

The Dangers of Stripping the Gospel of This Crucial Element

Pasta is Italian, bagels are Jewish and chicken chow mein is Chinese, right? Wrong. The bagel's roots are not Jewish, but rather Italian. While pasta history begins in China; the Chinese food staple chow mein is actually an American dish. What does the lost history of these different popular foods have to do with Jesus and Christianity?

The answer is simple. In the exact same way that these three foods and many others are believed to be culturally connected to a certain people group and tradition, Yeshua/Jesus—a nice Jewish man born in a Jewish town named Bethlehem, born to Jewish parents Yosef (Joseph) and Miriam (Mary), who lived His life according to biblical/Jewish law and conventions and who died in the capitol city of Israel, Jerusalem—has been largely removed from His real Jewish culture, and over the centuries made into a Hellenized Christian.

I know many people reading this may still at this point be wondering, *So what? I still don't know what difference it makes.* After all, you can enjoy a bagel in a kosher deli without understanding that the first bagels were made by Italians. You can eat a bowl of chow mein noodles with chopsticks without concern that it was first eaten in America and not in China. We also know the long piece of pasta is no less delicious just because the first ones to slurp pasta were not in Italy.

Although there is may be no critical impact caused by the lost cultural roots of foods such as spaghetti, bagels and chow mein, the impact caused by removing Yeshua from His cultural roots is more than simple cultural appropriation. The

issue isn't just that Yeshua was Jewish. The problem caused by the removal of Yeshua from Judaism is much greater than a lack of cultural awareness.

When we learn about Yeshua outside of the context of the Old Testament and the nation Israel, we may see Him as our Messiah, but we don't know and cannot understand *why* He is the Messiah and why only He can be the Messiah. Outside of the full context into which Yeshua was born, we cannot understand the meaning of verses such as Galatians 4:4, "But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born from a woman, born under the law."

Once removed from historical biblical context, it is impossible for someone to understand what is meant by "fullness of time," "God sent forth His Son," or "born under the law." So we are left simply with the understanding of His human birth, which alone does not, in truth, qualify Him to be the Messiah.

Without the knowledge that starts in Genesis 1:3, "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light," which is spoken before the creation of the sun, stars and other planets, it's impossible to understand John 8:12, "Again, [Yeshua] spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.'"

While Yeshua's death, burial and resurrection can only be understood on a surface level without being attached to their context beginning with Genesis 1:14, "And God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be signs to indicate seasons, and days, and years,'" the word "seasons" in verse 14 is the Hebrew word *moedim*, which means "appointed times." There were biblical reasons Yeshua died on Passover, was buried before the Sabbath and rose again on *Bikkurim*, or the firstfruits of the barley harvest. These reasons were established from the

very first words of the Bible and continue throughout the *Tanakh*, or Old Testament texts.

While it may not make any difference if someone goes their whole life thinking that bagels are Jewish, pasta is Italian and chow mein is Chinese, it makes a huge difference if a believer in Yeshua doesn't know Jesus was/is a Jew, because the very foundation of their faith is resting on that truth. After all, remember what Yeshua said on the last great day of the Feast in John 7:38, "He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water."

In order to have rivers of living water flow out of our innermost being, we must believe in Him as the Scriptures said, remembering that the only Scriptures in existence when those words were spoken were the books of the Old Testament.
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