

Jesus the Jew

I thank God that I grew up with this Biblical truth. Besides, Paul of Tarsus (Shaul) mentions in his Letter to the Galatians that "Jesus/Yeshua was born of a woman, born under the Law" (Gal. 4). My best mentor was also very much for the Jews and He preached fervently, i.e. as a young pioneer evangelist in South Africa (since the thirties), that Jesus is Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

This precious instrument of God had a wonderful testimony of how he used to receive visions from His Lord and Master whilst fasting - sometimes up to seven days dry fasts. He could describe Jesus in detail and one could always, from his preaching, sense that Jesus/Yeshua was indeed very real to him. Eye-witnesses who attended his gatherings testified that, while he was bringing the Word, it was done in such Power of the Holy Spirit that those living in sin would rush forward to repent, kneeling at the platform and confessing their sins spontaneously - that is before he had even given the usual altar call. Now, if this is not a sign of God's Presence and His blessings, what is?

Now, he had these unusual encounters with His Lord throughout His lifetime, something he could share with his audiences and of course moving many to believe in the risen Jesus/Yeshua. Among his converts were also staunch Jews who accepted Jesus as Messiah. And because so few of those who are bringing the message of Jesus/Yeshua today, are doing so without having had such testimony, I feel obliged to share what I have received with you.

Not a man to boast and to impress but somebody always for substance and this, in a nutshell, describes my mentor who was always prepared to bring His Saviour timely and untimely to those who were prepared to give a listening ear.

It is indeed reality that convinces us to fasten our faith in the Unknown and I know it as this is the reason why I too am bringing Jesus/Yeshua as the Messiah of Israel to those who want to take heed. Let's therefore take this wonderful journey together and so that we may once again experience the reality of the risen Messiah anew!

There is of course currently a great interest in many Christians' hearts, namely to opt for Old Testament reality. It is as though those who are prepared to do so, are just drawn to "Jewish" rituals - and naturally then extending to all the Jewish festivals and celebrations. This trend is gaining momentum and it is therefore an ideal that has to be pursued and often done to the extreme.

I, however, and although I know that there is a deep reality encapsulated in the Old Testament, I also know that we must opt not only for Jewish observance and all its customs, but we must focus on, as Paul rightly states to the Corinthians, the crucified Christ.

It is then this message that has to be carried forth, and therefore especially the "first fruits" apostolic gospel as this is the message that will spur us on to good works and conformance to God's will, namely to believe in His Son and clothing ourselves with righteousness and holiness and then not merely fixating on ritualistic customs which may indeed lead us back to the Old Testament Scriptures, but which may also simultaneously stir within our hearts a spirit of self-righteousness - something both Jesus/Yeshua and Paul had squarely come against in their encounters with especially the Pharisees.

I too am one hundred per cent in agreement that we cannot neglect the Old Testament (=the Scriptures). How can we ever do so? Besides, the Old Testament was so much part and parcel of my upbringing that it was indeed natural not to eat pork or any unclean food. It was then not for us something that could be rationalized. It was undoubtedly something that had to be respected as the Old Testament dietary laws were given by God - something Paul clearly substantiates in his letters (Everything is sanctified through the Word and prayer... therefore not only through prayer!).

However, how many who today are so ardently proclaiming adherence to Torah, also returning to their Jewish

roots, are prepared to bring the Angel of the Lord as Jesus/Yeshua of the New Testament? And some are so quick to fiercely lash back when Peter's (the Jew!) baptismal command on Pentecost Day is pushed, i.e. over against Math. 28.19, that one can just stand amazed wondering what is really "Jewish" and what is not?

Now, considering this specific matter, one cannot help but get the idea that the Trinitarian faith (established by the Catholic Church as only true doctrine) is then not to be touched, i.e. when listening to arguments upholding Math. 28.19 at all cost (indeed a command of salient importance to at least the average Catholic) whereas the "Jewish" baptism in the Name of the Son of God (Jesus/Yeshua) then seems to be just too "common" to be regarded as that one and only true apostolic baptism! (I am deliberately juxtaposing the Catholic Church on the one hand and then those who are in favour of returning to their Jewish roots on the other hand). Why siding with Math. 28.19 and not with Peter, surely the perfect example of New Testament "Jewishness" (i.e. of the apostles).

Let me be clear. I have yet to meet a faithful Torah abider, Sabbath and all, proclaiming the baptism in the Name of Jesus/Yeshua just as faithfully as the Jewish observance and customs are being adhered to!

Now with this in mind, can't we see a discrepancy here? Is the gospel and faith in God then about religious clothing and rituals or are we running the proverbial spiritual race with our Saviour - and what He desires of us - in mind? And trying to convince me that Paul was for the Trinitarian baptism, will surely not help as such a stance is indeed fallacious.

Paul is clear on the baptismal ritual - and this most of those who are searching the New Covenantal Scriptures will know very well - it was indeed this apostle who boldly expressed his stance on only one baptism. Should we then compare this Pauline text (Eph. 4.5) with his directive in Col. 3.17, surely we will be able to see a correlation between the two most important apostles' confessionals on baptism - Paul's baptism is in agreement with Peter's baptismal instruction on Pentecost Day and that it therefore has to be done in the Name of Jesus/Yeshua.

So where are we going to draw the line? I am sure there is room for those like me and who are boldly bringing the Jewish Jesus as Messiah, however, then not necessarily also propagating the wearing of, e.g. the kippa (yarmulka) - clearly a custom that took root in Judaism after the times of Christ and the apostle Paul!

May God help all of us who have a concern for Jesus/Yeshua and his cause, to have a new encounter with the crucified/risen Jesus! This to me is what the whole Body - the full spectrum - belonging to Christ (the Maschiach) is so intensely in need of!

I do indeed love symbolism and the rich spiritual meaning of Jewish observance and rituals - in which the Old Testament is clearly enveloped - but I would rather see Jesus' Presence and the deep New Testament reality burning in hearts, than ritualistically clinging to the mere shadow of reality! (Something those who don't know Jesus/Yeshua - and who are dead against Him and His gospel truth - are indeed still in need of).

Ritualistic clothing can definitely be problematic, or what am I saying? And did Paul had this type of dress code in mind when he voiced his opinion, i.e. with its insignificance in mind, in his letters?

*There is a good research work available on the Jewishness of Paul, something that will interest many Christians who are opting for Old Testament bias, written by Donald Riddle -

<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/1198441?sid=21105030961221&uid=2&uid=4> -

The kippah "covering" has become a symbol of Jewishness in society and it seemingly then pertains to the diaspora (after 70 A.D.). It "locates" the Presence of God (the Shekhina) "above the head" of a man. However, the broad-brimmed hat worn by the ultra-orthodox rabbi's is seemingly more in line with Torah prescription. The ancient Indians also regarded the head covering as very important, and also carrying a deep spiritual

connotation for them. The kippah forms part of the papal ecclesiastical apparel - a connection with Babylonia(?).

The "Shekhina" (depiction) seems to have an Aramaic (Syriac) connection and this tradition especially pertains to the post-70 A.D. era - 100 A.D.+ It was Rabbi Honah who never walked with uncovered head, claiming that God's Presence "resides above my head" [Kiddushin 31a] - see "The complete book of Jewish Observance", by Leo Trepp.

It is not clear when this son of Joshua (R. Honah) lived, but it seems after 70 A.D. The Apostle Paul did not approve of the covering of the head in prayer, i.e. of a man and we can then infer from his letters that the apostle adopted a different approach to Scripture since his Damascus encounter with Jesus/Yeshua.

In accordance with Paul's gospel - if objectified properly - we will see that He ascribed the Shekhina to Jesus/Yeshua as "Lord of Glory" (Peter does the same) and where the Shekhina rested upon the Angel of the Covenant (R. Cohen in his Concise Abbreviated Talmud, English translation), it would also then have rested on the New Covenantal Jesus/Yeshua who is interceding in prayer for us 24/7 (Paul in his Letter to the Hebrews, 7.25; 4). Paul clearly states that "Jesus is the same yesterday (Old Testament times), today (New Covenantal times) and forevermore (Heb. 13) - He will then indeed return in the same manner, i.e. as Son of God clothed with the Shekhina).

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January 8, 2015