

Neither Jew Not Gentile

But One New Man

By George Davis and Michael Clark

A brother wrote recently, asking a question that reflects a common misunderstanding of the gospel that is prevalent throughout Christendom today. "Is Messianic Judaism a return to a first century New Testament form?" We have received many such letters from sincere believers who asked similar questions. This is our attempt to answer these questions in a way that will not alienate any part of the family of God. Our goal is the unity of the faith in Christ Jesus.

It cannot be denied that the resurgence of "Messianic Judaism" is a return to a first century New Testament form that can easily be found in the pages of the New Testament. In fact virtually all of the epistles of Paul addressed it in one way or another. What did he have to say?

Many who ascribe to Messianic Judaism today, teach, either by implication or openly, that special privileges go with being a natural Jew, that Christianity is Jewish, and that any return to primitive Christianity must include a return to our Jewish roots. Although this may sound logical to some, it represents the same danger to the church today as it did in the Apostle Paul's day.

In Romans 3:1-2 Paul asked, "What advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way!" Paul's answer here seems to contradict his teaching in the rest of his epistles, but he summed up as follows: "What then? Are we better than they? No, in no way. For we previously charged both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin. As it is written, "There is no one righteous. No, not one." (Romans 3:10).

Before Jew and Greek can be united as one new man in Christ they must first be united in this fact, "They are all under sin." All are lost. There is none good, no not one. There are no outward privileges and physical advantages associated with being a Jew or a Gentile; both are sinners and are equally in need of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

No Ethnic Distinctions

A good knowledge of Jewish idioms and customs as well as the Old Testament helps shed a clearer light on the things that Jesus said and did, as pointing to Him as the Messiah. But all too often we lose sight of the TREE of LIFE as we gaze at the forest! Failure to understand the extent of the redemptive work of Christ and how it transcends all ethnic boundaries has led many of today's Christians to embrace a contemporary form of Galatian-ism. Bewitched by religious formalism, Jews and Gentiles alike are returning to the old Jewish feasts and ceremonies that Christ fulfilled in His sacrifice on the cross. He totally filled up the just requirements of the law by His sacrificial death (see Romans 8:3 and 4). We agree that the current observances of



"Christian holidays" are not found in the teachings of the New Testament fathers, but neither is going back under the Jewish law. God still hates our feasts. "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies" (Amos 5:21, NKJV). There is only one day that God is interested in us entering into and remaining, and that is His Sabbath rest (read Hebrews chapter four).

The current fascination with Messianic Judaism marks a return to the legalism of first century Judaism by which well-meaning Jewish believers nearly destroyed the Church. The very name "Messianic Judaism" indicates that the Messiah came to establish a christianized form of Judaism. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many early Jewish believers, called Judaizers, failed to understand that God's purpose in establishing a covenant with Abraham was not to bless the world with a failed religious system called "Judaism" (see Acts 15:7-11) but to bless all nations with Christ--the Seed. Paul accused them of preaching a different gospel (Galatians 1:6) and issued the following warning. "As we have said before, so I now say again: if any man preaches to you any gospel other than that which you received, let him be cursed" (Galatians 1:9). Jesus saw this threat coming when he tried to warn the disciples

saying, "Beware of the leavening of the Pharisees." And Paul warns, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."

What made the gospel of the Judaizers different? Their gospel was a mixture of both the old and the new covenants. They went out among the Gentile churches preaching that the Gentiles must become circumcised. The problem is that circumcision is a sign that you belong to an old covenant that has been done away with. They failed to understand that "If that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second" (Hebrews 8:7). They failed to understand that the New Covenant is "not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:6). God used Paul to correct this misunderstanding.

Paul reasoned that the law, which was added 430 years after God's covenant with Abraham (who was neither Jew nor Israelite), could neither enable nor hinder the promise, for the inheritance is not of the law but by promise, just as it was with Abraham (Galatians 3:16-19). Paul should have known, for he had been taught by the best teachers in Jerusalem and strove to keep the law perfectly before his life-changing encounter with the living Christ. The law was not the blessing, but was "added because of transgressions, until the Seed should come." The law was the stern schoolmaster, not the blessing to all nations.

The scripture has included *all* (both Jew and Gentile) "under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." But before faith came, we were kept under the law, "Shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. After faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. We are no longer under the law. For we are ALL (both Jew and Gentile) the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. FOR all who "have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." For this reason there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for we are all one in Christ Jesus. If we belong to Christ, then and only then are WE Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (See Galatians 3:22-29 Paul wrote, "He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God" (Romans 2:29).

Jews are by definition of the tribes of Judah (of which was Mary the mother of Jesus) and Benjamin (of which was Paul), but we who believe in Christ are the spiritual seed of Abraham who was the great, great grandfather of both Judah and Benjamin. Abraham was not even a Jew! The Christianity that Jesus gave birth is not of bloodline, but rather of faith in Christ alone. The only bloodline that counts in the eyes of God is the line of blood that leads from Calvary directly into the Holy of Holies, consecrating a NEW and LIVING way.

"Don't lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed in knowledge after the image of his Creator, where there can't be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondservant, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all. (Colossians 3:9-11 WEB).

"For in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (Galatians 6:15 WEB). "For we [who are born from above] are the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit and by the Spirit of God and exult and glory and pride ourselves in Jesus Christ, and put no confidence or dependence [on what we are] in the flesh and on outward privileges and physical advantages and external appearances." (Philippians 3:3 AMP)

So many Christians today are blowing the shofar, burning candles in the shadows, celebrating Purim, Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, while they reestablish the old extra-biblical rituals of rabbinical Judaism constituting a return to the shadows of religion. Most grievous of all is the fact that the substance and perfect sacrifice of Christ is ignored (see Colossians 2:17) and the one new man, the fruit of Christ's redemptive work, is denied by their unbelief.

The law was never given to the Gentiles nor did the early apostles expect them to keep it. Peter made this crystal clear when he said to his fellow Jews, some of which were still clinging to Judaism, "Now therefore why do you tempt God, that you should put a yoke on the neck of the disciples [the Gentile believers] which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10). The blessing of Abraham is the Spirit, not the law, and is of faith and not of dead works (Galatians 3:14).

When it comes to the Church, we are neither pro Jew nor pro Gentile. We are against a mindset that says that one race is more spiritually endowed than another. The

covenant that God cut with Abraham, a Gentile who walked with God by faith, was established to make Jews and Gentiles into one new spiritual race or man. It was not to make Gentiles into Jewish proselytes, keeping the Jewish laws, for in Abraham all the nations were to be blessed (Genesis 18:18). God is not requiring Gentiles to become Jews nor is He demanding that Jews become Gentiles, observing their holidays, laws and traditions. He wants both of them to become NEW! He is making of both ONE new man--reconciling "them both in ONE BODY to God through the cross."

"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new (2537 kainos) man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity." (Ephesians 2:14-16)

Clinging to our ethnicity and systems of religion causes enmity and strife. A new identity in Christ alone is our peace! He has MADE BOTH ONE! He did this by breaking down and abolishing the WALL or ENMITY that divided the two. The wall of separation that He abolished is "the law of commandments contained in ordinances." He did this to create in Himself ONE NEW MAN from the two, to the greater purpose that He might reconcile them both to God in one body and thereby put to death the enmity. The question we must ask ourselves is, "Is Jesus our *only* identity and hope?"

Nation Against Nation

Everywhere we look around the globe today, we see prophecy fulfilled, but the one prophecy that is most prominent is found in the words of Jesus, "Nation shall rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom." The word translated *nation* is the Greek word *ethnos*. Jesus prophesied that there would be great divisions and struggles along ethnic lines. When political boundaries and dictatorial controls cease, wars and violence pop up. We saw this all over the Soviet Union as Russia withdrew into its original boundaries. With the abolition of one dictator right now in Iraq, we see armed struggle rising as our troops withdraw. The blood-bath is not over yet. Even with all his organizations for world peace and high tech armies, man cannot bring peace or keep the peace. As soon as the troops withdraw, the pent-up hatred and prejudice takes center stage once again. Our only hope for peace is in forsaking all ethnic, social,

sexual, and political prejudices and lines that divide as we become ONE NEW MAN in Christ. Without the Prince of Peace dealing with the enmity in our hearts, we are sure to destroy ourselves. One new spiritual race in Christ is our only hope. We must reverse the effects of the fall of the First Adam and come under the covenant of the Last Adam or this world will self-destruct.

For the first century Jews, the gospel of Christ presented a real problem. They saw themselves as the keepers and guardians of God's Law, and this became a part of their national identity. It was the source of great pride, that out of all the people in the world, they were God's chosen people, and the custodians of His Law. To abolish the law would be to strip them of their pride and patriotic national identity. In the Jewish mind, the loss of the law would be tantamount to divesting them of their Jewishness. For this reason the preaching of the cross was a stumbling block to them. Before God could unite both Jew and Gentile, He had to remove the very thing in which the religious Jew found his sense of identity and righteousness. They saw the traditions of the elders and the law of commandments contained in ordinances as the very thing that had preserved them as a unique people, separate from all others. This separateness, which the Judaizers so fiercely defended, was the enemy of God's eternal purpose, which began long before Abraham, in eternity past, and will culminate at the end of the age.

This one body in Christ is no more Jewish than it is Gentile. The doctrines of British Israel and Arian Nations are as divisive as any Christian clinging to Judaism. In every way the body of Christ is NEW! (2537 kainos "of a new kind, unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of." -Strong). Nothing like it had ever been seen before. This one new man, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, is a new race, no longer of the old adamic lineage but something unheard of before. It is not of this world.

Not of This World

So many today are seeking to build their walled cities and towers unto the heavens with the same building blocks that God has forsaken. These are walls that divide the church. They believe that they are calling believers back to their roots, claiming that Christianity is Jewish. On the other hand some claim that the queen of England sits on the true throne of David, and that the ten lost tribes of Israel are the Arian races of Europe. These believe that they are working toward unity by calling all to join in their religious structures, but such is not the case. For the one body that Christ is

reconciling to God is new. Revamping a failed religious system is just putting a Band-Aid on the sinful flesh nature. Paul wrote, "So that if any one is in Christ, that one is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17 MKJV). To attempt to unite man around anything other than Jesus Christ is to reject His heavenly citizenship, because His kingdom is not of this world (see John 8:23 and 18:36).

The terms *American Christians*, *Jewish Christians*, and so on are oxymorons in the mind of God. We who belong to Jesus are either in Christ and He is our all in all, making all things new, or we are of another spirit, clinging to another gospel and another christ.

Christ is the root, the Seed, extending back beyond the ethnic confusion of Babylon to the garden, and the promise of a Seed that would bruise the serpent's head--the Seed through whom all nations would be blessed. The Gentiles are not saved by believing in Abraham, but by believing in the same Christ that Abraham believed in (see John 8:56), THE SEED. Unbelieving, broken-off branches are not the root. Neither are we wild olive branches who were once aliens without Christ and have been grafted in. We both need to be grafted into HIM and nothing else. The Root supports the branches, not the branches the Root (see Romans 11).

The bloodline of the Jews means nothing beyond the fulfilling of the promise made to Abraham that by his Seed the nations would be blessed (see Galatians 3:16-18). Christ is the promised Seed! Christ is everything. This is why Paul counted all his heritage and Jewish education as dung compared to the excellent, intimate knowledge of Christ. It was this line of thinking and preaching that finally led to Paul's betrayal and death. Satan knows his days are numbered once the walls of separation are down and the Son is manifest in true unity in the One New Man.

Jesus told those who claimed to be of the seed of Abraham, who trusted in natural lineage, that they were of their father the devil. Their actions clearly proved this out for they rejected the Seed of Abraham and hung him on a tree. They manifested that they were of Satan, who "was a liar and a murder from the beginning."

Jesus said that Abraham rejoiced to see His day. Without faith in Jesus, no man or woman can please God. Everyone, regardless of race or station in life, meets on a level plain at the foot of the cross. God has no favorites. He is no respecter of persons

except for the person of Jesus Christ. When the Father looks at a Christian, all the Father wants to see is the image of His Son.

Neither Jew or Gentile but a New Race

God has created a new race of new creatures, born of the last Adam, destined for His kingdom, devoid of the lines of this world that divide. Paul wrote, "[There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; FOR you are all one in Christ Jesus](#)" (Galatians 3:28). The Last Adam (Christ) has birthed a new race! As the first Adam was the natural father of the human race, so Christ, the last Adam, is the progenitor of a new humanity, a soiritual race. "[So also it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit](#)" (1 Corinthians 15:45).

Are we going to have part in this new race, or are we going to cling to our Jewish or Gentile heritage and traditions that separate and make void the commandments of God?

Old Testament types and shadows of things to come are not the substance of His kingdom, but a mere apparition from the kingdom point of view. Fables about the ten lost tribes are just mere smoke and mirrors that divide the body of Christ. How long will we continue to divide that one new man with ethnic quibbling and pride? How long will we refuse the work of grace that will truly unite us as one? How long will we make the promises of God of no effect in our lives by clinging to the shadows? Are we going to cling to the old Adam, the first Adam, or are we going to claim our place in the Life Giving Spirit as new Spiritual beings of the heavenly kingdom? Will we know one another after the flesh (2 Corinthians 5:16-17) or after the Spirit?

Father, help us to put aside all that would hinder and divide what you have joined together in your Son! Open our eyes to see the glory of the risen Christ that we might rightly comprehend His finished work! Open our eyes to see that He died to unite us as one new man. Restore to us the faith and vision of Paul who was totally taken-up with Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Break the downward pull of this world and its systems that make us slaves of false teachers who teach perverse things that they might draw away disciples after themselves. We would see only Jesus. Amen.

