
Messianic Jewish Apologetics: History Part 1-2

A Survey of Messianic Judaism

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Introduction

The Colorado flood of 2013 is a perfect example of how important the foundation is. There were thousands of families without housing. Over an entire years' worth of rain fell in just 36 hours, this occurred in the mountains west of Loveland, Longmont, and Boulder. It washed out all the roads leading to or from the mountain communities for a distance of over 100 miles up and down the front range of the Rocky Mountains. And then the water ran into the plains, the drainage basins from these mountain areas. This flooded miles and miles of lower areas of communities. In some cases it left families without even the remnant of land to build on, what they thought was safe ground is now nothing but river bottom. No house, no barn, not even a trace of the buildings that were there. Many people did not even know they were inside a flood plain.

They had never even had a water problem before. They found themselves in 3 or 4 feet of water for miles. A friend of my parents said their house was 150 years old. The house has no foundation, so the flood water came up right through the floor of the farm house. The water level raised as high as the thighs of the horses, and they have no idea what happened to their cattle.

Matthew 7:24—27 talks about building on the “rock” vs. building on the sand: *“And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.”*

Messianic Judaism is about building on the foundation of Yeshua; the Rock of Salvation that came from God to take away the sins of the world. The foundation He established 2000 years ago when the Creator of the Universe entered into the History of man. He fulfilled the plan established before the foundation of the world; He patterned His life as a living example for us to follow; and He fulfilled the scriptures written by Him. Most importantly, He established a path of redemption by which all mankind has a choice of reconciliation with their creator. Messianic Judaism seeks to reconcile the rich heritage and close relationship God has with Israel, His chosen people, and the knowledge and freedom we have through Yeshua.

Most of Christianity today is like the people in the above analogy of the people on the plains of Colorado. For years they have gone about their business without really thinking about the foundation, about where they had built their house. They didn't even know they were in a flood plain. Matt 7:27 *“The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell — and great was its fall.”*

Sha'ul (Apostle Paul) in Ephesians (Eph 4:11—16) provides an analogy from his own life experiences. Sha'ul was in storms at sea more than once. In a storm you take down the sails, put out the sea-anchor and hope for the best, being at the mercy of the sea, “... we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine.”

Seminary core curriculum includes the subject of Systematic Theology. Many authors have volumes of Systematic Theology; essentially all of them follow the same pattern of laying out the Christian faith. There is a key element missing in ALL of these studies. According to *Israelology*¹; 5/6ths of the Bible is about the nation and people of Israel and yet this subject is completely neglected in the schools of theology. Pastors and Priests are missing a key element of God's plan, past, present, and future. The volume of the book is about Israel, its people, its national identity, and its relationship with all of

¹ Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G., *Israelology*, Copyright 1989—2001, ISBN 0-914863-05-3, page 10

mankind; God's plan for the redemption of all humanity rests with His unique relationship with a people He chose, He nurtured, and He embraced. When we distance ourselves from Judaism we distance ourselves from really understanding our relationship with Yeshua.

First of all God developed a unique people, a called people for the specific purpose of being called by His name.² All of human history distinguishes itself through the eyes of the Jewish people. John 1 tells us it was through Yeshua we have ALL SCRIPTURE: 66 books / 40 authors over 2000 years; an integrated message system, from beyond our time domain.³ All 40 plus authors were Jewish, the only exception is the Gospel of Luke who is believed to be a "Proselyte," making him Jewish also.

² Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives, And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse.

And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." NASU

³ Chuck Missler, slogan, and literally true.

Biblical Judaism

Judaism stems from the word Judah (Yehudah in Hebrew), (Yahadut, the distinctive characteristics of the Judean ethnos), is the religion, philosophy and way of life of the Jewish people. Biblical Judaism is a monotheistic religion, based—on and identified—with the inspired Word of God, the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Tanach combined with the Brit Chadashah.

- Tanach: Hebrew acronym for three sections of Scripture (Old Testament):⁴
 - Torah: “Five Books of Moses” (also known in Greek as the Pentateuch).
 - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
 - Moses known as the Great Prophet of God, mentioned 772 times in the Tanach.
 - Moses is mentioned 80 times in the Brit Chadashah (New Testament). If you have ever been taught through the School of textual criticism that Moses did not write the Torah, you should note that every book of the scripture both Tanach and Brit Chadashah attribute the “Torah” to Moses. Yeshua Himself also stated this fact.
 - Neviim: “Prophets,”
 - Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
 - Scripture quotes 55 prophets. These were first individuals with a personal relationship with God. The Ruach Ha-Kodesh (Holy Spirit) rested upon them and they were also known as “seers (1 Samuel 9:9).” In all cases they were role models for us. Their lives were diverse and unique, but they all were servants of the LORD.
 - Kesuvim: “Writings”
 - Psalms, Proverbs, Job, The Songs of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles
 - Books like Chronicles, Ruth, and Esther, are first historical, but they also convey perspectives of life as in King Solomon’s Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and the Book of Job. The Psalms affect millions of people with words of gratitude, hope, prayer, aspiration, courage, and insight, many of which were personally written by King David.
- Brit Chadashah (New Covenant)
 - Known as the New Testament, this completes Biblical Judaism, just as the Tanach brings the knowledge of God, the Brit Chadashah provides the understanding and wisdom, the clarity of Yeshua as taught through—out the Tanach.
 - Good news of Yeshua: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
 - Letters from Yeshua’s emissary Paul: 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews.
 - Letters from Yeshua’s emissary’s: James, 1st and 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John, Jude.
 - The Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah to John.

⁴ Edited by Rabbi Nosson Scherman, Tanach, The ArtScroll Series, Mesorah Publications, Ltd. Copyright 1996

We are aware today all the books of God's Word are prophetic as well as historical in nature.

Rabbinic Judaism

Interestingly today, Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity both came into existence at about the same time. Rabbinic Judaism was NOT the form of Judaism active at the time of Yeshua, at least in the sense we think of it today. Rabbinic Judaism is the product of a people in exile after the 2nd Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. Its tenets were codified starting 90 A.D. and finishing about 200 A.D. by individuals trying to reconcile Biblical Judaism and oral tradition in light of the fact they could no longer carry out the requirements of the sacrificial system.⁵ Since this was the segment of Judaism which had rejected their messiah (Yeshua Ha-Mashiach) and was now living in the diaspora,⁶ this left them in confusion over how to live out their faith. Unable to atone for sin through the sacrificial system, they developed a works based theology that developed into what we have today as Rabbinic Judaism.

Extra-Biblical Writings of Judaism from which Rabbinic Judaism Stems

Keep in mind that the writings of the Mishnah and Talmud are rooted deeper in history than the first century. Pharisaic Judaism is the concept of building a fence around the law. At the time of the Babylonian captivity Rabbi's recognized the reason for the captivity was because of the violation of the law. This started out fairly benign with good intentions. At the time of Ezra they began analyzing all 613 laws spelled out in the Torah. One by one they tried to figure out all possible ways a person could transgress God's law. So they built a fence around the law itself. The idea is that if you avoided the fence you would not transgress what was inside the fence and thus avoid any transgression. The problem was that as time went on, the scribes put more and more importance on these until they were considered as binding as the law itself.

To give authentication to this, they began to teach God really gave two laws to Moses, the Written and the Oral.

Ezra was a sofer (scribe) and he began writing these principles down along with the Levites.⁷ At that time it was agreed that one soffer could disagree with another soffer but they could not disagree with the Torah. About a century and a half later another school called conageim arose. They started the concept that you could disagree with a tanna but you cannot disagree with the sofer (scribe). This meant what the seforim concluded became mandatory law. So the logical question was: why should we keep the law just because a sofer said it? The answer became that it was because it was actually given at the time of Moses. There is no evidence of any kind to support this answer, not from scripture or any other source. It all starts with Ezra.⁸

⁵ God specified sacrifices could only be carried out on the Temple Mount.

⁶ Diaspora refers to the Jewish population migrating to ALL parts of the world following the extreme persecution which took place throughout the Roman empire especially following the destruction of the Temple and the Bar Kokhba revolt (132—136 CE).

⁷ Nehemiah 8:8 Neh 8:8 They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.

⁸ Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G., Hebrew Christianity

The Mishnah was redacted circa 200—220 CE by Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi. According to the Talmud, the persecution of the Jews and the passage of time raised the possibility that the details of the oral traditions dating from Pharisaic times (536 BCE—70 CE) would be forgotten.⁹ There are 63 tractates Rabbi Yehudah set down as the oral law.

Talmud Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud), sometimes referred to as the Palestinian Talmud, was codified around 400 CE. It is a discussion and commentary about the Mishnah.¹⁰

Talmud Bavli (Babylonian Talmud) was written by the Rabbi's leading in the area of Babylon. Around 500 CE these writings are more extensive than the Talmud Yerushalmi and have become the authority describing the Oral Law.

Although not scripture, many of these writings have been inspired by God giving the authors insights into the Tanach. For example there is teaching of the Messiah coming twice, once as a suffering servant and once later as a mighty king and ruler forever. This was teaching from ancient Rabbi's before the time of Yeshua. Mashiach ben David was to come, however, Mashiach ben Joseph had to come first. We know this as believers and recognize Yeshua as the Suffering servant spoken of by Isaiah and others. Much of these early writings about the nature of the Messiah are ignored and denied by today's Rabbis.

By Yeshua's time the Pharisees had established thousands of laws building fences around every aspect of life as prescribed in the Torah. As time passed, these fences took on more and more importance creating a life of their own. This is what Yeshua was condemning in Matthew 6 and 23; Mark 7.

Rabbinic tradition sees itself as having the final authority.¹¹

Messianic Judaism and Biblical Judaism are ONE AND THE SAME

The revelation of Yeshua Ha-Mashiach (Jesus the Christ) is on every page of scripture, both in the pages of the Tanach and the Brit Chadashah (Old and New Testaments). Other than the book of Revelation itself, the whole Brit Chadashah is an explanation and an unfolding of prophecy of the Coming of the Messiah and the works He would perform. Luke 24:27 *Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.*

There is no way to understand the teachings of Yeshua without a basic knowledge of Judaism. In fact all major tenets of scripture are related to an understanding of their Jewishness.

⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mishneh>

¹⁰ Jewish virtual Library.org

¹¹ Chaim Urbach, Messianic Vision Principles.

Historical Background: Part 1

What caused the separation between the Jewish people and Christianity? The worst schism in history, completely outside of God's will is the separation between Christianity and Judaism. Let's see how this came about.

Books of Maccabees

For 125 years after Alexander the Great the Seleucids and the Ptolemies battled for Israel. 198 BCE Antiochus III defeated the Egyptians and incorporated Judea into his empire. Antiochus III had several defeats at the hands of the Romans and as such began a program of "Hellenization." Antiochus IV inherited a brief Jewish rebellion, which he attempted to quell in 176 BCE by forcing the Jews to abandon central tenants of Judaism; such as the Sabbath and circumcision. He then defiled the Temple by erecting an altar to the god, Zeus. Further violation occurred when he sacrificed pigs and opened the shrine to non-Jews. 164 BCE the Maccabees recaptured Jerusalem and purified the Temple. Thus the Holiday Hanukkah and Jewish independence for another 80 years.

Pompey of Rome 63 BCE: first conquest of Israel by Rome

Aulus Gabinius, proconsul of Syria, split the Maccabean Kingdom (Hasmonean) into five districts governed by the Sanhedrin based in Jerusalem.

Pacorus I of Parthia 37 BCE

Pacorus I of Parthia took Israel from Rome in 37 BCE for a short time and then it was recaptured by Rome.

Herod 1 Ruled Israel for Rome until 4 BCE

Herod was a madman who murdered his own family and a great many Rabbis. He expanded the Temple Mount and constructed the 2nd Temple. Caesarea Maritima, Masada and Herodium were built during his rule.¹²

Herod an Edomite placed Babylonian and Alexandrian High—Priests in the Temple. The people did not follow Herod or his ways and Herod enforced his policies with very strict consequences; which usually meant crucifixion.

Yeshua's Time

The Jewish people were looking for a strong Messiah to lead them out of the bondage of Roman Control. They truly hoped it would be someone like Judah Maccabee.

¹² Josephus: The Works of Josephus: New Updated Edition; Complete and Unabridged in One Volume, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Peabody, MA, All three (Josephus, Philo, Eusebius) can be purchased from www.christianbooks.com as one set.

John the Baptist was beheaded after his imprisonment for testifying against Herod Antipater, in relation to him divorcing his wife and marrying his brother's former wife, Herodias. The climate of the political power and punishment during that time was unbelievably cruel and extreme.

Jerusalem Tisha B'Av 70 CE

The triumphal Entry.

Yeshua wept over the city. Luke 19:41-44 *Not one stone will be left on another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.*

Luke 21:10 starts with future warnings and goes on to warn them personally: *"and let NOT those who are in the country enter the city..."*

In the year 66, the Jewish Rebel forces took Jerusalem. Titus Vespasian surrounded the city with the 5th, 12th, and 15th legions from the west and the 10th legion from the East on the Mt of Olives.

Titus allowed pilgrims to enter the city to celebrate Passover, but then he did not allow them to leave, this put significant pressure on the food supplies and water. The siege ended with the total destruction of the city and the Second Temple on Tisha B'Av in the beginning of August. The ensuing battle and extermination killed everyone in the city and surrounding vicinity. Josephus reports that of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, 1.1 million killed and only one hundred thousand slaves captured. During the siege and time leading up to it, 500 Jews were crucified each day—so many crosses that there was no room for all of them.¹³

Titus had wanted the Temple for the Roman Emperor and for the Roman pantheon. It was not his plan to destroy it. A Roman soldier threw a burning stick onto one of the Temple walls and the whole thing caught on fire.

Both Temples fell on Tisha B'Av. Because the temple walls were covered with gold, Titus ordered the temple dismantled stone by stone to recover the gold, thus



Catapult used by the Roman army during siege.



¹³ Josephus, see 10

Yeshua's prophecy about the destruction was literal to the last detail, *"not one stone left upon another."*

Figure 1 Arch of Titus with the relief of the spoils from the Temple.



Josephus returned to Rome with Titus and settled there as a client of the emperor. He gained Roman citizenship and took on the family name of the Emperor "Flavius."

The Wars of the Jews, is his primary work we are interested in. This is the work from the Maccabean revolt up to the destruction of the Jewish nation; it provides invaluable information about the Second Temple time.

The Antiquities of the Jews, is his work from the creation of the world to his present day, drawing on the Septuagint, and other historians.

The Early Believers

100,000 slaves taken for Roman Projects. 20,000 for the coliseum itself.

William Cave wrote "... the Sabbath or **Saturday** (for so the word sabbatum is constantly used in the writings of the fathers, when speaking of it as it relates to Christians) was held by them in great veneration, and especially in the Eastern parts honoured with all the public solemnities of religion. This is plain, not only from some passages in Ignatius and Clemens's Constitutions, but from writers of more unquestionable credit and authority. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, tells us that they assembled on Saturdays... to worship Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath."¹⁴

¹⁴ Cave, *Primitive Christianity: or the Religion of the Ancient Christians in the First Ages of the Gospel*. 1840, revised edition by H. Cary. Oxford, London, pp. 84–85). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polycarp#cite_note-13

Historical Background: Part Two

Last week we ended our discussion with Tisha B'Av; when the Temple was destroyed by Titus Vespasian. There are several facts of interest between Yeshua's resurrection and the destruction of the Temple. Eusebius' tells us Herod deliberately burned the genealogies of the Jewish people. This was to make himself appear of noble origin, since no one would be able to trace their pedigree by public record. Eusebius also records this as a time of innumerable commotions, tumults, and wars. At this time the Roman government primarily considered the conflict between the new believers in Yeshua and the non-believing Jews as simply an internal conflict which really was none of their concern.¹⁵

We know from the book of Acts that the gospel was being preached and many thousands were coming to the Lord.¹⁶ These were devout Jews from all nations living in Jerusalem, and came to be known as Christians.¹⁷ The term Christian is only used three times in the Brit Chadashah (New Testament). All three times it is in reference to gentile followers of Yeshua. The predominantly Jewish believers were called people of "The Way" or "Nazarenes" i.e. of the sect of Judaism following the teaching of the Nazarene.

At this same time the High Priest and the Sanhedrin they were continuing to persecute those following "The Way."¹⁸ Peter and John were arrested, but Rabbi Gamaliel's influence helped to free them.¹⁹ Next Stephen was stoned. Sha'ul (Paul of Tarsus) was helping the Sanhedrin to rout the new believers. He jailed and persecuted many, receiving written authority from the High Priest to go to the synagogues in Damascus and take prisoner the followers of The Way living there.²⁰ The High priest and Sanhedrin did not have jurisdiction outside of Jerusalem. There is no historical record of them issuing edicts (written documents) at that time against the believers. It is believed that the Temple rulers were also acting without Roman authority, using mob mentality to execute judgment against believers.²¹ Persecution started in earnest after this.

It was at this time Sha'ul (Paul) was confronted on the road to Damascus by Yeshua, and he became one of the greatest advocates of the people in "the Way." Sha'ul exchanged roles: from persecutor of the believers, to become one of the persecuted.

James, the son of Zebedee, was beheaded by Herod Agrippa primarily for political reasons. At this same time the High Priest and different leaders in the Sanhedrin were vying for power. They literally

¹⁵ Acts 25:18-19 "When the accusers stood up, they began bringing charges against him not of such crimes as I was expecting, but they simply had some points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive. NASU

¹⁶ Acts Chapter 2

¹⁷ Acts 2:5

¹⁸ The Way or Nazarenes was the way Jewish Christians were referred to.

¹⁹ It is not a coincidence Gamaliel was Sha'ul's teacher.

²⁰ Acts 9:1-3; 22:5; 26:12

²¹ Marvin R. Wilson, Our Father Abraham, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989

came to blows with sticks and stones. More and more anarchy was rising up in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. It is very clear from the historians of the day that the Roman government did not always have control over these people. In spite of this, the numbers of believers was growing rapidly (Acts 5:14-16; Acts 21:20) *"You see, brother, how many [tens of] thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law."*

The power base of the Jewish leadership was directly challenged by all the Jewish people following Yeshua. They had been placed into those positions of office by Herod and were not giving up this power without a fight.

The Roman leadership was no better. They had been fighting with the Jewish people for many years and it seemed there was no end in sight to the conflict. They also were fighting among themselves; vying for power over the region. One of those governors was Caius, who led after Tiberius died. Beginning with Alexandria, he instituted emperor worship by ordering that all of the synagogues be filled with statues with his own image. When he turned his attention to the Temple in Jerusalem, he received great opposition from the Jewish people.

Now around this time Nero became emperor and formally persecuted the Jewish believers and Christians around the empire. He executed Sha'ul and Peter around 64 CE. With Nero's death in 68 CE, Vespasian took control as discussed earlier.

Jerusalem at this time was in complete disarray. James, the half-brother of Yeshua, was the head of the believers in Jerusalem. When he was ordered to renounce his faith as a public demonstration, he instead reaffirmed his commitment to Yeshua and testified to the correctness of the movement. He was thrown from the Temple wall. Eusebius records that Jerusalem became a place of complete anarchy during this time.

Yeshua warned of the Vengeance to be poured out upon Jerusalem.

41 When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." Luke 19:41-44, NASU

20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. 21 "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; 22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled. 23 "Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Luke 21:20-24, NASU

Josephus and Eusebius both attribute the martyrdom of James the Just as being the trigger point for God's wrath to be poured out on Jerusalem and its inhabitants. The Jewish believers in Yeshua

numbered close to 100,000. They fled to Pella across the Jordan. This is where they lived with their families. Eusebius also attributes Matthew 24:19-21 to this time.

The Rift between Rome and the Jewish People After the destruction of the Temple

It is difficult to summarize all that happened during this tumultuous period of history. Roman leaders openly destroyed synagogues and Jewish communities in different areas. Where synagogues were allowed to exist, laws prohibited synagogues from accepting proselytes, and Christians were forbidden from practicing Jewish customs. Yeshua's followers attended synagogues; in some cases being accepted as fellow Jews, and in other cases they were harassed for their faith. Many Jewish people came to faith, but many others hardened their hearts against Yeshua.

This period is almost 200 years before Yeshua's birth up through the next 400 years after Yeshua's birth. The plight of the Jewish people extends up through the present day, with one of the most significant events in History being accomplished May 14th 1948: the rebirth of the nation Israel. David Ben-Gurion declared in a quote from Ezekiel, "Can a nation be born in an instant at the stroke of a pen?" And indeed, this is exactly what happened. But the part we are interested in rests in the events around the time of Yeshua.

People do not comprehend the complexities of the world in and around Judea during the time of Yeshua. The Romans controlled the world at that time, but, other factions still were vying for power. Inside the Roman Senate the political climate was worse than the external enemies they were fighting. Political power was played out by killing those perceived to be a threat to the emperors' power base; not even those within their own families were safe.

The Jewish people were a constant thorn in the side of the Romans. Jews refused to be ruled by a foreign government and pagan practices. Rome assimilated the Greek culture Alexander the Great had enforced across the known world. For several hundred years these pagan cultures had attempted to assimilate God's chosen people.

Judea was at the cross-roads of this hostile environment. It was only through divine providence and the tenacity God instilled in them, that they were able to survive as a people. Herod the Great created a dynasty at the time of Yeshua, ruling over all Judea. He also surrounded the Temple with High Priests and Sanhedrin that he could influence; much to the peoples' displeasure. These religious leaders controlled activities in the Temple; thus maintaining some semblance of power.

Yeshua was perceived as a serious threat to the power base of Temple, and to Roman authority. This was not about following God's commandments or seeking His counsel. The Temple leadership was corrupt to the core; leaving the people to languish in poverty, taxation, injustice, and inequality. As a whole, they were still shortsighted and selfish; refusing to look at the real consequences of their actions. They ignored the signs and the writings of the prophets, and yet God held them accountable for their actions. As the leadership goes, so goes the people.

We, as a people of God, have to realize that God is just; the consequences of our actions are real and permanent.

After Yeshua's ascension into heaven, Judea was in complete chaos. Small Jewish revolts were taking place, Synagogues were being destroyed or taken over throughout the land and in Jerusalem itself complete anarchy prevailed several times until its final destruction.

It is clear at this time Roman law and the prevailing opinion viewed the "followers of the way" as just another sect of Judaism. They viewed all of these sects of Judaism as being one body with internal conflicts. It is equally clear, in these early predominantly Jewish times that the distinction between believers and the other sects of Judaism came from the internal conflict in the synagogue itself. Part of this conflict was theological in nature, and part of it was similar as to what took place in the Temple i.e. the people in authority were not going to submit to the Apostles or the testimony they provided. This wedge was being driven between them.

All these things were happening together predominantly in the same time period:

- The people of the nations (the gentiles) were becoming Christians.
- The gentiles quickly outnumbered the Jewish believers; even surpassing the total Jewish population.
- Roman Emperors were passing many laws against the Jewish people, death sentences were common.
- Roman government was still actively at war with many factions of the Jewish people.
- Rabbi Akkiva (best known Rabbi at the time) declared Simon Bar Kokvah as the Messiah; this was the final element separating the believers in "the Way" from other sects of Judaism.
- Jews were being displaced from their homeland and other areas; moving from place to place seeking refuge from the persecution all over the Roman Empire.
- The new Christians were from a pagan culture. Old traditions are hard to get away from, especially when you still live in the culture. These new Christians viewed their faith from this background and influence.
- Judaism was foreign and unheard of to these people. They only had negative imagery and negative information about how bad these people were, after being at war with them for generations.
- The new Christians were from a pagan religious culture.
 - Worshipping the gods of your ancestors was required by law.
 - You were identified by the gods of your ancestors.
- Sunday worship.
 - In the Roman world, Sunday was the only day away from work. Sunday was, "The venerated day of the SUN."
 - Four sects of sun worship were predominant in the Roman culture.
- There were laws against Jews proselyting. Breaking these laws was punishable by death.
- There were laws against Christians following any Jewish customs or associating with Jews; again punishable by death.
- No protection was given to the Christian who abandoned the gods of his ancestors.
 - Emperor worship was mandatory; upon death.

- Again no exemption to follow Jewish customs.
- Depending on the Emperor sometimes these laws would be less strict and sometimes actual protection was given to the Jewish people.
- Following “God’s appointed times” was dangerous:
 - The most obvious way to distinguish a gentile convert to Christianity was if that individual followed the feasts of Israel or worshiped on the Sabbath, this lead to the conclusion the person was secretly sympathizing with the Jews or converting to Judaism.
 - Someone in the typical Roman culture performing anything Jewish stood out like a sore thumb.
- Jews still congregated in their own communities.
 - These Jews in the diaspora had to work together. Between persecution and their way of life they had no choice.
 - Their way of life was totally foreign to those around them.
- Jews in the diaspora have always been known for owning their own businesses and performing financial matters in the community they live.
 - This is out of necessity.
 - It is completely impossible to carry on a Biblical lifestyle and work for someone steeped in pagan tradition and culture. Two fundamental aspects demonstrate this:
 - The Sabbath: The Roman and Greek Empires worshipped on Sunday. No provision for Shabbat.
 - Feast Days fall on any day of the week, depending upon the phase of the moon. No provision was normal in a pagan culture for these days off.

Most of the bishops we call Church Fathers spiritualized the scriptures as allegory. They clearly taught the doctrine that God had abandoned Israel and the church had replaced her. The Jews were eternally condemned. Quite frankly most church fathers were either tolerated or utterly condemned, depending on their stance relating to Israel and the Old Testament Scriptures.

Conclusion

All things considered, the result we have seen in the church is not surprising. Realizing again the events that occurred during the first century were happening essentially at the same time, a wall of separation was being created between the Jewish people and the church, each one viewing the other as a different religion. The Jews hardened their position and excluded any Christian teaching. The Christians hardened their position also, excluding any Jewish teaching.

Messianic Judaism is the tool God is using to tear down this wall of separation, Messianic Judaism functions as an intermediary between the two branches: it is reconciling the church back into its roots and it is reconciling Judaism back into the fullness of the branches and the recognition of the Messiah.

As we progress through this series, we will look at these foundations of the faith.