

# A simple catechism on the Jewish Root error

## **Introduction**

This paper is being written to provide a simple critique of the Jewish (or Hebrew) Root Movement which is gaining widespread support amongst evangelicals. It will follow a question and answer format and will strive to be as simple as possible in dealing with every major issue involved. To follow up information on issues raised in this paper which we do not have space to deal with (e.g. Dispensationalism or Arminianism) please visit the website mentioned at the end of this paper.

## **General principles**

### **What is heresy?**

Heresy is following after a lie instead of Biblical truth. It is choosing to follow unorthodox teachings.

### **What is idolatry?**

Idolatry is following after a substitute for God. It is denying God his place and giving priority to something else. It is admiration, love and reverence for something above God.

### **What is blasphemy?**

Blasphemy is speaking vainly and disrespectfully of God or doing something that particularly dishonours God. It is speaking or behaving sacrilegiously.

### **What is the Jewish Root Movement?**

The Jewish Root Movement is a modern cultic trend which is founded in Dispensationalism.

### *What is Dispensationalism?*

Dispensational teaching is a modern form of eschatology that is a variant of ancient premillennialism. It arose in a heretical Victorian church, around 1830 onwards, based on the twin formulations of old Jesuit ideas and the occult ramblings of a young Scottish girl and was then promoted by the early Brethren Movement. The key foundation of Dispensationalism is the split in God's purposes between Israel and the church. While there are other distinctives, the most important is the stress on fleshly Israel being the people of God and the church being only an afterthought and stop-gap until the kingdom of Israel is established on earth in a millennium. None of this has any Biblical basis at all.

Dispensationalism is split into many camps; some groups would strongly contradict the key teachings of others. Thus some Dispensationalist theologians (such as Lewis Sperry Chafer) would not support the Jewish Root Movement placing the focus on Israel into a proposed millennium and not today since it is the church dispensation of grace. So these would condemn any focus upon Israel and Jewish forms in preaching, theology and church practice, insisting that Jews are saved in the same way as Gentiles and adopt the same principles of grace as Gentiles. However, many other Dispensationalists support Jewish Root ideas.

*Are there other distinctives of the Jewish Root Movement?*

A foundational plank of the Jewish Root Movement is that its Gospel is Arminian. Its teachings are generally very critical of Calvinism. Many, if not all, in the Jewish Root Movement are also Charismatic in church practice.

*What is its chief characteristic?*

The Jewish Root Movement affirms the importance of the Jews, Israel and Judaism as being the foundation of Christianity. It avers that the church, and Christians, will only prosper as they focus upon Israel, pray for Israel, support Israel, and approach religion with a Jewish mindset. It generally emphasises the Old Testament above the New Testament and claims that the New Covenant is totally Jewish.

*Is it a unified movement?*

There are many variations within the Jewish Root Movement (as there are within Dispensationalism); there is also confusion between this and the older Messianic Judaism in America. The Jewish Root Movement is more about Christians adopting Jewish ideas and background within their evangelical experience. This involves some evangelical Jews (especially in the leadership of the movement) but mostly Gentile Christians who seek to be more Jewish. Messianic Judaism is more to do with Jews who have believed in Christ as Messiah but who wish to stay Jewish in outlook. Thus there is a great deal of confusion and variety evidenced in Internet articles on this.

Some Jewish Root teachers are very extreme and endorse changing personal first names to Jewish equivalents, meeting on Friday night or Saturday morning and even practising circumcision. Some even deny that the NT is inspired and decry it as a pagan or Roman Catholic invention; worse still there are even some who deny the divinity of Christ, saying that he was just a reforming Jewish rabbi. Many give Jewish names to church (e.g. 'synagogue' or Jewish names) and church leaders are called rabbis. This principle also applies to Biblical characters; thus Jesus is always called 'Yeshua' or 'Y'shua, and Paul is called by some, 'Rabbi Sha'ul'. Like superstitious Jews of old (who were afraid of profaning God's name and never wrote it down in case they stepped on it) the name of God is abbreviated to 'G-d' as a mark of reverence. Most followers will use Jewish cultural idioms in day-to-day practice, such as using 'shalom' as a greeting, and many celebrate important Jewish feasts, especially the Passover.

The movement has many names following the many variants of teaching and practice. These include: Jewish Root Movement, Hebrew Root Movement, Messianic Christianity, Nazarene Judaism and Christian Zionism. The leaders within these groups are sometimes openly opposed to each other. Some leaders are more moderate and respected while other preachers have evidenced wild and unrestrained tendencies to vilification and slander. Some groups simply seek to promote the support of Israel and prayer for Jewish conversions (such as 'Prayer For Israel'), while others are crusaders who want to change the whole mindset of church and theology (such as Steve Maltz and Chris Hill). Some (such as Jacob Prasch) have also issued wild and unfounded attacks on Calvinists in history, such as the Reformers, Puritans and American Pilgrim Fathers.

*What are some of the Christian precursors of this movement?*

In America, where this movement (as most others) started there have been historical churches that have favoured Jewish culture and adopted certain Jewish features. Two examples of this are the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and the Church of God Jerusalem Acres (CGJA).

The WCG was founded by Herbert Armstrong (hence 'Armstrongism') and was a Christian sabbatarian sect; that is it met on Saturday; it also strongly emphasised the OT over the NT and prescribed Jewish dietary laws. It was also anti-Trinitarian. It is one of the churches that adhered to British Israelism (i.e. Britain arose from the ten lost tribes). The WCG also practised the annual Jewish feasts, rejected Christian holidays (such as Christmas) due to their pagan origins and denied medical practice. A further point in common with Jewish Root ministries was Armstrong's claim to forgotten understanding of obscure Biblical analogies and prophecies. Members felt (as in Jewish Root circles) privy to special revelation unknown outside their circle – thus it pandered to human pride. This material dried up when Armstrong died in 1986 and contributed to the fragmentation of the sect (some members tried to re-establish it on more evangelical principles). The break-up, in recent years, of the WCG provided the impetus for large numbers of ex-members to drift into Jewish Root churches; hence the rapid growth in the last two decades.

The CGJA is one of the many offshoots of the original Church of God, a Pentecostal church started by RG Spurling in 1886. AJ Tomlinson became the leader in 1903, by which time the church had experienced tongues for some time (since 1896, predating Parham's Topeka revival). This important Pentecostal church split into numerous others over time, including the Church of God of Prophecy with Tomlinson as its head in 1923. The CGJA began with Grady R Kent, who was originally a minister in Tomlinson's church. He was called to resign in 1957 after claiming to be in the spirit and power of John the Revelator. By 1962 Kent was preoccupied with Jewish things and the result was called 'NT Judaism', e.g. following the dietary laws, meeting on Saturday, observing Jewish festivals, using the Jewish calendar and Jewish names etc. After his death in 1964 many expected him to be resurrected. He was not and several tried to hold the leadership until 1980, but the church began to fragment after that time and many members appear to have joined the Jewish Root Movement.

Note that many joining the Jewish Root Movement came from heretical origins.

### **What is the chief problem with the Jewish Root Movement?**

The chief problem is that it distracts believers away from centring on Christ and focuses their attention on Jewish things. It uses false teaching to establish this, misinterpreting the Bible in many ways and often re-interpreting history as well. As such it is guilty of heresy, idolatry, lies and blasphemy. Such teaching brings weak and gullible believers into bondage, as Paul warned in Galatians.

As well as thinking in Jewish ways, some groups have gone much farther, such as making sectarian divisions in the church:

Some messianic fellowships have a two-tier membership structure, with Jew and Gentile treated differently and a Gentile never allowed into full membership.<sup>1</sup>

Others relinquish all forms of Biblical Christianity altogether in favour of a false religion,

I have been to such fellowships where Gentiles have worn skullcaps and prayer shawls, speak Yiddish and declare, in their testimony, that Messianic Judaism (rather than Jesus) has saved them!<sup>2</sup>

Jewish Roots is, at best, syncretism - adapting superficial, fleshly, earthly factors to Biblical Christianity; at worst it is blasphemous idolatry.

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, Saffron Planet (2009), p180.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p179. Maltz does not condone this.

## Key teachings of the Jewish Root Movement

### Israel is the root of the church

*What is this based upon?*

It is based upon misinterpreting Paul's argument in Romans 11. For example, '*Romans 11 tells us that the invisible root of the church is Israel.*'<sup>3</sup>

*What is their argument?*

The root or foundation of the church is Israel and the Gentile church has merely been grafted on to this like a branch on a tree; the important thing is Israel.

*Is this true?*

No, not at all. It only has a superficial application in that the culture of ancient Israel is the setting in which God's purposes were placed. But God's purposes are spiritual and not earthly.

*What is Paul's argument?*

Firstly, his argument in context is about predestination and not Israel in particular. This line of argument began in chapter 9 and continues to the end of chapter 11. It is the culmination of Paul's exposition of the Gospel. This began with sin, guilt and punishment in chapter 1-3; continuing with justification by faith from chapter 3-5; sanctification from chapter 6-8; victory and glorification in chapter 8. It finalises in predestination and election summing all this doctrine up in chapters 9-11 before he then works this out in practical terms from chapter 12-16.

Paul cannot be made to contradict himself and the Jewish Root interpretation contradicts what Paul said earlier about Jews in chapter 2:

Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfils the law, judge you who, *even with your written code* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; but *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. Rm 2:26-29

This hardly needs any comment, being blatantly obvious. He says that God is not interested in the material, outward form of being Jewish but is concerned only with the heart. Earthly Jewishness has no validity to God any more after the cross, but only a changed heart. Note what Paul categorically says, '**he is not a Jew who is one outwardly**'.

Paul is being sarcastic here. Judah (from which the word Jew derives) means 'praise' (Gen. 29:35; 49:8) and a true Jew in God's eyes, not only praises God properly, but is also praised by God. The praise of men is useless; it is what God praises that counts. God does not praise or value the external form (fleshly Jewishness) but the changed heart (what is in Christ). It matters nothing what men say being a Jew is (and there are many various definitions); what God says is what counts. According to Paul, God is looking for men who are: inwardly righteous, have circumcised hearts (that is have died with Christ and put off the old nature), are spiritual people and are praised by God. In this Paul follows the words of God through Samuel that God only looks on the hearts of men and not external circumstances, '**For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart**' (1 Sam 16:7).

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<sup>3</sup> Jacob Prasch, *Moriel Prayer and Newsletter*, Winter, 1996-7, p1.

So Paul completely jettisons the whole notion of any spiritual value in external, national, fleshly Jewishness early in his letter. Can it then make sense that he later on says that the entire basis and foundation of Christianity is national Israel?

*What does Romans 11 teach in this connection?*

There are three components to Paul's figurative image: the root of the tree, the tree itself and the branches of the tree, some of which were grafted in and others which were cut off. If Israel is the root, then it cannot be the tree or the branches. However, Jewish Root teachers want the root, the tree and the branches to be national Israel. Their argument is already fallacious before we examine the passage properly.

The line of Paul's argument in chapter 11 is as follows:

- Background in chapter 9: Paul begins with the election of Jacob and the passing by of Esau (Rm 9:9ff). Paul explains that being a fleshly Jew is of no value without faith (Rm 9:6-7); faith is the expression of election, only the elect have faith. Esau (a Jew) had no faith and was not elect, and was not loved by God (Rm 9:13). All this points to the sovereignty of God in salvation (Rm 9:16), as the potter illustration makes clear. In this sovereignty, God calls other nations, not just Jews (Rm 9:24) and only a part of Israel will be saved (Rm 9:27). The 'visible' basis of salvation is shown to be faith (Rm 9:32) which is a gift from God (Eph 2:8-10) given to the elect. The key problem with the Jews was to pursue salvation by works (Rm 9:32-33, 10:2-4), as such she is a lesson to people of all nations.
- Background in chapter 10: Paul elucidates this theme of justification by faith in chapter 10 and adds that preaching the Gospel is vital for this occur.
- Chapter 11: verse 1-2: God has not rejected all Jews. Having shown the condemnation that is on Israel for sin and particularly for killing the Lord (which the apostles mention several times) one could imagine that all Jews were cut off. Paul argues that this is not so.
- Verse 5: Salvation for Jews is only for a remnant. This is not surprising as it was also the case in the Old Testament.
- Verse 5-6: this salvation is only by grace and not by works. Any Jewish religious work has no value at all, whether it is celebrating a feast, following the law or pleading a special case on the basis of being Jewish.
- Verse 7: The basis of salvation is calling, being chosen, being elect. Those who are not elect are hardened. This is the continuation of Paul's argument begun in chapter 9. The world is not separated into Jew and Gentile but into those who are called and those who are hardened, i.e. the elect and the reprobate.
- Verse 11-12: By the apostasy of the Jews salvation emerged. That is, it was through the rejection of Christ as Messiah that Jews delivered Christ up for execution, and through the cross atonement was made for the elect. This salvation particularly affected the Gentiles. The book of Acts demonstrates what Paul refers to; the majority of the Jews rejected the Gospel and persecuted the church; but a small minority was saved.
- Verse 12-16: if the sin of the Jews led to salvation, the salvation of Jews will be blessed. Their rejection of Christ led to reconciliation of men with God, and their acceptance of Christ in conversion will result in resurrection power (c.f. Paul in Phil 3).
- Verse 17: Some of the branches of the tree were broken off (the majority of Jews to this day) and Gentiles were grafted in. What is this tree? It is Christ, the fulness of salvation. Gentiles were grafted into Christ and thus saved. The rich root of the olive tree (the people of God) is the faith of Abraham - the root of faith and the first to be declared justified by faith. This refers back to Paul's earlier teaching on Abraham and justification being the root to salvation. The root which supports the tree is what Abraham represents, faith and calling resulting in justification.

- Verse 20-22: Jews were broken off from the tree of salvation in Christ because of their unbelief. Gentiles were grafted in because of their faith. Those who continue in faith (i.e. genuine believers) will continue in God's kindness but superficial Christians will be cut off from the tree.
- Verse 23-24: Jews who exercise faith will be grafted back in. That is, Jews who believe the Gospel will be saved because of faith in Christ.
- Verse 25: the hardening of Israel in rejection of Christ and condemnation is partial just as it was in the Old Testament. Not all Jews are hardened and condemned, some are saved. Salvation first appeared to Jews and then spread to the world; when all the elect Gentiles are saved, then all Israel will be saved. That is not fleshly Israel (remember Paul's teaching in chapter 2) but all the elect of God. 'Israel' here stands as a type of all God's people.

#### *What is all this saying?*

- There is no salvation outside the calling of God revealed in giving faith to the elect resulting in justification. (Remember Paul spent two chapters earlier speaking about this and c9-11 relates predestination to justification).
- The figurative root of this is Abraham who is a type of the calling of God and faith resulting in justification (Isa 51:1-2). [Note that Abraham was not a Jew, neither had he been circumcised, when he was called.]
- The tree is the flowering of what comes from the root. Faith is the foundation and all that grows from faith is the tree, i.e. the church, the olive tree, all the elect in Christ, the body of Christ. In the OT this was the remnant of Israel but after the cross is the elect from all nations.
- The branches are what grows on the tree, the specific elect people. Jews who were called to be on this tree under the old covenant but who had no faith were cut off and hardened for condemnation. That is, they were externally called to be God's people but had no real faith and were cut off from being God's people. Gentiles were not originally called to be God's people under the old covenant; only Israel was chosen amongst the nations. But after the cross, Gentiles are called to be part of the tree in Christ. They were grafted in while most Jews were cut off. The tree is all those who have faith, all the elect (Jew or Gentile), the church in Christ.
- Fleshly Jews come to the fulness of their original calling and the love of God shown to them as a nation under the old covenant, by having faith and being grafted back into the tree and this results in much blessing.

#### *What is the orthodox interpretation of Romans 11?*

The sound interpretation throughout all church history, until recent times, was essentially as I have described above. There have been some who saw in this chapter a revival amongst the world's Jews at the end of time, i.e. this was the fulness Paul refers to (there is some scope for this idea). The Jewish Root interpretation is very recent, novel, extreme and without exegetical support. No sound evangelical, historic commentary takes such a view, although some Dispensational Brethren writers had some similar thoughts, though not as radical.

To emphasise that fleshly Israel is not in view, Paul stated in chapter 9,

For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. Rm 9:6-8

Indeed, Paul says that national Israel is the enemy of the people of God (Rm 11:28).

Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers.

Fleshly Jews are God's enemies but saved (elect) Jews are beloved by God (as are all the elect).

*What is the danger of the Jewish Root interpretation?*

The danger is to take attention away from Christ, which is idolatry. Paul always focuses on the covenant promise being in Christ, the Seed of Abraham and the fulfilment of all the Old Covenant promises. The tree of salvation is Christ and all those in him. Instead of this, Jewish Root teachers focus attention upon Israel emphasising that it is the root that supports the church; the believer is thus taught to concentrate upon a national country instead of Christ.

For Paul the foundation of salvation is Christ and nothing else:

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 3:11

Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.' Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,' and 'A stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.' They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 1 Pt 2:6-8

Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 'This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Acts 4:10-11

Abraham is considered to be the root in Paul's analogy because he placed his faith in Christ (Jn 8:56). The root is firstly (in the immediate context) referring to Abraham's faith but secondarily (in the larger context) as referring to Christ himself, the source of faith. To teach that the root or foundation of salvation is something other than Christ (i.e. Israel) is blasphemy. The first outworking of salvation is that God chooses his own people in Christ in eternity – the elect (Eph 1:4). From this root in Christ his people are called in time and given faith to believe in Christ as Saviour; Abraham is the type of this to illustrate calling and faith. The root of salvation proper is Christ, but the root of salvation being actually worked out in people is calling, faith and justification – which is Paul's point.

Using a different analogy, Paul explains in Romans 8:30 that calling in Christ is the first link in the chain of salvation. The point is the same. Paul's purpose in Romans 11 is to teach about election and calling, leading to justification, by referring to Israel as the symbolic type of this in the OT. His purpose is to teach about election and its results.

*What is another problem with the ethnic argument?*

Jewish Root teachers aver that natural Israel is in Paul's mind here; that is ethnic Jews who are descended from Abraham. However, if it is fleshly descendants of Abraham that are in view then this must also include Arabs who are descended from Abraham via Ishmael. If teachers wish to avoid this by saying that it is only descendants via Isaac, then according to Paul's definition in Galatians, then this includes Gentile Christians as well. Jewish Root teachers are completely flummoxed.

*What about Rm 11:26?*

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved. Rm 11:26-27a

‘So’ is an adverb of manner not of time, meaning ‘in this way’. There is no reference to a future millennial Jewish kingdom at all here, nor any comment on the ‘times of the Gentiles’ (Lk 21:24). The fulness of the Jewish remnant will be saved in the same way as the fulness of the Gentile elect.

### **An emphasis upon Jewish culture**

*How is this expressed?*

What Jewish Root teachers seek to affirm is the continuing relevance, nay importance, of being Jewish in the flesh. Working out Dispensational principles they see earthly Jewishness as being in the blessing of God never to be withdrawn. Thus Jews are special and national Israel is chief in God’s purposes even in its current sinful state.

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes in his book *Hebrew Christianity*,

What then is a Hebrew Christian? He is a Jew who believes that Jesus Christ is his Messiah. He must acknowledge that he is both a Jew and a Christian. ... If a Jew accepts baptism solely to lose his identity as a Jew, he is by no means to be considered a Hebrew Christian; he is a renegade, a traitor, and an apostate. A Hebrew Christian is proud of his Jewishness. [p12-13]

The homeland for the Hebrew Christian is the land of Israel, and this is where his primary loyalty should be. [p28]

The Hebrew Christian ... are [sic] part of Israel and the Jewish people. Their Jewishness is distinct. [p31]

This affirmation of Jewishness a serious error. The word of God declares that all believers are one in Christ where Jewishness no longer prevails at all,

**For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Gal 3:27-28

The whole point of salvation is that God creates a new race in Christ the Firstborn. Thus all believers are a ‘new creation’ (2 Cor 5:17). This is basic theology. All men in Adam are sinners, Jews and Gentiles included. In salvation God makes a new race that is not founded in Adam but in Christ, thus no earthly distinctives operate any more. For a true Christian to affirm Jewishness (or any other culture) is a denial of the work of God and blasphemy against Christ. It seeks to make man more important than Christ and the state of Israel more important than the kingdom of God.

The Christian is not part of this world anymore, he is a citizen of heaven and part of a spiritual kingdom (Jn 18:36). Believers are dead to the world (Gal 6:14). To affirm loyalty to an earthly and sinful state is a denial of Scripture and a dishonouring of Christ.

Christians who do not move past this sort of error will never develop as disciples at all but will grow in bondage to the forms of the world.

*Can you give me a specific example?*

One form of Jewish culture brought into church worship is Jewish folk dancing.

Another expression of our worship is through dance. There is one form of Jewish dance that has made great inroads into churches in recent years and that is the Davidic dance, patterned on Israeli folk dances ... the dances can range from the slow and devotional to the exuberantly joyful.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Steve Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p136.



Now I have elsewhere explained that dancing is not acceptable in Christian worship; indeed this form of fleshly self-expression is to be condemned. We cannot go into all the arguments why this is true here; suffice to say that dancing, as an external Old Covenant form, is excluded from Christian worship along with all the other Old Covenant forms. Indeed, worship after the cross must only be in the Spirit and truth. Externals and fleshly expressions are to be avoided.

What is sad is that some people who would reject unrestrained Charismatic free-form dancing embrace this sort of dancing because it is Jewish. The fact is that being Jewish has nothing to do with anything in worship; only what is of the new creation, that which is spiritual, that which is in Christ, is acceptable. Being of Jewish origins does not make dancing more acceptable in Christian worship; it is a fleshly and worldly form of self-expression like all other forms of dancing.

#### *What about circumcision?*

Some Jewish Root teachers insist that Gentile believers should be circumcised, which is contrary to the declaration of the Jerusalem synod in Acts 15. Others just insist that Hebrew Christians should be circumcised; Fruchtenbaum is a case in point:

It is my conviction that Hebrew Christians should have their sons circumcised on the eighth day.<sup>5</sup>

This is establishing a sacrament with no Biblical sanction to do so. The Law of Moses is now cancelled and believers are under the Law of Christ in the New Covenant (Heb 8:13; Gal 6:2). Why stop at circumcision? Why not offer blood sacrifices and establish a priesthood as well? All these things are now finished since Christ is the fulfilment of all that operated in the shadows of the old covenant. Circumcision is fulfilled in the circumcision of the heart (Col 2:11). To go back to the beggarly elements of before is a great sin (Gal 4:9-11). Paul warns Christians to avoid those of the circumcision party (Phil 3:2-3).

Fruchtenbaum is guilty of many serious errors of teaching and yet is considered by many as a stable commentator on these things. When a person becomes a believer in Christ, all his previous worldly status is eradicated and he is a new creation. If he then has children he should bring them up as Christ tells us to do, which does not include circumcision.

#### *What is the central teaching of the New Testament on these matters?*

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Col 3:1-3

To summarise:

- Look above not below.
- Look to heaven not earth.
- Look to spiritual things not earthly, fleshly or worldly things.
- Look to Christ and not something else.
- Our past life, with all its culture, is dead and our life is now hidden in Christ in God.

#### *What about the focus on Hebrew names and terms?*

Most Jewish Root teachers adopt Jewish terminology for the names of God, Jesus and other religious matters. As we have already noted, the abbreviated word G-d is used out of superstition and Jesus is called 'Yeshua' or 'Y'shua HaMashiach' ('Jesus the Messiah'). Some refer to God as 'Yahveh' instead of the term 'God'. In severe cases people change their names to Jewish equivalents, such as 'Miriam' for 'Mary', while some adopt a new

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<sup>5</sup> *Hebrew Christianity*, Ariel Press (1983), p29.

name such as 'David' for a non-Jewish name like 'Terry'. Greetings such as 'shalom' are used instead of 'hello' and 'goodbye'. In general it is all part of trying to enforce a cultural shift towards Jewishness, which we have already explained, is not required by God and only leads to deception and distraction from Christ.

Many Messianic Jews (Jewish Christians) now refuse to take the name 'Christian' in preference for identifying with Jews. *'I did not say that I would not want to be considered "Christian" amongst others in the Body of Messiah. I only said that with regard to our own people, the Jews, we cannot afford this association'*.<sup>6</sup> Messianic Jews are now unable to be chaplains in the US Navy because they refused to wear the sign of the cross on their uniform. Thus the clear allegiance of US Messianic Jews is with Israel and not Jesus.

To take just the name of 'Jesus Christ', which Jewish Root advocates do not want us to use, first note that this name appears in the original Greek text of the New Testament 176 times (Ihhsou/ Cristou/ or 'Iesou Christou'). Also note that Scripture states:

And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ. 1 Jn 3:23

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. Acts 16:31

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. Jn 17:3

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rm 5:1

To God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen. Rm 16:27

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 2:2

We could add scores more important references, but this will suffice.

*What are some examples of introducing Jewish practices into the church?*

What begins with trusting in extra-Biblical revelation, such as in the Talmud, rabbinic writings or Midrash, soon becomes sacramentalism which is trusting in material objects or actions of men to impart grace. Examples of Jewish sacramentalism in Charismatic churches today include the following: being circumcised; celebrating Jewish feasts; installing a Jewish altar of incense to aid prayer and blowing a ram's horn (shofar) to initiate revival.

*How is this related to other church movements?*

A Charismatic 'prophecy' by Dean Cozzens, published by *The Open Church Ministries* of Colorado Springs in 1997, states that the Jewish Root Movement is the last of a series of movements designed to change the direction of the church. The previous movements being the Pentecostal, the Charismatic and Word of Faith. The chief impetus of the Jewish Root Movement is to shift the emphasis from Greek thinking and living to Hebrew culture. Indeed, these movements have shifted the church – each one in a wrong direction on the basis of false teaching and aberrations of practice. The Jewish Root Movement is just one of a long line of unbiblical heresies designed by the devil to deceive the church and distract it from Christ.

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<sup>6</sup> Uri Marcus, Re: A Vote For "Jesus"?, 23 Oct. 1997, Nehemiah Trustees Covenant Fund.

## Christianity is Hebrew?

*Is this true?*

No, not at all. Christianity was never Hebrew and never Gentile; it is a spiritual matter of new birth in a new race of people in Christ in God. Christianity is not of this world and not of Adam. It is heavenly.

Against this Fruchtenbaum says,

In the early period (A.D 30–68) Christianity was Hebrew, and for all practical purposes it was a sect within Judaism. ... The Gentile believers were called Christians (Acts 11:29), but the Jewish believers were called Nazarenes (Acts 24:5).<sup>7</sup>

This is an absolute lie and a misrepresentation of Scripture. The earliest converts were Jews but when they were saved they no longer became Jews but Christians, those who are in Christ. The church was once only in Scripture called 'Nazarenes' but this was by an unbeliever, a Jew working for the enemies of Christ - the chief priests; it was a sneer term previously applied to Jesus. In this case it was particularly applied to Paul regarding his work with Gentiles not Jews.

The term 'Christian' was first applied to disciples in Antioch in Acts 11:26. This church contained many Jews and was not exclusively of Gentile origin; the chief leaders (Paul and Barnabus) were Jews. Furthermore, the Jerusalem church contained many Hellenists (Greeks; Acts 6:1). Stephen, one of the greatest ever Christian leaders, whose sermon occupies a chapter of Acts, was a leader of the Hellenists. Hellenists usually only spoke Greek while many Jewish Christians spoke both Greek and Aramaic (Syrian). No one, or at least very few, in ordinary society spoke Hebrew or wrote in it.<sup>8</sup> While some Hellenists were pilgrim visitors from abroad, many were Palestinians who lived in Jerusalem in the Lower City, especially the City of David. The Jerusalem church was pluralistic.<sup>9</sup>

If Christianity was a sect within Judaism then it would have been accepted with the dozen or so other sects. But it was hounded and persecuted by the Jews. The book of Acts is one long narrative of Jewish persecution of the church. The entire thesis of Fruchtenbaum is a lie.

*But did not Paul celebrate his Jewishness?*

No he did not; in fact he repudiated it as fleshly rubbish.

Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. Phil 3:4–10

In fact the word 'rubbish' is the Greek word 'excrement'. While Jewish Root false teachers try to make Paul affirm his Jewishness and even call him rabbi Sha'ul (e.g. Prasch), the Bible's revelation is that Paul called his Jewish roots 'dung'.

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<sup>7</sup> *Hebrew Christianity*, op. cit., p35, 37.

<sup>8</sup> See David A Fiensy, *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting; Vol 4 Palestinian Setting*, Ed. Richard Bauckham, Paternoster (1995), p234-235.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

It is significant that the risen Christ (not Jesus on earth) appeared to Paul from heaven outside of Jerusalem, completely independent of the other apostles and apart from all forms of Judaism in order to be the chief teaching apostle of all believers. The Jewish disciples that Christ spent three years teaching wrote little of the letters and only two of the Gospels. The Lord seemed to emphasise that Christianity is not Jewish but heavenly and universal.

### **Jewish believers can (must?) keep the Law of Moses**

*Who teaches this?*

Very many Jewish Root teachers, for instance, Fruchtenbaum again,

The believer in Christ is free of the Law of Moses. He is also free to keep parts of the Law of Moses if he so desires.<sup>10</sup>

Very many other leaders insist upon Gentile Christians keeping the whole Torah (Five books of Moses); that is the whole Old Covenant Jewish law.

Against this Paul states that to do this is to be in bondage to the law:

And *this occurred* because of false brethren [Judaizers] secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage).

Gal 2:4

But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have laboured for you in vain. Gal 4:9-11

... which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar -- for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. Gal 4:24-25

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Gal 5:1

The reason is that if you wish to keep part of the law, you must keep all of it or be guilty of transgression (Jam 2:10). Fruchtenbaum's teaching is riddled with error upon error.

Christ is the end and fulfilment of the Law of Moses and brings in the New Covenant whereby the Spirit indwelling us ensures that we follow the Law of Christ which is far better and more stringent than Mosaic Law, being internal and not external. Even thoughts are captured and dealt with by this law but the Mosaic Law has no power to bring life but only to condemn and bring death (2 Cor 3:7).

*Does this cancellation of the Mosaic Law include the feasts?*

Yes it does. The feasts are an integral part of Mosaic Law and cannot be extricated from it. They are cancelled along with sacrifices, mediatorial priests and temples. Christianity is not based on external rituals but on spirit and truth. Jewish Root teachers deny this, such as Fruchtenbaum:

There are certain advantages for a Hebrew Christian in keeping some or all of the Feasts. First, they are good opportunities to share the faith with unbelieving Jewish people, showing them how the particular Feast points to the Messiahship of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

Steve Maltz is another, of many, who support celebrating the Passover and other feasts and give instructions on it, including asking non-Christian Jews to participate:

<sup>10</sup> *Hebrew Christianity*, op. cit., p88.

<sup>11</sup> *Hebrew Christianity*, op. cit., p107.

We should celebrate the festivals of the Lord ...All those who partake in these festivals will be blessed.<sup>12</sup>

This is yet another lie. Paul has explained that the law is cancelled in all its forms and that celebrating feasts only bring people into bondage (Gal 4:9-11). Fruchtenbaum also teaches that the feasts are a useful aid to Jewish evangelism.

Secondly, the Feast presents a good way of identifying ourselves with Jewish people.

This matter of identification is very important as a testimony to the Jewishness of our faith.<sup>13</sup>

Elect Jews do not need some sort of Jewish compromise in order to be saved; they simply need to be confronted with the Gospel, which is the power of God to salvation. People who try to win Jews by this compromised, man-made method are denying to power of God in the simple presentation of the Gospel.

### **It is necessary to go to Hebrew writings and methods in order to fully understand the Bible**

The first step is going back to reading the Bible as a Jewish book, instead of as a Greek one.<sup>14</sup>

#### *What does this mean?*

Many Jewish Root teachers claim that the Bible is insufficient to bring believers into the truth. They insist that Jewish methods of interpretation are required or that Jewish oral and written teaching is necessary to direct the believer into properly understanding Scripture. Differing teachers adopt different standards. Jacob Prasch insists that Midrashic interpretation methods are vital, which essentially enables him to make Scripture say anything he wants it to, being a sort of typological method. Peter Michas and others direct people to Hebrew texts and even Hebrew oral tradition. Prasch refers to the Talmud as authoritative.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Is this true?*

Absolutely not! It is a lie from hell. Paul stated that though the Jews had zeal for God, they had no knowledge of him (Rm 10:1-2). We will learn nothing about God from Jewish writings; only lies.

Firstly, the Bible itself teaches us that it is completely sufficient, of itself, to lead us into all truth in order to live a life of true discipleship:

**From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:15-17**

Note this carefully. The Scriptures alone are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith. They are profitable for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be complete and equipped for every good work. If Scripture alone can make us complete and fit for every good work, we do not need Hebrew commentaries or methods.

<sup>12</sup> Steve Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, Saffron Planet (2009), p105.

<sup>13</sup> *Hebrew Christianity*, op. cit., p176.

<sup>14</sup> Jacob Prasch, *An Explanation of Midrash*.

<sup>15</sup> For example: 'The Talmud tells us there are multiple interpretations [of Scripture].' *An Explanation of Midrash*, <http://www.cw.co.za/moriel/> Rabbis teach that there are at least forty interpretations of every text. This is nonsense and unworkable.

Secondly, Jesus promised to give us the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us into all truth working on the basis of the Scriptures, which the Spirit inspired.

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you. Jn 16:12-15

The many things that the disciples could not bear at that time are the words written by the apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – the New Testament. The apostolic teachings are the final words of Christ to the church. The Holy Spirit indwelling the believer helps him to understand the truth by faith as he sheds light on this word.

With the indwelling Spirit and the Word of God we have everything we need to understand how to live righteously. But God does more.

And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Eph 4:11-13

God gives the church gifts of men to equip the saints for service. These men have gifts which edify (build up) the saints. Apostles are merely missionaries sent from a home church to plant a new one and build up a new flock. Prophets are not like OT prophets, which ceased with John the Baptist, but are men gifted in the word who bring strong exhortations, encouragements, comfort and admonitions that stir people's hearts and invigorate them (1 Cor 14:3). Evangelists are gifted in preaching the Gospel and fishing for men. But most importantly, pastor-teachers are shepherds who have the gift of didactic instruction to teach saints the essentials of the faith to make them wise. They also warn of dangers (like shepherds fighting off wolves) and contend for the faith against deceiving false teachers.

With all these components in place, the church needs nothing from Jewish sources at all. Those false teachers who insist that the church needs Jewish sources are again distracting the saints from God's provision in salvation.

A final note is that the church for nearly 2,000 years managed quite well without a focus upon Jewish things. It produced the greatest theologians, pastors and missionaries that the world has ever known. It did this without Midrash or Hebrew Root ideas. It also did it without the Charismatic versions of supposed supernatural gifts and false teaching. It is a slander on these men sent from God to suggest that they were inadequate. It is a blasphemy against God to suggest that he did not adequately provide for the church until recent times when this Jewish Root teaching was available.

*What is the key Jewish written teaching?*

It is the Talmud, or more properly, the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>16</sup> This document is the basis of modern rabbinic Judaism<sup>17</sup> and it is a grossly wicked and evil book. Rabbis teach that it is

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<sup>16</sup> The Talmud, written over several centuries, is a collection of 63 books in 524 chapters. It is broken down into the Mishna (or Mishnah, oral tradition), the Gemara (commentary on the Mishna; two versions Babylonian and Palestinian – a collection of debates of various sages on the Mishna) and the Midrashim or Midrash (more focused on elaboration of Biblical texts than law). The Mishna (a codification of Jewish law compiled by rabbi Judah the Prince around 200 AD) and Gemara represent the Jerusalem Talmud which was revised in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. and named the 'Babylonian Talmud'. The Gemara is considered to be the most authoritative. The standard complete translation of the Babylonian Talmud is that of Soncino Press, originally done in the 1930s. The Midrash was published by the Soncino Press as 'Midrash Rabbah'.

the Talmud and not the Torah which is the main source of authority for Jews. Modern Judaism is not the same as the Judaism of Moses or even the Judaism at the time of Christ.

The Babylonian Talmud was developed and collated after the destruction of Jerusalem chiefly by the Pharisaic party, i.e. the enemies of Jesus. It was necessary in order to lay down the basis of a new religion (rabbinic Judaism) since historic Judaism could no longer operate after the temple had been destroyed.

The contents of the Talmud contain some of the most evil teachings known to man. It even supports paedophilia and bestiality.<sup>18</sup> It teaches Jews to lie to, deceive, defraud, cheat and even kill Christians. Recent rabbinic books have supported this attack on Christians, saying that even killing Gentile babies is acceptable if they may grow up to be a threat to Israel.

But worst of all the Talmud declares than rabbis can defeat God<sup>19</sup> and contains the foulest blasphemies against Christ ever written. It has far worse things to say about Christ than anything in the Q'uran. I will not repeat these blasphemies here but more information can be found on all these matters, with sources, in my paper, '*Does God love Jews especially*'. In 1242 King Louis IX of France ordered the burning of the Talmud due to its blasphemies against Christ and incitement to deceive. After a Jewish synod in Poland in 1631, many editions of the Talmud have the offending passages expunged and replaced by circles, which rabbis commented upon orally in giving instruction.

Prasch calls the Lord Jesus, Y'eshua ha Nostri, which he gets from the Talmudic, 'Jeschua Hanotsri' – 'Jesus the Nazarene'. Gullible followers of Prasch use a term for Jesus which they think is more accurate and Jewish but, in fact, originates in a book devoted to blaspheming him.

Unlike the Sadducees, who affirmed a closed canon of Scripture (the OT), the Pharisees adhered to the oral law of the scribes and teachers, later rabbis, who interpreted the written Scripture. Over time these oral traditions were given greater authority and led to the Talmud – a collection of rabbinical tracts. In other words, modern Judaism is the adding to Scripture that Jesus condemned; it is the laws of men not God; it is the Pharisaic religion that contended against Christ and the apostles. It is this which Jewish Root teachers now seek to add to Scripture and deceive believers.

### **The New Testament was originally written in Hebrew**

*Is this true?*

Not at all it is a barefaced lie with no supporting evidence. The lingua franca at the time was Greek. Official and commercial documents were written in Greek until Latin superseded it. The outposts of the Roman Empire read and understood Greek. Even the Jews used a Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) and most of the OT quotes in the NT are from the Septuagint. This being the case, why would the apostles suddenly write in Hebrew, especially since most of the letters were written to Gentiles who had no means of understanding it? Jews at that time didn't even speak Hebrew but Aramaic. The Lord's words that are not translated but transliterated in the NT are from Aramaic not Hebrew. Even Matthew's Gospel, which was chiefly written for Jews, was written in Greek.

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<sup>17</sup> 'The modern Jew is the product of the Talmud. ... The Talmud itself accords to the Bible only a secondary place.' Michael Rodkinson (i.e. Rodkinssohn), *Preface to the translation of the Talmud*, Vol. I. p. x. 'There is nothing superior to the Holy Talmud.' *Mizbeach*, cap. V. 'He who transgresses the words of the scribes sins more gravely than the transgressors of the words of the law'. *Sanhedrin* X, 3, f.88b.

<sup>18</sup> *Yebamoth* 59b; *Sanhedrin* 54b, 55b; *Kethuboth* 11b.

<sup>19</sup> 'A rabbi debates God and defeats Him. God admits the rabbi won the debate.' *Baba Mezia* 59b.

Despite this Jewish Root teachers aver:

The New Testament is Hebrew/Aramaic and not Greek or English in origin or thought... Most all of the Judaic writings have been preserved for us and now translated into proper English directly from the Hebrew, as well as explained in true Hebraic manner. [Peter Michas, *Is The New Testament Hebrew/Aramaic or Greek?*]

[The NT] is based on Hebrew and Aramaic rather than Greek manuscripts...the Aramaic text makes much more sense than the Greek text. [James Trimm, *Society for the Advancement of Nazarene Judaism.*]

There is something wrong with our Protestant mentality...[in] reading a Jewish book as if it were a Greek book... The first step is going back to reading the Bible as a Jewish book, instead of as a Greek one. [Jacob Prasch; *Explaining the Midrash*; [www.cw.co.za/moriel/midrash.html](http://www.cw.co.za/moriel/midrash.html)]

The scholarly view is:

The New Testament writings were composed in Greek. [Fitzmeyer, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Dead Sea Scrolls*; p104]

Despite the critical claim that Matthew wrote the gospel in Aramaic, this contention has never been proved. ... The Greek gospel, which is now the Church's heritage, was almost beyond doubt written in Matthew's lifetime. ... but probably by himself. The consensus of critical scholars is that it is not a mere translation but an original composition. [*Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p706, 422]

It is now clear that the Greek of the New Testament ... is just the vernacular *koinē* of the 1st century AD, the *lingua franca* of the Greek-Roman empire, the legacy of Alexander the Great's conquest of the East. This *world-speech* was at bottom the late Attic vernacular with dialectical and provincial influences. It was not a decaying tongue, but a virile speech admirably adapted to the service of the many peoples of the time. [*Int. Standard Bible Ency.*, article 'Language of the New Testament'.]

Adolph Deissmann, ... opened the new era in the knowledge of the language of the New Testament. His *Bibelstudien* (zumeist aus den Papyri und Inschriften zur Geschichte der Sprache, des Schrifttums und der Religion des hellenistischen Judentums und des Urchristentums) appeared in 1895. In this epoch-making volume he proved conclusively from the papyri and the inscriptions that many of the seeming Hebraisms in the Septuagint and the New Testament were common idioms in the vernacular *koinē*. He boldly claimed that the bulk of the Hebraisms were falsely so termed, except in the case of translating Greek from the Hebrew or Aramaic or in "perfect" Hebraisms, genuine Greek usage made more common by reason of similarity to the Semitic idiom. [*Int. Standard Bible Ency.*, article 'Language of the New Testament'.]

## **The Kabbalistic Hebrew sources used by Jewish Root teachers**

### *What is the Kabbalah?*

The Kabbalah (also Kabbala, Kaballa, Cabala, and Cabbalah) is Jewish occultism and magic. It is a Hebrew mystical tradition, which arose in the 12<sup>th</sup> century as an interpretation of the Torah according to secret (occult) knowledge. The major text of the Kabbalah is *The Sepher-ha-Zohar* (the 'book of splendour') written around 1280. Its view of God is Gnostic being revealed in ten emanations down to creation. Kabbalism had a great impact on the modern development in occultism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is now a popular religion amongst celebrities such as Madonna.



Jewish Root teachers falsely claim not only that the Gospels were originally written in Hebrew and that Jesus spoke Hebrew, but that there are Hebrew texts which speak of Christ giving better information.

There was an original Hebrew 'Life of Jesus', from parts of which our canonical Greek Gospel Texts are mere compilations and translations. The individual words of the Greek texts that we have are standard Greek equivalents used to translate Hebrew documents into Greek, therefore we can retranslate back into Hebrew to discover what Jesus really said. Failure to appreciate the Hebraic origins of the Gospels has led to mistranslation, misinterpretation, spiritually damaging error and doctrinal confusion. [David Bivin (Director of the Jerusalem School Of Synoptic Research) & Roy Blizzard, *Understanding The Difficult Words Of Jesus*, (1984).]

The source of this Jewish life history of Jesus is Kabbalistic; it is called the *Toledot Yeshu* (or *Sepher Toldoth Jehoshua* or *Tolodoth Ieschu*). These writings refer to the shocking blasphemies of Christ which appear in the Talmud and develop them into myths. So Mary becomes a hairdresser who was fiancée to a man named Jochanan but was seduced by Joseph Panther (Pandera) and gave birth to Jeschu, who learned magic when he fled to Egypt. It is not only arrant nonsense but is blasphemous and dangerous.

It is interesting that the founder of occult Theosophy, Madam Blavatsky, followed this view of Christ and directly refers to the *Sepher Toldoth Jehoshua*, calling the Lord, 'Jesus Ben Pandera'. Blavatsky claimed that her ascended masters (i.e. spirit guides or demons) affirmed this to be true. An occult magician named Eliphas Levi, who lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, claimed that the *Toledot Yeshu*, thought to originate in the Middle Ages, actually belonged to a much earlier time but was deliberately hidden from Christians.

This is the root of these assertions of Jewish written traditions that are supposed to be earlier and better than the Greek Gospels we have today. It is nothing other than occult mythology and magical nonsense; in other words, totally demonic sources.

Now some assert that traditional Jews do not support the Kabbalah, but this is wrong. The Jewish Encyclopaedia itself states, '*the main ideas of the Zohar find confirmation in the Talmud. ... The Cabala, is not really in opposition to the Talmud ... many Talmudic Jews have supported and contributed to it.*'<sup>20</sup> One writer describes it as, '*the heart and life of Judaism*'.<sup>21</sup> Another, '*The greater number of the most eminent rabbis of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries believed firmly in the sacredness of the Zohar and of the infallibility of its teaching.*'<sup>22</sup>

Following traditional Judaism, some Jewish Root teachers utilise the Kabbalah as a source of information about Christ and the Gospels. Instead of accepting what was inspired by the Holy Spirit, they prefer the revelation of demons manifest in a blasphemous occult document written by men long after the Gospels were laid down in Greek.

## Key doctrinal errors of the Jewish Root Movement

### Background

The essence of the problem is that the Jewish Root Movement seeks to superimpose a Jewishness upon Christianity by pretending that the church has become Gentile and needs to return to its Hebrew origin. We have shown that this is false and that Christianity is spiritual, not earthly. However, in their attempt to do this what the false teachers do is to

<sup>20</sup> Article on 'Cabala'.

<sup>21</sup> Adolphe Franck, *La Kabbale*, p288

<sup>22</sup> P Vulliaud, *La Kabbale Juive: histoire et doctrine*, I. 256, quoting Greenstone, *The Messiah Idea*, p. 229.

impose aspects of Judaism upon Christian doctrine. Thus gradually the key elements of a false religion are imposed upon orthodoxy.

## History

*Why is the Jewish Root Movement a denial of God's work in history?*

God is sovereign. He puts kings in place and then removes them. He sets the boundaries of nations; he raises them up and then overthrows them (Acts 17:26). He controls every aspect of human life: political, social, technological, and cultural. Nothing is outside God's control and there are no accidents in God's plan. God controls all the good things in life and all the bad things as well (Isa 45:7; Amos 3:6; Jer 39:16). Not only does the Bible make this abundantly clear in thousands of places but if it were not so then God could not control the world and we would have no hope for the future. If God is not sovereign of everything then we are finished.

Now Jewish Root teachers, being Arminian in theology, deny this. Arminianism is a form of Semi-Pelagianism<sup>23</sup> that is closely related to Roman Catholicism (another semi-Pelagian religion that strongly influenced James Arminius). Arminianism entered Britain through a conspiracy by Roman Catholic Jesuits to subvert the true Protestant Reformed faith in the time of Archbishop Laud because it is easier to tempt Arminians into Catholicism than Calvinists. The foundation of Arminianism is that man can thwart God and that man has independent free will on earth to do good.

Despite their denial, the Bible declares that God is sovereign over all things, even the hairs on your head (Lk 12:7). This being the case, the finalising of Judaism by the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple by Romans is part of God's sovereign plan for Israel. God ensured that Torah Judaism could not longer operate because the temple, priesthood and offering system were all wiped out. Even if men rebuilt a temple, made new priestly garments and replaced the vessels this would be no good since these must be built under God's strict instructions and certain details are obscure. Copies of the originals are condemned. In any case, only those gifted by the Spirit of God (such as Bezalel) were allowed to make these items. The terrible destruction of Jerusalem was to emphasise that Judaism was finished and that God is now honoured only in Christ. Earthly forms of religion were cancelled and only worship in Spirit and truth is now acceptable (Jn 4:24). Earthly forms of material, sensual worship are condemned.

The destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews from Palestine was under God's sovereign hand in order to demonstrate that Judaism was ended. Jewish Root teachers are trying to reverse God will.

*But what about the return of the Jews to Israel?*

This does not alter anything at all. The fleshly, pharisaic Judaism that emerged after 70 AD is not of God and is demonic. This has nothing to do with God's sovereignty regarding the land of Israel.

God has enabled the Jews to return to Israel in order to fulfil his end-time plans for the world. This does not mean that God is blessing Israel in a spiritual manner. Indeed, Israel is guilty of some of the worst crimes known to man and is guilty before God. No other nation has so many outstanding UN Security Council resolutions against her, far more

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<sup>23</sup> To put things simply, this is a form of religion based on the powers of man. Pelagianism proper claims that man does not need God for salvation but can achieve it alone by will power. Semi-Pelagianism does not go this far but claims that man must initiate salvation by will power and accept the redemption provided by Christ for all. This denies many Scriptures, e.g. Rm 9:16.

than Saddam Hussein ever had (86 at my last count). God's word is sure and certain, governments that act unrighteously will be judged and Israel is an unrighteous nation.

God raised up Assyria to do his will and bring judgment on Israel in 721 BC; but that did not mean that Assyria was righteous; indeed God later judged Assyria for its wickedness, even though it had been an instrument of God in world history. God has enabled Jews to return to Israel in his divine permission. But it was the political conniving of Zionists and Western politicians that did this in a very unrighteous manner, betraying previous treaties. The result was the murder of innocent Palestinian civilians, the destruction of Palestinian towns and the confiscation of Palestinian property, which continues to this day. This is not righteous and it will receive condemnation from God on the last day.

Just imagine living happily in your village in Sussex and one day a foreign nation comes along, kills your family, burns down the village and then throws out all the surviving residents. This people then builds new towns and villages in the area they now occupy by force and you are forced to live in a squalid ghetto behind a concrete wall with irregular water supply and electricity. When children protest this by throwing stones at patrolling soldiers, this occupying army responds by shooting tens of thousands of bullets into communities and firing missiles from helicopter gunships killing innocent civilians. How would you feel? This is why the Palestinians are angry.

Furthermore, there are a large number of conservative Jews who seek to follow the Torah and not the Talmud who condemn the return of Jews to Israel and decry their treatment of the Palestinians. They deny that Zionism is Jewish and condemn it as a political hijacking of true Judaism. These people show solidarity with the Palestinians. Here are some quotes from them:

Zionism and the State of "Israel" are a tragedy for the Jewish People, as well as for the Palestinians. Judaism and Zionism are different and incompatible concepts diametrically opposed to each other.

The founding of the State of Israel is in direct contradiction to the teachings of the Torah (Jewish teaching) which forbid the establishment of any Jewish sovereignty since the destruction of the Temple, and commands Jews to peacefully remain among the nations.

Zionist rebellion against G-d's will through the establishment of the "state of Israel" represents an official rebellion against G-d and his Torah. This rebellion has generated untold pain and suffering as predicted by the Talmud and many other Torah sources throughout Jewish history.

Another important teaching of Judaism violated by the Zionists, is the requirement to be compassionate towards fellow human beings, and of course not to steal etc. These requirements have been directly relevant to the treatment of the native Palestinian population in the Holy Land, who have been subjected to various forms of collective punishment and oppression: deportation, subjugation, ghettoization, destruction of property, farms and homes.

True lasting peace and harmony in the Holy Land will never be attained without the total dismantlement of the heretical, rebellious State of "Israel." This will require that the Palestinian people be able to live under their self rule, without fear of oppression, ghettos, expulsion and racism, in freedom, sovereignty and dignity throughout historic

Palestine. Jewish justice demands the full repatriation of the Palestinian refugees to their original homes and lands throughout historic Palestine.<sup>24</sup>

It is impossible to consider that the State of Israel is a blessing from God. It is something God has allowed for a higher purpose, just as he allows Robert Mugabe to rule Zimbabwe, or Gaddafi to rule Libya. God's purpose at the end is to magnify man's sin and allow his rule of the world to bring his rebellion to completion and be ready for judgment; then the end will come. The State of Israel is part of this proud rebellion.

## The Trinity

*What errors do Jewish Root teachers commit regarding the Trinity?*

The Trinity is denied by certain Jewish Root teachers because Judaism denies that God can exist in three persons.

To understand the true relationship of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, it is essential to preserve the concept of oneness ... The aspect of the Father may be simply understood as the Will of God. The aspect of the Son may be understood as the Word of God. The aspect of the Spirit of the Holy One may be understood as the Power of God ... To say God is three 'persons' opens the door to misunderstanding God. God is Spirit and cannot be reduced to the concept of a person. The Spirit of the Holy One is the very essence of the power of God the Father and not some separate entity. [Peter Michas, *The rod of an almond tree in God's master plan*, WinePress Publishing, (Mukilteo, WA) p256-257.]

This is the error of modalism (e.g. Sabellianism); a denial of any personal distinctions in the Trinity and an emphasis upon oneness, which is the foundational principle of Judaism. Jewish monotheism does not need to express the revelation of God in modes, but Jewish Root teachers, wishing to avoid upsetting Jews, speak of God operating in three distinct modes of one divine person. The persons of the Godhead thus referred to as 'aspects' and the Spirit becomes an essence or power rather than a person.

This is a cardinal error. The Bible tells us to avoid people who deny the Trinity and deny the divinity or humanity of Christ. It even states that we should not greet such folk or admit them into our house for fear of losing our reward and displeasing God (2 Jn 1:7-11). On this basis alone Christians should condemn any Jewish Root teacher denying the Trinity.

## Midrash

*What is Midrash?*

We have already seen, in a footnote, that the historical Midrash is chiefly comments on OT passages, and also on certain laws. It uses an allegorical or typological method, which enables rabbis to say almost anything they want hinged upon a certain text. Biblical typology is determined within the limits of interpretation laid down by the apostles, such as in the book of Hebrews.

Jacob Prasch claims that this form of interpretation, which he calls Midrash but which is really arbitrary symbol and type, is vital to understanding Jewish thought on Biblical interpretation. He calls this the 'wisdom of the ancients', which is to be preferred (according to him) to the wisdom of the Reformation.<sup>25</sup> This 'ancient wisdom' is so arcane that Prasch accepts he can't explain it, '*Unless someone has been educated in Judaism, Hebrew, or theology, it is easier to demonstrate midrash than to explain it*'. Surely any sane

<sup>24</sup> See, "Israel": how long will you sully the name of Judaism; [www.nkusa.org](http://www.nkusa.org) – [info@nkusa.org](mailto:info@nkusa.org)

<sup>25</sup> *Explaining the Midrash*; [www.cw.co.za/moriel/midrash.html](http://www.cw.co.za/moriel/midrash.html)

Christian can see that if you need to be educated in Judaism in order to understand how to operate a method of interpreting the Bible, there is something wrong. Furthermore, since Prasch originated this idea, and is the only person teaching this (though some foolish people have now followed his methods), the result is that only Prasch can really understand the Bible. This is hubris of the worst kind.

### *Why is this dangerous?*

This ‘ancient wisdom’, contained in the rabbinic writings exemplified in the Talmud, blaspheme Christ, dishonour God, state that Christians will go to hell and are described as murderers, idolaters, or dung, and claim that those who read the NT will not go to heaven.<sup>26</sup> Why would a believer want to follow this ‘ancient wisdom’ which is nothing but demon-inspired blasphemy?

Furthermore, the Talmud teaches Jews to lie to and deceive Christians and Gentiles.<sup>27</sup> It was this reason, coupled with the practice of Jewish usury, that compelled many countries in history to expel Jews from the nation. Jews couldn’t be trusted because their religion compelled them to lie and deceive.

In my book, ‘*The Veil of Moses*’ I discuss Prasch’s Midrash and give examples where he teaches lies about Scripture; in practice Prasch’s Midrash enables him to arbitrarily say anything he wants. The Midrashic technique he uses results in false teaching and error. This is following the Talmud’s influence to lie to Christians to lead them astray.

If Jesus wanted us to refer to Jewish writings and methods he would have instructed us in this via the apostles. He did not. Indeed, he continually condemned the Pharisees, and their oral laws, who were the instigators of the Jewish writings we have today in the Talmud. As with other matters, Jewish Root teachers actually reverse what Jesus said.

### *Explain about Jewish interpretation*

Jewish interpretation of the Scripture is often summarised in an acronym, PARDES, which derives from the Kabbalah. This word means an ‘orchard’ but stands for: *p’shat*, *remez*, *d’rash* and *sod*.<sup>28</sup> This gives us the following:

- *p’shat* - meaning ‘simple rendering’ = the grammatical method of Protestant exegesis<sup>29</sup>. Taking the simplest grammatical meaning, including taking into account the historical context. This means interpreting literally wherever possible.
- *remez* – means ‘to hint’ and involves interpreting figures of speech: symbols, types, allegory and so on. Again this agrees with normal Protestant Reformed exegesis.
- *d’rash* – or midrash meaning ‘to search’. The usual rules of this were those set down by rabbis Hillel, Ishamel and Eliezer. This enables interpreters to make arbitrary statements about Scripture following Jewish precedents. It sees symbol and type where there is none. This is why the Talmud resulted in contradictions to the Torah.
- *sod* = secret and mystical meaning; gematria<sup>30</sup> and suchlike. This method of interpretation is dangerous, occult and to be avoided.

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<sup>26</sup> *Rosh Hashanah* 17a; *Sanhedrin* 90a; *Gittin*, 57a, 56b; *Kallah*, 1b (18b); *Schabbath*, 104b; *Sanhedrin* 67a; *Toldoth Jeschu*, *Sanhedrin* 43a; *Gittin* 56b; *Abhodah Zarah* 22a, *Iore Dea* 153.2, Maimonides *Vide Infra*, Chap2, p42, *Perusch* 78c.

<sup>27</sup> E.g. *Baba Kamma* 113a.

<sup>28</sup> I am indebted to Steve Maltz for this information.

<sup>29</sup> The science of understanding what a text means.

<sup>30</sup> A Kabbalistic method of interpreting the Hebrew scriptures by computing the numerical value of words based on their constituent letters.

So, the first two forms are the same as normal Protestant interpretation. These are all we need. The only safe way to interpret the Bible is to take passages literally (including accommodating figures of speech in the original) unless there is apostolic precedent to take them figuratively.

## **The people of God**

*What do Jewish Root teachers claim?*

Following Dispensational theology, they teach that Jews are the true people of God and Gentiles are an afterthought; a temporary people. God's eternal purposes are with Israel and not with the church, except for the current dispensation which is a temporary reign of grace to Gentiles.

*Is this true?*

No; it is a lie.

In contrast to this false teaching, Jesus explained that the kingdom had been removed from the Jews (Matt 21:43) and that their house was now desolate (Matt 23:38). Indeed, he issues repeated condemnation of the Jews for rejecting the Messiah and prophesies terrible judgment upon them, as we have seen already, which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem (see Appendix One).

The kingdom of God, the people of God, is not earthly at all; they are not the inhabitants of a nation whether Gentile or Jew. God's people are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17) and not earthly. They are resurrected people who are not of this world (Jn 15:19). To advocate an earthly nation as being the Lord's people is a serious error.

Jesus is a stone of stumbling to the Jewish people. To those who receive him he is the foundation stone of the church, but to those who reject him he is a stone which crushes them to powder.

He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken, be snared and taken. Isa 8:14-15

Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because *they did* not *seek it* by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. Rm 9:31-32

Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,' and 'a stone of stumbling And a rock of offence.' They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 1 Pt 2:7-8

The Jews rejected him in the first century and continue, as a people, to reject him now. They suffer the condemnation of God for this like a stone crushing them. This rejection was pre-ordained by God according to his divine purpose (hence Isaiah's prophecy centuries before). Paul explains this rejection further in Romans 11.

The Jews are not God's people; even under the Old Covenant not all Jews were God's people. Only those who had faith constituted a remnant, which was the true people of God. The vast majority of the nation was lost. Jews are not God's people by birth and Israel is not God's nation by favour.

For more information see my paper, '*Does God love Jews especially?*'.

## The people of Abraham

*Who are the true descendants of Abraham?*

Paul makes a long argument in Galatians that the promised Seed of Abraham is not the Jewish people but is Christ alone.

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ. Gal 3:16

The fulfilment of the covenant promise to Abraham is in Christ not the Jewish people or the land of Israel. Abraham foresaw this and was glad (Jn 8:56).

Subsequent to this Christ is the Firstborn of a new race of people who are a new creation in him. Through their unity with Christ the elect of all nations are also the seed of Abraham.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:26-29

Thus the people of God (as with the kingdom) is a spiritual matter. The seed of Abraham is spiritual; the heirs of the covenant are spiritual. The promises of blessing promised to Abraham are now residing in the church, the body of Christ containing all the elect of God, Jew and Gentile alike.

This is why Paul categorically teaches that being a true descendant of Abraham, a Jew according to God's eyes, is a matter of a circumcised heart (being born again) not of any ethnic quality. It is a spiritual issue not one of earthly race or culture.

For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; but *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. Rm 2:28-29

## The New Covenant

*Whom is the New Covenant made with?*

Jewish Root teachers proclaim that the New Covenant is made with Jews and that all its blessings are Jewish. The Gentile church comes into this almost accidentally.

The New Covenant made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah ... The New Covenant ... was with the whole house of Israel ... Gentiles were eventually allowed in too.<sup>31</sup>

These teachers say this on the basis of the promise in Jeremiah that was initially addressed to the faithful remnant in Israel (Jer 31:31-34). But this remnant was the elect up to that time which was Jewish (Jer 15:1-11, 23:3, 31:7); the Gospel had not yet been sent to the nations. Indeed the original promise to Abraham was to be a father of many nations not just one and Isaiah emphasises that the covenant was to extend to the Gentile nations (Isa 60:3, 66:20). The Gospel became universal after the cross. The promise in Jeremiah is to all the elect, Jews and Gentiles.

The New Covenant is the foundation of the Gospel. It is the covenant sealed by Christ's blood (Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25) and is now celebrated in the Lord's Supper given to the church by Christ himself. Paul, and his colleagues, were sent to the Gentiles and yet were ministers of the New Covenant (2 Cor 3:6).

The essence of the New Covenant is that it is internal rather than external (Jer 31:33); it is not made with an earthly nation but with a spiritual body – the church, the elect of all

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<sup>31</sup> Steve Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p114.

nations, those who share the faith of Abraham. The Old Covenant was continued by external ordinances (temple, sacrifices, mediatorial priests, singers, musicians, feasts etc.) but these were symbolic of the work of Christ and were all done away with in their external form when they were fulfilled in Christ's cross. The covenant of God is no longer continued in external form; it was a temporary measure to demonstrate election and magnify sin, pointing to the need of a Saviour (Gal 3:19). When Christ came as the fulfilment of the law and the Old Covenant, the new was inaugurated at the cross and the Spirit sent to indwell believers for the first time (Jn 7:39) thus enabling God's will to be done from a renewed heart. Thus in the New Covenant all things are new (2 Cor 5:17). Jews do not like this newness.

The problem with Jewish believers was that they were always being tempted to go back into Judaism because they were attracted to outward forms and found it hard to accept that these were cancelled. The earliest letter confronted this (Galatians) and the first ever synod at Jerusalem showed apostolic denial of attempts to Judaize Gentiles (Acts 15). Nevertheless it continued to be a problem that harried Paul throughout his ministry and shortly before the fall of Jerusalem an apostle (Paul?) had to write an entire letter (to the Hebrews) to finally kill this idea that the Old Covenant was in operation.

Hebrews spends a considerable amount of space destroying the notion that the old covenant can continue alongside the new. It shows that Christ is better than Moses, the temple, the blood offerings, the Levitical priesthood and so on, explaining that these are finished.

**In that He says, 'A new *covenant*, 'He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Heb 8:13**

At the time of the writing of Hebrews the Old Covenant is considered by God to be finished and obsolete but this was the time period of the Acts, a time of slow transition to the New Covenant. So it was only ready to actually vanish when the temple was destroyed in 70 AD. After this time the Old Covenant (Torah Judaism) could not function and it was finally finished. The Judaism that God ordained ended theoretically at the cross and in practice in 70 AD. The Judaism that continued is a man-made false religion based upon pharisaic will-worship. It is a work of the flesh.

Hebrews shows that everything is now different. In the New Covenant, the Lord himself ended the blood offerings in one single sacrifice based upon the quality of a perfect, endless life. This offering, being of eternal quality puts all that went before into the shade. This offering purified men's consciences and not just their ritual sanctification. The priesthood of the Lord is entirely different being based on the Melchizedek model and not the Levitical. Jesus was not even of the tribe of Levi, but was from Judah, descended from David. The priesthood has changed and therefore everything in the law has changed. Torah Judaism finished at the cross, fulfilled and perfected in Christ. Jesus Christ is the perfect man, the prophet like Moses, the king like David, the priest like Melchizedek, the dwelling place of God like the Tabernacle, the Immanuel of Isaiah, that Torah Judaism pointed to and hoped for. It is complete and finished in Christ.

It is impossible to believe the contents of the book of Hebrews and continue accepting the lies of Jewish Root teachers. The same could be said for the book of Galatians. To try to resurrect Judaism as the basis of Christianity is blasphemy against the work of Christ and the decreed purpose of God.



## **Displacement of Christ**

*What do you mean by this?*

Christ is the centre and fulness of all God's plan (Col 1:17). He is to have the pre-eminence in the church (Col 1:18). All things find their centre in Christ. Even the movement of the planets and the stability of the earth are in Christ's hands (Col 1:16, 17b; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 2:10). Christ is the means whereby God not only brings salvation but also established universal order in the cosmos. As such Christ the Son is the apple of God's eye and the only beloved (Matt 3:17; Lk 3:22; 2 Pt 1:17).

In light of this it is very troubling to hear Jewish Root teachers place the centre of God's thoughts upon Israel. Even the more moderate Steve Maltz states, '*The Jews are the key to God's heart*'.<sup>32</sup>

This is idolatry pure and simple. It is replacing Christ with Israel.

## **The immutability of God**

*What does this mean?*

It means that God is unchangeable. As a perfect being God never changes his mind or alters his eternal decree. His purposes are fixed and his plan is certain. If God changed in any way, or altered his mind on a matter, then God would immediately cease to be God, because his character would be imperfect, having sustained change.

Furthermore, if God said one thing and then changed his mind and performed the opposite, then he would be guilty of lying. The truth is that all God's choices were determined in eternity and everything that occurs on earth is predestined to comply with the divine will.

*What do Jewish Root teachers say?*

In a sense the whole basis of Dispensational theology surrounding Jewish Root ideas teaches that God changes. The worst Dispensational teachers claim that even God's method of salvation changes in each new dispensation. Regarding Israel they teach that God favoured the nation of Israel, then temporally changed this policy to produce the church for a while because the Jews rejected the Gospel, and then in a future imaginary millennium God once again establishes his kingdom with the Jews and the church is absorbed. All this proposes changes in God.

Furthermore, they actually state this; Steve Maltz says,  
Yes God does listen to us and can change his mind.<sup>33</sup>

Against this bold statement the Bible states:

**God *is* not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? Num 23:19**

**Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Jm 1:17**

**God, who cannot lie. Titus 1:2**

This is very clear; God does not change and cannot lie. When certain OT texts say that God may relent, these are examples of anthropomorphism. In order to accommodate the ineffable attributes of God to mere mortals, Scripture often speaks of God in human ways so that people can understand. Prayer and repentance is encouraged in the Bible and

<sup>32</sup> Steve Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p162.

<sup>33</sup> Steve Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit., p123.

characters speak of repenting and praying in order that God may perhaps relent of promised judgment. Nineveh is a classic example of this under Jonah's preaching. The truth is that in God's pre-determinative counsel the repenting of Nineveh was predestined but the threat of coming judgment was required to make them consider this and take action. The example shows the length to which God's grace is granted to evil men.

Thus God repenting, relenting, or being gracious after promising condemnation are examples of anthropomorphism, not of God actually changing his mind. To human minds it seemed as if God changed his purpose, but in God's eternal counsel his plan was always the same. God cannot change or he cannot be God.

### **Unbiblical and irreverent statements**

*What do you mean?*

Over and over Jewish Root teachers make utterly unbiblical statements that are thrown around like confetti. Some are just plain ungodly. I will give just a few examples from a recent book, if one pored over the writings of Jacob Prasch one would find very many more, and these I have picked up elsewhere.

*The prophecy of Elijah coming back is still to be fulfilled.*

Thus Steve Maltz in p24 of his book *How the Church Lost the Way*. Instead Scripture tells us that this prophecy was symbolically fulfilled in John the Baptist,

**For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive *it*, he is Elijah who is to come. Matt 11:13-14**

**But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands. Matt 17:12**

**But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him. Mk 9:13**

Jewish Root teachers just don't read their Bibles properly; perhaps they are too busy reading Jewish sources!

### *Circumcision*

To some, such as the apostles Matthew, Thomas and Philip, it was clear. They [Gentiles] would need to go through adult circumcision – it was the only way.<sup>34</sup>

Maltz makes this astonishing statement in a paraphrased narrative about the Jerusalem synod in Acts 15. There is absolutely no Biblical foundation for such a statement. Indeed, the 12 apostles had earlier received Peter's confirmation that Gentiles (Cornelius and his household) been born again and filled with the Spirit without circumcision and had come into better revelation (Acts 10-11). The apostles also agreed with Paul's presentation of justification by faith alone and all were in agreement (Gal 2:2-9). There is no way that Matthew, Thomas and Philip could hold this view during Acts 15. It is the worst sort of eisegesis.<sup>35</sup>

Maltz also states that the synod at Jerusalem was comprised of Jewish believers.<sup>36</sup> This is nonsense. The Jerusalem church had a large contingent of Hellenists (Greeks and Greek speaking foreigners). It had been like this from the very beginning when large numbers of proselytes were converted under Peter's sermons, who remained there. In Acts 6 we see that the Hellenist group complained about receiving poorer treatment than Jewish

<sup>34</sup> Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p18.

<sup>35</sup> Reading something into the Biblical text which isn't there.

<sup>36</sup> Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p17.

believers and that is why Hellenist leaders (deacons, but not named as such), such as Stephen, were established to cater for them.

Now in those days, when *the number of the disciples was multiplying*, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Acts 6:1

This is another example of simply failing to read Scripture properly.

### *God demeaned*

*It was a stormy, fiery relationship that tried His [God's] patience exceedingly. Then, in 397 BC, He felt He needed a rest, packed His bags and went off on holiday for around four hundred years ... [on] a "gap year".<sup>37</sup>*

This is just plainly irreverent and close to blasphemy. It needs no further comment.

We could continue ad nauseam giving examples of erroneous teaching, so full is this movement of deception, but we have already far exceeded our original remit and cannot prolong this any further. More information can be found in the author's book, '*The Veil of Moses*'.

## **Sacramentalism**

### *What does this mean?*

Sacramentalism is the error of believing that material objects or performing certain actions brings spiritual blessing. The Charismatic church is riddled with it. Sacramentalism, at its worst, is very similar to occult magic, such as when supposed 'Christians' believe that staring at gems or applying holy water will aid healing.

Jewish Root sacramentalism involves performing Jewish rituals or invoking Jewish objects to bring about spiritual blessing. Several times in this paper we denounce the observation of Jewish festivals, which Jewish Root teachers proclaim will produce spiritual blessing. This is sacramentalism.

There are only two Biblical sacraments, which are performing certain actions to celebrate a spiritual inner truth. These are the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are to be observed because they are direct commands of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, there are no other sacraments. The Christian life is a spiritual matter. Any other form of sacramentalism is an error and will do damage to those who perform it.

An example of Jewish Root sacramentalism is the advice to pray for the peace of earthly Jerusalem in order to be blessed. This is based upon a literal interpretation of Psalm 122:6-9,

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces.' For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, 'Peace *be* within you.' Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek your good.

I discuss this in detail in my paper, '*Does God love Jews Especially*' and particularly in my book, '*The Veil of Moses*'. Apostolic teaching shows that this must now be applied as praying for the blessing of the whole church, Jew and Gentile. The people of God are the church (1 Pt 2:9), the temple of God is the church (1 Cor 3:16), the house of God is the church (1 Pt 2:5). Jerusalem above is the church (Heb 12:22). The city of God is the church (Heb 12:22; Phil 3:20). Furthermore Jerusalem on earth now represents bondage and the flesh (Gal 4:25).

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<sup>37</sup> Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p23.

Furthermore, just think about this concept for a minute. If this is to be taken literally, then what about the many centuries when Jerusalem was the property of enemies of Christ; it only belonged to Jews for less than 500 years, between the reign of David (about 1,000 BC) and 587 BC? Before David it belonged to a king subject to Egypt. After the exile it belonged to the Babylonians; after that it was the property of the Persians and then the Greeks and then the Romans. After that it eventually became the property of Muslims and then the Ottoman Turks. Are we really saying that we should pray for the peace of the Ottoman Turks (or anyone else)? Yet this is required if we take this passage literally. Indeed we are to seek the good of those within Jerusalem, but even today this does not just mean Jews but also Arabs, Palestinians and Muslims. Can we really say that God will bless those who pray for these people sacramentally? No, indeed not. God does not bless people just because they favour a certain people or certain city-dwellers or even a certain city. Neither is there any blessing in praying for literal stones that make up a city. Thus it cannot be taken literally even in its OT context, where it stood figuratively for the people of God.

This is typical of the sacramental nonsense peddled by Jewish Root teachers. They want Christians to place their attention on physical things in order to be blessed. This is superstitious nonsense. Worse still, it takes attention away from the Lord Jesus, and thus is to be deplored.

### **Epistemology**

*What does this mean?*

Epistemology is the theory of true knowledge; the investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion.

*Why is this important?*

I have left this until last in this section because it is so important, though we touch on it elsewhere. It is absolutely crucial that a believer has the right source of knowledge or his whole belief system is threatened. If we do not follow the truth we will be deceived and blown about by demonic lies and temptations. Knowing the truth is utterly vital to living a proper Christian life.

In knowing the truth, we also have to be clear on what are the most important truths, what takes priority, and what is the last line of doctrinal certainty. Some knowledge is true but is not important to us; other lines of knowledge save our lives. It is true that the background to the Bible is Hebrew and that Christianity grew out of Judaism, in that Christ was a Jew. This is true; but it is not an important truth. Knowing this will not save you; neither will it help you grow as a disciple nor teach you how to practice church fellowship.

*What is the crucial truth then?*

The centre and focus of truth is Jesus Christ. He is the truth and it is knowledge of him that saves.

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.' Jn 14:6

The truth in Christ is what sets people free (Jn 8:32). This means that Christ is the centrality of our faith and must be pre-eminent in all things (Col 1:18). It is his view of what is important doctrine that sets the seal on what we believe and what our priorities are.

*What is Christ's view of important truth?*

What is important to Christ is initially proposed in his Gospel narratives, but these are limited by the fact that the cross had not yet occurred and the disciples were not yet able to understand deep spiritual truths because they did not yet have the Spirit indwelling them.

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. Jn 16:12

The fulness of Christ's spiritual teaching is found in the apostolic writings. As I have already stated, these are the fulness of Christ's words to the disciples from heaven mediated by the Holy Spirit. Christ sent the Spirit to teach them more about himself and lead them into all truth.

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you. Jn 16:13-15

Note this, the Spirit will lead the disciples into ALL TRUTH. There is nothing left out in the apostolic writings. The Gospels, apostolic letters and Revelation give us all that we need to understand about spiritual matters and God's decree, and it is they that form the basis for interpreting all the Old Testament. The priority in Biblical interpretation is the apostolic writings and nothing else.

*Why is this important regarding Jewish Root issues?*

Almost all the Jewish Root teachers and all Messianic Jews teach the contrary, that the NT is not important at all, The worst of these deny that the NT is inspired or even claim it to be of pagan origin. Even those who accept the validity of the NT try to get round Jesus' words by pretending that the original manuscripts of the NT were written in Hebrew or Aramaic and then pervert the teaching of the apostles. This is done against all scholarly evidence regarding textual matters and without any manuscript proof. There are thousands of Greek NT manuscripts but no earlier Hebrew one, and neither would there need to be since the Jews used Greek language and writing in commerce, and even in a Greek Old Testament, and Aramaic speech in day to day conversation.

Why would Jesus' disciples write Gospels in Hebrew when Jesus and the disciples spoke Aramaic and were mostly unlearned men? When Peter wrote a Gospel he did it through John Mark who was able to write in Greek. John wrote his Gospel later than the others, most likely in Ephesus, and clearly in Greek for his church readers. Even his time frames are in Roman time not Jewish. Luke was a Gentile and his Gospel was for Gentiles and so was in Greek. Matthew was written for Jews and focuses more on Jewish matters, showing how Christ fulfilled OT prophecies for instance. Yet there is no historical evidence that he wrote his Gospel in Hebrew and all sound scholars declare that it was originally written in Greek, as we have already proved.

So there is no evidence of a Hebrew NT but much evidence of a Greek one. Thus the statements of Jesus show that the NT has priority and it was written in Greek.

*What are the implications of this.*

It means that the Jewish Root teachers who demand the priority of the Old Testament are lying to you. When they demand that the Old Testament must interpret the New Testament they are wrong. When they insist on the OT being always interpreted literally they are lying since the apostles mostly interpret it spiritually as focused on Christ; even Christ himself interpreted the OT as pointing to himself (Lk 24:27). When they insist on a Jewish cultural background being the most important factor in understanding Christian matters they are also wrong. It is far more helpful to have knowledge about the construction of Koine Greek in order to understand the nuances of the New Testament.

Furthermore, it means that all extra-biblical, religious writings by Jews are of no value whatsoever in gaining spiritual knowledge, whether it is the Talmud, or anything else. These are the writings of men without inspiration that are worse than useless in helping us

understand spiritual truth. The worst of these are actually satanic lies full of blasphemies and unrighteousness.

*So what is the measure of truth?*

It is what the apostles say it is. The determining factor in Christian truth is the teaching of the apostles and nothing else because they are bringing Christ's' last words to us; words that explain the basis of everything else – the Gospels and the OT.

It is apostolic doctrine that forms the basis of all that we call 'knowledge' in Christian affairs. This is why those earliest, chiefly Jewish, disciples after Pentecost centred upon apostolic doctrine,

**And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:42**

The establishment of base Christian doctrines must be formed by apostolic teaching as found in the New Testament. These writings teach us that being a physical Jew means nothing but being a spiritual Jew with a converted heart means everything (Rm 2:28-29). They teach us that all the conventions, culture and religious background of Judaism is as dung before the excellence of knowing Christ (Phil 3:8). They teach that the root of faith, the father of faith, is the faith of Abraham (when he was an uncircumcised Sumerian) not Israel (Rm 4:3, 9-10, 12). They teach that Abraham was heir of the whole world, not just Jews, and this was before the Mosaic Law was even brought in (Rm 4:13). They teach that the Seed of Abraham is not the Jews after the flesh but Christ, and all those who are in Christ – the church both Jews and Gentiles (Rm 4:16, 9:7-8; Gal 3:7-9, 14, 16, 29). They teach that the Mosaic Law is finished in its Jewish operation but fulfilled and ended in Christ and the New Covenant (Heb 8:13; Jn 1:17; 2 Cor 1:20; Rm 10:4). They teach that the church no longer celebrates earthly, material, physical rituals (such as feasts or circumcision), which bring people into bondage, but worships God in the Spirit (Jn 4:24; Gal 2:4, 4:9-11, 24-25, 5:1). Finally, they teach that there is only one people of God (Jew and Gentile), a spiritual people, a holy temple, a heavenly body in Christ, which is the church, and no one must separate what God has joined together (Eph 2:12-22).

Thus Jewish Root teaching is not based upon the truth, even though it gives the appearance of being Scriptural. It is a demonic lie to deceive people and turn them away from Christ. This was a severe problem to the apostolic church and one that continued afterwards.

## Key historical teachings of the Jewish Root Movement

### Background

*Has this error occurred in history?*

Yes it has, several times. The chief expression was in the early church where Judaisers were confronted by the apostles for bringing Gentile believers into bondage, insisting on them being circumcised and following the Law of Moses. Acts 15 describes a synod of churches where this matter was discussed and the Judaising position condemned.

Subsequent to this a sect developed called Ebionism which was a sectarian movement of Judaisers. The early church fathers confronted this strongly. There is a modern sect within the Jewish Root Movement which calls itself by this name. For more detailed information on Ebionism see my paper, *'The twin problems affecting the early church'*.

### The captivity of the church by Greek philosophy

*What does this mean?*

Jewish Root teachers, such as Jacob Prasch and Steve Maltz, have written much to make the case that the early church followed Greek philosophy, particularly Platonic dualism, in its methods and official formulations, abandoning its Jewish background. They usually cite the Jewish philosopher and OT commentator Philo as being a key figure in this drift, followed by church fathers (theologians) such as Origen and Augustine. This follows standard Jewish teaching that Christianity is not Jewish but a Greek invention based on the teachings of Jesus, who was a Jewish rabbi who followed the law. Jews blame the apostle Paul for this drift.

#### *What is Platonic dualism?*

This is the foundation of the teachings of Plato, the student of the chief Greek philosopher Socrates, that the form of life around us is material and thus evil while the true reality behind the forms around us are spiritual and thus perfect. Essentially, matter is evil; spirit is good. This became the basis of many dualistic ideas and sects, such as Gnosticism

The point Jewish Root teachers are seeking to make is that the early church abandoned the literal interpretation of the OT, particularly OT prophecies and promises to Israel, in order to adopt a spiritualising method, or allegorical method, of interpreting the OT.

*Is this true?*

Not in the way Jewish Root teachers aver.

*What is the truth?*

It is true that the early church theologians used the academic principles that were associated with Greek philosophy and were often trained in Greek schools. But this was using the best skills that were available at the time. The alternative to Greek education was the pagan world around which was based upon fatalism, superstition, blind faith, idolatry and irrational ideas; there was no Hebrew educational system and Jewish culture had been smashed and dispersed after the Fall of Jerusalem. What Greek philosophy provided were the principles of logic, empiricism (the primacy of experience over reason in gaining knowledge) and investigative analysis arising from Aristotle, and deductive reasoning (the inference of particular instances from a general law), idealism and a focus on the spiritual

from Plato. Using Greek scholastic method was much to be preferred to pagan superstition.

It must be understood that in God's providence Greek culture had dominated the Mediterranean during the campaigns of Alexander the Great and the Greek language became the lingua franca. Thus the NT was written in Greek to ensure easy communication around the known world. Jews before the time of Christ realised this and developed a Greek translation of the OT in Alexandria (the Septuagint) which became the one most used by the apostles. Greek was the cultural foundation of the world at that time. Note:

The incursion of the Greek language and culture into Jewish Palestinian society is quite evident on many fronts. Coins were minted in Palestine with Greek inscriptions; the Hebrew and Aramaic languages adopted numerous Greek loan words; many Palestinian Jews had Greek names; the architecture of the residences and pottery show Greek influences; the government – as far back as Herod the Great – was Hellenised; there was a gymnasium; and numerous inscriptions, papyri and ostraca in Greek have been found. ... To be Greek was highly desired by the wealthy. [*The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting; Vol 4 Palestinian Setting*, Ed. Richard Bauckham, Paternoster (1995), p230-231.]

Furthermore, the Greek language was more subtle than Hebrew or Aramaic and was much more suitable for developing theological propositions. It was entirely natural for early church theologians to be influenced by Greek ideas and this was under the providence of God. God's sovereignty over the world at this time must be taken into account and not ignored as Jewish Root teachers do.

The Greek development of education and scholastic method led to the origins of science and engineering which benefited the whole world, and particularly Roman and Arabic scientists and engineers in the beginning. To sneer at this is foolhardy. The early church mainly adopted Platonic or Neo-Platonic methods (which chiefly focused on the glory of God) while the medieval church followed Aristotelianism (e.g. the detailed scholasticism and investigative method of Thomas Aquinas).

Though some early theologians came from dualistic backgrounds (e.g. Augustine was converted out of Manichaeism) they repudiated their pagan backgrounds and wrote against them. They did not bring these influences into their Christian teaching and it is slander to say that they did.

Problems with any church father need to be singled out, itemised and addressed, (there are many errors present in some fathers) but universally attacking all of them on a spurious technical point is fallacious. Indeed, we should be grateful to several Greek influenced fathers for developing and protecting the cardinal doctrines of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ against pagan errors (such as Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers). For more detailed information on this matter see my paper, '*The twin problems affecting the early church*'.

Aside: It is interesting that the Talmud and Kabbalah were both influenced by Greek thought, particularly the mystical portions. Speculations on Genesis and Ezekiel's visions were later moulded by ideas emanating from Syriac Greeks, Zoroastrian Babylonians and Byzantine Gnostics. This included mythological ideas about the nether-world, ghosts and spirits. In fact the Talmud is pre-occupied with demonology and degrading magical potions which derive from Gentile, pagan, occult magic. [e.g.

*Gittin*, 69a, b, 70a; *Berakhoth*, folio 6; *Hullin*, folios 143-4.]



When certain folk make this pretentious argument about the pervading Greek influence in the church they become blind to their own contradictions. Steve Maltz makes a great deal of this in two books and gives examples, such as blaming Greek philosophy for the clergy / laity split and the focus upon authoritarian church leaders. In fact this has nothing to do with Greek ideas but arises from a focus upon Old Covenant Jewish forms. It was OT Judaism which emphasised a clergy laity split with a specialist tribe of priests and temple workers. The model for this leadership (clergy) focus in the church is Jewish not Greek. It is absolute nonsense to suggest otherwise.

*But what about the interpretation of Scripture; isn't it true that the church generally adopted a spiritualising approach?*

Firstly, there was never a general consensus of OT interpretation; there were many early fathers and many different types of approach to the OT. It was not uncommon for them to disagree. Certainly Origen adopted an over-enthusiastic allegorical approach to the OT and this is to be deplored.

What the better church fathers sought to do was to interpret the OT in the way that the apostles did, and this involves both some literal interpretation and many spiritual interpretations. The NT is full of spiritual interpretations of OT prophecies and types. Many times prophecies are fulfilled in ways which the writer never expected e.g: Zech 12:10 cf. Jn 19:37; Zech 13:7 c.f. Matt 26:31. Both these prophecies are put into the future by Dispensationalists despite being said to be fulfilled. Many times prophecies are fulfilled spiritually and in an unexpected way (e.g: Gen 17:5 in Rm 4:17; Jer 31:15 in Matt 2:18; Gen 3:15 in Col 2:15; Ezek 37 in 2 Cor 6:6-18).

Most cases of OT prophecy are stated by the NT to be fulfilled spiritually e.g: Joel's outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, the land of promise is heavenly (Heb 11:8-16), Elijah as the forerunner to the Messiah is fulfilled in John the Baptist (Mal 3:1, 4:5-6; Lk 1:17; Matt 11:13-14). Over 86% of the OT prophecies fulfilled by NT events are spiritually fulfilled. One examination of 94 OT prophecies, revealed only 11 cases where the fulfilment was exactly as the writer foresaw (in OT & NT events). If interpreted literally, this would have resulted in a wrong and unbiblical conclusion 88% of the time.<sup>38</sup> Another writer identified 97 OT prophecies regarding Christ, only 34 are fulfilled literally in the NT (35%).<sup>39</sup>

So, the apostles very often interpret the OT in spiritual ways. Our job is to follow the example of the apostles who bring the final words of Christ and his teaching to the church. To deny this is to deny Christ and adopt the false ideas of men. Very often types and prophecies have more than one interpretation: one relevant to the time in Israel, one relevant to Christ in the future, and one relevant to the church in Christ. For instance, the Tabernacle was a reality for Israel in the wilderness and was a type of God dwelling with them. But it was also a type of Christ, the dwelling place of God in man and thence also a type of the church included in Christ. To insist only on the literal interpretation (as Dispensationalists do) results in failing to see what God is saying. The chief focus of all Scripture is Christ and this is what both Christ and the apostles repeatedly said was important (Lk 24:25, 27; Acts 3:22, 7:37). Jewish Root teachers deny this and wish to make Israel the focus.

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<sup>38</sup> R.L. Whitelaw, Article, The Gospel Millennium and Obedience to Scripture, p6ff. *Searching Together*, St Croix Falls, WI. USA

<sup>39</sup> See Curtis Crenshaw, *Dispensationalism Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow*, Footstool Pub. Memphis (1986) p7-14 for list.

Aside: Typical of the inconsistency and contradictory statements made by Jewish Root preachers, Steve Maltz (though a fan of Prasch) spends many pages condemning the allegorical, spiritualising method of Biblical interpretation which he blames on Greek influences. Yet Prasch spends even more pages defending his Jewish Midrashic interpretation method which is exactly the same, being based upon arbitrary typology and allegorical interpretation. So one preacher says the church is lacking wisdom because it follows the allegorical method of Greek thinkers, the other says the church is lacking because it doesn't follow the allegorical method of Jewish thinkers. The true position is to follow the hermeneutic of the apostles, which usually adopts a literal interpretation unless the context demands that it be interpreted allegorically or typologically. The apostles give us examples when to use a more spiritualising method

A summary of some things Maltz says is of Greek origin:

*'The issue of the filioque had absolutely nothing to do with the Bible but everything to do with the various ways the Christian philosophers interpreted the works of Plato.'*<sup>40</sup> Wrong! Hear the words of Scripture,

**But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name. Jn 14:26**

**But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father. Jn 15:26**

**If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. Jn 16:7**

The Spirit is sent by the Father in the name of Jesus and thus is sent by Christ himself with the Father. The addition of the filioque clause<sup>41</sup> was completely Biblical and the Eastern Church was wrong to separate over it. This was nothing to do with Plato; in fact the church that refused the filioque clause was Greek.

*'Pastors, teachers, preachers ... [are] a thoroughly Greek idea and wrong.'*<sup>42</sup> Wrong! The precedent for a religious clergy is Jewish and not Greek. The format found in many institutional churches is taken straight out of the Old Testament, not from Greek sources. Furthermore, the idea of ministry is not wrong but is Biblical. The long list of leaders found in many Charismatic churches is wrong, none of these exist at all in Scripture, but the office of elder, comprising teacher and pastor is Biblical (Eph 4:11).

The development of an order of mediatorial priests was Roman Catholic and not Greek, based upon Jewish precedents in the OT. It was the Calvinistic Reformation, not a return to Jewish ideas, that removed this and established the priesthood of all believers. It was Calvinism that brought liberty of thinking and Christian conscience to the world, not Judaism. Indeed, Judaism has its established order of officiating priesthood in the form of rabbis, to whom all must bow. The word of rabbis affects not only religious declarations of practice and theology but also how one conducts one's whole life to the last detail. Judaism is of no help in wiping out the clergy laity split. This idea is a massive lie.

*'Declaring a division ... between sacred work and secular work ... between supernatural and natural, is a thoroughly Greek idea.'*<sup>43</sup> Wrong! It was not Greek philosophy that fuelled this idea, it was the practice of Roman Catholicism during the Dark Ages, and this system was

<sup>40</sup> Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p42.

<sup>41</sup> Meaning, 'and the Son'. An addition to the third article of the Western form of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. It derives from the Council of Toledo in 589. It denounces Arianism and asserts the co-equality of the Father and the Son.

<sup>42</sup> Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p55.

<sup>43</sup> Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p54.

based upon copying Old Covenant Jewish practices, rituals and officiating clergy. In fact, it was the Protestant Reformation which removed this idea and initiated the Protestant work ethic which fuelled the prosperity of the western civilisations; the very Calvinism that Jewish Root teachers (such as Prasch) vilify and condemn without cause. It was Calvinists, not Jews, who made secular work holy. [For further information see my book, *‘Was the Reformation Good News?’*]

*‘The church is not a building, it is you and me, the people of God.’*<sup>44</sup> Agreed; but it was the Jewish temple which provided the impetus for worldly professing Christians in the time of Constantine to build dedicated church buildings (or use basilicas) based upon pagan temple architecture. Worse still, it is Dispensational Jewish Root teachers who are providing the stimulation to blasphemously attempt to rebuild a Jewish temple in Israel even now.

*‘Augustine of Hippo ... from him we get the idea of original sin and our traditional understanding of evil.’*<sup>45</sup> While this is a compliment I’m sure that Augustine would complain. Our understanding of sin and evil comes from the apostolic writings and not Augustine. Yet another example of loose and false statements.

*‘The church ... failed to remain pure and sullied itself with pagan philosophies ... the Church moved on from that pure, simple and effective vehicle for spreading the true Gospel of Jesus Christ at the time of the book of Acts. Those simple core beliefs were to become submerged in a sea of philosophy and debate.’*<sup>46</sup> Wrong! This is a complete misreading of history. Firstly, the early church did not sully itself with pagan philosophies at all. Indeed, it fought against paganism all the time from, at least, the time of Irenaeus (175-195) onwards. Indeed the full title of his famous *‘Against Heresies’* is *‘Detection and Overthrow of Falsely-named Knowledge (Gnosis)’*, being a condemnation and refutation of Greek ideas.

The sea of debate arose because the early church fathers were forced to write against and condemn a number of heresies that rose up to squash Biblical doctrine. The nature of God, the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, the divine person of Christ and the ministry of the Spirit were just some of the issues that church fathers had to fight tooth and nail to defend. This required precision of thinking and formulation, which is why the discipline of Greek thinking and education proved immensely helpful. We should be grateful for the hard work and immense suffering of the fathers on our behalf. The life of Athanasius alone ought to be required reading for all new converts and would that more believers followed his example. We owe a great deal for our current orthodoxy on the sacrificial work of certain church fathers.

The continued attack on the Greek influence in the early church is a scandal filled with misleading statements and deliberate misrepresentation. Preachers such as Steve Maltz, Chris Hill and Jacob Prasch (they are not alone) should be ashamed of themselves.

Now I do not defend all early church theologians, indeed I have elsewhere criticised some of them severely. The development of monarchical bishops that came to a head with Cyprian is to be lamented for instance. But what is shameful is the tarring of all of them with false accusations in order to develop a personal agenda for Judaism.

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<sup>44</sup> Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p54.

<sup>45</sup> Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p37.

<sup>46</sup> Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p52.

## The early church fathers were anti-Semitic

*What does anti-Semitic mean?*

Anti-Semitism is a term hi-jacked by Jews and Jewish Root teachers to slander those who oppose them for some valid reason.

Anti-Semitism is generally in use as a term for the hatred of the Jewish 'race' and is used as a synonym for racism. However, the Jews are not a race of people at all but a sub-division of a race. Jewishness is cultural and religious and not ethnic.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, Semites (supposed descendants of Shem through Abraham; those who speak a Semitic language) include Arabs as well as Jews. Yet Jews in general hate Arabs but they do not consider this to be anti-Semitism – but it is. What is good for the goose is good for the gander.

If someone is unnecessarily rude or defamatory to a person or people group, then they should be criticised for this specific action of hate; but throwing general accusations of anti-Semitism at all sorts of innocent people just because they criticise something about Jews or Jewishness is ridiculous. Yet this is what Jewish Root teachers frequently do; often when they cannot answer specific criticisms. The accusation of anti-Semitism is merely a prop used by weak Jewish Root teachers when they cannot answer the arguments placed against them.

*Were the early church fathers anti-Semitic?*

The fathers were not anti-Semitic but they did write severe condemnations of the Jews since they were one of the chief enemies of the church at that time. They were not focused upon condemning Jews and also condemned paganism and the various cults, such as the Gnostic sects and cults of the time. Christian sects and false teachers were also vociferously condemned, such as Augustine's strong attack on the British Celtic monk Pelagius.

The fathers followed the line of Paul's attack on the Jews, which is clearly evidenced in his letters and in the Acts. The Jews were the chief enemies of the early church and this is clear to see from Acts. The persecution of Paul was stimulated almost exclusively by Jews and only once or twice by pagan idolaters. The final chapters of Acts are a long narrative of Jewish persecution of Paul, including lying and conspiracy to murder, which resulted in Paul's long term of house arrest and imprisonment.

The early church continued to be assailed by Jews hence the fathers condemnation and warnings.

Note what Paul says,

**For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. 1 Thess 2:14-16**

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<sup>47</sup> What determines a Jew is open to much debate. Many believe that it means someone descended from a Jewish mother, but many Jews today derive from the Khazar people who proselytised en masse years ago. Messianic Christians with Jewish mothers are cast out of Judaism by rabbis [according to the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform): *'For us in the Jewish community, anyone who claims that Jesus is their saviour is no longer a Jew and is an apostate'*]. An Israeli Supreme Court decision in 1989 ruled that Messianic Judaism constituted another religion. Jewishness is often an arbitrary matter. Many people consider themselves Jews because they have a Jewish father, but most orthodox Jews deny this as being valid unless they commit especially to identification with Judaism.

Notice what Paul says about the Jews (Judaean). Far from the attitude which Jewish Root teachers demand towards fleshly Israel, Paul says,

- They killed their own prophets.
- They killed the Lord Jesus.
- They persecuted the apostles.
- They do not please God.
- They are contrary to all men.
- They forbid apostles to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved.

He then finalises his condemnation by saying that they must always to fill up the measure of their sins and wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

Now when church fathers made similar statements they are attacked by Jewish Root teachers (such as Steve Maltz) as being anti-Semitic but they are saying exactly what Paul says. Dare Maltz say that God's word is anti-Semitic.

For more information on this, including further examples, see my paper, '*The twin problems affecting the early church*'.

## Conclusion

It is a curious thing that Jewish Root teachers, who are often Christians of Jewish birth, spend so much effort trying to make believers adopt Jewish ideas and practices and even study rabbinic teaching, when Judaism itself condemns Gentile Christians for even 'prying' into the law and utterly condemns Jews who convert to Christ.

Hebrew Christians are in radical conflict with the communal interests and the destiny of the Jewish people.

[*Jews for Judaism*, [www.jewsforjudaism.org/javasite/webdocs/challenge.html](http://www.jewsforjudaism.org/javasite/webdocs/challenge.html)]

The Talmud is more severe, teaching that Jewish apostates must be killed [*Hilkhoth Akum* (X, 2)]. Jewish Root teachers are trying to take Christians into Judaism, but Judaism doesn't want them. The concoction that is 'Jewish Roots' is an evil, compromised and idolatrous religion that is neither Christianity nor Judaism but heresy to both.

*But surely churches can adopt Old Testament practices since they are Biblical?*

What is vital for the believer is to know God's will. His will is expressed, under the supervision and guidance of the Spirit, through Scripture, his word to man. This means that Scripture must be understood as it intends you to understand. Thus later revelation eclipses and interprets earlier revelation. Even in the OT itself this progression can be seen and later revelation amends earlier revelation (e.g. Jer 31:29). Isaiah's revelation of the Messiah was greater than that given to Moses.

When it comes to the NT clearly things are very different. Genocide was commanded in the OT, including the killing of babies, but under the New Covenant no believer can commit any sort of violence, or even think about it. Under the Old Covenant a man could be killed for gathering sticks on the Sabbath (Num 15:32-26); this no longer applies. God's theocracy of Israel has gone and the concept of a state church has vanished. God, though he owns and rules all, is king within the church, the body that submits to his will in a world of rebels.

The only way to understand how to interpret the OT is to follow the instruction of the apostles and walk in their footsteps. Their words are the final teaching of Christ from heaven to the church and this is the rule we must follow. Thus the early church was steeped in apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42). If we are disciples of Christ then we cannot follow the ideas of men but must submit to apostolic doctrine.

Now apostolic doctrine tells us that we cannot hold two opinions. Indeed, Paul repeatedly commands that we must be of one mind, of one soul and of one heart, thinking the same things (Rm 15:6; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 1:27, 2:2). There cannot be a part of Christ's body that follows Jewish Root teaching and a part that shuns it; all believers must think the same thing. This means that only what the apostles think about Jewish Roots is acceptable, and they all categorically deny it. Whole books (Galatians, Hebrews) were written to make the point that going back to Judaism in, any sense, is heresy and will lead to destruction.

Believers in Christ are part of a heavenly order; they are spiritual people not earthly; they are new creations in which all that is earthly is now dead to them. Being in Christ means loyalty to a spiritual kingdom and not an earthly one. Thus all earthly ties must be severed, and this includes earthly Jewishness.

Jewish Root teaching leads believers away from Christ because it is a modern deception unknown to our wiser post-Reformation forbears. It was an early church heresy that vanished but has now been resurrected in these evil times. It is a lie of the devil and must be contended against. Be warned; following Jewish Root doctrine will lead you into bondage and death; it is a devilish deception.

## Appendix One

# The Destruction of Jerusalem

Jewish Root teachers rarely mention the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans in 70AD, but this is a very important matter in our understanding of God's views on natural Israel.

The utter destruction of Jerusalem was prophesied by Christ several times and included warnings to believers to flee when they saw the armies of Rome marching against the city (Matt 24:15-16). This warning was heeded by the early Christians who fled to Perea and escaped the atrocities which befell the Jews in the city.<sup>48</sup>

The siege of Jerusalem was perhaps the worst siege in history. There were untold cases of the most terrible atrocities, as described by the Jewish historian Josephus. In the famine that developed people were reduced to the most appalling straits, eating rats, shoe leather and the leather straps of shields.<sup>49</sup> In the end mothers killed, roasted and ate their own children, thus bringing on themselves a terrible condemnation; even the besieging Romans felt sorry for them when they heard this. We will avoid further description; the point is that the siege was extreme and terrible, as Christ predicted.

When the siege was over, the Romans were bent on bloodlust and total destruction of what was considered to be indestructible – Jerusalem was reduced to ruins. In punishment for failing to surrender, the hills of Judaea were denuded of trees in order to make crosses for thousands of prisoners who had survived the famine. Jerusalem became a byword for destruction and suffering.

Now the point is that God is the sovereign of all things, particularly of the control of cities and nations (Amos 3:6). The destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world were under divine providence. Why such a terrible judgment?

The reason given by Scripture, which Jewish Root teachers wish to avoid, is that it was the Jews who killed the Christ; the Jewish historian Josephus also testifies to this. Despite all the blessings that God had given them they killed his only Son. Jesus himself warned them that this would happen (e.g. the parable of the tenants, Matt 21:38-39). Over and over Scripture shows us that Jews were responsible for Calvary, not Romans (Acts 2:23, 36, 7:52; 1 Thess 2:14-15; in fact Christ prayed for the forgiveness of the Romans involved who acted in ignorance, but Jews knew what they were doing).

As a result of this terrible sin, for which the Jews asked for a curse upon them and their children (Matt 27:25), the result was the utter destruction of all things Jewish. Without Jerusalem there was no temple, no vessels, no priestly garments, no priestly order, nowhere to sacrifice blood offerings. In short, the Judaism of the *torah* could no longer be

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<sup>48</sup> Josephus: 'the Jewish Christians in the city [called] to mind the prediction and caution given them by Christ about thirty-three years and a half before, that "when they should see the abomination of desolation" [the idolatrous Roman armies, with the images of their idols in their ensigns, ready to lay Jerusalem desolate] "stand where it ought not;" or, "in the holy place;" or, "when they should see Jerusalem ... compassed with armies;" they should then "flee to the mount..." By complying with which those Jewish Christians fled the siege of Jerusalem; which yet was providentially ... near to the mountains of Perea, and escaped this destruction.' *Wars of the Jews*, Book 2, Footnote 30.

<sup>49</sup> *Wars of the Jews*, Book 5, Chapter 3.

practised. It was for this reason that Pharisees developed rabbinic Judaism, which is a man-made substitute for obeying the law of Moses, and wrote the Babylonian Talmud, which is filled with terrible blasphemies against Christ. Modern Judaism is the result of this blasphemy.

Jesus tells us that God would judge those who killed the Son in a terrible way, using their own words:

**'Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?' They said to Him, 'He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.'** Matt 21: 40-41

First the kingdom is taken from the Jews and given to others, that is all the elect, the church, because Israel rejected Christ:

**Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes'? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.'** Matt 21:42-44

And then those who rejected the stone (the foundation which is Christ) will have the stone fall on them. The Jews who rejected Christ wilfully were ground to powder finally in the destruction of Jerusalem. The destruction of the temple and the city by Titus was a fulfilment of Christ's words and revealed the terrible condemnation of God against the Jews.

Steve Maltz uses several pages of imaginary dialogue to make the point that the Jews were not responsible for Jesus' death in his book, *'How the Church Lost the Way'*.<sup>50</sup> He makes a similar claim more didactically in his book, *'How the Church Lost the Truth'*. His point is that God is responsible for the death of Jesus, based upon logic and God's sovereign purpose revealed in John 10:17-18 (though this actually speaks of Christ laying down his life). He also claims that Jesus forgave the Jewish leaders who demanded his execution. Is this true?

The problem with this argument is that it ignores the clear statements of Scripture, which we have already witnessed. God's own word reveals that it was the Jews who killed Jesus not the Romans or God himself (e.g. Matt 21:38-39; Acts 2:23, 36, 7:52; 1 Thess 2:14-15). The Roman soldiers who actually executed Jesus are the one's he sought forgiveness for because they did not know what they were doing. As a result one centurion saw that Jesus was God (Matt 27:54). This is typical of Jewish Root teachers, they highlight a fanciful point seemingly based on one text and ignore several verses that contradict it elsewhere. So the first point is that Maltz's argument is unbiblical.

The key issue, as shown by Jesus' prophetic parables and the historical narrative, is that the Jewish rulers crucified Jesus because he claimed to be the Son of God. They ignored the proofs he offered in fulfilment of many OT prophecies and the good deeds he performed by God's power, which should have left them with no excuse to fail to honour him as king. They knew he was God's Son but rejected him as Messiah and killed him instead of submitting to him. They preferred their own brand of religion, which made them powerful, rather than accepting the Messiahship of Christ. This made them culpable. Under satanic inspiration, the Jews were manipulated to actually kill God's own Son and thus fulfilled Jesus' prophetic parable of the tenants.

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<sup>50</sup> Pages 154-157.



The second point is that Maltz appears to have little understanding about God's decree and purpose. Under Maltz's argument God becomes responsible for the sin of men. The fact that God allows a thing to happen does not make him responsible for the sin committed in this action. God allowed sin into the world and controls all men's actions in his predestinating purpose, but he is not responsible for the sin men commit. Men commit sin because they want to and chose to do it willingly, thus they pay for their own sins which they committed by choice.

As we mentioned in passing earlier, when Assyria was permitted by God to bring judgment upon Israel, to kill many, destroy the Northern Kingdom and to deport many captives, it did this under the sovereign control of God (Isa 7:16, 8:4). However, the sin Assyria committed in its brutality, and the hubris it demonstrated, was later condemned and judged by God because it was sin (Isa 10:5-13).

The guilt of the sin committed by men is borne by them, despite the controlling sovereignty of God. Thus the guilt of the wrongful death of Jesus is laid at the feet of those who demanded it and took the curse of it upon themselves and their children; the Jews. God's word calls Jesus' death murder and blames it on Jews and not Romans.

The result of this, the most terrible sin in the entire history of man, is that God brought about the destruction of all that was Jewish in the appalling devastation of Jerusalem by the Roman army.

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