



ISSUES IN MESSIANIC JEWISH THEOLOGY  
Instructor: Mottel Baleston (Camp Shoshanah 2008)

**A. LEGALISM, CULTURE AND OUR LIBERTY IN MESSIAH**

1. American Church culture and its effects
  - a. It often presents a barrier to Jewish acceptance of Messiah
  - b. It will often be a barrier to full participation by Jewish believers in otherwise good evangelical churches
  - c. If used as a measure of spirituality, it becomes “Legalism”
2. We have liberty and latitude in the “non-essentials”
  - a. Liberty in food and drink and social contacts - Romans 14
  - b. Liberty in observing “Holy Days” - Romans 14:5-6
  - c. We have responsibility to avoid unnecessary offense - Romans 14:15-21, I Corinthians 10:23-33
3. Our freedom to observe Jewish holidays and life-cycle events  
Romans 14, I Corinthians 9:19-23, Acts 21:17-26
  - a. The Biblical/Jewish Calendar was central to Yeshua and the Apostles
  - b. Having the right mindset as we observe and celebrate
  - c. Do we observe all the holidays? Make adjustments to any?
  - d. What about:
    - (1) Bar/Bat Mitzvah?
    - (2) Kashrut/Kosher regulations?
    - (3) Bris/Circumcision?
    - (4) Zionism?

## B. CAN JEWISH PEOPLE ENTER GOD'S KINGDOM

### APART FROM FAITH IN YESHUA?

THE ISSUE: A number of the believers, both Jewish and gentile, now say that Jewish people have a pathway into Gods favor apart from individual faith. They say, "How can the gospel be Good News for the Jews when the usual interpretation seems to condemn Jews to hell?"

1. What do the Hebrew scriptures say about the relationship of individual Jewish people to God?
2. What did Messiah Yeshua say about atonement to the orthodox Jewish leaders of his day?
3. What was the message of the early Jewish believers to the mainstream Jewish leadership?
4. Do 1700 years of violence by Christendom against Jewish people change these imperatives?

## C. JEWS AND GENTILES, TOGETHER IN MESSIAH - EPHESIANS 2

1. Who is a Jew?
2. Who is a Gentile?
3. The situation in the early congregations
4. The status of the Gentiles  
Ephesians 2:12
5. God's solution:  
Isaiah 49:6  
Ephesians 2:13-14
6. A new unity in Messiah Yeshua  
Ephesians 2:15-22
7. Should Gentiles seek to become Jewish?
8. We DO remain either Jews or Gentiles, male or female, but are in unity in Messiah  
Galatians 3:28

## D. MESSIANIC JEWISH THEOLOGY: “THE BELIEVER AND THE MOSAIC LAW”

1. The Mosaic Law and its limitations
  - a. It was given to only one nation
  - b. It was conditional
  - c. It was given for a temporary period of time
2. The inability of the Law - Galatians 3
  - a. The Law could only curse (3:10-14)
  - b. The Law could not secure your inheritance (3:15-18)
  - c. The Law was a temporary custodian and ‘tutor’, pointing to Messiah (3:23-26)
  - d. Conclusion: Neither Jews nor Gentiles are under Mosaic Law, we are acceptable to God through faith in Messiah (3:26-29)
3. The abolishing and nullification of the Law, use of the Greek word “katargeo”
  - a. The Law “fades away” - II Corinthians 3:1-18 (v.11 ‘katargeo’)
  - b. Messiah “abolished” the Law - Ephesians 2:14-17 (v.15 ‘katargeo’)
4. Objections to the ‘end of the Law’, some say:
  - a. The Law is eternal - Matthew 5:17  
Answer:
  - b. Only the ceremonial Law has been done away with  
Answer:
  - c. The Law’s end implies that the Law, given by God, was bad  
Answer:
  - d. Without the Law, we can no longer be Jews  
Answer:
5. Our *Freedom* to “keep” portions of the Law as desired

## E. MESSIANIC CONGREGATIONS

### TWO CONTRASTING VIEWS:

*“Messianic Judaism is a distinctive community alongside, but not within, the Christian community.”*

Russel Resnik,  
Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations  
(Letter to the Editor - CHRISTIANITY TODAY,  
August 2008)

*“Messianic Judaism is a legitimate expression of Biblical faith by Jewish and Gentile believers in Messiah Yeshua, and part of the multi-faceted universal body of believers, the Christian community.”*

Mottel Baleston,  
Association of Messianic Congregations

1. The supporters of the Messianic Congregation movement say:
  - a. Congregations need to exist to demonstrate the “Remnant” concept
  - b. Congregations are the best vehicle for Jewish evangelism
  - c. Congregations ensure Jewish cultural and family survival

“The Churches” have failed to accommodate Jewish believers at best, or at worst they actively try to separate Jewish believers from their culture and families.
2. The critics of Messianic Congregations say:
  - a. Congregations cause divisions in the body of Christ
  - b. Congregations “major on the minors” and often flirt with heresies
  - c. The Jewish community says they are deceptive
3. Seeking a healthy balance
  - a. A realistic assessment of congregations and Jewish evangelism
  - b. Confronting Jewish/Gentile inequality
  - c. Recognizing the possible loss of influence on the larger body of believers
  - d. Avoiding dogmatism, i.e. “Congregations are the only way”
  - e. Avoiding extremes in theology and terminology
  - f. Recognizing that no matter how well we ‘do congregation’, the mainstream Jewish leadership will never fully accept us

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### **Websites with Good Material on a Balanced Messianic Judaism**

[www.Ariel.org](http://www.Ariel.org)

[www.BibleStudyProject.org](http://www.BibleStudyProject.org)

[www.MessianicAssociation.org](http://www.MessianicAssociation.org)

[www.WordofMessiah.org](http://www.WordofMessiah.org)