

## STANDING WHEN MANY ARE RETIRING (3)

It is most ironic that many of the points of criticism found in the documented objections against the belief of people like ourselves, are more applicable to the traditional Christian belief than it is to the so called Hebrew Roots Movement. While we do not necessarily align ourselves completely with every claim made under the banner of the "Hebrew Roots Movement", we have nevertheless chosen to return to what we believe are the very roots of the convictions and lifestyle of the early followers of the Messiah. This choice is not an easy one to make - it is often met with great resistance and animosity, coming from those standing at a distance and taking for granted the bona fides of their inherited system of belief. But the majority of us who have made this choice, have done so primarily because we came to understand that what we had been taught consistently by traditional christianity, represented a breach and a moving away from many clear-cut concepts and practices in Scriptures. Against this background we can only frown (and even put in a little smile) at the accusation that WE have taken a route away from Scriptures.

On a website entitled "Field Guide to the Wide World of Religion" there is a subdivision in which readers are warned against the so-called "Hebrew Roots Movement". The following is a quote from this article:

"It is the position of this website that any ministry or group which identifies itself with Hebrew Roots interests which promote any of the following ideas is undermining the simplicity that is in Jesus:

Any claim that insists that adopting customs or traditions of Judaism is necessary to "get closer to God" or "understand the deep things of God."

Any claim that such a ministry or group is revealing astounding information, unavailable to the average Bible reader, that will "transform your spiritual life." (Only Jesus truly transforms lives.)

Any claim that insists that Christians must study the writings of the historical Jewish Rabbis, such as those in the Talmud, in order to understand the Bible and live Godly lives.

Any subtle hint or overt claim that the New Testament is inferior to the Old Testament as inspired by God.

Any subtle hint or overt claim that Jesus of Nazareth was just a really pious first century Rabbi.

Any subtle hint or overt claim that the Apostle Paul attempted to undermine the teachings of Jesus.

We shall not try to defend our own view on each of these points, as many (if not all) of these have already been treated in other studies. But what is being hinted at in these 6 points seems very much like a hand pointing with one finger to another but having three fingers pointing back. This may even help us to remember why we have chosen to "come out" in the first place! Let us examine each one of these points from this perspective."

Adopting customs or traditions of Judaism. This is a very real danger and one that we should all take very seriously, but the question is how many people are aware of the (non-Scriptural) customs and traditions of Christianity, like Sunday worship, "holy days" like Easter and Christmas, infant baptism, Trinitarian doctrine, rejecting the Name of the Almighty, rejecting the commandments of Yahweh, and many others. Just like Judaism, Christianity has also come up with numerous customs and traditions, many of which go beyond (and even against) the clear message of Scriptures.

Claiming unique and superior knowledge and spirituality. There are many clear warnings against pride and boasting in Scriptures, like "he who thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor 10:12). What we have seen and experienced with (some areas of) traditional christianity, however, is even worst than this. For many, the age old doctrines of the christian belief are set in stone and have become like an unmoving rock and an untouchable stronghold - elevated to a position far beyond the reach and the questioning of ordinary people. Anyone who dares to question a doctrine that does not seem to reflect the truth and the consistent message of

Scriptures, is often subjected to the "divinely appointed" authorities of the church and treated with contempt.

Insisting on studying the writings of a religious nature. It is our firm view that our belief should not be based upon the writings and doctrines of men but purely upon the plain and clear writings of both the Pre-messianic and Messianic Scriptures. The majority of churches, however, rely very heavily on religious writings and confessions and statements of faith. These churches try to convince their members that they are following sound principles like "sola Scriptura" and "soli Deo gloria" but even a very superficial, but objective investigation will prove that the majority of churches are built upon foundations and belief systems contaminated with human error and manmade doctrines.

Viewing the "New Testament" as being inferior to the "Old Testament". Because the "New Testament" contains the earliest available writings about Y'shua, the promised Messiah of the "Old Testament", it should not be seen as inferior to the "Old Testament". It should rather be seen as a collection of writings that sheds invaluable light on the prophetic content of the "Old Testament" and as such, came into existence under the guidance of the Spirit of Yahweh. There is, however, a very real tendency among many thousands of people who call themselves followers of the Messiah, to do the exact opposite and view the Old Testament as being inferior to the New Testament - something that neither the Messiah Himself, nor any of his early followers, would ever dream of doing.

Seeing Y'shua just as a prominent historical person. While Scriptures leave no doubt that Y'shua of Natsaret was a historical person, in other words a human being who lived and walked on this earth some 2000 years ago, it also declares that this man, Y'shua, was unlike any other human being who had lived before him. He was given many special titles, like Son of Elohim, Son of Man, Lamb of Elohim, Word of Yah and Immanuel; his birth came about supernaturally; He did not yield before the temptation to sin; He performed many miracles and taught like no one before; He died and arose from the dead after three days; He ascended to heaven where He was exalted to a position at the right hand of Yahweh. The claim, however, that Y'shua is Yahweh, is not true and does not reflect what both Pre-messianic and Messianic Scriptures teach about Him. It also does not reflect what the Messiah said about (and thought of) Himself.

Saying that Shaul undermined the teachings of Y'shua. While some (groups or individuals) in the Hebrew Roots Movement may be claiming that Shaul undermined the teachings of Y'shua, a proper understanding of Scriptures will clearly reveal that this is not the case. Shaul called on other believers to become his followers - just as he was a follower of Messiah and everything that the Messiah had taught (1 Cor 11:1). He would never undermine or deviate from the teachings of Messiah. The flip side of the coin is that many in the christian tradition are of the opinion that Shaul's writings and sayings contained some kind of new revelation. They say Shaul's teachings were different because he had the perspective of "hindsight" with regards to a so-called "change", especially as far as the Torah is concerned, that came about after the death and resurrection of the Messiah. This prove to be a false claim and a subtle twist enforced upon the clear message of Scriptures - something that the apostle Kepha (Peter) warned against clearly (2 Kepha 3:15-17) and also something, up till this day, that has caused thousands of believers to stumble on a side track.