

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

— Matthew 24:4-5 —

Hebrew Roots (Pharisaism)

How strong are your vocabulary skills? When you read, do you have a dictionary handy in case you come across a word you do not understand? Or do you read presumptuously? Nobody is a walking dictionary. If you do not understand something, take the time to research it. Many words have multiple meanings. Many false doctrines have been built upon the foundation of misunderstanding.

When I first believed, almost fifty years ago, I examined many denominations. I thought, certainly they can teach me how to understand the Bible. But the more I read the Bible, and the more I compared it to the various denominational doctrines, the more it seemed to me that they mostly were not teaching the Bible the way it read to me.

In those days, I would listen to radio station WOAI in San Antonio, Texas. All through the night they broadcast one preacher after another from various denominations. One I remember was “The Sacred Name Broadcast” with Jacob O. Meyer. His entire doctrine was based around knowing the original Hebrew names of the Father and the Son, and living according to the Mosaic covenant. Accordingly, if you did not know these things, you did not know the true God.

I knew this was not true¹, because God had called me long before I knew the names. As time went on I came across others with the same beliefs, but none of them could agree on the actual pronunciation or the spelling of the names. There are so many versions of this doctrine that if you thought you had to believe in it to be saved, you could never know which one got it right.

The truth is, God speaks all languages. He is the one who divided us by language after the tower of Babel incident. All languages were given by God. Languages have different alphabets, with various symbols to represent the different consonant and vowel vocalizations. An approximation of Jesus' name in Hebrew might be Yeshua. But we are trying to use a different alphabet to sound out a Hebrew word. In Greek, Jesus' name was translated Iesous. Not because it sounds like Zeus, but because "ie" was the closest approximation to the "y" sound in the Greek alphabet. The "s" in the middle of Iesous was because they did not have a way of representing the "sh" sound. The "s" on the end was to indicate the masculine form. This is just how different languages are. Later, when it was translated from Greek into old German, they used a "j" for the "y" sound, because that is what "j" sounded like in German. When it was translated into English, they kept the "j", but in English "j" sounds like a soft "g". It is that innocent. If you ask some Spanish speaking people to pronounce the word "yellow", it will come out "jello". It is simply the difference in the way people speak.

It is the definition of the word that matters. What phonetic symbol you use to represent that definition is irrelevant, as long as you understand the definition. Salvation is not like magic, where you need to say “abracadabra” or “hocus pocus” before the magic will work. If you think you have to speak Hebrew to understand the Word of God, you may need a time machine. What you need is the Holy Spirit, and for that, all you need to do is believe and ask. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic. The New Testament was never written in Hebrew. It was always Greek, and that was God's doing.

So what about this idea that we need to become Jewish and keep the old covenant to be saved?

Galatians 5:3-5 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Did Timothy and Paul fall from grace because Paul circumcised Timothy?

Acts 16:1-3 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.”

It seems hypocritical since they had settled this exact controversy in Acts 15. But then, Paul was still flesh and blood.

Acts 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

Acts 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

Acts 15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

Acts 15:7-10 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Acts 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Acts 15:19-20 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

Acts 15:24-29 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

The book of Acts was a period of learning. They had not yet understood by the Holy Spirit what was the meaning of the new covenant. It took some time.

Take for instance, water baptism. Jesus never intended for water baptism to continue after His resurrection. John the baptizer made that clear from the beginning.

Mark 1:8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

Paul later understood that.

1 Corinthians 1:13-17 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

There are no rituals in Christianity. It is all about walking in the Spirit and in faith. The old covenant was for a specific time, a specific people, and a specific purpose. It was the constitution for a nation to be set apart to the one true God, until the one came who would fulfill that purpose. Jesus fulfilled that purpose. Once the real thing is come, there is no more purpose for the symbolic. The old covenant had an expiration date. How long was that covenant to last, "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made"?

Galatians 3:16-19 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before (Abrahamic covenant) of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, **till the seed should come to whom the promise was made;**...

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:13-16 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Hebrews 8:13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.

Hebrew roots is not the old covenant. Not even the Jews are living by the old covenant. They cannot, because that system does not exist anymore. What you are doing is practicing Rabbinic Judaism, which is simply modern Pharisaism. They will one day attempt to resume the old covenant. That is when their anti-messiah will appear, because that is the kind of messiah they have been expecting all along. If you are following after Hebrew roots, you may follow him too.

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Only Jesus Saves