

# Midrash With The Rabbi

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RABBI MORDECAI SILVER



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MIDRASH WITH RAV MORDECAI SILVER Collected Teachings of Rav Mordecai Silver by Rabbi Mordecai Silver © 2008, Tree of Life Messianic Ministries, Organ, NM.

Cover by Mordecai Silver, Organ, NM

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# Why Should Christians Learn about Jews and Jewish Traditions?

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Why should Christians learn about Jews and Jewish traditions? The answers to these questions cannot only be informative and enlightening, they can also be somewhat challenging because they force us to rethink centuries of tradition and stereotyping regarding Christianity and Jews.

Most do not realize there was a vital connection between Christianity and Judaism that was severed by the Christian church 1700 years ago. Once that severing took place, biblical Judaism and biblical Christianity, which God intended to be one, went their separate ways with tragic consequences for both.

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## RETURNING TO OUR ROOTS

We are living at a time when God is calling both Jews and Christians back to their biblical roots. The biblical root of Christianity grew from an everlasting covenant God made with Abraham. Christians become part of that covenant through faith in Yeshua-Jesus. The Whole House of Israel!

There were thousands of years of Hebrew history, culture, language, traditions and customs that formed the root of Christianity. We may not like it nor want to acknowledge it, but Christianity is nourished from that Hebraic-Jewish root.

A Hebrew rabbi from Tarsus, known as Rav Shaul-the Apostle Paul, wrote these words to the Christians in Rome, “Then don’t boast as if you were better than the branches (Jews)! However, if you do boast, remember that you are not supporting the root (the Hebraic origins of our faith), the root is supporting you (Christianity) Romans 11:18). The more we learn about our Hebraic-Jewish roots, the more fruitful and blessed we are in our lives as Believers—as Torah Observant/Biblical Israel.

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## A Fuller and Clearer Understanding of the Bible

While Christians in America view life with a Western mind and worldview, the Bible was written by Abraham's descendants who had an Hebraic culture, language, and worldview. This presents a real problem and challenge. We have a Middle-Eastern book that we seek to understand from our Western culture. Our Western perspective can easily cause us to misunderstand the Bible. Furthermore, our mind has been more influenced by Greek philosophy than biblical, Hebraic thought. This is why we must study the Hebraic-Jewish roots of Christianity.

“The Bible is a Hebrew book, telling the story of the Hebrew people, Yeshua was a Hebrew. We, on the other hand, are Western people sharing a very diverse and sometimes controversial heritage that comes from many sources.

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## A Fuller and Clearer Understanding of the Bible

If the Bible is going to be understood in our day, we must develop ‘Hebrew eyes’ and ‘Hebrew attitudes’ toward life” (John Shelby Spong, *This Hebrew Lord* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), p.31. When we read the Bible through Hebrew eyes, our understanding becomes much richer, deeper, and clearer with more detail than we could ever imagine. We gain new and powerful insights and clarity of vision because we are perceiving the Bible through the eyes of the writers. We see truths that we just cannot see with our Western eyes no matter how honorable our motives and intense our desires.

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## **Exciting New Insights About the Teachings of Yeshua**

While Christians have a good understanding of the deity of Yeshua, few know Yeshua the man. Every culture makes Yeshua over into their own image. Westerners get upset when they discover that Yeshua was not a European. Religious groups get upset when they discover that Yeshua was not a member of their denomination. The PLO is trying to make Yeshua into a Palestinian. Yeshua was a Hebrew born into a Hebrew family in the Israelite village of Bethlehem in the land of Israel. His heritage was Hebraic and He kept all the Torah of God.

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## Exciting New Insights About the Teachings of Yeshua

### YESHUA

Read the Hebrew

Wore Israeli clothes

Ate only biblically kosher food

Kept the Hebrew-Biblical Sabbath

Celebrated the Hebrew feasts

Followed Hebraic customs w Scriptures

Spoke Hebrew



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## Exciting New Insights About the Teachings of Yeshua

### YESHUA

Yeshua's followers were Israelites/Hebrews/Jews. The Apostolic Scriptures tell us that they worshipped on Saturday (the biblically appointed day), attended the Synagogue and kept the feasts.

They acknowledged Yeshua as the Hebrew King and Messiah, wrote the "Hebrew" Apostolic Scriptures, and lived Torah-observant life-styles (Acts 21:20).

Yeshua and His early followers were deeply rooted in the rich Hebraic soil of their ancestors. They thought, taught, and lived out of this soil. God planted Christianity in this soil and we must return to it in order to be biblically nourished.

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## Rav Shaul/the Apostle Paul

Rav Shaul-the Apostle Paul is one of the most misunderstood persons in history. Both Christians and Jews believe Rav Shaul was an anti-“Law” Jew who established a Gentile brand of Christianity that was different from his ancient faith. We learn otherwise when we study Rav Shaul’s writings from his Hebraic-Jewish roots. The greatest misunderstanding of Rav Shaul’s writing relates to his views on Law and Grace. For centuries, the church has taught that, in the Tanakh-First Testament, the Hebrews were saved by Law, but in the Apostolic Writings we are saved by grace and faith. From a Western view, the Law was understood as a legalistic system of rules which the Hebrews had to keep in order to be saved. Grace was understood as freedom from the Law. Judaism with its Law, and Christianity with its grace, were placed in opposition to one another. This is a Western view, but it is not Rav Shaul’s view, nor is it what he intended us to understand from his writings.

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## **TORAH**

- The Hebrew word for commandment is mitzvah
- Torah means to teach, instruct, guide, and direct.

Torah is teaching people the way to walk with God. • It does not mean a legalistic set of rules one must follow in order to have salvation.

The consequence of this unfortunate misunderstanding has been a disaster for the church. Christianity became a “lawless” religion in which people believed they could simply confess salvation and live as they please. Yet, the entire Apostolic Writings is Torah showing us how to walk with God.

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## **A Better Talmid-Student of Yeshua**

**Another exciting benefit of studying our Hebraic-Jewish roots is that we will be a better talmid-student of Yeshua. Yeshua said to two of His talmidim, "...Foolish people! So unwilling to put your trust in everything the prophets spoke! Didn't the Messiah have to die like this before entering His glory?" Then, starting with Moshe and all the prophets, He explained to them the things that can be found throughout the Tanakh concerning Himself. (Luke 24:25-27).**

**Luke recorded this story and went on to say, "Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. But He became invisible to them. They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn inside us as He spoke to us on the road, opening up the Tanakh to us?"**

**When we learn our Hebraic-Jewish roots, the Ruach-Spirit of the Living God will open our spiritual eyes to know Yeshua more clearly and more intimately. God's words will burn within our hearts with a fresh fire that cannot be quenched.**

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## How You Can Learn More

By attending a Messianic Congregation or group that teaches and practices the Hebraic-Jewish traditions. By attending Messianic conferences that are held in all parts of the country and world. By enrolling in courses and discussion groups via the Internet. There are many opportunities available to you today than ever before. Make use of them.

The Judaic Studies Institute affords you the opportunity to grow in the Jewish Roots of Your Faith In Yeshua.

