

Kosher Jesus?

By Sha'ul bayn Yahukhenun ha Yahudah

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The Way of the Most High

“Exalting belief in our Father, the Most High **יְהוָה** (YaHUAH), through His Turah, the 5 scrolls of M'shih (Moses).”

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Over the years, we have read a lot of books out of plain interest written by rabbis. Some arguing for the validity and so-called "first century" perspective on Yeshua/Jesus. Others like Asher Norman writing against. Recently, one rabbi by the name of Shmuley Boteach has decided there are not enough books of drivel on this subject, so he decided to write his own, entitled "Kosher Jesus." Albeit, he had great intentions.

Apparently, Boteach had intentions to show that there was a historical Yeshua/Jesus, but not the great Passover Lamb, High Priest, Son of the Most High and everything else the New Testament paints him as. Well, in all honesty, that is no different than a lot of Jewish rabbis prior to Boteach. Really, do we need another book attempting to say that there was some guy named Yeshua/Jesus who really did live, but somehow taught the Torah and had his words twisted and made into a false mighty one (alahym - elohim) after his death? And really, all this does is perpetuate the lie that some guy died on Passover in a certain year by death decree by the mouth of Pontius Pilate, which has never been proven historically.

Shmuley Boteach is simply another rabbi trying to cash in on the Messianic Jewish movement. With a book title like "Kosher Jesus," the market audience MUST be Messianic Jews. He claims his target audience is regular Jews, to show them that the REAL Jesus was at one point a kosher Torah-observant "Jew." But clearly, no Torah-only believer is going to buy his book, as we could care less about the blasphemer (Yeshua/Jesus) or the New Testament. But Messianic Jews on the other hand, who love to delve in the realm of mystery, would love to get their hands on yet-another book pandering to the idea that the blasphemer (Yeshua/Jesus) is really an okay guy, and that the New Testament originally was pretty "kosher." It is that mysterious, elusive, supposed "first century" "Notsrim" (as they call their sect of the Nazarenes in modern day Masoretic niqud). It is a Pharisaic rabbinical perspective that Messianic Jews (as they are often called) love to play on. Ironically, while Boteach would love for Jews to buy his book and prepare a defense against the Christian missionaries, I'm almost certain that most people buying his book will be Christians or Messianic Jews.

Shmuley writes in his own words that "Kosher Jesus is the true story of Jesus' Jewish life – culled from early Christian and Jewish sources – that portrays Jesus as a Torah-observant teacher who instructed his followers to keep every letter of the Law, whose teachings quoted extensively from the Bible and rabbinical writings, who fought Roman paganism and persecution of the Jewish people, and was killed by Pontius Pilate for his rebellion against Rome, the Jews having had nothing whatsoever to do with his murder." Seriously? A Jewish rabbi living in the 20th century of our Common Era somehow got the drop, finally, on the mysterious "true story of Jesus' Jewish life?" Sounds a bit like Deepak Chopra, Nehemiah Gordon or Geza Vermes to me. It is almost enough to make one vomit. Almost. But we've heard it all before.

Alish'bai and I believed and taught the so-called "Hebraic" "first century" "Notsri" (Nazarene) message for close to five years. We also had a book, *The Path of the Almighty and His Son*. That is, until we realized that the New Testament, taken at face value, based on historical documents and the original Greek manuscripts, is not in agreement with the Torah (Scripture) quotations and doctrinal issues it addresses.

Mind you, Shmuley Boteach has in no way stated that Yeshua/Jesus is the Son of the Most High (as far as I know) or the "anointed one" (m'shiyakh - messiah). His goal is

to show that there was a progression from a simply pharisaic rabbi into the great Passover Lamb and all the rest that Christianity portrays him as. And as great an endeavor as that may be, there is still one problem with that. No one can prove that Yeshua/Jesus lived, died and rose again. No one can prove that Herod killed children under the age of 2. No one can prove that Pontius Pilate killed such a person. In truth, Shmuley Boteach, like numerous Jewish rabbis before him, is simply pandering to the myth that this Yeshua/Jesus actually did live, and attempts to portray him as a righteous teacher of the Torah, devoted to YaH and the Turah (Scripture).

What hurts the most about *Kosher Jesus* is that "Rabbi Shmuley offers an unadorned image of Jesus as a Jewish fighter who came to Jerusalem to rescue the Temple from Roman dominance."¹ Please say it isn't so. Yeshua/Jesus didn't rescue the House of YaH from anything. And on top of this, Shmuley re-enforces the myth that "Jesus was turned over to the Romans by the corrupt Jewish High Priest Caiaphas, a Roman stooge who acted as Rome's police enforcer."² Come on. You're killing us here. Shmuley is not helping against the evangelism of New Testament believers, he is actually giving them a gun to say "Yes, a high priest, in a certain year, had Yeshua/Jesus killed for our sins!" Without any proof whatsoever. And it will perpetuate the reading of the New Testament for passages as Matthew 5 known as the "Sermon on the Mount," thinking that it is in line with the Turah (Scripture) when it is not. People will, as a result of Boteach, come away with the idea that this Yeshua/Jesus really did exist, really did teach the Turah (Law), really did die by the instigation of a high priest, really did die by the order of Pontius Pilate, and be drawn to the New Testament in some way. It is sad that Jewish rabbis, rather than focus on the Turah (Scripture), the coming Government of YaH, the lifestyle and path of the Most High, have chosen to cash in on the Messianic Jewish movement by portraying Yeshua/Jesus as a Turah-observant rabbi.

¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kevin-bermeister/chabad-emissary-kosher-jesus_b_1210196.html.

² Ibid.