

# Debunking "the Historical Jewish Jesus" Theory

By Sha'ul bayn Yahukhenun ha Yahudah

Copyright 2012©



The Way of the Most High

“Exalting belief in Our Father, the Most High יהוה (YaHUAH), through His TaNaK (falsely called ‘Old Testament’).”

Email – [followYah@gmail.com](mailto:followYah@gmail.com)  
Website – [www.thewayofthemosthigh.ca](http://www.thewayofthemosthigh.ca)

The following is a response and commentary by Sha'ul to a document written by Jesse Jury on *The Jewish Origins of Christianity and the Jewishness of Jesus*. Similar to our review of *Kosher Jesus*, there are numerous people who believe in Yeshua/Jesus as a historical Jewish rabbi, prophet, preacher, teacher, Essene, rebel or other variances. In truth, there is no truth to these claims. Enjoy our response to Jesse's paper, to which he still has not responded.

YaH Khey (YaH lives)!

Sha'ul

---

Jury 1

## The Jewish Origins of Christianity and the Jewishness of Jesus

By J. Jury

March 14, 2012

**Sha'ul: My comments and editing suggestions are in this font or in red.**

From his original teachings and followers to the religion that was established in his wake, everything that embodies the historical Jesus was distinctly Jewish, and does not represent modern Christianity.

**This is a claim that has often been made by those writing on the subject of the historicity of Jesus. However, it is an assumption. Modern Christianity is based on a plain and simple acceptance of the New Testament at face value, which Messianic Judaism rejects. While Messianic Judaism attempts to worm around contradictions, Trinity issues and so forth, Christianity does not. It admits that it is a new religion, different and replacing of the belief system of the TaNaK (OT). The "gospels" themselves have issues within them that do NOT "embody" a person who would have been "distinctly Jewish." This in itself merits a rather large treatise which I will not go into at this point.**

The sentiments of this paper are best summed up in the words of Dr. John D. Garr, a scholar in the field of Judeo-Christian studies: "Christianity's roots are in Judaism. Without Judaism, there would be no Christianity, for biblical Judaism is the parent of Christianity" (19).

**Again, this is another claim that cannot be proven. That is, every time that the TaNaK (OT) is quoted in the New Testament, much like the Qur'an, it is an inaccurate quotation taken out of context and often changing the original wording. Thus, while people claim the New Testament is based on the TaNaK, it is not. It is a separate belief system which rejects the House of the Most High, rejects the Most High as the one and only Creator who alone created all that is, rejects the laws of the Most High (Matt. 5 and other examples), rejects the priesthood of L'wi (Levi) and replaces it with that of Jesus, rejects the people of Y'shr'Al (Israel) and replaces them with believers in Jesus.**

Regrettably, Christianity, by its very nature, defines itself as being "not Judaism," just as Judaism defines itself as being "not Christianity;" yet this stark distinction between the two groups was not as clear in ancient times as it is today (Nanos 1). Christianity, as a religious system, began as a distinct sect of Judaism and shared with it many of the same

fundamentals, ideals, beliefs, and norms. That Christianity and Judaism have more in common than not is an understatement. In fact, three of the greatest tenants of each religion are shared by both faiths: a belief in one God, a sacred collection of holy texts, and the concept of an afterlife (Garr 23).

**Began as a sect of "Judaism?" No, they were considered blasphemers. If there is any historicity to the story of Jesus, then he died as a reject who could not come through with the prophecies about the House of YaH, the re-gathering of the 12 tribes, bringing peace between father and son, and numerous other prophecies about the "anointed one." Moreover, it is his changing of the Turah (Law) and belief in him as Passover Lamb, High Priest, and the Father come in the flesh (Aymnu'Al - Emmanuel) which is the worst part of it. So no, it was never a sect of "Judaism," any more than Islam could be. So they did not believe in the same Creator/Most High Father. They believed that the Father and the Son are one and the same. This is plain in Matthew 1 and John 1, which Messianic Judaism fights tooth and nail.**

Both religions contain moral injunctions to regulate human action and interaction, **The "moral injunctions" which Jesus taught were different than what we find in the Turah. So you cannot relate the two. That would be like saying that Islam is similar to the TaNaK because it also has "moral injunctions." But those of Islam are different than those of the TaNaK.**

and both religions teach an outreach to help those in need, both physically and spiritually.

**While this is true, it ought to be noted that the TaNaK does not give suggestions in this regard, but specific commandments about how to deal with poverty. Jesus gives rather illogical and overbearing suggestions that cannot apply to our time and are out of step with the laws of the TaNaK. Such as Matt. 19:21 where he asks to sell all that you have, give it to the poor and follow him. Jesus does not fulfill the commandments regarding poverty which are numerous and extensive in the TaNaK.**

Since both religions contain an internal authority structure which very closely mirrors one another (Moseley 8), it is impossible to engage in a study of Jesus and his early followers, the basis of the Christian church, without first understanding the backdrop of first century Judaism (Farmer 192).

The primary directives of religious Judaism come from a holy book called the Torah, which is understood to be the direct revelation to Moses from God himself contained in the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It is believed that the Torah was received by Moses directly from God, and that Moses passed it down to the people through an unbroken line of succession (*The Soncino Babylonian Talmud*, Mishnah Avoth 1:1). Its name is frequently translated into English as "Law," but a more accurate translation is "Teaching" (Nanos 2).

**"Law" or "Government" would be the best term to define Turah. It is the mark (t) of the Head/Authority (ר) of YaH (א). Teaching is best used regarding other words, contexts and idioms.**

For the remainder of this paper, the Hebrew term "Torah" will be used.

There is also a secondary source of cultural and religious directives, found in the commentaries of Jewish teachers throughout the ages, known as "halacha," the name of which refers to legal rulings of the religious community (Moseley 165). It is from the observance of halacha that many Jewish traditions and norms have been developed. Despite the fact that halacha is frequently referred to as the "oral law" (Roth 929), written forms of it do exist, examples of which are found in the anthologies of such Jewish works as the Talmud, the Tosefta, and the Zohar. As the interpretation of the Torah can differ from

community to community, a different set of halachic rules can be found in the writings of different sects, such as those found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (Vermes 26).

**In comparing the words of Jesus with the words of rabbinical commentary and customs in observance of the Torah, there is a big difference. The words of rabbis were always and only the words of rabbis. They were commentary and suggestions as to how to observe the Torah, which were often debated and questioned, revised and so forth. Moreover, we are told in the TaNaK not to add or take away from the words of the Most High. The words of Jesus are taken as commandment and a way of life to be strictly followed, even in contradiction of adding and taking away from the TaNaK.**

From a sociological standpoint, both the Torah and its halachic counterparts represent the norms, values, roles, and customs of the Jewish culture, providing expectations for the legal, religious, and economic framework of Jewish society (Luhman 68-71). The Torah contains regulations for the priesthood and judicial system, being the basis of legal and rational authority, whereas matters of halacha are primarily regulated through traditional authority (Luhman 87). **Jury 3**

These elements together formed the cultural framework for the inhabitants of the Jewish society of first century Israel. The land and its inhabitants were under Roman occupation, with garrisons stationed throughout the land, and a High Priest who had been appointed by Caesar (Farmer 188). This was not unlike the events of several hundred years prior, in which the Jewish people were under oppression from the Seleucid Greek Empire. In spite of being significantly outnumbered, the Jews had been victorious in their wars against the Greeks (Farmer 14), and had come to revere an individual named Judas Maccabeus for his heroism against the Greek armies, even calling him “the savior of Israel” (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1 Maccabees 9:21).

**While this is true, it is noted that the writings of Yahudah (Maccabees) are not included in the TaNaK for the most significant reason that much of it is out of line with the TaNaK. However, its historical value remains the same, and it should be noted that Yahudah (Judas Maccabeus) was never worshipped, seen as a high priest, or the embodiment of Yah Most High. Thus, there is no parallel between him and Jesus. Jesus did not go to battle with Rome and ended up being simply another person on another Roman cross like numerous criminals and dissidents of Rome. That is, if we take the New Testament at face value as a historical document, which I do not.**

The account of the life and battles of Judas were recorded in great detail by the first century Jewish historian Josephus, showing that Jewish nationalists of the first century CE held the victories of the Maccabees as tremendously important in the Roman occupation (Farmer 109). All of these elements are a brief summation of the social and political climate into which Jesus was born.

**Doesn't it strike you as odd that Josephus had so much to say about Yahudah (Judas) Maccabeus and hardly a word about the supposed Yeshua/Jesus? For a Jewish historian it seems he didn't do much work in the area of the supposed "historical Jesus." Beside Josephus there were numerous other Jewish historians who had kept quite diligent records in matters pertaining to their people, who had nothing to say about a "historical Jesus." This is myth-making at its best.**

In studying the parallels between the earlier Maccabean revolts against Greek oppression and the Jewish nationalism in the Roman occupation, it should be noted that Jesus was “a true son of Israel who wrestled with and agonized over the crucial political, economic, social, and religious issues of his own particular people in his own particular day” (Farmer 188). The Jewish nationalists of the first century Roman occupation **saw** Jesus as a potential new militant leader who, like Judas who came before him, would lead a rebellion against the

Roman occupation, which had become the new political, social, and religious enemy of the Jewish nation (Farmer 100).

The Jewish background of Jesus' life makes itself abundantly clear in the Gospel accounts (Tabor 109). The Gospels record his Jewish lineage (Matthew 1:1-17), that he read the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogues (Luke 4:16), that he had a Jewish style of teaching (Matthew 5-7), that he celebrated Jewish festivals (Luke 2:42, John 2:23), and that he observed the Jewish Sabbath (John 18:20).

**Yes, all would agree with these points.**

James Tabor, a distinguished author and Dead Sea Scrolls expert, noted that for the first century Jew living in the Roman occupation of Israel, "it was impossible to separate the social and political realities of military occupation and economic oppression from Jewish piety and faith" (110). In other words, for Jews living in Jesus' day, religious observance of Judaism was a devoutly pivotal focus of everyday life.

Given the political backdrop of first century Israel, it has already been established that the Jews were expecting in **the** role of Messiah, a militant leader who would liberate them from Roman occupation. Even his own students expected this of him when they asked, "Is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Jesus very clearly did not meet the expectations of this role. He was not a warrior, but a teacher, urging his students to love their enemies (Matthew 5:44).

**Agreed, and this being the case, no one ought to have thought of Jesus as an "anointed one," as all of the great prophecies regarding the "anointed one" were prophecies of greatness, the deliverance and wonders of Yah, NOT simply teaching... especially when the teachings do not line up with the TaNaK.**

Success, in Jesus' teachings, was not determined by heroic military exploits, but by service to the poor in the community (Matthew 19:21). It is for this reason that modern Jews do not identify Jesus as the Messiah from the Hebrew Scriptures (Roth 905).

**That is an understatement. So far you, nor Roth, have addressed the actual prophecies about what the "anointed one" in Scripture is supposed to accomplish. EVERYONE was supposed to accomplish the care of the poor, needy, widow, and orphan. IF Jesus helped the poor, which we have very little example of, that would make him an average person following the TaNaK. However, Jesus never brought anything to a storehouse and doled out clothing and food to the poor. This is actually a failure on the part of Jesus, in that the prophet Mel'aki (Mal.) said His people did not bring the tithes and offerings to His storehouse to be given to the poor and so forth. Of course, there are all the wonderful CLAIMS about Jesus feeding and helping the poor, but no historical evidence.**

There is substantial evidence, however, that the Jews of ancient times identified not one, but two distinct Messiahs, each one having a different role and purpose (Roth 908); one was called the Messiah, son of David, and the other was the Messiah, son of Joseph (Gemara Sukkah 52a). It is found within the pages of the Talmud that the Messiah would be found in Rome, or an area occupied by Roman rule, sitting among the poor lepers (Gemara Sanhedrin 98a). This brief description of the Messiah son of Joseph certainly matches the profile of Jesus in the New Testament (Mark 1:40-45). It is very probable that his first century Jewish followers connected the revolutionary Jesus not with the role of a militant leader, but with the role of a suffering teacher who had been written about by the Hebrew prophets (Isaiah 53:11, Zechariah 12:10). Jesus undoubtedly saw in himself the potential to fulfill the role of the Messiah son of Joseph.

**The problem with this is that Jesus was not the son of Yusap (Joseph). In fact, the "gospels" go through great pains to show that Jesus is the seed directly implanted by the**

Spirit of the Most High into the womb of a lady, without sexual relations with Yusap (Joseph). Jesus, can only be considered the adopted son of Yusap (Joseph). His lineage is different in each account. Moreover, ZakarYah (Zech.) 12 is not at all a prophecy about the anointed one of the lineage of Yusap (Joseph). This is the problem when you take a text out of context. Nowhere is the subject of the anointed one of the lineage of Yusap (Joseph) even mentioned in the text. And as for Y'shaiYahu (Isa.) 53, we know that this is in the context of 52:15, which is a report of the suffering servant of Y'shr'Al (Israel), which the nations can hardly believe. It is not a report which Y'shr'Al (Israel) couldn't believe about Jesus as a suffering servant. Moreover, the servant in 53 moves on to have children, be victorious in battle, and chapter 54 is a servant song of victory, because the suffering servant of Y'shr'Al (Israel) is now exalted.

In bringing reform to the culture of his day, Jesus employed a method of teaching that was distinctly Jewish, and was not unlike other Rabbis of his day (Moseley 19-29). It was built upon the principles of: patience in judgment, making many disciples, and the halachic observance of the Torah (Matthew 29:19-20, Mishnah Avoth 1:1). His students, following his methods of halachic observance, did likewise, and continued to make many disciples. This flow of teaching from one generation to the next became what is known today as the Christian church.

**Okay, if anything, this would make Jesus simply a regular person, a rabbi. That is, if his teachings were in line with the TaNaK, which they were not.**

It is important to note, however, that what is known today as the Christian church, being based upon the original followers of Jesus and his students, was born in the Jewish synagogue of the first century CE; in fact, the traditions, roles, and authority structure of both religious systems have near-exact parallels in one another (Moseley 7-14). From its early leadership to its sacred liturgy and its holy festivals, first-century Christianity was distinctly a "flavor" of Judaism, not a religion separate from it.

**Again, we are in complete disagreement here. Jesus, if he was historical, was tolerated in the synagogues but clearly rejected by the majority, often chased out of the synagogues, and certainly did not start his movement IN any synagogue. Now if people wish to say that after his death, that his followers managed to con a synagogue into belief in Jesus, that is another story, but we need historical proof of these matters. Once again, this only makes Jesus and his followers a bunch of wannabes, regular people. Nothing special. Most importantly, Jesus was worshipped as Passover Lamb, High Priest, and the Creator come in the flesh. This is not the same religion found in the TaNaK. To say that Nazarene/Christian services were the same as what we find in the synagogues of those who worshipped Yah and followed His TaNaK in the first century is a great lie.**

In order to fully understand first century Christianity, it is essential to also understand the group identified in ancient times as the earliest form of Christianity: the Nazarenes. Reference to them as having been the first followers of Jesus is found in the New Testament book of Acts (24:5), which contains in itself a chronicle of the history of the early church after Jesus' death.

Notable fourth century church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, in quoting earlier Jewish church historian Hegesippus, cites that there were at least seven distinct major sects of Judaism during the first century CE (Boyle 158).

**I suppose this is the root of the problem. People think of differences as "sects," when they are in fact often "apostasies."**

There were certainly others, but three in particular stand out that have specific importance to the life and teachings of Jesus: the Pharisees, the Essenes, and the Zealots (Farmer 189). Both Jesus and his Nazarene followers still maintained significant ties to these

three major Jewish sects, all of whom were fairly unified in their resistance of the Roman occupation (Farmer 190).

**Agreed, although Jesus and his followers did nothing about it. I'd say the Occupy movement is doing more in action against corruption in our age than Jesus and his followers ever did.**

Jerome, a late fourth century church historian and theologian, in describing this sect of the Nazarenes, observed that that they “accept Messiah in such a way that they do not cease to observe the old Law” (Trimm 4).

**Again, this is an oxymoron. Acceptance of Jesus means that Passover is no longer Passover and remembrance of deliverance from M'tsrayim (Egypt), it is now a meal of blood and flesh (transubstantiation/Catholicism), the meal of Mithras, “in remembrance” of Jesus (Luke 22:19). This in itself is an aberration of the Torah (Law).**

Another fourth century church father, Epiphanius, elaborated further that the Nazarene sect “did not call themselves Christians— but, 'Nazarenes'

**I guess Epiphanius never read Acts 11:26?**

... However they are simply complete Jews.

**Yeah, that is the problem with New Testament believers. They think it makes a “complete Jew.” Those who reject the New Testament are not really followers of YAH and worthy to be called “Yahudim” (worshippers of YAH). See, it is a different religion.**

They use not only the New Testament but the Old Testament as well, as the Jews do...

**Yahudim did not use the New Testament. They are not the same.**

They have no different ideas, but confess everything exactly as the Law proclaims it and in the Jewish fashion

**I guess Epiphanius forgot all the places where Jesus contradicts the Tanakh, such as Matt. 5:33-37, which is in direct opposition to D'bayrim (Deut.) 6:13.**

— except for their belief in Messiah, if you please! ... They are different from the Jews, and different from Christians, only in the following: they disagree with Jews because they have come to faith in Messiah; but since they are still fettered by the Law— circumcision, the Sabbath, and the rest— they are not in accord with Christians... they are nothing but Jews...” (Trimm 4).

The Nazarenes were not removed from Jerusalem until well into the second century; hence, for its first hundred years, the Nazarene church remained an active part of first-century Judaism, and early church leaders were very involved in Jewish affairs (Moseley 8).

**This is not true. Nazarenes would no more be involved in “Jewish affairs” than Messianic Jews of today.**

This continues to be evident throughout the book of Acts, which illustrates that faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah of the Hebrew Scriptures was in no way a departure from religious Judaism, and Jewish traditions continued to be observed (Tyson 204). Mark Nanos, a distinguished Scholar-in-Residence at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri, observed, regarding the attitude of first century Christianity toward the Torah, “Indifference to Torah was not the norm either for Jesus or for James and the other apostles of this movement. For them, there was no dichotomy between Torah and Christ” (21).

**Agreed, although there is indeed a great dichotomy.**

Early leadership of the Nazarene community continued to keep the movement alive and strong after Jesus' death. There is a very old tradition which holds that leadership of the church was placed in the hands of Jesus' brother, James, who is frequently referred to as James the Just. James, according to the early second century Jewish church historian

Hegesippus, was an extremely pious Jew, who was fervent in worship at the Jewish temple (Boyle 75). Jesus' mission lived on in James, who was held in high regard among the religiously devout Jewish communities. So influential, Hegesippus recorded, was James' influence among the Jews, that "those who did believe, believed because of James. So, when many even of the ruling class believed, there was a commotion among the Jews, and scribes, and Pharisees, who said: 'A little more, and we shall have all the people looking for Jesus as the Christ' " (Boyle 76). It was James who was selected to carry on the torch of the Nazarene movement of Judaism that had begun with Jesus (Tabor 244).

**Of course there is no proof that the "ruling class" or even people in general believed in Jesus. All of this is of course embellishment based upon New Testament claims that numerous worshippers of Yah alone converted to the blasphemy of the New Testament.**

The church at Jerusalem from which James presided over the Nazarene community continued an unbroken line of apostolic succession of Jewish leadership for its subsequent fourteen bishops (Boyle 130-131).

**Here is where things get muddy. If the leadership of the Nazarene movement was "Jewish," their leaders would have been like "Jewish" leaders, being rabbis. The fact that they made a different religion with different titles and so forth is also proof that this was very different from worship of Yah alone and His TaNaK.**

Another factor that contributed to the rapid growth of the Nazarene sect was their openness to the incoming of non-Jews into their community (Roth 835). This quality, while it was not shared by the other Jewish sects, is derived from the writings of the Hebrew prophets (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6), and Jesus was undoubtedly familiar with them. The Nazarene community nonetheless believed it essential to maintain their Jewish identity, the boundaries of which were becoming increasingly difficult to enforce due to this mass influx of non-Jewish believers; for some, it was a struggle to respond to the presence of non-Jews in their religious community (Gregerman 1). Like other Jewish sects of the first century, there is no reason to assume they would perceive the threat of non-Jewish influence any differently (Gregerman 3).

**It is evident that belief in Jesus leads people away from the Torah. And because the Torah was not the government of the Nazarene community, when the nations started to join in on their community, which was basically a pagan religion, then there was no stopping it. This is simple cause and effect. No matter how you try to cut the cake, belief in Jesus equals "freedom" from Torah (Law).**

Evidence of this struggle is seen in the writings of Saint Paul, who, being the most prolific author of the New Testament letters, was recognized by the leadership of the Nazarene movement as a missionary to non-Jews (Galatians 2:7). Paul's mission was to bridge the gap between the Jewish and non-Jewish adherents of the Nazarene movement. He did this, like the Rabbis who came before him, by writing halachic observances of the Torah, specifically pertaining to inclusion of non-Jews in the community (Gregerman 2).

**"Halachic observances of the Torah." lol. Telling people that you can eat food offered to idols because idols are not really alive is hardly a "halachic observance of" Torah (Law - See 1 Corinthians 8).**

Unfortunately, the arguments contained in Paul's writings have frequently been twisted to support the church's departure from Judaism. The reality is that Paul's writings are actually directed against the misuse of the Torah by other Jewish sects who wished to impose their own halachic observations upon the incoming non-Jews (Moseley 39).

**False. I refer back to my last comment.**

It was not significantly after the death of James, Paul, and the rest of the original leadership of the Nazarene community that widespread misunderstanding of the relationship between Jesus' followers and mainstream Judaism entered the church. Early on in the emergence of Christianity, a pagan movement known as Gnosticism began to prevalently infiltrate the church. They derived their name from the Greek word for “knowledge,” and believed, among other things, that salvation came from the acquisition of esoteric knowledge apart from works or lifestyle (Garr 49). This belief in salvation-by-knowledge was diametrically opposed to the understanding of salvation in both Judaism and early Christianity, which is that salvation came by a lifestyle of dedication and perpetual observance of God's commandments and goodness towards fellow mankind. (Micah 6:8, Ecclesiastes 12:13, Mishnah Avoth 1:2).

**Absolutely not. Obviously someone missed the point of the TaNaK. While the TaNaK, particularly the Torah (Law) is the government of Yah, everlasting life or compassion and forgiveness from the Most High was never based on an act of obedience. Read Mi'kah (Micah) 7:18-20. You cannot earn compassion. Compassion and forgiveness are shown and given out of the greatness of the compassion of Yah. Mind you, this does not mean there is no obedience to commandments necessary. It is simply the government of Yah. You were right to quote Mi'kah (Micah) 6:8 and Qohaylat (Ecc.) 12:13 in that regard.**

Marcion, an early second century Gnostic teacher, was among the earlier pioneers of the Gnostic infiltration of the Nazarenes. The ideas he introduced merged Gnostic ideals with Judeo-Christian principals, creating a theology that was sharply dualistic and violently antagonistic toward Judaism (Moseley 40). The result was a portrayal of the God of the Old Testament, i.e. the God of the Jews, as both harsh and legalistic, in contrast to Jesus, who was identified as the God of love depicted in the New Testament (Moseley 36).

**And yet Jesus is the one who comes with a sword to kill everyone who doesn't believe in him (Rev. 19:11-21). Figure that out.**

Ironically, it was this same Marcion to whom the modern church owes a debt of gratitude for his impact on the canonization of the New Testament, as it was Marcion who first suggested the concept of an official collection of sacred texts exclusively for use in the Christian Church (Roth 831). This first “New Testament,” as Marcion coined the term, was comprised of a handful of the grace-based letters of Saint Paul and a truncated form of the “gentile” Gospel of Luke (Garr 21). In response to Marcion's proposal for a New Testament canon, and partly out of fear that someone else would beat them to it, third century Christian authorities felt the need to preserve the body of religious writing that could be trusted as accurate and authoritative, thus giving birth to the New Testament as it is known today (Roth 833).

Up to this point, however, the Nazarenes had functioned as any other Jewish sect, utilizing as their holy texts the same ones that were recognized by other sects of Judaism: the Hebrew Scriptures, that is, the Old Testament. For example, when Saint Paul wrote to his student Timothy that “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16), he was speaking specifically of the Hebrew Scriptures, as the New Testament had not yet come into existence. This thought process is also reflected in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, which notes that the Jews at Berea were “more receptive than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message very eagerly and examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). In other words, the Jews utilized the Hebrew Scriptures to measure Jesus' teachings.

**Agreed, although it was their version and spin of the TaNaK.**

Although Marcion himself was branded a heretic, and was subsequently removed from the church, the influence of his teachings, as well as other Gnostic ideals, continues to remain to this day, especially his efforts to remove all evidence of Judaism from Christianity (Garr 21). Slowly but surely, the early church shifted the balance of power away from Jerusalem and toward the West. In the process, many of the Roman converts who became church leaders retained their pagan cultural practices (Moseley 39).

Upon the removal of Marcion, his followers, and all the other Gnostics from the church, one would assume that the relationship between Judaism and early Christianity would continue in peaceful bliss. Ideally, the Christian church should have continued to be an active part of the Jewish synagogue. Professor Joseph Tyson at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, noted that, under the established system, “Christians would continue to hear readings from the OT and thus be led to understand the story of ancient Israel as part of their own history... They would be able to see Jesus as part of an ongoing history and as a participant in an ancient and vibrant Jewish culture” (202). Yet this is not exactly how events unfolded. Marcion was not alone in his dualistic approach to the Hebrew Scriptures and Jesus, and the next wave of change would come from inside the church. Justin Martyr, a non-Jewish church father in the mid-second century CE, presented a very similar approach, one which, though less disdainful of Judaism and the Torah than Marcion, nonetheless called for separation between non-Jewish Christianity and Judaism. Yet Martyr's refusal to reject the Hebrew scriptures altogether led to its own internal complications; early Christian believers, in maintaining that the same God who sent Jesus had also sent Moses, would, as a matter of intellectual consistency, have to find a way to rationalize what was perceived as differences between their teachings (Tyson 202). The ideas put forth by Martyr demanded that the Hebrew Scriptures could not be understood in a literal sense, and that the Torah itself, though it was a binding law to Jews, was not to be taken literally by Christians (Tyson 206). Martyr insisted, for example, that Moses' commandments regarding circumcision, the Sabbath, and kosher eating were given as types and foreshadows, and were not to be followed literally by the Christian community.

**True. But given that the New Testament itself constantly takes the TaNaK out of its original context and wording, to make something new out of it, is it any wonder that the commandments would eventually be thrown out as types and foreshadows? It is a natural byproduct.**

Martyr's opinion, rather, was that the Christians had a better covenant with God that was based not upon commandments and law, but solely upon faith and grace (Tyson 205). This idea itself is a Gnostic principle (Barnstone 300), one that had no basis in the teachings of Jesus and the original church.

The later church father Tertullian, at the beginning of the third century CE, attacked equally the Marcionite and the Jewish views of the Hebrew Scriptures, stating that the Jewish method of interpretation— that the Hebrew Scriptures were both literal and accurate— was deficient (Tyson 207).

**And this STILL IS the method of New Testament belief. Always has been and always will be. Y'shaiYahu (Isa.) 7:14 (out of chapters 7-8 in terms of a 2 chapter prophecy) NEVER applied to Jesus. Thus, the New Testament asks people on a consistent basis to reject a “literal and accurate” TaNaK.**

It was this outright rejection of the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures from within the ranks of the Christian church that prepared for the separation of Judaism and Christianity into two separate social, political, and religious groups.

It is neither fair nor objective to place all of the blame for the divergence of Christianity from Judaism upon any one individual or factor. While Marcion, the Gnostics, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and the pagans may have planted seeds of change, the true point of divergence between Judaism and Christianity came in the fourth century CE, when Emperor Constantine I, in an attempt to join the growing body of Christianity with the Greco-Roman pagan religion of the Roman Empire, proclaimed, "Let us, then, have nothing in common with the Jews, who are our adversaries..." (Garr 22).

**WRONG. As stated earlier, the divergence between the TaNaK and the New Testament came the moment that a single text in Y'shaiYahu (Isa.) 7:14 was misapplied in Matt. 1:20-21. The divergence came the day that Jesus changed the Torah (Law) in saying that you shouldn't swear/oath anymore. The divergence came the second that Jesus said Passover bread and wine was his body and blood to be remembered forevermore.**

This turn of political and social tide provided a new avenue to reinterpret the New Testament teachings in a Greco-Roman pagan light, void of all influence of first century Jewish beliefs and ideals. This interpretation became the foundation of the newly emerging pagan, non-Jewish, Roman Church, and has continued to make a strong impact throughout the history of Church theology ever since (Roth 829).

Seventeen hundred years of hostile separation have alienated Christianity from Judaism, yet the historical evidence and textual criticism cannot continue to be ignored by either side of the religious spectrum. Jesus cannot be truly understood outside of his devout loyalty to the faith of his ancestors (Tabor 109), and this understanding of Jesus as a revolutionary Jewish Rabbi who taught the Jewish faith to outsiders provides an enrichment to both religious groups.

For Christians wishing to relearn their Jewish heritage, it is easy at this point to recognize the New Testament in its proper context: as an authentically Jewish text which portrays the halachic observances of the Nazarene sect of Judaism, depicting how members of the movement maintained their dedication to the Jewish faith while believing in Jesus as the promised Messiah of the Hebrew Scriptures. In its pages can be read the story and teachings of an incredible rabbi who wished to share the culture he loved with the world at large, and went to great lengths to send out his students to spread this news to anyone who would listen. After all is said and done, a fundamental departure from Judaism is a fundamental departure from Jesus.

**More like an acceptance of Jesus is a departure from the TaNaK.**

## Works Cited

- Barnstone, Willis, and Marvin Meyer. *The Gnostic Bible*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2003. Print.
- Boyle, Isaac. *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981. Print.
- Epstein, Isidore. *The Soncino Babylonian Talmud*. London: Soncino, 1947. PDF.
- Farmer, William Reuben. *Maccabees, Zealots, and Josephus: An Inquiry into Jewish Nationalism in the Greco-Roman Period*. New York: Columbia UP, 1956. Print.
- Garr, John D. *Restoring Our Lost Legacy: Christianity's Hebrew Heritage*. Atlanta: Golden Key Publications, 2006. Print.
- Gregerman, Adam. "The Lack of Evidence for a Jewish Christian Countermission in Galatia." *Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College* 4.1 (2009): 1-24. Web. 07 Feb. 2012.
- Luhman, Reid. *The Sociological Outlook*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. Print.
- Moseley, Ron. *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. Baltimore: Messianic Jewish, 1996. Print.
- Nanos, Mark D. "The Myth of the „Law-Free“ Paul Standing Between Christians and Jews." *Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College* 4.1 (2009): 1-21. Web. 07 Feb. 2012.
- Roth, Andrew Gabriel. *Aramaic English New Testament: A Compilation, Annotation and Translation of the Eastern Original Aramaic New Testament Peshitta Text*. Bellingham: Netzari Press, 2009. Print. July 14

Tabor, James D. *The Jesus Dynasty: The Hidden History of Jesus, His Royal Family, and the Birth of Christianity*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006. Print.

*The New Revised Standard Version*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2008. Print.

Trimm, James. *Gospel According to the Hebrews*. Fort Worth: Society for the Advancement of Nazarene Judaism, 2009. Print.

Tyson, Joseph B. "Anti-Judaism in Marcion and His Opponents." *Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College* 1.1 (2005): 196-208. Web. 07 Feb. 2012.

Vermes, Geza. *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. New York: Penguin Putnam, 1997. Print.