

The Benefits the Jews and Messianic Jews Bring **Benefits from Judaism**

by Moshe Schwab

- Judaism brought a God centered life.
 - People in ancient times often believed in the cycle of life – no special purpose or plan for life.¹
 - People did what they thought was right in their own eyes. It does not mean they did what was right. Doing what you think is right instead of what God says is right is not always right. We are not God.
 - Idol worship had become prevalent after the flood; instead of worship of the one true God.
- Judaism brought dignity and worth.
 - Jews ascribed to higher values than that of other ancient cultures.
 - Jews recognized the need for self correction (repentance), justice and mercy.
- The Jews gave us the scriptures (Deut. 4:7-8, 6:17-18), and all the writers of the scriptures were Jewish. Recent scholarship has determined that a number of the books of the New Testament were originally written in Hebrew including all four gospels. We now have many copies of the Hebrew scriptures of the New Testament.
- The Jews gave us a history of God's love for man; the law; songs; prophecy; instruction and wisdom; future expectation; and the promises of God.
- The Jews gave us the Messiah (John 5:25-27; 8:51, 58; 17:5; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 7:13-14), the "right and good" ways to live (Deuteronomy 6:17-18), the concept of assembly, and God's blessings.
 - Yeshua (Jesus) had to be a Jew (He had to be the Jewish kinsman redeemer – Heb. 2:14-17).²
 - The promise of Holy Spirit was given to the Jews and the early believers were Jewish Acts 11:18, 18:14-16, 21:20).
 - The early believers celebrated Shabbat, the Jewish feasts, and formed local Messianic synagogues.
 - We are in debt to the Jews for our blessings (Genesis 1:1; Rom. 15:27; Eph. 2:11-16).
- Those who loved the Jews were given special blessings from God both in the Old Testament portion and New Testament portion. Yeshua (Jesus) also gave preference to those who were good to the Jews! (Gen. 12:3; Luke 7:4-6; Acts 10:1-2).

There is a Need for Messianic Jews³ (whether Jew or Gentile).

- God blessed the descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and that blessing is still in effect today (Gen. 12:3).

Originally, the believers in the Messiah Yeshua were Messianic Jews. In time, Gentiles were allowed to be part of the believing community. Messianic Gentiles were to be fellow heirs with the Messianic Jews who believed in Yeshua (Eph. 3:5-6).
- We are warned to be good to the Jews (see Rom. 11:13-29).
 - Withholding the message of their Messiah from Jews is mistreating them and has robbed believers in Yeshua (Jesus) over the ages of blessings. Also, Messianic Jews bring blessings to the modern day believers in Yeshua.
 - In the 2nd and 3rd century, the Roman Empire made it illegal to observe God's feasts

¹ According to Cahill in The Gifts of the Jews, the Sumerians believed that individuals weren't important. The cycle of life did not stress individual importance.

² In The Church and the Jews, Dr. Fruchtenbaum talks about the Jewish practice of the kinsman redeemer; that is the person who rescued or redeemed a person financially or otherwise had to be a kinsman – a family member. In Hebrews 2:17 CJB, it says that, "He had to be made like His brethren," and so Yeshua had to be a Jew and He came to redeem the Jews (as well as the Gentiles).

³ The word "Jew" comes from the name Yehudah which in English means "praise." Shaul says, "So that we who earlier had put our hope in the Messiah would bring him praise commensurate with his glory." Eph. 1:12 CJB. The word "Jew" is a good term; believers in the Messiah are to be to the praise of God.

(Leviticus 23:2) and illegal for believers in the Messiah to keep biblical practice in order to make the religion of the Empire ethnically into a Greco/Roman religion. The believers in Messiah lost its Jewish connection and the knowledge that went with that. For example, early Messianic believers celebrated the Jewish feasts and understood how the feasts related to the Messianic Covenant.

- Making Gentile fellowships all there is to God's plan is denying the truth of God's plan for Messianic Jews to be part of the body of believers in Yeshua and bring its unique biblical perspective and blessing to the believers.

■ Informed Messianic Jews understand how the scriptures relate to Jewish practice and would have greatly helped the believers in the Messiah avoid confusion over the meaning of some of the scriptures:⁴

- Jews know that baptism is by immersion (there has been a lot of infighting over this).

- Messianic Jews know that communion is a remembrance ceremony (The concept of sacraments was borrowed from the pagan cults.).⁵

- Messianic Jews know who their messiah was to be and so would not deny the virgin birth or deny other fulfilled prophecy.

- Observant Jews would not allow liberal interpretations of the scriptures – instead, they would guard the scriptures.

- Observant Jews would not allow idols – because the number of Messianic Jews declined in the 2nd and 3rd centuries because of the persecution of the Messianic Jews, this allowed false teaching and wrong practices to come into the believing community.

■ All Gentiles that originally believed in Yeshua became Messianic Jews. Acts 21:20 (occurs in about 58 AD) occurs about 28 years after Yeshua rose from the dead and the believers were zealous for the law. Jerusalem was the center for early believers in Yeshua (Acts 15) so if something needed to be changed, they would have done it. It is not true that early believers left being Jewish; historically they were called Nazarene Jews. Shaul (Paul) said he was still a Jewish Pharisee in Acts 23:6-8 and the leaders there didn't dispute that he was a Jewish teacher and leader. Instead they disputed the resurrection.⁶

■ The Bible says that Messianic Jews have their place in the body of believers in Messiah (Eph. 2:11-16) and that all believers are responsible to reach out to the Jews concerning their Messiah (Rom. 1:16)

- Even though Shaul (Paul) was a messenger (apostle) to the Gentiles, he went to the Jews first (Acts 17:1-2).

- The Gentile believers have a responsibility to help the Messianic Jews as well (Rom. 15:25-27).

- We should be praying for the Jews (Isa. 62:6-7; Rom. 10:1).

⁴ In The Church and the Jews, Dr. Fruchtenbaum says that the Christian church has suffered because they didn't include Jewish believers and Jewish biblical practice, and he makes the following points under this segment except for note 5.

⁵ See Pagan Mysteries and Christian Sacraments, by Paul Andrews.

⁶ “‘Brothers, I myself am a Parush and the son of P'rushim; and it is concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead that I am being tried!’ When he said this, an argument arose between the P'rushim and the Tz'dukim, and the crowd was divided. For the Tz'dukim deny the resurrection and the existence of angels and spirits; whereas the P'rushim acknowledge both.;" Acts 23:6-8 CJB. P'rushim is Pharisees in Hebrew and Tz'dukim is Sadducees in Hebrew. He was talking to Jewish leaders and they considered Shaul a Jewish leader. They didn't argue that he was not still Jewish leader, but about the resurrection.