10 Problems With Sacred Name Bibles

Welcome to this conversation about Sacred Name Bibles and the teachings behind them. The backstory to this discussion is that I'm doing a series reviewing Bible translations from Hebraic perspectives - this includes Orthodox and Messianic Jewish translations, and also Hebrew Roots and Sacred Name versions.

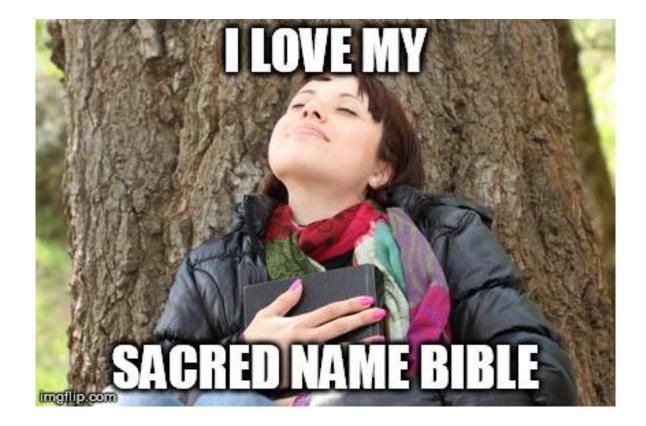
Before reviewing individual Sacred Name Bibles, I thought it would be helpful to give you a quick overview explaining what they are, where they came from, and some serious problems they have in common.

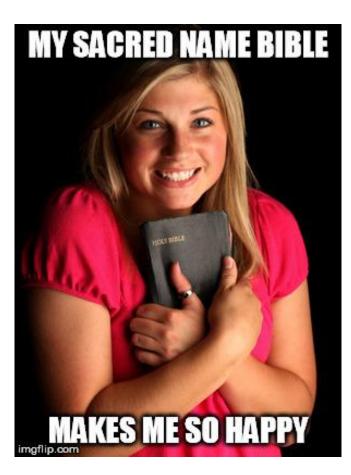
Let's start by talking about the elephant in the room - this is an emotionally charged issue for many people.

If you're Jewish and you've heard people trying to pronounce God's name, you probably felt like this:



If you read from a Sacred Name Bible, you may feel like this:

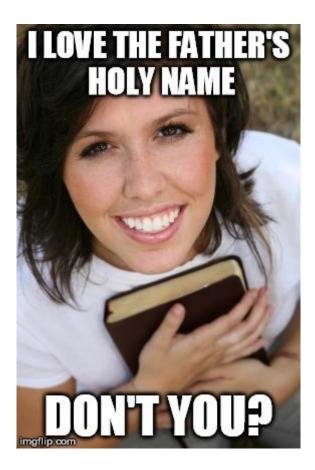






Now, I did just mention that I'm going to be talking about some problems with Sacred Name Bibles. I understand, that might have made you feel like this:









If that's you, I understand you may feel a little threatened right now. I hope you can hear me out as we talk about Sacred Name teachings and translations, and look at what the Word and history tell us about them. I'm like you, I deeply love the Father and I have an overwhelming desire know the Messiah and follow him. That commitment has cost me dearly, and I'm sure you've paid a high price also. Maybe it would be helpful to share a little of my story. I teach Hebrew, and my passion is helping people come closer to Yeshua through experiencing the Hebrew language and learning about the Jewish context of the Bible. I'm also very serious about reading the Word and just believing and doing what it says, even if that isn't mainstream or popular. When I first got involved with the Messianic Jewish movement about 15 years ago, it was because I'd read the Bible and come to the conclusions that God wasn't finished with Israel and that in fact the best was yet to come, that Yeshua didn't do away with the law and that the Torah is still valid today, and that if Jesus Christ was the same yesterday today and forever, then he was still Jewish and learning about Judaism could help me know him better.

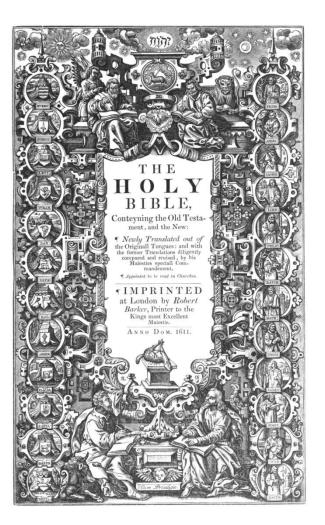
When I first became "Messianic", I got a Sacred Name Bible because it had some Hebrew in it, and I was learning Hebrew. I also read some Sacred Name books that left me convinced that we should follow what the Word says about calling on and proclaiming God's name, instead of following Rabbinic traditions of men that would cause us to forget God's name. I even taught this in my first Hebrew course, where I read God's name as "Yahweh" instead of following the Jewish tradition of saying "Adonai". So as we talk about Sacred Name teachings, even though I no longer subscribe to them I want you to know that I really care about these matters, and that I've thought long and deep about them. There is another reason I really care about this topic. Sacred Name teachings pretty much wrecked my life. They were very damaging to my relationships with my Christian friends and my ability to represent the Messianic message to them. They also distanced me from the Jewish community, and negated the testimony for Yeshua I could have had. They did the opposite of helping me become a mature, healthy, and loving person. Sacred Name teachings produced so much bad fruit in my life that it literally took years to undo the damage they caused. I want to spare you that pain, and that waste. Especially as a teacher, this is my effort at keeping you from going down a path that may look right, but will only take you downhill. So having shared some of the backstory to these talks, let's continue.

What are Sacred Name Bibles?

To answer that question, we should probably answer the question of "What's the Sacred Name?" In the original Hebrew text of the Bible, God's name is written as "יהוה". One of the Ten Commandments is to not take God's name in vain, and the punishment for taking God's name in vain was execution. So not surprisingly, the Jewish people have taken God's name very seriously, and treated it with great reverence.

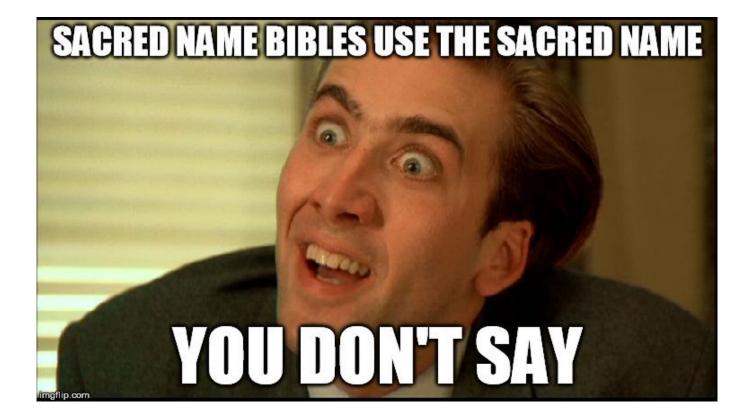
Since before the time of Yeshua, one of the ways the Jewish people did this was by saying "Adonai" instead of actually pronouncing the Sacred Name. Adonai is Hebrew for Master, or Lord. Instead of saying God's name, Jewish people also say "Hashem", which literally means "the name".

Interestingly enough, almost all Christian Bible translators have followed this Jewish tradition, and instead of trying to write the Sacred Name in English letters, have written "the LORD" instead.



In contrast with Jewish and Christian tradition, Sacred Name Bibles attempt to put God's name in the translation. The reason I say "attempt" is because it's not certain how God's name was originally pronounced, so almost every Sacred Name Bible has a different pronunciation. The most popular pronunciations are Yahweh, Yahveh, Yehovah, or Yahuah. There's at least one translation that avoids this problem by putting the original Hebrew "הוה" in the English text, and then leaving it up to you to figure out how to pronounce it.

Sacred Name Bibles also use the Hebrew name of the Messiah. Some of them have "Yeshua", which is the normal Hebrew pronunciation. Others have their own versions such as Yahshua, Yahushua, Yahusha, or...Yahawashi.



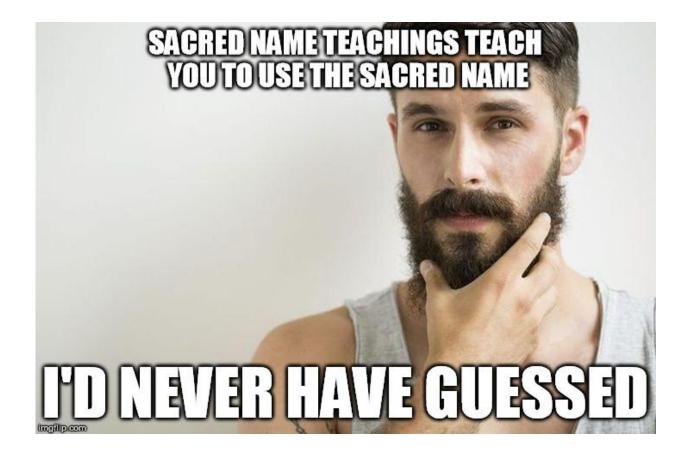
There are other differences between Sacred Name Bibles and regular Bibles. I'll explain those differences in more detail in my individual reviews, but for now this introduction should give you a rough idea of what Sacred Name Bibles are about.

Now let's talk about the teachings that inspired Sacred Name Bibles in the first place.

What are Sacred Name teachings?

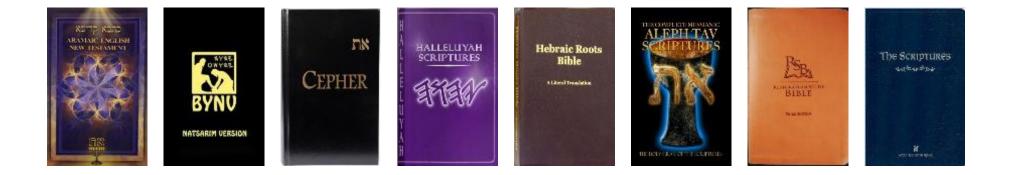
Sacred Name Bibles are based on Sacred Name teachings. Basically, these teachings say that you should try to pronounce God's Sacred Name instead of following the Jewish and Christian traditions of saying Adonai or Lord. I say "try" to pronounce his name because, as I mentioned earlier, it's not certain how his name was originally pronounced.

They also say that you should use the Hebrew name of the Messiah instead of "Jesus" or whatever he's called in your language.



There are other Sacred Name teachings. For instance, they say that words like God and Jesus are actually dirty words and that you shouldn't say them because they come from pagan languages. Of course, they use English to tell you this.

I'll tackle some of those other teachings in my individual reviews, but for now this should give you a good sense of what Sacred Name teachings have to say.



Sacred Name teachings don't follow Yeshua's example. Sacred Name teachings don't follow the example of Yeshua's apostles. Sacred Name teachings are based on misinterpretations of Scripture. Sacred Name teachings are based on a misunderstanding of language. Sacred Name teachings make false accusations against Jews and Christians. Sacred Name teachings cause unnecessary fights and divisions. Sacred Name teachings will destroy your witness to the Jewish community. Sacred Name teachings are a new form of Replacement Theology. Sacred Name teachings claim to be Messianic when they're not. Sacred Name teachings breed unconscious antisemitism.

Sacred Name teachings don't follow Yeshua's example.

If I were to ask "who are you", what would you say? How long before your relationship with Yeshua came up? Probably not long. Scripture says we're "in" the Messiah - that we've been immersed into his death, burial, and resurrection, and that we're one spirit with him. We as a community have the same kind of relationship with the Son of Man that a girl has with her fiancé. It's deep, passionate, and consuming! I think we can agree that our identity is all wrapped up in Yeshua. That means our core identity is as disciples of Rabbi Jesus. We see this reflected in Scripture, also. We're called "disciples" over 250 times in the New Testament. We're only called "Christians" or "Messianic" 3 times.

So the big question is, what do disciples do? What's our job?

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Mat 4:19 And He *said to them, "Follow 1	<mark>Me</mark> , and I will ma	ake you fishers of men."			A
Mat 8:22 But Jesus *said to him, "Follow	<mark>7 Me</mark> , and allow th	he dead to bury their own dead."			
Mat 9:9 As Jesus went on from there, He	saw a man called	d Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's	booth; and He *said to h	nim, " <mark>Follow Me</mark> !" And he got up and	l followed Him.
Mat 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciple	es, "If anyone wis	hes to come after Me, he must deny hin	uself, and take up his cro	oss and <mark>follow Me</mark> .	
Mat 19:21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish	to be complete, §	go and sell your possessions and give to	the poor, and you will h	nave treasure in heaven; and come, <mark>f</mark>	ollow Me."
Mar 1:17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow	<mark>7 Me</mark> , and I will m	nake you become fishers of men."			
Mar 2:14 As He passed by, He saw Levi th	he son of Alphaeı	us sitting in the tax booth, and He *said	to him, " <mark>Follow Me</mark> !" Ar	nd he got up and followed Him.	
Mar 8:34 And He summoned the crowd w	with His disciples	s, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to	come after Me, he mus	t deny himself, and take up his cross	and follow Me.
Mar 10:21 Looking at him, Jesus felt a low and come, follow Me."	ve for him and sa	id to him, "One thing you lack: go and s	ell all you possess and g	give to the poor, and you will have tre	easure in heaven;
Luk 5:27 After that He went out and notic	ced a tax collecto	or named Levi sitting in the tax booth, a	nd He said to him, " <mark>Follo</mark>	ow Me."	
Luk 9:23 And He was saying to them all,	"If anyone wishe	s to come after Me, he must deny himse	lf, and take up his cross	daily and <mark>follow Me</mark> .	
Luk 9:59 And He said to another, "Follow	<mark>v Me</mark> ." But he sai	d, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury	my father."		
Luk 18:22 When Jesus heard this, He said follow Me."	d to him, " <mark>One th</mark>	ning you still lack; sell all that you posse	ss and distribute it to the	e poor, and you shall have treasure i	in heaven; and come,
Joh 1:43 The next day He purposed to go	into Galilee, and	l He *found Philip. And Jesus *said to h	im, " <mark>Follow Me</mark> ."		
Joh 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and	I know them, and	d they <mark>follow Me</mark> ;			
Joh 12:26 "If anyone serves Me, he must	follow Me; and w	where I am, there My servant will be also	; if anyone serves Me, th	he Father will honor him.	
Joh 13:36 Simon Peter *said to Him, "Lo	rd, where are You	u going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go,	you cannot <mark>follow Me</mark> ne	ow; but you will follow later."	
Joh 21:19 Now this He said, signifying by	what kind of dea	ath he would glorify God. And when He	had spoken this, He *sai	id to him, " <mark>Follow Me</mark> !"	
Joh 21:22 Jesus *said to him, "If I want h	im to remain unt	til I come, what is that to you? You <mark>follo</mark>	w Me!"		

That was easy. But Yeshua didn't just invite people to follow him. He also talked about *why* he wanted people to follow him. The big idea was for his disciples to follow him around and spend so much time with him that they'd end up becoming like him.

A disciple is not above his teacher - but everyone, after they've been fully trained, will **be like their teacher**.

~Yeshua, Luke 6:40

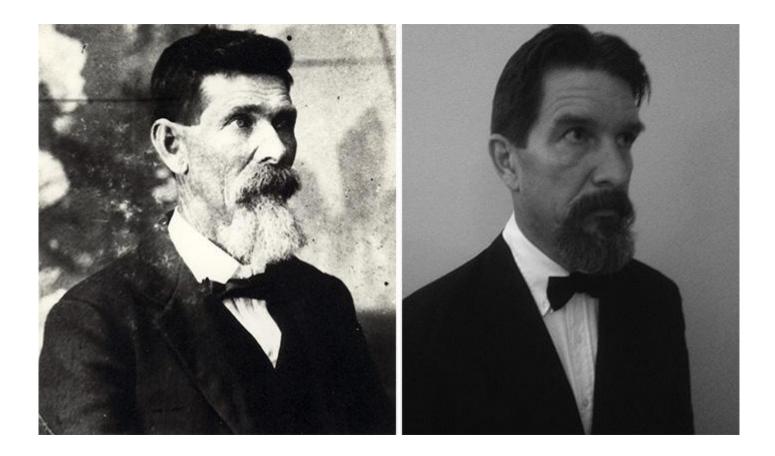
Here are some pictures of children who grew up to look like their parents. In a way, that's what discipleship is about - growing up to look like Yeshua so if someone were to watch you, they'd get this eerie feeling they're watching him.

















So as disciples, the only thing we care about is becoming like Yeshua. Let's look at one more Scripture about our job as disciples before we look at how all this relates to Sacred Name teachings and translations.

By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to **walk in the same way in which he walked.**

~Yochanan, his first letter 2:5-6

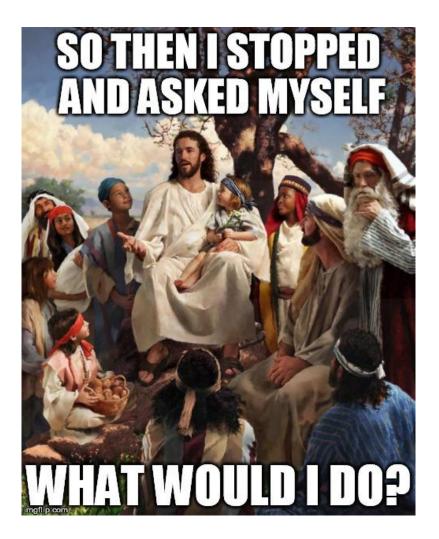
Walk as he walked.

Remember that John and Jesus were both Jewish. So to fully understand their words, sometimes you need to look at the Jewish context of them. And sure enough, there is something really special about this concept from a Jewish perspective! The Hebrew word *to walk* is *halach*. From that verb we get the noun *halacha*. So, how you *halach* is your *halacha*. This is a very meaningful word in Judaism because it's the word for Jewish law, for how the Jewish community interprets and "walks out" the Torah. So what John is telling us is that we as a community get our *halacha* from Yeshua and how he walked out his Father's word.









So let's bring all this home now. Sacred Name teachings say that you should try to pronounce God's name instead of following the Jewish and Christian traditions of saying "Adonai" or "Lord". And if you just read Sacred Name Bibles as they're written, most of them will get you saying some version of God's name also. So the question is, what did Yeshua do? Let's break this question down into three questions. What did Yeshua in public, what did he do in private, and what did he teach people to do?

So firstly, what did Yeshua do in public.

Yeshua came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And **as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.** And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. **He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of Adonai is upon me,** because he has anointed me..." **And all spoke well of him** and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:16-22)



We know from this story that our Rabbi regularly went to synagogue and publicly read from the Scriptures. So the question is, when he did that did he read God's name as it was written, or did he say "Adonai"? We know that whatever he did was in keeping with Jewish custom, or it wouldn't have said that everyone spoke well of him.

Thankfully, we do know what the custom was from from the historical writings available to us from that time period. This is an issue that was discussed in the Mishnah, and also by Philo. Before we look at the actual quotes, here's a quick overview of those two sources. The Mishnah is the record of how the Jewish community interpreted the Torah two thousand years ago. It was originally memorized and communicated word of mouth, and was finally written down in the late 100s. The Mishnah is widely accepted by the academic world and by the Jewish community as a historically accurate source, so its testimony carries great weight.

Philo, whose Hebrew name was Yedidyah HaKohen, was a Jewish philosopher. He lived in Alexandria, Egypt when baby Yeshua was exiled to that country. He was also an uncle-in-law to Bernice, who is mentioned in the book of Acts alongside her brother King Agrippa. Philo was of noble birth, and travelled to Rome as a delegate to Emperor Caligula when he was already an older man around 40 CE. He'll serve as a second historical witness in this discussion. So firstly, we read in the Mishnah that God's name was only pronounced in the Temple by the priests when they said the Aaronic blessing, and by the the high priest on the Day of Atonement. This is in Sotah 7:6, and Yoma 6:2.

How did they pronounce the Blessing of the Priests?-In the provinces they recited¹ it as Three Blessings,² but in the Temple as a Single Blessing; in the Temple they pronounced³ the Name as it was written,4 but in the provinces by its substitute word;⁵ in the provinces the priests raised⁶ their hands on a level with their shoulders, but in the Temple above their heads, save the High Priest who did not raise his hands above the frontplate." R. Judah^{*} says, The High Priest also raised⁹ his hands¹⁰ above the front-plate, as it is said, And¹¹ Aaron lifted up his hands¹² toward the people and blessed them.

בַּמִדִינַה כהנים ברכת בָּרָכוֹת, ײַשַׁלשׁ אותה יאומרים ;אָקָת; בּמְקַדָּש ּבְרָכָה וּבַמָּקַדָּשׁ יאומר אֶת־הַשֵּׁם יכּּכְתָבוֹ, וּבַמְּדִינָה יּבְּכָנּוּיו; בַּמְּדִינָה כֹּהַנִים יּנוֹשָׂאָים · אָת־יְדִיהָן כְּגָגֶר כִּתְפִיהֶן, וּבַמִּקְדָשׁ עַל גַּבִי רָאשִׁיהֵן, חוּץ מִכּהֵן גָּדוֹל מַּגְּהִיהַ אֶת־יָדָיו לְמַצֵּלָה שאינו מִן־יהַצִיץ. רַבִּי יִיהוּדָה אוֹמֶר, אָף כהן גָּרוֹל ימַגְהְיהַ יידִיו לְמַעַלָה מִן־הַצִּיץ, שֶׁנָאֲמַר, יינַיִשָּׁא אַהַרֹן אֶת־ײּיָדָיו אֶל־הָעָם וַיְכָרֲכֵם.

Mishnah 2

He¹ then² came next to the Scapegoat, and he laid his two hands upon it and made confession; and thus he used to say,3 'I pray, O Eternal! Thy people, the house of Israel, have done wrong, they have transgressed, they have sinned before Thee.⁴ I pray, by Thy Name!* Pardon, I pray, the iniquities, the transgressions, and the sins which Thy people, the house of Israel, have wrongly committed, and which they have transgressed, and which they have sinned before Thee, as it is written⁵ in the Law of Moses, Thy servant, For on This day shall atonement⁶ be made for you to cleanse you from all your sins, before the Eternal shall ye be clean.' And the priests and the people who were standing in the Forecourt, when they heard the Ineffable Name come forth

שעיר המשתקח, יי בא 17 738 וּמְתְוַדָּה; וסומד עַלַיו שחי ּוֹכֵדְ הַיָּה יאוֹמֵר א**ַנָא י**הַשֵּׁם, עָווּ עַמָּך: בֵּית ילפניה חסאר פשעו 28. שראל. כפר XIX בשםי לעונות, וְלַחֵּטָאִים לפשעים, <u>שַעַור, </u> רְפָנֵיה וְשָׁחַטָאו ושפשעוי עַמִּד בֵּית יִשְׂרָאָל, יַכַּכַּתוּב בְּתוֹרֵת משה עַבִדָּר, לֵאמֹר, כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזָּה יּיַכַפָּר צַלֵיכֵם לְטַהָר אָתְכֵםו מְכֹל תִּסְהָרוּ. ה' לפני חַטאַתֵיכָם וַהַכּּהַנִים וָהָעָם הָעוֹמִדִים <u>בְּעַזַרַה</u>, המפורש שׁם ישומעים כשהיו כהן גַּדוֹל הָיוּ שֵׁהוּא יוצֵא מְפִּי וּמִשְׁתַחַוּים וּגוֹפָלים עַל כורעים כבור פּנֵיהֵם וָאוֹמְרִים, בָּרוּך שם מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלֵם וַעֲד.

from the mouth of the High Priest,⁷ used to kneel and prostrate themselves and fall down on their faces and say, 'Blessed be His Name the glory of His Kingdom is for ever and ever.'

מִשְׁנָה ב

Philo confirms that when the Temple stood the name of God was only pronounced by the Priests in the Temple. In Life of Moses 2:114, when describing the golden plate worn by the High Priest, on which was inscribed the name of God, he wrote:

A golden leaf was wrought like a crown, having engraved on it the four letters of the name which only those whose ears and tongues are purified unto wisdom may hear or speak in the holy place, and by no one else at all in any place whatever. The Mishnah doesn't just record that the name of God was only spoken by the Priests in the Temple for special occasions. It also tells us in Sanhedrin 7:5 that pronouncing the Name in other contexts was considered blasphemy, which was punishable by death by stoning...kind of a big deal.

Mishnah 5

The blasphemer¹ is not guilty until he pronounces the Name² [expressly]. R. Joshua ben Karchah said, Every day [during the trial the court] examined⁴ the witnesses with a substitute name³ [such as] may fose smite Jose. When the sentence was to be pronounced they did not condemn⁴ him to death [on the testimony given] with the substitute name, but they sent⁴ forth every person outside, and asked⁴ the chief one among them [namely, the witnesses] and said⁴ to him, 'Say exactly what thou didst hear', and he said⁴ it, and the judges stood⁴ up on their feet and rent⁴ [their garments], but they did not repair⁴ [them]; and the second [witness] said,⁴ 'I also [heard] just as he did'; המנדף אינו חַיִיב, עד שִׁיפַרשׁ יהשׁם· אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן קָרְחָה • בְּכָל יוֹם יַדָּגִין אָת־הָאָדִים יבְּכִינוּי יַכֶּה יוֹסֵי אֵת־יוֹסֵיּ גָנְמַר הַדְּין לא הורגים בכינוי, אלא ימוציאים י כַּל־אָדַם לַחוּץ, יושואַלִים אַת־ הַנְּדוֹל שֶׁבְּהֶן יוָאוֹמְרִים לוֹ אֵמוֹר מַה־שֶׁשֶׁמַעָתָ בְּפֵירוּש, וְהוּא יאוֹמֵר, רגליהן יעומדים על והדינים יוקוֹרִשִין, וַלֹא ימָאַחִין; וָהַשֵׁנִי יאוֹמֵר כמוהו: יוהשלישי יאומר אף אני אַף אַנִי כָמְוֹהוּי

and the third one⁵ said,⁴ 'I, too, [heard] just as he did'.

1 Leviticus 24, 10ff. 2 The Divine Name, the Tetragrammaton itself. Compare היוֹמָה 38, 62; יוֹמָה 36. 3 i.e., not using the Divine Name itself. 4 Literally examine, send, etc., i.e., in the present tense. 5 If there was a third witness.

מִשְׁנַה ה

Philo corroborates the Mishnaic account on this point also, in his commentary to Leviticus 24 in Life of Moses 2:206:

But if any one were, I will not say to blaspheme against the Lord of gods and men, but were even to dare to utter his name unseasonably, he must endure the punishment of death.

If you were a judge in court and this evidence was presented to you, what would your verdict be? I'm guessing you would conclude that when Yeshua walked the earth, Jewish custom was to say "Adonai" instead of saying God's name. Which, of course, means you'd also conclude that when Yeshua publicly read the Scrolls, he said "Adonai" instead of pronouncing the Sacred Name.



But what about when Yeshua was praying privately? Or just with his disciples? Did he use the name of God then? Thankfully, Scripture allows us to listen in to several of those incredibly intimate moments, and gives us clear answers.

Going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "**Abba, Father**, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." (Mark 14:35-36)

When Yeshua had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "**Father**, the hour has come...And now, **Father**, glorify me in your own presence...**Holy Father**, keep them in your name...that they may all be one, just as you, **Father**, are in me, and I in you...**Father**, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am...O **righteous Father**, even though the world does not know you, I know you... (John 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 15)

From these two accounts, it's clear that when the Master was praying privately, or with his disciples, his common custom was to address God as "Abba" and "Father", sometimes adding descriptive words like "holy" or "righteous".

Remember "halacha", that Hebrew word for your walk, for how you practice God's commandments? Now we know what our Rabbi's halacha was when it came to using the Sacred Name in Scripture reading and prayer. How about what he taught his disciples, did this come up at all in his instructions? Again, the answer is yes.

"Pray in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name..." (Matthew 6:9)

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, **"Abba! Father!"** (Romans 8:15)

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Galatians 4:6)

As you can see, Yeshua explicitly taught his disciples to address God as "Father". His disciples confirmed this by saying more than once that the Holy Spirit will inspire us to call God "Abba Father".



I want to show you one more thing. In Yeshua's time, if you were talking about your father you wouldn't say "my father" or "our father". In both cases, you'd just say "abba". Here are two examples from Shabbat 1:9 and Eruvin 6:2.

Mishnah 9

Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel said, 'In my father's house¹ they used to give white clothes to a non-Jewish² washerman three days before the Sabbath.' And both³ are in agreement that they may load up⁴ the beams⁵ of the olive-press or the rollers⁵ of the winepress vat.^{6*} מִשְׁנָה מ

אָמַר רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן נַּמְלִיאָל, נוּזְהַגִין הְיוּ יבֵּית אַבְּא שֶׁהְיוּ נוֹתְנִין כְּלֵי לָבָן לְכוֹבֵס עַוֹבֵד יּכּוֹכְבִים שְׁלֹשֶׁה יְמִים אְלוֹדֵם לְשֵׁבָּת. וְשָׁוּין יּאֵלוּ וְאֵלוּ אָשׁׁטוֹעַנִין יקורוֹת יבֵית הַבַּדיּיּוְעִנּוּלֵי הַנַּת.

Mishnah 2

Rabban Gamaliel¹ said, 'It once happened that a certain Sadduccee² lived with us in an alley in Jerusalem, and our father³ said to us, "Hasten and remove all utensils⁴ into the alley-way before he⁵ removes⁶ and places restriction upon you".' R. Judah' says, 'He⁸ used a different expression, "Hasten and perform your requirements,⁹ before it departs¹⁰ and places restriction upon you".'

			-	
מַעֲשֶׂה	יל,	ינַּמְלִיאֵ	רַבָּן	אָמַר
עַמָּנוּ	דר :	שֶׁהְיָה	ן אֶתָר	יבַאָּרוּי
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			מַהַרוּ	
יּיוֹצָיא	יי איז	עַר טֶ	לַמָּבוֹי	הַכֵּלִים
אוֹמֵר	הּרָה	רַבָּיי	צַלֵיכֶם.	וְיָאֲסַר
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ויאָסַר	וֹצִיא	10 8	עַד שֶׁק	בַּמֶּבוֹי
				אֲלֵיכֶם

Now that you've seen what Yeshua did, and what he taught us to do, you can probably see why I have a problem with Sacred Name teachings and translations. They're trying to get you to interpret the Torah in a way that Yeshua didn't. And he is the Word made flesh - he's the Torah with skin on! These false teachers are making up their own halacha, and pretending it's the Master's when it's not. That's dangerous ground!

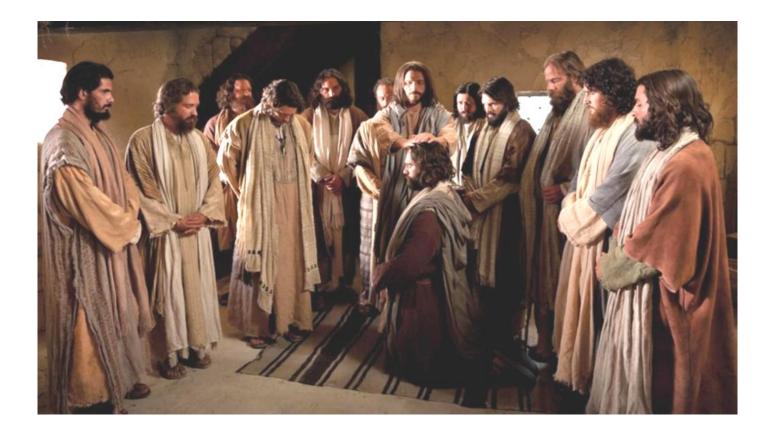
So, my final encouragement to you is just to follow Yeshua. When you're reading Scripture, respect God's holy name and reverently say "Adonai" or "Lord" instead of trying to pronounce it. When you're praying, don't use the Sacred Name. Affectionately call God your "Abba", call him "Father". And draw on the rich tradition of his titles as they're used throughout the Tanach, also.

Remember that you are Yeshua's disciple, and that you're not greater than your Master. Remember that when you've been fully trained, you'll walk like your teacher. So please join me in praying that we'll never stop following him, and never stop becoming more like him. Because he is worthy!

In our next discussion, we'll continue with this theme and look at the history of the early Yeshua movement and how they treated the Sacred Name. I do hope you'll join me for that.

Sacred Name teachings don't follow the example of Yeshua's apostles.

In our previous discussion, we talked about whether or not Yeshua used the Sacred Name in Scripture reading and prayer. We also talked about what he taught his disciples. This conversation will be a continuation of that theme, looking at what Yeshua's disciples did after he ascended to his *Abba*, and left the movement in their hands.



Let's start by talking about the guys Yeshua left in charge. What, actually, was their job description?

Yeshua's inner circle of disciples were called apostles. *Apostle* is an English word that comes from the Greek word *apostolos* - someone who has been sent. But it goes back farther than that.

Remember that Jesus and his disciples were thoroughly Jewish. That means the context of the New Testament is Jewish, regardless of whether you're reading it in English, or even Greek. So it begs the question, what's the Hebrew word for apostle? And were there apostles in Judaism two thousand years ago?

The answer is, yes there were! The Hebrew word for a male apostle is *shaliach*, which also means someone who has been sent. The plural of *shaliach* is *shlichim*. A female apostle is a *shlicha*, with the feminine plural *shlichot*.

Shaliach was actually a legal term in the Jewish world two thousand years ago. To be a *shaliach* was to fill a legal role with clearly defined powers and parameters. The function of the *shaliach* is defined in several places in Jewish law, but it's first mentioned in Brachot 5:5, where the core idea of the *shaliach* is summed up:

Mishnah 5

When one prays¹ and makes a mistake it is a bad omen for him, and if he be the Reader for a congregation it is a bad omen for those² who appointed him, because the representative of a person is like to himself. They related of R. Chanina ben Dosa that when he prayed on behalf of sick people he used to say, 'This one will live,' or 'That one will die.' They said to him, 'Whence dost thou know?' He replied to them, 'If my prayer be uttered fluently³ I know it is granted,⁴ but if not, I know that it is rejected.'5

מִשְׁנָה ה יהַמָתַפַּלֵל וִטָעָה סִימָן רַע לוֹי וָאָם שֶׁלִיתַ צִבּוּר הוּא סִימָן רַע ַלְשׁוֹלְחָיו*י* מִפְּגֵי שֶׁשְׁלוּחוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם ² כִּמוֹתוֹי אָמִרוּ עָלָיו עַל רַבִּי חַגִינַא בֶּן דּוֹסָא שֶׁהָיָה מִתְפַּלֵל עַל הַחוֹלִים וְאוֹמֵרי זֶה חֵי וְזֶה מֵתי אָמָרוּ לוֹ מִנַּיִן אַתָּה יוֹדֵעַי אָמַר לַהֵםי אָם יּשְׁגוּרֶה תִּפִלָּתִי בפי יוֹדֵעַ אֲנִי שֶׁהוּא יּמְקָבָּלי וָאָם ַלָאו יוֹדֵעַ אָ**נִי** שֵׁהוּא יּמְטוֹרָף. As you can see, the Hebrew reads *shlucho shel adam k'moto*, and is translated as *the representative of a person is like to himself.*

So a shaliach was a legal agent authorized to act as his proxy. Another way of saying this would be that a shaliach was an emissary empowered to represent the person who sent him or her.

So now that we understand what an apostle was in the Jewish world of Jesus, let's see what he had to say about his apostles. Remember, this has everything to do with our question about Sacred Name teachings and Bibles.

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.

Rabbi Yeshua, John 13:20

So basically, the Master was saying that however you treat his *shlichim* is how you're treating him. Receive them, and you've received him. Reject his representatives, which of course would include rejecting their teachings and example, and you're also rejecting him. That's why Paul had the chutzpah to tell people this: "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Messiah." (1 Corinthians 11:1) Because imitating a *shaliach* of Messiah, is imitating the Messiah.

So now that we've established the fact that we don't just follow Yeshua, that we also follow his apostles and their teachings and example, let's ask the question. Did our Master's emissaries use the Sacred Name, or teach people to use it?

We know that after Yeshua lifted off planet earth, the community he started continued to use the Temple in Jerusalem as their central gathering place for teaching and prayer.

Day by day **continuing with one mind in the temple,** and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart. (Acts 2:46)

At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and **they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico.** (Acts 5:12)

Every day, **in the temple** and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Yeshua as the Messiah. (Acts 5:42)

Remember how we used that story about Yeshua reading in the synagogue back in Nazareth as a concrete instance of whether or not he used the Sacred Name? Let's do something similar with the apostles.

We're told they had a gathering for prayer after healing a lame guy and getting in trouble with the religious leaders for it. We can assume this gathering happened in the Temple, because that was where they met. Here's what they said:

When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "**Sovereign Lord**, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against **the Lord** and against his Anointed' - for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, **Lord**, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." (Acts 4:23-30)

You can see here that they quoted a Psalm that explicitly mentions God's name. So the question is, did they pronounce the Sacred Name, or say "Adonai" instead? We already established the fact from multiple credible sources that by that time it was a capital offense to pronounce the holy name of God, so I think you know the answer to that question. The early Messianic community in Jerusalem continued to follow Yeshua's example of saying "Adonai" instead of saying the Sacred Name.

Going one step past those early years in Jerusalem, there is also no evidence that Yeshua's apostles used the Sacred Name anywhere, ever. In fact, the evidence is the exact opposite. It's quite clear that when the Yeshua movement broke out and spread throughout the Graeco-Roman world, the early Greek-speaking disciples called God "Kurios", which is the Greek equivalent of "Adonai". There's no indication in the book of Acts, or in the Epistles, that the apostles taught those early disciples to use the Hebrew name of God instead of saying "Kurios". There's also no indication in church history that those early apostolic communities used the Hebrew name of God after the death of that first generation of apostles.

The same goes for the Hebrew name of the Messiah. Now don't get me wrong, I love the original name of our Savior. When you call Jesus "Yeshua", you're recognizing that he has a Hebrew name with a Hebrew meaning. You're celebrating his Jewishness, and showing your love for the Jewish people. It can be very meaningful and intimate, for sure. But at the same time, there's no historical evidence that the apostles taught Greek speakers to call Yeshua by his Hebrew name. That fact is that Greek speakers called Yeshua "Iesous", which is the Greek way of saying "Joshua", and the apostles were fine with that. So if you call him Yeshua that's great, but remember that you're doing it because you want to, not because you have to, and nobody else has to either. I mentioned the early Christian/Messianic community after the death of the apostles. What about them? Is there any evidence one way or the other there? There actually is. We know that the early Yeshua movement was seen as a sect of Judaism. While they simply called themselves "the Way", they became known as "the Nazarenes" because they followed the man of Nazareth, the Nazarene. Here's how Paul was describe, for instance: "We have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and **a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes**." (Acts 24:5)

So what happened to that early Messianic community in Jerusalem? We know that the apostles and the brothers of the Master were married, so they must have had children. Have you ever wondered where their direct descendants went? This may surprise you, but they were still around in the 300s and were described in detail by Epiphanius, who was a widely respected voice in the early church. Epiphanius was born in Israel around 320, lived as a monk in Egypt, and eventually became the bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, where he lived until his death in 403. Epiphanius wrote a book called "Panarion" against 80 of the "heresies" of his time period. Sadly, he included the Nazarenes in his attacks, simply because they continued to live as Jews and were "fettered by the law", as he put it.

Firstly, here's what he said about their whereabouts:

"This sect of Nazarenes is to be found...in the Decapolis near Pella...for that was its place of origin, since all the disciples had settled in Pella after their remove from Jerusalem - Christ having told them to abandon Jerusalem and withdraw from it because of the siege it was about to undergo. And they settled in Peraea for this reason and, as I said, lived their lives there. It was from this that the Nazarene sect had its origin." (Panarion 29.7.7-8)

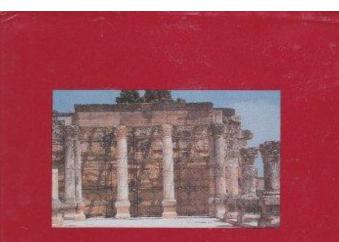
Did you get that? These Nazarenes in the 300s were the direct descendants of the first Messianic community in Jerusalem!

And then here's how he described the Nazarene community.

"They are Jews in every way, and nothing else! They do not only use the New Testament, but also the Old Testament, as the Jews do. For unlike the previous sectarians, they do not repudiate the Law, the Prophets, and the books which are called Writings by the Jews and by themselves. They have no different views but confess everything in full accord with the doctrine of the Law and like the Jews, except that they are supposedly believers in Christ. For they acknowledge both the resurrection of the dead and the divine creation of all things, and declare that God is one, and that his Son is Jesus Christ. They are perfectly versed in the Hebrew language. For among them the entire Law, the Prophets, and the so-called Writings - I mean the poetic books, Kings, Chronicles, Esther and all the rest - are read in Hebrew, as of course they are among the Jews. They are different from Jews, and different from Christians, only in the following ways: they disagree with Jews because they have come to faith in Christ; but since they are still fettered by the Law - circumcision, the Sabbath, and the rest - they are not in accord with Christians." (Panarion 29.7.1-5) It's sad that Ephinanius wasn't alone in anti-Jewish sentiments. By the 300s, antisemitism had already taken over the early church to such an insane degree that Jewish believers were hated and branded as heretics, simply for living Jewish lives. And as you can see here, even the direct descendants of Yeshua's closest disciples and siblings were subjected to this insane prejudice.



I'd definitely encourage you to learn more about the Nazarenes. You could start by Googling "Panarion 29" and reading the whole chapter. You could also get an e-copy of Ray Pritz's book "Nazarene Jewish Christianity". But for now what I wanted to point out to you is that 300 years after the apostles, the community they started was still practicing Judaism and was described as being no different from the larger Jewish community, with their only point of disagreement being their faith in Yeshua. Notice what it doesn't say is their only two points of disagreement being Yeshua and the use of the Sacred Name.



RAY A. PRITZ

NAZARENE JEWISH CHRISTIANITY

FROM THE END OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD UNTIL ITS DISAPPEARANCE IN THE FOURTH CENTURY I hope this conversation has strengthened you in your resolve to follow Yeshua, and the teachings and example of his *shlichim*. And I pray for a full assurance for you, right now, that you're right to call God "Adonai" or "Hashem" in Hebrew, or "Lord" in English, and that you're right to respectfully abstain from trying to pronounce his Sacred Name.

In our next conversation, we'll talk about how Sacred Name teachings twist Scripture in some very serious ways, and how Sacred Name Bibles are based on those misinterpretations. I do hope you'll join me for that discussion.

Sacred Name teachings misinterpret Scripture.

In our first two discussions about Sacred Name teachings, we looked at how they conflict with the example and teachings of both the Messiah, and his chosen emissaries.

In this talk we're going to get into the nitty-gritty of how **these teachings interpret specific Scriptures in ways that Yeshua and his guys didn't.** Not surprisingly, most of these passages are about the name of God.

Scripture says to call on God's name, to proclaim his name, and to praise and bless his name. Sacred Name teachings say that unless you actually say God's name, you are disobeying these Scriptures. Saying "Adonai" or "Lord" just doesn't cut it. But, as we learned, there is conclusive historical evidence that Yeshua and his disciples didn't use the Sacred Name, and followed the Jewish custom of saying "Adonai" or using another title, instead.

So..what gives? If Scripture says to call on, proclaim, and praise God's name, but Yeshua and his disciples wouldn't even say God's name, then **what do these Scriptures mean?**



It's a really good question. The answer is that in the Bible, your name is way more than just a sound that people make with their vocal chords. **Your name is who you are, your name is what you do, and your name is your reputation.** And this is true of God's name too.

Let's look at each of these individually.

Firstly, your name is your character, it's who you are. Here's a Scripture where God proclaimed his name. But as you can see, it didn't *just* involve making the sound of his name. He described himself, he communicated his heart:

Adonai descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and **proclaimed the name of Adonai**. Adonai passed before him and proclaimed, "Adonai, Adonai, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin... (Exodus 34:5-7)



Here's another example. In this one, we're literally told that a description of God is his name.

You shall not worship any other god, for Adonai, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. (Exodus 34:14)

Secondly, your **name is what you do.** This makes sense because our behaviour reflects our character. What you do flows from who you are. Here's an example from a Hebrew literary device called "poetic parallelism" in which calling upon God's name is equated with making his deeds known:

Give thanks to Adonai; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples! (Psalms 105:1)

This broader understanding - that God's name is who he is and what he does - helps us to understand several Scriptures. For instance, in the Aaronic benediction when the priests expressed what God would do those being blessed, it was described as putting his name upon them.

"This is how you shall bless the people of Israel. Say to them, 'Adonai **bless** you and **keep** you; Adonai **make his face to shine** upon you and **be gracious** to you; Adonai **lift up his countenance** upon you and **give you peace**.' So shall they **put my name upon the people** of Israel, and I will bless them." (Numbers 6:22-27)



Here's another example. This Scripture equivalates confessing Yeshua and the resurrection with calling on God's name. This makes sense from a Hebraic perspective because Yeshua is who God is, and resurrection is what God does. It's his name.

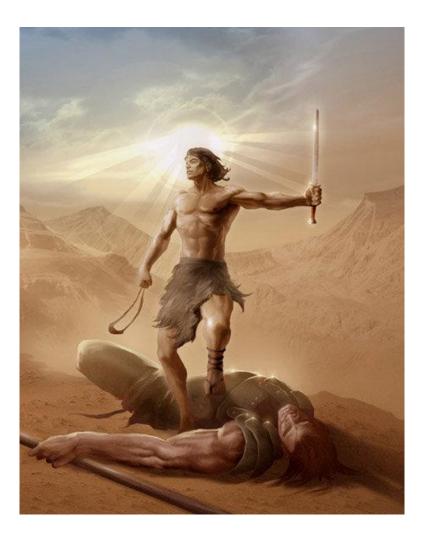
If you confess with your mouth the Master Yeshua and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved...for "everyone who calls on the name of Adonai will be saved." (Romans 10:9,13)

"I manifested your name to the people you gave me out of the world...**I made your name known to them, and I will** continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:6, 26)

This Scripture is sometimes used as a proof text that Yeshua taught his disciples the true pronunciation of the Father's name. But that doesn't make any sense, because in the same breath he said he would continue to do that. Teaching someone how to pronounce a word isn't something you need to continue to do, unless they have amnesia. What *does* make sense is that Yeshua *revealed who the Father was* to his disciples, because that is something he continued to do. And notice how right after he mentions the Father's name, he talks about love. Love is who God is, and love is what God does. Again, it's his name. In Scripture your name isn't just who you are and what you do. It's also how your character and behavior cause people to see you and speak of you. In other words, your name is your reputation. Here are two examples:

"I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and **I will make** you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth." (2 Samuel 7:9)

David made a name for himself when he returned from killing 18,000 Arameans in the Valley of Salt. (2 Samuel 8:13)



Here are some Scriptures that make more sense with the understanding that God's name is his reputation:

To **the place that Adonai your God will choose, to make his name dwell there,** there you shall bring all that I command you. (Deuteronomy 12:11)

He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Psalms 23:3)

Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, **for your name's sake**! (Psalms 79:9)

Before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors **for my name's sake.** (Luke 21:12)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. (Matthew 6:9)

As you can see, Sacred Name teachings don't just misinterpret Scripture on this count. They cheapen the name of God with their shallow assumption that it's just a sound you make with your mouth. They get people obsessing about the letter of the law and forgetting about the spirit of it. But God's name is so much more than just a sound people make with their mouths!

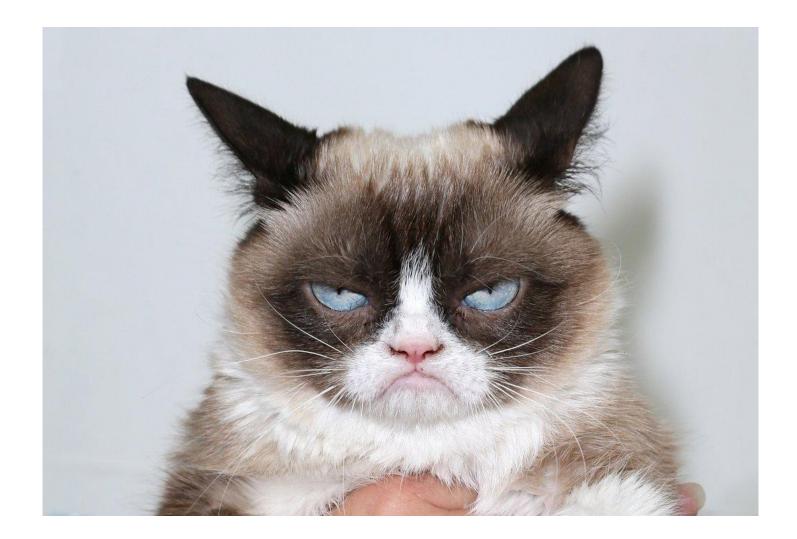
So go forth with confidence, knowing that as you sing about the character of God you are indeed praising his name. As you tell the stories of what he has done, you are indeed calling upon his name. And as you live as Yeshua lived, you are proclaiming and hallowing the Father's name in this world. Because he has staked his reputation on you. There are other ways that Sacred Name teachings misinterpret Scripture. I'll address these in my reviews of specific Sacred Name Bibles. In the meantime, I hope you'll join me for our next discussion looking at how Sacred Name teachings don't just misunderstand Scripture - they also misunderstand how language works.

Sacred Name teachings are based on a misunderstanding of language.

In our previous discussion, I explained how Sacred Name teachings drastically misinterpret Scripture. In this talk you're going to see how these teachings are also based on a misunderstanding of language and how it works. We're going to get a little analytical here for a minute, so hang on to your hat.

The first thing Sacred Name teachings don't understand is that language is a representative system of communication. In other words, a word represents a thing. The word isn't the thing itself, the word just represents the thing.

Here's an example for you:



Another way of saying this is that words are not reality. At their best, words are just vague reflections of reality.

This is true of names also. Your name isn't you. It just represents you. Similarly, the name of God isn't God. It just represents him. Of course that doesn't mean we treat the Sacred Name in an irreverent way, but it's important to understand that God's name isn't God himself. In a broader sense, this is also true of any word people use to refer to God. The name of God is any word in any language that refers to him.

This is especially clear in Hebrew because the word for "name" has the sense of a pointer. As in, a name points to the person it represents. The Hebrew word for "name" is "shem שׁם", and the Hebrew word for "there" is "sham שׁם". These two words are pronounced differently, but they're spelled exactly the same, and they're also very similar in meaning. To use a person's "shem" is to say "sham" - in other words, when you say somebody's name, you're pointing to them and saying "that person over there." So again, in a broader sense the name of God is any word in any language that points to him.

I know this is a no-brainer, but I feel the need to point this out because Sacred Name teachings would lead you to believe that knowing God's name is knowing God. But knowing a sound in your brain, or saying it with your mouth, doesn't mean you know the person that sound represents.

Here's an example. Imagine two women. One of them is deaf and mute, and will never speak the name of God, or even know how it's pronounced. Yet it's possible for her to know God on a personal and experiential level better than anyone else in the world. The other says and writes the "true name" of God hundreds of times a day, but doesn't know him at all. Or, at least it sure doesn't seem like it from some of the comments she makes on Facebook. Scripture teaches this difference, also.

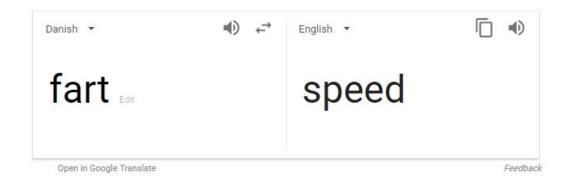
These people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. (Matthew 15:8)

They have the **appearance** of godliness, but they deny its **power.** Avoid such people. (2 Timothy 3:5)

We see from these Scriptures that you can be all lips and appearances, but have no heart and power.

In the end, either you're going to end up focused on knowing God personally - on that spirit to spirit connection, on your heart getting as close to him as possible, on experiencing his power in your life - or you're going to end up obsessing over externals like saying the right words the right way, outward appearances, and that whole letter of the law thing. And probably judging other people for it, too.

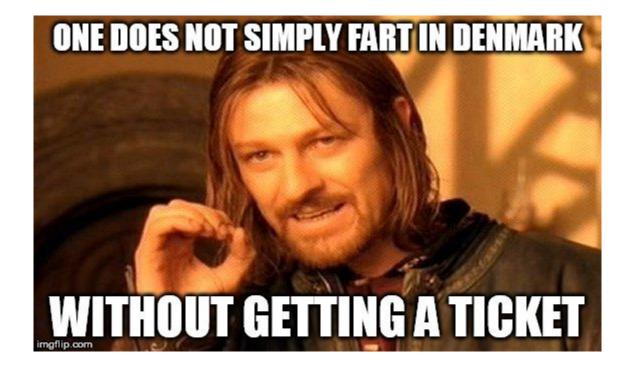
There's another way that Sacred Name teachings can be misleading. It has to do with language being subjective. A word only works if people agree that this sound represents this thing. Language isn't objective, and the sounds you make with your mouth only mean what you and your listeners agree they mean. Paul alluded to this dynamic when he said "There are undoubtedly all kinds of sounds in the world, and none is altogether meaningless; but if I don't know what a person's sounds mean, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker will be a foreigner to me." (1 Corinthians 14:10-11) We see here that people need to be agreed on what words mean, or those words mean nothing.







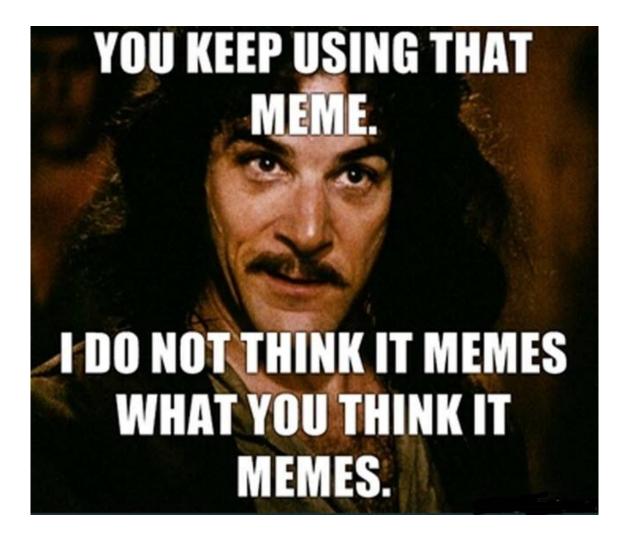




In this example, the word "fart" means one thing to English speakers, and another thing to Danish speakers. The sound "fart" has no objective meaning, because language is subjective.

Even when people are speaking the same language, their subjective understanding of what words mean can be so different they don't get each other. It's like, instead of the message being lost in translation, it's lost in transmission:

my brain ~ electrical impulses ~ my mouth ~ sound waves ~ your ears ~ more electrical impulses ~ your brain



All that to say, when Sacred Name people stress out about saying the right words, or pronouncing them correctly, it's because they don't understand how language works. Words are just functional things you use to point to something or somebody. And words only have meaning when people agree on what they mean.

So if you're using words people don't understand, you're kinda missing the point. Or if you're saying Hebrew names differently than how Hebrew speakers say them, you may tell yourself you're technically correct, but you're actually wrong...because nobody knows what you're talking about.

Out of the ten problems with Sacred Name teachings I'm addressing in these talks, this is probably the least worrisome. In fact, it can be almost comedic when Sacred Name teachers make up their own version of Hebrew straight out of their infallible Strong's Concordance which they only started using last year. But it's still a problem.



In our next talk we're going to look at a much bigger problem - how the Sacred Name movement has become a voice for the accuser of the brethren.

Sacred Name teachings make false accusations against Jews and Christians.

This is going to be our shortest discussion in this series, but it's very serious. We already talked about how Sacred Name teachings say that if you don't try to pronounce God's name you're sinning. Let's talk about that a little more. Because it's actually an accusation, and a very serious one at that.

Have the Jewish people been breaking the Torah for the last couple thousand years by saying "Adonai" instead of saying God's name?

Are hundreds of millions of sincere Christians offending God daily by calling him "Lord"?

You know the Jehovah's Witnesses would say the answer to these questions is "yes". Are they right?



No. The answer to all these questions is, no. We already established the historical fact that Yeshua and the apostles said "Adonai" instead of using God's name. So the Jewish people are right to practice this reverent tradition. And similarly, the body of Christ around the world is right to follow this Jewish tradition by using the English equivalent of "Adonai".

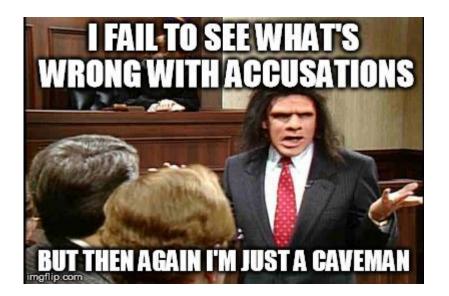
So, contrary to common accusations in the Sacred Name movement, there's no evil conspiracy of the Rabbis to get God's people to forget his name. The church doesn't have a secret agenda to trick people into calling on a false god by saying "Lord". And you are not sinning because you don't try to pronounce God's name.



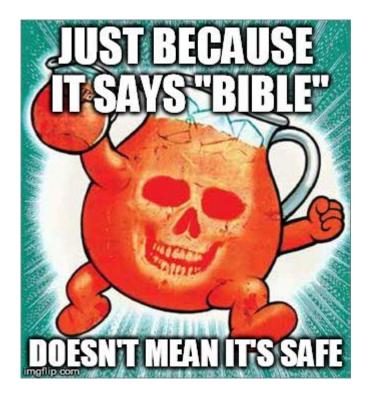


Humour aside though, this is a big deal because we know who the accuser is. Satan is called the "accuser of the brethren" in Revelation 12:10. That's all he does, 24/7. He make accusations against God's people. So when you hear Sacred Name teachings making false accusations like this against your Jewish and Christian brothers and sisters, doesn't it make you wonder where that's coming from?

This is one of the big reasons I recommend that you stay away from Sacred Name Bibles. They're like gateway drugs. They seem harmless, and even good - I mean, it is the Bible after all, right? And it even has some Hebrew in it! But you don't realize how deep the rabbit hole goes. Unless you're a serious student of Biblical languages and history, you probably won't pick up on the poison. And before you know it, you may even find yourself spreading these false accusations and becoming an unwitting voice for the enemy.



Speaking of bizarre, there are other bizarre accusations Sacred Name teachings make. For instance, they say that the word "God" is pagan, and that people who use it are actually calling on a pagan deity. They also say that the name "Jesus" means horrible things in the original Greek. I'll demolish these false teachings in my individual reviews of specific Sacred Name Bibles. For now, hopefully it'll suffice to just warn you to stay away from the Kool-Aid.



In our next talk, I'll show you how Sacred Name teachings and their underlying accusations always cause fights and divisions.

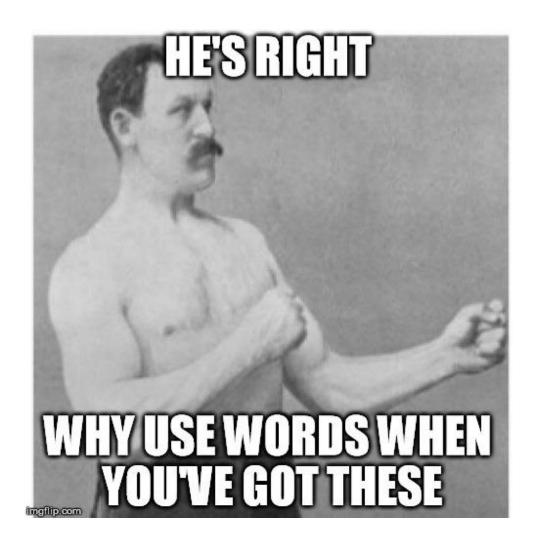
Sacred Name teachings cause unnecessary fights and divisions.

Sacred Name teachings always cause trouble. The same goes for when you have somebody in a congregation who starts using a Sacred Name Bible. I've seen this happen many times on both a local fellowship level, and on a movement level. In fact, if I could pick one phrase to sum up the fruit of Sacred Name teachings, I'd say "fights about words".

What's crazy about this is that Messiah explicitly commanded us through his apostle not to fight about words!

Remind everyone about these things, and **command them in God's presence to stop fighting over words.** Such arguments are useless, and they can ruin those who hear them. (2 Timothy 2:14)

Some people may contradict our teaching, but these are the wholesome teachings of the Master Yeshua the Messiah. These teachings promote a godly life. Anyone who teaches something different is arrogant and lacks understanding. **Such a person has an unhealthy desire to fight about words.** This stirs up arguments ending in jealousy, division, slander, and evil suspicions. These people always cause trouble. (1 Timothy 6:3-5)

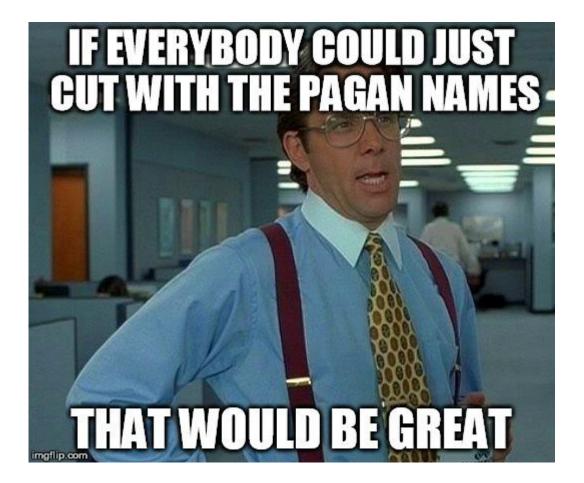


Manly man may not get it, but let's take this to heart. We are commanded in Scripture not to argue and fight about words. Scripture says these arguments are useless and destructive. It also says that people who want to fight about these things are unhealthy, arrogant, lacking in understanding, and always causing trouble.

Based on this Scripture, it's my belief that we should have zero tolerance for Sacred Name teachings, and for Sacred Name Bibles.

You may be wondering to yourself why these kinds of arguments caused so much trouble two thousand years ago, and why they still do today. I've wondered about this too, and have identified at least three reasons.

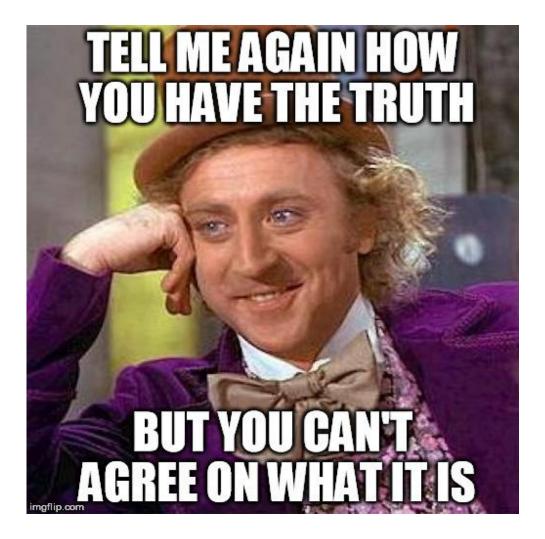
Firstly, it's because this is a black and white issue. Sacred Name teachings are either right, or they're wrong. If they're right, then everybody in the group should start using the "true names" and cut with all the fake names. If they're wrong, then they're spreading false teachings and they should be confronted and stopped.



Secondly, it's because this is a very "in your face" issue. God gets lots of airtime at religious gatherings, and you need to call him something when you're talking about him. The same goes for public Bible reading - you can't usually read far before you hit God's name. And the same goes for prayer.

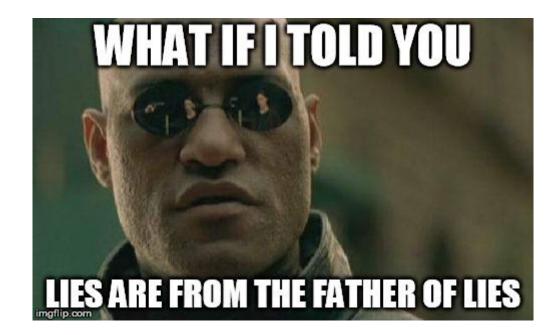


As a side note, it gets old fast when everybody in the room is saying God's name differently. And let's face it, it makes your group look bad too. New people visit, and the first thing they notice is that you can't even agree on what you call your God. Like really, would you expect a group like that to have anything else figured out? Or would you really want to join? Most people don't find confusion attractive, actually.



The third reason Sacred Name teachings are so disruptive is because they're Satanic. Scripture says that some teachings are "doctrines of demons". In other words, they're Satanically inspired. If the enemy wanted to ruin a fellowship or hijack a whole movement, wouldn't it make sense to use something so close to the truth, but with a twist? I mean, we're talking about the Hebrew language and the Bible here. These are good things!

Please understand, when I say that Sacred Name teachings are Satanic, it doesn't mean there aren't sincere believers in the Sacred Name movement. The same goes for people who use Sacred Name Bibles. If you use one, you've probably even had some beautiful times of fellowship with the Father reading it. That's the scariest thing about deception - you can have the best intentions and the sweetest spirit in the world, and still be deceived. And thankfully, the Father still loves us and relates to us, in spite of our deceptions! But none of that negates the fact that the whole Sacred Name world is based on historical misinformation, and Scriptural misinterpretation. In other words, it's based on lies, and we know who the "father of lies" is. It also doesn't negate the fact that the Sacred Name movement resounds with accusations against our Jewish and Christian brethren. And the "accuser of the brethren" isn't the good guy in the story! So hopefully you can see why I believe that Sacred Name teachings are Satanic.



I know, this is some heavy stuff. Thankfully the answer is simple. If you've been following Sacred Name teachings, now that you know better, just drop the misinformation. If you have a Sacred Name Bible put it away, and get a Messianic Jewish Bible, or even a regular Christian one, instead. Develop a zero tolerance policy towards fights about words in your fellowship. Let the truth of the Messiah, and his peace, reign in your hearts, and in your group. You'll be so glad you did. Maybe you're breathing a sigh of relief already, just hearing me say that.



I mentioned getting a Messianic Jewish Bible. The last four talks in this series are going to be about the Jewish people, and your relationship with them. I do hope you'll stay with me for those, because this is something I'm very passionate about, and something that I believe is very close to the heart of Yeshua also. In our next talk, we're going to talk about our testimony for Messiah to the Jewish community, and how Sacred Name teachings have the potential to destroy that. Join me.

Sacred Name teachings will destroy your witness to the Jewish community.

Thank you for joining me for this discussion. It's definitely the one that's closest to my heart. I know it's very close to the heart of Yeshua also, because it's about his relationship with his flesh and blood family, the Jewish people.

Scripture explicitly says that the Gospel is first for the Jew. That mean when it comes to our mission to tell the story of Yeshua and represent him to the world, the Jewish people should always be our first priority. Not that the rest of humanity doesn't matter, but God has a strategic order, and this is what it is.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, **to the Jew first** and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)

God also tells us through Scripture that he has a deep love for the Jewish people, an unconditional love. In other words, the Jewish community has a special place in his heart.

From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but **from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;** for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. (Romans 11:28-29)

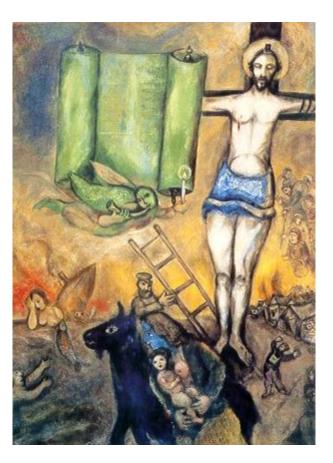
We also know that the Jewish people are Yeshua's own flesh and blood family. Here's an example of how he has identified himself so closely with them - look at the title that mysteriously came up at his birth, and death. It's like this was what he was born for, and what he died for.

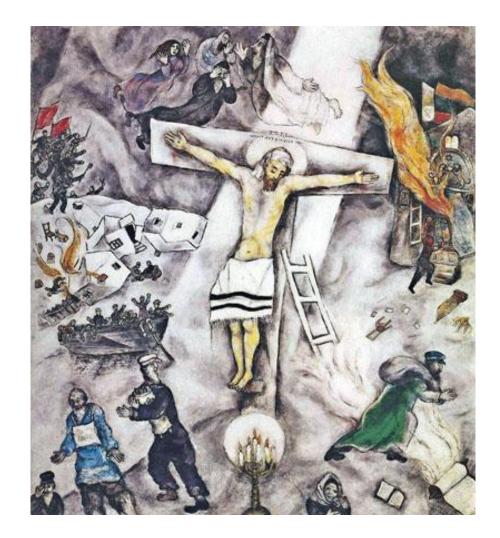
After Yeshua was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is **he who has been born king of the Jews?** For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:1-2)

Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is **Yeshua, the King of the Jews.**" (Matthew 27:37)

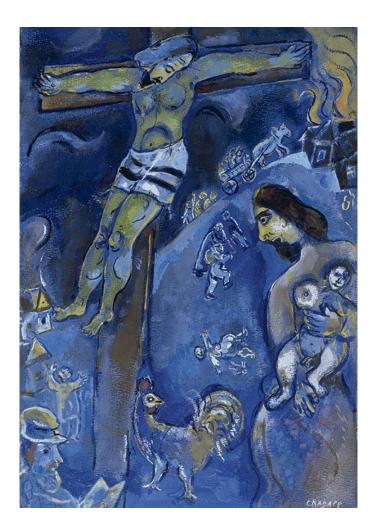
I think the artist who has best depicted Yeshua as the crucified King of the Jews is Mark Chagall. Before I show you some of his paintings, let me tell you a little about him. Born Moishe Shegal in 1887 in Belarus, Chagall lived for almost a hundred years, and was described as "the last survivor of the first generation of European modernists" and as "the quintessential Jewish artist of the twentieth century". Picasso said that he would be "the only painter left who understands what colour really is."

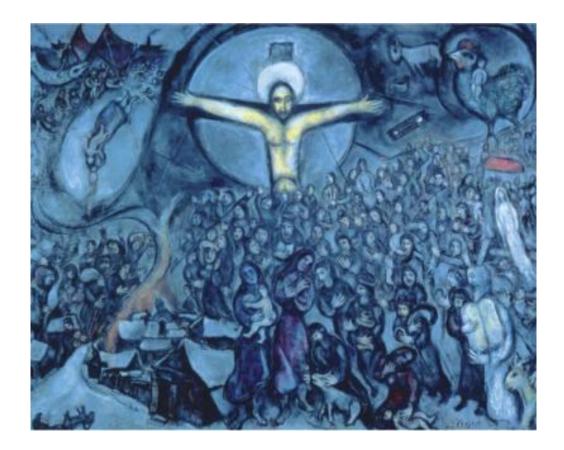
Here's Chagall on his paintings of Jesus: "For me, Christ has always symbolized the true type of the Jewish martyr. That is how I understood him in 1908 when I used this figure for the first time. It was under the influence of the pogroms. Then I painted and drew him in pictures about ghettos, surrounded by Jewish troubles, by Jewish mothers, running terrified with little children in their arms." In 1944 Chagall said "after two thousand years of "Christianity" in the world—say whatever you like—but, with few exceptions, their hearts are silent... I see the artists in Christian nations sit still—who has heard them speak up? They are not worried about themselves, and our Jewish life doesn't concern them." Chillingly, most of these paintings of the suffering Jewish Christ were done between 1941 and 1945. Were they a prophetic expression of the deep groanings of the heart of Christ for his people? I think so.











So here's where the rubber meets the road. There are things you can do that will help you represent this Yeshua in a beautiful way to his Jewish people. There are also things you can do that will wreck your testimony and turn Jewish people off to the Messiah you represent. Here are three general principles that will help you be a good witness. Notice these are all straight from Scripture.

Firstly, you need to speak their language. Otherwise they won't understand what you're saying, duh. But on a deeper level, if they see you as a "barbarian" then they'll see your message as foreign, and will fail to see how it relates to them and their world.

There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. **If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian,** and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. (1 Corinthians 14:10-11) Yeshua was our best example of this. God sent him to the human race with a message, and what did he do? He entered our world, he became one of us. The Word himself learned to speak our language.

The Word became flesh, and lived among us! (John 1:14)

This is a reality that often escapes the notice of well-meaning Christians when it comes to Jewish people. Just because we speak English doesn't' t mean English words are the ones we most deeply resonate with. Remember that Jewish people grow up reading the Bible and praying in Hebrew, and that most of our deepest beliefs are expressed in Hebrew terms. So really, even though Christians and Jews both speak English, when it comes to our spiritual language, they're two worlds apart. Can you see why I'm so passionate about introducing Christians to the heart and soul of the Hebrew language?



This reminds me of a short interchange between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Pope Francis during a recent papal visit to Israel, actually.

Netanyahu: "Jesus was here, in this land. He spoke Hebrew." Pope: "Aramaic." Netanyahu: "He spoke Aramaic, but he knew Hebrew."

In my opinion, this was a prime example of how Christians haven't bothered to connect with the Jewish people through taking a positive attitude towards their heart language.



The second thing you need to do is put yourself in their sandals of the person you're trying to reach. Again, as Yeshua's emissary to the non-Jewish world, Paul was an excellent example of this.

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews...**I have become all things to all people**, that by all means I might save some. (1 Corinthians 9:20-22)

And again, Yeshua was *the* most excellent excellent example. He literally put himself in our sandals by becoming one of us!

The Word became flesh, and lived among us! (John 1:14)



The third thing you need to do - and this one is way too often overlooked - is actually something you shouldn't do. Don't offend them! Again, guess who was a prime example of this? The guy Mashiach sent to the nations to represent him! Surprise!

Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all people in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved. (1 Corinthians 10:32-33)

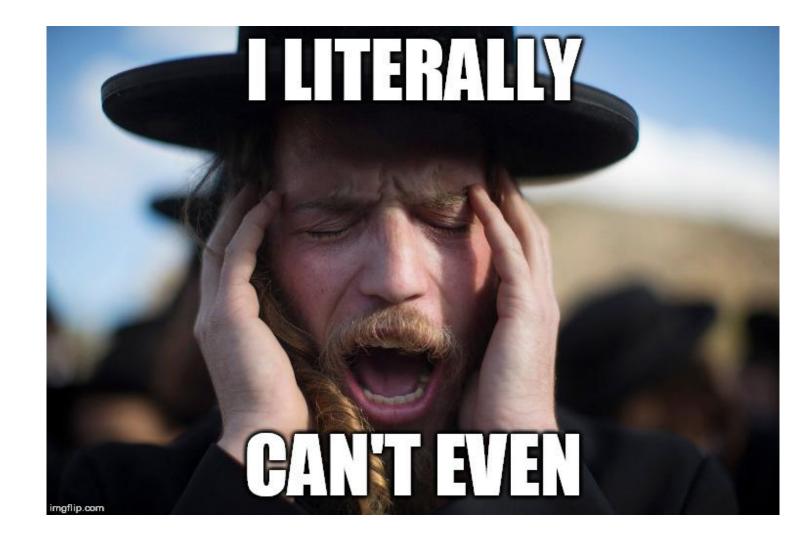
Giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited. (2 Corinthians 6:3)

In other words, don't make people make this face.



Of course, I'm giving you these three tips assuming you want to be a good witness for Messiah. Just for fun, I'll also give you some tips on how to be a bad witness for Messiah. If you've ever seen a video by JP Sears, just imagine that I'm like a Jewish version of him. I hope these make you laugh, but I hope they also terrify you. Because this is pretty much a description of the Sacred Name movement.

So, firstly, if you were hoping to be a bad witness for Messiah, be sure to use God's name. And the more, the better. If you could imagine the reaction a fundamentalist preacher would succeed in getting if he walked up to his pulpit on Sunday morning, wearing a skimpy dress and heavy makeup, that's pretty much the reaction you'll be able to get from Jewish people if they hear you trying to pronounce God's name. So this advice definitely comes with my highest recommendations if you were hoping to offend Jewish people. If you were hoping to offend them seventy times seven like the Bible says, I'd also suggest that you don't just use God's name in Scripture reading and conversation. Be sure to also learn some of the traditional Jewish prayers, and then wherever they would "Adonai", you can use your favourite pronunciation of God's name there, too. So for instance, instead of saying "Baruch atah Adonai ", say "Baruch atah Y****h". You'll find this little tip to be incredibly helpful in making the Jewish people you're trying to reach even more unreachable.



My second piece of advice is to make up your own version of Hebrew. Hebrew is very special to the Jewish people, it's like their sacred tongue. So if you wanted to push Jewish people away in order to bring them closer, one the most effective ways you could do that is by making up your own version of Hebrew, instead of learning to say stuff the way Jewish people do. It wouldn't hurt to throw in some conspiracy theories about the evil Rabbis in there, too.





You have to remember that your job is to make the Jews jealous. And what better way to make them jealous than to take something that's theirs? And what's theirs, more than their own language? I'll show you how to do this for yourself in my reviews of specific Sacred Name Bibles. Several of them are really good at making up their own version of Hebrew. So definitely stay tuned for those.



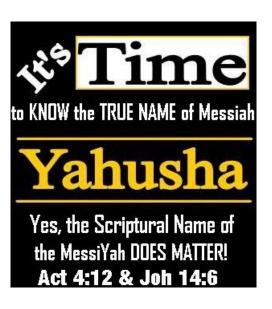
My third piece of wisdom for you is to make up your own version of Yeshua's name. The Sacred Name movement has already done a great job making up all kinds of creative new versions of Yeshua's name. They usually call these "true names". There's Yahshua, Yahushua, Yahusha, and Yahawashi, to name a few. You could pick one of these, or you could use your Strong's concordance and make up your own. The important thing is to be sure to put "Yah" in there somewhere or it doesn't count. Another option would be to take a true name somebody else made up, and capitalize some of the letters to make it even more true. For instance, you can write Yahusha as YaHuSHa.

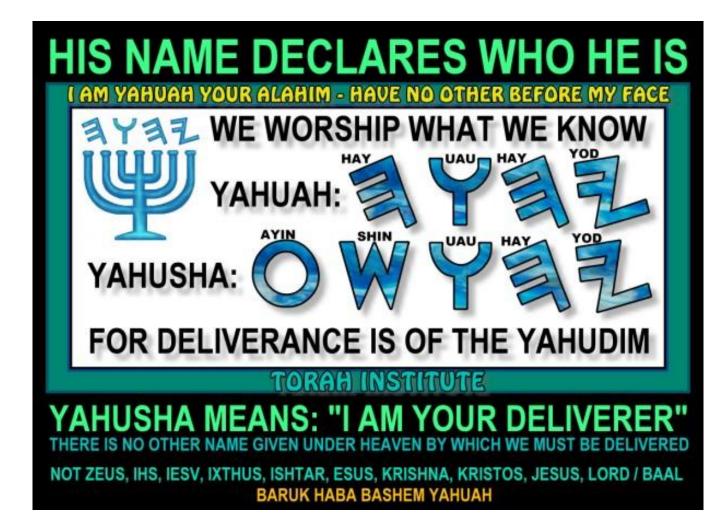
Every time you say the Name YAHUSHAA you are proclaining

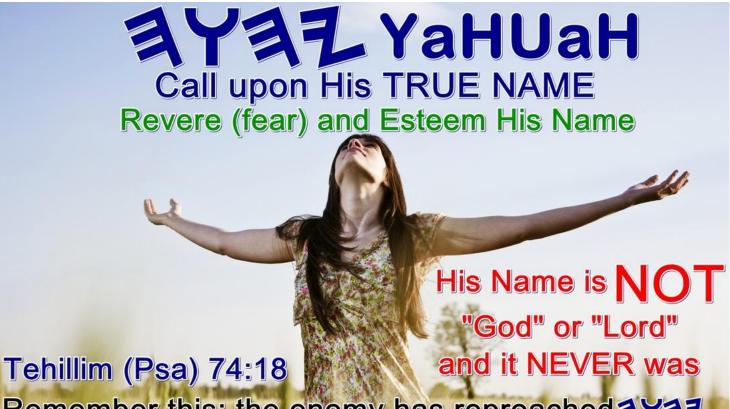


There are pros and cons to making up your own true name. One of the pros is that, if it becomes popular, you'll get so many hipster points for using it before it was cool. You might even get prophet status for restoring the true name. If it doesn't become popular, that can be a pro too. It feels really set-apart to use your own true name and know that no one else is using it. One of the cons is that your true name won't have a Sacred Name Bible with your true spelling, unless you're planning to publish one of your own. All the most popular true names do have their own Sacred Name Bibles. But don't be discouraged if you aren't able to publish a Bible. You can at least make some graphics with the true name on them, and ball caps don't hurt either.

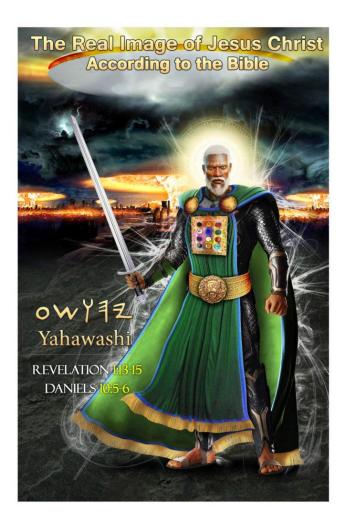








Remember this: the enemy has reproached **AYAL**, And a **foolish people** has despised Your Name.



Either way, regardless of whether you make up your own true name or use somebody else's, one of the greatest things about this tip is that you'll be accomplishing two things at once, like a double-edged sword. Here's what I mean. Let's say you're talking with a Jewish person, and you wait for that perfect moment, and then casually drop the true name. If it's paleo enough and if you do it right, there's a good chance they won't even realize you're talking about Jesus, and will probably assume you're talking about some Japanese guy. If you're able to achieve this, you've truly reached the heights of set-apartness.



Even if you fail on that one and they're able to figure out who you're talking about, you'll still probably succeed at offending them, so don't be discouraged. And if they know their stuff, you might even be able to get them to laugh at you. If you're blessed enough for this to happen, you'll be able to brush the dust off your sandals as you walk away, and it'll earn you many persecution points. I also hope you don't feel discouraged if you don't have many conversations with real Jewish people, because that's why there's the internet.

As a side note, the reason I say "if they know their stuff" is because actually the Hebrew name of Jesus actually is "Yeshua", like in all the Jewish and Christian writings from that time period. There isn't actually anything that says his Hebrew name was anything other than "Yeshua". But you shouldn't let this fact threaten you and your true name. I recommend shaking it off with a conspiracy theory. You should also go back to what you figured out from Strong's concordance because obviously, it's impossible for anything to be stronger than Strong's. It can also be comforting to imagine all the manuscripts with the true name that are hidden in the Vatican. There is one more bonus to using a true name that I didn't tell you about yet. If you use a true name, it will help keep you safe from contact with the Jewish community, which can be very stressful, not to mention corrupting. It will also guard you from possibly falling into a relationship with them. It's almost magical that way, actually. True names also work well against the Messianic Jewish community. You have to remember that even though they believe in Messiah, they don't use his true name, so it's best to keep a healthy distance there.

Ok, I hope I got my point across in a way that made you laugh and think at the same time. There is one more way you can mortify Jewish people, but I'm going to talk about this one in a more normal way. In the Jewish tradition, if a book contains God's Hebrew name, it's considered a holy book. Jewish people handle holy books very reverently, and have developed some special traditions to reflect this. For instance, we never put a holy book on the floor or put anything on top of it, except for another holy book. We also try not to put it facedown, or upside down. And we don't take holy books into the bathroom, or throw them in the garbage.

The Sacred Name movement doesn't bother to teach people how to handle holy books in a respectful manner, effectively spitting on Jewish sensibilities and despising the example of the apostle Paul. I know, these are strong words, but this is such an important issue. We're talking about Jewish individuals seeing Yeshua for who he really is. We're talking about a movement that is horrifically misrepresenting Messiah to his own people, precious people for whom he suffered and died. I personally have witnessed people putting their Sacred Name Bibles containing God's holy name on the ground on multiple occasions. Can you see how this type of behaviour would cause a Jewish person undue distress, even trauma? Can you see how it's slamming the door to the kingdom in their faces, possibly forever? This is a big deal!

So to sum this up, God has a special love for the Jewish people, Yeshua is passionate for them, and we are called to prioritize accurately representing Messiah to his own flesh and blood family. We can do this by speaking their language, putting ourselves in their sandals, and trying not to offend them. The Sacred Name movement rejects all this and destroys the testimony they could have for Messiah by using God's name in public settings, making up their own version of Hebrew, perverting the name of Yeshua, and handling holy books in flippant ways. That's how Sacred Name teachings will destroy your witness for Messiah, probably without you even realizing it...until now.

Thanks for hearing my heart in this discussion. Even though I talked about some heavy things, I hope this was a positive experience for you. In our next talk we're going to learn about Replacement Theology, and how this evil mentality isn't just a problem in the church - there's a new Replacement Theology that is fast spreading amongst Christians who are learning about the Hebrew Roots of their faith. I do hope you'll join me for that.

Sacred Name teachings are a new form of Replacement Theology.

In our last discussion, I explained how Sacred Name teachings will wreck your testimony to the Jewish community, probably without you even realizing it. This talk with be something of a continuation of that theme, about a pernicious mindset that has infected certain sectors of the church, and is now taking a new form in the Sacred Name and Hebrew Roots movements.

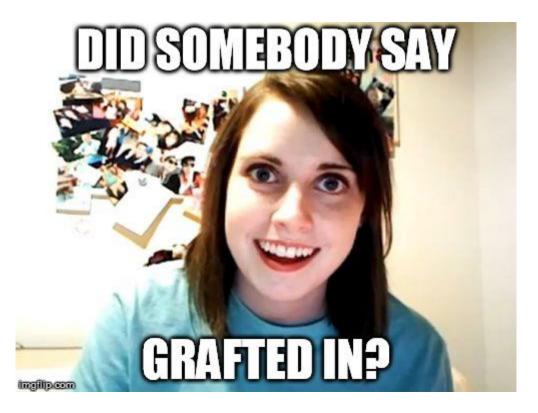


Replacement theology is basically the belief that the Church has replaced Israel. Or that *you* have replaced the Jewish people. Like assuming you're not Jewish. According to this story, God used to be in a relationship with the Jewish people, but then they dumped Jesus so God dumped them and now he has a new girlfriend. In the replacement theology construct, the nation of Israel has been rejected by God forever, and all the blessings and promises in the Old Testament now belong to the church. Well in a spiritual sense, anyway. Most Christians don't really want to move to the Middle East.



There are several glaring problems with replacement theology. For one thing, it's not in the Bible. The apostle Paul repeatedly stated in Romans 9 to 11 that God didn't reject Israel. He listed the things that continued to belong to the physical Jewish people, including the covenants and the promises. And he spoke with overwhelming hope of a future fulfillment and acceptance of the Jewish people - a time when all Israel would be saved, after the fullness of the nations had come in. If you're coming from a Reformed background, it may surprise you to realize that the main point of Romans 9 to 11 wasn't predestination.

As a side note, the apostle Paul didn't teach replacement theology, but he did teach inclusion theology. Not that the Church replaced Israel, but rather that Christians had been "brought near" to the Jewish community, "grafted in" along with the Jewish people, and co-heirs with them. Through the Messiah, believers from the nations were included in the commonwealth of Israel, and counted amongst the children of Abraham. Can you see the difference?



Another glaring problem with replacement theology is that you need to have your head buried in the sand to believe it. Like, it's hard to believe that God is done with the Jewish people when they're still around after an exile that lasted almost two thousand years. Not to mention that Hebrew came back from the dead and the nation of Israel was kind of born again and it was all kind of a miracle. If God decided he was finished with the Jewish people and that he wasn't going to help them anymore, he didn't do a very good job not helping them anymore.

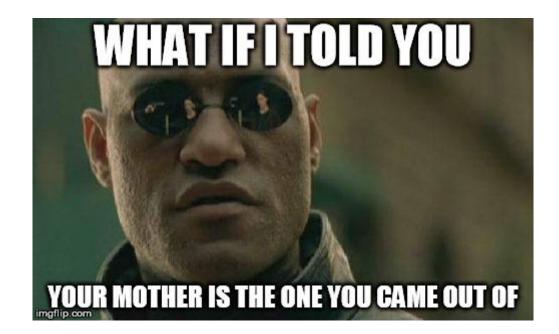


One more problem with replacement theology is that it's antisemitic. Let's face it, if you're the new girlfriend it's going to be hard for you not to hate the old girlfriend. Or, at least, not to feel threatened by her. If you really believe that your God rejected the Jewish people, you're going to reject them too. And when it comes to rejection and hatred, you can't have one without the other.



Replacement theology teaches that the Church is the new Israel, the true Israel, which sounds wonderful until you look at the flip side of the coin, which is usually left unsaid. Because it sounds like Darth Vader. Replacement theology teaches that the Jews are the old Israel, the fake Israel. The unavoidable conclusion to this assertion is that the Jewish people don't really have a legitimate identity anymore. In other words, the Jewish people don't really have a right to exist - at least not as Jews. I'm sure you can see the problem there.

Most of us would agree that replacement theology is evil. And that includes the vast majority of sincere believers who use Sacred Name Bibles. But we don't realize how deep the rabbit hole goes. Most of us grew up in churches that were anything but antisemitic - they were probably even supportive of Israel, and that's a good thing! But if you grew up in the Protestant world, you need to realize that your world came out of the Roman Catholic world, which was thoroughly steeped in replacement theology. And it still stains our thinking in many ways.

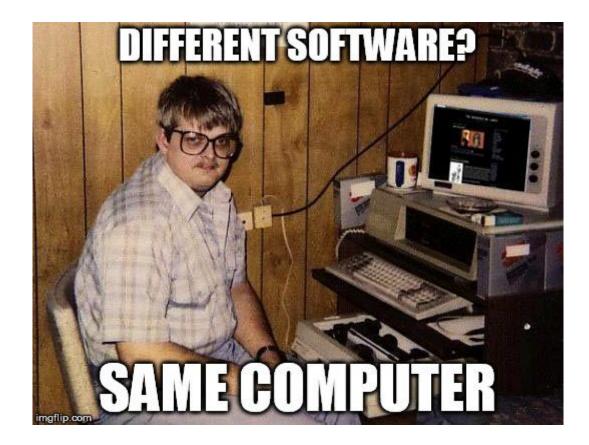


Here's an example of subtle replacement theology. Jeremiah 29:11, the famous "I know the plans I have for you" verse. I love this Scripture. My grandparents used to always write it in the cards they'd give me, and I treasure that. But have you *ever* heard *anybody* mention that this a promise to the Jewish community? That's replacement theology in action. It's not bad to receive these words of hope for ourselves. But if we forget that in context God spoke these words to Israel in exile and we just think they're about us, then somewhere deep in our minds, we just replaced them.



Or here's another example. How many sermons have you heard about how to have a good relationship with the Jewish community? Or how to share the gospel with them? Or just how to respect them, and not be a jerk and offend them? I grew up in Baptist, Alliance, and Pentecostal churches. My dad and my grandpa were both pastors. And I never heard *anything* about *any* of that. The Jewish people weren't even on the radar. It was like they didn't exist, as if we had replaced them or something. Never mind that Paul said the gospel is first for the Jewish people, and never mind that the Jewish people are still around. Like almost all of us have a Jewish neighbour or friend or coworker or relative. That's replacement theology in action.

So here's the problem. You have this movement of believers who grew up with this stuff, and now they're learning about the Jewish roots of Christianity. Which is great, but too often they don't realize just how deeply replacement theology has affected them. So now they're learning Hebrew, or keeping a little more of the Torah, but they're carrying this replacement theology baggage with them, and it basically just takes on a new form. Kind of like changing the software on a computer, but keeping the same defunct operating system.



We already talked about some of the ways this new "Messianic" replacement theology expresses itself through Sacred Name practices. For instance, when people make up their own version of Hebrew, instead of learning to write and pronounce it the way the Jewish people do, they're ignoring the fact that Hebrew is the language of the Jewish people, and are acting as if they're replaced them. Never mind the Scriptures actually call Hebrew "Yehudit" in a couple places, which translates roughly as "Jewish". Or when Sacred Name publishers don't bother teaching people how to handle holy books in a way that's respectful to Jewish sensitivities. Through their silence, they're saying that the Jewish people don't matter - essentially, that they've been replaced - and they're teaching their followers to say likewise through their actions.

The same goes for people who make up alternate spellings and pronunciations for the name of Yeshua. What they're really saying is that they know better than the Messianic Jewish community - that they're the new replacement.

And then this last example is probably the biggest. When people insist on using the name of God and reject the Jewish tradition of saying "Adonai" or "Lord", what they're really saying is that the Torah wasn't given to the Jewish people, and that it's no longer their *place* to interpret it. Why? Because they've been *re*placed. But that's not what Scripture teaches. We're told in Romans 3:2 that the Torah has been entrusted to the Jewish community. And likewise, Romans 9:4 confirms this by saying that the giving of the Torah belongs, in the present, to physical Israel.

I know, these are strong words. Thank you for hearing me out so far. Now that we've looked at the negative side the roots and the fruits of replacement theology - let's finish by looking at the positive side. What can we do to be cleansed of these deeply stained ways of thinking? Firstly, let's cultivate an attitude of respect and honour towards the Jewish people, towards traditional Judaism, and towards the Messianic Jewish movement. And let's be fiercely uncompromising on this.

Secondly, let's acknowledge loudly and often God's ongoing relationship with Israel, and the fact that the Jewish community has been entrusted with the Torah and its interpretation.

And thirdly, Paul said we've been "brought near" to the Jewish community. Let's take that seriously, and do what we can to nurture that relationship and come a little closer. Maybe call up the Rabbi of your local synagogue and ask if you could come for services sometime, or ask that Jewish person in your life to tell you about what it's like to be Jewish.

What coming a little closer looks like is going to be different for each of us. But for all of us, I guarantee it's going to be a beautiful experience. Because one small step towards the Jewish people, is one giant leap away from replacement theology.

Thank you so much for hanging in there while I lambasted replacement theology. I hope the memes helped. In our next conversation, I'm going to tell you about the histories of three movements - Messianic Judaism, Sacred Name, and Hebrew roots - and then explain how the term "Messianic" has been hijacked. I do hope you'll join me for that.

Sacred Name teachings claim to be Messianic when they're not.

It may surprise you to hear that the label "Messianic" is being increasingly misapplied. I would even say it's being hijacked. Originally, if you were Messianic it meant you were a Messianic Jew, or at least closely involved with a Messianic Jewish synagogue. And if something was Messianic, it meant it was Messianic *Jewish*. In the last couple decades however, the term "Messianic" has been co-opted by the Hebrew Roots and Sacred Name movements. This wouldn't be such a bad thing if these movements weren't rife with so many *un*-Jewish notions, and *anti*-Jewish attitudes. But they are, and the result is that the real Messianic movement is getting misrepresented. Let's talk about the history of these three movements.

Here's the story of the Messianic Jewish movement. In the 1800s, the number of Jewish people coming to faith in Yeshua began to increase. They called themselves "Hebrew Christians" and formed several alliances starting with the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Great Britain in 1866, and culminating in the International Hebrew Christian Alliance in 1925. The following were the stated aims of the IHCA. As you can see, they were both powerful and prophetic in their time: 1. To foster a spirit of fellowship and co-operation among Hebrew Christians throughout the world.

a) By the establishment of local Alliances wherever possible.

b) By watching over the spiritual development and general welfare of converts, and encouraging them to be witnesses for Christ among Israel in every sphere of life, and thus to set up again under Divine guidance "the candlestick" of witness within Jewery.

2. To present a united witness on behalf of Christ, not only to the Jewish people, but to the world.

3. To interpret the spirit of the Jewish people to the Christian world, and the spirit of the Christian Gospel to the Jews.

4. To make it possible for Hebrew Christians, who may desire to do so, to share in the activities of Zionism, and to claim for them equal rights in terms of the Balfour Declaration.

5. To aid Churches and Societies in their selection of Hebrew Christian candidates offering themselves forth Ministry, and supplying them with information regarding Converts as occasion may arise.

6. To identify Hebrew Christians with the Jewish People in the defence of their just rights in countries in which these rights are denied them, and, when necessary, to protest against the spirit of Anti-Semitism.

Here are a couple pictures from that era. This publication is from the newly formed Alliance in Great Britain.

The Scattered Nation, June 1, 1866. 125

HEBREW-CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE.

HEBREW-CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE.

BY THE EDITOR.

MANY meetings are held in London in the month of May, which are long before made known to the Christian public, every effort being used to secure a large attendance; and we wish them all God-speed, inasmuch as they promote the glory of Christ. On the 23d of May a meeting was held in the plain schoolroom of Trinity Chapel, John Street, Edgware Road, which had not before been advertised, was altogether of a private character; and yet we believe that our readers will agree with us, after they have learnt its import, when we say, that such a meeting has not taken place since the Apostolic age.

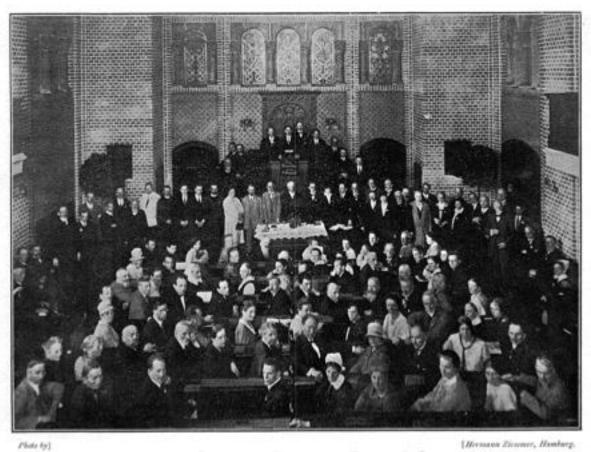
"Blessed are they that come in the name of the Lord," as he knew they had assembled in the name of the God of their fathers. After the singing of the 100th Psalm, the reading of Isaiah lxii., and prayer, the Chairman pointed out the object of the meeting, which he described to be: a profession of our *faith* before our *Jewish*, a maintaining of the *hope* of Israel before our Gentile Christian, brethren, and a strengthening of *love* among ourselves, *Hebrew Christians*. It would be made manifest that we have not abandoned the faith professed by Moses and the Prophets. It is highly important to declare to our

There exists a Jewish and an Evangelical Alliance, and both of them do a great and a good work in their sphere; but the need has been felt of yet another institution of somewhat similar character. It was thought desirable also to establish a Bond of Union between those Hebrews who have found peace and joy in Jesus Christ. In consequence thereof, several brethren issued a circular inviting Hebrew Christians belonging to different denominations - clergymen, laymen, physicians, tradesmen - to meet together on Wednesday, the 23rd, for prayer and consultation, in order to consider together whether a Hcbrew-Christian Alliance could and should be formed, to define its object, and to fix as far as possible its organization and management.

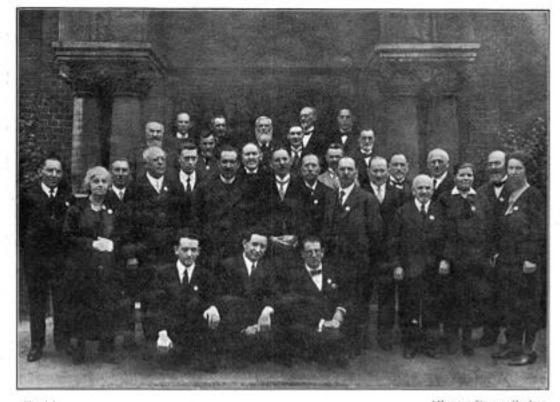
Eighty brethren met on the day appointed, and the Rev. A. M. Meyer moved, and Dr. Ginsburg soconded, that Dr. Schwartz take the chair, which was accordingly done. He addressed the assembled brethren in the language of their fathers : שלום עליכם "Peaco be with you"; and then again שנים VOL. I.-NO. VI.

Christian brethren that we have not forsaken the hope of Israel, nor are in any way ashamed of our Jewish origin. But then it is good that we meet together as Hebrews and Christians, and build up each other in our holy faith. We who have assembled here this morning belong to many different countries, and have been born in the most opposite parts of Europe, and we are a true specimen of THE SCATTERED NATION. But we have now been gathered by and in Christ. What is seen in us, as the first-fruits, will certainly bo seen in our whole nation, when He who scattered Israel will gather it; all Israel shall bow before Him, and delight in the majesty of Him who is their glory.

The Rev. A. M. Meyer introduced the subject of the desirability of a Hebrew-Christian Alliance, which, if ever established, ought to be allied to the Most High. Sympathy is a sweet savour, and the converted Jew stands greatly in need of it. It is no small matter to be separated from those who gave to us birth; with whom we spent the early days







THE INTERNATIONAL HEBREW CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE.

Photo by

EXECUTIVE COMMITTER, ELECTED AT HAMBURG, 1928,

Hiemana Zitsener, Benburg.

Another landmark was the founding of the first Hebrew Christian Church in New York city, in 1885. Really, this was America's first Messianic congregation! Here's a fuzzy little picture of their synagogue.



The Hebrew Christian movement continued to grow. Then the 1960s struck. Israel recaptured Jerusalem, and suddenly it was groovy to be Jewish. The Jesus people movement broke out, and a ton of Jewish kids got turned on to Jesus. And the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America voted, and became the *Messianic Jewish* Alliance of America. It was more than just a name change, too. The movement had shifted from a scattering of mostly assimilated Jews, to a core of congregations that were unapologetically Messianic, and unapologetically Jewish. That was the beginning of the Messianic Jewish movement as such, which has grown to hundreds of congregations worshipping together as "Jew and Gentile, one in Messiah".

In the 1990s a new movement began to emerge. Christians were increasingly feeling drawn to learn about the Hebraic roots of their faith. This awakening was characterized by a love for Israel, the usage of the name Yeshua and some other Hebrew keywords, and a return to keeping a little more of the Torah, mostly what I call the three f's - food, feasts, and fringes.





Whenever I hear the phrase "Hebrew roots" I think of literal vegetable roots, so let's go with the metaphor for a moment. The main ingredient in this newly emerging salad was Christians coming from traditional churches, or from Messianic Jewish congregations. It also included a pinch of Worldwide Church of God people looking for the "true church" after their previous true church fell apart, and a dash of Seventh-Day Adventists who felt ripped off because they weren't allowed to celebrate any of the feasts except the Sabbath, and were tired of grapejuice and wanted some real wine. Ok I may be reading into motives a little here for the sake of humour. But that was the general recipe. The most influential teachers in this movement have also generally come from these backgrounds.

The Hebrew Roots movement is very fluid, and has changed considerably in the last couple decades. It started out closer to the Messianic Jewish movement, and in a way was birthed by it. Unfortunately, three teachings were embraced by this movement that distanced it from the Messianic Jewish community, and got most of its teachers banned from Messianic Jewish congregations and conferences.

The first teaching to significantly damage the relationship was the "Two House" teaching, which basically says that Gentile believers are the lost ten tribes of Israel - if not literally then figuratively.

The second controversial teaching was the "One Law" teaching, which basically says that Jewish and Gentile believers are both equally obligated to keep the whole Torah - including adult male circumcision.

And then the third divisive teaching was the Sacred Name teaching, which leads us to the question of where these teachings came from.

Before we talk about the history of the Sacred Name movement, I just want say that this influx of other teachings into the Hebrew Roots movement reminds me of a confluence. A confluence is a geographical point where one river flows into another. Unfortunately, in this case, the rivers flowing in were dirty, and only served to muddy the waters. Here are a couple pictures of confluences from around the world to help illustrate this.





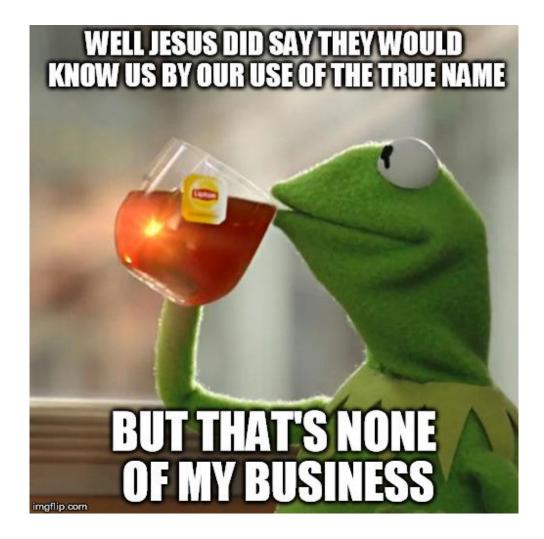






So. Speaking of dirty influences. The Sacred Name movement is just as diverse as the Hebrew Roots movement, and almost as grassroots. Most historians would trace its beginnings back to the 1920s, when a number of teachers and groups began emphasizing the usage of the Hebrew names of God and Jesus, which they referred to as the "true names". The Jehovah's Witnesses movement was also just getting off the ground at this time, and it may have added fuel to this fire, or even sparked it. Herbert Armstrong was also part of this early melting pot, before going on to start the Worldwide Church of God.

These pioneer Sacred Name teachers felt very strongly about using the true names of the Father and the Son, but it took them awhile to figure out what they were. After running through dozens of variations, by the 1950s many had settled on "Yahweh" for the Father, and "Yahshua" for the Son. In 1950 a New Testament was published, followed up by a complete Bible in 1962, which was based on the King James text but used the names "Yahweh" and "Yahshua", and also had "Elohim" for God. This brought a little more uniformity to the movement, but there were still dozens of splinter sects, each with their own "true names", which continues to be the case today. The Sacred Name movement may be famous for many things, but unity is not one of them.



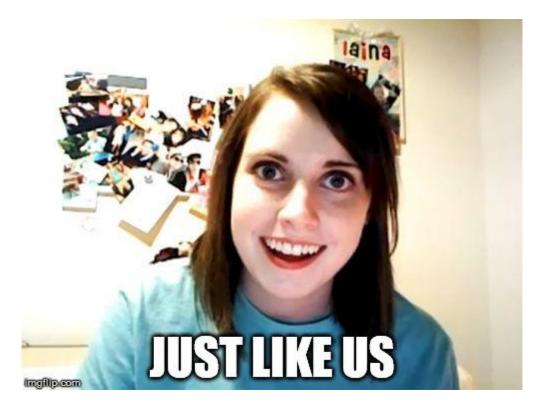
So that's a quick overview of these three movements. As you can see, they're very different, but because they all use the Hebrew name of Jesus they can be confused at first glance. Which is exactly what has happened. Sincere Christians want to study the Jewish roots of their faith, they see a Sacred Name Bible with some Hebrew in it, and before you know it they've been sucked into the Sacred Name vortex. Or they visit a Messianic Jewish congregation, experience a spiritual awakening, and then slide into the Hebrew Roots world where they absorb all sorts of anti-Jewish venom.



What doesn't help is that many Hebrew Roots teachers say they're Messianic when they're not. When in fact they're totally out of relationship with the Messianic Jewish community, and have even been banned from Messianic congregations and conferences. It also doesn't help that some Sacred Name publishers use the term "Messianic" in their Bibles, when they are so not. Co-opting the Messianic label like this isn't just misleading and insulting. It's a direct attack on the Messianic Jewish community.



The bottom line is that everyone is welcome to join the Messianic Jewish movement, but if you don't have a positive relationship with the leaders of the Messianic Jewish community, or if you're teaching stuff that the scholars of Messianic Judaism have rejected, you shouldn't call yourself Messianic. The words "Messianic" and "Jewish" are like Siamese twins. Try to separate them, and you'll kill them both.



So now you know why I say that the term "Messianic" has been hijacked, and why I call Sacred Name Bibles "pseudo-Messianic". In our last conversation in this series, I'm going to show you how the dynamics we've talked about here, and in our previous two discussions, are combining to create a fertile breeding ground for a new antisemitism that you probably never imagined. I do hope you'll join me for that crescendo.

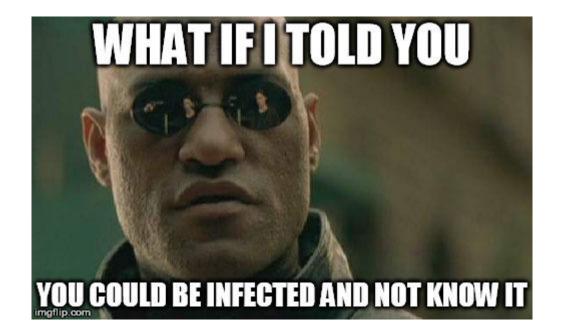
Sacred Name teachings breed unconscious antisemitism.

Antisemitism is a loaded word. It conjures up horrible images in our memories and imaginations. The vast majority of people would never say they're antisemitic - it would be like saying that you worship Satan, or that you practice cannibalism, or that you listen to Justin Bieber. So you may be experiencing strong emotions in response to hearing me equate Sacred Name teachings with antisemitism and with the music of Justin Bieber. If that's you, please hear me out and consider what I'm about to say, because it's coming from a heart of love for the Jewish people, and for you. I'm talking about these things because I care.

Oh and Justin Bieber cares too, jsyk. He even has a Hebrew tattoo of the name "Yeshua"!



But back to me, I've spent most of my adult life around the Messianic movement and around the Jewish community. I've spent literally thousands of hours studying the Scriptures and history, and have come to the realization that some things don't add up. I have to say also that I feel a deep sense of urgency about this message. Ask anyone who knows me well and they'll tell you that I hate conflict. I'll avoid disagreements and friction at almost any cost. Like it's actually a weakness of mine. But I see a trainwreck coming, and this is my effort at getting as many people off the Sacred Name train as possible before the crash. That's where I'm coming from with these talks. So having said that, let's talk about antisemitism. It's important to understand that there are different kinds of antisemitism, almost like strains of a disease. Some are more open and in your face, like cancer when it's metastasized. Others are quieter and more subtle, but that doesn't mean they don't affect you. Think of someone you know who's outright aggressive, versus someone you know who's passive-aggressive. They're both dangerous and can drive you crazy, they just do it in different ways. Antisemitism can lie dormant, undetected for years, until something happens to trigger it, and it suddenly flares up.



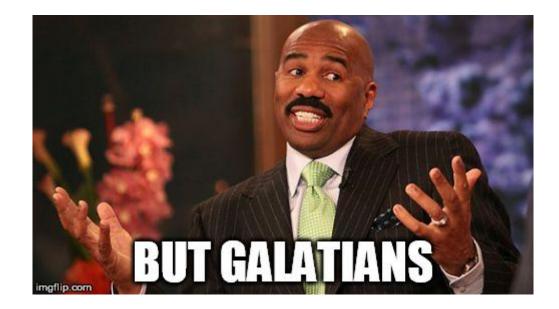
For the sake of understanding, let's call these two strains conscious and unconscious antisemitism. Conscious antisemites hate the Jews, and they know they hate the Jews, and they'll tell you they hate the Jews. They may have adopted conspiracy theories or ethnic myths to justify their hatred, but the bottom line is that they hate the Jews, *as Jews*. Unconscious antisemites, on the other hand, don't hate the Jews, but they don't care about them either. There's a coldness there, an indifference. Unconscious antisemitism may not scream "death to the Jews", but it's definitely not interested in doing life with the Jews in any way shape or form, either. It ignores them, treats them as irrelevant, and is closed to even learning about them.



Remember that ultimately love is a verb, and so is hate. Sometimes all you need to do to hate the Jews, is nothing. Think of the millions of Europeans during the Second World War who just went about their lives while their Jewish neighbours were being rounded up and carted off. Their lack of action was caused by their implicit antisemitism. It paralyzed them, and made them complicit with the explicit antisemitism of the Nazis.



That's why it's often easier to detect unconscious antisemitism by watching for what isn't there, than for what is. For instance, why do some preachers never talk about the Jewish people? Why doesn't praying for the peace of Jerusalem happen in some churches? And how can seminaries crank out graduates who never learned a sniff about Judaism? These are all possible symptoms of unconscious antisemitism. You can't tell for sure though until a potential trigger event happens. Someone in the church wants to host a Passover seder. A family member starts keeping the feasts. A seat of Jewish studies is proposed. At that point, if there's unconscious antisemitism it'll begin pushing back, usually masking itself behind Bible verses quoted out of context, or sometimes by criticism of the modern state of Israel.



Sociologists have also recognized several different types of antisemitism. Of particular note are the categories of "racial antisemitism" and "religious antisemitism". Racial antisemitism is plain, old-fashioned, Jew-hatred. The Nazis are probably the best example of this. Religious antisemitism, on the other hand, is *Judaism*-hatred. And I'm sorry to say this, but Christianity in its darker chapters has probably been the best example of this.



It's extremely important to understand this about antisemitism - *hatred of Judaism is hatred of Jews.* Think about it for a moment. Without Judaism, there would be no Jewish people, because it's our religion that makes us Jews. So if you say you love us *as Jews*, then you must also love our Judaism. Conversely, if you hate Judaism, then you also hate us *as Jews*. Which is antisemitism. What I said about the words "Messianic" and Jewish" also apply here. Jews and their Judaism are also like Siamese twins - take one from the other, and you'll kill them both.



So let's bring this discussion home. Hopefully you're beginning to see how the Sacred Name world is a breeding ground for antisemitism. Sacred Name teachings may not promote conscious racial antisemitism, but they *are* infecting people with religious antisemitism - a hatred of Judaism which is sometimes unconscious, but in many cases is very conscious.

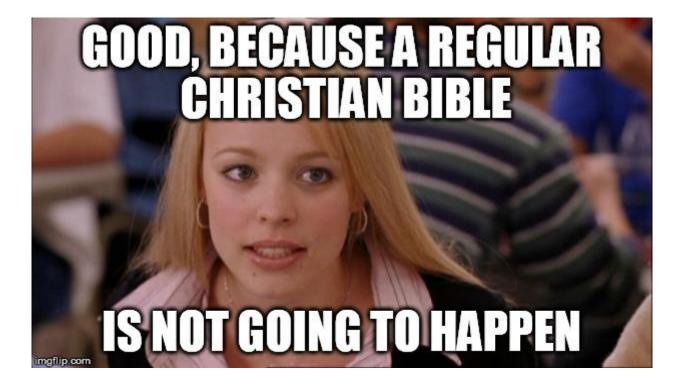
The bottom line is that teaching people to use God's name in flagrant disregard for Jewish sensitivities is antisemitic. Making up your own version of Hebrew instead of learning to pronounce it the Jewish way is antisemitic. Same goes for Messiah's name - coming up with variant forms instead of respecting the Messianic Jewish movement and our usage of the name "Yeshua", is antisemitic. And, not bothering to learn how to handle holy books and ignoring Jewish feelings on this matter is antisemitic. This is also true of replacement theology. Anything that causes people to think or act as if God gave the Torah to them, instead of the Jewish community, is antisemitic. Likewise, any way of thinking or acting that displaces the centrality of national Israel's ongoing relationship with God, is antisemitic.

I know, these are strong words, and I'm not saying this to accuse anyone or make them feel bad. If you use a Sacred Name Bible you may feel shocked at the suggestion that some of your practices are antisemitic. You have a good heart, you're sincerely trying to follow the Father, and you may even have a genuine love for Israel. You're obviously not an evil person, so how could anyone accuse you of antisemitism? If that's you, I do hope you'll consider the possibility that you may have inadvertently absorbed some teachings that were tainted with religious antisemitism, even though your heart was in the right place and you had good intentions.

Please spend some time prayerfully contemplating this question. Is it possible you could have picked up some practices that are actually antisemitic, and you weren't even aware of it? If that's what happened, don't feel bad. Just respond to this invitation to let go of those things, and step into a new relationship of love, respect, and understanding towards the Jewish people.



What are some practical things you can do to take that positive step? Begin reverently calling God "Adonai" or "Lord", instead of insisting on using his name every chance you get. Call our Messiah "Yeshua" instead of using some version that isn't even real Hebrew. Handle books containing God's name reverently, and be careful not to put them on the ground or put stuff on top of them. Retire your Sacred Name Bible, and start using a Messianic Jewish Bible, or even a regular Christian Bible. If you're not sure which would be best for you, my translation review series at holylanguage.com can help you find the Bible that's right for you.



These are a couple concrete things you can do, but the most important thing is the heart. If you're doing what you can to actively cultivate an attitude of love towards the Jewish people and respect towards their Judaism, then the next step will be revealed to you. Follow that leading. I guarantee it will be a beautiful journey, and the Father's name will truly be set apart through your life.