

Messianic / Christian or "THE ONE NEW MAN"

When you read the title of this essay you may say to your self that I am speaking of the same thing. However, I am really not. I encourage you to continue on, if you so desire, to see what I truly am trying to say in this article.

I would like to take the first two words of our title and review them. Let us first take the term "Messianic." The definition of the term "Messianic" is that it is referring to a person who is a Jewish believer of and in the Messiah-Yeshua. The term "Messiah" is a Hebrew word which means "anointed" or the "anointed one." It is literally referring to the one that the Jewish people believe will come and set them free from all the bondage in this world. Jewish believers believe that Yeshua (Jesus) is the fulfillment of this.

We see this term used in the following scriptures in the Old Testament.

- Daniel 9:25-26 – *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the **Messiah** the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troubled times. And after threescore and two weeks shall **Messiah** be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

Next I would like to define the term "Christian." This literally means a follower of Christ. The term, "Christ" is the Greek word which means "anointed" or the "anointed one." It is used in the New Testament many times in reference to Jesus because the New Testament was sometimes written in another language (Hebrew) and then translated into the common language of that time which was Greek. It means "anointed one," just as the Jewish word "Messiah" means "the anointed one."

We see the word "Christian" or "Christianity" used only three times in the New Testament.

- Acts 26:28 – *"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuade me to be a **Christian**."*
- 1Peter 4:16 – *"Yet if any man suffer as a **Christian**, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."*
- Acts 11:26 says, *"...for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called **Christians** first at Antioch."*

A Christian and a Messianic are actually both saying the same thing – that Jesus was and is the "anointed one" of God. God the Father sent "the anointed one," Jesus/Yeshua, to this earth to die for our sins and to raise us up unto the Father. They literally are the same words.

I cannot nor do I understand the tremendous rift that has formed over the years concerning the true believers, both Jewish believers and Gentile believers, in Jesus and all that He did for us. I keep hearing and seeing on television and radio and podcasts the great division concerning this aspect of the faith.

Actually, we are not to call our selves either one of these – Messianic or Christian. I know that we read in Acts 11:26 and 1Peter 4:16 of the term "Christian." Actually, in the first two or three hundred years before it became the "state religion of Rome," the term "Christianity" or even being called a "Christian" was meant as a derogatory statement against the true believers in Jesus.

We see in Acts 28:28 that King Agrippa mentions to Paul that he almost has persuaded him to become a "*Christian*." Again, Agrippa was using this as a derogatory statement against all of the true believers in Jesus. That was what they were called but it was meant to be a derogatory statement.

When Peter was writing his letter and he used that term, he was literally referring to this derogatory term that the true believers in Jesus were being referred to as. As Peter writes in 1Peter 4:19 he tells us, "*Yet if any man suffer as a **Christian**, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*"

What Peter was relating to as he uses the term "*suffers as a Christian*," was literally referring to the slur that the true believers were being called. He tells them that if they were called this derogatory term that they ought not to be ashamed but rather they should continue to glorify God even more. He was telling the true believers not to be intimidated by the slurs but rather to continue on and keep praising the Lord.

Acts 11:26 says, "*...for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called **Christians** first at Antioch.*" We see that this was where the term seemed to have originated. They were called "Christians." Who called them this term. We do not get a clear picture of who referred to the believers as "Christians." We simply are told that they were called this. Did they call themselves this or was it a slur that the non-believers termed them as? Hmmmm....

Actually, the believers started to call themselves, "The Way." It is mentioned several times in the book of Acts (Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22) in connection with early followers of Jesus. Paul, who was then known at that time as Saul, was to take prisoner men and women who belonged to "the Way" (Acts 9:2). After Saul was converted, he became a missionary and went by the Gentile name for Saul - "Paul."

During his trial before Felix, Paul said, "*I admit that I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of **the Way**, which they call a sect*" (Acts 24:14). It seems that the Romans considered "the Way" to be a sect of Judaism rather than a separate religion. Presumably, the early followers of Jesus referred to themselves as "the Way" because of Jesus' statement in John 14:6 that He is "*...**the way** and the truth and the life.*"

But let's see what Jesus Himself chooses to call the true believer in Christ. Let's read Ephesians 2:13-18 as it states, "*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself **one new man** from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.*"

Paul as an accomplished scholar is clearly referencing this understanding of the word "*one*" and using it to point towards not just the unity but the "**oneness**" that the Jewish believer and Gentile believer now have in Jesus through the cross and His resurrection. Paul is making it plain to all the followers of Jesus that whether they be Jewish or Gentile, male or female, we are all "**one**" in Him. This understanding is of vital importance for us. Unfortunately, we do not see it at its fullness, as of yet.

Now, let us get to the aspect of the term “new” as found in Ephesians 2:13-18. To look at this, let us refer to 2Corinthians 5:17 as it tells us - *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become **new**.”* We are a brand new species of being as a believer in Jesus. We are to no longer look at ourselves as either a Jew or Gentile or male or female any longer. No, we are to look at ourselves the way that God now chooses to look at us – as the “**one new man**” in Christ but even more importantly as His own child – a child of the living God.

The final word in the phrase, “*one new man*” is the most straight forward - “*man*.” The term “*man*” used here does not mean a single male but in fact means something much broader – humanity or in other words male and female. It is not slandering the female gender. It is referring to all of “*mankind*.”

Jewish believers and Gentile believers really should not look at themselves any other way any longer. The Bible is clear, God is clear. We are no longer Jewish. We are no longer Gentile. We are no longer male nor are we female. We have been changed into a **new species of being**. We are now the “**one new man**,” a totally “**new species of being**,” who now has a totally new relationship with God, the Father through the Son, Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit’s job is to try to break through all of the pent up “religiosity” of both sides, Jewish believers and Gentile believers, and try to make us see this very real and simple truth. We are no longer a Jewish believer, a Gentile believer, a male believer or a female believer. We are the “one new creature,” a new species of being, the “one new man” (male and female together) that is found to be in the Body of Christ jointly, as one. Yes, we are men and we are women but as far as God is concerned we are now new creatures in Christ – we are actually “spirit” beings that are still in our mortal body.

We must see this in all of its fullness. We are so caught up in our own churches and our own little section of religiousness. We are missing the true message of what Jesus came to bring forth to us. He came so that we may be able to become **one** with the Father. However, there is a two-fold aspect to this. The other aspect is that we are to be **one** with each other as true believers in Jesus.

I get it. I get that we may not always see things the same way. But that doesn’t make what we do necessarily correct. Maybe we need to stop thinking that we are always right and start thinking of what God sees and knows is right. He desires His people to be as **one**.

I had mentioned it previously and you are probably tired of me always bringing it up. But... here I go again. There are over 45,000 different denominations of the Body of Christ in the world today. All of them think that they are correct. Many of them may be. However, we all are incorrect in that we have formed these divisions within the Body of Christ when Jesus expressly tells us that we are to be “one in and with Him.”

Even if we think we are correct in all we do we must take a good look at what we are doing and recognize that something may be incorrect with what we are doing. I know that we have seen churches trying to come together and worship and do outreaches and help their communities. That is all wonderful and it is so very important.

However, let’s get down to the real “brass tacks” of the matter—are we truly “one new man” in Jesus or are we “many” new men in Jesus. After we do those “things” with other ministries, are we really one with each other or do we then just continue on with what each of us is doing within our own ministry.

Now, I want to make it clear that I am not pointing to any particular church or ministry but rather I am speaking in general to the whole Body of Christ. I am not saying that what the churches, or what your church is doing, is all wrong. I am saying that we may be missing a very large piece of the puzzle that is very important to God and for all of us in this hour – **oneness in Christ AND with each other.**

We can worship in different ways but do we criticize other churches for what they are doing. We must remember that we will be, and that we are, different as long as we are in this world. Cultures are different and therefore the way we do things in our worship may be different.

However, the real key to the whole matter is this, what is the **spirit** in which we are doing the things we are doing. Are the things that we are doing really according to His Word and can they truly be found in His Word. Or have we changed things to line up with today's thinking and with what people want today instead of how God desires us to worship Him and serve Him. Hey, they are changing the Bibles, so why can't they change what God wants even if He doesn't want it that way.

I do not have the format of "correct worship." I believe God allows us the perimeters of the particular culture we are in to worship Him. But true worship must first come from within the heart and then come forth out of each true born again child of God. It is wonderful to come together but the true worship that God delights in is the individual's worship and service unto their God.

True worship does not come from a Body or a church. Yes, that is important. However, true worship, as the Word tell us in John 4:24, comes from the individual's own spirit and then it flows out of that individual the way God desires it to come forth – in His truth the way that God desires to be worshiped and served. Cultures may differ but God still knows the heart of the individual. I have been in places throughout the world where it may have seemed very strange to me, yet I sensed the presence of God so strongly.

There is truly nothing that can every compare to those times of true worship when it is just me and God. Yes, God delights in corporate worship but He loves and truly desires those times of individual worship and adoration. He loves those times when we can be just real with Him – whether we are doing great or we are not doing so great. As long as we are real with Him, He delights in that. Our God is right there **AND** He will come and minister to you directly during those times.

You may be Messianic. You may be Christian. That is all well and good, but... the real question is,
"Are you part of the "One New Man" that is found only in Jesus."