

Is it OK for a Jewish Believer to be Jewish?

Christians, who embrace the Great Commission, affirm that every tribe, tongue and nation has the right to hear the Gospel in a culturally-relevant way. Mission scholars demand that effective evangelism be carried out where new believers are not required to change their basic cultural activities. Why is it that Jewish people who believe in Jesus are the only people over the last 2000 years who have consistently been forced to renounce Jewish people, culture, and practice and assimilate into other cultures?

Through the centuries, both the Church and Synagogue have agreed on one thing: "He who would be Christian and Jew can neither be Christian or Jew."

Most Jewish believers want to retain their identity with their Jewish people and culture. Dr. Dan Juster writes:

"With regard to Jewish believers, it was assumed and accepted they would maintain their Jewish biblical heritage to the extent it was consistent with the New Covenant order. This would be the case both in predominantly Jewish New Covenant congregations, such as in Israel, as well as in the diaspora congregations of mixed composition.

This is proven by the testimony of the Jewish leadership in Acts 21 and the personal testimony of Paul in his faithfulness to the Jewish biblical heritage (Acts 18:18; 21:17-26; 28:17).

It is proven by the excellent historical evidence of the life of James and the other Jewish disciples of Yeshua. It is shown as well in sources on the life and practice of the disciples from the first into the mid-second century, known as the Nazarenes. Sources are found in the Talmud, Josephus, Heggasippus, Justin Martyr, and Eusebius."ⁱ

Romans 11:29 says that *the gifts and calling of God for Israel are irrevocable*. Many believers affirm God's calling on Israel. But if Jews believe in Jesus, are they still part of this irrevocable calling? Of course they are. Paul clearly identifies Messianic Jews as the saved remnant of national and ethnic Israel (Romans 11:5).ⁱⁱ

"The saved remnant of Israel, as living a Jewish life, is proof of God's continuing covenant with the nation of Israel as a whole. The saved remnant of Israel, the Jewish believer, lives out the picture of what Jewish life means with the fullness of understanding of its fulfillment in Yeshua and its redemptive foreshadowing of the last days and the Age to Come. Only the Jewish follower of Yeshua, because of having the fullness of the Spirit and faith, can live out the intercessory meanings of the feasts and Jewish practices in Yeshua."ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ Daniel C. Juster, Growing to Maturity: A Messianic Jewish Guide (Denver, CO: Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, 1987), p. 212.

ⁱⁱ Daniel C. Juster, The Irrevocable Calling (Gaithersburg, MA: Tikun, 1996), pp. 8-9.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, p. 45.