

If I Believe in Jesus, I Will No Longer Be Jewish!

Dealing with this concern is one of the most emotionally taxing issues that a Jewish person must confront in order to come to faith. Typically, Jewish religious leaders will make this argument:

...Many people, Christians and some Jews as well, erroneously believe that just as one can be Black and Christian, just as one can be Oriental and Christian, one can also be Jewish and Christian. It is not true. The Jews are not a race. There is no genetic code passed from either mother or father to the child that makes that child a Jew. Even if all, or some, of the genetic code in a child could be proved to be of Jewish origin, that would not make the child a Jew. Jewish law determines who is a Jew, and Jewish law is quite clear. If a person's mother is a Jew, and that person has not converted to another faith, then that person will be considered fully Jewish, so long as that person wishes to identify solely as a Jew. Although one cannot convert to become a member of a race, for example one cannot convert to become an Oriental or an African-American, one who converts to Judaism does, indeed, become fully a Jew. Similarly, if one converts from Judaism to another faith, one is no longer a Jew. (www.whatjewsbelieve.org by Rabbi Stuart Federow)

While this argument sounds reasonable from a religious standpoint it fails to consider what the Bible teaches. The faith of the Jewish people as well as the faith of a Christian is not a matter of religion, it is a matter of relationship to the living God. Christians are defined as those who believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah of Israel. Christians come from two different backgrounds. They are Jewish or they are Gentile.

A Jewish person does not become a Gentile when he becomes a believer. Rather, he is a Jewish person who believes that Jesus is the promised Messiah of Israel and has received

Him. A Jewish believer in Jesus is a true Jew according to Paul in Romans 2:28-29. Paul never considered himself to be anything but a Jew after he believed in Jesus (Acts 22:3; Rom. 11:1; Phil. 3:5).

The rabbis have made themselves the interpreters of the Law but time and time again they have missed what God was teaching in His Torah (Isaiah 29:9-14; Ezek. 34:1-16). If Jesus is the promised Messiah of Israel, then it is the rabbis who are failing to receive their Messiah. The question that needs to be asked and answered is whether or not Jesus meets the qualifications of the Messiah as foretold in Scripture. If He does, then there is nothing more Jewish in the world than believing in Him.

When a Jewish person believes that Jesus is his Messiah, he does not change his physical identity (Rom. 11:1; Acts. 26:6-7). The only thing that changes is his relationship to God. He is now related to Him through the Messiah of Israel. A Jewish person who accepts Jesus is not changing his religion. He is following a messianic tradition of biblical Judaism rather than the rabbinical thinking of talmudic Judaism. A Jewish person who believes in Jesus has NOT "converted" from being Jewish, but rather has "converted" from being a sinner to one whose sins are forgiven. He has "converted" from sin!

Many Christians will emphasize that there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gentile) in the Body of Christ; both are one (Gal.3:28). But the nature of this oneness is spiritual. Jewish and Gentile believers are one in the Spirit, and thus they are part of the one Body of the Messiah. But Galatians 3:28 also speaks of male and female, slave and freeman as being one in Christ. Even though they are one in the Messiah, they still retain their physical distinctions (cf Eph. 5:22-33; 6:6-9; Col. 3:18-25; I Peter 3:1-7). Therefore, while those in the Church are one in the Messiah, physical distinctions are not erased!

-Roy Schwarcz