

## Christianity = Biblical Judaism Realized

I cannot tell you the number of times I have heard the expression, “We need to return to the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.” For quite some time, I was bothered by this expression. And while I could not quite put my finger on it, there was something that just did not feel right ... even when it came out of my mouth.



Finally, the problem with this expression hit me right between the eyes. The phrase separates a Christian and/or church's faith as believers emotionally, if not tangibly, from

the source of that faith — the Jewish man Jesus. If we as the church focus on the roots and not the present reality of our faith, we can often simplify the Jewish connection to the Christian belief to merely a Jesus in the Passover demonstration every couple of years by Tzedakah Ministries or whomever and think we have done our job for Jewish missions. ***Nothing could be further from the truth! For a Jesus in the Passover presentation is just the beginning of the local church's job of living out Romans 1:16 and Romans 11:11!***

Tzedakah Ministries would, therefore, like to offer you an alternative expression to express our connection to our Jewish Messiah Jesus. Instead of looking at Biblical Judaism as something “rootish,” why don't we consider that Christianity is simply and succinctly Biblical Judaism realized! What we are as believers and churches is the realization and/or fulfillment of what the prophets and Torah foretold so many centuries ago. We can all affirm that the church has not replaced Israel in God's economy, so why don't we see that we are the final proof of Biblical Judaism?!

By the way, did you notice that I emphasized repeatedly in the previous paragraph the term, **Biblical Judaism**? This is key to understanding this article. Rabbinic Judaism forgets the truth of Messianic prophecies which point to Jesus. Biblical Judaism proclaims the reality of Jesus Messiah for all the world to see. Rabbinic Judaism attempts to avoid Jesus. Biblical Judaism embraces the reality of our hope for all eternity. Therefore, the Christian faith will always and forever equal Biblical Judaism. It is the simplest and most powerful of equations ... even if you are not a math whiz!

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So given this basic truth, the next and only logical question is ... why do so many Christians and churches forget both our heritage and present reality? Is it simply just a sad result of the powerful invasion of Replacement Theology? Or is there something more to this story?

I believe it is something more. For while Replacement Theology has separated the church from its Biblical Judaism present for many churches and believers, it is not the only cause for the delineation. I believe that many simply do not care about our heritage and present Biblically Jewish connection. We want to avoid our “relatives” because they don’t always fit in with the latest church growth scheme and/or “health and wealth” religious philosophy that is nothing but heretical lies. So in an attempt to distance ourselves from our family, many churches have lost our Jewish essence and our evangelistic presence in the world.

We can return to our foundational and ever present Biblical Judaism realization. To do so is to acknowledge that because of Jesus everything regardless of the Christian or Jewish label finally and eternally makes sense! Shalom!

*Acts 20:24,*



*Amy Downey*

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## Williamsburg, Brooklyn ... Who Will Reach the Unapproachable?

While taking fifteen students of Arlington Baptist College on a mission trip to New York City, we took a few minutes to explore the Williamsburg area of Brooklyn ... which is also the home to approximately 50,000 Ultra-Orthodox Satmar Jewish souls.

The Satmar Haredi (aka Hasidic) population is different from the more commonly known Lubavitch Ultra-Orthodox as they are more insular in nature and are not engaged in overt public support of Israel. In fact, and in many instances, they do not recognize the modern-state of Israel because it was not founded by the Jewish Messiah.



I walked around with my students who were always curious about my Jewish mission calling, but little more than curious and certainly not something that really sparked their interest until that day in Williamsburg. We talked about Jewish traditions, Jewish customs. They wandered around the streets fascinated by the faces of the Satmars and even tried non-dairy ice cream. They liked it!



However, and for this reality I am grateful, they were heartbroken by the faces of the men, women, and children they saw on the streets. They asked me why there was no joy in their eyes. They were curious as to the rabbinic Jewish legalism by which the Satmars lived their lives. I even had one student who asked me, “Are there no Satmar Jews who know Jesus?” They have a burden for the Jewish people around the world and want to do more to share Jesus with them.

And so, I must ask this question – who will decide to reach out to the Satmar Jewish community of Williamsburg? But even more, who will reach out to their Jewish neighbor, Jewish friend, Jewish family member, Jewish co-worker? For while the Jewish people who often cross our paths are so unlike the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish souls of Williamsburg, they are still seemingly unapproachable in regards to the Gospel. However, we must continue to try. We must continue to reach out and share the truth of who the Jewish Messiah was, is, and always will be. The Satmar community is waiting. Your neighbors are waiting. Your family is waiting. Will today be the day or we will put it off for another day, not knowing if they will receive another chance?



## Community ... Is This the Solution to Jewish Evangelism?

When I was young, I used to dread family reunions. I always wondered why I had to go to these events where “old people” left wet residue whenever they kissed you. As I grew older, I didn’t enjoy them because the kisses were still sloppy wet and was often followed by the question – “Why aren’t you married yet?” Today, most of my immediate family are gone and the time of large family reunions are a thing of the past.

For while I do have a cousins reunion to attend this summer, my family is shrinking daily. I never really appreciated the community that being a Downey (Butler on my mom’s side) gave me until it was gone. I now wish I could return to those days where the family community was such a large part of my life ... except I still would not eat Aunt Dora’s potato salad!

Community (or *Kehillah*) is a powerful bond within the Jewish community. It is even more powerful than a Downey family reunion as this sense of community has gone back almost 2,000 years to AD 70 when the Temple was destroyed and the people were scattered to the four winds of the earth.

It is this sense of community that can also be a huge obstacle to the Gospel. I have known of Jewish people who are afraid of what will happen if the “community” were to discover that they were even considering Jesus. Therefore, we must find a way to bring this idea of community to the evangelism/discipleship process for the Jewish people. Tzedakah Ministries has written a few thoughts about it at <http://mysterysolvedwithmessiahjesus.wordpress.com/2011/02/23/kehillah-new-plan-for-jewish-evangelism/>. **Read it. Pray about it. And join with Tzedakah Ministries to do something to bring eternal *Kehillah* to the Jewish people.**

## Book Review ... *Shanda* by Neal Karlen

I just finished another book by another Jewish author who went on a journey of spiritual self-discovery. And yet again, I found a searcher, who though surrounded by supposed Christians, never heard that Jesus was his Messiah as well.

Therefore, Neal Karlen’s autobiographical search for meaning and a way to overcome the label of traitor (*shanda*), ends with a return to a form of Judaism but not to the Messiah of Judaism ... Jesus! It is a good book that is written concisely and honestly about his search, but yet again I was heartbroken that never in all his time among “those Christians” did he ever hear the Gospel message.

I want to urge you to read some of the biographies I have mentioned previously – *My Jesus Year, Bagels and Grits: A Jew on the Bayou*, and *Generation J*. Read these books and resolve to do something about their searching!