

A monk in a dark habit stands in the center of a church, holding a small cross in his right hand and a golden chalice in his left. Behind him are three large crucifixes mounted on the wall, each set against a tall, narrow stained glass window. The church interior is dimly lit, with pews visible on either side and candles hanging from the ceiling.

No Longer A Christian

- my testimony -

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Why I no longer call myself a Christian - my personal testimony

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I am often asked a simple question: 'Are you a Christian?'

My answer is quite simply — no, not if being a 'Christian' requires me to affirm beliefs and practices that I do not find faithful to Scripture, to the character of our Heavenly Father, or to 'the Way' taught by the Messiah Himself.

I did not abandon faith. I did not reject the Scriptures. I did not walk away from Messiah. I have not abandoned my journey of salvation.

What I walked away from is a religious identity and system that, over time, has become deeply disconnected from its biblical roots.

I was a Christian until I read my Bible for myself.

It is strange how the minute you challenge this label, most people automatically assume that you are a 'backslider' or have become a 'non-believer'. Well, this is certainly untrue. I believe the Word contained in all 66 Books of Scripture – The complete Bible.

I suppose in the true sense of the word, I could be called an apostate, which refers to someone who has 'stood away' from their former beliefs. This is partly true. The term does however, often carry strong negative, judgmental connotations within religious communities and is generally considered a derogatory term. For that reason I would not refer to myself as such.

I only prefer not to be labelled as a 'Christian' as I embrace a different set of beliefs and understanding of Scripture to the mainstream religion of Christianity.

Our Messiah Yahushua taught a message and interpretation of Scripture that was almost totally rejected in his day by those whom he came to set free. We must not make this same mistake of misunderstanding his words. As a result of the multitude not understanding his teaching, he was rejected and killed. More seriously - he was murdered.

The book of Revelation reveals that this rejection will replay once again when the anointed 'two witnesses' are killed for their end-time message.

If I must accept any label, then I would consider myself a Messianic Yisra'elite (Israelite) and affiliate myself with the first century Ebionites. Calling myself a Messianic Yisra'elite is somewhat presumptuous though as it is only the Almighty that could award such a title.

Christianity - a religion of traditions.

Please hear what Yahushua's words imply in the following verses:

But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

Matthew 15:3

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Matthew 15:8-9

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Mark 7:7-9

The religion of mainstream 'Christianity' has, for the best part of the past two thousand years, replaced the Word of the Almighty with the 'Traditions of men' i.e. the interpretations and teachings of theologians.

I therefore cannot possibly call myself a Christian if being a Christian requires me to believe and accept erroneous teachings and doctrines adopted and taught in the Christian church.

Examples of these teachings, with which I strongly disagree and reject, are the following:

- That our Messiah's divinely given and meaningful Hebrew name (Yahushua) has been replaced with a Greek name devoid of covenant meaning - a culturally redefined and meaningless one i.e. Jesus
- That I must believe and accept that the 'Lamb of God' (Jesus) was crucified on a cross and was offered as a pleasing blood 'sacrifice' to appease the Almighty Father - a 'human sacrifice' at that. As if the Almighty requires or delights in such a thing.
- That I must choose from one of the thousands of vastly differing 'church' systems, styles and doctrines in order to satisfy my personal desire. As opposed to the one single 'called out' group of believers referred to as the 'ecclesia' in Scripture.
- That the teachings of **Paul** outweigh or override those of **James**, the brother of the Messiah and the one who continued as the leader of the first assembly of believers after the death of his brother (Yahushua our Messiah).

- That the Priest/Pastor, the one who supposedly has the 'calling' and anointing/authority, is my leader/teacher that I should listen to and submit to as my primary spiritual guide. Even though the Scripture states that the Spirit is our teacher/guide - John 14:26, John 16:13
- That biblical distinctions between **clean and unclean foods** have been abolished and I can now freely eat pork and any other 'Biblically' unclean foods such as shellfish etc.
- Even worse is that Christians believe that it is ok to eat animals who are extremely traumatised and murdered to satisfy our lustful appetites. This reflects a complete lack of understanding of a loving Father's heart.
- That repentance and removing **leaven** from one's life (a consistent biblical theme and a symbol of corruption) is no longer required or at least not a primary focus within church doctrine.
- That all our sins – past, present and future, are automatically forgiven and unseen by our Father, without the need for repentance, obedience, perseverance and transformation.
- That the Messiah 'did everything,' leaving self-denial, obedience, 'dying to self' and 'crucifying the flesh' as optional suggestions often overlooked and rarely taught.
- That the **seventh-day Sabbath**, commanded by our Father, is 'Old Testament', considered 'Jewish' and therefore is obsolete and replaced by Sunday observance for Christians.
- That the biblical **Feast Days (Moedim)** are irrelevant, while man-made, non-biblical, pagan rooted traditions such as Christmas, Easter, and Lent are embraced.
- That a **symbol of torture and execution (the cross)** should be displayed and revered, while the Menorah is dismissed as merely 'Jewish' or 'Old Testament.'
- That most of the Torah can be ignored — except for tithing to a religious institution, which conveniently remains enforced.
- That all who do not profess belief in Jesus will suffer eternal, conscious torment in an eternal fire, i.e. a place called Hell, despite Scripture stating:

"For no one is cast off by the Lord forever" (Lamentations 3:31).

- That the Father is a 'three in one' **Trinity**, despite declaring Himself **One** as He states in (Deuteronomy 6:4).
- That Messiah is God Himself wearing human flesh rather than being God's anointed servant - a man who 'is come in the flesh' - i.e. in every way fully human. Denying this fact makes one a deceiver and an antichrist:

2 John 1:7 (KJV):

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist

- That the Father somehow changed His ways after the so-called 'Old Testament,' despite declaring that He does **not change** (Numbers 23:19; James 1:17).

- That Mary conceived through a supernatural seed conception apart from a man (Joseph) - taught as the 'virgin birth', contrary to the very creation/procreation pattern established by the Creator.
- That we ignore the critical Biblical requirement to 'overcome' the trappings of the 'flesh' and resist this world with all of its carnal attractions.
- That mimicking secular culture with 'Christian versions' of music, entertainment, and lifestyle somehow brings honour to the Kingdom of Heaven.
- That praising God when our favourite sports team scores points during Sabbath-breaking activities is acceptable.
- That worship is an emotional expression such as when you raise your arms in the air and sing along to 'rock' music rather than being obedient, as per the example/pattern demonstrated by Abraham (Genesis 22).
- A cosmic entity called 'Satan' or the Devil is a literal 'fallen' angelic being.
- That personal sin and all of my evil deeds can be blamed on this cosmic adversary called 'Satan' rather than taking personal responsibility. The Christian excuse for sin is often:

'It is not my doing but the influence and fault of a powerful, external enemy force.'

- That there is a war going on in Heaven for the souls of mankind between this powerful cosmic entity called 'Satan' and the Almighty Creator of the universe.
- That humanity is incapable of walking in righteousness because our sinful nature prevents us from ever achieving righteousness.
- That all believers, the church, will soon escape this evil world to a place called 'heaven', through a secret rapture, before the wrath of almighty God is poured out.
- That the entire body of believers constitutes the 'Bride' of the Messiah.
- That immersion in water alone makes one 'born again.'
- That material wealth and general prosperity in this world is evidence of God's favour, despite Scripture teaching that suffering and persecution mark the lives of the faithful.

This list above reflects only some examples of what I consider to be non-biblical, misrepresentations of Scripture. There are many others.

It is for this reason that I do not embrace the label of being called a 'Christian'. If I stand alone because of this then so be it. But please read on to understand what the term Christian actually means and where the term originated.

*I must inform you that this document is not designed to declare my beliefs with regards to those areas listed above. Hopefully the content on my website provides that detail.

It does seem rather ludicrous to me that the term 'Christian' was adopted and accepted, seemingly without objection, by the believers/followers of the Messiah Yahushua, both in the early 'New Testament' time and still today. I say this due to the

origin and infrequent use of the term Christian in the early days of the believers. Why has the Church embraced this label?

Names in Scripture hold enormous meaning and significance. People of knowledge should be very careful to use the correct names due to the significance of their meaning.

There was a time when the word 'gay' meant 'happy and joyful'. Well things have changed and the word holds a completely different meaning in today' s world.

The term 'Christian'.

Believers in the Bible's New Testament are traditionally known as Christians throughout the world. But few Christians probably know that the believers in the first century were known by other names, as well as being called a sect.

Even respected biblical dictionaries acknowledge that 'Christian' was a label imposed from outside the community, not one chosen by the disciples themselves or the Messiah.

Historical sources confirm that the term was first used in Antioch, likely by Greeks or Romans, and possibly in mockery. The early believers referred to themselves as brethren, disciples, believers, saints, and the faithful — not Christians.

From the **Easton's Bible Dictionary** we read:

'Christian' is the name given by the Greeks or Romans, probably in reproach, to the followers of Jesus. It was first used at Antioch. The names by which the disciples were known among themselves were "brethren," "the faithful," "elect," "saints," "believers." But as distinguishing them from the multitude without, the name "Christian" came into use, and was universally accepted. This name occurs but three times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26 ; 26:28 ; 1 Peter 4:16).
(Easton's Bible Dictionary)

And the **Smith's Bible Dictionary**:

The disciples, we are told, (Acts 11:26) were first called Christians at Antioch on the Orontes, somewhere about A.D. 43. They were known to each other as, and were among themselves called, *brethren*, (Acts 15:1 Acts 15:23 ; 1 Corinthians 7:12) *disciples* , (Acts 9:26 ; 11:29) *believers* , (Acts 5:14) *saints* , (Romans 8:27 ; 15:25) The name "Christian," which, in the only other cases where it appears in the New Testament, (Acts 26:28 ; 1 Peter 4:16) is used contemptuously, could not have been applied by the early disciples to themselves, but was imposed upon them by the Gentile world. There is no reason to suppose that the name "Christian" of itself was

intended as a term of scurrility or abuse, though it would naturally be used with contempt.

(Smith's Bible Dictionary)

The term 'Christian' itself is deeply problematic. It appears only three times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16) and was never used by the Messiah to describe His followers..

Acts 11:26 - and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

Acts 26:28 - And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?"

1Peter 4:16 - Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

The English word 'Christian' comes from the Greek word Christianos (Strong's G5546) and means a follower of 'christ' or 'anointed'.

I highly doubt that the word 'christian/christianos' would have come out of the mouth of Peter either – one of the three occurrences being in the book of 1 Peter.

What the first-century believers were actually called

The following reflects names which were used to refer to the believers in the Messiah, mentioned in the New Testament writings:

The Way

The name which was widely used for the believers, and is most unknown to Christians today would be the title 'The Way'. Probably originating from Messiah himself, who called himself 'The Way' (John 14:6), this name was used widely in the Book of Acts. 'The Way' highlights a lifestyle of following the Messiah rather than just a set of beliefs. It represents the path of salvation, the 'way of the Lord' (Acts 9:2), and a new exodus out of spiritual slavery.

The verses below prove that they were known more widely as 'the Way', than 'Christians', especially as Paul introduces himself as a follower of 'the Way' to the Governor, and not as a 'Christian'(Acts 24:14), even though they were known as 'Christians' by Acts 11:26.

*Acts 9:2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to **the Way**, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

*Acts 19:9 But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of **the Way** before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.*

*Acts 19:23 About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning **the Way**.*

*Acts 24:14 But this I confess to you, that according to **the Way**, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets,*

*Acts 24:22 But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of **the Way**, put them off, saying, "When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.*

In the Old Testament, the scriptures describe 'walking in God's way' as keeping the Father's commandments (Deuteronomy 5:33, Deuteronomy 8:6, Psalm 119:1-3).

The following NT verse reveals much to the believer:

'Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it' (Matthew 7:13-14).

A 'way' is a traveled road. A 'way' is a journey. A 'way' is a manner of thinking, feeling, or deciding.

'The Way' is the direction revealed by the Messiah through his teachings and life.

The Nazarenes

Another name which was used to refer to the early believers was 'the Nazarenes', originating from Yahushua, the Nazarene as seen in Mat 2:23.

*Act 24:5 For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of **the Nazarenes**.*

Signage on the Cross: Pilate placed a title on the cross identifying Yahushua as 'the Nazarene' in some translations. (John 19:19).

A sect

The early believers were also known as a Sect. The word 'Sect' meant 'a group of people with somewhat different religious beliefs (typically regarded as heretical) from those of a larger group to which they belong'.

*Acts 28:22 But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this **sect** we know that everywhere it is spoken against."*

*Acts 24:14 But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a **sect**, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets,*

*Acts 24:5 For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the **sect** of the Nazarenes.*

The 'church'

The word 'church' is the most used word in the English translation of the New Testament to represent the group of believers. In the KJV it is used 118 times.

Many English dictionaries today define 'church' as '*a building for public religious services and especially Christian worship*'. This is also how most people would define the word 'church'.

AI offers the following on the etymology of the word church:

The word "church" originates from the Greek *kūrikón* (or *kyriakon*), meaning "the Lord's house" or "of the Lord," derived from *kurios* originates from the Greek *kūrikón* (or *kyriakon*), meaning "the Lord's house" or "of the Lord," derived from *kurios* (ruler/lord). This Greek term was adopted by early Germanic speakers as *kirika* before passing into Old English as *cirice*, finally evolving into the modern term representing both the building and the congregation.

Key Aspects of Church Etymology:

- Original Greek Term: *kyriakon doma* ("Lord's house") or *kyriakon* ("of the Lord"), used to describe places of worship since c. AD 300.
- The Germanic Connection: The term passed into West Germanic dialects as *kirika*.
- Old English: Developed into *cirice* or *cyrice*, which was later refined into *ch* by French scribes in Middle English.
- Relationship to "Kirk": Old Norse borrowed the Old English term to form *kirkja*, which became the Scottish "kirk".
- Contrast with *Ekklesia*: While "church" stems from "Lord's house" (a place), the word used in the Greek New Testament is *ekklesia*, meaning "gathering" or "called out ones".

The word 'church' in the English New Testament has been used to translate the Greek word *Ekklesia/Ecclesia*, which refers to 'a called-out assembly or congregation of believers.' This is very different to its modern use for a building.

By choosing to use the English word 'church' as a suitable translation for *ekklesia* the intended meaning has been completely lost to the reader of the New Testament.

In a Biblical sense, a 'called out assembly' refers to those believers who have become set-apart through their new found belief and faith in the Messiah. They have become separated from the secular world system and now live to follow their Messiah.

This word has completely lost its true meaning in our modern world.

I am of the belief that the choice of the word 'church' in most English translations had to do with the institution of the Roman Catholic or Orthodox Churches at the time. Those translators believed that if they wrote 'church,' the average reader would be inclined to think of the hierarchical institution centered at Rome or Constantinople, rather than a reference to a group of believers in Christ.

It was a very deceptive way of shifting the understanding of the believers away from a focus of being a set-apart group to rather becoming a part of a religious institution i.e. the church. What a successful plot that has proved to be.

A Faith Severed From Its Roots

The early believers were Jewish (*Yehudim**), immersed in Jewish Scripture, covenant, and practice. Messiah Himself said he was sent to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matthew 15:24). Yet modern Christianity has largely severed itself from those roots, creating an artificial divide: *Judaism for Jews, Christianity for Gentiles*.

This stands in direct contradiction to Messiah's words — '*There shall be one flock*' (John 10:16) — and Paul's declaration — '*There is neither Jew nor Greek*' (Galatians 3:28).

Two thousand years of separation has transformed what was once **the Way** into a religion that barely resembles the faith taught by a **Nazarene Messiah**.

**Yehudim (יְהוּדִים) is the Hebrew term for Jews, originating from the name of the tribe of Judah (Yehuda).*

So what am I?

Considering the above understanding, I do not refer to myself as a Christian. I am however a committed Bible believing student - an attentive 'Berean', a 'Nazarene' and a follower of 'The Way'. One who is listening out for the voice of the 'Good Shepherd' - to follow wherever He leads. I relate more to the Ebionite sect who were considered heretics.

I find myself aligned most closely with the first century Ebionites — a group later labeled heretical by church fathers such as Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius, and Epiphanius — not because they were wrong, but because they refused to abandon the Torah, rejected later theological inventions, and held to a simpler, earlier understanding of Messiah.

Early Church Fathers like Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius, and Epiphanius of Salamis labeled the Ebionites as heretics, viewing them as a Jewish-Christian sect that rejected Jesus' divinity and Paul's apostleship, with much of our information coming from these opponents who described them critically for their adherence to Jewish law and differing Christology.

History is written by the victors. The voices that survived were not always the most faithful — merely the most powerful. History remembers them through the words of their opponents, yet their faith more closely resembles what I see in Scripture.

Conclusion

The point of this testimony is not to ask anyone to start calling themselves ‘The Way’ or ‘The Nazarenes’, but to direct all ‘Christians’ to see how things were, and how they are today inside institutionalised Christianity. The Early Church was firmly planted in and amongst Jews. The very people that Messiah came to save (Mat 15:24) are now discarded by the Christians as strangers. The very body he wanted to unite, wants to clearly separate themselves from each other. ‘Judaism is for the Jews’ and ‘Christianity is for the Gentiles’ has outweighed the words of Yahushua who said ‘there shall be one Flock’ (John 10:16) and the words of Paul who said ‘there are no more Jew or Greek’ (Gal 3:28). 2000 years of separation from the roots of our faith, has made ‘Christianity’ into a Religion which is far from ‘The Way’ which was preached by a ‘Nazarene’.

This is a call to start reading the Scriptures with eyes and spirit wide open. We must know where we come from to know who we are and where we are headed.

For me, the issue is not about adopting a different label—it is about returning to the roots of the faith, reading Scripture with open eyes and an honest heart, and walking the narrow path that was first called ‘The Way’.

This is not about becoming a ‘Jew’ either or following the error of the Pharisees. It is about understanding and interpreting the patterns and symbols of the Old Testament and through the revelation from the ‘Greater Light’ (the Messiah) we can now worship in spirit and truth. Hear the words spoken by our shepherd - the Messiah:

John 4:24 (KJV) God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Names matter. In Scripture, names carry meaning, identity, and purpose. Words change over time, just as the word ‘gay’ once meant joyful and now means something entirely different. The term ‘*Christian*’ today represents something profoundly different from its original context.

Considering the origins, evolution, and modern meaning of the term ‘Christian,’ I can no longer wear it with integrity.

What I seek is not a label, but faithfulness — a return to the ancient path, the narrow way, the Way that leads to life.

The Christian Church did not grow up in isolation; it was born in a pagan world and inherited many of its forms, symbols, and ceremonies — James George Frazer

Sir James George Frazer (1854–1941) argued in The Golden Bough that early Christianity adopted pagan rituals, symbols, and holidays to aid adoption and create continuity with existing traditions. He noted that Christianity did not exist in a vacuum but adapted to the pagan world surrounding it.

James was recorded as being an atheist but even so his claims are valid. I can now understand how modern religious Christianity has prevented most Jews from accepting the Messiah and also why many others prefer to remain atheists rather than accept the corrupt modern Christian beliefs and practices.

I have listened to many arguments presented by Jewish Rabbis such as Rabbi Tovia Singer and Rabbi Michael Skobac from Jews for Judaism. Many of their criticisms/arguments against the religion of Christianity are valid in my view and require some serious consideration by Church leaders if we are to entice them to accept the New Testament.

The words from the prophet Jeremiah come to mind:

Jeremiah 16:19

Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, 'Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.'

And to that, all I can add is: 'Amen!'

