

A *breif* HISTORY OF JEWISH CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

2ed Peter 3:13-17 (NIV)

- (13) But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.
- (14) So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him.
- (15) bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.
- (16) He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort.
- (17) Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from you secure position.

In the Book entitled A HISTORY OF THE JEWS by Solomon Graysel, the author discusses the teachings of the Apostle Paul.

The results of Paul's Teaching – It is not what happened to Paul personally that is important, but rather what happened to Paul's teachings. Even while he lived, ample evidence proves that the people to whom he preached had misunderstood him. He had spoken in terms of high and noble idealism, of charity, of personal righteousness. He urged men to believe in Jesus firmly and, believing in so perfect an example of godly living, and begin to lead a godly life themselves. Such righteous people could have no difficulty in meeting the day of God's judgment. They would surely survive it, and when the day of resurrection came, such people would surely be permitted to live again and forever. **But most of the people who listened to Paul remembered only the connection between believing in Jesus and meriting God's mercy and ultimate resurrection.**

They skipped the middle step – the need to live godly lives. Thus, faith in Jesus came to be the only and entire basis of the religion adopted by the pagan Christians, while the Judeo-Christians, who lived in Palestine, continued to observe Jewish law.

But it was the **pagan Christian attitude which won** in the end. Many pagans who had admired Judaism either openly or secretly now had a chance to adopt a form of Judaism, which appealed to them. It is not at all strange that Christianity spread most easily and rapidly in those cities in which Jews had lived for a long time, so that people were already acquainted with their life and religious ideas....

John 15:20 (NASB)

- (20) **“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you;...”**

Matthew 5:11 (NASB)

- (11) **“Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.”**

The following excerpts are taken from **JEWISH SOURCES IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY**, by David Flusser:

“JESUS WAS A FAITHFUL JEW. HIS PERSONAL DISCIPLES AND THEIR FOLLOWERS who resided in Palestine were Jews who had studied the Torah and were strict in their observance of the commandments.” “As against [contrary to] the Gentiles who accepted Christianity, these disciples regarded Jesus as a great prophet and as Messiah. These were Jews who despaired, for a brief moment, of their faith in Jesus the crucified, and who regained their faith through their belief in his resurrection....”

“In its struggle against Gentile Christianity, Jewish Christianity emphasized the Judaism of Jesus.... Some of them adopted Peter, Jesus’ disciple and the leader of the first Christian community in Jerusalem, as their patron. Some preferred James (Jacob), Jesus’ brother. James was executed by the Sadducees, and it was the (Jewish) SAGES who had opposed his (James) execution and supported him. Thus James became the founding father of Jewish Christianity or Hebrew Christianity,...

“One can detect traces of their [Nazorean] principal beliefs and even discover whole works of theirs in an adapted form in Christian literature of the period of the New Testament onward. The Jewish Christians interpreted the issues of Christianity in their own way and according to their own (Jewish) traditions and information. It is clear that some of their materials, **adapted** to suit the interests of the Church, have penetrated into the ecclesiastical literature of Gentile Christianity. **These Jewish Christians were persecuted by the** [Gentile]

Church and regarded as infidels and heretics who had gone the wrong way and attempted to Judaize Christianity....”

“During the Roman War, the Jewish Christian groups emigrated to Fella across the Jordan, and later on they returned to Jerusalem. **After the Second Jewish Revolt, they were not permitted to reside within Jerusalem, because they were Jews.** Then the heads of the community who were circumcised immigrated to Lebanon.”

“Kaukaba was a center for Jewish Christians of all the various streams - for those who were closer to the [Gentile] Church, as well as for those who were closer to Judaism. **From the second century onward, [Gentile] Christianity forbade the Jewish Christians to keep the Commandments and persecuted them as heretics.** Because of this persecution, a growing opposition to the Gentile Church spread among the Jewish Christians.”

In the book **THOSE INCREDIBLE CHRISTIANS** by Dr.Hugh J. Schonfield, we find what has been the traditional attitude toward the Messianic movements whether that attitude came from the Jewish Community or from the Gentile Christians.

“There were yet living members of the family of Jesus and numerous persons who had known and heard His Apostles.”

“So long as there were Jews at the head of Christian affairs in the East, that is to say down to A.D. 132, there was some check to the relinquishment in the region of features of the Church’s original teaching, though it’s waning effectiveness was further weakened by the persecuting policy of Domitian.”

“The crime was aggravated by an assertion that the **new** Faith (Gentile Christianity, centralized in Rome) was the **true apostolic Faith**; by having invented and perverted many things about Jesus; by having been plotted in Rome, enemy of God’s people; and by the audacious **falsehood** that the venerated Peter had apostatized and given his blessing (to the pagan hybridized Gentile theology)... As most of the Church progressively went over to the new religion, and dared to call the (Jewish) Church of the Apostles heretical, and when this religion finally became that of the Roman Empire and mercilessly persecuted the inheritors of the **Truth** and drove them away, the seed sown by Paul had indeed become a tree bearing bitter fruit. No wonder that by the Nazoreans he (Paul) was vilified and made to pay posthumously for **the follies of his successors.**”

Dr. Schonfield is one of the few major scholars of early Church history who has been able to recognize this simple truth concerning the Apostle Paul. Most scholars, both Christian and Jewish find it necessary to believe that Paul set out to preach a **NEW RELIGION**, when in fact his intent was just the opposite. It is quite obvious **IF** one studies the writings of Paul from the right perspective that his intent was simply to convert the Gentiles to a Messianic form of Judaism. It was his successors, who later translated and interpreters of his letters, who

manipulated the truth to try and prove that Paul had indeed brought the foundation of a “NEW” Religion to the Gentile world.

“The New (Gentile) Christianity, which gave rise to the Catholic Church, continued to hold that in the formulation of its doctrine it was progressively guided by revelation through the Holy Spirit. Peter in the Clementine’s combats this claim in his controversy with Simon Magus.”

“So far as the (Gentile) Christians were concerned the Jews had been abandoned by God. The two faiths henceforth were in inflexible opposition, and both were anxious to destroy the one bridge between them represented by **Jewish Christianity**. For Church and Synagogue, the Nazoreans were now heretics, and both could agree with the dictum of Jerome, ‘that while they will be both Jews and Christians, they are neither Jews nor Christians’. It has had to wait until the twentieth century for a move to set aside this antique verdict, without which there can be no advance towards reconciliation, and the real character and mission of Jesus will continue to be rejected by (most) Christians and Jews alike.”

Messianic-Believer, Judaic-Christians or Jewish-Christians as we have seen are often accused of being heretics and apostates, as well as condemned as being Judaizers.

In the ENCYCLOPEADIA JUDAICA by Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd. Published in 1972, we find a fairly good investigation of the subject of Judaizers.

JUDAIZER, persons who without being jews follow in whole or in part the Jewish religion...

... In the classical period, the principles and certain practices of Judaism exercised a powerful attraction on some segments of the general population *even in Rome*, who changed the tenor of their lives, becoming “God-fearers” who rejected pagan worship and observed the Sabbath...

... With the rise of Christianity, the differentiation between the followers of the new faith and the old was sometimes not easy to impose, and the Church inveighed violently against Judaizers within the Church who wore Jewish ritual vestments, followed some of the dietary laws, kept the seventh-day Sabbath, and observed Easter on the Passover or with Jewish rites. In the Church, over a prolonged period (for instance at the time of the Albigensian schism), the accusation of Judaizing was frequently made against dissidents. In fact, some of them, such as the “Passagi” and “Circomcisi”, were it seems Judaizing sects in the full sense of the term. Similar accusations were common at the time of the Reformation, sometimes even within the internal polemics of the Reformation,...

... Some of the “Old Christian” victims of the Inquisition in Spain convicted of following Old Testament rites, and therefore termed Jews, are also in the category.

... With the rise of Puritanism in England and the North Atlantic area generally, including America, **the study of the Old Testament led to a relatively wide spread of Judaizing tendencies, expressed in the demands** of some extremists for the use of Hebrew in the liturgy, **the modeling of the constitution on biblical prescriptions, the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath,** and rigorous abstention from blood....

... In the certain case, as that of the followers of John Traske in England in the first half of the 17th century, these Judaizing tendencies had as their inexorable sequel in due course the formal adoption of Judaism. The same occurred in the 18th to 19th centuries with the Sabbath-observing sects in Hungary and in Russia and recently with the proselyte community of San Nicandro in southern Italy....

Present-day Judaizers or Judaizing sects are mostly to be found outside Europe. On the American continent, apart from the Black Jews of the United States, there are the so-called “Indian” Jews in Mexico and the Iglesia Israelita de Chile, consisting of less than one thousand people in the southern Chilean province of Cautin. Many of them joined the Zionist movement and some even settled in Israel. They originated in the early 20th century in a Christian fundamentalist sect which gradually adopted Old Testament rites and festivals. Some Protestant Sabbath-observing “Israelites” in Peru are sometimes mistaken as Jews. In Japan several Christian sects are deeply interested in Judaism, the Old Testament and the Hebrew language, and their members often visit Israel. In Uganda a Judaizing sect called Bayudaya, of which only about 500 remained faithful to Judaism was founded in the 1920’s by the political and military leader Semei Kakungulu. It was recognized in 1964 by the government as a religious community under the name “The Propagation of Judaism in Uganda—Moses Synagogue”....

When the early Messianic believers were fleeing from persecutions in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, many of those believers in Asia (Turkey), went north toward Russia, in an effort to escape. A history of Judaizing by the Messianic believers in that region of the world should also be recognized.

In Russia. There were various Judaizing sect and trends in Russia from the second half of the 15th century on. Occasionally they even adopted Judaism and its precepts, in part or completely, sometimes leading to formal conversion. The emergence of Judaizers in this area stemmed from ancient Byzantine oppositional tradition to the established Church, going as far back as iconoclasm and the disputation with Jews and encounters with them in the Kievan principality. In the 16th century and later the Judaizers were influenced by the radical wing of the Reformation long-held critical opinions simmering in the Athos monasteries influenced the many Russian pilgrims who visited them....

... **At the Church council of 1490, Gennadi called for the adoption of severe measures against Judaizers and suggested the establishment of an Inquisition.** The Grand Prince rejected this project, but it was agreed that **Judaizers were to be confined to monasteries.** In 1494 the metropolitan of

Moscow, Zosima, was accused of being a Judaizer and deposed. The struggle against the Judaizers became rapidly enmeshed with underground struggle between various factions of the nobility over the succession to the throne and the course of Russian policy... ... a campaign of persecution against the Judaizers began, and in 1504 the leaders of the sect were condemned to be burned at the stake....

... According to some scholars, the Judaizers were a Christian **rationalist** sect, which tended to reject the Church hierarchy, the religious ceremonies, and icon adulation... ..Whatever may have been the true character of the sect, the propaganda against it, which emphasized its affinity with Judaism, aroused a persisting fear of the Jews among all classes of the Russian population...

... At the beginning of the 18th century Judaizers reappeared in Russia... The origin of the later groups was essentially due to a profound study of the Bible. St. Dimitri of Rostov, *who concerned himself with tracking down sects which deviated from the Church, mentions* the sect of Sabbath observers in his work of the early 18th century. During the second half of the 18th century, sects of Judaizers and Sabbath observers appeared in the interior provinces of Russia, as well as in the Volga provinces and the northern Caucasus....

... During the early 19th century, the authorities began to persecute the Judaizers systematically. The existence of Sabbath observers was discovered in the province of Voronezh. After a series of persecutions, many of them were brought back within the fold of the ruling Church. The others were enlisted into the army....

... In 1805 the authorities of the province of Moscow announced the existence of Sabbath observers, and in the province of Tula about 150 persons were discovered as claiming that they had been attacked for their faith from ancient times but that they had concealed this so as not to provoke their Christian neighbors....

... In 1820 the Council of Ministers decided to instruct the local authorities to act with lenience toward the Judaizers and to content themselves with banishing their preachers to the Caucasus, where they were to settle. The remainder was not to be attacked so long as they did not propagate their faith. In a memorandum of 1823, submitted by Count Kochubey to the Council of Ministers, he claimed that the Judaizers sect was widespread throughout Russia... .. it was decided to enlist all who propagated the beliefs of the sect into the army, with those who were unsuitable for military service were to be banished to Siberia and settled in such a way as to preclude them from any intercommunication. It was also decided to expel the Jews from all places to which the sect had spread. Another decision prevent them from issuing passports to the Judaizers so as to restrict their movement, and prevent them from meeting with Jews, or propagating their faith. In order to arouse the masses of the people against them, and ostracize them, it was emphasized that they were merely of a Jewish sect. At the same time, the Judaizers were prohibited from holding prayer meetings and carrying out circumcision, marriage, and burial ceremonies according to Jewish custom.

Many members of the sect decided to accept Christianity outwardly while continuing to practice their customs clandestinely.

With the accession of Nicholas I to the throne, the position of the Judaizers deteriorated. **Those who were apprehended in the observance of Jewish customs were enlisted into the army or exiled to Siberia. Entire villages were thus depopulated and destroyed.** Many of the Judaizers were expelled beyond the Caucasus Mountains, where they settled, founded flourishing villages, and spread their religion among the Russian settlers. Near Alksandrovsk, in the Caucasus, almost all the inhabitants adhered to the Judaizers' sect. During the 1840s the Russian government supported the settlements of members of the sect in the northern Caucasus because it regarded them as an industrious and a desirable element. The expulsion of the Judaizers from their former place of residence was nevertheless continued. In Siberia, large settlements of Judaizers of various categories were also established (as in the town of Zima).

With the accession of Alexander II, the administrative pressure was alleviated and the authorities did not insist on the application of the law. Many of the Judaizers began to observe their religion openly. They were particularly numerous in the provinces of Voronezh and Saratov. With the manifesto issued on Oct. 17, 1905, which included freedom of religion for all the citizens of Russia, all the discriminatory legislation against the Judaizers and Sabbath observers was abolished. The government even emphasized, in special circulars issued by the ministry of the interior, that the Sabbath observers were not to be regarded as Jews, and that the special laws directed against the Jews did not apply to them.

All those who came into contact with the members of the sect, even their opponents, pointed out that they were mainly industrious peasants, moral, literate, charitable, and sober in their lives....

There is no information available on the lives of the Judaizer and the proselytes under Soviet regime.

The **JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA** published by Funk and Wagnalls Company in 1907, contains a very interesting statement about Judaizers in Russia.

... the secretaries of worship and the interior were ordered to make a report to the emperor concerning the Judaizing Christians.

From the investigation it became apparent that the Judaizing heresy had spread to the government of Orel, Tula, and Saratov.... **The sect,** according to the opinion of the metropolitan, was not a distinctly Old Testament cult, but **was characterized by the observance of certain Jewish rites,** e.g., the celebration of the Sabbath, circumcision, contracting marriages and dissolving them at will, peculiar burial ceremonies, and manner of assembling for prayer. The sectarians declared that they did not condemn the Christian faith, and therefore, did not consider themselves apostates; and they insisted that they never had been

Christians, but had only adhered to the faith of their fathers, which they would NOT forsake.

It may still appear to many that the assessment made by Jerome concerning the Messianic Believer, Judaic-Christians or Jewish Christians still holds true, 16 centuries later; **that while they are both Jewish and Christian, they are neither Jewish nor Christian.** Yet, history reveals that various groups of Messianic Believers have been in continuous existence since the Common Era began. Frequently these groups were isolated and not aware of their counterparts scattered among the nations. Observant Messianic forms of Judaism have been documented from Spain, France, Italy, Bulgaria and the rest of Europe; to North, Central and South America, as well as Africa and Asia.

In Spain for example, Messianic or Jewish Christians had a long and well-established presence for many centuries. Once Catholicism regained control of Spain from the rule of Moslems, it did not take long before the presence of Jewish Christians gave rise to the Spanish Inquisition. From the start of the Spanish Inquisition in 1492, it did not take long spread to the Spanish Colonies in the New World. As time passed, over the centuries, the last remnant of the Spanish Inquisition, were only still to be found in South America. The Latin American Inquisition did, at least officially, come to an end; but not until 1968. Just before the Spanish Inquisitions started in 1492, Jews who did not believe that Jesus was a Messiah were expelled from Spain. On the other hand, those that believed Jesus was the suffering Messiah (also known as Messiah ben-Joseph) and still held on to **any part** of observant Judaism (even to a small degree) were perceived to be as such a great threat to the State Religion and therefore to the State itself, that they were hunted down, tortured and killed!

Throughout the centuries most Jews and Christians have been taught by their respective theologians that no segment of Judaism ever recognized the “Jesus” of the New Testament as actually being the long awaited Messiah of God. Yet anyone with the ability to read can see that Yeshua’s (Jesus’s) personal ministry was strictly to the Jews, and only when a Gentile came to Him with a “Jewish” understanding of who He was, would He even speak to them. The first so called “Church” was made up only of Jews, and they were taught to be strictly observant of the Laws of God and many of the customs and traditions of Judaism. These observant Jews who knew the Torah, knew this Messiah had indeed fulfilled the prophecies of Messiah ben-Joseph, as recorded in the “New” Testament. It was these “Jewish-Christians” (the first century Church) that had always kept the Laws and Commandments of God, just as their spiritual and genetic descendants still do today.

The true heirs of the Kingdom of God are the progeny of tenacious believers and their converts who refused to be pressured to the “right” or to the “left”. This was and is the “remnant” of those who refused to “bow the knee to Baal”, or accept the deadly yoke of “Hellenism”; by refusing to accept the false teaching of the Hellenists which said (falsely) that the New Testament had changed or nullified the Old Testament Laws and Commandments. In contrast to the original form of believers in Yeshua (Jesus) who have continued trod the narrow path. Enduring persecution in every generation, they have kept the flame of passion for the truth alive for those of us who would willingly follow.

Today we have a “**New Era**” presumably “**dawning**” upon the earth; an era of “**Unity**” and “**Tolerance**” and “**Love**” being brought about by the predominant religions of the world being shouted across the air waves; while at the same time the world is seeing the worst cases of national genocide, for “**religious**” differences, ever in the history of man. Someone once said that those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. We must remember the first thing historical “**Hellenized**” Christianity has done prior to every Inquisition or Crusade has been to proclaim tolerance and acceptance of those perceived to be its current enemy. What has always followed this movement has been a well documented pattern. Today’s preparation for the next Crusade by the “**Hellenists**”, is hidden under the cover of “**Love**” and “**Unity**” that has come at a time when the world, and especially many in the land of Israel, want desperately to believe that it is the truth. Their leaders have openly apologized for past atrocities committed against Israel and its “**Elder Brother-Judaism**” by organized Christianity. This is the very platform of peace through which the head of this movement has, and will continue to deceive, even the very elect.

We cannot warn every individual. We cannot teach the lessons of history to every individual. We cannot begin to halt the fulfillment of prophecies that have built up so much momentum over the last century. Our hope is that this warning will reach those to whom God has chosen to help sound the alarm, until the last trumpet sounds.

Today there are numerous “**Messianic**” groups popping up here and there. It has been a “**wake-up**” call, sounded by the Holy Spirit... “**Come out of her My people...**”, and many have heard the call and responded. This movement is due in part to the “**New**” tolerance, and lessened degree of persecution. However, persecution in various forms does still exist. It is this persecution combined with an increased counter move by the Hellenist that has drawn far too many of so-called “**Messianic**” groups, back into being nothing more than another form of Hellenized Pagan Christianity, with a sprinkle of Jewish window dressing... “**having a form of Godliness, but denying the...**” truth of its origin. The adversary will not allow the truth of God to go unchallenged! It is therefore up to each of us who refuse to accept anything but the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help us God, **NOT** to give him a foothold. We must be on our guard constantly, not to be “**carried away by the error of lawless and unprincipled men**” who seek to pervert the very foundation of **THE WORD OF GOD**, that foundation is simply the obedience to the Laws and Commandments of God.

How can such a tiny remnant of believers stand in the gap between two such powerful forces? On one hand we have the dominant world wide force of Hellenized Christianity, and on the other we have the Jewish forces, small in number but a dynamic spiritual force scattered throughout the world. While persecution of the Judaic-Christians or the “**observant**” Messianic groups comes predominantly from the Christian world, acceptance by Jewish communities worldwide has been very limited. Personally, we have found over the years that most “**observant**” Jewish communities are much more tolerant and accepting of those they still consider “**Gentiles**”, who are trying to keep the Laws of God, Whereas the less observant and reformed communities seem to harbor more fear and resentment. What is the common problem for both the modern Hellenized Christians and the non-observant Jews? That is simple; if this theology that teaches “**keeping the Laws of God**” is right... then they are wrong! If this dinky assortment of Messianic legalistic advocates, actually do bridge the gap between Christianity and Judaism, were does that leave everyone else?

There is little wonder why even acknowledging the very existence of such small groups throughout history, would have been such a bitter pill to swallow, for both Hellenized Christians and non-observant Jews. None of them want to keep THE LAWS OF GOD, and have spent two millennia developing all kinds of excuses, not to do so. These are the people who most fear anyone who claims to believe that the Messiah was an observant Jew and that He never changed or altered a single Word of **GOD'S LAWS**. They usually try using New Testament scripture to deny any validity to the very existence of observant Messianic Jewish groups, most of these "**Christians**", will classify these Messianic groups as "**Cults**", and then these Gentile Christians, will all too often, sets out to destroy them (by infiltration and/or slander and persecution).

The origins of these problems were summarized well in David Flussers conclusion to his book: **JEWISHH SOURCES IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY.**

They (the Jewish Christians) maintained that the proper language of teaching, in which the early Gospel had been written, was Hebrew, and that when the Gospels had been translated into other languages it was though they had been forged...

The Jewish Christians were rejected by the Jews and persecuted by the Christians, who regarded them as heretics and villains. Despite all this, Christian literature reflects their (the Jewish Christians) creative vitality and their loyalty to Judaism. Because of Ecclesiastical censorship, only some relics of their own writing have reached us. But the faithfulness of the Jewish Christians to Judaism, despite all their difficulties, is worthy of admiration.

As was pointed out earlier, the Spanish Inquisition was originated for the specific purpose of destroying those "**heretics**" who claim to believe in the Messiah, but insisted on living according to Jewish Law. In some other cases, both Jewish and Christian leaders have tried to rob the remnant of their True Apostolic Faith and its history. Some of them still apply revisionist history, denying that such groups ever existed. It is in knowing and understanding the historical *faith of our fathers*, that we may still be comforted to some degree, to find we have not been completely alone on the "**Narrow Path**".

Matthew 7:14 (NASB)

(14) "**For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.**"

Daniel 11:33-35 (NASB)

(33) "And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder, for many days."

(34) "Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy". (*with flattering word, pretending to be something they are not; - false brethren -*)

(35) "And some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge, and make them pure, until the end time."

Daniel 12:3 (NASB)

(3) “And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

Revelation 12:17 (NASB)

(17) And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who **KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD** and hold to the **TESTIMONY OF JESUS.**

Revelation 14:12 (NKJV)

(12) Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep **THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD** and **THE FAITH OF JESUS.**”