

## Explaining Christian Hellenism

'Paul was with the apostles entering Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. He argued against the Hellenists who were seeking to kill him' (Acts 9:28 & 29).

There is a very distinct difference between the Hebrew culture laid out by God Himself via Moses, and the Greek Hellenistic culture that continues to reverberate around the globe today. Judaism and genuine Messianic Christianity can and are working together to turn a fragile relationship into a united global community committed to God. We need to work together to reconcile Jews and Christians after many misguided Hellenistic 'Christians' helped to murder millions of innocent Jewish people over the past two thousand years – all supposedly in the 'name of God' just like they did during Apostle Paul's day, as written in the opening verse above. There is a vast difference between Messianic Christians and Hellenistic Christians. After reading this Bible study inspired by a Messianic Rabbi, we should be able to discern our leaning. If we are Messianic, we can continue to grow and embrace our calling in God. If someone realises they are Hellenistic, they will need to repent and change their attitude towards our Spiritual Jewish root system, orchestrated by God thousands of years ago. The first earthy Messianic incarnate of God was King and Priest Melchizedek who met with Abraham (Genesis 14:18 to 20). Jesus our Messiah, our King and Priest was a direct descendent of Abraham and it was the Hellenists who killed the Messianic believers when Jesus was on earth and after He was resurrected, and the Hellenists have continued to do so ever since, killing and persecuting both Jews and Messianic Christians. Jesus warned the Messianic Jews who believed in Him, "They (the Hellenists) will put you out of the synagogues. Yes, the time comes when whoever kills you will think he offers service to God. They will do these things because they have not known the Father nor Me" (John 16:2 & 3). Notice here, Jesus said they do not know God nor do they really know Jesus. Hellenists know OF them but do not have a close personal relationship with the Lord and they do not understand the heart of God or the Hebrew concept of Salvation by faith message, which God initiated.

Alexander the Great was the one who introduced Hellenism to the world. Alexander's four generals and their descendents continued Greek rule after his death. Hellenism comes from the word, 'Hellas' which was the ancient Greek lifestyle. Hellas was the organisation of the nation, laws, legal system, art, sciences, trade, industry, customs, fashion, jewellery, idols, household ornaments and their pagan language. Many Greek words come from idolatry. This lifestyle was found in ancient Israel before the birth of Jesus and many Jews embraced it, often giving their children Greek names. When the Lord had to prepare Israel for the first coming of Jesus, He had to quash Greek rule. Jesus could not have been born into Israel ruled by pagans and idolaters so God rose up brave men to cleanse Israel so Jesus could come as our Messiah. In 165 BC the Hasmonean and Judean's won a military victory against the Syrian/Greek Hellenists during the war of the Maccabees led by a soldier named Judah. The resounding victory gave Judean's the opportunity to reclaim and cleanse Jerusalem and the second Temple. The Israelites were finally independent of the heirs of Alexander. Jesus was able come to Jerusalem and worship at the Temple, now cleansed and able to be used as God had intended. Our modern Western culture is a clash between God's plan of Judeo/Christian global influence and the ancient Greco/Roman influences. This clash of ideologies separates Jerusalem and Israel from the rest of the world. In the Greek philosophy, beauty, meditation, speculation and theory is truth. In the Hebrew Scriptures, truth, daily moral and ethical conduct is beauty. Greeks believe the human form was the epitome of perfection so they regarded the covenant of circumcision followed by Jewish people to be a terrible crime because in their ungodly eyes, it maimed the perfect human form. The Greek gods like Zeus were formed in the image of humanity with strong muscled characteristics. Aphrodite was the goddess of beauty, love and lustful pleasure. Judaism, which comes directly from God is the complete opposite of this pagan system. Humans were created in the image and likeness of our Creator God (Genesis 1:26 & 27) and we are not permitted to make anything in the image of any created thing on earth (Leviticus 26:1), so the statues and the worship of false gods is wickedness. Mankind is encouraged to walk in the ways of God, to emulate His Holy, Divine, Spiritual characteristics of love, kindness, truth, compassion, patience and grace. Walking in faith like this edifies the soul and does us good.

Hellas was still practiced after the Roman Empire took control of Israel but the Temple was still used as a place of worship in line with Judaism. The three prevalent languages spoken during Jesus' time were Hebrew, Greek and Latin (John 19:20). Although the Jews spoke Hebrew, they could often speak Greek and Latin. The Greek culture was very appealing to many people and did influence some Jews. Because Hebrew, Greek and Latin were the prevailing languages of Jesus' day, some disciples named in the New Testament had two or three names from the three languages. Art, architecture and buildings were often Greek in style. The way Herod renovated the Jewish Temple was influenced by Greek culture but the Jewish priests continued to use the Temple for worship. The Hellenistic culture did prevail in the Temple and that infuriated Jesus. 'The disciples came to Jerusalem and Jesus entered the Temple. He began to throw out those who bought and sold things in the Temple. He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold the doves. He would not allow anyone to carry a container through the Temple. Jesus said, "It is

written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations,' but you have made it a den of thieves" (Mark 11:15 to 17; Jeremiah 7:11).

Hellenism was and still is a Greek-minded ideology and is in complete contrast to Hebrew teachings, language and culture. That is why all Christians need to learn about and observe the Bible from a Hebrew/Jewish point of view and return to our 'first love,' which is the Jewish teachings of the Bible. This is what Jesus said to the assembly in Ephesus, "I know your works, your toil, perseverance and I know you cannot tolerate evil men ... you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, you have left your first love. Remember from where you have fallen and repent and do the first works or else I am coming to you swiftly and will move your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent ... those who have a (Spiritual) ear, let them hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to the assemblies (churches)" (Revelation 2:1 to 5 & 7). Our 'first love' should be the Hebrew Scriptures as they are, written by Hebrew and Jewish prophets. When Jesus said He would remove their lampstand or Menorah, He was referring to the verse in Matthew when He said, "The righteous will shine forth like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Those who have (Spiritual) ears to hear let them hear" (Matthew 13:43). Jesus was saying their Light of salvation would go out unless they repented.

Some Jews who took part in some aspects of Hellenism, completely rejected the Greek culture of the worship of mankind, idols, nature, polytheism or multiple gods. Hellenism produces hedonism, the love of the body, physique and sinful pleasures, so if someone was not considered to be 'beautiful' they were ostracised. Opposite to that attitude, Judaism places God at the centre of our lives and He sees the heart of a person not the outward appearance (1 Samuel 16:7). Since the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit we must all worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24). We must always read the Bible within the context of Judaism, which is the context the Bible was written and was the context in which Jesus taught the disciples. Most Christians do not ever think of studying the Bible within the Hebrew context it was written but focus more on the Hellenistic attitudes. Sadly, some modern churches are still bowing down to Hellenism. An anti-Semitic – pro-Greek teaching that has prevailed for almost two thousand years is the erroneous claim, the New Testament was written in Greek. That is wrong. The entire New Testament is the expression of God to Jews first then Gentiles, proclaiming the Kingdom of God and Heaven that began just prior to the onset of Jesus' ministry as proclaimed by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2). God would never allow His expression of love to the world in the form of salvation and justification by faith to be written in a pagan, foreign, corrupted language. It would have to be written in the holy, pure language of Hebrew (Zephaniah 3:9), originally written by Jewish men to other Jews. The Bible was translated into other languages so people could read the Word in their own language but the original Bible was entirely written in Hebrew by Jews for Jews. It was not given to Gentiles until later. Messianic believers accept the entire Bible was written in Hebrew. Hellenistic Christians refuse to accept that truth and continue to teach from the pulpit using Greek words. If people continue to believe the New Testament was written in Greek, they do not know the true heart of God. The entire Bible centres around God's chosen people, the Jewish people, descendants of Noah's son Shem (Luke 3:21 to 36) through to Abraham the Hebrew (Genesis 14:13), living in God's chosen and Promised Land of Israel with its capital Jerusalem, within the language of Hebrew, Jewish culture, laws of Moses, Hebrew calendar, kosher food, holy Feasts of the Lord and the Sacred Scriptures all written in Hebrew. From all of those facts, we have received our Jewish Messiah, born, lived and educated in Israel, born to Jewish parents, He spoke Hebrew, taught from the Hebrew Scriptures called the Torah and Tenach, He celebrated the Feasts, worshipped and taught in the Temple and Synagogues and everything He did was according to the Hebrew/Jewish culture. From the beginning, right through to the Book of Revelation, it was all written in Hebrew (Revelation 16:16).

The Prosperity Teaching is another example of Hellenism. Hellenism was driving the people in the Temple the day when Jesus became furious and threw the greedy buyers, sellers, moneychangers and thieves out of the Temple. Preachers who teach the erroneous prosperity heresy make the claim, if a person is not wealthy, there must be something wrong with their walk with God. That is completely opposite to what the Bible teaches. Jesus said we would always have poor among us (Mark 14:7). Jesus Himself had no home to call His own (Luke 9:58) but stayed with friends (Matthew 21:17), He had nothing except His clothes and shoes (Daniel 9:26). Jesus had no ready cash and had to get His taxes from the mouth of a fish (Matthew 17:27). Are the prosperity teachers claiming Jesus had a problem with His walk with God because He was poor and homeless? Apostle Paul sometimes went hungry (Philippians 4:12) or cold and asked Timothy to bring him a warm cloak (2 Timothy 4:13). Are the prosperity teachers inferring Paul had something wrong in his walk with God? Study the Scriptures about poor Lazarus sitting at the wealthy man's gate, hungry, sick, destitute, homeless (Luke 16:19 to 31) but he ended up in heaven when the wealthy man ended up in Hades. That tells us Lazarus' walk with the Lord was strong even though he suffered. If we take this story at face value, we will be able to see there will be many wealthy Hellenistic Christians in Hades when the poor people they should have been helping will be in heaven, no longer poor and hungry but fulfilled and at peace. That is food for thought! Think on that you prosperity teachers! The prosperity teaching encourages the idolatrous

love of money. It is a different doctrine from the Bible. They should be teaching people to be content with the Lord's provision (Philippians 4:11). God always provides us with our needs but we need to seek God and His righteousness first (Matthew 6:8, 32 & 33). Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Timothy 6:6 & 8). Greed is wickedness (Psalm 10:3). God provides us with what we need, not necessarily what we want.

Money is not the root of evil, it is the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil and the prosperity teaching is a different doctrine from the Bible – the opposite to what the Bible teaches and Christians should withdraw from believing such carnal thoughts. The Scripture tells us those people are conceited, obsessed and do not know anything about God! Greed leads people away from a deep relationship with God and that pierces their lives with sorrow and misery. 'If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not consent to sound words, which are the Words of our Lord Jesus and to the doctrine which is according to Godliness, he is conceited, knowing nothing, but obsessed with arguments, disputes and word battles, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, constant friction of people of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that Godliness is a means of gain. Withdraw yourself from such thoughts and people. Godliness with contentment is great gain. We brought nothing into the world and we certainly cannot carry anything out. We should be content with having food and clothing. Those who are determined to be wealthy fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful lusts, such has destroyed men in ruin and destruction. The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some have been led astray from the faith in their greed and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, patience and gentleness' (1 Timothy 6:3 to 11). The prosperity teaching comes straight from pagan Hellenism – the love of pleasure and money. Anyone who loves money more than the Lord is not worthy to be called His disciple because we cannot serve God and riches (Luke 16:13).

Another Hellenistic 'Christian' teaching that ostracises people is imperfection. If a person is overweight, has a physical defect or is suffering from a mental illness, they are often told to leave the church or they are ostracised, bullied or ignored. It really does happen in our modern churches. Hellenists are intolerant of imperfection. There is very little love in the reality of churches that wrongly teach all sickness is your own fault so you are out of step with God, or if you were genuine God would heal you so you must be living with secret sin. How wicked are those people! Once again, that is a pagan Hellenistic attitude. Many Hellenistic Christians intensely dislike having disabled, disfigured, elderly people who are in need of help, people with a mental disability or the mentally ill around them. Imperfection repulses them. People like them are not genuine Christians, they are practicing Hellenists. We know that because Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, you must love one another just like I have loved you, so love one another. By this everyone will know you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34 & 35). We are not given the choice. We cannot choose to love one person and discard another! Jesus said, "If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? If you only greet your friends, how is that better than sinners? Even the wicked do the same" (Matthew 5:46 & 47). Clearly, people who behave in this wicked manner are not true Messianic disciples, they are Hellenists. We are not to show any favouritism because it is sinful to do so and we must love others (our neighbours) as much as we love ourselves (James 2:1 to 9).

If you are a person who avoids any other genuine believer for any reason, you are not a true disciple but a Hellenist and Scripturally, going to a lost eternity without knowing or realising where you will be going, because you have been spiritually blinded by the devil. But it gets worse. God calls you a liar and a murderer without eternal life. Loving our brother or sister in Jesus shows our love for God. If we mistreat any fellow believer, the Bible says we are blinded by wickedness and are unsaved. The Bible teaches, 'Those who say they are in the Light (of God) and hates their brother (or sister in Jesus) is in the darkness ... Those who love their brother (or sister) remain in the Light ... Those who hate their brother (or sister) is in the darkness, walks in the darkness and does not know where they are going because the darkness has blinded their (spiritual) eyes' (1 John 2:9 to 11). 'We know we have passed out of (spiritual) death into (eternal) life because we love the brothers (and sisters). Those who do not love their brother (and sister) remains in (eternal) death. Whoever hates their brother (or sister) is a murderer and you know no murderer has eternal life remaining in them' (1 John 3:14 & 15). 'If someone says, "I love God," and continues to hate their brother (or sister) they are a liar for anyone who does not love their brother (or sister) whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. This commandment we have from Jesus, those who love God should also love their brother (or sister in Jesus)' (1 John 4:20 & 21).

Hellenists preach and believe the 'Rapture Theory', which has no actual basis in scripture. People who teach a 'rapture' is coming, do not know the basis of the Scriptures and they do not understand what Jesus and the Apostles were saying. The 'rapturists' believe they can do whatever they want and they will be forgiven when they are 'Raptured off'. Most 'rapturists' are very immature Christians who resent being told to grow up and mature in God. The 'rapture' theory is opposite to Scripture. Jesus said only those who endure to the very end will be saved (Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13). Nobody will be 'raptured' off in the middle of a

tribulation. Rapturists are Hellenists and are actually 'goats' not 'sheep' and God is separating His sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:32 to 46). Hellenists are tares or darnel, not 'wheat' and are opening themselves up to severe judgement and could possibly be thrown into the eternal Lake of Fire unless they repent (Matthew 13:24 to 30 then 36 to 42). The rapture is a false teaching. The Scriptures teach us there will be a resurrection of the righteous (Luke 14:14) on the last day of this age (John 11:24) but there will not be a rapture.

Hellenistic Christians often behave badly, whereas genuine Messianic believers know the heart of God and try to be like Him (Ephesians 4:24). This is how the Bible describes Hellenists without actually naming them as such, but they love money, have a weak form of Godliness, are corrupt and they never come to a deep knowledge of the Truth of the Scriptures. They continue to teach things that are opposite to the Scriptures and actually hate the genuine Truth of the Word of God and their sin prevents them from growing in God. 'Know this, in the last days grievous times will come, for people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding a form of Godliness but denying the power of God. Turn away from these people. These are those (leaders) who creep into houses and take captive gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth. As some opposed Moses, so do these people also oppose the Truth, people corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith. They cannot grow (in God) any further for their folly will be evident to everyone ... But you (true disciples) did follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love and steadfastness' (2 Timothy 3:1 to 10). The New Testament refers to people like these as immature 'little children'. People like these mentioned here need to repent of their Hellenistic attitudes and grow up in God, grow in the Scriptures and behave like adults not spoilt children. Remember, Jesus is coming back for a church or assembly without spot or wrinkle, holy, without blemish (Ephesians 5:27). When Jesus comes back, He will not tolerate bad behaviour from Hellenistic Christians who think they can behave as they want to. Christians often accept drunkenness as being okay but people who drink alcohol are evil, according to the Bible. Christians who behave badly could go to a lost eternity no matter how long they have been attending church. 'If an evil servant should say in his heart, "My Lord is delaying His coming," and beats his fellow servants (other Christians) and eat and drink with the drunkards, the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he does not expect it and in an hour when he does not know it. The Lord will cut him in pieces and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. That is where the weeping, wailing and grinding of teeth will be' (Matthew 24:48 to 51).

Hellenistic – Greek – Spartan – Roman beliefs are akin to the lie of evolution. They believe humans are just an evolved human species, a complex animal most able to survive because we evolved higher intelligence. They think war and violence separates the weak from the strong, the brave from the cowardly, spawning wicked ideologies like the Babylonian cult, Persian cult, the might of the Roman Empire, Stalinism, Marxism and Nazism. God taught us through Abraham to teach our children and household to observe the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice and to be a blessing (Genesis 18:18 & 19). Abraham's descendents and all people who accept the teaching of God are to be God's witnesses on earth to all humanity, teaching the lost to accept Jesus as our Human Redeemer, attempting to bring peace to this fallen world. We need a world where the strong will not think it is their right to destroy the weak, lame, elderly or infirm but will take responsibility for people in need, like Jesus taught regarding the Good Samaritan. We are to help people in need, to be kind, to show compassion and if necessary, to pay for them (Luke 10:30 to 37). Fighting has occurred between the righteous thought of morality and ethical behaviour, and the wicked thought to destroy the weaker in our communities. Abortion, euthanasia, child abuse, elder abuse, cruel domination of women, anti-Semitism and other destructive policies are opposite to God's expressed will for humanity, yet many Hellenistic Christians practice these things. The Bible teaches us not to kill anyone, especially the innocent (Exodus 20:13; 23:7; Deuteronomy 5:17). Judaism knows God created mankind in His image and likeness, free to believe whatever they may choose as long as their beliefs do not bring suffering to any innocent person. All humanity are children of our Divine Creator/Father, free to choose our eternal destiny with God or we can choose to be alienated from God. The early Christian church and some modern Christians believe the same. 'Middle' Christianity from about 300 AD until about three hundred years ago murdered anyone who did not believe their doctrine. The crusades, the inquisitions and nazism are examples of open slaughter against Jewish people and genuine Christians. God and Abraham had a close relationship encouraging Abraham to practise ethical monotheism, righteousness and moral justice taught to him by God. God is working hard to restore the Jewish people back into His holy Land of Israel and Jerusalem in preparation for the return of Jesus to earth. Israel is the House of God and the awesome gateway to heaven as revealed to Jacob (Genesis 28:12 to 17).

There are not many genuine, true Messianic believers in the world today who can be referred to as true disciples of the Messiah. The differences between Messianic Christians and Hellenistic Christians is stark.

We need to fully understand, Jesus/Yeshua was a living Torah. He was and still is the living Word of God (Revelation 19:13). The Torah and Tenach are filled with Messianic Prophecies. The holy Feasts of the Lord are all prophetic in nature. The Hebrew language is a testimony for Jesus/Yeshua. The Hebrew word for 'cut off' can also mean to 'cut a covenant'. 'After the sixty-two weeks (then seven weeks, then another week = seventy weeks) the Anointed One (Jesus/Yeshua) will be cut off (cut a covenant) and will have nothing' (Daniel 9:26). These verses told the Jewish people the exact year Jesus would begin His ministry and when He would die and in doing so, He would cut a New Covenant in His blood. 'Jesus took the cup after supper saying, "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood which is poured out for you' (Luke 22:20). This New Covenant was for Jews first then Gentiles. For genuine Messianic believers, we can see Jesus in every chapter in the Bible. For someone who refuses to believe, no proof will turn their hearts even if Someone is raised from the dead. 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if One rises from the dead' (Luke 16:31). Some Hellenistic Christians will sadly continue down their dark path to destruction. They know God in their minds but they do not know Him in their hearts (Isaiah 29:13). Jesus warned, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven but only those who do the will of My Father Who is in heaven. Many will tell Me on Judgement Day, 'Lord, Lord, we prophesied in Your name, in Your name we cast out demons and in Your name did many mighty works.' Then I will tell them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me you who work iniquity'" (Matthew 7:21 to 23). In shock, disappointment, terror and regret there will be weeping, wailing and gnashing or grinding of teeth (Matthew 25:30). The good news is, if Hellenists repent and embrace our Hebrew roots and learn to know Yeshua in a deep personal relationship so He becomes your Lord and Saviour, on Judgement Day He will say, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matthew 25:21 & 23).

Amen and God bless you.

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