

Shalom and good morning,

Thought I would try to address a couple of your questions this morning.

**Your Question:** I was wondering if it could be proven that Yeshua even existed?

Comment: We have the same problem here that a person has in proving that George Washington existed. We must rely on the historical works of the time and other third party evidence. One of the most compelling proofs is the changes that have occurred in the world since He was here on earth. Not many mythological creations have the devotion of their followers to cause them to give their life for the cause.

For example, lets look at the twelve talmidim that Yeshua chose to teach. At His death they were completely demoralized and ready to return to their homes after the festival. Suddenly these men became bold and willing to stake their very lives upon the belief that this Rabbi they had been studying with was the promised Messiah. Every one of them suffered great hardship for that belief and most were killed. Logic tells us that something special happened to cause them to have that strength of character and belief.

But lets look at Jewish support for the existence of the Man Yeshua. The Jewish historian Josephus discusses several things that happened because of this man called Yeshua. He never expresses any doubt as to the existence of the leader of this new sect of Judaism that was called "The Way". There is a good deal of Rabbinic writing touching upon this sect by contemporary Rabbis and none of them express any doubt that the Man Yeshua existed. In fact most of the older rabbinic scholars considered Him to be a significant Rabbi of His day even though not accepting Him as Messiah.

The attempt to deny the existence of Yeshua as a Human is a fairly recent development by a group of anti-missionary Jews in trying to prevent the surprising number of Jewish people from accepting the fact that a Jewish Messiah has truly come once and is soon to return.

**Your comment:** If I'm not mistaken...all Rabbis wrote their Mishnah and Yeshua never wrote one word and this seems odd to me. Would you mind explaining why there wasn't any written word from Yeshua.

Response: To start let me give my understanding of "mishnah". This is usually considered the written record of the great Oral Torah given to Moshe and the elders. For many years it was passed down by word of mouth to the next generation. The Mishnah was finally written down during what is called the 'inter-testamental' period. It is very concise instructions on how to obey the instructions given in the Torah. My personal copy is in the manner of a song or rhyme since it was designed to be easy to memorize. We will soon start a video class on the mishnah here at the congregation. It is a great work but not to be considered as inspired scripture, in My opinion. The purpose of the Mishnah was to provide the details needed to obey the Written Torah. Such things as the procedures for the Levites to use in offering the sacrifices or how to dress for the services at festival times.

The major writings of the Rabbis is called the Talmud which is commentary on either the Torah or Mishnah. Not all of the sages writings were considered appropriate to be included in the Talmud when it was compiled about 400 CE. The sages in Jerusalem compiled one Talmud and those in Babylon compiled another which is larger due to the greater number of Rabbis in Babylon during this period. Later the Gamera began to evolve of other writings and commentary.

Only a small number of the Rabbis have done significant writing. For example Rabbi Schneerson of the Lubavitch did not do much more than make notes of his teachings. Since his death other

followers of his have begun to write down these teachings. He was considered one of the greatest Rabbis of modern times (some even thought he was the Mashiach) and did no significant writing. This is also true of other great rabbis since they had such responsibility of ministering to their people that time was scarce for writing.

Most of the writing by rabbis was in providing teaching material on the Torah for the weekly study portion. Some like Rambam and Rashi have provided extensive material for our study.

Now, lets take a look at Yeshua and what He did while here on earth. He came to teach only one thing, Torah. Since He had given it to Moshe 2,000 years earlier, He did not need to re-write it while He was here on earth. All of His teaching is correctly giving halakah on subjects which were being incorrectly handled. Often He would say, "You have heard it said, ..But I say". The things He was addressing were instructions in which there were major differences between the various rabbis. Many of the things recorded in the Brit Chadasha (New Testament) were responses directly to other rabbis. Only a few of His public teachings to the general public are recorded, such as the sermon on the mount. If you will read these you will note that they are really teachings on Torah.

Yeshua came to get His people back on the right track with Torah and most importantly, to become the sacrifice for sin. As we see in Vayikra (Leviticus) the un-intentional sins of the people required a blood sacrifice in order to be in line with Yahweh's covenants. All the animal sacrifices were temporary coverings for sin. Yahweh provided Himself as the final atonement of salvation through the personage of Yeshua.

**Your comment: Any group whose belief is based off of Jesus or Yeshua and the book referred to as the New Testament makes them Christian. This includes "Jews for Jesus" and 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists.**

Response: Yeshua did not come to start a new religion. He came to His people Israel in the land that He had promised to Av'raham. He did not teach to those outside that group. He did teach to a couple that were not Jewish such as the centurian, who was worshipping with the Jews and the Samaritan at the well who was probably of Israelite blood. None of the talmidim ever considered themselves anything other than Jews who believed that the Messiah promised in the Torah, Prophets, and writings had come in the person of Yeshua.

Shaul became a believer in Yeshua but remained a Rabbi and a Pharisee all his life. He was allowed to teach in the synagogues wherever he went. Had he been seen as a member of another religion, the rabbi at the synagogue would never have allowed him to enter or teach there.

A couple of hundred years after the resurrection of Yeshua, the followers of Yeshua had been persecuted almost to extinction as had Judah. The assemblies that the talmidim and Shaul started had become mostly gentiles who had little knowledge of Torah or Yahweh. The new leadership did not want to be considered Jewish since they were constantly persecuted. They began to avoid things that made them noticeable such as tzitzit and Shabbat worship. With the taking over of the religion by Constantine, there was little of the aspect of Torah left. He adopted much of the pagan worship that was so prevalent in that day and called it Christianity. In doing so he forbade the worship on Shabbat, observance of the Festivals or any other action of obedience to Torah. A good study on this subject would be one called "The Constantine Conspiracy". Let me know if you would like a copy.

What is so gloriously happening today, all around the world, is that Yahweh is calling both the House of Judah and the House of Ephraim back to Torah. More Jews are accepting Yeshua as Messiah today than at any time in history. They are not becoming Christians but remain true to the teachings of Torah. This is what they are suppose to do. In fact most are becoming obedient to Torah for the first times in their life. They are excited to realize that they do not have to give up

their heritage or their relationship to the covenants of Yahweh in accepting Yeshua as Messiah. They are coming to understand that the false teaching of groups like "Jews for Jesus" and 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist are not correct in accordance to Torah.

The House of Ephraim is made up of those who had forsaken their bloodline as Israelites and been assimilated over the centuries. Most have no idea that they are of Israel. None are able to prove that they come from any of the twelve tribes, which is also true of most of the Jews of today. The Torah teaches us that our bloodline comes down through the father, but because of the persecution and oppression of the past the Jews have had to go to allowing anyone born of a Jewish woman to be considered a Jew regardless of the bloodline of the father.

I believe that many of those coming out of the churches today and returning to Torah are actually members of the 10 lost tribes. While their tribal heritage cannot be proven, there are many prophecies in the Tanakh that are specifically addressed to Ephraim and not Judah. The sudden turn away from the pagan aspects of the Christian churches by people all over the world has to be the work of the Ruach HaKodesh. There are no great leaders who can claim credit for this movement back to Torah. It has started in groups of one or two and continues to grow all over the world. Our small congregation is really a large group in the movement since most consist of a couple of families. There is no logical reason for people to turn away from a lifetime of teaching of Christianity to obedience to Torah. In fact many of us have been made outcasts by our families and friends as we have pulled away from the family traditions of Christmas and easter.

I hope this beginning of our discussion provides some food for thought. We will continue with your other comments and questions as soon as possible.

Shalom B'Shem Yeshua  
Rabbi Earl