

Messianic or Natsari, What is the Difference?

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I have been asked this many times over the past few years and I realize it will be asked again many more times and so I have decided to give the short and long answer to this question:

THE SHORT ANSWER:

The vast majority of those who call themselves Messianic Jews are nothing more than Baptist in Jewish garb, they merely keep up and out ward appearance of Judaism yet are more closely aligned with Modern Day Christianity which is far flung from Natsari Judaism. "Messianic" is actually a Gentile designation. They pick and choose which commandments of Torah to follow where as the Natsari trace their roots back to the 1st century Jewish believers in Messiah who walked in the footsteps of Messiah Yeshua and kept the whole Torah as well as kept their cultural identity as Jews in tact by keeping many customs and traditions.

THE LONG ANSWER:

The name "Christian" is a misnomer today. Scripturally, Christian means one who has converted in the sect of Judaism that followed in the footsteps of Yeshua Messiah by following Torah, called the Natsarim. This is thought by some to be a term that is/was a derogatory name given to the Gentiles who converted to Natsarim Judaism by the Gentiles who opposed them. This is equivalent to calling a black person the "N" word, or a Jew the "K" word! That is not what Christian means today. The word Messianic is the Hebrew form of Christian. Therefore, a Messianic Jew is an oxymoron, unless one means a religious Jew who believes in a Messiah that has come or is coming. In that case, all Jews are Messianic Jews.

Most "Messianic Jews" today are nothing more than Baptists in Jewish clothes. They look like Jews, and participate in the Jewish culture, but they believe and live for the most part, like Christians. Their motto is: "One faith, two expressions." Most believe, like Christians, that most if not all the Law has been abolished in the death of Messiah.

By this time, some people may think that I believe all Christians are utter pagans and are going to hell. This is not the case; nothing could be further from the truth. I know many Christians who sincerely love and serve YHWH with all their heart to the best of their ability with what they currently know. Scriptures say Elohim winks at our ignorance. (Acts 17:30) However, once a person knows the facts, knows the truth, and knows better, the ball is in their court and they are accountable for what they know and do with it. Christians need to take a hard look at Christianity, research its roots and ask the hard questions. Be Bereans (Acts 17:11) Study out what you are told. Just don't be spoon-fed and believe what everyone teaches in the name of YHWH. Even this work you are reading. As my former Rabbi, Rabbi Daniel Harris has said:

“For the record, I believe there will be MILLIONS of Christians going to Heaven. G-D’s mercy endures forever and there are so many sincere Christians who really love the L-RD. They really have no Idea of the pagan roots of their faith and are serving G-D to the best of their ability and knowledge.” Also, “As far as ‘Christian bashing’ goes, all I can say is, it is incumbent upon me by Torah to DENOUNCE any and all paganism regardless of WHAT it is or WHO it offends (Ex.34:13; Mt.15:13). I have no INTENTION to offend ANYBODY but it is inevitable if one preaches and teaches Truth (Ps.119:142; Ezk.3).”

- **“Confessions of a Legalist” Rabbi Daniel Harris, Kol Ha-Shofar vol.2.issue 5**

I have been asked do I believe Christians are pagans. Let me use an allegory to explain:

It is like a baby pig who feeds with lambs nursing from a mother sheep. The pig is not a sheep, yet it has been accepted and raised by the sheep. One can clearly see, even the lambs it plays with, that the pig is not a sheep. Yet it lives out its days among the sheep. It may adopt many of the ways of sheep. It may learn to prance and skip around like a sheep. It may nibble grass every now and again, yet it will eat slop and roll around in the mud when given the choice. It will “oink” instead of bleat. But in the end, the farmer will take both the sheep and the pig to the same mutual final destination.

It is similar with Christians. They may have been raised with a form of the Torah, and may even have adopted a shadow of the ways of a Jew, yet they will always return to pagan practices they adopted after the believing Gentiles split off from the believing Jews. They will go to heaven just as the

believing Jew, however, they will go having lived out a watered down mingled form of Judaism and paganism.

According to Rabbi James Trimm:

“...In many Christian circles there is a teaching that says that originally Judaism was the true faith but that it has been now replaced by a new faith “Christianity” which is now the true faith. This theology is totally counter to the teachings of the “New Testament”. The “New Testament” is plain in telling us that there is one true faith (Eph.4:5) which was given once and for all time (Jude1:3). This means that theology that claims that Christianity is a true faith which has replaced Judaism which had been the previous true faith is absolutely false! There is, according to the “New Testament” itself ONE TRUE FAITH and it was ONLY GIVEN ONCE. Christianity is too young to be that ONE true faith that was ONCE given, that ONE true faith that was ONCE given therefore MUST be Judaism!”
-“Error of Two Torah Theology I”

Yeshua did not come to start a new religion; He came to bring fullness to the original one. Here is what Jim Myers has to say about it, in his article, “Would Your Church Allow You to Really Be Like Jesus?” Found at: <http://www.biblicalheritage.org/Jesus/would.htm>

“Jesus was a Jew, not a Christian and he was certainly not both. It is clear that Jesus was a practicing Jew who lived a very observant lifestyle. An amazing discovery for any Christian is the fact that there is simply no evidence that Jesus ever renounced Judaism and quit being a Jew. Also, his teachings do not indicate that he ever wanted any Jew to renounce their Judaism and join a new religion. How then, did he get credited with the distinct label that he was the person responsible for creating a new religion? Especially a religion which opposed the religion and way of life he continued to live?”

“Without a great deal of effort it becomes glaringly apparent that neither R. Jesus, the apostles nor the Paul of Acts 21, would be allowed to join a church. On the other hand, it is also clear that R. Jesus would not participate in any religion that not only opposes, but is actively dedicated to destroying his religion! Is it not true that the goal and stated mission of Christianity is to "save the world?" How is this mission to be accomplished? To put it very simply, the goal is to convert every non-Christian to Christianity. The convert must renounce any non-Christian religion, agree to accept the doctrines of Christianity and oppose any religion that opposes Christianity.

Instead of a physical Jihad (holy war), Christianity has engaged in a doctrinal

Jihad. As I stated above, Christianity is an exclusive religion. Christians are not allowed to simultaneously practice Islam, Buddhism, Judaism or any other religion. Therefore, if Christianity was to attain its goal of "getting every person on the face of the earth to believe in Jesus," including all the Jews, Judaism would be totally destroyed and cease to exist.

This would accomplish something that the crusaders, the inquisition, Hitler and a number of others have failed to accomplish. How do you think R. Jesus would react to the idea that such a mission was being carried out in his name? This really gets weird when you think about it! Christians base their proof for their ultimate salvation on a Jewish rabbi named Yeshua (Jesus), who was an observant Jew who faithfully practiced Judaism. On the one hand, his religion would most probably not allow him to practice modern Christianity. On the other hand, modern Christianity would not allow him to practice its religion without first renouncing his religion -- Judaism!

This should present a very important challenge to every Christian -- If R. Jesus could not, and would not, practice a religion dedicated to destroying his religion, how can anyone who bases their salvation on R. Jesus participate in and perpetuate it? Would R. Jesus agree with a salvation message being based on such a system? Are you getting the drift of this discussion?"

"Christianity, almost universally, requires a Jew to convert to Christianity before he can become a member of the church or be saved. This conversion process forces the Jew to renounce his or her Judaism and terminate or redefine any Jewish practices."

Christianity, as it is today is incompatible with Natsarim Judaism and is not even Scriptural Christianity. So the expression running rampant in "Messianic" Judaism concerning it and Christianity, "One faith, two expressions," holds no water. Christians fails to see the level of the deception. How they have accepted the doctrine of men and of demons, of Rome and of Babylon. How they have broken off, and have separated themselves from the 1st century Natsarim Judaism. They have essentially have created another religion.

A fine young man approached me about what the difference is between Natsarim and Netzarim, if any. Much confusion over the passage in Matthew 2:23 where in most English Translations the word "Nazarene" appears, and most people falsely assume it is referring to the city of Nazareth or that Yeshua was a Nazarite, though the root word for both is the same Yeshua was not a Nazarite until the last Passover in which He vows that he will not partake of the fruit of the vine by saying, "until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." The way He worded this notion during

the last Passover according to the Rabbi's and Sages constitutes the formulation of one's intentions to take on a Nazarite vow, hence but one reason when asked for water He rejects the sour wine brought up to Him on a sponge. But that is for another time we are slightly getting off track.

Mat 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

The prophet spoken of is Isaiah in the book that bears his name chapter 11, verses 1 through 2.

Isaiah 11

¹And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

²And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

Nazareth and Nazarene is a mistranslation of the word, "Natsari" meaning, "Protector" or "Branch."

The footnotes in the Hebraic Roots Version (HRV) says:

"There appears to be a word play in the Hebrew here between Natzeret and Netzer (branch Isa. 11:2(11:1))"

There was no city of Nazareth until Constantine's mother invented it as will be discussed later, but there was a small Masada-like outpost called Natsari which was on an outcrop of hills near Galilee.

According to Rav Yoshi this is the outpost/village recorded in Luke 4. Unlike the Constantinian Nazareth which Helena the Mother of Constantine supposedly "discovered" along with, supposedly, the cross of the crucifixion in a vision during her trip to the Holy Land and later founded a church there

in a poor attempt to validate the Scriptures for there was no Nazareth known in her time. But the one she fabricated had no such cliffs as mentioned in Luke 4.

Luke 4:16-30 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.' " "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian." All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way. (NIV)

The following is a word study and an excellent essay on the word Natsarim which can be found at these two websites:

<http://www.fossilizedcustoms.com/nazir.html>

<http://www.onlinetruth.org/Articles%20Folder/natsarim.htm>

“Natsarim

Natsar -- A Crash Study of the Hebrew word

natsar = nun, Tsadee, resh.

THE WORD "**NATSAR**"

There is usually some initial confusion with the word Natsar. The original Hebrew for "Nazarene" is based on the root "natsar", and means **to watch** -- this is because the **area** around the burg **Natsareth** was named for it, hence the word "**Gennetsaret**" (*vale of Netsar*) -- referring to the whole district. This root word used points to the fact that the town was situated on high ground, and provided a **panoramic view of the surroundings**. It was an absolutely lovely place to grow up.

The "brow of the hill" which Yahushua's (our Messiah) town folk tried to throw Him over gave the name to the town itself. Natsareth (natsar, the root) hence means "watchtower", and Natsarenes are by extension "watchmen", but this also fulfills the prophecies of Yesh Yahu 11:1, (Isaiah 11:1) and Zec. 6:12. In these places, the change in vowels forms the root "netser", meaning "branch"; it's a kind of synonym, like any word with two meanings, but the same spelling. "He shall be called a **Natsarene**" (Mt. 2:23) refers to the verses above, but it is not a direct quote as we are led to believe. This synonym (word spelled the same) forms a play-on-words: "netser", meaning "branch", and "natsar", meaning "to watch". So, we can be called **branches**, and **watchmen** for this reason. Remember Yahushua said, "I am the vine, you are the branches" (Yahuchanon 15:5). The original followers of Yahushua were known as "Natsarim" (the plural of Natsari), because you'll see "**sect of the Nazarenes**" written in your translations at Acts 24:5.

At Acts 28:22, we see that this "sect" was spoken against everywhere: "**And we think it right to hear from you what you think, for indeed, concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere.**" What sect? The sect of the Natsarim. The definition of "sect" is the same as the word "cult", and a "cult" is not necessarily a bad thing at all--it's only a label flung about to judge a group before thoroughly examining its teachings. The Natsarim were the ORIGINAL disciples and followers of Yahushua, before Catholicism and Christianity ever existed. The brain-washing of the masses would have us believe that Abraham was a Catholic; but we know now that Kepha (Peter) wasn't one either. Yet, Catholics believe Kepha was the "first Pope". This is an incredible quantum leap to make.

From chapter 31 of Yerme Yahu (Jeremiah) where the promised *New Covenant* is located, there are the words, "**There will be a day when**

WATCHMEN will cry out on the hills of Ephraim " (31:6) -- referring to one of the ***10 lost tribes*** whom Yahushua was sent to, among these, some are "Natsarim" (like me); **and He is finishing that mission through His Natsarim today.** The word "watchmen" is from the same root, Natsar, from which we derive the words Natsareth, Gennetsaret, and Natsarim. Technically, we should not use a letter "z" in "Nazarene", because the letter is a tsadee, or "ts" sound -- and it confuses the word with nazir, which uses a zayin (z). A specialist in researching the historical setting of the Natsarim, brother Norman Willis expresses it the best as he says:

"The Catholic Church Father Epiphanius lived and wrote in the fourth century CE, some three hundred years after the Messiah. Epiphanius was one of the key players responsible for the establishment of the official Roman Catholic Church dogma.

In his doctrinal book, 'Against Heresies,' Epiphanius wrote:

"The Nazarenes do not differ in any essential thing from them [meaning the Orthodox Jews], since they practice the customs and doctrines prescribed by Jewish Law; except that they believe in Christ....

"They believe in the resurrection of the dead, and that the universe was created by God. They preach that God is One, and that Jesus Christ is his Son....

"They are very learned in the Hebrew language.

"They read the Law [meaning the Law of Moses]....

"Therefore they differ...from the TRUE Christians because they fulfill until now 'Jewish' rites as the circumcision, Sabbath, and others."

[The Church Father Epiphanius in his doctrinal book, "Against Heresies," Panarion 29, 7, Page 41, 402]

Epiphanius tells us that the Nazarenes differed from what he called the "True Christians...." because they continued to fulfill "until now" such "Jewish" rites as the circumcision, the Sabbath, and others. Since Epiphanius lived and wrote in the fourth century, three hundred years after the Messiah, the *Nazarenes* and the *Christians* could only have been two Separate Groups at that time.

The Next quotation is by a modern-day Catholic Christian professor named Marcel Simon. Marcel Simon lived and worked in twentieth Century France, and he was widely regarded as being one of the leading experts on the First Century Assembly.

In his book ‘Judeo-Christianity,’ Professor Simon disagreed with what Epiphanius had said regarding the Nazarenes. In an effort to correct history, the Catholic Professor Simon wrote:

“They (meaning the Nazarenes) are characterized essentially by their tenacious attachment to Jewish observances. “If they became heretics in the eyes of the Mother Church , it is simply because they remained fixed on outmoded positions.”

[However....] “They well represent (although Epiphanius is energetically refusing to admit it) the very direct descendants of that primitive community, of which our author knows that it was designated by the Jews, by the same name, of Nazarenes’.”

[French Catholic Professor and First Century Assembly expert Marcel Simon, Judéo-christianisme, pp 47-48.]

Even though he was himself a practicing Roman Catholic, Marcel Simon professed that it was not the Catholic Christians, but the Nazarenes who were the “very direct descendants of that primitive community,” called the Nazarenes. By this, he means that the Nazarenes (and not the Catholics) are the direct spiritual descendants of the Apostles of the New Covenant.

The Church father Epiphanius told us that there were two different groups, the *Christians* and the *Nazarenes*; and now Professor Simon tells us that it was the Nazarenes who descended directly from James, John, Peter, Paul, Matthew, Andrew, Phillip, and the rest. And yet, curiously, Professor Simon agrees with Epiphanius that these Nazarenes were indeed heretics, because they continued to practice the exact same worship as the Apostles had.

In other words, Professor Simon says that the Nazarenes of the fourth century became heretics simply because they continued to practice the Faith Once Delivered to the Saints." [end of quote]"

The above statement in quotations citing Jude 1:3

The “Nazareth” that Constantine’s mother named and founded created many problems for Biblical Archeologist, Apologetisists, and Biblical Scholars and fueled great so-called evidences for Anti-Missionaries, Atheists and Skeptics. Here are their valid arguments, valid because the place that has always been pointed to as Nazareth is the wrong one!

Josephus never mentions Nazareth, and apparently it isn't mentioned in any other records of the day. Josephus even documents a military campaign that the Romans into the very vicinity of Nazareth and yet no mention of it.

Apparently some claim that the only evidence of human habitation from Christ's time would have been caves in the area, but Jews would never live in caves because they used caves to bury people, and as there are graves near by they would never live in graves or near dead bodies

The geography is wrong. Apparently there is no cliff near the Synagogue which Jesus might be thrown off of as is seen in Luke. --

<http://www.geocities.com/metagetics/Nazareth.html>

The Sect of the Natsarim was named so because Yeshua not only is the Branch, but He was the “Protector” of the Torah. He grew up with the teachings of the Pharisees in the synagogues but He didn’t always side with them such being the case as their view of divorce and their man made tradition of ritual hand washing. Neither did he give way to the politically corrupt interpretations of the Sadducees who controlled the Temple. He was, not a Karite, they didn’t exist then, plus he kept many of the Pharisaical traditions and customs, but He did not feel bound by them. He preserved the Torah and its true intent and taught His talmidim how to walk it correctly.

Matthew 5:17-21 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

It is a small battle of semantics if you will, but for the most part Natsarim and Netzarim refer to the same sect and group of believers.