



ONE TORAH FOR ALL

One Torah shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.
Exodus 12:49

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

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No Man's Land

An essay

For nearly two millennia now, two factions have been fighting. One faction has almost always had the upper hand. These two factions are Jews and Christianity. The reason Christianity has nearly always had the upper hand in this conflict in the western world is that Christianity has been in control of the empires, kingdoms, and governments of the western world.

Now mind you, when we speak of Christianity in this context, we are speaking of those ruling powers that have made the claim they were Christian. This statement is not a judgment of whether they were or were not Christian, but rather simply a reflection of their own claims. They claimed to be Christian and a part of Christianity; therefore, we will refer to them in the same manner in which they referred to themselves for the purpose of this essay.

The Jews, on the other hand, were Jews by birth first, and secondly, Jews by practice. They were easily distinguished from Christians in practice as well as family names. It was a simple matter to segregate the Jews into ghettos, since the Jews actually preferred to live together as a community. This also made them an easy target for the Christians. Many times, it was a simple matter to build a wall around the already existing Jewish community, thus creating a ghetto. However, not all ghettos were walled, but some were.

Jews knew their own kind and Christians knew their own. It was easy for both groups not only to identify their own kind, but also to know who the other side was. It was common practice to identify someone they did not know as being on the other side if that person failed to demonstrate that he was not a part of their group. For example, a Jew knew a person to be a Christian if he kept Christian holidays and believed in Jesus Christ. Likewise, a Christian knew a person to be a Jew if he kept Jewish holidays and did not believe in Jesus Christ. The two sides were easily identified by both sides. To go over to the other side was considered an act of the highest treason by both sides. Such describes the last two millennia.

It is precisely between these two factions that we find "no man's land." "No man's land" is understood as that parcel of land located between the front-lines of two warring factions. For a

man to get caught in no man's land means to become the target of both sides, certainly not a desirous place to be found!

For example, one such place exists even today between two warring nations, the DMZ between North and South Korea. The DMZ, demilitarized zone, is even fenced on both sides, making it difficult for any person to accidentally stray into this field of fire. However, if a person gets caught in this zone, it is not uncommon for both sides to begin firing upon such a person. Such a scenario does not present a high rate of survival for the one caught in this no man's land.

In our time we are witnessing many who are intentionally stepping into a different kind of no man's land, not fully understanding the existence of this no man's land, nor that both of the warring factions will most likely see such a person as belonging to the other side. What are we talking about? Let us carefully consider the matter before us.

There are a growing number of people who are embracing the Hebrew roots of their faith in Messiah. Inevitably at some point in such a person's journey, he will begin to see a distinction between the Christian Jesus and the historical Yeshua as found in Scripture. Furthermore, such a person will often begin rejecting the Christian holidays and embrace the "Jewish" holidays. We say "Jewish" holidays in this context because this is often how both sides describe the festivals commanded in Scripture. As this transition happens, often such a person will then no longer consider himself to be a Christian. However, Jews typically do not see any such distinction between Yeshua and Jesus and therefore such a person is still considered a Christian, even though one may not consider himself one. Some Jews even go so far as to be leery of such people, seeing such distinctions as a ruse and possibly even a trick. Many Jews are suspicious, and understandably so, considering the history of the past two millennia.

Likewise, Christians see those who have forsaken the celebration of Easter and Christmas and embrace Jewish holidays as treasonous and are highly suspicious of such people. Christians often get quite emotional towards a person who has gone this route, believing such a person has lost his salvation. Christians often look upon such people as Judaizers. The name calling and ultimate rejection of such a person by the Christian community at large can, and does, become quite hurtful to the one receiving such a verbal assault.

Such a person finds himself walking in this no man's land as the target of both Jews and Christians, neither side accepting such a person, albeit for different reasons. The Jew does not accept such a person because of his acceptance of Yeshua as Messiah and the Christian does not accept such a person because of his keeping of Jewish holidays and the seventh day Shabbat and the rejection of Christian holidays and Sunday worship.

Is it any wonder then that there is such confusion among the ranks of those so caught in this no man's land? This confusion can be so prevalent among those caught in this no man's land that they may even take aim at one another, not realizing at whom they are shooting.

The greater question is really this: Why do these sides need to be at war in the first place? If the Creator of this world is the same for both, Jews and Christians (as well as those caught in no man's land), then just exactly what is all the conflict about in the first place?

Okay, I know one of the fundamental differences between Jews and Christians is this whole idea of the Trinity. Personally, I do not agree with the doctrine of the Trinity. Jews tend to hold to the oneness of YHWH based upon the Shema. However, there are many Jews who study and hold to the sefirotic tree of heaven, which has ten emanations of Elohim. So, it's okay to see the Creator as ten, but not three? Does that even make any sense to you? Scripture even states the Creator has seven spirits. So, it's okay to view Him with seven manifestations, but not three? What gives?

Therefore, what it really boils down to, is one of those manifestations in particular, namely the manifestation of Mashiach, who many understand was named Yeshua, (the Christians mistakenly call His name Jesus) is actually what causes all the trouble between the two factions. However, most of this conflict would vanish nearly overnight if those who call themselves Christians would discard all that which is extra-biblical and follow only the teachings of Scripture. This would put them more in tune with their Jewish brothers in many more ways than not. For example, all would be keeping the seventh day weekly Shabbat as well as all the other holidays. Furthermore, it would give rise to an honest discussion between the two sides concerning the Messiah. The only real difference between Jews and those who follow Yeshua is that Jews are still waiting for the Messiah and others see that Messiah has already come once in Yeshua.

We need to come to the realization that both sides have some very important truth to offer. This is something those already in no man's land have discovered: There is truth contained in both sides. Part of the trouble is that it seems neither side is willing to investigate the possibility that some of what they presently hold to may not line up with the truth of Scripture. However, it is true, neither side has a complete grasp of, nor, exclusive rights to, the truth, and both sides have error. Gasp!

The only thing that will facilitate these two sides stopping the warring and inherent distrust is to begin to dialog with one another, individuals, as well as leaders. It is long past time to bury the hatchet!

Those who are most vulnerable, those in no man's land, need those on both sides to see that they are sincere and honest in their convictions that they are neither Jew nor Christian. If nothing else happens, both sides need to see that there is a middle ground and that those in that middle ground, for the most part, are not enemies of either side.

However, in order for this actually to happen, those who have walked into this no man's land must stop acting like those on either side are the enemy. Those in no man's land must stop taking pot shots at those on either side of no man's land. Those in no man's land must stop

acting like they have a lock on His truth, when in fact that is not true at all. Those in no man's land are still working on rooting out error in their own lives as well.

In order to survive no man's land those caught in it must band together. They must begin to embrace one another realizing that within the ranks of all present there is still error. No one person has all of His truth! Those in no man's land must stop shooting each other for these relative minor differences. Let's face it; most of those in no man's land have more in common with one another than with those on either side of them. On that basis should they not come together? It really is a matter of survival as well; as this is what Scripture tells us will happen. Therefore, those who refuse to be a part of coming together, for whatever reason, may find themselves in a position that is not to their liking in the end.

For a person to agree to walk with another does not necessarily mean they are in total and complete agreement. It simply means they have agreed to walk together towards a common goal. What is that goal? The goal is to come together on common ground. The common ground is Mashiach Yeshua and Torah. All the rest is minor and can be worked out as brothers walk together.

Remember, nowhere in Scripture will a person be judged for what he believes, but rather each will be judged on what he does or does not do. Beliefs are minor; stop making them a point of division!

Since it seems many of us are relegated to this no man's land for the time being, let us make the most of it, and carve out a nation in this land no one else wants!

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
www.onetorahforall.com
zerubbabel@onetorahforall.com

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