

What Are You?

What You Are Not

If you were asked the question, what is your religious persuasion you would probably answer Messianic and if you were a Jewish believer you would probably describe yourself as being a Messianic Jew! These tend to be the most common responses to this question but do these titles 'cut the mustard.'

Messianic

According to the dictionary, messianic has the meaning of 'relating to a messiah' this being the case, any religion purporting to have a messiah at its head is messianic, therefore, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity are all messianic faiths and their followers can legitimately claim the title 'Messianic.' So the term Messianic is too generic to identify the individual character of a specific following. True believers need a label more specific than 'Messianic' if they wish to be considered different from other religions.

Messianic Jew

The term Messianic Jew is a little more specific but has its own ambiguities and obviously can only apply to a Jewish person. But according to the above definition all Jews, whether believers or not, are messianic, what separates them is that some accept Yahusha is the Mashiach whilst others, notably the orthodox, do not and are still awaiting the first appearance of the Mashiach of the Scriptures.

Technically, the title 'Messianic Jew' does not distinguish between believing and non-believing Jews it is therefore hardly suitable for either persuasion to adopt it as their unique label. We need also to remember that whilst all Jews are Israelites not all Israelites are Jews whether or not they are believers: a fact further negating the suitability of this title.

I Would Suggest The Following

When we consider our faith is rooted in the belief, teachings and lifestyle of Mashiach Yahusha what would be more appropriate than for us to label ourselves using the same description the Scriptures give to Him and to follow in the footsteps of His apostles? If I were to put a label on this faith it would be Netzarim, borne from the words spoken in Isaiah 11,

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Netzer (sprout) shall grow out of his roots, (Isa.11:1).

It is commonly accepted that the term Netzer in the above passage is a reference to Mashiach Yahusha. He is the Netzer (sprout/root/branch). Netzer is the base word used for the Nazarenes of whom the apostle Paul was accused of being a ringleader in Acts 24:5.

For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

Whilst the term Nazarene may also have referred to the inhabitants of the city of Nazareth, this is not the context of either Isaiah or Acts. In Isaiah 'Netzer' speaks of the attributes of Mashiach as described in the subsequent verses 11:2-3. The reference in Acts is directed at the faith taught by the apostles, the basis of which was to develop a character aligned with Mashiach's attributes and to follow in the footsteps of the Netzer; Mashiach Yahusha Himself. I describe myself as a Netzari collectively Netzarim, I say this because the foundation of our faith is to put on the character of the Netzer Himself.