

# Sectarianism and Elitism

Dark Enemies of Unity



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Most of us probably consider ourselves to be non-denominational. It has become quite fashionable for believers to identify themselves this way. Many of us have seen a lot of negativity coming from the various denominations and would rather not identify ourselves with those kinds of things.

However, in the midst of our non-denominationalism I have found quite a bit of denominationalism or sectarianism among believers in Torah and Messiah. There may not be a building with a name on it. There may not be an incorporated 501c registered religion per say, but all the elements are definitely there.

I want to begin by sharing some scripture that speaks directly to this very thing. Sectarianism is as old as the first century, and actually much older than that, but for now let's examine a scripture:

**Act 24:1-5** - Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator *named* Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.

<sup>2</sup> And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: "Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight,

<sup>3</sup> "we accept *it* always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

<sup>4</sup> "Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us.

<sup>5</sup> "For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the **sect** of the Nazarenes.

Here we see that Paul is accused of being a "ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." The unbelieving Jews considered the believers in Messiah to be a sect of first century Judaism. Of course, we know that Paul was accused of various things in the verses to follow. But I want to draw our attention on the response that Paul issued on this particular accusation:

**Act 24:12-14** - "And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city.

<sup>13</sup> "Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me.

<sup>14</sup> "But this I confess to you, that according to **the Way** which they call a **sect**, so I worship the Elohim of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.

Notice that Paul never actually identified himself as being a part of some Nazarene sect. In fact, he indirectly contradicted it by simply saying that “they” (the unbelieving Jews) called it a sect.

But what did Paul himself call their movement? He says, “according to **the Way...so I worship the Elohim of my fathers.**”

You can find this phrase “the Way” in a number of places.

**Act 9:1-2** - Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Master, went to the high priest<sup>2</sup> and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of **the Way**, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

**Act 19:8-9** - And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of Elohim.

<sup>9</sup> But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of **the Way** before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

**Act 19:23** - And about that time there arose a great commotion about **the Way**.

**Act 24:22** - But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of **the Way**, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case."

So rather than Paul identifying himself as a member of some Nazarene sect, he simply said He is of “the Way.” Thus, he distanced himself from sectarianism altogether.

There is a very good reason why he did.

Let’s first examine the word translated “sect” in Acts 24. It’s a very fascinating word:

**139** αἵρεσις hairesis {hah'-ee-res-is}

**Meaning:** 1) act of taking, capture: e.g. storming a city  
2) choosing, choice  
3) that which is chosen 4  
) a body of men following their own tenets (sect or party)  
4a) of the Sadducees

- 4b) of the Pharisees
- 4c) of the Christians
- 5) dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims

I think this lexicon may have interpreted Acts 24 to suggest that “Christians” were a sect in the first century, but we have seen that Paul distanced himself from that idea. The root meaning here has to do with “choosing” and “choice.”

So how did it manage to be translated “sect” in our bibles?

**Act 5:17** - Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the **sect** of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation

**Act 15:5** - But some of the **sect** of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses."

It would seem the word “sect” would make sense in these verses because that’s essentially what they were. Sadducees and Pharisees were denominations in first century Judaism. They were somewhat political in their mentality. Yahushua noted that they sought power and privilege among the people and were respected as priests and “rabbis,” leaders of the Jewish people.

First century sectarianism was a key reason why the leaders sought to kill Yahushua. They saw Him as a threat to their respective denominations. He exposed their flaws, their errors and their hypocrisy. They didn’t want him interfering with their political aspirations, or their power and respect among the people.

Now I want to notice some additional notes on this Lexicon entry from Thayer’s:

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4c) of the Christians

5) dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims

**Origin:** from 138; TDNT - 1:180,27; n f

**Usage:** AV - sect 5, heresy 4; 9

Notice that the same word translated “sect” is also translated “heresy” in the KJV.

I personally find this to be remarkable!

Basically, sectarianism IS heresy.

Denominationalism IS heresy. Both “sect” and “heresy” are both from the same Greek word, “Haireses.” The word itself actually doesn’t say or mean “false doctrine.” It’s most basic meaning is “choosing, choice.”

Notice also that the origin of this word is “from 138.” Let’s take a look at #138 for a minute:

**138 αἰρέομαι (αἰρέω) haireomai** {hahee-reh'-om-ahee}

**Meaning:** 1) to take for oneself, to prefer, choose  
2) to choose by vote, elect to office

**Origin:** probably akin to 142; TDNT - 1:180,27; v

**Usage:** AV - choose 3; 3

This particular word is said to probably be “akin to 142” (Grk. Airo) which means “to raise up, or elevate.” We see the political element here in the definition which says “to choose by vote, elect to office.”

So basically we have a word that has to do with political position, compelling someone to make a choice, and sectarianism is somehow involved in all of this.

Let’s take a moment now and examine some other verses where “Haireses” is translated “heresy.”

**Gal 5:19-21** - Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,  
<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies <139, hairesis>,  
<sup>21</sup> envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of Elohim.

Paul says that “hairesis” is a work of the flesh. No wonder he didn’t want to be called that! Those who practice “hairesis” will not inherit the Kingdom of Elohim! It is a serious thing indeed. We had better figure out what this word is all about because we could be in serious danger if we are practicing it.

I realize that the church has kind of hijacked this word to mean anyone who doesn’t agree with the Trinity, or fall within the parameter of the historic Christian faith. But we need to let the scriptures speak for themselves here.

Another instance is found in 1Corinthians 5:

**1Co 11:17-19** - Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you*, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

<sup>18</sup> For first of all, when you come together as a congregation, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

<sup>19</sup> For there must also be factions <139, 'haireisis'> among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

So many of us get discouraged because we see division in the body of Messiah. Some people even decide not to fellowship much anymore because of all the division in the body of Messiah. But even in the 1<sup>st</sup> century there was division. And what was the culprit?

“Hairesis.” He even said that “there must also be haireisis” among you. Think about that! Furthermore, it is through the presence of denominationalistic/sectarianistic believers among us that we discover who really are approved by Yahweh.

Is this getting stranger by the minute or what?

It isn't strange at all if you understand how incredibly powerful the sectarian/elitist mentality is, and what it has done to the people of Yahweh going all the way back to the time of Moshe.

Sectarianism, Elitism, Denominationalism all have to do with the root sins of pride, and a desire for power, control and prestige.

The sons of Korah, what was their sin? They had difficulty believing that this humble and meek man named Moshe could be anything special.

**Num 16:1-3** - Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men*;

<sup>2</sup> and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown.

<sup>3</sup> They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "*You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and Yahweh is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of Yahweh?*"

We know what happened to them. The earth swallowed them up along with everything they had.

These men were a threat because if they were regarded to be on equal standing with Moshe, they would have the ability to issue doctrines and judgments that would not be from Yahweh.

If they were allowed to proceed, a sect would have inevitably formed, with some people siding with the sons of Korah and their beliefs, while others sided with Moshe and his beliefs. Thus, “to choose” is at the heart of the Greek word “Hairesis.”

The integrity of Yahweh’s word and His law were at stake. This, if left unchecked, would have undermined what Yahweh sought to do in establishing His true Torah. It was too important not to deal with it swiftly.

We also know that Moshe’s brother Aaron and his sister Miriam tried to act like they were on equal par, and Miriam became leprous.

Yahweh could trust Moshe because he was a humble and meek man, and would faithfully pass on the Torah to the people. But the desire for power and position were at work. This is the heart of denominationalism and sectarianism.

Now fast forward to the time of the northern and southern Kingdoms of Israel. Jereboam was given kingship, and he was afraid that he would lose his position of power and influence. So he set up his own sect or denomination. One that allowed graven images, and one that established an entirely different priesthood. Once that happened, it was over. The northern kingdom never recovered. Not a single king of Israel was considered righteous. All of them were considered wicked.

Sectarianism and denominationalism were incredibly destructive to Yahweh’s people.

In first century Judaism the sect of the Sadducees, the sect of the Pharisees, the sect of the Essenes, and who knows how many more there could have been. Yahushua said about them:

**Mat 23:15 - "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.**

Obviously, He didn’t like what they were doing, or their sectarian mentality.

His own disciples were starting to lay a foundation of sectarianism when they began to argue about “who would be the greatest.” If left unchecked, after Yahushua died they would have all decided which one of them should take over as leader...and probably wouldn’t have agreed as to who that would have been. Thus, some of them might choose John, others Peter or maybe Andrew. And the end result would have been satan coming in to divide and conquer.

At the heart of all denominations is this argument “who will be the greatest?” They all claim to be the greatest, do they not? “Come to us, join OUR church, OUR group, OUR assembly” and you will be among the elite ones!. The ones who are truly saved!

How did Yahushua defeat their mentality?

**Mar 9:33-39** - Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?"

<sup>34</sup> But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who *would be the greatest*.

<sup>35</sup> And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

<sup>36</sup> Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them,

<sup>37</sup> "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

The ones who desire to be first need to humble themselves and simply serve. No claim for power, no claim for position, no desire to exalt themselves over others, just SERVE. Just be like a child in humility and in doing what children do: Follow. Follow the Good Shepherd, and imitate Him.

That mentality destroys denominationalism, sectarianism and elitism. Notice what happened next

**Mar 9:38-40** - Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us."

<sup>39</sup> But Yahushua said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.

<sup>40</sup> "For he who is not against us is on our side."

Yahushua didn't care that this person wasn't walking around with him. He said, "do not forbid him." So what? He is advancing the Kingdom so rather than viewing him as a threat, consider him a partner in ministry!

Ministries and congregations shouldn't consider each other as "competition." They should consider each other to be partners against the adversary.

Now I want to dig in a little deeper here as to how the first century responded to those who were following sectarianism. Let's take a look:

**Tit 3:8-11** - This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in Elohim should be careful to maintain good works.

These things are good and profitable to men.

<sup>9</sup> But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.

<sup>10</sup> Reject a divisive [heretikos](#) man after the first and second admonition,

<sup>11</sup> knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Notice that the “heritikos” man is mentioned just after the disputes, contentions and strivings about the law. It is in these strivings that the heritikos man is able to do his work.

This word “heretikos” is from 141 and 141 is ultimately from the “hairesis” word we looked at earlier :

**141 αἱρετικός** hairetikos {hahee-ret-ee-kos’}

**Meaning:** 1) fitted or able to take or choose a thing 2) schismatic, factious, a follower of a false doctrine 3) heretic

**Origin:** from the same as 140; TDNT - 1:184,27; adj

**Usage:** AV - that is a heretic 1; 1

These kinds of men we are told to reject after the first and second admonition. These kinds of men were there in the first century and what they would do is try to draw men away. Basically, to become sectarian in mindset. In this case the hairetikos would use an argument from the law to find fault with the disciples and draw men away into some kind of sect.

This was a major major problem in the first century!

The ruling in Acts 15 had everything to do with it. In fact, the entire book of Galatians was written because of it!

**Act 15:1** - *And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."*

**Act 15:5** - *But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."*

These men were sectarians. They didn’t believe one was saved until one was circumcised. They had ambitions that were unholy:

**Gal 6:13** - *For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.*

They wanted to “bag a foreskin” and brag about it to their fellows sectarian-minded cronies.

So what was James’ decision in Acts 15? How did they deal with these sectarians who wanted to claim that the new Gentile believers were not saved until they were circumcised and kept the law?

**Act 15:19-21** - *"Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to Elohim,*

<sup>20</sup> "but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.*

<sup>21</sup> "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

Since the Gentiles were already attending the synagogue on the Sabbath, and would have the opportunity to hear the Torah being taught, James and all the rest of the disciples decided that they would just require them to do some basic things that would demonstrate repentance:

- 1) Refrain from idolatry and its contaminations
- 2) Refrain from sexual immorality
- 3) Refrain from blood and meat from strangled animals

This is in keeping with the basic fundamental message of the good news of Yahushua: repentance and faith in Messiah.

These were some basic things that would demonstrate that the 1<sup>st</sup> century Gentile believers really were "turning to Elohim" by forsaking their idolatrous practices, along with an opportunity to hear more of Yahweh's word in the synagogues.

As they would hear the word, being led by the Holy Spirit, they would be able to learn and grow at a pace that they could bear---rather than being pressured to come under the knife of circumcisers who had sectarian motivations.

This ruling in Acts 15 is the antithesis of sectarianism. It is the antidote, the opposite mentality. It puts Yahweh in the position of authority and allows Him to minister to individuals by the Holy Spirit rather than pressuring people by threatening them with words that cause them to doubt their salvation.

Threatening people by telling them they are not saved until they do what you do is the spirit of sectarianism and denominationalism. It IS heresy. It IS a work of the flesh.

Now let's take this into a modern day application. Suppose there was an unbeliever that was living a very sinful lifestyle. This unbeliever was in a motel room one night and opened up the drawer. In the drawer was a Gideon bible. He began to read it and became very interested. He began to realize that he wanted a new life. He realized that he was a sinner and needed redemption. He got on his face in tears of repentance and expressed that He believed in the Messiah spoken of in the scriptures and that he desired to inherit eternal life through Him.

Now, this man is almost completely bible-illiterate. He knows very little about Yahweh's will for his life. But his heart is in the right place and he gives his life to the Heavenly Father.

Now, how many people among us would believe that Yahweh is up in heaven looking at this person and saying, "Sorry, you haven't pronounced my Son's name correctly. I can't save you?" How many would believe that Yahweh is saying, "Sorry you have not yet kept my Sabbath, and therefore I reject your cries for salvation?"

I hope that you are not one of them. This is not the way our Father works at all. He doesn't wait until you pronounce His name correctly to save you, though I do believe it's important to use His name. He doesn't wait until you keep your first Sabbath to accept you, though I do believe we should keep the Sabbath. This man who got on his face didn't join a denomination or a sect when he repented and accepted the Messiah, HE ENTERED INTO A RELATIONSHIP.

And that's the key!

He was at one time an enemy of Yahweh, but now he has turned his heart toward following the holy scriptures. How much knowledge of Yahweh's ways must he attain before He would be accepted? 5%? 10%? 55%? 100%?

Let me ask you, how far along this path do you suppose yourself to be? Do you know and walk out 100% of Yahweh's will and are completely and totally like Messiah in every way?

Beware!

**Mat 7:2-3** - "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

<sup>3</sup> "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?"

If we say that this man is still an unbeliever simply because he hasn't yet come to a truth that you happened to have found, what if we are also lacking a spiritual truth somewhere? "With what judgment we judged, we shall be judged."

As we judge someone else to be an unbeliever on the basis that they have not yet received a truth that we happen to value, we may not see that gigantic 2X4 in our own eye that Yahweh is looking at right now.

We need to view Yahweh as He is... a Father. It is a Father and son relationship. We are his children and He is our Father.

As parents, how many of us would reject our children who come to us in tears, humility, confessing that they did something wrong and want us to help them not do it anymore? I hope that none of us would. Our arms should be around that child saying, "Yes, I accept you and forgive you and am willing to help." The prodigal son was accepted when he changed his attitude and turned to his heart back to his father.

Likewise, scripture says:

**Psa 103:12-14** - As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

<sup>13</sup> As a father pities *his* children, So Yahweh pities those who fear Him.

<sup>14</sup> For He knows our frame; He remembers that we *are* dust.

We have such a Father in heaven. He is merciful and compassionate. I dare say, even far more than most of us are as parents.

Understanding this is the key to understanding why the disciples made such a ruling in Acts 15. They did not lay the entire law down on them at one time. In the same way that we cannot eat a 500 course meal in one sitting, we cannot digest the entirety of Yahweh's word in one sitting. It takes time to learn and grow and change.

Now, suppose that same believer in the hotel room decided to go to a Christian church. As far as he knew, these were the people that tried to follow the bible so it seemed the logical place to go. Suppose he listened to that Pastor and he was so amazed by the man's knowledge of the bible that he decided to sit his bible on the shelf and just listen to the preacher instead.

At that point, he left his first love. He has now put his soul in the hands of man rather than in the hands of Yahweh. In such a case, this man is now walking on very dangerous ground, spiritually speaking.

Now the reason I am sharing this is so that we understand what the true good news is really all about. It isn't about how far you've traveled, it's whether or not you are on the narrow path. It isn't about whether or not you know this or know that, it's about whether He knows you. It's about whether or not you are "on the Way."

**2Pe 2:1-2** - But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies <139, 'haireisis'>, even denying the Master who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction.

<sup>2</sup> And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way <3598. 'hodos'> of truth will be blasphemed.

Notice the contrast here. There are the ones leading people to sectarianism/denominationalism, and there are those who are following "the Way" of truth. The word translated "way" in this verse is from "hodos" and it is the same word we saw earlier when Paul was describing his faith before Felix the Governor.

I'll go ahead and repost these verses as a reminder of what the early believers considered themselves to be a part of:

**Act 9:1-2** - Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Master, went to the high priest<sup>2</sup> and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of **the Way**, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

**Act 19:8-9** - And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of Elohim.

<sup>9</sup> But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of **the Way** before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

**Act 19:23** - And about that time there arose a great commotion about **the Way**.

**Act 24:22** - But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of **the Way**, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case."

This word, "Way" is from:

**3598 ὁδός** hodos {hod-os'}

**Meaning:** 1) properly 1a) a way 1a1) a travelled way, road 1b) a travellers way, journey, travelling 2) metaph. 2a) a course of conduct 2b) a way (i.e. manner) of thinking, feeling, deciding

**Origin:** apparently a root word; TDNT - 5:42,666; n f

**Usage:** AV - way 83, way side 8, journey 6, highway 3, misc 2; 102

The Septuagint, an ancient translation of the Tanakh/OT, uses this word in the following proverb:

**Pro 4:18** - But the **path** of the just *is* like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

Notice that the path of the righteous is not instantly bright, but it gets brighter and brighter.

It's also found here:

**Isa 2:3** - Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, To the house of the Elohim of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His **paths**." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.

The law of Yahweh is Yahweh's way. It's also found here:

**Joh 14:6 - Yahushua said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

Yahushua is the Way because He not only cleanses us from all sin, He also provides us with a perfect example of Torah observance. We are supposed to be followers of "the Way."

This is so important. This is so, so important! This defines us. This is who we are. This is our identity as believers. We are of "the Way!"

Sectarianism has a way of becoming an alternative identity-- "I am a Mennonite." "I am a Baptist." "I am a Methodist." "I am a Jehovah Witness." "I am an Adventist." "I am a Sacred Namer." "I am this" and "I am that."

Whatever we identify ourselves with, we have a tendency to just walk that out.

If I want to be a biker, then I will get the leather garb on and buy myself a Harley-Davidson. I will go down the road with a pair of dark sunglasses and a bandana on, and I will fit the identity of the biker guy.

The sectarian mindset offers an identity as well, and you will be pressured by men to fit the mold, whether it is biblical or not. You will be motivated to fit the denominational mold, rather than Messiah and the holy scriptures.

So why not let our identity be one who is a follower of the Way, which will inevitably shine ever brighter, never saying, "I've arrived. Come to me. My group is the true one and nobody else is. We are the only ones." That's the error of denominationalism. They find a little bit of truth, and then assume that they have arrived...building their empire of man after those pet doctrines they found in the bible.

We cannot go there. We can't! Protestant Christianity made that mistake again and again. It is one of the lies that we have inherited from our fathers.

But these kinds of things aren't just found in Protestant Christianity. There are strong nuances of this kind of spirit operating even in groups among us that have no denominational affiliation.

It is evident in how a believer in the Sabbath treats a non-Sabbath keeper.

It's evident in how a believer in using the sacred names treats one who uses "Jesus" and "the Lord God."

Some who believe like us treat those who have not yet received some of the truths that we cherish as if they are lost outsiders who have no salvation.

I can't tell you how many times I've heard some, who believe like me and use the sacred names, call traditional Christians "Baal worshipers" and "Pagans."

As if no traditional Christian could ever have a relationship with Yahweh at all. Yet, the same people will testify that they DID have a relationship with Yahweh before they used the sacred names. They just didn't know any better then.

Sorry, but this is a double standard. One standard for you, and a different standard for everybody else. WE CANNOT DO THIS, my brethren. It damages people. It endangers our own salvation.

If we come to a traditional Christian with this mentality that they are lost and headed for the lake of fire simply because they have not yet heard and accepted something that we believe in, we are walking in a sectarian/elitist spirit. We are believing in a false evangel, a false good news. Similar to the sect of the Pharisees who taught the brethren, "Unless you \_\_\_\_\_ you cannot be saved." Fill in the blank. Circumcision? Law-keeping? Sacred names? Sabbath? Repentance and faith in Yahushua the Messiah for the forgiveness of sin is the only true evangel or good news.

To say that all traditional Christians are going to the lake of fire is to reject the message of the early disciples and aligns us with the sectarian and elitist mindset.

The "Sectarian" mindset IS a heresy. It is the same word!!

Innumerable Christians have been turned off by those among us who promote this sectarian way. We come to them in condemnation, invalidating their experience with the Messiah and how he has changed their lives so much. We forget how patient Yahweh has been with us. We forget how patient Yahweh still is with us each and every day.

It really is Yahushua who is changing many of their lives for the better. Many of them were rotten sinners who repented like the man in the motel room and believed in the Savior with all their hearts. He changed their lives.

But then we come along and tell them that their experience wasn't real because they didn't yet pronounce the Messiah's name correctly? Nonsense!

Yahushua's name isn't a magic word that gets you into the kingdom. It's His name and we should use it, but it's the person who saves us, not a vocalization.

He can overlook our ignorance. If He can't, then we ARE ALL in trouble! All of us are ignorant of something:

**1Jo 1:8 - If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

We cannot effectively share the truths that Yahweh has taught us if we are going to do so with a denominational and sectarian mentality.

Yes, the Christians might be blind in some areas. But I guarantee you that we all have blind spots.

**Joh 9:39-41** - And Yahushua said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

<sup>40</sup> Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"

<sup>41</sup> Yahushua said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains."

Yahushua can overlook our blind spots and not charge us with sin if we are ignorant. It's a Father/child relationship. If my son didn't know something was wrong, I wouldn't discipline him for it. But if he was arrogant and claimed to know everything, refusing to really listen to me, I would probably hold him accountable for everything.

Likewise, if we are like the Pharisees here, who had a sectarian mentality, claiming to be the all-seeing ones, Yahweh would say that our sin remains.

This is the great danger of sectarianism and denominationalism: They claim to see! They claim to have arrived. They say, "Come to us, we have the answers right here. We have found the truth and if you want to be saved you should join our group." Many claim that there is no salvation outside their particular group.

Therefore, "with what judgment they have judged" they will be judged. The very measure they have used, it will be measured back to them.

We should fear that!

Who is to say that you are more righteous than the Christian? Perhaps he isn't keeping Sabbath which is a pretty significant sin in Yahweh's eyes, but then he might be loving his wife better than you are. He might be more loving, more peaceful, more kind, more giving, more patient, and more like Messiah in 50 other ways than you are. Maybe he is being a better father to his children, and maybe he is overcoming lust and you aren't. Maybe he has a more intense prayer life and has more faith than you do.

Who are we to say that our truth is important but these others are not so important? That Christian might actually have something to teach you if you will listen.

All truth is important. But we need to respect each other enough, and be humble enough to recognize that maybe we aren't greater one after all. Maybe it's best to take Paul's advice and actually consider others better than ourselves.

So, I say, let's not insult the Christians among us, scowling at them from our high perch.

Instead, let's get underneath them and build them up in the faith once delivered to the saints as we have discovered it. We will be far more effective witnesses when we operate with the truth of the good news rather than "another evangel."

Paul said concerning the sectarian Pharisees:

**Gal 1:8-9** - But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other evangel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

<sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other evangel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

This is why "sect" and "heresy" are the same word, my brothers and sisters. Let's not fall prey to it. It is very very dangerous. It harms us, and it harms our witness to others.

Now I want to say that I don't only hear sectarianism toward Christians. I hear it people practicing it toward each other in the Messianic and sacred name groups.

Well, I won't fellowship with that group because they do this wrong or that wrong. They don't use the pronunciation I use, or they keep the conjunction, or they don't keep Passover on the right day, or they have a different belief on this or that or the other.

We don't have to get so upset over our differences. I think in the early years, the 1970's and 80's especially, many sacred name groups felt pressured to all be the same in these areas. People split up over it.

Mark my words: the more pressure from men there is for everyone to be the same, the more division you will ultimately encounter.

We don't have to all be in the same place to be on the same path. We don't have to all be at the same spiritual level to be on "the Path" or "The Way." It's the direction our feet are moving, and whether or not they ARE moving. If we believe in Messiah and are growing in righteousness and knowledge of truth, we are on the path. That's "the Way," plain and simple.

Let's walk in it!

Yahweh is not looking down, and saying, "Hmm, that denomination is saved. That one is not saved. That denomination is saved. That group over there, they are among the saved."

He doesn't compartmentalize believers like the world does. Yahweh looks at the heart.

Within each one of those groups there may be some who are genuine repentant believers in Messiah, and some who are not. Some are just "playing church", or they are just "playing Jewish", or they are just pretenders and they found an identity that they want to hang onto, and there is not a sincere bone in their body.

Some sacred name believers among us are no longer growing because they think they have found the truth and have nothing else significant to really learn. They are taking confidence in these doctrines, and the difference it has with Christianity, and think they have found the right religion, so they stop growing. They have accepted the sectarian mentality, hook, line and sinker. In their mentality, they are no different the Jehovah's witnesses or the Adventists. I hope this is not you.

Some people among us might only believe in the Torah & true names because they are bitter at Christians and want to have an excuse to slander them. I hope this is not you.

There are others who are on the fence. But usually, only Yahweh really knows who all they are.

**2Ti 2:19 - Nevertheless the solid foundation of Elohim stands, having this seal: "Yahweh knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Messiah depart from iniquity."**

This doesn't mean that we never judge anyone. Yahushua taught us in Matthew 18 how to deal with sin in the body of Messiah. We should follow His instructions, and if you notice: the criteria for one no longer being considered a believer is that they refuse to repent of sin that the entire body of Messiah would recognize as wickedness.

It needs to be clear that the person has no desire to repent of blatantly obvious sin. It would need to be a sin that exposes the heart of the individual and reveals the fact that they don't really follow the true evangel of Messiah: Repentance and faith in Messiah Yahushua. But this is a whole other topic for another study.

So, as I've heard it said, if we want the Hebrew roots, if we want to partake of the fatness of the olive tree, then we need to bear ALL the fruits of His Spirit...which come from the roots.

Not just Sabbath keeping, not just keeping a Feast Day, not just using a right name. But also walking in love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control, gentleness, and all the good fruits.

Let's not become conceited with the knowledge that we have, because knowledge puffs up, but love-- LOVE-- edifies.

We don't have to condemn people to win them. We will actually have more success if we are patient and longsuffering, humble and kind, respectful and accepting.

We don't have to put others down a notch in order to become His people. We need to place ourselves underneath others, that we might be the servant Yahushua asks us to be, distancing ourselves from the "who will be the greatest?" argument.

Time is short. Yahushua is coming for a pure Bride. Let's not risk our spiritual lives by failing to heed His good news. precepts. Let's put away the works of the flesh and walk in the Spirit. Let's purify ourselves for the coming of Yahushua and seek to be that Bride without spot, without blemish, by the righteousness He imparts to us.

Let's be a Bride that rejects this elitist attitude, this sectarian, denominational spirit. Let's be a Bride that is filled with His Spirit-- a Bride that, in honor, prefers one another.

Let's not see ourselves as a people who are superior to others, and, therefore, separate ourselves and separate ourselves and separate ourselves until we are on an island living by yourself. Let's be a Bride filled with people that consider others better than themselves.

Others may indeed be very immature spiritually, but if their heart is yielded to the Father's will in their life and they receive Messiah as their salvation, I can accept them, because Yahweh accepts them. They might be doing a better job at doing what they know to be true than I am. After all, to whom much is given, much is required.

If we have been given much, we should be humbled, not puffed up. Because we are responsible for much. Therefore, let's walk in meekness and fear, and not grumble about other people that Yahushua, in His abundant mercy, considers believers. Behold, the Judge is standing at the Door!

**Jam 5:9 - Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!**

If, during a gathering of believers, all we talk about is how wrong other people are, we are missing it.

Our walk with Messiah is not based on how wrong others may be, but on how correct and true Yahweh's ways are!

So let's follow "the Way." Rejecting the sectarian, elitist mentality and proclaiming the good news of salvation to all the world. Repentance from what we know to be wrong, and genuine faith in Yahushua the Messiah for the forgiveness of sin.

There is no other good news taught in the scriptures. We have learned some important things on our journey down this narrow path. Let's

**1Pe 3:15 - But sanctify Yahweh Elohim in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;**

**Gal 6:1-3 - Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.**

<sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Messiah.

<sup>3</sup> For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

**Jam 3:13-18** - Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.

<sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

<sup>15</sup> This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic.

<sup>16</sup> For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there.

<sup>17</sup> But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

<sup>18</sup> Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

The works of the flesh are the greatest enemy to unity. Sectarianism is one of them.

The fruits of the Spirit are the greatest antidotes to the works of the flesh. May Yahweh fill us with these fruits of His Spirit.

May Yahweh help us to sow the word of Yahweh in peace, not in strife or debate.

May Yahweh forgive us if we have strayed from the true good news and embraced a sectarian/elitist mentality.

And may Yahweh bless you, and have mercy on us all!