

THE NAZARENES, THE EARLIEST JEWISH BELIEVERS IN YEHOSHUA, DID NOT ACCEPT PAUL'S DOCTRINE ON THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE LAW NOR THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL'S MANDATE TO NOT CIRCUMCISE THE GENTILE BELIEVERS WHO JOINED THEM!

By Joy Collins Lyle, © June 5, 2026

The title of this article is shocking – on purpose!

Let me repeat it:

THE NAZARENES (in Greek NAZORAEANS, or NAZAREANS, originally from Hebrew NOTS'RIM), THE EARLIEST JEWISH BELIEVERS, DID NOT ACCEPT PAUL'S DOCTRINE ON THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE LAW OR THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL'S MANDATE (ACTS 15) TO NOT CIRCUMCISE THE GENTILE BELIEVERS AND TEACH THEM THE TORAH! INSTEAD, THEY INSTRUCTED THE GENTILE BELIEVERS TO JOIN THEM FULLY - TO BE CIRCUMCISED AND ALSO KEEP THE WRITTEN TORAH!! THEY MUST HAVE KNOWN THAT YEHOSHUA INSTRUCTED HIS JEWISH APOSTLES THAT THE "OTHERS " (GENTILES) THAT WOULD JOIN THEM WOULD BECOME PART OF HIS ONE FOLD WITH NO DISTINCTION (Isaiah 56:3), WITH HIM AS THE ONE SHEPHERD/KING, ALL OBEYING YEHOVAH'S COMMANDMENTS, JUDGMENTS AND STATUTES! THIS IS EXACTLY HOW THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IN ISRAEL IS PROPHESED – YEHOVAH'S DESIRE IS THAT THERE WILL FINALLY BE ONE UNIFIED OBEDIENT ISRAEL!!! (Ezekiel 37:15-28, Isaiah 56:1-8, Ezekiel 11:17-20, Ezekiel 47:21-23, Ezekiel 44:9, Isaiah 52:1).

THE JEWS WERE NOT TO LOSE THEIR JEWISHNESS – THE GENTILES WERE TO LOSE THEIR GENTILENESS!!!

I have yet to find any scholars who have put all of these excerpts from the Church Fathers together which prove this, though I certainly hope there are some. *It does require putting them together to see it clearly.* Most scholars will not admit that it is true that this is how the Nazarenes accepted and taught the gentiles who joined them. However, it's also important to note that the Nazarenes did not follow the Pharisees/Rabbis and their supposed Oral Torah! That means the Nazarenes could not be of the camp of the Pharisaical Jewish believers that is spoken of in Acts 15, which resulted in the Jerusalem Council. All of the Nazarenes' combined beliefs and practices eventually caused these true Jewish Believers to be called heretical by both Christianity (which became mostly Gentile believers, rejecting even the Written Torah) and Rabbinical Judaism (which were the descendants of the

Pharisees and became the dominant sect of Jews, who added their belief in an oral torah to the Written Torah) as they each developed, although they were true believers in Yehoshua as the Son of God (Yehovah Elohim)! They also believed He was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary (Miriam in Hebrew), that he is the Messiah of Israel, that He was crucified, dead, buried, and resurrected, and ascended to Heaven! They used the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew written in Hebrew letters, and pretty much disregarded any of the others (see Eusebius reference). I quote and elaborate on each of these sources in Chapter 18 of my book, ***The Holy Arm of the Lord***, available as a free pdf on my website by the same name: www.TheHolyArmofttheLord.com. I am only going to list them here, not quote them, as that book is easily accessible. Also, these original sources are all easily accessible online themselves. NewAdvent.org, a Catholic website, has most of them translated into English.

Origen. *Contra Celsum* (Against Celcus), Book V Chapters LXI – LXV. Print.

States specifically that they rejected the Letters of Paul.

Epiphanius. *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, Book I, 29 (1,1-1,4; 7,1 -7,7; 8,6-8,7; 9,1-9,5). Also 30 (1,1) Also 30 (3,7)

Note: (29) 8.6 specifically states that the Nazoraeans did not obey the Jerusalem Council Mandate because they taught the gentile converts the (Written)Torah. (29) 8.7 specifically states that they did not follow Paul's admonition to not circumcise themselves (nor the gentiles joined to them). Since circumcision IS a commandment of the Torah, they would have the gentile believers to follow through with circumcision. It was first commanded to Abraham and his descendants, even his entire household (servants/slaves) in Genesis 17 whole chapter and then brought forward into the Written Torah in Exodus 12:48-49 and Leviticus 12:1-3. Along with heart circumcision, Yehovah shows that physical circumcision is still His desire for His People and will be continued in the Messianic Kingdom according to Ezekiel 44:9 and Isaiah 52:1. If any gentile will be able to even enter Jerusalem, he will most certainly be physically circumcised! Evidently, the Nazarenes were aware of these prophecies! They also must have been aware of the many prophecies of the New Covenant that the gentiles who were invited into the New Covenant were also supposed to be enlightened by the Torah, even into the Messianic Kingdom (Isaiah 49:5-6, Isaiah 51:4-7, Isaiah 2:1-4, Micah 4:1-4, Isaiah 56:1-8)!

(29) 9.4 particularly and 9. 2-3 proves that the actual Nazarenes (Nazoraeans) also DID NOT accept the Oral Torah of the Pharisees/Rabbis. (30)1.1 shows the belief that the Ebionites came after the Nazarenes. (30) 3.7 shows they only used a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, sometimes called the Gospel of the Hebrews.

Jerome. Epistle 112, 13. Letter to Augustine in 404 AD.

States that the Nazarenes believe in Christ, the Son of God, born of Mary the Virgin, that He suffered under Pontius Pilate and rose again.

Jerome. *Commentary on Isaiah: On Isaiah 8:20-21; Isaiah 9:1-4; Isaiah 29:20-21; Isaiah 31:6-9*

States in all of these that the Nazarenes did not listen to the oral torah of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Augustine. *Contra Faustum*. Book XIX 4 -6, and Book XIX 17. *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, in thirty-three books (400-404 A.D.) Philip Schaff: NPNF1-04. Augustine: The Writings Against the Manichaeans and Against the Donatists - Christian Classics Ethereal Library (online), accessed 3-4-2020.

Contra Faustum, Book 19.17 is a long expose of Augustine's description of how the Nazarenes (he uses the word Nazareans) allowed the gentile believers to keep the Torah and be circumcised along with them. The gentiles' hearts were inclined to do it, according to Augustine. However, Augustine describes his belief of how it was permissible for the Jewish believers, for a short time, SO AS NOT TO OFFEND THEM SINCE IT WAS THEIR HERITAGE, but should gradually be abolished altogether. (This must be how he and the Roman Catholic Church justifies ignoring the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council and Acts 21 instruction that the Jewish believers absolutely were to continue keeping the Torah). However, Augustine believed that it was NOT permissible for the gentile believers at all! **Because the Nazarenes circumcised themselves AND THE GENTILES JOINED TO THEM, disregarding Paul and the Jerusalem Council's mandate, Augustine states his frustration with them and began to make it official that they were to be regarded as HERETICS according to "The Church." He states that they are still a sect but that their numbers are small...**

Augustine. *de Baptismo Contra Donatistas* (On Baptism, Against the Donatists) Book VII, Chapter 1,1.

In *de Baptismo Contra Donatistas*, **Augustine also confirmed that the "Nazarene Christians" circumcised their flesh in the same way the Jews did. The term "Nazarene Christian" makes me believe that these were gentile believers, as**

well as any Jewish Believers who may still be left. This writing of his confirms that they also were baptized!

Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History Complete and Unabridged*, Translated by C. F. Cruse. Book III, 27. 3-6. New Updated Edition. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing LLC. May 2014 -Eighth Printing. Print.

This Book 3, chapter (27) deals with the two groups of Jewish Believers who mistakenly are both called Ebionites by him. However, in sections 3-6, Eusebius speaks of “Others” who are obviously the Nazarenes according to their beliefs about the Messiah (Son of God, born of a Virgin). Ray A. Pritz (in his book *Nazarene Jewish Christianity* I refer to below) makes the strong case that the Nazarenes were first and the Ebionites broke off from them, somewhere around the turn of the first century. The Ebionites did not believe that Yehoshua was the Son of God, born of The Virgin, but they did continue to keep the Torah. **As he continues speaking of these “Others,” (The Nazarenes), Eusebius states, that THEY call Paul an “Apostate from the Law”!**

I encourage everyone to look up these quotations for themselves!

Pritz, Ray A. *NAZARENE JEWISH CHRISTIANITY From the End of the New Testament Period Until Its Disappearance in the Fourth Century*. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1988 1st ed., Reprinted 1992. ISBN 9781590459188. Print.

As I stated above, this book was very instrumental in my research of the Nazarenes. He has a good summary at the end of the book. However, even Ray Pritz obviously was not willing to see the truth that the Nazarenes fully accepted the Gentile Believers into their fold, having them circumcised along with themselves, and teaching them to also keep the Written Torah. **He did NOT quote the Augustine sources that I found (*Contra Faustum* and *de Baptismo Contra Donatistas*) that PROVE that Augustine stated that the Nazarenes did not accept Paul’s doctrine nor the Jerusalem Council’s Mandate to not do these things - even though I actually found these sources in Pritz’s footnotes, so he was aware of them!** Pritz seems to derive his opinion that the Nazarenes accepted Paul’s ministry among the gentiles from Jerome’s Commentary on Isaiah instead (I only found the one on Isaiah 9:1-4 that would influence his opinion that way). However, Jerome is the only source for this, and even if the Nazarenes did not disavow Paul, **ORIGEN, EPIPHANIUS, AUGUSTINE, AND EUSEBIUS ALL TOGETHER SHOW THAT THE**

NAZARENES DID NOT FOLLOW PAUL'S DOCTRINE ON THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE TORAH, INCLUDING THE CIRCUMCISION, OR THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL'S MANDATE!

CONCLUSION: Taking a look at the Prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah shows us how **The One Unified Messianic Kingdom of Israel, including the strangers joined to them**, will look! They confirm, in my opinion, that the Nazarenes were absolutely right! These are just a few of the prophecies that the Nazarenes must have believed!!!:

[Ezekiel 37:15-28 KJV] 15 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, 16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and [for] all the house of Israel his companions: 17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. 18 And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou [meanest] by these? 19 Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which [is] in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, [even] with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and **THEY SHALL BE ONE IN MINE HAND.** 20 And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. 21 And say unto them, **Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:** 22 **And I will make them ONE NATION IN THE LAND UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL; and ONE KING SHALL BE KING TO THEM ALL: and THEY SHALL BE NO MORE TWO NATIONS, NEITHER SHALL THEY BE DIVIDED INTO TWO KINGDOMS ANY MORE AT ALL:** 23 **NEITHER SHALL THEY DEFILE THEMSELVES ANY MORE WITH THEIR IDOLS, NOR WITH THEIR DETESTABLE THINGS, NOR WITH ANY OF THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS:** but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. 24 And David my servant [shall be] king over them; and they all shall have ONE SHEPHERD: they shall also WALK IN MY JUDGMENTS (MISHPATIM), AND OBSERVE MY STATUTES (CHUKOT), AND DO THEM. 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, [even] they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and **MY SERVANT DAVID [SHALL BE] THEIR PRINCE FOR EVER.** 26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set **MY SANCTUARY ("MIK'DASH" – THE HOLY TEMPLE) in the midst of**

them for evermore. 27 MY TABERNACLE ("MISH'KAN) also shall be with them
(My Note: "aleyhem" is better translated "over them" as Isaiah 4:5-6 describes
where YEHOVAH'S GLORY [CAVOD] will be over Mount Zion with flaming fire
by night and cloud by day!): yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my
people. 28 And the heathen shall know that I THE LORD DO SANCTIFY ISRAEL,
when MY SANCTUARY ("MIK'DASH" – THE HOLY TEMPLE) SHALL BE IN THE
MIDST OF THEM FOR EVERMORE.

[Ezekiel 47:21-23 KJV] 21 So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the
tribes of Israel. 22 And it shall come to pass, [that] ye shall divide it by lot for
an inheritance unto you, AND TO THE STRANGERS THAT SOJOURN AMONG
YOU, WHICH SHALL BEGET CHILDREN AMONG YOU: AND THEY SHALL BE
UNTO YOU AS BORN IN THE COUNTRY ("C'EZRACH" -AS NATIVE BORN)
AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL; THEY SHALL HAVE INHERITANCE WITH
YOU AMONG THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL. 23 And it shall come to pass, [that] in
what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give [him] his inheritance,
saith the Lord GOD.

[Isaiah 56:1-8 KJV] 1 Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice:
for my salvation [is] near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. 2
Blessed [is] the man [that] doeth this, and the son of man [that] layeth hold on
it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing
any evil. 3 NEITHER LET THE SON OF THE STRANGER, THAT HATH JOINED
HIMSELF TO THE LORD, SPEAK, SAYING, THE LORD HATH UTTERLY
SEPARATED ME FROM HIS PEOPLE: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I [am] a
dry tree. 4 For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths,
and choose [the things] that please me, and take hold of my covenant; 5 Even
unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name
better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that
shall not be cut off. 6 **ALSO THE SONS OF THE STRANGER, THAT JOIN**
THEMSELVES TO THE LORD, TO SERVE HIM, AND TO LOVE THE NAME OF THE
LORD, TO BE HIS SERVANTS, EVERY ONE THAT KEEPETH THE SABBATH FROM
POLLUTING IT, AND TAKETH HOLD OF MY COVENANT; 7 EVEN THEM WILL I
BRING TO MY HOLY MOUNTAIN, AND MAKE THEM JOYFUL IN MY HOUSE OF
PRAYER: THEIR BURNT OFFERINGS AND THEIR SACRIFICES [SHALL BE]
ACCEPTED UPON MINE ALTAR; FOR MINE HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED AN HOUSE
OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE. 8 THE LORD GOD WHICH GATHERETH THE
OUTCASTS OF ISRAEL SAITH, YET WILL I GATHER [OTHERS] TO HIM, BESIDE
THOSE THAT ARE GATHERED UNTO HIM.

[Isaiah 52:1 KJV] 1 AWAKE, AWAKE; PUT ON THY STRENGTH, O ZION; PUT ON THY BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS, O JERUSALEM, THE HOLY CITY: FOR HENCEFORTH THERE SHALL NO MORE COME INTO THEE THE UNCIRCUMCISED AND THE UNCLEAN.

[Ezekiel 44:9 KJV] 9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; NO STRANGER, UNCIRCUMCISED IN HEART, NOR UNCIRCUMCISED IN FLESH, shall enter into MY SANCTUARY ("MIK'DASH" – THE HOLY TEMPLE), OF ANY STRANGER THAT [IS] AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

YEHOVAH MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT IF ANY STRANGER AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IS GOING TO ENTER JERUSALEM AND OFFER SACRIFICES UPON HIS ALTAR AT THE HOLY TEMPLE, HE MOST CERTAINLY WILL BE CIRCUMCISED IN FLESH AS WELL AS IN HEART, AND WILL HAVE LEARNED FROM THE TORAH, WITH ALL ISRAEL (EZEKIEL 44:23-24), THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT YEHOVAH HIMSELF CONSIDERS CLEAN AND UNCLEAN!!!

Recommended Reading:

My book, ***THE HOLY ARM OF THE LORD***, *available as a free pdf at www.TheHolyArmoftheLord.com* expounds on what this should mean to Believers in Yehoshua. The chapters listed below are specifically directed to Christians and show how, I believe, Christianity got off track very early in its history. (The first fourteen chapters and chapter 21 provide many scriptures that show that Yehoshua is the prophesied Messiah of Israel, the Holy Arm of Yehovah of Isaiah 53!)

Chapter 15 – “YEHOSHUA, IN THE SHEM TOV HEBREW MATTHEW, TOLD ALL BELIEVERS TO KEEP EVERY LETTER OF THE WRITTEN TORAH!”

Chapter 16 – “THE ORAL TORAH EXAMINED TOO!”

Chapter 17 – “WHERE CHRISTIANITY WENT WRONG – PAUL IS THE PROBLEM!”

Chapter 18 – “THE NOTS’RIYM – NAZARENES – NAZORAEANS: THE FIRST JEWISH BELIEVERS IN YEHOSHUA!”

Chapter 19 – “YEHOSHUA DID NOT ENDORSE THE ORAL TORAH!”

Chapter 20 – “WHY DID YEHOSHUA HAVE AUTHORITY TO ADD TO THE WRITTEN TORAH?”