



What God Do We Serve?

(Exodus 3:6,15; Matthew 22:32, KJV)

While the Creator is definitely a universal unlimited Sovereign Designer and Architect of our world, He is totally above and set apart from all other so-called gods scattered over the earth. My crucial point which I wish to make in our educational Hebraic foundational teaching is that as followers of the One True God, we must know exactly by what name He identifies Himself. In Exodus 3 and Matthew 22 above He makes it clear for us.

While my title above may sound odd to a normal believer, it was in the late 1990's in Jerusalem when a Russian Jewish immigrant asked me a question. It not only surprised me but upset me. I had been caring for an elderly immigrant couple from the FSU (Former Soviet Union) who had made Aliyah to Israel. The surprising question asked — stunned me. He said, "What God do the Christians worship?" It was because of my strong belief and full assurance that I was answering appropriately and with accuracy, I replied quickly and said "Of course, we worship the God of Israel!" His expression was one of relief. He then said to me "I asked because there are many gods in the world." I hear Christians say, "I asked God to heal me." "I praised God today." "I hear Christians singing **"Our" God** reigns, but they never say by what name does this God exist." I had heard many questions posed to me throughout our time in Israel but this query really made me think and take a better look at the whole picture.

My husband and I were travelling the world speaking in congregations and conferences. One day from behind the pulpit I decided I would test (this question) on some of the church goers. After all, it was a legitimate question. So, I asked it. "Can anyone tell me what God we serve?" I suppose I expected everyone to raise their hands or shout it out but instead-- dead silence. It appeared everyone was trying to think about it. It got quieter. Then a hand raised up and in a quiet voice said, "The God of Compassion?" Another came up "The God of Love?" Finally, one said quietly "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?" No wonder he had to ask the question. No one really knew the answer but then in a quiet whisper came the voice of truth which said, "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?" I still remain amazed that Vladimir had needed to bring this question to my attention.

I am encouraging believers in Yeshua (Jesus) to KNOW God for who He is. He identifies Himself to the world many times over in the Torah, (the Jewish scriptures), the Tanakh (the prophets) and in the Writings of the Jewish Apostles, a.k.a the New Testament. The Jewish disciples warned new believers not to "*follow another Jesus*" (2 Corinthians 11:4, KJV) (which will be another topic to address later) but this is a reminder today to

always remember we follow the God of Israel (not Islam, not Buddha, not a Greek god) but of Israel. No other god but ONE! "...among New Testament scholars, the earliest version of high Christology emerged within a Jewish context. I submit that it is possible to understand the Gospel ONLY if both Jesus and the Jews are present" (Rabbi Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels*). In other words, we cannot truly understand the God of Israel or Jesus in any other context than the original one – which is Hebraic (Jewish).

I wish to encourage everyone to be thoughtful when singing "OUR God Reigns!" Yes, He *is* "our" God, but He was Israel's God first and still is as we see clearly in the Scriptures — He remains the God of Israel. He has never changed! Obviously, it is a battle in Israel, in which we who live here must endure, as most Jewish people think we follow a different God because it has been made to appear that way in Christian doctrines, speeches, conferences, writings and in establishing a totally different identity than the Jewish one. Instead of being one family – we are now two separate and very different families — religions that developed after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.

Jesus taught us the Hebrew Shema. **(Mark 12:29, KJV)** He also taught His brethren, His fellow Jews, to follow the One True God and to love Him with all of their hearts. **(Matthew 22:37, KJV)** God tells Israel He is *their* Holy One, *their* Creator and King. **(Isaiah 43:15, KJV)** He is not an ambiguous God. Statistics show that over six thousand times He is called YHVH in the Hebrew Bible. There is a multitude of search engines which will tell us repeatedly that the One True God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – Israel. In conclusion, we really need to be sensitive not to appear to claim Him only as "our" God exclusively as once again it appears to Jewish people that we have taken Him for ourselves solely when it remains clear that God identifies Himself as the God of Israel. We are building bridges among the Jewish people, and this is one way we can clarify our beliefs and correct any misunderstandings.

Let's also remember that Yeshua Himself said "*salvation*" is of the Jews. **(John 4:22, KJV)** Also **Ephesians 4:5-6 (KJV)** reminds us that there is only ONE GOD AND FATHER. Consequently, there is no "*Christian* God"! The God of Israel is the only God of the whole world! Recently I was reading from the Christian Post an article entitled "Has Denying the Christian God Become Intellectually Disordered?" You see that many believe there is a "Christian" God. We who are learning need to, in love, correct this. Didn't we just prove He is the God of Israel? I also quote Dr. Dwight Pryor quite often as in his manual "*Behold the Man*", Judaic-Christian Studies, he stated "There is no Christian Messiah — He is either Jewish or He is not the Messiah!" I applaud a man of true character who is not afraid to speak truth.

From this experience which taught me, my prayer is that should someone ask you the question, "*What God do you worship?*" you will be in season when you respond and share your faith in the God of Israel to whoever requests a response. In today's world where there is a mixture of theological truths and flawed doctrines, we ought to know beyond a shadow of a doubt who we worship — without ever having to think twice.

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