

A Review of the book, *Kosher Jesus* by Shmuley Boteach, Revised

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"Who was Jesus of Nazareth?" begins the discourse in *Kosher Jesus: The Legacy of Jesus Among Jews and Christians*. According to Daniel 7:27, it is clear the message of this book is "...weighed and is found wanting." The question is not "who **was** Jesus?" It is, "Who **is** Jesus?" He is the first fruits (Lev 23:9-14, 1 Cor 15:20-23). Jesus is the risen G-d --the triune G-d not only of those who know Him as Messiah, but of those who fail to recognize Him as historic Prophet, post-resurrected Priest, and soon coming King to sit on David's throne. Jesus certainly **is** kosher. But He **is not** the Jesus portrayed in *Kosher Jesus* Rabbi Boteach.

The publication of *Kosher Jesus* was launched on 2- 8-12 in NY with a panel discussion moderated by Jane Eisner of '*The Forward*'. Yet this panel did not include a representative Jew who recognizes Jesus as Messiah and LORD. How odd. Since Boteach intends to **instruct** followers of Christ, it certainly seems right to include the perspectives of Jews who are believers. This reviewer is a Jew who believes in Jesus.

The Jewish King Solomon declares "there is no new thing under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9b). Hence, Boteach's research, theories, and conclusions are not new. Many published works outline complaints by Jewish anti-missionaries and scholars opposed to Jesus of Nazareth. The issue comes down to personal faith —or not —in a personal G-d —or not. But Boteach declares no faith in Jesus the Messiah at all. As such, he is not born again according to Jesus' declaration to the Jews: "Ye must be born again" (John 3:3, 5, 7). Therefore, Boteach's insights lack spiritual wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:23, 2:14,....)

There also exists massive works that attempt to build bridges between Judeo and Christian belief. Politically commendable is Boteach's focus on American - Israeli relations and that joint influence in the war on terror. Boteach's book does add to the pleas for a return to Judeo-Christian values.

Yet, regarding all the soothing good that should come from speaking words of peace, **if** Isaiah's *Prince of Peace* —the Balm of Gilead (Jeremiah 8:22) —is re-invented to be **other than** Israel's long awaited Messiah —then peaceful words are only a ruse. Jesus-deniers such as Boteach lack vision, caused by scales that blind them to the truth that Christ Jesus is the person presented in YeshaYahu 52:13 - 53:12.

The understandable desire for reconciliation of Judaism and Christianity is presented by Franz Rosenzweig with his **Dual Covenant Theology (DCT)**. But DCT is not confirmed by accurate *exegesis* of Scripture. Most recently, renegade John Hagee believes sincere Jews are saved according to the Abrahamic Covenant, while Gentiles are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Failing to recognize **echad** as the bud out of which salvific faith grows, *Kosher Jesus* refutes the triune nature of the G-d of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov. (See John B. Metzger's *The Tri-unity of G-d is Jewish: A Theological Study of the Plurality and Tri-unity of G-d in the Hebrew Scriptures*.) And, Deuteronomy 6:4 is an argument in favor of the simultaneous unity and plurality of the G-dhead. (See Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Ariel Ministries*. He is a Jew more authoritative on Jesus more than Boteach.)

The eternal, non-created Son of G-d fulfills **Torah's perfect** law, contrary to Boteach's claims. Every prophecy of messianic *advent* —supernatural *being*, cultural *rejection*, atoning *death*, prescribed *burial*, and witnessed *resurrection* are fulfilled in the person and work of Christ Jesus of Nazareth. Boteach attempts to reduce this Divine Christ Jesus to human understanding and history. But a better description of Jesus' perfect sacrifice is taught by S. H. Kellogg's *The Book of Leviticus*. The blood of goats and bulls and the death of chickens have been replaced by the blood, death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua HaMashiach. He came to save as **Messiah ben Joseph**. He will return in power as **Messiah ben David**.

Regarding Rav Boteach *not* being impressed with Rav Sha'ul —the Damascus Road convert Paul —the Apostle confesses Christ as Lord, saying, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to G-d for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Rom 10:1) This is my prayer for Rav Boteach who is in covenant with G-d only by the New Covenant.