

# WHAT IS A CULT?

By Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle-Revised 6-30-03

Recently some “well meaning Christians” have started using a buzz word that throws up red flags in the minds of the media and religious people. The word is “**CULT**”! Cult phobia began in 1978 when a man named Jim Jones (who was an ordained Methodist minister) led a number of people to their deaths in a mass suicide in Guyana. Then we have the David Koresh Waco Massacre and “The Gate of Heaven” space nerds. Ministers of the “gospel” jumped on the bandwagon to label ANY SMALL GROUP of NON-DENOMINATIONAL believers a “cult”. Now people label any new work of YHWH that keeps the Shabbat and Torah that buzz word. Anything group they do not understand or agree with doctrinally gets labeled with the terrible “C” word. What people do not understand they fear and criticize.

Let us study the word “cult” and see what it really means.

- Webster's Dictionary: CULT (from cultus/to cultivate/wheel) 1) formal religious veneration: worship 2) a system of religious beliefs and ritual 3) religion regarded as unorthodox or spurious 4) devotion to a PERSON, IDEA, or THING; a small circle of persons united together by devotion or allegiance to a movement or FIGURE. Experts say it is a religion started by ONE MAN whose TEACHINGS are DIFFERENT from the organized religion.

According to Webster's, which is a recognized and accepted source for the English language, we can come to the conclusion that what is now called “Christianity” around the world qualifies as a CULT! Read the definitions a second time and let the reality sink in to your soul. After honest study of the Scriptures we can see that most of the practices and customs of Christianity are not found in the Scriptures, but are man's traditions and doctrines of men. Today, the Yehudim call “Jews for Jesus” a cult! Interestingly, according to the definitions in the dictionary, we find that Yahshua was considered a “cult” leader during the Second Temple period.

Denominational churchianity throws this word around in order that THEIR tight control of their people cannot be questioned. They feel must protect their sheep from any wrong teaching. The reality is that they are afraid that “their sheep” will find out that what they have been taught from the pulpit is in error and will find greener pasture elsewhere. If you are not part of their group or denomination then you must be a cult. If you keep Shabbat, the Feasts, kashrut, wear a tallit and kippah, speak Hebrew, pray from the Siddur, call your group a congregation and not a “church”, and separate yourself from the world and its paganism-then they say you must be a cult. WAIT A MINUTE! Didn't I just describe Yahshua and His talmidim?

Yahshua warned us in Matt.7: 21-22 to beware of false teachers and prophets in sheep clothing (disguised as sheep) because inwardly they are ravening wolves that will destroy the sheep. Our Master also says that not all who call Him “Master” will enter the Kingdom but only those who DO the will of His Father. You can have a big TV ministry and even a “super church” and not enter the Kingdom according to Yahshua. Yahshua says that all who continually practices lawlessness (does not keep Torah and teach others not to do so) will be cast away from His presence.

It was a corrupt religious leadership that put Yahshua to death with the help of a corrupt political system. The same system will be in the end-times. True prophets of Yahweh were persecuted and killed because they tried to warn Yisrael of their idolatry and paganism. Their message was one of teshuvah or return. Yisrael (both Judah and Ephraim) needed to repent of their lawlessness and return to Yahweh and His Torah.

Let us be careful not to throw around words so carelessly. We need take the beam out of our own eye. Yahshua said that by your own words YOU would be condemned or justified, and with what measure YOU judge another you would be judged. Remember we shall reap what we sow.

**NOTE:** To understand what we believe and teach here at B'nai Avraham see our doctrinal statement