



CALL NO MAN RABBI OR FATHER

By George Lujack

Most Messianic and Catholic religious organizations have spiritual teachers who go by the titles ‘Rabbi’ and ‘Father.’ This article will analyze Yeshua’s (Jesus’) statement against calling anyone by these titles, will examine some other titles, and will address the practical application of His words.

MATTHEW 23:8-10:

“But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Messiah (Christ), and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called leaders*; for One is your Leader, the Messiah (Christ).”

*Some Bible translations use the word ‘teacher,’ but the proper translation is ‘leader.’ Those who preach and teach God’s word are teachers, and teachers are obviously those who teach.

MATTHEW 5:19:

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and TEACHES men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and TEACHES them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Yeshua (Jesus) said, “Do not call any man on earth ‘father,’ or ‘rabbi.’”

Father:

Often as a title or form of address, a priest [1].

Rabbi:

A person appointed as a Jewish religious leader [2].

Judaism currently rejects their Messiah, Yeshua (Jesus), and His teachings, so it is understandable that they continue to persist in calling their teachers ‘rabbis.’ Messianics and Catholics, who have accepted Yeshua (Jesus) and His teachings, have no excuse in continuing to call their religious teachers ‘rabbi’ and ‘father.’

When Yeshua (Jesus) spoke against calling no man rabbi, father, or leader, He was speaking in the context of calling no *religious male teacher* a rabbi, father, or leader, for we are all brethren and we are all under One Father, God, and One Leader, Messiah (Christ).

CATHOLIC OBJECTIONS

Catholics call their spiritual teacher priests ‘father,’ and have come up with many excuses for doing so, in spite of the words Yeshua (Jesus) spoke.

“A male parent is called ‘father,’ the same way we call our priests ‘father.’”

“Scripture speaks of Abraham being the ‘father’ of many nations.”

GENESIS 17:4-5:

As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.

Catholics who defend using the term ‘father’ to address their priests are intentionally disobeying Yeshua (Jesus) using an out-of-context application of what He was saying. Of course we can call our biological dads ‘father,’ for they are our earthly biological fathers. We can call Abraham the father of Israel, for he is the biological father of Israel, from whom the whole nation sprang. We can call America’s founders the Founding ‘Fathers,’ for they were fathers of the new nation called America.

Yeshua (Jesus) clearly spoke of not calling any spiritual *teacher* father, rabbi, or leader. While Yeshua didn’t speak against calling anyone ‘reverend,’ or ‘pastor,’ the same principles of His statements apply.

Pastor:

a minister of a church [3].

Origin: Late Middle English, Anglo-Norman French, Latin: ‘shepherd.’

Reverend:

used as a title or form of address to members of the clergy [4].

Origin: Late Middle English, Old French, or Latin: ‘person to be revered.’

We should not call anyone on Earth pastor (shepherd), for One is our Shepherd, the Messiah (Christ), and we are all brethren.
And we should not call anyone reverend, for there is One to be revered, God.

What then should we call spiritual teachers and what title should they go by?
'Brother,' 'Minister,' or 'Teacher' is sufficient.

Brother:

a male fellow Christian or member of a religious order [5].

Minister:

a member of the clergy [6].

Origin: Middle English, Old French, Latin: 'servant.'

Teacher:

A person who teaches; causes another to learn through explanation, information, and instruction [7][8].

1. 'Father,' Oxford Dictionaries, © Oxford University Press,
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/father>
2. 'Rabbi,' Oxford Dictionaries, Oxford University Press,
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/rabbi>
3. 'Pastor,' Oxford Dictionaries, Oxford University Press,
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/pastor>
4. 'Reverend,' Oxford Dictionaries, Oxford University Press,
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/reverend>
5. 'Brother,' Oxford Dictionaries, Oxford University Press,
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/brother>
6. 'Reverend,' Oxford Dictionaries, Oxford University Press,
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/minister>
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8. 'Teach,' Oxford Dictionaries, Oxford University Press,
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/teach>