

FAQs on "Nazorean"

Jackson Snyder November 20, 2014

I've heard of Nazarenes but where did the term Nazorean that you use come from?

Nazarene refers to a person from Nazareth (Matthew 2:23). It also refers to members of the Church of the Nazarene, a Christian holiness denomination that originated in and separated from the Methodist Church. Nazarene also refers to those who are affiliated with the various Nazarene Yisraelite groups including our affiliate B'nai Yahshua Synagogues Worldwide.

Nazorean (on the other hand) is a term referring to the first followers of Yahshua the Anointed (Acts 24:5). Most Scripture versions incorrectly transliterate the term as "Nazarene" to follow tradition, but as Raymond E. Brown has shown, NAZARENE refers to a person from the geographic location of Nazareth and NAZOREAN (Netzarim) refers to a person who is a member of the religious sect.

(The Birth of the Messiah. Doubleday, 1977, 209ff. You may read it at the bottom of the page or [click here](#).)

I used the correct transliteration "Nazorean" for years before learning there was a Nazarene Yisraelite movement. (A excellent essay about Acts / Christians / Nazoreans is found [here](#).) The Hebraic term would of course be Nōserîm, Notzrim or Nozrim. We might translate the word as "watch-persons" or "guardians."

Who are the Nazoreans?

The Nazoreans were a sect of Israelites to which Yahshua and his family belonged - one of at least three divisions of what we now call The Essenes. The Nazoreans were non-violent. Though they kept the feasts of Yahweh they did not sacrifice animals. A good argument can be made that they did not eat any meat nor did they condone violence or cruelty. They understood the origin of evil to be according to the prophecies of Enoch, and that people were often victims of demonic evil.

The Nazoreans had methods of healing that included laying on of hands, anointing with oil and herbal remedies. Because of their frugal and sensible living, it was not unusual for a Nazorean to live in good health for 120 years. (Yahshua's brother Simon of Cana and many others were documented to have lived that long.)

They had their own Passover meals - what they ate is still secret today. Nazoreans didn't all keep the lunar calendar - they kept the solar. Their holy days and feasts often fell on different days than those of the Jews. This is why, in John's evangel, the feast Yahshua attended in Jerusalem were spoken of "the feast of the Jews."

The first biography of Yahshua was kept by a Nazorean disciple in the Hebrew language. Today that work is known as "The Gospel of the Nazoreans" or "The Gospel of the Hebrews." Only excerpts remain of these gospels; the Christian Church destroyed them all.

The Nazoreans had their own temple priesthood, referred to in Scripture as "the poorer priests," who took up residence in the southwest corner of Jerusalem in what was known as the Essene Quarter. This priesthood was known as the Melchizedek Priesthood. Yahshua's brother Ya'aqov (James) was a very well known, documented priest of this order in Jerusalem. It is even documented that Ya'aqov, like Zechariah, entered the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur and spoke the sacred name. The writer of Hebrews mentions this priesthood, as does the Dead Sea Scrolls extensively.

The two other sects of the Essenes (which means "keepers" - they were keepers of the secrets of the faith, keepers of the truth, keepers of the set-apart ordinances) were the Theraputae (healers) and the Zaddikim (righteous). The Theraputae were mainly located in Egypt. Joseph surely went to them with Yahshua before "out of Egypt I called my son." These Essenes were called Healers because they could heal any affliction.

The Zaddikim isolated themselves by the Dead Sea east of Jerusalem in caves. They were a breakaway movement, preparing themselves to fight the Kittim (Romans) when the time came for the Kingdom to come. They are often called "The Qumran Essenes" or "Qumran Sectarians." Their hope was when the war against Rome came, and they went forth as their hero Phineas did in ages past, the rest of Israel would follow them to finish the Romans, the Herods and the Sadducees.

Nazoreans today seek to be the "keepers" of the true faith of Yahshua, Ya'aqov, and the rest of Yahshua's family; the keepers of the ancient documents, truths and traditions; the keepers of the only knowledge and power that will be useful when Yahshua returns in the next few years. As Christianity and Judaism have both veered off the truth to become religions of paganism, emotionalism and idolatry, there have always been Nazoreans "keeping," no matter what they have called themselves. Later on down this column, I hope to elucidate on what this kind of "Keeping" is all about.