

## The Red Mark on God's Forehead: Explaining the Way of God More Accurately to His People

**Darryl Weinberg**

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*The Red Mark on God's Forehead is an impressive religious book that ties together Hebrew and Christian scriptures to show a strong need for reforming the church.*

Darryl Weinberg's absorbing religious book *The Red Mark on God's Forehead* makes a strong case for reuniting Jesus with his essential Jewish roots.

The book is a passionate argument in favor of changing the focus of traditional Christianity away from two thousand years of church tradition toward a rediscovery of the Jewish roots of the Jesus movement. The book argues that many of the traditions of the church, such as the Easter holiday and Sunday worship, are based on flawed readings of the Bible and are false "man-made" traditions. The book explores the Jewish nature of the faith, arguing for a return to the codes found in Leviticus and elsewhere in the Bible.

The book takes the Bible literally and sees the New Testament in terms of the Hebrew Bible, asserting that Jesus was a Jewish man who was seeking a reformation of the Jewish people. The text argues that Christians ought to be following Jewish practices, like keeping kosher and observing traditional Jewish holidays. The book argues that to do otherwise is not in keeping with God's commandments in the Bible because "if we're truly going to turn from our ways to His, we must first know His ways."

The text draws a picture of God as an ever-bemused deity who finds his creation and people always falling short and failing to live up to the words of the Bible. The text begins its exploration of how to worship and honor God by first personifying him with the humorous image of God on a throne constantly slapping his forehead at the stupidity of humanity. The book uses this central conceit to focus its attention, describing the importance of following all of God's laws and not picking and choosing among pieces of the Bible. It explains the proper way forward, beginning with a look at Christmas and concluding that it's not right to celebrate the holiday given its lack of biblical support and its pagan roots.

Throughout, the text relies on Weinberg's Messianic rabbinical training and study probing the linkages between the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament. The book makes the intriguing assertion that "the entire purpose of the Hebrew scriptures, or the Old Covenant, is to help us understand how God defines love," finding a similar argument in John's gospel. The book's connections between the two halves of the Bible give the text an impressive depth of scholarship and learning, building a complex commentary from both Christian sources and Jewish writings.

The text seeks to convince Christians of the rightness of its cause. It presents anecdotes about Weinberg's quest to do just that and finding a sometimes chilly response. The book suggests that "one need look no further than the fruit we're bearing within Christianity today to know that we are missing [the mark] badly." It succeeds in drawing an image of an approachable God who just wants to be understood and to have his words taken to heart. It ends with the hope that change is possible and humanity has the tools to do it if they would only listen.

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JEREMIAH ROOD (September 13, 2022)

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