



Common Objections to Jesus as Messiah

By Steve Cohen

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Jesus the Messiah: Answering 13 Common Objections of Jewish People

In my personal experience as a missionary to Jewish people, I want to share with you some common objections I've heard throughout the years. I call it "A Baker's Dozen" or, "Thirteen objections – with holes in them – that can be filled with the Gospel."

When it comes to telling Jewish people about Jesus, we find that many objections raised are not necessarily new objections. A whole history of apologetics is today being reviewed and republished, all speaking against the claims of Jesus' Messiahship.

One noted work is a book entitled Hezzek Emunah. In English it means, "Faith Strengthened," written by Isaac Troke, a Karrite. The Karrites were Jewish people who did not acknowledge that the Talmud had the same authority as the Bible. He lived in the early 16th century. He wrote his polemic to refute, in an organized way, the Messianic claims of Jesus. Today his work has been republished by a couple of Jewish publication societies. His lines of disputation have been republished in popular forms by a number of Jewish organizations who see themselves as anti-missionaries. Rabbis and scholars who seek to refute the Messiahship of Jesus and the validity of the New Testament are quoting him, even in the media.

Interestingly enough, Rev. Arthur Lukyn Williams, in the early 20th century in England, published a series of articles that eventually were compiled into a book entitled A Manual of Christian Evidences for Jewish People. It refuted, point by point, the arguments in "Faith Strengthened." In browsing through the library at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, I was fortunate to find both volumes one and two of William's works.

Considering the Mindset

Most Jewish people today are not familiar with many of the arguments set forth in "Faith Strengthened." But they do have a mindset, instilled by tradition, not to consider Jesus as Messiah.

Along with this mindset are common objections that people use as smokescreens to try to ward off a positive testimony. I've experienced them personally. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it does cover many questions Jewish people raise, both personally and theologically.

In any situation, if you can anticipate someone's objection and have answers prepared to meet it, you will be well on your way towards helping Jewish people overcome their fears in considering Jesus as the Messiah. This doesn't mean they will readily accept or acknowledge that your answers are true, but they will see that there is a logical answer for their questions. So, let's begin!

1. Loss of Jewishness

The first objection reflects an attitude of fear. "I cannot believe in Jesus, because if I believe in Jesus, I will become a Christian, meaning that I will stop being Jewish."



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As a reaction to the modern-day Messianic movement, and the modern “Jews for Jesus” movement, Jewish leaders are more frequently saying that if you believe in Jesus, you are no longer Jewish. Some families have carried this to extremes, even giving funerals for their children who have come to faith and been baptized. Other families have disinherited their children, and still others think that the souls of their children have been snatched away. They seek to have their children kidnapped by de-programmers to forcefully bring their children back to Judaism.

One such example of this extreme reaction can be found in a book entitled *Kidnapped for My Faith*, written by Ken Levitt and Ceil Rosen, and published by Moody Press. It’s the story of a Jewish person I know who came to believe in Jesus. As he was preparing to be married, his parents had him kidnaped for de-programming. He was taken from his home in the Boston area to the Adirondack Mountains in upper New York State. After three weeks of attempted de-programming, he escaped.

I picked him up the day he escaped. It’s a moving testimony to hear his story of how people sought to desecrate the scriptures and the teachings of Jesus. These actions are simply a response to fears that people have when it comes to Jewishness and Jesus.

But again, these are but a handful of extremist attitudes made visible today. The majority of Jewish people just don’t have much to do with Jesus. Their attitude is, “Well, it’s OK for the gentiles, it’s OK for the Christians, but for those of us who are in the synagogue, Jesus and I, well, we just don’t go together.”

So let’s take a closer look. Being Jewish is not a matter of religiosity. Being Jewish is a matter of being born into a covenant relationship that God established with Abraham, passed down to Isaac, Jacob, and eventually to their descendants. God inaugurated a covenant with the Jewish people who were chosen for a mission: proclaim to the world that there is just one God.

People become Jewish by birth. They are born to Jewish parents into this covenant. For males, this covenant is sealed with the sign of circumcision on the eighth day after birth. Frequently I’ve heard it said, “I was born Jewish and I will die Jewish, so nothing’s going to cause me to change my ways.” Some Jewish people mistakenly equate belief in Jesus with becoming a gentile.

The accoutrements of the church today seem very un-Jewish. The culture, music and fellowship are totally different from what Jewish people would find in the synagogue or their home. Therefore, they conclude, Christianity must not be Jewish!

Physical birth plays an important role in maintaining the Jewish lineage within the community. Many Jewish people can still maintain a misconception that Jewish parents produce Jewish babies, therefore Christian parents produce Christian babies.

An old saying might clarify this point: “Being born in a Christian home doesn’t make you a Christian any more than being born in a bakery makes you a bagel.” This old and slightly humorous statement conveys a real Biblical truth: no one, neither Jewish nor gentile, becomes a Christian by physical birth. Christian parents do not produce Christian babies at birth. The Holy Spirit works in the lives of individuals and through Baptism.



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There are two kinds of physical births in this world, those that are Jewish, and those that are gentile (coming from the Hebrew term Goy, meaning of the nations as opposed to being from the 12 tribes of Israel). But both Jewish AND gentiles become believers, and become New Testament chosen people in the same way — by grace, through faith, in Jesus the Messiah. This is the gift of God. It is not something we are born into or something we can earn. This is very important to communicate with your Jewish friends.

From the beginning you need to have a frame of reference that demonstrates to your unsaved friends that you are not trying to change them from being Jewish into a gentile. And you are not trying to get them to stop being Jewish, either. Rather, have your Jewish friend consider the fact that the Messiah of Israel has come to free us from the penalty of sin. And that belief in the Messiah is the only way to eternal life. Though it may not be traditionally taught within the community, it is very clearly taught throughout the scriptures.

Some terms used today to describe Jewish people who are believers in Jesus are: Jewish Christians, Christian Jews, Hebrew Christians, Messianic Jews, Jewish Believers, Jews for Jesus and Followers of Y'Shua. Each title conveys the same truth — people who are Jewish who also believe in Jesus as the Messiah. Some Jewish believers are found worshiping in Messianic congregations, while others are sprinkled throughout mainline denominations of the body of Christ today. But all Jewish believers have one thing in common – salvation through Jesus by faith. They also hold this in common with their gentile brothers and sisters.

Whereas Paul says in Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Paul did not mean that there were no longer men and women or Jews and gentiles on this earth. Paul meant that believers enjoy unity, a unity given to us through the power of the Holy Spirit. This unity can help us to build bridges and to raise an effective testimony for our Lord and Savior and what He has done for us.

So if someone says to you, “I can’t believe in Jesus, because if I do I will stop being Jewish,” review this section to understand what the Bible says about being Jewish. Believing in the Messiah today does not mean that you stop being Jewish, but in fact the Old Testament promises have found their fulfillment and completion in Jesus in the New Testament. Belief in Jesus is an affirmation, not a denial, of being Jewish.

2. The Rabbi Doesn’t Teach it

Frequently, when speaking with Jewish people, we find that the kinds of spiritual questions we’re posing are ones they have no experience in dealing with.

A traditional response is to shift the question away from the hearer to the Rabbi’s shoulders. So, a second kind of objection is: “If Jesus is the Messiah, then why don’t our Rabbis believe, or understand, or teach us about Him?”

The Rabbi is the chief figure within the religious community, and is in a position of authority. He has studied, dreamt and hoped for Messiah to come. Obviously, Jewish people reason, if Messiah had



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come, their Rabbi would let them know! When you respond to this question, you must understand the basis of rabbinic study today.

Rabbinic study derives from a Talmudic point of view. (The Talmud is the compilation of rabbinic commentaries on the first five books of the Bible comprising of two main sections: The Mishna and Gemorrah. Mishna is direct commentary on scripture, while Gemorrah is commentary on Mishna.) The emphasis and focus of the Talmud is that Messiah is yet to come. It is not an open question for Rabbis today whether or not Messiah has come, but everything leads to and focuses on the hope of the future coming of our Messiah.

Besides pointing this out, it is important to relate that many Rabbis throughout history have followed Jesus as Messiah. Their testimonies are written up in pamphlets and journals from many Jewish mission organizations. One of the most prominent was an Orthodox Rabbi by the name of Isaac Lichtenstein of Hungary. In his early rabbinic career, he was introduced to the New Testament. Tradition tells us that he was so upset that somebody brought him a copy that he threw the New Testament across the room, and it fell behind some older books on his shelf.

Some 40 years later, as he was cleaning his shelves, he came across the copy of the New Testament. This time, instead of anger, he sat down in interest and read about Jesus for the first time. As he read, he became convinced of the truth that Jesus was indeed the Messiah of Israel. And, in his congregation in Hungary, he publicly proclaimed the Messiahship of Jesus.

Many have followed his example and testimony. In the early 1900s, a German Rabbi, Max Wortheimer, came to the United States and graduated from Hebrew Union College. He wrote of his experience in a book entitled, *How a Rabbi Found Peace*. Rabbi Paul Levinhof, had a congregation of some 700 Jewish believers in the London area. Rabbi Joseph Rabinowitz of Kichenev in Russia had a following of several thousand Messianic Jewish believers.

Rabbi Leopold Cohn was the founder of the Williamsburg Mission in the early 1880s, which eventually came to be known as the American Board of Missions to the Jews. That mission is still growing and going strong across North America. And don't forget Rabbi Saul of Tarsus!

Many Jewish believers are not Rabbis, but men of distinction. They have become known throughout the world. Benjamin Disraeli, the Prime Minister of England, was a great writer. Samuel Isaac Joseph Sherashewsky was a renowned Hebrew Christian called by God to go to China and bring the testimony of the Gospel to people there. He was called to translate the scriptures into Mandarin. The testimony of his afflictions, and yet his persistence and perseverance in the Gospel is a great encouragement to many who enter into the mission field today.

According to the Jewish historian Neander nearly one million Jewish people were believers in the Messiah at the end of the first century!

Today some Rabbis estimate that nearly 2,000 - 3,000 Jewish people come to believe in Jesus as Messiah each year. There are no accurate numbers, however, because a census of Jewish believers has yet to be taken. Estimates vary as to how many Jewish believers are in the world today, and it is difficult to determine because many are secret believers. They have come to faith in Messiah, but



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for personal reasons — family, social or business reasons— have been unwilling or unable to go public in terms of their faith.

Jewish believers today are by no means the majority within the Jewish community, your friend might argue. You may answer by pointing out that truth has never been determined by a majority vote. Throughout Jewish history, we find times when Jewish people were called to follow the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but many fell away. Early in Moses' life, he was rejected by his brothers and sisters and the people of Israel. The prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah did not find universal acceptance of their message. Instead, they were rejected, scorned and mocked.

So if Moses and the prophets were rejected, would it be any different for the Messiah of Israel? The scriptures indicate clearly that the Messiah would be rejected. In Isaiah 53:1-4, we find:

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

Messianic expectations of the religious and political leaders of the Jewish people in Jesus' day were not focused on the suffering servant pictured in Isaiah 53. Rather, they hoped for a conquering king who would remove the Roman yoke, a rule that strangled them and placed burdens upon their shoulders.

The first advent of Jesus was really to make atonement for all sin, and to reconcile man to God. The external political situation of that time did not change, and so the hopes of many for peace in the world were dashed at the foot of the cross.

But this fact is not something unexpected. Isaiah 6 provides a preview of what would happen. Isaiah the prophet had a vision of the Lord. He was cleansed by hot coals from the altar as they touched his lips, and he was sent out into the world with a message. In Isaiah 6:9-10, the Lord says:

Go, and say to this people, hear and hear, but do not understand. See and see, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.

Not only is this true of what happened during Isaiah's ministry, but it's a future statement of what happened during Messiah's ministry. For many heard the message of Messiah at that time, but they did not hear with their ears or understand with their hearts, and turn at that point to be healed.

People might ask, "Why would God, for a period of time, blind the hearts and the minds of some Jewish people?" This mystery is revealed as Paul explains in Romans 11:1-11:



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I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah — how he appealed to God against Israel: 'Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me?' And what was God's answer to him? 'I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, as it is written: 'God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.' And David says: 'May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.' Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.

So what can we draw from these verses in Romans 11? In the 21st century, perhaps we can look back to see that it was part of God's plan that not all of the Jewish people would acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah when He came the first time. Some would, but many would have their hearts hardened. With the hardening of the hearts of some Jewish people, we find the spreading of the Gospel of the Word of God to the gentiles who are grafted into the olive tree. God established a covenant with Israel and a plan for worldwide salvation through the Messiah – thus gentiles who believed in Jesus were called in turn to provoke many Jewish people to jealousy on account of their faith in the Jewish Messiah.

Perhaps we can speculate and ask, “What would happen if Jesus had been universally accepted by the Jewish people when he came? Would Jewish people have gone out into the world proclaiming the fact that Messiah had come to the non-Jewish people?”

Again, it is mere speculation, but some people would say, “No, that would not have happened.” Yet salvation was not to be confined to the Jewish people alone, but salvation was to be brought to the entire world. So perhaps we can see why this is part of God's plan, that for a time, some of the Jewish people will not believe. However, this is not an eternal state of unbelief, but a temporary state of hardness of heart and spiritual blindness for some.

3. Where is the Evidence?

A corollary to the argument concerning why Rabbis don't believe is a third common objection: “If Jesus is the Messiah, then why is there no peace in the world? Why do we still have wars and famines and other troubles facing us?”

The emphasis has become one-sided as we look at the Messianic speculation of Jewish people today. Instead of looking for a suffering servant described in Isaiah or Zechariah, the hope for Jewish people today is that Messiah will be a king, a ruler who will come down to this earth, rule from Jerusalem and bring peace to the world. Jewish people long for a time when the lion will lay down with the lamb (Isaiah 11:6) and swords be beaten into plowshares (Isaiah 2:4).



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As we watch any TV broadcast or read any newspaper or magazine, we find just the opposite condition in the world. So many Jewish people simply conclude, “It’s obvious! Messiah has not yet come.”

Additionally, most Jewish people have been molded by a tradition that says there is one coming of Messiah, not two. “We are looking for King Messiah. We are waiting for Him to come and establish His rule on this earth” is a common response from Jewish leaders and individuals today.

But this is not the historic Messianic understanding. For up until around 700 years ago, our rabbis and leaders have taught not just one coming of Messiah – but two. The mosaic that is painted of Messianic prophecy within the scriptures portrays two different pictures. One picture is that of a king, who will come and bring peace. The other is that of a servant, who suffers, is rejected, and dies.

Our rabbis have identified these two types of figures with labels: Messiah Ben David and Messiah Ben Joseph. Messiah Ben David is the Messianic figure who would sit on the throne of David, bringing peace and rule. Messiah Ben Joseph is the Messianic figure who, like Joseph, would be rejected by his own family and left for dead. He went to Egypt and found favor and eventually grew into a high position within that non-Jewish community. Eventually he was able to restore life to his brothers and family as they faced death through a famine throughout the land. Messiah Ben Joseph is a figure rejected at first, but received later by family and friends.

Throughout Jewish history, much Messianic literature has evolved that comments upon the Hebrew Scriptures. Various forms have been set forth in traditional form, codified, and brought down to us today. This literature speaks of scripture in a homiletic sense and seeks to explain the scripture through the telling of stories, known as Midrash.

One example of this literature is called Pesikta Rabbati, a compilation of at least two rabbinic figures who wrote on the Jewish festivals. The Pesikta Rabbati is thought to have surfaced around the middle of the ninth century C.E. An interesting portion in section 162a. comments upon Messiah, known as “the suffering Messiah.” The English translation of this portion is found in a book entitled The Messiah Texts by Raphael Pattai.

In a reading from a section on the suffering servant of Messiah, found on page eleven, he writes: “A certain rabbi said, ‘In the future Jerusalem will be a lantern for the nations of the world. And they will walk in her light.’ ‘In thy light do we see light,’ says the psalmist, chapter 36. V.10. This is the light of Messiah, as it is written, ‘and God saw the light and it was good.’ This teaches us that the holy one, blessed be He, saw the generation of Messiah and its deeds prior to the creation of the world, and He hid the light from the Messiah and His generation under His throne of glory.

Satan said before the Holy One, blessed be He, ‘Master of the world, the light which is hidden underneath Your throne of glory, for whom is it destined?’ The Lord said to him, ‘for him who will turn you back and disgrace you and shame your face.’ And he said to Him, ‘Master of the world, show Him to me.’ The Lord said to Satan, ‘come and see Him.’ When Satan saw the Messiah, he trembled and fell upon his face and said, ‘surely this is the Messiah who, in the future, will cast me and all the princes of the nation into the world, into Gehenna.’



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In that hour the nations became awestruck and said to Him, 'Master of the world, who is He in whose hands we shall fall? What is His name and what is His nature?' The Holy one, blessed be He, said to them, 'His name is Ephriam, the true Messiah. He will raise His stature and the stature of His generation, and will light up the eyes. He will save His people, that no nation or language shall be able to stand up against Him. All His enemies and adversaries will be frightened and will flee from Him. Even the rivers will cease to flow into the sea.'

The Holy One, blessed be He, began to tell Messiah the conditions of His future mission, and He said unto Him, 'Those who are hidden with you, that is, your generation, their sins will in the future force you into an iron yoke, and they will render you like unto this calf, whose eyes have grown dim. And they will choke your spirit with the yoke and because of their sins, your tongue will cleave to the roof of your mouth. Do you accept this?' The Messiah said before The Holy One, blessed be He, 'Master of the world, will that suffering last many years?' The Holy One, blessed be He, said unto Him, 'By your life and the life of my head, it is a centenary of what it is that I have decreed upon you. But if your soul is troubled, I shall banish them as from this very moment.'

He said unto Him, 'Master of the world, with gladness in my soul and with joy in my heart, I accept it, so that not a single one of Israel should perish. And not only those who are alive should be saved in my days, but even the dead, who have died from the days of Adam the first man until now. And not only they, but even the stillborn shall be saved in my days. And not only the stillborn, but even those whose creation you gave thought, but who were not created. This is what I want, and this is what I accept.'

Scholars have repeatedly speculated about the origin of Messiah Ben Joseph, and wondered at the fact that the Messiah figure was split into two. At an early stage, the death of Messiah was pictured and developed as a consequence of the suffering servant text. Perhaps it results from a prophecy in Daniel 9:24-26.

The question remains, to what end do we find a suffering Messiah, one who dies as opposed to one who would be a king? When God established the covenant relationship between Abraham and Himself, between Moses and Himself, and the people of Israel, He declared a principle – the people were to follow the commandments of the Lord, to seek His heart and to do His will.

Isaiah 59:1-2 says, *"Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."*

In Jeremiah 3:11, we read:

The LORD said to me, 'Faithless Israel is more righteous than unfaithful Judah. Go, proclaim this message toward the north: "Return, faithless Israel," declares the LORD, "I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful," declares the LORD, "I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your guilt — you have rebelled against the LORD your God, you have scattered your favors to foreign gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me," declares the LORD. "Return, faithless



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people,” declares the LORD, “for I am your husband. I will choose you — one from a town and two from a clan — and bring you to Zion. Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding. In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land,” declares the LORD, “men will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the LORD.’ It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made. At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts.” ’

Man was given the freedom to follow or not follow God’s commandments. The consequence of men not following His commandments is evident. The relationship between man and his creator is severed. Israel had to first acknowledge their iniquity, their sin, and then God would grant them the blessings of the covenant He established.

Before there can be peace in the world, man must have peace with God — a proper, unique and harmonious relationship with God — and peace with himself. That peace cannot be found until man deals with his sin, which destroys any peace between man and God. Before Messianic benefits can be had, an intimate relationship between God and His people must be restored.

In Ezekiel 36:22-28, we see these principles:

Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes. For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.’

In verse 25, we read that there must be a cleansing for the forgiveness of sin. This cleansing and forgiveness results in the spirit of God dwelling within man and bringing about a new nature, inclinations and attitudes. Redemption and Messianic blessings without man’s repentance and regeneration is untenable and morally impossible. Man, in an unregenerated condition, would only spoil the Messianic blessings God can give. To argue against this denies the testimony of the scriptures and ignores God’s holiness and justice.

So how do we find forgiveness for sins? The prophet Daniel 9:24-26 sheds light:

Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree



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to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

The purpose of the coming of Messiah, we find in verse 24, is to end sin, to make reconciliation to atone for sin, and to bring an opportunity for everlasting righteousness. Through Messiah's death, this will be accomplished. He will be cut off from the land of the living, Isaiah the prophet said in a very moving way.

Isaiah 52: 13 to 53:12 are key Messianic passages:

See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness— so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand. Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.



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This clearly indicates that Messiah will be “the sin-bearer.” He will take our sins upon Him, and affect atonement for our sin. As a result of His atonement, man will be restored to the proper relationship with God. Man must first be made right with God before peace in the world is possible.

You can gain clear insight into the full meaning of atonement by reading Leviticus 16. Here we find God’s proscribed means for restoring sinful man to a right relationship with himself. This is the centerpiece of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, with its highlight being Leviticus 17:10-11. God indicates clearly that there must be the shedding of blood before atonement and forgiveness of sins can be found.

So, if Jewish people say, “If Jesus is the Messiah, then why is there no peace in the world? The lion is supposed to lay down with the lamb and swords are to be beaten into plowshares!” You can give this answer, “Indeed, we have peace. A peace, as the New Testament says, which passes all understanding. A peace of heart, a peace of mind. A peace with God, that comes first through the death of Messiah, our faith in Him, and subsequently, eternal peace through His return.”

A corollary to the question above is, “Where does it say in the Jewish Bible that there would be two comings of the Messiah?” This question will be answered in the chapter that deals with Messianic prophecy.

4. No Intermediary Required

A fourth objection: “We Jewish people can go directly to God when we pray. We do not need an intermediary.” Traditional Judaism as practiced today does not have a mediator for the people. Rabbis serve as the leaders of congregations, but not as go-betweens between the individual and the almighty. Yet, traditional Judaism today is much different from revealed Biblical Judaism.

Moses, Aaron and the priesthood served as intermediaries between the people and the Lord. Leviticus 16 explains how it was the function of the high priest to mediate once a year between the people of Israel and the Lord, to make atonement on Yom Kippur. An individual could not make his own sacrifice, nor could he take his own sacrifice into the Holy of Holies. Instead, the high priest alone was allowed, this one time a year, to make atonement for all the people’s sins.

So we see the picture of a mediator, who stood for the people before the Lord:

When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. - Hebrews 9:11-15



Today, traditional Judaism does not seek a mediator. But Biblical Judaism focuses on the priest, who serves all Israel as mediator. The ultimate mediator for all mankind is our Messiah. Sinful men cannot approach God's holy presence. We first must be cleansed. Jesus has accomplished this work, who, though sinless, made it possible for us to be cleansed. Acknowledging that Messiah is the One who atones for our sins acknowledges that Messiah is not a mere human, but God incarnate. Only God is without sin, and only the Messiah can make atonement for all our sin and redeem mankind. This is none other than Jesus.

5. The Lord Our God is One

The fifth objection: Christians believe in three Gods. But Jewish people believe in only One God. Because Jewish people hear Christians talk about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it appears to some that Christians worship more than one God. We know that Christianity does not teach tri-theism, but rather one God revealed in three persons, the Trinity.

Jewish people react strongly against the thought of the Trinity because of the Sh'mah in Deuteronomy 6:4: Sh'mah Israel Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echad. "*Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is One.*" Many Jewish people say it is impossible for there to be a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because there is just one God, as it says in the Sh'mah.

The Hebrew word for One is echad. A literal translation of this word is not "one" in the numerical sense, but one in the sense of a complex unity. The Hebrew word echad is found many places in the scriptures. One of the first is Genesis 2:23-24. God brings Eve to Adam, who says, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." Verse 24 says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."

Two people are perceived as one. The picture is one of complex unity – two distinct individuals, yet viewed with a single eye by God. Another example of the complexity of this unity of echad is found in Numbers 13:23. "When they reached the Valley of Eshcol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs." The phrase, the cluster of grapes, the single cluster of grapes, is referred to as echad, a grouping of individual grapes but bound together on one cluster. Many grapes but one cluster.

Echad can be contrasted with the word that means "absolute oneness" – Yachid. Yachid is found in many instances of scripture, but here are just two. In Genesis 22:2, Abraham is instructed to take Isaac, his only son – Yachid – to offer him up. This Yachid refers to the one son of Abraham and Sarah. Again, a similar phrase, "your only son," is found in Jeremiah 6:26. Though the Hebrew word echad does not automatically imply a trinity, it does leave evidence that the nature of God is more than Yachid, a single, absolute oneness, but rather, a complex unity.

There is an excellent pamphlet that has been reprinted from the publication called, Issues, volume 1, no. 8, written by Arnold Fruchtenbaum. The pamphlet is entitled "Jewishness and the Trinity" and is available from the offices of Jews for Jesus. You can obtain one by writing them at 60 Haight Street, San Francisco CA, 94102.



This pamphlet clearly lays out the bulk of this lengthy argument concerning Jewishness and the Trinity. Some areas discussed in this pamphlet deal with: the name of God as a plural; plural pronouns used to refer to God; plural descriptions of God; the Sh'mah; and how many persons of God there are (the three personalities found in the same passage, such as Isaiah 48:12-16). It also deals with New Testament scripture.

6. The Trinity

The sixth objection is found in an underlying attitude. Many Jewish people today think that you cannot be Jewish and believe in the Trinity at the same time. Now, rather than wrestling with the theological issue of explaining the Trinity, or trying to convince someone of the three persons of God, it's more important to deal with the nature of God and the attitude that causes this.

At best, what you can do is say that in your own life you have come to understand that God is one who reveals Himself. There are many things about God one cannot fully understand, because He is infinite and our minds are finite. But you do believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and of the Messiah of Israel. A Jewish person cannot theologially argue against your personal experience if you have encountered the Triune God. Certainly, one would not stop being Jewish if he believed in this Messiah.

7. No Original Sin

A seventh objection is that Jewish people don't believe in original sin. "How can we, as human beings, be responsible for the sin that Adam committed in the Garden of Eden?" they ask. Many Jewish people question the scriptures' veracity or truthfulness. Some teach that Adam and Eve and the stories of creation are not real, but merely fables or settings that try to explain creation and the nature of Man today.

Jewish tradition holds that Man is made up of two inclinations. One, the Yetzer Ha Tov, the good inclination, and the other, the Yetzer Ha Rah, the evil inclination. These two sparks of good and evil are instilled in man at birth. Man lives out his life in a struggle for the good to overcome the evil on this plane. Original sin is not seen as something needing attention. Jewish people concentrate on the struggle with our day-to-day evil inclinations, to overcome them with the good ones.

From a Biblical standpoint, original sin means that mankind suffers from the consequences of Adam's transgressions. The effect of his disobedience is passed down from generation to generation, to our own lives today. This means that sin is part of Man's nature, rather than an outward action or attitude. The nature of sin within us causes us to commit sinful acts.

Jewish people today tend to think of sin in terms of deeds, not as a characteristic. Robbery, murder or idolatry are actions viewed as sins committed by Man. This does not take into consideration the Biblical understanding of Human Nature. The Bible says that we are disease-ridden by our sin. Much of modern Jewish thought today says it is possible for Man to live a moral and exemplary life, and to make decent, good moral choices.



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We can agree that it is possible to lead a good life, and to practice ethics, perhaps even to raise the level of society. But this does not deal with man's relationship to God. What can one say when he comes face to face with God in a disease-ridden condition of sin? What good have we in our lives? What do the scriptures say about the nature of this relationship?

Let's review briefly what scriptures say. In Jeremiah 17:9, we read the following:

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" In Ecclesiastes 7:20, we find, "There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins." In Psalm 14:2-3, "The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Isaiah 53:6 describes the condition of man's relationship with God: "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Because God is both loving and just, He cannot simply wink at or overlook our sin. He must judge and reject it. We must be judged in light of our sin, and be found either innocent or guilty. Without Jesus, we are found guilty. In Ezekiel 18:4, we read how all souls belong to the Lord, the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son. The soul that sins is to die – both a physical and spiritual death. Separation from God is a direct consequence of our sin. Other verses dealing with this subject are Jeremiah 31:29, and Song of Solomon 5:5-7. A barrier of sin exists between man and God.

Isaiah 59:1-2 reads, "Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."

Frequently people think that making themselves right before God is simple – do a bunch of good deeds, here and now. This attitude is pervasive today, but it does not match the teaching of scripture. In Isaiah 64:5-6, we find, "You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways. But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved? All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away."

Because of our sinful nature, God considers even our righteous deeds and good acts to be considered polluted. Why? Because they are stained with the sinfulness of our hearts, which must be atoned for by the shedding of blood. Our own efforts are insufficient, in every way, to make us right before God. The Psalmist says in 49:7-8: "No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him — the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough."

And yet, God does not leave us in a hopeless state. Psalm 49:17 says, "For he will take nothing with him when he dies, his splendor will not descend with him." We trust and hope in God's provision of the Messiah. His death is sufficient for our sin — our original sin and all the sins we have committed throughout our lives.



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The provision that God made prior to the coming of Messiah was the sacrificial system and its offerings. That system allowed Jewish people to satisfy God's requirements through the shedding of blood, a repentant heart, and an attitude desirous of returning to this right relationship with God.

These same principles apply today. This time, though, it is through the blood of the Messiah. The Lord has dealt with our sin, has judged us and has made provision. When Jesus came and offered up His life, His sacrifice once and for all, He made it possible for both Jews and gentiles to enter into this living relationship with God, through repentance and faith. Though someone today may say that he does not believe in original sin, encourage him to consider the testimony of the scriptures and to take them seriously to heart. God doesn't turn His eyes from our sin, but rather makes provision for us in Jesus Christ's shed blood, if we will only receive it.

8. The Virgin Birth

The eighth common objection raised is that it is difficult to understand a religion that believes in a virgin birth. Many Jewish people today are at least familiar with the story of Jesus' birth. They probably have not read about the nativity through the scriptures, but they have seen Christmas pageants, plays, stories and movies. They acknowledge that teaching, but they do not accept it.

In the Old Testament, Isaiah 7:14 refers to the virgin birth. Arguments have raged for centuries over the meaning of the word "virgin." In Hebrew, virgin is "Almah," a word found only seven times in the Old Testament — Genesis 24:43, Exodus 2:8, Psalm 68:25, Proverbs 30:19, Song of Solomon 1:3, and 6:8, and of course, Isaiah 7:14.

In each of these, apart from Isaiah 7:14, we find that the Hebrew word Almah is translated to "virgin." Logic and hermeneutics would dictate that a word taken for a certain meaning in six other instances should mean the same in the seventh instance. Yet, many today contend that the word Almah does not mean virgin, and that Jesus therefore was not born of a virgin.

To give you an overview of the apologetic against the teaching that Messiah is born of a virgin, see the book *The Jew and the Christian Missionary: A Christian Response to Missionary Christianity*, by Gerald Segal, published in 1981 by CDEV Publishing Company. In chapter eight, Mr. Segal devotes nine pages to "the virgin birth myth," as he calls it. He looks for many ways to try to tear down this clear scriptural teaching that Messiah would be born of a virgin.

I learned a few years ago, that when the Septuagint was translated, some 150 years prior to Jesus' birth, the Hebrew word Almah was translated into the Greek word Parthenos. One day, as I was speaking to a group in New York City, a young student from Greece heard me mention this word, Parthenos. She said, "Why, that word only means 'virgin.' "

The translators of the Septuagint took great pains and care to translate the Hebrew meaning into Greek. While it was not a problem 200 years before the birth of the Messiah whether Isaiah 7:14 referred to a virgin or not, it became a great problem subsequent to the New Testament accounts of the birth of the Messiah Jesus.



Practically speaking, we can recognize that God is supreme over all His creation. God can do anything He wants to carry out His purposes. He can part a Red Sea, cause Abraham to have a child at 100 years old and Sarah at 90, and provide manna in the desert. He can work miracle upon miracle, and bring about the birth of His Son, Jesus, through a virgin.

9. The Deity of Jesus

A ninth common question also references Isaiah 7:14. “Emmanuel” literally means “God with us.” Many Jewish people today say, “How can Jesus, being a man, make Himself to be God?”

Exodus 20:4-6, one of the 10 commandments, says, “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

From this, Jewish people extrapolate that God can in no way take on human form. Therefore Jesus was merely a man, only saying He was God. The question shouldn’t be, “Didn’t Man make himself to be God?” but rather “Did God make Himself to be Man, in order to express His love toward us?”

Throughout scripture we find several incidences of God appearing in the form of Man, called “theophany.” In Genesis 18, the Lord appears in the presence of two other angels before Abraham. The Lord sits down, eats and is served with Abraham and the others.

It was not out of the realm of possibility for God to take on human form. But it is unique that the person of Jesus became incarnate as a baby, grew as a boy, and experienced the anguish and pains, suffering and joys that we human beings experience. Only in God becoming Man could He experience firsthand what we struggle with in our daily lives. Now, as the risen Messiah, He can truly intercede for us, knowing our sufferings and temptations.

The eighth chapter of Josh McDowell’s book, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, entitled, “The Great Proposition,” includes an excellent 30-page description focusing on the purpose and nature of God becoming a man. I encourage you to include this textbook in your library.

10. Not from the Line of David

The tenth objection I commonly hear is, “How can Jesus rightfully claim to be heir to David’s throne, if he was born of a virgin? Since Joseph wasn’t his real father, He has no right to be Messiah and King. That right is transmitted only through the father.”

In order to properly evaluate this objection, we must first ascertain whether women can receive and transmit inheritance rights, according to scripture. In Numbers 27:3, we read that Zeloaphad died, and had no sons. His daughters came to Moses, and asked if they could be given their father’s inheritance. Moses agreed that their reasoning was correct, and he gave them their inheritance. In the eighth verse, he was commanded by God to tell Israel, that if a man dies without a son, his



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inheritance passes to his daughter. So, according to the scripture, women had property, as well as inheritance, rights.

Judges 4 and 5 shows us that women had administrative rights as well. Deborah, the Prophetess, exercised leadership and delivered Israel from the Canaanites. Under her administration, God gave Israel peace from their enemies for some 40 years. In 2 King 11:1, we find Queen Athaliah ruled Judah for a six-year period. Later, she was over-thrown, not because she was a woman, but because she had seized power through murder and intrigue. Queen Salome Alexandra ruled Israel, and is remembered as a wise and a good ruler from the year 76 to 67 B.C.E. She even helped to heal many political divisions, and kept Israel free from invasion.

Numbers 36:1 states:

The family heads of the clan of Gilead son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, who were from the clans of the descendants of Joseph, came and spoke before Moses and the leaders, the heads of the Israelite families. They said, "When the LORD commanded my lord to give the land as an inheritance to the Israelites by lot, he ordered you to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. Now suppose they marry men from other Israelite tribes; then their inheritance will be taken from our ancestral inheritance and added to that of the tribe they marry into. And so part of the inheritance allotted to us will be taken away. When the Year of Jubilee for the Israelites comes, their inheritance will be added to that of the tribe into which they marry, and their property will be taken from the tribal inheritance of our forefathers.

In verse 9, we read, "No inheritance may pass from tribe to tribe, for each Israelite tribe is to keep the land it inherits."

We find by command of the Lord that inheritance rights can be transferred through a woman, but must stay within the tribe. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a descendent of King David through Nathan. Joseph, Mary's husband, also was a descendent of King David through Solomon. Mary married into the same tribe, and maintained her inheritance right. Yet there is no record of Mary having any brothers, so the inheritance of Heli, Mary's father, was passed down to her.

2 Samuel 7:12-16 says:

When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. 15 But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.

God promised David that his throne would be established forever. Jeremiah 22:30 speaks about Jekoniah, one of Solomon's descendants. Because of Jekoniah's idolatry, and his great sins against the Lord, none of Jekoniah's descendants would ever rule in the kingdom of Judah. The promise of the eternal throne was given unconditionally to King David, but not to Solomon. Therefore, we



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should discern that David's inheritance and rights must be transmitted through some other line than that of Solomon and Jekoniah.

It's interesting to find in 1 Chronicles 3:5: "*and these were the children born to him there: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon. These four were by Bathsheba daughter of Ammiel.*" Now, we know from 2 Samuel 12:24 that Solomon was born before Nathan. But perhaps this is a fore glimpse of the importance of Nathan over Solomon in the Messianic lineage. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a direct descendent of Nathan, and therefore of David. Mary and Joseph were of David's lineage, since the two were married. The inheritance rights were maintained and were capable of being passed down through the mother to Jesus.

But consider something equally important. Had Joseph been Jesus' physical father, he would have been barred from passing down the inherited throne to Jesus, because of the prophecy Jeremiah gave concerning Jekoniah. In this light, the virgin birth is the Lord's answer to a problem established through Jekoniah's idolatry. God provided for throne rights to be passed down through Mary, as Jesus was not the physical seed of Joseph.

Jesus was not barred from inheriting from Joseph, however. Jesus was the adopted step-child of Joseph. Through this adoption, he was able to receive all rights as a direct child.

11. Heaven and Hell

The eleventh objection speaks of eternity. Many Jewish people today wrestle with the concept of the Biblical teaching concerning heaven and hell. It's more modern and upbeat to say that heaven and hell are here on earth, rather than an eternal place of abode. We make them ourselves and so eliminate the consequences of sin.

Jewish people who come from a more liberal background say that there is life after this life. But it is not our personal existence, rather the memories of the good deeds we have done that are passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, the most important thing for us to do on earth today is not worry about our eternal future, but to concentrate on doing the best we can here and now.

Many verses of scripture speak to this, but let's examine just two. Psalm 9:15-17 says, "The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden. The LORD is known by his justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. Higgaion. Selah 17 "The wicked return to the grave, all the nations that forget God." In Daniel 12:2 (verse 1 in the Hebrew text), we find: "Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."

Scripture clearly indicates life continues beyond the grave – a place of everlasting life with God or everlasting life in a place apart from God. Whether this conjures up a picture of heaven with angels floating around in clouds, or a hell with devils and pitchforks and flames shooting out, the reality is this – people who believe in Jesus and have their sins redeemed will live in the presence of God and those who do not believe in Jesus and have no provision for their sin will find themselves apart from God. The determining factor that determines our eternal life is how we deal with our sin.



12. The Holocaust

This Biblical reality has unfortunately led to an emotional response, and the twelfth objection: “If this is the case, that only those people who believe in Jesus go to heaven, what about my friends or relatives who died in the holocaust? Are you telling me that the six million people who died in Germany are going to spend eternity in hell simply because they didn’t accept Jesus?” The corollary to that of course, is, “Where was God when the six million people died?”

The emotions of many Jewish memories are tied and bound to those who died in the concentration camps of Dachau and Auschwitz. Six million Jewish people were killed during that tragic time. But an additional 24 million non-Jewish people also lost their lives during World War II. It is unfair to drag their memories into the balance scale of human judgement that each person faces.

We should respond with compassion, understanding and love for the person who raises these objections – but dying in a concentration camp is not sufficient to atone for anyone’s sins. Historically speaking, six million Jewish people in Eastern Europe in the 1940s are just one part of an ongoing attempt to eliminate Jewish people from the face of this earth. Pharaoh, Haman, Czars, and Hitler all have sought to destroy the Jewish people. None have yet succeeded, nor will they succeed.

If it were possible to eliminate Jews from this earth, then it would be possible to thwart God’s eternal plan, which includes the Jewish people coming to faith. Jeremiah 31:35-38 promises that heaven and earth would have to pass away before the Jewish people could be removed from the face of this earth.

So, how do you answer, “Where was God during the carnage, as Jewish people lost their lives?” At best, we can say God was mourning over the dead and persecuted, and mourning over those minds who were confused by a lust for power.

God created us with a free will. He allows us to make free, independent, moral choices. We are independent of each other, and we can act independently of God, if we choose. Unfortunately, some have allowed that independent action to lead to mass destruction of many people, including Jewish people. Instead of choosing the ability to love and rejoice, to choose peace, some have chosen hatred, war, and even a holocaust.

Mankind has responded to the privilege God gave us of making good moral choices with a history of irresponsibly making many immoral choices. In the end, we know that God will judge each man and woman for his or her decisions. Six million people’s deaths cannot atone for even one person’s sin. Affirm the fact that God has a plan for salvation and life eternal – only through the blood sacrifice of the perfect Son of God, Messiah.

13. Christian Persecution

Beyond the holocaust and the six million, what about all of the Christians who, throughout the centuries, have so hated and mistreated the Jewish people? Throughout history, we have seen that



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Jewish bloodshed has come at the hands of those who claimed to follow Jesus. Jewish people have suffered crusades and pogroms, the Holocaust and forced expulsions of entire communities by those who claimed to follow Jesus.

We must demonstrate the clear difference between what Jesus taught us to do, and what people have wrongfully done in His name. Jesus did not teach us to kill, but rather to lay down our lives for our brother. Yet these past acts remain strong emotional barriers in Jewish people's minds.

Unfortunately, even some of Martin Luther's writings have become a barrier to Jewish people hearing the Gospel today. (For a more detailed examination of the history of Jewish missions, see the second part of this book.)

We have one recourse — to demonstrate to our Jewish brethren that Jesus taught us to love one another. Anti-Jewish thought, anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish sentiments are absolutely inconsistent with the clear teachings of the scriptures!

Paul went a step further to say that this Good News should even be brought to the Jewish people first. Not first, because Jewish people are better, or of higher value to God, but first because the prophets, the scriptures and the Messiah Himself came through Jewish people. The opportunity for them to respond first was granted as a result of this. "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."— Romans 1:16

Conclusion

Jewish people have other objections, but these give you a starting point. First, pray before you speak to your Jewish friends. Most important, listen to them with an open heart. Learn to listen beneath the surface of the question so that you can hear the real objection they raise. When you hear their true fears, you will have an opportunity to open up communication and dialogue about the Gospel.

Not all of your Jewish friends will accept, right from the start, your words, deeds or testimony. But you can plant seeds for the Gospel. Water them with prayers and fertilize them with love, and the Holy Spirit can work in their lives.



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For More Information

For more information about this resource, please feel free to contact us at:

The Apple of His Eye Mission Society
PO Box 1649
Brentwood, TN 37024-1649
(888) 512-7753
info@appleofhiseye.org

For additional resources, please visit our website at www.appleofhiseye.org.