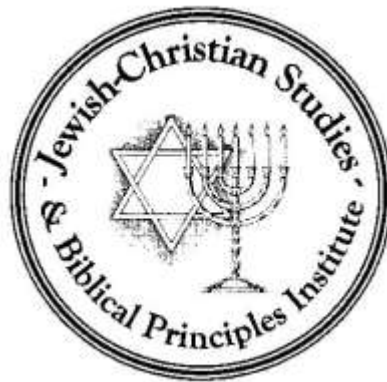




# *Jewish & Christian Theology:*

*Differences Between Jewish & Christian Beliefs*

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# JEWISH & CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY: *DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JEWISH & CHRISTIAN BELIEFS*

BY  
STEVEN G. COOK, TH.D.

*“They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.”* Isaiah 29:24

## Introduction

The purpose of this course on Jewish & Christian Theology is to help Christians better understand what Orthodox Judaism believes. It is not our intent to ridicule Jewish theology or be offensive toward the Jewish people. This course will attempt to identify major differences between Judaism and fundamental Baptist Christian beliefs.

This is a far more difficult task than you might expect. Judaism has no dogma, no formal set of beliefs that one must hold to be a Jew. In Judaism, actions are far more important than beliefs, although there is certainly a place for belief within Judaism.

The closest that anyone has ever come to creating a widely accepted list of Jewish beliefs is **Rambam’s Thirteen Principles of Faith**. Rambam’s given name is Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, also called Maimonides, and lived from 1135-1204 C.E.

A physician born in Moorish Cordoba, Rambam lived in a variety of places throughout the Moorish lands of Spain, the Middle East and North Africa, often fleeing persecution. He was a leader of the Jewish community in Cairo. He was heavily influenced by Greek thought, particularly that of Aristotle.

Rambam was the author of the *Mishnah Torah*, one of the greatest codes of Jewish law, compiling every conceivable topic of Jewish law in subject matter order and providing a simple statement of the prevailing view in plain language. In his own time, he was widely condemned because he claimed that the *Mishnah Torah* was a substitute for studying the *Talmud*.

Rambam is responsible for several important theological works. He developed the **13 Principles of Faith**, the most widely accepted list of Jewish beliefs. He also wrote the *Guide for the Perplexed*, a discussion of difficult theological concepts written from the perspective of an Aristotelian philosopher.



**Rambam's Thirteen Principles of Faith**, considered the minimum requirements of Jewish belief, consist of the following principles:

1. **God exists**
2. **God is one and unique**
3. **God is incorporeal**
4. **God is eternal**
5. **Prayer is to be directed to God alone and to no other**
6. **The words of the prophets are true**
7. **Moses' prophecies are true, and Moses was the greatest of the prophets**
8. **The Written Torah (first 5 books of the Bible) and Oral Torah (teachings now contained in the Talmud and other writings) were given to Moses**
9. **There will be no other Torah**
10. **God knows the thoughts and deeds of men**
11. **God will reward the good and punish the wicked**
12. **The Messiah will come**
13. **The dead will be resurrected**



As you can see, these are very basic and general principles. Yet as basic as these principles are, the necessity of believing each one of these has been disputed by Jewish leaders at one time or another, and liberal movements of Judaism dispute many of these principles.

Unlike many other religions, Judaism does not focus much on abstract cosmological concepts. Although Jews have certainly considered the nature of God, man, the universe, life, and life after death at great length, there is no mandated, official, definitive belief on these subjects, outside of the very general concepts outlined in *Rambam's 13 Principles of Faith*. Judaism allows substantial room for personal opinion on all of these matters because Judaism is more concerned about actions than beliefs.

Judaism focuses more on relationships: the relationship between God and mankind, between God and the Jewish people, between the Jewish people and the land of Israel, and between human beings. They contend that the Scriptures tell the story of the development of these relationships, from the time of creation, through the creation of the relationship between God and Abraham, to the creation of the relationship between God and the Jewish people, and forward. Judaism stresses that the Scriptures also specify the mutual obligations created by these relationships, although various movements of Judaism disagree about the nature of them. Some Jewish scholars say they are absolute, unchanging laws from God (**Orthodox**); some say they are laws from God that change and evolve over time (**Conservative**); some say that they are guidelines that you can choose whether or not to follow (**Reform and Reconstructionist**).

So, what are these actions that Judaism is so concerned about? According to Orthodox Judaism, these actions include 613 Commandments given by God in the Torah, as well as laws instituted by the rabbis and long-standing customs.

It may surprise you to find that there are many aspects of theology on which Jews and Christians agree. For instance, Jews and Christians pray to the same God. However, Christian theology teaches that there is “*one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*” (1 Timothy 2:5). Judaism does not believe that Jesus (Yeshua) is Divine, nor the Promised Messiah. Both Judaism and Christianity teach love of God and fellow man, hatred of evil, importance of charitable deeds, doing good, and helping others. As we examine major doctrinal beliefs of Judaism and Christianity, we will take the time to compare and contrast opposing views.

There are three (3) major movements of Judaism – *Orthodox*, *Conservative*, and *Reform*. This course will examine major beliefs of Orthodox Judaism, called “Traditional Judaism.” It is important to note that even among *Traditional* or *Orthodox* Jews; differences still exist, depending upon which rabbi is followed.

Jews commonly identify themselves as *observant* or *non-observant* Jews. *Observant Jews* attempt to observe the letter of the Law, while *non-observant Jews* are more lenient in the practices of strict Jewish observances. Time will not permit us to make a detailed analysis of the broad body of doctrines of God’s Word; therefore, we will limit our study in this course to only a few major doctrines. Let us begin with the *Doctrine of God*.

# Jewish & Christian Theology: *The Doctrine of God*

## The Nature of God

The nature of God is one of the few areas of abstract Jewish belief where there are a number of clear-cut ideas about which there is little dispute or disagreement.

## God Exists

The fact of God's existence is accepted almost without question. Proof is not needed, and is rarely offered. The Torah begins by stating "*In the beginning, God created...*" It does not tell Who God is or how He was came to exist. In general, Judaism views the existence of God as a necessary prerequisite for the existence of the universe. The existence of the universe is sufficient proof of the existence of God.

## God Is One

One of the primary expressions of Jewish faith, recited twice daily in prayer, is the *Shema* ("Hear"), which begins with the words, "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:*" This simple statement encompasses several different important Judaic theological ideas, not necessarily accepted in Christian Theology:

1. **There is only one God. No other being participated in the work of creation.**
2. **God is a unity. He is a single, whole, complete indivisible entity. He cannot be divided into parts or described by attributes. Any attempt to ascribe attributes to God is merely man's imperfect attempt to understand the infinite.**
3. **God is the only being to whom we should offer praise. The Shema can also be translated as "The Lord is our God, The Lord alone," meaning that no other is our God, and we should not pray to any other.**



## **God Is the Creator of Everything**

Judaism adheres to the belief that everything in the universe was created by God and only by God. Judaism completely rejects the dualistic notion that evil was created by Satan or some other deity. All comes from God. As Isaiah said, "*I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil. I am the Lord, that does all these things.*" (**Isaiah 45:6-7**).

## **God Is Incorporeal**

Although many places in Scripture and the Talmud speak of various parts of God's body (the Hand of God, God's wings, etc.) or speak of God in anthropomorphic terms (God walking in the garden of Eden, God looking upon mankind, etc.), Judaism firmly maintains that God has no body. Any reference to God's body is simply considered a figure of speech, a means of making God's actions more comprehensible to beings living in a material world. Much of Rambam's *Guide for the Perplexed* is devoted to explaining each of these anthropomorphic references and proving why they should be understood figuratively.

Jews are forbidden to represent God in a physical form. That is considered idolatry. The sin of the Golden Calf incident was not that the people chose another deity, but that they tried to represent God in a physical form.

## **God Is Neither Male Nor Female**

Jewish Theology teaches that God has no physical form. As one rabbi explained, "God has no body, no genitalia; therefore the very idea that God is male or female is patently absurd." Jews refer to God using masculine terms simply for convenience's sake because Hebrew has no neutral gender. Jews say that God is no more male than a table is.

Although Judaism commonly refers to God in masculine terms, there are times when Judaism refers to God in feminine terms. Jews believe that the Shekinah, the manifestation of God's presence that fills the universe, was conceived in feminine terms, and the word Shekinah is a feminine word.

## **God Is Omnipresent**

Jewish theology teaches that God is in all places at all times. Judaism contends that God fills the universe and exceeds its scope. Jewish theology also believes that God is always available for people to call upon Him in need, and that God sees all that man does. Judaism teaches that God is universal; that God is not only the God of the Jews, but the God of the Gentile nations as well.

## **God Is Omnipotent**

Judaism believes that God can do anything. It is said that the only thing that is beyond God's power is fear of Him; that is, man has free will, and God cannot compel man to do His will. This belief of God's *omnipotence* has been sorely tested during the many persecutions of Jews, but Jews maintain that God

has a reason for allowing persecution in the lives of the Jewish people, even if in their limited perception and understanding cannot see God's reasoning.

### **God Is Omniscient**

Jewish theology believes that God knows all things - *past, present* and *future*. He knows the thoughts of all men. It has been said, "It may surprise you that nothing ever surprises God!"

### **God Is Eternal**

Judaism adheres to the belief that God transcends time. He has no beginning and no end. He will always exist to fulfill his promises. When Moses asked for God's name, He replied, "*Ehyeh asher ehyeh*." That phrase is generally translated as, "***I Am that I Am***," but, according to Jewish theologians, the word "*ehyeh*" can be present or future tense, meaning "*I am what I will be*" or "*I will be what I will be*." Jews contend that the ambiguity of the phrase is often interpreted as a reference to God's eternal nature.

### **Avinu Malkeinu: God Is Both Father and King**

Judaism maintains that all men are God's children. A well-known piece of Jewish liturgy repeatedly describes God as "*Avinu Malkeinu*," our Father, our King. The Talmud (Rabbinical commentary on the Torah) teaches that there are three participants in the formation of every human being: the mother and father, who provide the physical form, and God, who provides the soul, the personality, and intelligence. It is said that one of God's greatest gifts to humanity is the knowledge that ALL men are His children and created in His image.

### **God the Creator (Gen. 1:1)**

***"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."* Genesis 1:1**



Jews, like Christians, adamantly believe that God is the Creator of all things. The Word of God clearly teaches that God is the Creator of the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1). If one does not believe that God is Creator, then there is no reason to read the rest of the Bible! The verb "created" (in Hebrew) actually comes before the subject. In Hebrew, ***Genesis 1:1*** actually reads, "***In the beginning created God.***"

Throughout the Tanakh, one can read time and again that God is the Creator of the heavens and earth, the animals, fish, birds, and all that is

upon the earth. Psalm 8 especially attributes creation to God the Creator. Judaism and Christianity both contend that only God could have created something so intricate as creation – whether you are referring to the heavens and the earth or to the creation of mankind.

One preacher aptly said, *“To believe that all of creation happened by accident or chance is to believe that it is possible to spill a bottle of ink and all of the alphabet and words known to man simply appeared by chance.”* Suffice it to say that Christians and Jews agree whole-heartedly on this particular aspect of the *Doctrine of God*. However, there are other aspects of the *Doctrine of God* on which Jews and Christians do not agree.

### **The Trinity of God (Gen. 1:26)**

***“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” Genesis 1:26***

Jews do not believe in the Doctrine of the Trinity of God. As a matter of fact, Jews claim that Christians are polytheistic because we believe that God is a Triune Being – *God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit*. Fundamental Christianity believes in **ONE** God, the Creator of heaven and earth; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three (3) co-equal, co-eternal Persons: *God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit*, equal in power and glory and executing distinct and harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Genesis 1:1; 26; Exodus 20:2; 3; Romans 1:1-6).

The basis of this Christian belief is found in **Genesis 1:26** – *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”* The words **us** and **our** clearly reveal that God is referencing *God the Son* and *God the Holy Spirit* as members of the Holy Godhead. In the New Testament we also find evidence that supports this belief. **John 1:1-3** states, ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”*** Who was the **Word**? The **Word** is Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Christ).

Judaic Theology vehemently disagrees with this doctrinal belief of fundamental Christianity. Judaism repudiates the idea of a Triune Godhead. In contrast, Judaism teaches that the use of the pronouns **“us”** and **“our”** in **Genesis 1:26** refer to God’s reference to **angels** present during the creation process. One Jewish man went so far as to suggest that God was debating with angels whether or not to create mankind, and that God overcame the objections of the angels and created man anyway!

It is rather sad that Judaism gives such prominence to angels. Angels, like human beings, are created beings. As



a matter of fact, an in-depth of angels, reveals that God manifested His love for mankind far more than to His angels. There are many fallen angels, but God did not make provision for their salvation. On the contrary, God has provided salvation for mankind in the Person of Jesus Christ, who shed His precious blood on Calvary for the sin of the world.

In *Colossians 1:16-17* we find another reference to Jesus Christ as the Creator – “*For by him (Jesus Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*” Paul clearly states that **Jesus Christ**, the **Word**, was **before all things**, and **BY Him** (Jesus Christ), were **ALL** things **CREATED**.

In rabbinic literature, rabbis often personify Jehovah God, yet refuse to believe that God is Triune. The closest that Jews come to expressing God as a Person is in something called – *memrah*. This is an Aramaic word used to express God in a manner in which to comprehend Him. It may be that the reason for the Jews unwillingness to agree with this Doctrine of the Trinity is because the manner in which Jehovah judged the two Kingdoms of Israel when they committed idolatry.

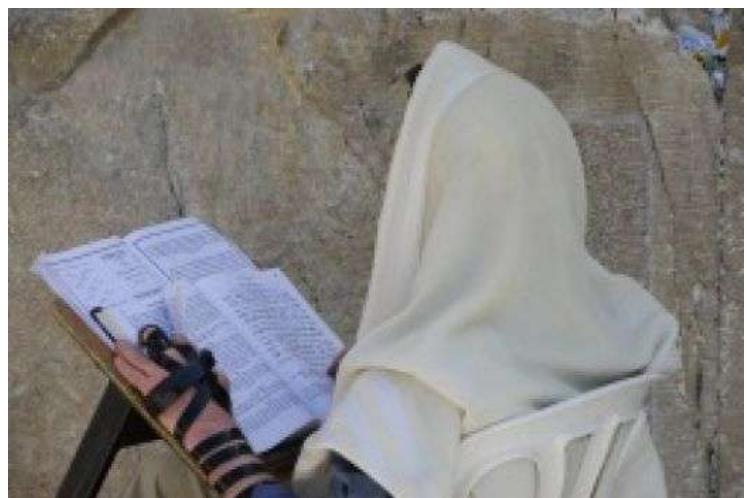


The Northern Kingdom of Israel set up two golden calves – one in Dan and one in Beth-el. Because of their idolatry, God allowed the Assyrians to attack and conquer the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Later, the Southern Kingdom of Israel (Judah) also fell into gross sin and idolatry, so God allowed them to be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. In 586 B.C., Jerusalem fell, and the Temple of Solomon was destroyed. After Israel’s Babylonian captivity, the Jews never again committed idolatry!

As we have already stated, there is one verse of Scripture all Jews know well, called the *Shema*. It reads, “**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord**” (Deuteronomy 6:4). There is no such thing in the Jewish mind as a “*personal relationship with God*”. Jews keep God at a distance much the way the ancient Romans did before they adopted Christianity. Because of this belief, Jews know of no way to approach God on a personal basis.

Comments such as “*God spoke to me about this or that*” or “*God called me to preach*” or “*God called me to missions*” are completely foreign in Judaism. Rambam once wrote, “*The only way to get to know God is to imitate God.*”

Christianity, however, depends on our personal relationship with God the Son, Jesus Christ, our Mediator, to both intercede and mediate before God the Father on our behalf. Paul wrote, “**For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;**” (1 Timothy 2:5).



## ***Jewish & Christian Theology:*** **The Doctrine of the Word of God**

### **Torah (Psalm 119:9-11; Psalm 1:1-3)**

***“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Psalm 119:9-11***

***“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Psalm 1:1-3***

***Torah*** refers to the Five Books of Moses: ***Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*** and ***Deuteronomy***. But the word ***Torah*** is also used by Judaism to refer to the entire Jewish Bible (the body of scripture known to non-Jews as the Old Testament and to Jews as the Tanakh or Written Torah), or in its broadest sense, to the whole body of Jewish law and teachings.

### **Written Torah**

To Jews, there is no ***Old Testament***. The books that Christians call the ***New Testament*** are not part of Jewish canon of Scripture. The Christian ***Old Testament*** is known to Jews as the ***Written Torah*** or ***Tanakh***.



This is a list of the books of Written Torah, in the order in which they appear in Jewish translations, with the Hebrew name of the book, a translation of the Hebrew name (where it is not the same as the English

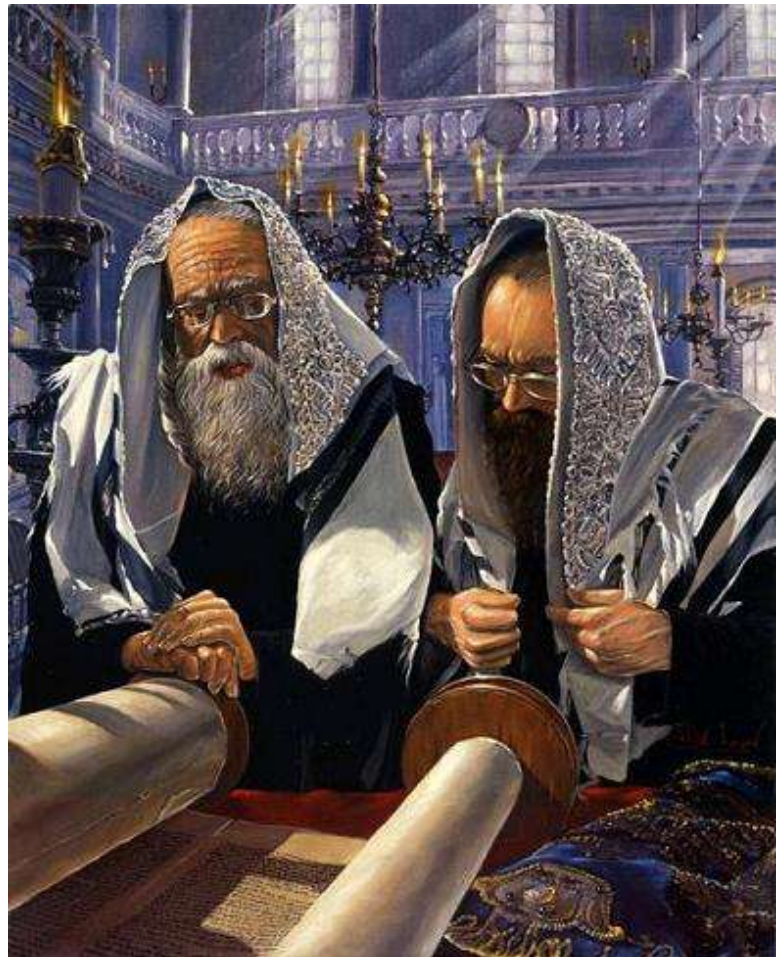
name), and English names of the books (where it is not the same as the Hebrew name). The Hebrew names of the first five books are derived from the first few words of the book. The text of each book is more or less the same in Jewish translations as what you see in Christian Bibles, although there are some occasional, slight differences in the numbering of verses and there are some significant differences in the translations.

## **TORAH (The Law):**

- **Bereishith (In the beginning...)** (Genesis)
- **Shemoth (The names...)** (Exodus)
- **Vayiqra (And He called...)** (Leviticus)
- **Bamidbar (In the wilderness...)** (Numbers)
- **Devarim (The words...)** (Deuteronomy)

## **NEVI'IM (The Prophets):**

- **Yehoshua (Joshua)**
- **Shoftim (Judges)**
- **Shmuel (I & II Samuel)**
- **Melakhim (I & II Kings)**
- **Yeshayah (Isaiah)**
- **Yirmyah (Jeremiah)**
- **Yechezqel (Ezekiel)**
- **The Twelve (treated as one book)**
  - **Hoshea (Hosea)**
  - **Yoel (Joel)**
  - **Amos**
  - **Ovadyah (Obadiah)**
  - **Yonah (Jonah)**
  - **Mikhah (Micah)**
  - **Nachum**
  - **Chavaqquq (Habbakkuk)**
  - **Tzefanyah (Zephaniah)**
  - **Chaggai**
  - **Zekharyah (Zechariah)**
  - **Malakhi**



## **KETHUVIM (The Writings):**

- **Tehillim (Psalms)**
- **Mishlei (Proverbs)**
- **Iyov (Job)**
- **Shir Ha-Shirim (Song of Songs)**
- **Ruth**
- **Eikhah (Lamentations)**
- **Qoheleth (the author's name) (Ecclesiastes)**
- **Esther**

- Daniel
- Ezra & Nechemyah (Nehemiah) (treated as one book)
- Divrei Ha-Yamim (The words of the days) (Chronicles)

Written Torah is often referred to as the Tanakh, which is an acronym of Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim.

## Torah Scrolls

The Scriptures used by Jews in services are written on parchment scrolls. They are always hand-written, in attractive Hebrew calligraphy with "crowns" (crows-foot-like marks coming up from the upper points) on many of the letters. This style of writing is known as STA"M (an abbreviation for "Sifrei Torah, Tefillin and Mezuzot," which is where you will see that style of writing).

Jewish people are not supposed to touch the parchment on these scrolls; some say because they are too holy; some say



because the parchment, made from animal skins, is a source of ritual

defilement; others say because your fingers' sweat has acids that will damage the parchment over time. Instead, they follow the text with a pointer, called a Yad. "Yad" means "hand" in Hebrew, and the pointer usually is in the shape of a hand with a pointing index finger. The scrolls are kept covered with fabric, and often ornamented with silver crowns on the handles of the scrolls and a silver breastplate on the front.



The scrolls are kept in a cabinet in the synagogue called an "ark," as in Ark of the Covenant, not Noah's Ark. The words are different and unrelated in Hebrew. Noah's ark (and also the ark that Moses was placed in) is called in Hebrew *teyvat* (ship). Rabbis commonly teach that the "Ark" of the Covenant and the ark in synagogue are an acronym of "aron kodesh" (**holy cabinet**). However, some say that it is merely an archaic English word derived from the Latin *arca* (cabinet).

The Torah scrolls read in synagogue are **unpointed** text, having no vowels or musical notes, so the ability to read a passage from a scroll is a valuable skill, and usually requires substantial advance preparation (reviewing the passage in a text with points).



## Chumash

Jewish scriptures are sometimes bound in a form that corresponds to the division into weekly readings (called *parshiyot* in Hebrew). Scriptures bound in this way are generally referred to as a *Chumash*. The word "Chumash" comes from the Hebrew word meaning five, and refers to the five books of the Torah. Sometimes, a Chumash is simply refers to a collection of the five books of the Torah. But often, a Chumash contains the entire first five books, divided up by the weekly parshiyot, with the haftarah portion inserted after each week's parshah.



## Oral Torah: The Talmud

In addition to the *written* scriptures (Torah and Chumash), Jews also have an *Oral Torah*, a tradition explaining what the written scriptures mean and how to interpret them and apply the Laws. Orthodox Jews believe that God taught the *Oral Torah* to Moses, and Moses taught it to others, passing it down to our present day. Judaism teaches that this tradition was maintained only in oral form until about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century C.E., when the oral law was compiled and written down in a document called the *Mishnah*.

Over the next few centuries, additional commentaries elaborating on the *Mishnah* were written in Jerusalem and Babylon. These additional commentaries are known as the *Gemara*. The *Gemara* and the *Mishnah* together are known as the *Talmud*, completed in the 5th Century C.E.



Judaism claims two Talmuds: the *Jerusalem Talmud* and the *Babylonian Talmud*. The Babylonian Talmud is more comprehensive, and is the one most people mean if they just say "the Talmud" without specifying which one.

There have been additional commentaries on the Talmud by such noted Jewish scholars as Rashi and Rambam. Adin Steinsaltz is preparing a new edition of the Talmud, with his own commentary supplementing the Mishnah, Gemara, and Rashi commentaries.

Jews readily admit that the Talmud is not easy to read. It reminds one of someone else's class notes for a college lecture you never attended. There are often gaps in the reasoning where it is assumed that you already know what they are talking about, and concepts are often expressed in a sort of shorthand. Biblical verses that support a teaching are often referenced by only two or three words. The Talmud preserves a variety of views on every issue, and does not always clearly identify which view is the accepted one.

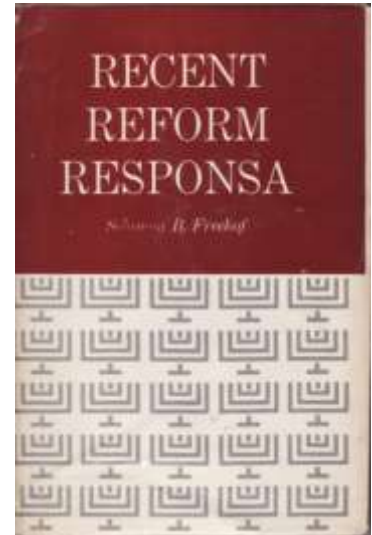
In recent times, many observant Jews have taken up the practice of studying a page of Talmud every day. This practice, referred to as *daf yomi*, was started at the First International Congress of the Agudath Yisrael World Movement in August, 1923. Rav Meir Shapiro, the rav of Lublin, Poland, proposed

uniting people worldwide through the daily study of a page of Talmud. Daf Yomi is currently in its 11th cycle.

## **Other Writings**

In addition to these works, Jews also have Midrashim, which are basically stories expanding on incidents in the Bible to derive principles or Jewish law or to teach moral lessons. For example, there is a midrash about why Moses wasn't a good speaker (he put coals in his mouth as a child basically as a way of proving that he wasn't greedy), and another one about Abram discovering monotheism and rejecting his father's idolatry (that's a nifty one: basically, he smashes up all his father's idols except the big one, then blames the mess on the big one, as a way of showing his father that the idols don't really have any power).

There is also a vast body of *responsa*, answers to specific questions of Jewish law. Beginning in the middle ages, when local rabbis were faced with difficult issues of Jewish law, they often wrote to the most respected rabbis in the world to get answers to these questions. The local rabbi would present the situation, often including detailed references to the Talmudic passages he had reviewed and his own interpretations of these authorities, and the world-renowned rabbi would provide a reasoned argument in favor of his answer. Over time, these *responsa* were collected into printed volumes.



## Jewish & Christian Theology: *The Doctrine of Man*

### Creation of Man (Gen. 1:26; Psalm 8)

***“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” Genesis 1:26***

***“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” Psalm 8:4***

Judaism and Christianity view the *Doctrine of Man* quite differently. Christians are quick to point out the *“depravity of man”*, whereas, Jews hold to the idea of the *“dignity of man”*. Christians believe that man is hopeless, helpless, and hell-bound because of his inherent, sinful nature. Judaism contends that man, created in the image and likeness of God, has a form of dignity, not held by other of God’s creation.

On the question of human nature, as in most areas of abstract belief in Judaism, there is a lot of room for personal opinion. There is no dogma on the subject, no required belief about the nature of humanity. There are a variety of contrary opinions expressed on the subject, and one is no less a Jew (and no less a good Jew) for disagreeing with any or all of these opinions. Nevertheless, there are certain ideas that seem to reflect the majority opinion in Jewish thought that are worth discussing.

### In the Image of God

Jews believe that all man is created in the *image of God*, but they do not hold to the idea that mankind is created in the *physical* image of God. Judaism steadfastly maintains that God is incorporeal (has no physical appearance). Rambam points out that the Hebrew words translated as "image" and "likeness" in Genesis 1:27 do not refer to *physical form*, but rather the nature or essence of God. Rambam used Psalm 73:20 as support of this belief, *“you will despise their image”* (tzel'mam). Rambam further wrote, *“one despises a person's nature; not a person's physical appearance.”* The word used for physical form, Rambam contended, is "to'ar," as found in Genesis 39:6, *“...and Joseph was beautiful of form (to'ar) and*



*fair to look upon.*" Similarly, the Hebrew word used for "likeness" is "damut," which is used to indicate a simile, not identity of form. For example, in Psalm 17:12, "He is like (*damuno*) a lion," refers not to similar *appearance*, but to similar *nature*.

Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (Rashi), one of the greatest medieval Jewish scholars, contends that all men are like God in that man has the ability to understand and discern. Rambam elaborates that by using intellect, man is able to perceive things without the use of physical senses, an ability that makes man like God, who perceives without having physical senses.

### **Yetzer Ra & Yetzer Tov (Jeremiah 17:9)**

***"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9***

While Jews believe in the **Doctrine of Sin**, they do not believe man is in a helpless, fallen state of depravity. Please, do not pass judgment on the Jews so quickly, though. Let me explain the Jewish view of the Doctrine of Man, and you will better understand why they believe they way they do.

Let us look again at **Genesis 1:26-27** –

*"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."*

Christians agree with Judaism that man was **created**; man did not evolve from some primate state to a more intricate, sophisticated state of being. Christians also believe that **Adam** was **created** in the "**image**" of God (according to Genesis 5:3 – all other men and women were begotten in the likeness and image of Adam, a sinner). However, there is some common ground between the beliefs and teachings of Judaism and Christianity. Christianity will concede that man possesses tri-unity in that man consists of three (3) distinct aspects or parts: "**spirit and soul and body**" (**1 Thess. 5:23**).

1. "**Man's spirit**" is the part which "**knows**" (**1 Cor. 2:11**) and believes that God is the Creator of all there is; this **spirit** allow man to have a God-consciousness or awareness of a Divine Creator.
2. "**Man's Soul**" in itself implies that man has self-consciousness. On the contrary, plant life has only an unconscious life; no means of self-awareness. Animal life (does not include man or human life as some evolutionists insist) have a soul (self-consciousness/awareness), but not to the extent of man; Man's soul is the seat of his emotions, desires, and affections (**Psalm 42:1-6**). The "**heart**" is nearly synonymous with the "**soul**" in Scripture; "**soul**" is sometimes used synonymously with the individual (**Gen. 1:25**).
3. "**Man's Body**" is that part of man susceptible to death, but is an integral part of man, as the resurrection shows (**John 5:28-29; 1 Cor.: 15:47-50; Rev. 20:11-13**).

Judaism believes in a "**dual nature**" of man. According to Judaic Theology, Jews contend that Genesis 2:7 reveals that God formed (**vayyitzer**) man. Jewish theologians contend that the spelling of the word, **vayyitzer**, is unusual because it uses two consecutive **Yods** (mark used in Hebrew writing) instead of the

one you would expect. Theologians infer that these *Yods* stand for the word "*yetzer*," which means *impulse*, and the existence of two *Yods* indicates that humanity was formed with two impulses: a *good impulse* (*yetzer tov*) and an *evil impulse* (*yetzer ra*).

The concept of *yetzer tov* and *yetzer ra* can be simply illustrated by the cartoon, "*Bugs Bunny*", many of us saw while growing up as children. Do you recall Bugs having an angel rabbit with a halo on one shoulder whispering in his ear that what he was about to do was *wrong*, while on his other shoulder there was a devil rabbit dressed in a red suit with a pitch fork who whispered in his ear, "*Go for it, Bugs!*"



Judaism teaches that *yetzer tov* is the *moral conscience*, the *inner voice* that reminds you of God's law when you consider doing something forbidden. According to some rabbinical views, it does not enter a person until his 13th birthday, when one becomes responsible for following the commandments.

The *yetzer ra* is more difficult to define because there are many different ideas about it. It is not a desire to do evil in the way one would normally think, such as a desire to cause senseless harm, but rather, it is usually conceived as the *selfish nature*, the desire to satisfy one's personal needs (i.e. - food, shelter, sex, etc.) without regard for the moral consequences of fulfilling those desires.

Judaism teaches that *yetzer ra* is not a bad thing. It was created by God, and all things created by God are good. The Talmud notes that without the *yetzer ra* (the desire to satisfy one's personal needs), man would not build a house, marry a wife, beget children or conduct business affairs. But the *yetzer ra* can also lead to wrongdoing when it is not controlled by the *yetzer tov*. There is nothing inherently wrong with hunger, but it can lead you to steal food. There is nothing inherently wrong with sexual desire, but it can lead you to commit rape, adultery, incest or other sexual perversion.



The *yetzer ra* is generally viewed as something internal; not external. The idea that "*the devil made me do it*" is not in line with the majority of thought in Judaism. Although it has been said that Satan and the *yetzer ra* are one and the same, it is more often understood as meaning that Satan is merely a personification of our own selfish desires, rather than that our selfish desires are caused by some external force.

Judaism further teaches that people have the ability to choose which impulse to follow: the *yetzer tov* or the *yetzer ra*. This is the heart of the Jewish understanding of *free will*. The Talmud notes that all people are descended from Adam, so no one can blame his own wickedness on his ancestry. On the contrary, we all have the ability to make our own choices, and we will all be held responsible for the choices we make.

This tradition continues to the present day, and there are several rabbis in this century who have developed responsa on issues relating to modern technologies. For example, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, who died in the 1980s, wrote responsa on such diverse topics as the permissibility of cosmetic surgery, the koshering of dishwashers, and artificial insemination. There are literally thousands of volumes of responsa. A project at Bar-Ilan University is compiling these responsa into a computer database in what is called The Responsa Project.

As you can see, the body of Jewish tradition is vast. Is there any place to get quick answers? In the middle ages, there were several attempts to create definitive codes of Jewish law. The best-known of these codes are Rambam's Mishnah Torah and Joseph Caro's Shulchan Arukh. In their own time, these works were very controversial, because they did not identify the Torah or Talmudic basis for their opinions and generally ignored conflicting opinions. There was concern that such works would discourage Jews from studying the primary sources: Torah and Talmud. Today, however, these sources are well-respected. In fact, the Shulchan Arukh is often treated as a primary source.

Regardless of what source of reading Jews choose, one thing stands out in their theological thinking - Judaism **does not** teach the depravity of man, therefore, it **does not teach the need of a Saviour**. This is a very important aspect of Jewish theology. While Christianity teaches that no one will be saved unless they realize they need of a Saviour, Judaism neither teaches the depravity of man nor the need of salvation through a Saviour.

The need for the *new birth* is well documented in *John Chapter 3*. In this chapter of God's Word, Jesus (a Jew) told Nicodemus (a Jew), "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*" (John 3:3). At first, Nicodemus did not comprehend the concept of a "*new birth*". After Jesus explained to Nicodemus in ways he could understand, it is apparent that Nicodemus finally understood. When Jesus was later crucified, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea took spices to anoint the body of their Saviour and bury him in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea.

Instead of teaching this New Testament doctrine of the "*New Birth*", Jewish theology teaches that by performing "good deeds" (**mitzvot**), one can obtain a closer communion with God, though the concept of a personal relationship is still foreign to the Jew. Without a Temple to perform the Levitical sacrifices prescribed in the Mosaic Law, Judaism has substituted the keeping of *mitzvot* as a means of offering sacrifices to Jehovah. The problem with this theology is that this is not in keeping with the Law that God gave to Israel.

***"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."*** Leviticus 17:11

Today's Judaism is quite different from the days when Israel practiced sacrificial worship under the Mosaic Law. Without a Temple or tabernacle, Judaic theology is better termed – Rabbinic Judaism. Rabbinic Judaism was founded by Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai, an important Jewish sage. Between 30 CE and 90 CE, Rabbi Zakai became the "*Father of Rabbinic Judaism*". Zakai's writings became a major contributor to the *Mishnah*, the core text of Rabbinic Judaism.

The *Mishnah* is the first written redaction of Jewish oral tradition, called the *Oral Torah*, and the first major work of Rabbinic Judaism. It was redacted 200 CE by Judah Ha Nasi when, according to the Talmud, the persecution of the Jews and the passage of time raised the possibility that the details of the oral traditions dating from Pharisaic times (536 BCE–70 CE) would be forgotten. It is thus named for being both the one written authority (codex) secondary (only) to the Tanakh as a basis for the passing of judgment, a source and a tool for creating laws, and the first of many books to complement the Bible in a certain aspect.

The Mishnah is also called *Shas* (an acronym for *Shisha Sedarim* - the "six orders"), in reference to its six main divisions. Rabbinic commentaries on the Mishnah over the next three centuries were redacted as the *Gemara*, which, coupled with the Mishnah, comprise the *Talmud*.



### **Sinfulness of Man (Romans 3:10-18)**

***“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.”***

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Roman believers, he clearly disagreed with Judaism’s theology and doctrine of man. In **Romans 3:10-18** we find a **14-fold indictment** of the sinfulness of man:

- 10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*
- 11 *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*
- 12 *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*
- 13 *Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:*
- 14 *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:*
- 15 *Their feet are swift to shed blood:*
- 16 *Destruction and misery are in their ways:*
- 17 *And the way of peace have they not known:*
- 18 *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

On more than one occasion that salvation is **not by works** (*mitzvot*), but by “**Grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ**” (Ephesians 2:8). It is vital that one understand their need of salvation in order to be compelled to call upon the name of the Lord. This is true with both Jews and Gentiles.

One way of doing this is to show how all men descended from Adam. Only Adam was *created* “perfectly” by God (**Genesis 1:27**), but as **Genesis 5** clearly teaches, we were all begotten as descendents of Adam. We were created with the nature of Adam, and as **Romans 5:12** reveals, “*sin entered the world and death by sin, and so death has passed upon all men because all men have sinned.*” Sin can only be atoned by the shedding of blood. In order to be forgiven of sin, one must have a blood sacrifice. Of course, this was the clear teaching of all of the Old Testament sacrifices in the Law (Jeremiah 17:11).

God changes not! **SIN** remains **SIN**, and “*the soul that sinneth, it shall die*” (Ezekiel 18:4). Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah) came to earth to offer Himself as the Lamb of God. He became our Substitute as He offered Himself vicariously upon the Cross of Calvary. Jesus Christ died for our offenses, but He rose again for our justification. The only hope of mankind is in the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

## Jewish & Christian Theology: *The Doctrine of Afterlife*

We now want to take a look at the differences between Jewish and Christian theology in regard to the **“Doctrine of Afterlife”**. Judaism clearly believes in a literal, physical **“resurrection”** from the dead. During the Hellenistic Era, when Jews were indoctrinated with the ideas and superstitions of the Hellenistic Greeks, a group of Jews sympathetic with Hellenism arose in Judaism, called **Sadducees**. They did not believe in a literal resurrection from the dead – This is why they were “sad you see!”

Since the destruction of the Temple, the Sadducees lost their influence in Jewish Theology. **Parosheem (Pharisees)** became the only remaining organized religious group of Judaism, and from this sect came the rabbinic writings of the **Mishnah** and **Talmud**.



**Parosheem** taught a literal, physical resurrection of all man, as taught clearly in Scripture. One need only to look at the Book of Job, to see this important doctrinal teaching. Job asked the question, **“If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14)**. Job answered his own question when he declared, **“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me” (Job 19:25-27)**.

It is interesting that Muslims know the significance of Job’s teaching. Muslims know about Messiah’s promise to come again to Jerusalem. Many Muslims have been buried in a cemetery in front of the Eastern Gate because they do not believe the Jewish priest will defile Himself by walking through a cemetery. What Muslims do not understand is that Messiah will not return as a priest from the tribe of Levi, but instead, Messiah will return as the Lion of the tribe of Judah! He will have no problem walking up the Eastern slope of the Temple mount and entering through the Eastern Gate of the city of Jerusalem, where He will sit upon the throne of His father, David, and rule for 1,000 years according to Scripture (Revelation Ch. 19-20).



The *Doctrine of the Afterlife* is an important doctrine because it determines how one lives in the present. The Doctrine of the Afterlife is relevant to Christians because Christianity teaches that all men will spend eternity in one of two places – Heaven or Hell. The New Testament speaks of a place that **“God has prepared for them that love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9)**. Jesus spoke of going to prepare this place for His Disciples, and that He would come again to receive them unto Himself (John 14:1-3).

However, Jesus spoke more about a place called Hell than He did about Heaven. He emphasized the reality of a place of torments and

damnation created for the devil and his angels. Hell is a place where unbelievers will go until death and hell is cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14). This is why Jesus urged people of from all walks of life to repent, believe on Him, and be saved.



Judaism also teaches about Heaven and Hell, though they refer to them by different names. Judaism teaches about a place called “*Gan Eden*” (Garden of Eden). This is a place of paradise, similar to what we think of Heaven. Judaism also teaches about a place called “*Gehenna*”. This is a place of judgment, punishment, and torment similar to what we would call Hell. The name Gehenna comes from a place located outside of the southwestern gate of Jerusalem called the “Dung Gate.” The valley outside of this gate was used as a place to offer human sacrifice to Moloch in Old Testament days, and was later used during the days of Jesus as a garbage dump that burned continuously.

The stench, the smoke, and the smoldering of the dump depicted such a vivid illustration of Hell that Jesus alluded to in the Valley of Gehenna.

Both Judaism and Christianity agree that the unrighteous dead will go to one this place of torment. The difference between what Jewish Theology and Christian Theology teach is the duration of one’s stay in Hell. Judaism does not teach that Jehovah will permit even the vilest of people to remain in this place of torment more than a period of 12 months. It is the belief of Judaism that since man is created in the image and likeness of God, God will not suffer man to be tormented eternally.

Traditional Judaism believes that all men fall into one of three categories: *good*, *not so good*, or *evil*. Judaism teaches that *good people* will go immediately to Gan Eden (Heaven); *not so good people* will go to Gehenna for a short time; and that *evil men* will suffer in Gehenna until they repent or are tormented by the demons of their own making, but never for more than a 12 month period.

Furthermore, Rabbinic Judaism teaches that all men, whether



*good, not so good, or evil* will eventually be ushered out of Gehenna into Gan Eden (sometimes referred to as Olam Ha-Bah), thus spending eternity in a perfect state of fellowship with Jehovah.

Jewish Theology teaches three (3) ways to escape going to Gehenna:

1. Performing Good deeds (Mitzvot)
2. Repentance of sin while in Gehenna
3. Prayers/Mitzvot of others on their behalf can secure release from Gehenna

If this last provision sounds somewhat familiar, it is because Catholics teach a similar theology. Catholics teach that some dead go to an intermediate place (a third option during the afterlife) called **“Purgatory.”** Purgatory is thought to be a place where people go when they are sort of between *good* and *evil*. Where did Catholics get this idea? No doubt they got it from Jews!

Remember, Catholicism was formed in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century when Roman Emperor Constantine had a dream of a cross in the sky, woke up, and demanded that the Roman Empire convert to Christianity. However, Constantine imitated much of what he knew about Judaism. The idea that one could live as they wanted and then after death, God would grant them a second chance was actually a teaching of Judaism first.

On the other hand, let us consider that the 1<sup>st</sup> Century New Testament Church actually consisted of Jews that had trusted in Jesus as their Promised Messiah and the Saviour of the world. It is apparent, as we read the New Testament; these Jewish believers did not accept such Judaic teaching.

Let us read the story of the rich man and Lazarus recorded in **Luke 16:19-31**:

- 19 *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day;*
- 20 *And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,*
- 21 *And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.*
- 22 *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;*
- 23 *And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*
- 24 *And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*
- 25 *But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*
- 26 *And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*
- 27 *Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to*

- my father's house:*
- 28 *For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*
- 29 *Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.*
- 30 *And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.*
- 31 *And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

Jesus taught that the rich man did not receive a second chance in Hell, but rather, he lifted up his eyes in torment thirsting for just one drop of water. When he did not get relief, he thought of his relatives still living, and he asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to his 5 brethren. Abraham told the missionary-minded rich man in Hell that his five brothers had “Moses and the prophets” – The Word of God. This is still the manner in which sinful man is saved. ***“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”*** (Romans 10:17).

My friend, God **IS** a God of second chances...sometimes third, fourth, fifth... and sometimes even hundreds of chances! However, God’s Word clearly teaches us in **Amos 4:12** – ***“Prepare to meet thy God.”*** **Hebrews 9:27** declares, ***“It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.”*** **Revelation 20:11-15** reveals that God will judge those who reject the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Death and Hell will both be cast into the Lake of Fire! The Lake of Fire is not only a REAL place, but it is also an ETERNAL place!



# Jewish & Christian Theology: The Doctrine of Messiah

## Messiah (Isaiah 9:6-7)

***“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”*** Isaiah 9:6-7

Jews have an enormous respect for the land of Israel. They believe that though all Jews do not live in Israel, they desire to live there. Traditional Judaism believes strongly in the coming their Messiah. One of **Rambam’s 13 Principle Beliefs** (the minimum teachings of Jewish theology), is Messiah will come. In the Jewish *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer, recited daily by Orthodox Jews, they pray for all eight (8) of the prescribed elements of the coming of the Messiah: *ingathering of the exiles; restoration of the religious courts of justice; an end of wickedness, sin and heresy; reward to the righteous; rebuilding of Jerusalem; restoration of the line of King David; and restoration of Temple service.*

Modern, liberal Bible scholars suggest that the Messianic concept was introduced later in the history of Judaism, during the age of the prophets. They note that the Messianic concept is not mentioned anywhere in the Torah. However, traditional Judaism maintains that the Messianic idea has always been a part of Judaism. They contend that Messiah is not mentioned explicitly in the Torah because the Torah was written in terms that all people could understand. The *abstract concept* of a distant, spiritual, future reward was beyond the comprehension of some people.

In reality, the Torah contains several references to *“the end of days”* (achareet ha-yameem), which is the time of the Messiah; thus, the concept of Messiah was known in ancient times. The term *“Messiah”* literally means *“anointed one”*, and refers to the ancient practice of anointing kings with oil when they took the throne. Messiah is the one who will be anointed as king in the end of days.



According to Jewish Theology, the word "*Messiah*" does not mean "*Saviour*". The notion of an innocent, Divine or even semi-Divine being that has been sacrificed to save mankind from the wages of sin is considered purely a Christian concept with no basis of Jewish thought.

Jewish Theology believes Messiah will be a great political leader who descends from King David (Jeremiah 23:5). The Messiah is often referred to as "Moshiach ben David" (Messiah, son of David). Judaism teaches that Messiah will be well versed in Jewish law, observant of its commandments (Isaiah 11:2-5), and a charismatic leader, inspiring others to follow his example. Judaism teaches that Messiah will be a great military leader that will win battles for Israel. It is taught that Messiah will be a great judge that makes righteous decisions (Jeremiah 33:15), but above all, Messiah will be a human being, not a god, demi-god, or other supernatural Divine being.

Traditional Jews are not looking for a "*religious Messiah*" per se, but rather a "*political Messiah*" that will be a deliverer who will free them from Gentile oppression. It has been taught that in every generation, a person is born with the potential to be the Messiah. If the time is right for the Messianic Age within a person's lifetime, then that person will announce Himself as Messiah. However, if the potential Messiah dies before he completes the mission of Messiah, then that person was not the Messiah at all.



In general, it is believed that Messiah will come at a time when he is most needed (i.e. - the world is extremely wicked and sinful), or in a time when he is most deserved (i.e. - the world is so good). The following is taught by Orthodox Judaism as prerequisite for the coming of Messiah:

- All Israel repents a single day
- Israel observes a single Shabbat properly
- All Israel observes two Shabbats in a row properly
- A generation that is totally innocent or totally guilty
- A generation that loses hope for deliverance
- A generation whose children are totally disrespectful towards their parents and elders

It is further believed that there will be wars and suffering (Ezekiel 38:16) prior to the coming of Messiah. Judaism teaches that Messiah will bring about the political and spiritual redemption of the Jewish people by bringing Jews back to Israel and restoring Jerusalem (Isaiah 11:11-12; Jeremiah 23:8; 30:3; Hosea 3:4-5). Messiah will establish a government in Israel that will become the center of all world government for both Jews and Gentiles (Isaiah 2:2-4; 9:6-7; 11:10; 42:1).

Judaic Theology teaches that Messiah will rebuild the Temple and re-establish its worship (Jeremiah 33:18). However, today there are some rabbis who believe that the Temple must first be built in order for Messiah to come. Traditional Judaism teaches that Messiah will restore the religious court system of Israel and establish Jewish law as the law of the land (Jeremiah 33:15).



One can easily understand why Israel will make a treaty or covenant with Antichrist during the Tribulation Period. No doubt many Jews will mistake Antichrist as the Messiah! Jews do not believe that Yeshua (Jesus) was their anticipated Messiah because He did not fulfill the mission of Messiah as described in the Biblical passages we have already cited. In fact, Jews claim that Jesus did not fulfill any of the things that Scriptures say Messiah will accomplish.

I suggest that Jewish people consider the **324 Messianic Prophecies** that Jesus Christ did fulfill at His First Advent. What these Jews do not understand is that Jesus came into the world the **first time** for the express purpose of establishing a “**spiritual kingdom**”; **not an earthly kingdom**. The problem is not the issues Jews must endure under the “Times of the Gentiles”; the major problem is the sinfulness of man’s heart. As we have already stated, Judaism does not teach the **depravity of man**; but rather the **dignity of man**, therefore, they find difficulty in understanding “*that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Christian Theology teaches that Jesus (the Messiah) will come **AGAIN** as promised in the God’s Word to fulfill **ALL** of the aspects of Messiah that Judaism contends Jesus did not fulfill. My question for honest Jewish people is simple, “**What do they do with the 324 Messianic prophecies that Jesus did fulfill?**” It is a sad that the God’s chosen people, the Jews, who were given and entrusted the Messianic prophecies of God’s precious Word, disregard so evidences of Jesus’ Messiahship.

# Jewish & Christian Theology:

## *Replacement Theology*

### What Is Replacement Theology?

**ANSWER:** Replacement Theology basically teaches that the church has completely replaced Israel in God's plan. Adherents of Replacement Theology believe that the Jews are no longer God's chosen people and God does not have specific future plans for the nation of Israel. There are really only two views, either the Church is a continuation of Israel (Replacement Theology) or the Church is totally different and distinct from Israel (Dispensationalism / Premillennialism).



Replacement Theology teaches that the Church is the replacement for Israel and that the many promises made to Israel in the Bible are fulfilled in the Christian Church, not in Israel. So, the prophecies in Scripture concerning the blessing and restoration of Israel to the Promised Land are "spiritualized" or "allegorized" into promises of God's blessing for the Church. Major problems exist with this view, such as the continuing existence of the Jewish people throughout the centuries and especially with the revival of the modern state of Israel. If God has condemned Israel, and there is no future for the Jewish nation, how do we explain the supernatural survival of the Jewish people over the past 2000 years despite the many attempts to destroy them? How do we explain why and how Israel reappeared as a nation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century after not existing for 1900 years?

The view that Israel and the Church are different is clearly taught in the New Testament. In this view, the Church is completely different and distinct from Israel and the two are never to be confused or used interchangeably. We are taught from Scripture that the Church is an entirely new creation, which came into being on the Day of Pentecost and will continue until it is translated

to Heaven at the Rapture (Ephesians 1:9-11). The Church has no relationship to the curses and blessings for Israel, the covenants, promises and warnings are valid only for Israel. Israel has been set aside in God's program during these past 2,000 years of dispersion.

After the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) God will restore Israel to the primary focus of His plan. The first event at this time is the Great Tribulation (Revelation chapters 6-19). The world will be judged for rejecting Christ, while Israel is prepared through the trials of the Great Tribulation for the Second Coming of the Messiah. Now, when Christ does return to the earth, at the end of the Tribulation, Israel will be ready to receive Him. The remnant of Israel, which survives the Tribulation, will be saved and the Lord will establish His kingdom on this earth with the capital as Jerusalem. With Christ reigning as King, Israel will be the leading nation and representatives from all nations will come to Jerusalem to honor and worship the King. The Church will return with Christ and will reign with Him for a literal thousand years (Revelation 20:1-5).

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament support a Premillennial / Dispensational understanding of God's plan for humanity. Even so, the strongest support for Premillennialism is found in the clear teaching of Revelation 20:1-7, where it says, six times, that Christ's kingdom will last 1,000 years. After the Tribulation the Lord will return and establish His kingdom with the nation of Israel, Christ will reign over the whole earth with Jerusalem, as His capital and Israel will be the leader of the nations. The Church will reign with Him for a literal thousand years. I do not believe Replacement Theology is correct or Biblical.

## The Roman Catholic Church

Emperor Constantine started the Roman Catholic Church, in 311 AD after a vision of a cross in the sky. It was at this time that Constantine professed Christianity, and demanded that his empire convert to Christianity as well. This State church was strikingly similar in many aspects to Judaism:

1. Israel had a high priest / Catholics had a Pope
2. Israel had Jerusalem / Catholics had Rome
3. Israel had a Temple / Catholics had the Vatican
4. Israel had the Talmud commentary / Catholics had the Canon laws
5. Israel was considered the "old people of God" / Catholics considered themselves the "new people of God"
6. Jews were dispersed worldwide / Catholics believed they *replaced* the Jews

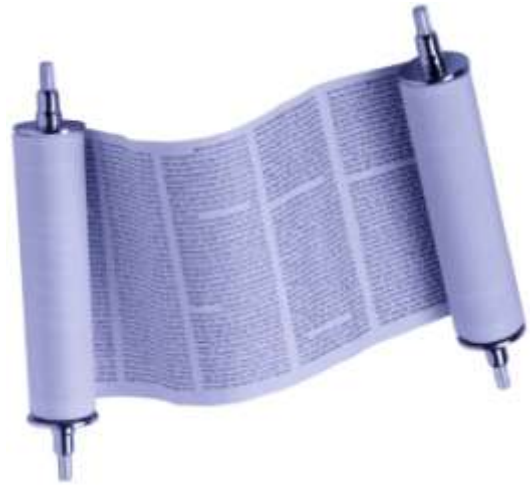
At the Council of Nicaea, when Emperor Constantine declared that Christians should divest the detestable company of the Jews, Replacement Theology gained momentum. Catholics believed that God had forsaken the Jews as His chosen people, and Catholics contended the reason was because Jews had killed Jesus.



It is obvious that the Scriptures do not support such a foolish doctrine. Paul addressed Past, Present, and Future in **Romans 9, 10, and 11** respectfully. Paul clearly taught that God had set Israel aside, but had not forsaken them permanently. Paul wrote, *“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin” (Romans 11:1).*

Paul’s salvation is proof positive that God had not cast away His people, the Jews. Paul declared himself a Jew, an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham and of the tribe of Benjamin. In **Romans 11:2**, Paul reiterates once again, *“God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.”*

The doctrine of the remnant proves it (**Romans 11:2-6**). We see that Israel’s national unbelief was foreseen (**Romans 11:7-10**). **Romans 11:11-25** teaches us that Israel’s unbelief is actually the Gentile’s opportunity to be saved. **Romans 11:17-22** reveals that Israel has been judicially judged by God and broken off from the good olive tree (favored position of God), but they will one day be grafted back into God’s favored position according to **Romans 11:25-29**.



**Replacement Theology**, the idea that the Church now inherits the distinctive promises God made to His chosen people, the Jews, is clearly not taught in the Scriptures. The Church, made up of Jews and Gentiles who have trusted Jesus as Savior, (**1 Corinthians 12:13**) has become the *“heavenly seed of Abraham (Gen. 15:5-6; Gal. 3:29)*. Christians become partaker of the spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant (**Gen. 15:8**), but Israel as a nation always has its own place, and will yet to have its greatest exaltation as the earthly people of God.

## **Conclusion**

There are many other Jewish and Christian beliefs that we could examine, however, our purpose in this course is to provide a basis for understanding both common beliefs and differences between Judaism and Christianity. We hope this study has served such a purpose. It is our hope at Jewish End-Time Ministries that you have been encouraged to follow up with a more detailed study of your own in the days ahead.

## **Jewish & Christian Theology: *Dual Covenant Theology***

***“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.” Romans 10:9-12***

### **What Is Dual Covenant Theology?**

**ANSWER: Dual-Covenant Theology** is primarily a term found in Christian theology that teaches that Jews can go to Heaven simply by keeping the Law of Moses, because of the “everlasting covenant” between Abraham and God expressed in the Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old Testament), whereas Gentiles (those not Jews) must convert to Christianity.

### **Do Jewish People Have Another Path to Salvation?**

I am often asked the question “Do Jewish People have another way of salvation apart from Jesus?” My simple yet clear answer is, “No.” If I believed any differently, I would not be serving with Jewish End-Time Ministries, Inc., telling Jewish people about Jesus, our Divine mandate - the very reason for our existence. If I believed there was any other path of salvation for Jewish people, I would not be devoted to the often unpopular and painful task of trying to convince Jews that our Messiah has already come, and His Name is Yeshua.

The question is a good one and is often prompted by good intentions. After all, Jewish people have suffered for almost two thousand years because of their initial rejection of Jesus and efforts to convert them by force to Christianity. As a result, modern Judaism is in part a response to these efforts. In other words, we define Judaism often by what Jews do not believe instead of what they do believe. ***Jews do not believe in Jesus.***

### **The Influence of Dual Covenant Theology**

Simply stated, Dual Covenant Theology promulgates the idea that the Jewish people have a separate path of salvation through the Abrahamic or Mosaic Covenant. In other words, this view holds that Jews do not need Jesus for personal salvation.

This idea sprung up immediately following World War II and evolved into something called the Dialogue Movement. This well established movement teaches that Judaism and Christianity are both

valid yet distinct religions, each equally worthy of the other's full acceptance and respect. In other words, Christians ought not to challenge traditional Judaism's rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. Sparked by guilt over the extermination of six million Jews under the guise of Christ and Christianity during the Holocaust, a growing sensitivity emerged among primarily liberal scholars. They began to write and teach that the Jews have suffered enough through the centuries, and since much of this suffering was due to efforts to try to force Jews to convert to Christianity, we now need to leave them alone. As a result, many Christians, including Evangelicals, consider it good will not to share the Gospel with Jewish people.

While there may be an element of truth in this idea, and it certainly seems almost a noble one, the Bible declares that the Gospel is not only for the Jewish people, but specifically it is *to the Jew first* (Romans 1:16). There is only one plan of salvation for all people; ***“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”*** (Acts 4:12). Jesus Himself said in John 14:6, ***“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*** As Bible believers, we have no choice but to accept this at face value. Either you believe God's Word or you don't.

## Faith Comes By Hearing

But you don't have to fully espouse Dual Covenant Theology to miss the mark. Some Bible teachers, while not fully embracing a Dual Covenant view, do teach that sharing the Gospel with Jewish people is unnecessary. One prominent leader (whom I otherwise greatly respect) made the statement, “Jews do not come to Christ through proclamation, but through revelation.” Although this statement does not negate the need to believe in Jesus for personal salvation, it does seem to dismiss the mandate to Christians to share their faith with Jewish people. Apparently, this leader feels this is God's job, and God will take care of it on His own.

While this is not exactly a Dual Covenant position, the end result is the same - there is no need to share our faith with Jewish people. The Apostle Paul tells us in very clear language that proclamation is an essential prerequisite to revelation, or faith - ***“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”*** (Romans 10:14-15). A few verses later, he again reemphasizes this truth with the familiar declaration, ***“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”*** (Romans 10:17).



If you read this passage in context, you'll see it is talking about the restoration of the Jewish people. There is a clear progression the Apostle Paul lays out. He is saying, “Proclamation precedes faith.” In our outreaches in the former Soviet Union, I have seen many Jewish people receive Yeshua as their Messiah. It has been in response to the proclamation of the Gospel, just as Paul taught.

Paul shared his heart in **Romans 9:1-3** concerning his Jewish brethren. He makes the astounding statement that he would be willing to give up his very eternity for their salvation. Paul wrote, *“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:”*

I believe Paul’s heart also reveals the heart of God concerning the salvation of the Jewish people. It is God’s desire for all believers to be co-laborers together with Him in the restoration of Israel and the Jewish people. This means that all of us are called to pray for the salvation of the Jewish people and share our faith whenever possible. There is no greater blessing you can give the Jew than the gift of eternal life through a relationship with their Messiah, and **His Name is Yeshua.**

Jewish leaders are finally realizing that evangelical Christians are Israel's best friends. Over the past few decades, there has been a growing love and support for the Israel and the Jewish people. Rallies, financial support and efforts to lobby the United States government not to force Israel to trade land for peace have become common occurrences across the country. However, in the past couple of years, we have seen somewhat of a shift in this type of thought.

Though there is great love for the Jewish people among fundamental, evangelical Christians, I have serious concern for the growing acceptance of “Dual Covenant Theology.” It promotes the idea that Jewish people have a separate path to salvation through the Abrahamic or Mosaic covenants. In other words, Jews don't need Jesus for personal salvation.

It would be much better for both believers and the Jewish people if Christians would simply be honest in their relationships with Jewish leaders. Instead of saying they are against evangelizing Jewish people, they should say, "I'm an evangelical Christian, compelled to share the gospel with all people. That means I can't exclude you. I will share my faith openly, because that is what God calls me to do. But also know that my love for you and support of Israel is unconditional."

Rest assured, Jewish leaders would respect and accept this position, and we all would be the better for it. My prayer is that Christian attempts to evangelize Jewish people will flourish. Israel needs our support now more than ever. Anti-Semitism is on the rise worldwide, and Hezbollah, Iran and Syria are not going away. They hate Israel and want to see Israel’s tiny nation pushed into the sea.

We need friends, but not at the expense of withholding the gospel from the Jewish people. After all, there is no greater blessing you can give a Jewish person than eternal life through a relationship with their Messiah. **His name is Yeshua.**