



Choose

LIFE

A COUNTER-MISSIONARY

STUDY GUIDE

*I call heaven and
earth to record this
day against you,
that I have set
before you life and
death, blessing and
curse; therefore
choose life,
that both you
and your seed
may live...*

Deuteronomy 30:19

By **Rick Halpern**

Foreword and Edited by:
Rabbi Michael Skobac

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Foreword by Rabbi Michael Skobac

"Are Christian missionaries really a problem?" After 27 years of involvement in the Jewish counter-missionary field, this frequently asked question tells me that there's still a lot more work that must be done. It's difficult to help our community deal with a problem when so many are convinced we don't have one.

As with most issues, it is important to clarify our terms. When we assume that all missionaries wear identifying T-shirts or come knocking at our doors at the most annoying times – there probably isn't much of a problem. But when we realize that anyone who seeks to sway us to their religion is a missionary, that's *another ballgame* as they say.

Recent estimates reveal that 25% - 40% of Americans are evangelical Christians. They firmly believe that everyone on the planet will spend their eternity in hell unless they get saved. They also believe that the most important thing they can do in their lives is help to bring the message of salvation to all people – relatives, friends, neighbours, roommates, co-workers, patients, clients and others, including and especially the Jews.

In a recent survey conducted by Jews for Judaism of over 1,000 high school and university students, 81% reported that someone had tried to share their faith with them.

This is why the book you are holding is so important. Rick Halpern has produced an invaluable resource for the Jewish community. His *Choose Life: A Counter-Missionary Study Guide* explains the motivations of those who seek to convert us, the reasons why so many Jewish people are vulnerable, and most importantly, what needs to be done to ensure that we always keep Jews Jewish.

Choose Life – the title says it all. This book broadcasts the critical message that the stakes are very high for those Jews who embrace Christianity. The missionary message does to our souls what smoking 10 packs of cigarettes a day does to our bodies.

This book also contains a passionate call for all Jews to take hold of the Torah, our Tree of Life, and let it nourish our souls. Although missionaries try to use our Torah against us by twisting its meaning and injecting their religion, *Choose Life* allows the Torah to speak for itself.

Louis Pasteur, renowned 19th century scientist, stated, "Fortune favours the mind that's prepared." *Choose Life* is an invaluable resource that firstly, helps to inoculate the Jewish community against the missionary threat and secondly, introduce countless Jews to the sweet and profound spiritual treasure that lies buried in their own backyards – our G-d given Tree of Life, the Torah.

Rabbi Michael Skobac
Director of Education, Jews for Judaism, Toronto

Introduction

When Christianity arose 2,000 years ago, the Jews who founded it believed that the Jewish Messiah had come, and that the Jewish Bible must be viewed from a new perspective. Since that time, the Jewish people have had to contend repeatedly with Christian missionaries and their claims. Though missionaries insist that Jesus fulfilled numerous Biblical prophecies, Judaism has always rejected their viewpoint. Why?

This subject is one that few Jews have much knowledge about, since it is rarely discussed. Unfortunately, when Jews are uneducated about their own Bible and are confronted with Christian arguments, they often feel confused about what to say and what to believe.

Why Should Jews Learn the Response to Missionaries' Claims?

The Jewish response to Christian missionary claims is relevant today for the following reasons:

- Most Jews, at one time or another, will be confronted by missionaries, whether in person or through their literature. Their efforts to proselytize us are massive, well-funded – and growing. What makes this a pressing issue today is that Jews are buying into Christian beliefs in unprecedented numbers.

Certainly not every Christian is out to convert us. In fact, many are very respectful of Judaism and the Jewish people. Some Christians will ask us questions about Judaism out of a genuine curiosity, and we must know how to answer them. However, our focus in this Study Guide is directed toward those who seek to convert us, and we must know how to answer them as well.

- Although you may not be susceptible to missionaries, someone you know could be – and you could make the difference in preventing them from falling into their clutches.
- Studying Christianity can be a powerful springboard for studying Judaism. Although we disagree with many of their beliefs, Christians do raise key issues. Who is G-d and what does He require of us? What is the Biblical concept of the Messiah and the Messianic Age? What about sin, atonement and life after death? Are the Torah's laws still relevant today? Are the Jews still G-d's Chosen People?

Throughout these timeless debates, none of the claims or verses cited by today's missionaries is any different from those cited throughout Christian history. For 2,000 years, Jewish scholars have heard all their challenges, and together with the vast majority of our ancestors, rejected all of them – even if it meant certain death. Just because you do not have answers to their questions does not mean that the missionaries are right, nor does it mean that Jews lack answers. We do, in fact, have potent responses to all their claims.

For a Jew, the choice between Judaism and Christianity is clearly one of those “life or death, blessing or curse” decisions the Torah speaks about. We must know that G-d, through His Torah, gives us the information we need to “choose life.” This Study Guide discusses the issues surrounding this decision, makes you better prepared for the missionaries' arguments, and hopefully fosters a greater appreciation of your own Jewish heritage.

The Historical Perspective

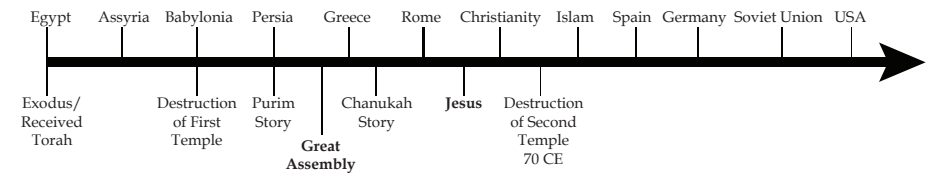
*Yet now hear,
O Jacob My
servant; and
Israel, whom I
have chosen...
You are My
witnesses.*

Isaiah 44:1,8

What Is The Historical Perspective On This Issue?

In the more than 3,300 years since the Jews left Egypt, our journey as G-d's Chosen People or "servant" has taken us throughout the four corners of the earth. Being His "witnesses," we have encountered all of history's great empires face-to-face, and we have outlasted them all. Our experiences have taught us much – including the enduring nature of our people and our Torah. We will now explore some additional lessons in our unique history to further highlight this subject.

Timeline of Jewish History (Not to scale)



Our timeline begins at the Exodus from Egypt and extends until today. As G-d promised to Abraham, our history demonstrates the miracle of the Jewish nation who has always retained a faithful remnant that has survived against all odds. Yet, in every generation, Jews have been lost through persecution or their abandonment of Judaism in favour of the foreign culture of the day. However, faithful Jews have always resisted demands to abandon our beliefs for other gods. For the last 2,000 years, we have viewed calls to believe in Jesus in this way.

Beware, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn, and serve other gods, and worship them.
Deuteronomy 11:16

Every Jew alive today has a long line of ancestors to thank for having remained true to Judaism and the Jewish people. In every generation, those Jews who embraced other cultures and religions at the expense of their Judaism failed to have descendants faithful to Judaism, and most of them became totally assimilated within three to four generations. Think of it this way – if one of your great-great grandparents had converted, you would, in all likelihood, not identify as a Jew today.

But you who held fast to the Lord, your G-d, are alive, every one of you, this day.
Deuteronomy 4:4

If G-d wants the Jewish people to survive, then those Jews who cut their ties to historical Judaism are swimming against the tide of G-d's agenda.

The Second Temple Era and The Rise Of Christianity

Christianity arose during very trying times for the Jewish people, and it is important to understand the historical context of that period. In the year 586 BCE,¹ following the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians, the Jews were carried from their land into exile. After 70 years, Ezra the Scribe led a large number of Jews back to Israel to reclaim the land and rebuild the Temple. The majority of Jews, however, remained in Babylon even after the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in 70 CE.

The Great Assembly

Upon returning to Israel, Ezra convened a special assembly of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish High Court) known as the *Anshei Keneset HaGedolah* (Men of the Great Assembly) whose members included the likes of Nehemiah, Daniel and Zechariah. Since the era of the prophets had come to an end, the Great Assembly addressed itself to several critical needs of the nation.

Two of their greatest achievements were to:

- **Canonize the Tanach** (Old Testament). To do this they selected those books that were consistent with the laws and beliefs of the Torah, and whose prophecies were of enduring relevance. From the writings of the Tanach, we get a consistent picture of Jewish beliefs, including the Messianic Era.
- **Organize the Jewish prayer service.** To express the beliefs and aspirations of Judaism, the Great Assembly formalized Jewish blessings and prayers. Among these is the *Shemoneh Esrei* (Eighteen Blessings) which forms the core of the Jewish prayer service. By examining its sacred words, we get insight into a variety of Jewish beliefs, including the topic of the Messiah.

אֶת צְמוּחַ דָּוִד עֲבֹדֶךָ מְהֵרָה תִצְמַח, וְקִרְנֹו תְרוּם בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ.
כִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קִוִּינוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', מִצְמִיחַ קֶרֶן יְשׁוּעָה.

The offspring of Your servant David may You speedily cause to flourish, and enhance his pride through Your salvation, for we hope for Your salvation all day long. Blessed are You, G-d, Who causes the pride of salvation to flourish.

This blessing from the *Shemoneh Esrei* deals with our belief in the Messiah. Obviously, there is no mention that the Messiah will be the “Son of G-d”, that he will suffer and die as an atonement for our sins, or that there will be a second coming. These Christian ideas are totally foreign to Judaism.

As the Men of the Great Assembly passed away, they bestowed the mantle of leadership to a long line of sages, known as *Tanaaim* who led the Jewish people

into Talmudic times. Their adherence to the laws handed down from Moses to the Judges and to the Prophets set the stage for the continuity of our faith until today. As the Talmudic rabbis, in turn, assumed the leadership of the people, we were prepared to withstand the tests of exile and our enemies.

Hellenism and The Roots of Christianity

Perhaps the greatest challenge that Judaism faced in the Second Temple Era was the spread and influence of Hellenism. Through the conquests of Alexander the Great, Hellenistic ideas made their way to the land of Israel. Conflict arose between the man-centered philosophy of Greece that emphasized physical beauty and pleasures, and the G-d-centered Torah of Israel that emphasized holiness and adherence to G-d’s laws – and this battle still rages today. Because many Jews sided with the Greeks in their disregard for the Torah, this conflict was further heightened. The events of the Chanukah story (165 BCE) saw this conflict result in a successful conclusion with the Jews achieving a spiritual, as well as a military victory.

To understand the Greek culture that many Jews embraced is essential to understanding the roots of Christianity. Although the founders of Christianity were Jews, they took this new religion on a path that led away from the Torah to make it more palatable to the Greek world. Greek mythology contained foreign notions, such as virgin-born saviours, and many of their heroes were venerated as being sons of god. The New Testament was composed almost entirely in Greek, unlike the books of the Tanach, which were written in Hebrew. Paul, the main promoter of Christianity, made his new religion more appealing to the pagan nations by replacing the observance of Torah law with total faith in Jesus.

Over time, additional pagan influences were brought into Christianity, such as the belief in the Trinity and vicarious atonement, as well as pagan holidays. When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, its doctrines and practices demonstrated that it was focused on appealing to the surrounding pagan nations. Soon thereafter, all its Jewish ties were severed.

Pagan origin of Christian holidays:

- Sunday - the weekly festival to the Sun god
- December 25 - festival for the Winter solstice
- Easter - from the festival to the fertility goddess Oester, with its fertility symbols of eggs and rabbits

Christianity and The Jews

Despite the efforts of Christianity to portray itself as the religion of love, it has posed the greatest threat to the Jewish people over the last 2,000 years, both physically and spiritually. The Church’s legacy of religious and economic oppression, as well as the wholesale slaughter of Jews, remains as history’s longest standing oppression of one group against another.

Many missionaries are very quick to apologize for atrocities committed by Christians over the centuries against the Jews, but are equally as quick to tell you that those murderers were not “real Christians.” They say, “Real Christians wouldn’t do that, because they are so loving.” It has always been difficult to accept an answer like that. In truth, they are only trying to escape the responsibility that their religion has had concerning Jewish bloodshed. What about the millions who sat by and did nothing? Were they also not “real Christians?”

Many Protestant missionaries try to absolve themselves by attributing the bloodshed to only the Catholics who initiated the Crusades, the Inquisition and numerous blood libels and pogroms. Yet, when we read the writings of Martin Luther, the founder of the Protestant Reformation, we also see a tremendous amount of hatred towards the Jews. Through his work *On The Jews and Their Lies*, Luther’s anti-Jewish rants from the 1500s influenced the leaders of the Nazi party in the 20th century.

“First, their synagogues should be set on fire, and whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread over with dirt so that no one may ever be able to see a cinder or stone of it. And this ought to be done for the honor of G-d and of Christianity in order that G-d may see that we are Christians... secondly, their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed... thirdly, they should be deprived of their prayer books and Talmuds... fourthly, their rabbis must be forbidden under threat of death to teach anymore... To sum up, dear princes and nobles who have Jews in your domains, if this advice of mine does not suit you, then find a better one so that you and we may all be free of this insufferable devilish burden, the Jews...”
Martin Luther

Most Jews are painfully aware of the brutal persecutions by Christians throughout history. Therefore, for the missionaries to succeed in overcoming Jewish resistance to Christian beliefs, they must first succeed in overcoming the problem of Christian history toward the Jews. This is usually accomplished with an avoidance of the subject and an over abundant demonstration of love. Nevertheless, this is still denial. Some missionaries, on the other hand, actually try to put the blame for persecution on the Jews themselves. Why was the Second Temple destroyed? Why did the Holocaust happen? They suggest that it was because the Jews rejected Jesus, and therefore G-d was angry with them.

Every Christian is strongly impacted by the stories of the New Testament – and when they read certain passages, it is very difficult for them to feel much love and respect toward the Jews, our rabbis, Jewish law or Judaism itself. Jews are characterized as heartless and ruthless, as seen in the story of the Good Samaritan, the character of Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus, and numerous other examples.

Too often, the words of the Christian scriptures have stirred resentment toward Jewish leaders and Jewish law. Many New Testament quotes have been used to incite hatred and even bloodshed toward Jews throughout history.

You [Jews] are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do.
John 8:44

But when he [John the Baptist] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?
Matthew 3:7

... the Jews, who both killed the lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to G-d, but are hostile to all men!
I Thessalonians 2:14-15

As Jews, we recognize the heroic compassion of many Christians who saved Jews during the Holocaust and at other times of persecution. But, we have also experienced similar acts of kindness from gentiles of other faiths, and we call such people Righteous Gentiles.

In conclusion, evangelical Christians are behind the aggressive efforts targeting Jews for conversion, and we must educate ourselves and others to be prepared.

No Rebel Heroes: A Final Lesson from Jewish History

Only do not rebel against the Lord...
Numbers 14:9

There is much that we will find in our Tanach – personalities, events, laws and principles. But one thing we do not find are rebel heroes. What do I mean?

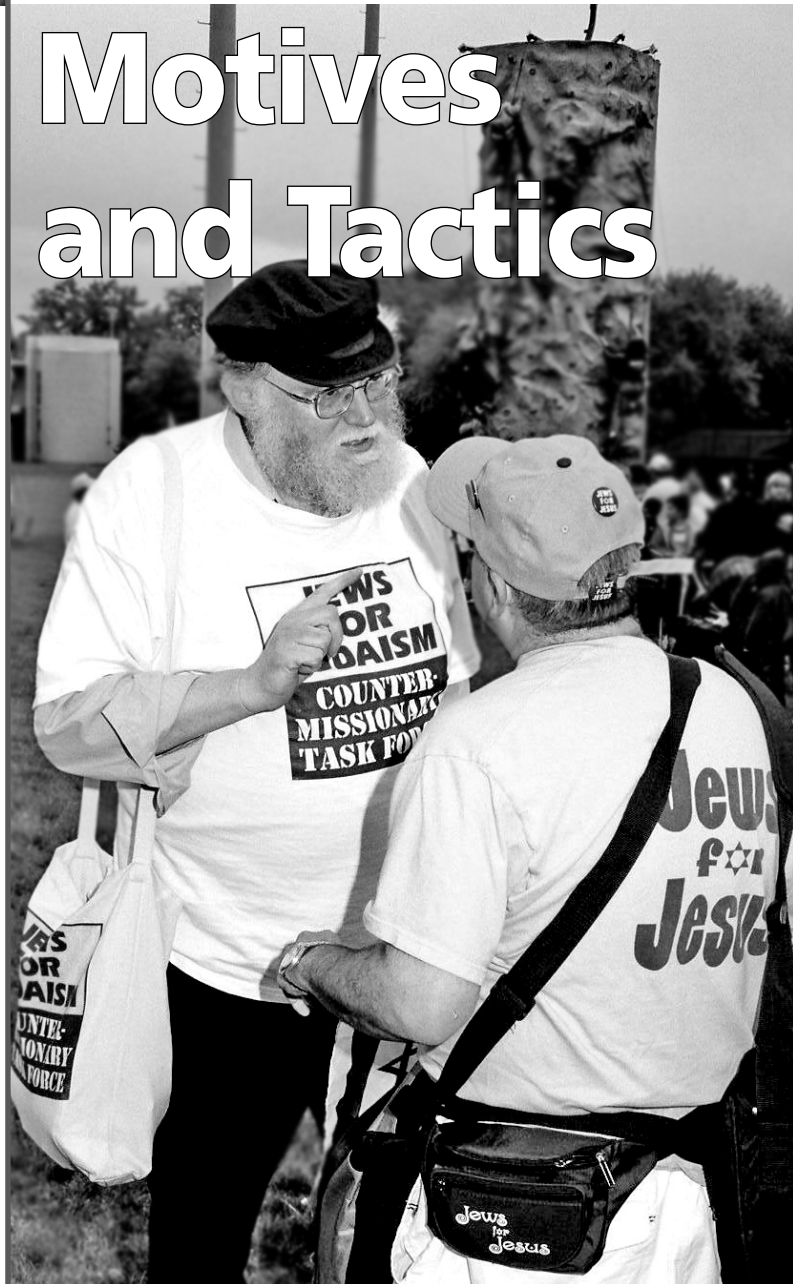
All the heroes of the Tanach are people who stood up for the Torah and for sustaining the religion that G-d revealed to the Jews. When things were not going well for us, they called for a return to the “old order” (Torah observance), because this is our foundation. Occasionally, people came along and said, “The old is out, and we’ve got something better.” Yet, none of them is among the Tanach’s heroes.

Not so in the non-Jewish world which is devoid of Torah. Their rebels are often their heroes. Yet, every new system of law that man creates, no matter how seemingly enlightened, ultimately degrades and must be recreated again and again. In our century, Lenin and Mao touted communism and claimed, “The old order is unjust, and we have something better.” Likewise, their systems of government became unjust in a short time. In 1776, the American Revolution overthrew an unjust tyrant. Nevertheless in the 1960s, with the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War, the American government and society needed a new revolution.

In the religious world, Martin Luther proclaimed that the old order of Catholicism was corrupt, and offered a revised form of Christianity. Today, we can clearly see what became of his Protestant Germany as it progressed into the 20th century.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus made the same type of proclamation against the Jewish religious establishment. His words provided sufficient reason for us to reject him. He was not our type of hero.

Missionaries' Motives and Tactics



We exist to make the Messiahship of Jesus an unavoidable issue to our Jewish people worldwide.

Jews for Jesus

Missionaries' Motives and Tactics

Who are the missionaries that we will encounter? They may be a schoolmate, a co-worker, or a neighbour who wants to share the “good news” of Christianity. Most often, they are just ordinary people in ordinary situations and not paid professional missionaries. Regardless of how sincere or well-intentioned these people may appear, their message spells tragedy for a Jew.

As the Jewish people confronted Christianity over these last 2,000 years, we have been consistent in our rejection of the claims that Jesus is the Messiah and the “Son of G-d.”

So, why are the missionaries still trying to convert Jewish people? What are their motivations?

- **Altruism:** Saving us from damnation. According to Christianity, anyone who does not believe in Jesus is condemned to an eternity of burning in hell. From a spirit of love, many believing Christians want to save us from this perceived fate. Judaism, however, disagrees with their views of hell and the need to be saved through faith in Jesus.
- **The Great Commission:** Missionaries feel they have an obligation to witness to us, and this comes directly from the New Testament. Jesus gave his disciples the Great Commission to go out into the world and spread the gospel. And what’s more, the message should first be preached to the Jew, and then to the gentile:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of G-d unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and then to the Greek (Gentile).
Romans 1:16

- **The Second Coming:** According to Christianity, Jesus is going to come back a second time as the Messiah to establish G-d’s kingdom on earth. To many, this Second Coming is contingent upon the Jews accepting him as their saviour.

... Assuredly I say unto you, You shall not see me, until the time comes when you shall say, ‘Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.’
Luke 13:35

This verse is understood to mean that since Jesus was speaking to the Jews, they must accept him before he comes again. Therefore, there is a special urgency among the missionaries to convert as many Jews as soon as possible.

There are also a variety of emotional issues that motivate Christian believers in their missionary efforts.

- Every Jew faithful to Judaism is a reminder that maybe their god and their beliefs are false, because the Jews, G-d's Chosen People, have always rejected them. Having the Jews convert would alleviate this anxiety.
- Some Christians envy the status of the Jews, and want to be G-d's Chosen People. To accomplish this, they have formulated "Replacement Theology" where the Jews are superseded by the Christians in G-d's eyes. The conversion of Jewish people helps validate this view.
- Many of the Jews who become Christian missionaries are driven by bad experiences within Judaism and their families, and therefore resent their Jewishness. They want acceptance among non-Jews, and are zealous in abandoning many of the bonds to their Jewish heritage. Most are intermarried.

Why Do We Have This Problem?

A sad truth facing the Jewish community today is the alienation of too many of our people. The lack of a Jewish education or a negative experience with Jewish life has caused them to become distanced from the vitality and spirituality found in Judaism and in identifying with the Jewish people. Some have experienced Jewish life as merely emphasizing material success or supporting only secular causes. For them, their exposure to Judaism failed to transmit the love, spirituality and sense of family they required.

WHO IS MOST VULNERABLE?

Jews who convert to other religions are often extremely vulnerable as a result of experiencing a period of transition or crisis in their lives. Who are these people?

- College students who are away from home and are now exploring their spirituality
- Transplants – people who move to a new city, leave their Jewish connections behind and are now looking for new friends
- Russian immigrants for whom being identified as a Jew was often a liability are now consumed with succeeding in America. Often, the Jewish community has not reached out to them as consistently as the Christians have
- The elderly who are living alone and need companionship
- Interfaith families with Jewish spouses and children are influenced by their Christian spouses and relatives

Among us, these are the Jewishly alienated, the spiritual seekers, the Jews of all ages often with low self-esteem who are going through times of trauma and seeking guidance and love. Missionaries are taking advantage of their vulnerability with much zeal and success. They offer these Jews the love and acceptance they seek – along with Christian beliefs. How do they do it? By deceptively cloaking everything in a Jewish facade.

The Jewish community must do a better job promoting the love and vitality found in our own religion, and thereby prevent Jews from being lured by open-arms missionaries. In Psalm 19, King David wrote "The Torah of G-d is complete." We have a complete religion, and we must tell our fellow-Jews and children that everything they seek can be found in Judaism. No need to look elsewhere!

The Missionary Sales Pitch

Recently, *Charisma* magazine reported that "more Jews have embraced Christianity in the last 19 years, than in the last 19 centuries." What has changed? In the past, missionaries pushed Jews to abandon Judaism for Christianity. Today, they realize that most Jews are uncomfortable with the idea of abandoning their Jewishness to become a Christian.

So now, missionaries have adopted a whole new approach in reaching those vulnerable Jews. Now, they tell them that they do not have to convert. They say:

"A Jew can believe in Jesus and still be Jewish."

Jewish law confirms that there is nothing a Jew can do to lose his/her Jewish status. The missionaries insist that "If you are born a Jew, you will die a Jew, so you are not abandoning who you are." They emphasize that Jesus and his disciples were Jews, so believing in him must be a Jewish thing to do.

This is truly a baseless claim! A Jewish mass-murderer is still Jewish, but that does not mean he is doing what G-d wants. Just because someone is Jewish doesn't mean that everything he/she does is automatically consistent with the teachings of Judaism.

"Become a Completed Jew."

Missionaries assert, "You are not abandoning anything by embracing Christianity. You are only completing the Judaism of your ancestors. Judaism believes in the idea of a Messiah. Where is yours? The Jewish Messiah is here for you to accept."

This approach is also deceptive. Shortly, we will see how radically different Christianity is from Judaism and how it veers away from Judaism on virtually all major theological issues. The result of accepting such a faith is to cut oneself off from the Torah's teachings and Jewish people. Is this a Completed Jew?

In the early 1970s, missionary groups developed a Jewish-like version of Christianity they call "Messianic Judaism" which camouflages Christianity as a form of Judaism. The missionaries have been so successful in marketing this mirage that an entire movement has emerged from it. Books, tapes and seminars have been created to educate missionaries on the many ways they can witness to their Jewish friends in this new improved manner.

Some guidelines missionaries use when speaking to Jews include:

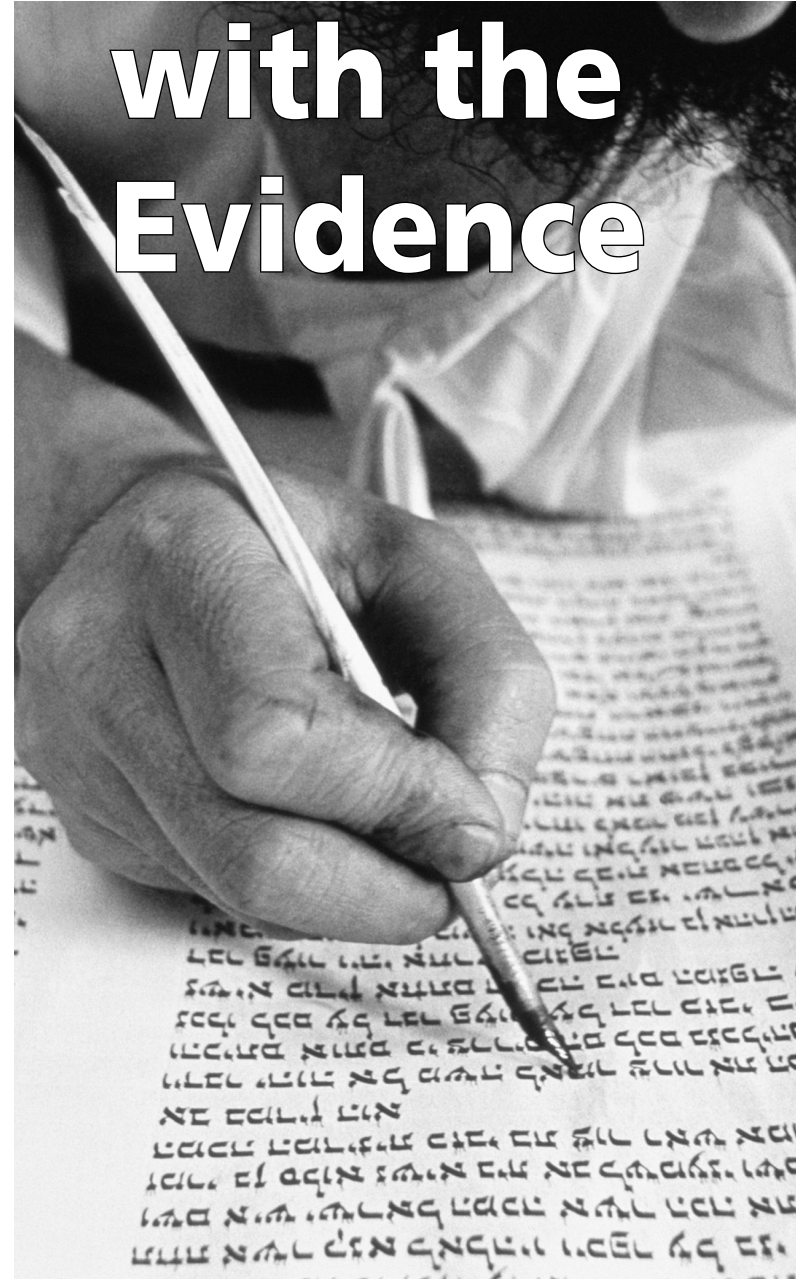
- Start out by only quoting the Old Testament and try to establish the scriptural authority and Jewishness of Jesus.
- Certain words and images raise a red flag and are very uncomfortable for Jews because of their historical associations with Christianity. Therefore, use these euphemistic alternatives:

DON'T SAY	DO SAY
Jesus	Yeshua
Christ	Messiah or <i>Mashiach</i>
New Testament	New Covenant
Convert	Become a Messianic, Completed or Fulfilled Jew
Christian	Bible Believer
Baptism	Mikvah Service

There are "Messianic synagogues" with names, such as Beth Hallel, Adas Yeshua and Etz Chaim. These "synagogues" display only Jewish symbols, with no crosses or other blatantly Christian symbols. Services are led by a "rabbi" wearing a *kipah* (skullcap) and *tallis* (prayer shawl) who adds Jewish "shtick" to provide a Jewish feel. Jewish holidays and Shabbat are seemingly celebrated, but always with an eventual connection to Jesus. The annual Passover Seder is a major event. *The Messianic Haggadah* explains that the three matzahs represent the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and describes how Yeshua is the real Passover lamb.

A major theme of this Study Guide is uncovering the missionaries' deceptions. We now examine the integrity of their arguments and their use of Jewish sources. How truthful are the missionaries? We will soon discover the answer.

Tampering with the Evidence



*In every way,
whether in
pretense or in
truth, Christ
is proclaimed;
and in that I
rejoice.*

Philippians 1:18

*He who speaks
truth gives just
evidence; but
a false witness
deceits.*

Proverbs 12:17

Tampering with the Evidence

Missionaries want you to believe in the New Testament, and that their messianic claims about Jesus are supported by the Tanach. To examine the believability of these claims, let us begin by examining how accurately the missionaries and the writers of the New Testament use Jewish scriptures.

A careful study of the Tanach, as well as the New Testament, reveals how often deception is used to build the case for Jesus. Since the writers of the New Testament wanted to paint Jesus into the Tanach as often as possible, we will see just how far they go to make this work. Two key lessons to learn from this Study Guide are:

- Judaism bases its beliefs on a comprehensive reading of the entire Bible. Every verse must be taken into account in order to get the true picture. Missionaries do not and cannot quote every verse. They ignore major sections of the *Tanach* because many verses contradict the picture they are trying to fabricate. Would their literature ever include verses, such as:
 - *“G-d is not a man, that he should lie.”* Numbers 23:19
 - *“Do not put your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no salvation.”* Psalm 146:3 (Jesus is often referred to as the son of man).
- Every prophecy that the missionaries cite from the *Tanach* is either:
 - Mistranslated or misrepresented
 - Taken out of context
 - Just made up!

Setting The Stage

And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to G-d, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.
I Corinthians 9:20-22

In this passage and the one quoted on the previous page from Philippians, the Apostle Paul reveals his willingness to say whatever it takes to get people to believe in Jesus. Here, he set the precedent of the end justifying the means for all future missionaries.

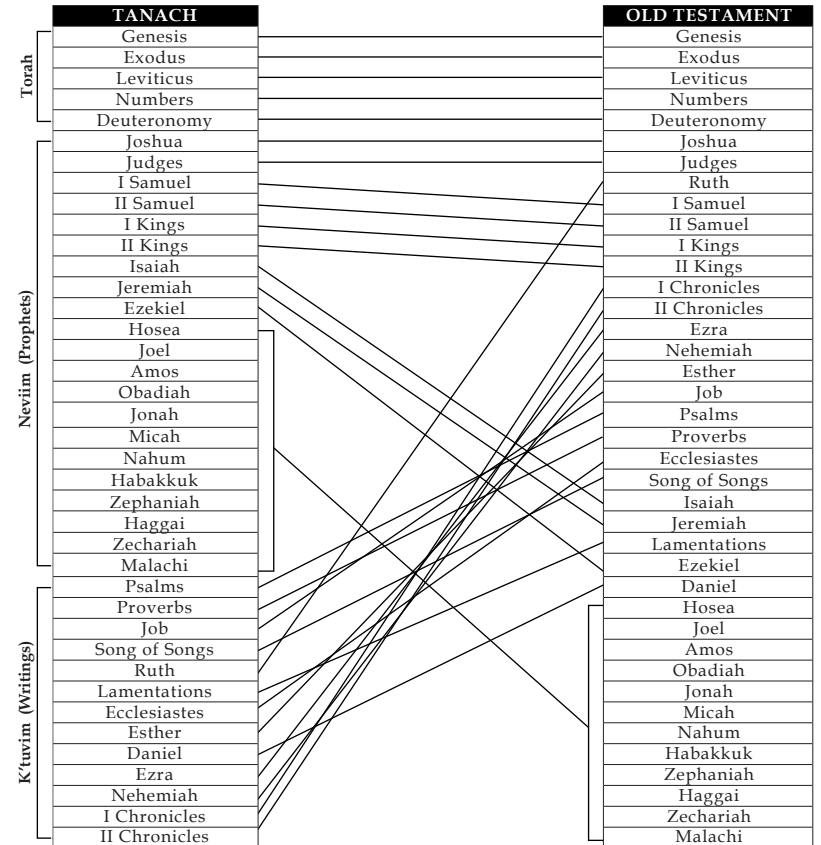
We now read several examples that show how much the missionaries tamper with the evidence.

The Order of The Tanach

A key insight into Christian manipulation begins with something as simple as the order of the Tanach. As we know, the word “TaNaCh” is an acrostic formed by the first letter of the names of the three sections of the Jewish Scriptures: Torah (The Five Books), Neviim (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings). The Tanach was canonized in roughly 500 BCE (over 800 years before the New Testament) by the Men of the Great Assembly who obviously placed great significance on the order of the books.

The Church sought to graft the New Testament onto the Tanach and thereby create its own Bible. Many changes in translation and the order of the books were incorporated to make their creation appear to better flow from our book into theirs.

This chart reveals how the Church has rearranged our scriptures:



- The Church obviously felt it had licence as editors of our Tanach to rearrange its order. As we will see, they used this licence to change other things as well.
- The new order meant that our book could no longer be called the Tanach and required a new name. Therefore, they called it the Old Testament to be superseded by the New Testament.
- The Church re-arranged the books of the Tanach to end with Malachi rather than II Chronicles. Malachi allowed for a smoother transition into the New Testament's Book of Matthew since II Chronicles ends with an upbeat message for the Jews. There, King Cyrus of Persia gives the Jews permission to return from exile to rebuild their land and their Temple. In typical fashion, the Church tried to avoid highlighting hopeful messages about the future of the Jews, especially because we rejected Jesus.

Thus said Cyrus king of Persia, "All the kingdoms of the earth has the Lord G-d of heaven given me; and He has charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all His people, the Lord his G-d be with him, and let him go up!"

II Chronicles 36:23

Malachi, in contrast, ends with:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. He will turn back (to G-d) the hearts of the fathers with their sons, and the hearts of the sons with their fathers, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.

Malachi 3:23-24

For the Church, this is a great lead-in to the New Testament story of John the Baptist who they allege to be Elijah the Prophet heralding the Messiah, Jesus. However in the New Testament Book of John 1:21, John the Baptist actually denies being Elijah.

Missionary "Proof-texting"

The New Testament repeatedly claims that Jesus fulfilled Biblical prophecies. The Jewish position is that he did not fulfill any, and that all attempts to make him appear to have done so come from misquoting our texts. This manipulation of our scriptures is accomplished by taking passages out of context, mistranslating words, and even making up quotes! Here are several New Testament (NT) verses, together with their sources in Tanach (T). Let us examine how honestly specific passages are portrayed.

TAKING PASSAGES OUT OF CONTEXT

Example #1

When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."
Matthew 2:14 (NT)

This New Testament story is about Joseph fleeing with his wife Mary and baby Jesus shortly after Jesus was born. G-d is quoted as calling His "son" out of Egypt. Matthew tries to show that this event was forecasted in the Tanach's Book of Hosea hundreds of years earlier. Looking at this passage from Hosea as cited in Matthew, it might appear that Jesus could have been this "Son of G-d."

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.
Hosea 11:1 (T)

When we examine the actual text that Matthew uses as his source, we see very clearly that Hosea was actually referring to the Jewish people collectively as G-d's son. This use of metaphor is common throughout the Tanach where the Jewish people are referred to repeatedly as G-d's "son" or "child."

And you shall say unto Pharaoh, thus says the Lord, Israel is my son, my firstborn.
Exodus 4:22

Furthermore, this verse in Hosea is one of many examples where the New Testament takes an historical event and transforms it into a messianic prophesy.

Example #2

And leaving Nazareth, he [Jesus] came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zebulun and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people, which sat in darkness, saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

Matthew 4:13-16 (NT)

This passage deals with the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and lists the places he visited. Matthew wanted to show that Jesus fulfilled an alleged prophecy that the Messiah would also begin his ministry in these same places.

Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory; and it will rise over all its channels, and go over all its banks... For there is no weariness to him [the king of Assyria] who is set against her, at the first lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards he afflicted her more grievously by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

Isaiah 8:7,23 (T)

The eighth chapter of Isaiah is really an historical account of the king of Assyria's assault on the Northern Kingdom of Israel which ultimately led to his taking the 10 tribes into exile. The chapter ends with a description of how he afflicted the lands of Zebulun, Naphtali, and the Galilee. This clearly negates Matthew's claim that this is a messianic prophecy fulfilled by Jesus. Notice that Matthew twice eliminates the description of how the king afflicted these areas.

MISTRANSLATIONS

To make the Tanach appear full of references to Jesus, Christian writers have resorted to mistranslating some critical Hebrew words. Therefore, not only should we be aware of the deception found in the New Testament, but we should also be wary of Christian translations of the Hebrew Bible.

Example #3

כִּי סָבְבוּנִי כְּלָבִים עֲדַת מְרֵעִים הַקִּיפוּנִי כְּאַרְיֵי יָדַי וְרַגְלָי

Psalm 22:17

For dogs have surrounded me; the assembly of the wicked have encircled me; they pierced my hands and my feet.

From this Christian translation of the Hebrew Bible, it appears that this Psalm speaks about someone whose hands and feet are pierced. These words could lead someone to believe that the Psalm is alluding to Jesus. However, during the Roman occupation, tens of thousands of Jews were crucified, and Psalm 22:17 does not identify any specific person, including Jesus.

Versus

For dogs have surrounded me; the assembly of the wicked have encircled me, like a lion [they are at] my hands and my feet.

This Jewish translation of Psalm 22:17 renders כְּאַרְיֵי *ka'ari*, the Hebrew word in question, as "like a lion" and not as "they pierced." King David wrote this passage to describe the travails of his life – it is not a messianic prophecy. In verses 14 and 22, David refers allegorically to those who pursue him as lions

(see also Psalm 7:3). In all other places where כְּאַרְיֵי *ka'ari* is found in the Hebrew Scriptures, Christian translations render it correctly as "like a lion" (Numbers 24:9, Isaiah 38:13, Ezekiel 22:25).

Example #4

נִשְׁקוּ בֶרֶךְ פֶּן יִאָּנֵן וְתִאבְּדוּ דְרֹךְ כִּי יִבְעַר כְּמַעַט אַפּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־י כָּל חוֹסֵי בּוֹ.

Psalm 2:12

Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way; when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

This Christian translation of Psalm 2:12 creates the impression that we are to embrace the Son (of G-d) or else suffer the consequences.

Versus

Embrace [worship in] purity, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

In this Jewish translation, the Hebrew word בֶרֶךְ *bar* is correctly translated as "purity." Christians base their rendition upon the Aramaic translation of בֶרֶךְ *bar* meaning "son of", as in Bar Mitzvah. Aside from the fact that בֶרֶךְ *bar* is not the Aramaic word for "son", why would this Aramaic word find its way into a Psalm composed in Hebrew by King David? The context of this Psalm is an admonition of the rulers of the world for their behaviour – not a prophesy about the Messiah.

MADE UP VERSES

Example #5

And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth that it might be filled which was spoken by the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene.'

Matthew 2:23 (NT)

The point of this passage is to show that the Messiah is to be from the city of Nazareth and be known for this by all – as Jesus of Nazareth was.

Not only has there never been a requirement for the Messiah to be from Nazareth, but also the quote that Matthew cites does not appear anywhere in the Tanach. It was made up! Furthermore, the words "Nazareth" and "Nazarene" cannot be found anywhere in the Tanach.

Some Christians attempt to connect this verse with a *nazir*, a person who takes an oath of abstinence from wine (Numbers 6:2, Judges 13:5). However, נָזִיר *nazir* is spelled with a "ז" (z), whereas נְצִרָת *Natzeret* (Nazareth) is spelled with a "צ" (tz). Other Christians try to make the connection from the description of the Messiah in Isaiah 11:1 as a "נֶצֶר" (branch) of Jesse, David's father. Even though this word's root is the same, it is clearly not the same quote, and shows no connection to the city of Nazareth.

Example #6

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me. Matthew 27:9-10 (NT)

Matthew wants us to believe that the prophet Jeremiah foretold the 30 pieces of silver that Judas received for betraying Jesus. After feeling remorse, Judas threw them into the Temple before committing suicide. Jeremiah never wrote anything of the sort! The closest reference to this could be from is a combination of the following two verses:

And Jeremiah said, The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Behold, Hanameel, the son of Shallum, your uncle shall come unto you, saying, Buy my field that is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is yours to buy it. Jeremiah 32:6-7

And I said unto them, If you think it good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord. Zechariah 11:12-14

Both these texts are historical passages that have nothing to do with describing the Messiah who would come in the future.

It is important for Jews to understand that the same manipulation of scripture that we have seen in these six examples is also used for beliefs that are foundational to Christianity. Let us now examine two of them.

The Virgin Birth

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14, Christian Translation

This is the verse upon which Christianity bases its claim that Jesus was born of a virgin, and this is essential to prove that he is the "Son of G-d." As mentioned before, stories of virgin births were common within pagan mythologies, and were readily accepted by them. Such beliefs have always been totally foreign to Judaism!

By now, we have seen many examples of the ways in which some Christian "editors" have manipulated Jewish texts, and we can understand how these verses have been doctored. Through mistranslating words and taking passages out of context, we again see how their beliefs have absolutely no connection to our *Tanach*.

Let us now look at the seventh chapter of Isaiah to see the actual context of these verses.

And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz... king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Aram, and Pekah... king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to fight against it, but could not prevail against it... Moreover the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your G-d; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said, Hear now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my G-d also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, the young woman is with child, and she will bear a son, and shall call his name Immanu-El. Butter and honey shall he eat, when he shall know how to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know how to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread shall be deserted. Isaiah 7:1-16

After the reign of Solomon, the Jewish people split into two warring kingdoms: the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel (Ephraim). King Ahaz of the kingdom of Judah was being attacked by the two armies of Aram and Israel, and was panicking. To ease his fears, G-d offered him a sign that he and the rest of Jerusalem would be saved. The young woman (someone familiar to Ahaz) was pregnant, and would give birth. The real sign was that before the child would "know how to refuse the evil, and choose the good", Ahaz and his kingdom would be spared of the two threatening kings.

This chapter is dealing with a political crisis that took place around 700 BCE. It has nothing to do with the future Messiah of the Jewish people. What comfort would Ahaz gain from a child born 700 years later, since he needed help then?

Christian translators change the word הָרָה *harah* which means "is pregnant" (see Isaiah 26:17) to mean "shall conceive", thereby implying that Isaiah is talking about the future, not the present. Furthermore, they changed the word הָעַלְמָה *ha'alma* which means "the young woman" to mean "a virgin."² The Biblical Hebrew word for virgin is בְּתוּלָה *betulah*. Furthermore, if Isaiah did mean "a virgin", then there would have to be a virgin birth in Ahaz's day, and there is no mention anywhere of such an event occurring.

Blood Atonement

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 makes an atonement for the soul.
Leviticus 17:11 (OT)

Christian missionaries will tell you that this passage affirms that it is only through a blood sacrifice that we can make atonement for our souls. However, because Jews no longer have Temple sacrifices, how do we achieve atonement? The missionaries claim that such sacrifices are no longer necessary because the blood of Jesus serves as our eternal atonement... if only we would believe in him.

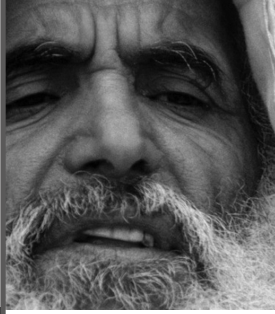
Once again, it is absolutely essential to see every passage in its full context to understand its true meaning and the missionaries' deliberate manipulation.

And whoever there is of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among you, who eats any kind of blood; I will set my face against that soul who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 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 makes an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said to the people of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood. And whoever there is of the people of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among you, who hunts and catches any beast or bird that may be eaten; he shall pour out its blood, and cover it with dust. For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for its life; therefore I said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any kind of flesh; for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.

Leviticus 17:10-14

Clearly, this passage is about the prohibition against consuming blood, and not about securing forgiveness from sins. Blood contains the life force of an animal, so when sacrifices were offered on the holy altar to atone for us, it is blood – not the nose, foot or ear – that atones. However, is a blood sacrifice the **only** way to achieve atonement? Not according to the Tanach. The verse the missionaries rely on (Leviticus 17:11) says that blood can serve as **an** atonement – not that blood is the **only** means of atonement. We deal more with this issue in the Appendix on page 51.

By now, we can clearly see that it is vital to always consider all of the Tanach in its original language and context. The writers of the Christian scriptures had an agenda, and they needed the Jewish texts to fit their requirements. Although we have not covered all of the Christian “proof-texts”, it is fair to say that we have seen typical examples of the distortions they use to make their case. Now, we turn our attention to understanding the person of Jesus, assessing him as a prophet and as the Messiah. Did he meet the criteria?

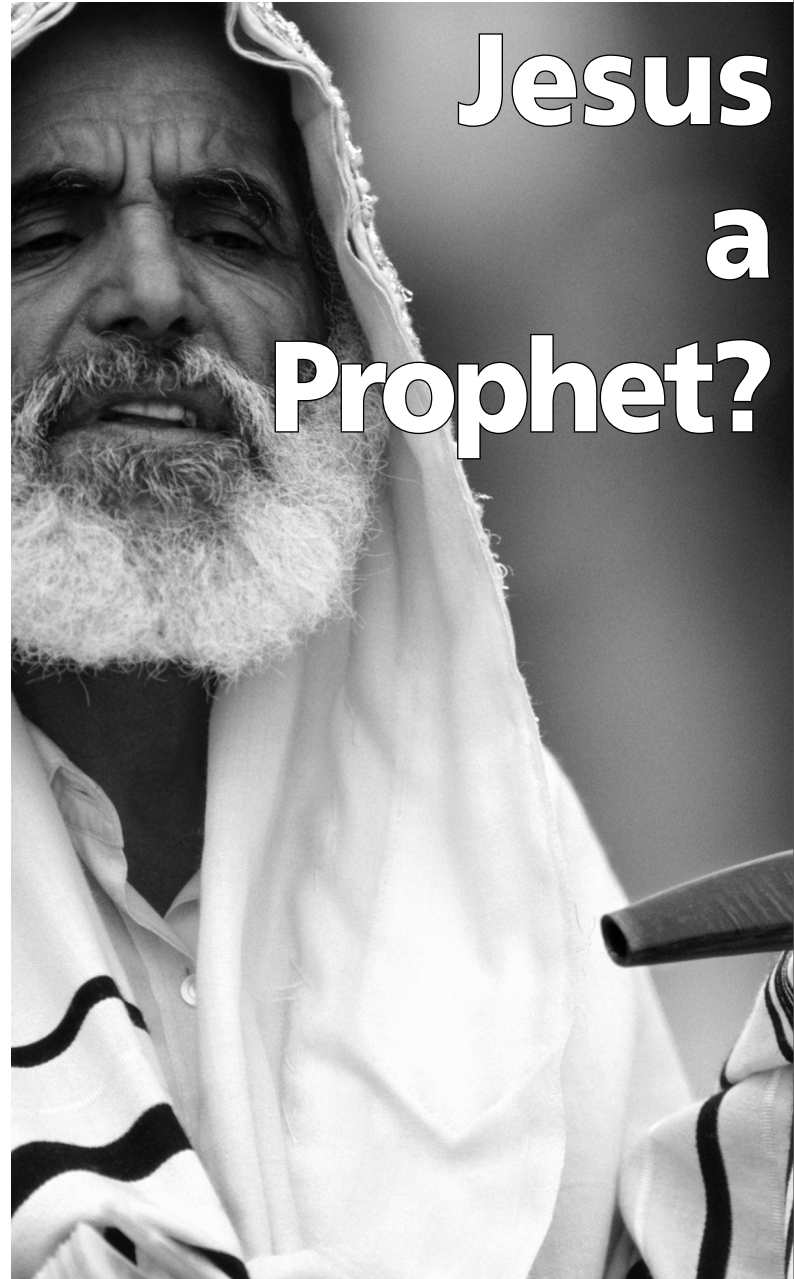


Was

Jesus

a

Prophet?



*And He sent
prophets to
them, to bring
them back to
the Lord.*

II Chronicles 24:19

Was Jesus a Prophet?

According to Judaism, the Torah was given to the Jewish people as a guidebook for life. We believe that within the Torah is the blueprint of Creation that provides us with the foundation and principles upon which the Heavens and Earth operate. Regardless of time and location, wherever a Jew will find himself, the Torah will give him insight into how to think and what to do. This was the case when it came to evaluating Jesus and the religion that developed subsequent to his death 2,000 years ago. This issue was significant enough that the Torah provided us with the ways to deal with it.

If you were to ask a missionary to show you where Jesus is most openly hinted at in the Five Books of Moses, he/she would most likely show you the following:

I will raise them a prophet from among their brothers, like you [Moses], and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him.

Deuteronomy 18:18-19

“I will raise a prophet... like... Moses.” Missionaries will ask “Who was a prophet like Moses? Who could the Torah be speaking about?” They will insist it is Jesus, and if we do not follow Jesus, G-d will punish us.

Knowing what we now know about how missionaries typically build their case, we need to examine this verse in its full context. When we read it in its entirety, we see a more complete and accurate picture.

I will raise them a prophet from among their brothers, like you, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, who shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follows not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, and the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. Deuteronomy 18:18-22

This passage serves several purposes.

- It establishes the authority of all future prophets after Moses. If, when it says “I will raise up a prophet”, it refers to only one person, and that person is Jesus, where did the earlier prophets, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah get their authority from?

- It provides instruction on the ways to distinguish between a true and a false prophet. We are told that when he prophesies and that which he predicts does not come about, we know he is a false prophet.

By examining the New Testament, we can see how Jesus measured up as a prophet.

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we want to see a sign from you. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Matthew 12:38-40

Here, Christians boldly claim Jesus is a prophet because he foretold his own death and resurrection. The problem is that this prophecy was given to the “scribes and Pharisees.” If Jesus’ prophecy had, in fact, come true and he was resurrected from the dead, then he should have appeared to his doubters to establish his truth, but he didn’t. Instead, we have to trust his followers that the events of his resurrection did, in fact, happen. Also, Matthew states that Jesus predicted he’d be buried for three days and three nights (12:40). But, according to the three synoptic Gospels, he was buried for only three days and two nights. According to the Gospel of John (20:1) it was only two days and two nights.

Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. Matthew 16:28

In this passage, Jesus is telling his disciples that he shall return to set up his kingdom before some of them die. Obviously he did not, and has not for 2,000 years. What kind of prophet would Deuteronomy 18:18-22 deem him to be?

There is another passage in the Book of Deuteronomy that is relevant when assessing Jesus and the authors of the Christian bible.

If there arises among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder, comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them'; you shall not listen to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your G-d tests you, to know whether you love the Lord your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the Lord your G-d, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and you shall serve him, and hold fast to him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he has spoken to turn you away from the Lord your G-d, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to thrust you out of the way which the Lord your G-d commanded you to walk in. So shall you purge the evil away from the midst of you. Deuteronomy 13:2-6

Here we learn that G-d will allow miracle-working prophets to come and test our faithfulness to Him. We are warned that we must not be fooled by miracles. The magicians of Egypt performed miracles, but that does not mean we should believe in them. However, the Christian scriptures assume that miracles are absolute proof of Jesus' legitimacy.

Therefore said some of the Pharisees: This man is not of G-d, because he does not keep the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?

John 9:16

Deuteronomy 13:2-6 provides the criteria with which we are to evaluate all people claiming to speak for G-d. Two things prove conclusively that these messengers are not from G-d, even if they are able to perform supernatural miracles:

- Any deviation from the laws that G-d revealed to Moses
- Any conception of G-d we had not previously known

The entire religious edifice of the Christian scriptures is impeached by these two criteria. The New Testament consistently asserts that many laws of the Torah that G-d declared as eternal are no longer binding, and presents a view of G-d that was unknown to our ancestors. We will soon explore these two issues.

One last point. We previously learned that the age of prophecy ended with the completion of the Tanach, and this motivated the canonization of the Tanach, because in a sense "the book was closed." Indeed, the Jews do not recognize any post-Tanach prophets. If Jesus was regarded by the Jews as a prophet, then the only category where he could be placed would be "false prophet."

Interestingly, did the prophet Zechariah prophesy about Jesus centuries before he lived? Perhaps so. One of the great commentators to the Tanach³ taught that in the Messianic era, the false prophets will return to confess their errors. Who is the prophet with wounds in his hands?

On that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for cleansing and for sprinkling. And it shall come to pass on that day, says the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no more be remembered; and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass from the land. And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother who bore him shall say to him, You shall not live; for you speak lies in the name of the Lord; and his father and his mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies. And it shall come to pass on that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed everyone of his vision, when he has prophesied; nor shall they wear a hairy mantle in order to deceive; But he shall say, I am not a prophet, I am a tiller of the soil; for a man taught me to keep cattle from my youth. And one shall say to him, What are these wounds in your hands? Then he shall answer, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

Zechariah 13:1-6



Is

Jesus the Messiah?

*And there shall
come forth a rod
from the stem
of Jesse, and
a branch shall
grow from his
roots; And the
spirit of the Lord
shall rest upon
him, the spirit
of wisdom and
understanding,
the spirit of
counsel and
might, the spirit
of knowledge
and of the fear
of the Lord...*

Isaiah 11:1-2

Point #1: Both genealogies end with Joseph, Jesus' stepfather, yet they have almost no other names in common. How can Joseph have two different lineages? It certainly challenges the credibility of one, if not both of them. One Christian response is that the Matthew lineage is that of Joseph, whereas the one in Luke traces Mary's lineage. We will now deal with each one and examine the problems they present.

CONCERNING JOSEPH'S LINEAGE IN MATTHEW

Point #2: A stepfather is not a person's birth father. We are interested in determining the path through which David's Y-chromosomes, passed father-to-son, reached Jesus. Certainly, it could not come through Jesus' stepfather. Christians will argue that Joseph adopted Jesus, and by doing so, transmitted the royal line. Yet, just as with the Kohanim (Priests), an adopted son cannot become a Kohen, so too, a son adopted by a member of the royal line cannot become heir to the throne. The Messiah must be an actual biological member of the royal line.

Point #3: Missing Names and Generations. When comparing the Davidic line as shown in Matthew with the way it is shown in I Chronicles, we see that four names are eliminated as indicated on the chart. For example, Matthew's genealogy states that Uzziah (same as Azariah) was the son of Jehoram, instead of the son of Amaziah. Christian apologists try to explain this by stating that when it says "this one begat that one", it implies his ancestor, and not necessarily his father. The problem they create for themselves is intensified when Matthew states:

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.
Matthew 1:17

Because the *gematria* (numerical value) of David's name in Hebrew is 14, the authors of the New Testament were anxious to show how Jesus' genealogy was tied to this number.

We can accept that names could be skipped when showing an ancestral line. However, it is not legitimate to take a lineage that stretched from David to the Babylonian exile, which included 18 generations, and claim that it only contained 14 in order to show the significance of the number of generations.

Point #4: According to Christianity, Joseph himself was not a legitimate heir to the throne. Even if lineage could be passed on through adoption, Jesus could not be a Messianic candidate if he was a descendant of Joseph. Why? Joseph, himself, was a descendant of a family that was disqualified from being the Messiah. Matthew 1:11 shows that Joseph was descended from Jechoniah or Coniah for short, a former king who was very wicked and cursed by G-d. In Jeremiah 22, we see that Jechoniah's descendants are absolutely disqualified

as heirs to the throne. Therefore, anyone descended from Joseph was also disqualified as a candidate to the throne.

Is this man Coniah a despised broken vessel? An object that no one cares for? Why are they cast out, he and his seed, and banished to a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord, Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.
Jeremiah 22:28-30

Some Christians answer that a rabbinic *Midrash* (tradition) tells us that Jechoniah repented, and the curse was later rescinded. However, this idea is not found in the Bible – it is only taught by our Jewish sages. Missionaries only accept the authority of the Bible and not the traditions of our rabbis. Therefore, according to Christian beliefs, Joseph's lineage was not valid.

CONCERNING MARY'S LINEAGE IN LUKE

Point #5: Mary's name is not mentioned in Luke's lineage. Christians explain the discrepancies between the two New Testament genealogies by inventively proposing that Matthew is tracing Joseph's lineage, and Luke is tracing Mary's lineage. How can we know this is Mary's lineage? Some contend that Heli is really Mary's father, and when it says that Heli is the father of Joseph, it really means father-in-law. Yet, nowhere does the New Testament say anything about Heli, and furthermore, he is only mentioned here. Others contend that Joseph was also the name of Mary's father, and that the Joseph mentioned here was really Mary's father, not husband. The bottom line is that we cannot substantiate this as Mary's lineage by anything written in the New Testament. Our conclusion is especially ironic – firstly, because Christians are so adamant in rejecting the legitimacy of Jewish traditions that do not appear explicitly in the Bible; and secondly, because they insist upon strict reliance on scripture.

Point #6: The royal line is only passed through the father, never the mother. Even if the lineage mentioned in Luke is Mary's lineage – this presents a problem in and of itself. True, one's Jewishness is passed through the mother, yet one's tribal inheritance passes through the father. Christians argue that the Book of Numbers shows a case where a father had no sons, and his estate of land was inherited by his daughters upon his death. However, this story teaches that inheritance applies only to property, not to lineage. This is why his daughters were required to marry within their tribe; otherwise, the estates they inherited would be lost to another tribe. Yet, even if we assume that lineage could pass through the mother, and we also assume that Luke's lineage did, in fact, belong to Mary – was Mary's lineage a legitimate one?

Point #7: David-to-Solomon. According to the Bible, the Davidic line had to pass only through David's son Solomon, and no other son.

As I swore to you by the Lord G-d of Israel, saying, assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me (David), and he shall sit upon my throne in my place...
I Kings 1:30

Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies around; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. He shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.
I Chronicles 22:9-10

Luke's lineage shows that Mary is not from Solomon's line, but from Nathan, another of David's sons, (Luke 3:31) who was not a royal heir. Since Mary is not from Solomon's line, she and her descendants do not have a legitimate connection to the royal line of David.

Now that we see that neither Matthew's lineage of Joseph, nor Luke's supposed lineage of Mary is legitimate, we cannot consider Jesus as a legitimate descendant of David. Therefore, Jesus cannot be the Messiah.

What Is The Messiah Supposed To Accomplish?

According to scripture, the Messiah is supposed to come once, exalted as a revered king of the Jewish people, and accomplish several things toward establishing G-d's kingdom on earth.⁴

WORLD PEACE

And He (G-d) shall judge among the nations, and shall decide for many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more.
Isaiah 2:4

Since the time of Jesus, there have been unending horrific wars. In fact, there has been more bloodshed in the name of Jesus than anyone else on earth.

THE NATIONS WILL TURN TO THE G-D OF ISRAEL

To You (G-d) nations shall come from the ends of the earth and say: Our fathers inherited utter delusions, things that are futile and worthless. Can a man make gods for himself? They are not gods! Assuredly, I will teach them, once and for all I will teach them My power and My might. And they shall learn that My name is G-d.
Jeremiah 16:19-21

Thus says the Lord of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men from the nations of every language, shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that G-d is with you.
Zechariah 8:23

Thus says the Lord G-d, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be your nursing fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers: they shall bow down to you with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of your feet; and you shall know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.
Isaiah 49:22-23

UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE OF G-D

After those days, says the Lord, I will put my Torah in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their G-d, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will no longer remember their sin.
Jeremiah 31:32-33

... For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, who shall stand for a banner of the people; to it shall the nations seek; and his resting place shall be glorious.
Isaiah 11:9-10

The most comprehensive list of what is to occur in the Messiah's time is found in the Book of Ezekiel, Chapter 37.

And say to them, Thus says the Lord G-d: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from among the nations, where they have gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land;

And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, nor shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all;

Nor shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them in all their dwelling places, where they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be their G-d.

And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also follow my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given

to Jacob my servant, where your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell in it, they and their children, and their grandchildren forever; and my servant David shall be their prince forever. And I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

My tabernacle also shall be with them; and I will be their G-d, and they shall be my people. And the nations shall know that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.
Ezekiel 37:21-27

In summary, the following will happen in the Messianic era:

1. The ingathering of all the exiled Jewish people back to the land of Israel
2. The Jews will be unified, purified from sin, with no more idolatry
3. A descendant of King David will rule the Jews as their king and Messiah
4. The Jews will keep all of the G-d given Torah laws
5. G-d will establish an eternal covenant of peace with the Jews and there will be no more war on earth
6. The Temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem
7. All the nations of the world will come to recognize the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who has chosen and sanctifies the Jewish people

Based on the evidence that we have now examined, it is clear that the Messiah has not yet come. Does today's world appear as if the Messiah has already arrived? Over the past 2,000 years, the one point that Jews have unanimously agreed upon is that Jesus is not the Messiah as described and promised in our Bible.

The Christian View On Why Jesus Came

Most Christians recognize the issues we just mentioned, but they have a different point of view. Though Jesus was killed and failed to establish G-d's Kingdom here on earth in his lifetime, Christians claim that his life and death are all part of G-d's plan for the Messiah. His followers came to believe that Jesus will return a second time, and then succeed in bringing about world peace and rebuilding the Temple.

Why, then, did he come the first time? They propose that he came to "deal with sin." Through his suffering and death, all of mankind was given atonement for their sins – if only they would believe in him.

Isaiah 53: The Suffering Servant

There is no passage in the entire *Tanach* that Christians cite with more conviction as proof of Jesus as Messiah than Isaiah 53. They claim that the trials, tribulations and suffering that Jesus allegedly underwent are a fulfillment of those experienced by the "person" spoken of in Isaiah 53. However here, as with all of the *Tanach*, it is necessary to deal with this passage in its original Hebrew and original context.

The subject of Isaiah 53 is described as G-d's servant, not as the Messiah.

Who is Isaiah referring to when he speaks about G-d's "servant?" Missionaries emphatically claim that it is Jesus. The Jewish position emerges from a careful contextual reading of this chapter in light of everything that Isaiah wrote.

But you, Israel, are my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called you from the chief men thereof, and said unto you, You are my servant; I have chosen you, and not cast you away. Isaiah 41:8

Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are My servant. I have formed you. You are My servant O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me. Isaiah 44:21

And said unto me, You are my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Isaiah 49:3

Isaiah explicitly makes this identification of Israel as G-d's servant at least ten times.⁵

The chapters in Isaiah immediately before and after the passage under consideration also add clarification. Chapters 52 and 54 both speak about the historical suffering and persecution of the Jewish people and their ultimate redemption by G-d. This is also the theme of chapter 53.

Isaiah 52:13-15 introduces chapter 53 by telling us that when G-d's servant will ultimately be exalted, the nations and kings of the world will be totally shocked. This statement makes sense if we understand the servant to be the Jewish people. However, the ultimate elevation of Jesus would not at all surprise the world – because this is exactly what both Christianity and Islam are expecting.

Furthermore, a proper translation of verse 53:8 *לְמוֹ לָמוּ עַמִּי נִגַע לְמוֹ* states "from the sins of my people, they were stricken" – implying that a people, not a single man, will suffer. The kings of the world are going to acknowledge that their people have sinned by afflicting G-d's "servant" (Israel).⁶ Christian translators render this verse as "for the sins of my people, he is stricken" as they try to suggest that one

man, Jesus, suffered for our sins. The original Hebrew of Isaiah does not support this contention. In addition, verse 10 tells us that the servant will have both actual children and have a long life – these obviously do not apply to Jesus.

We do not believe that the Messiah is to suffer for our sins. He will be a righteous king who will reign in Israel. Upon his coming, the Jews who have experienced great suffering throughout history will suffer no more.

Jesus' crucifixion caused his followers to scramble for a way to justify that his death was not a tragedy. Instead, they tell us it was intentional and part of G-d's plan. If this was the case and Jesus was, in fact, G-d, then why were his last words on the cross:

My G-d, my G-d, why have you forsaken me?

Matthew 27:46

Christians contend that Jesus died as a perfect sacrifice to atone for our sins, and he will return to establish G-d's Kingdom on Earth.

WAS HE A PERFECT SACRIFICE?

Needed for kosher sacrifice:	What happened to Jesus:
Kosher animal	Human sacrifice ⁷
Slaughtered according to Jewish law	Nailed to a cross
Offered on the altar in the Temple	Crucified outside the Temple ⁸
Offered by a Kohen (Priest)	Killed by Roman soldiers

THE RESURRECTION

There is no belief that Christians hang onto more tightly than their belief in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. In fact, some claim that because of their unquestionable belief in the resurrection, they have no concerns about any scriptural problems. Judaism, obviously, approaches scripture very differently. Once again, careful study also reveals several problems with the resurrection story.

- Even if someone is resurrected – this does not necessarily qualify him as being the Messiah. The prophet Elisha resurrected a child, and Jesus allegedly resurrected Lazarus. Does this qualify Lazarus as the Messiah? We must remember that none of the Biblical passages about the Messiah mentions that he will be resurrected from the dead.
- The four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John – present distinct accounts of the resurrection with major discrepancies. Christians try to use these discrepancies to bolster their case, and claim that totally consistent stories would suggest collusion. By making this claim, they assert that the Gospel

stories were true eyewitness accounts. However, none of the Gospel writers was an eyewitness. If instead, they relied on the "Holy Spirit" for their information, why would the "Holy Spirit" provide four different accounts?

Below is a chart comparing the four accounts of Jesus' alleged resurrection:

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Who first approached the empty tomb?	Mary Magdalene & Mother Mary.	Mary Magdalene & Mother Mary & Salome.	Mary Magdalene & Mother Mary & Joanna.	Mary Magdalene alone.
Who did they first see when they came to the tomb?	An angel sitting outside the tomb.	One man sitting inside the tomb.	Two men sitting inside the tomb.	At first no one, later two angels.
Who first told Mary Magdalene about the resurrection of Jesus?	An angel.	A man.	Two men.	Jesus himself.
Who did Jesus first appear to?	A joyful Mary Magdalene on the road.	Mary Magdalene on the road.	Cleopas & Simon on the road.	A grief stricken Mary Magdalene in the tomb.
What did the women do when they were informed that Jesus had risen?	Mary Magdalene & Mother Mary rushed to inform the disciples.	They fearfully kept the news to themselves. Mary Magdalene alone later went to inform the disciples.	They went to inform the disciples.	Mary Magdalene went to inform the disciples.
Who did Jesus first reveal himself to and where?	To 11 disciples in the Galilee.	To 11 disciples in the Galilee.	To 11 disciples in Jerusalem.	To 11 disciples in Jerusalem.

The fact that Jesus has inspired many people to become better people is wonderful, yet every religion can make this claim. That he atoned for our sins, that he is the only path to a relationship with G-d, and that he is the key to eternal life cannot be objectively validated. These claims are based purely on faith. In addition to never describing the Messiah as a human sacrifice who dies and is resurrected, Jewish Scriptures never speak about a "second-coming." The global utopian changes that will occur when the Messiah arrives are all tangible and verifiable. Because Jesus fulfilled nothing that was required of the Messiah, the Jewish people cannot accept him as such.

Do They Match?

**G-d is near
unto all that
call upon Him,
to all that call
upon Him in
truth.**

Psalm 145:18

**Jesus said
unto him, I am
the way, the
truth, and the
life: no man
comes unto
the Father, but
by me.**

John 14:6

Do They Match?

Is Christianity merely an extension of Judaism, as Messianic Jews would have us believe, or is Christianity a completely different religion? If it is an extension, then we can argue that a Jew can believe in this religion and still remain faithful to the Torah. However, if it is different, then we must deal with Christianity in terms of a Jew leaving Judaism for another religion.

In our search for the truth, we have the Torah as our guide. When we are presented with a new idea, we ask ourselves whether or not this idea corresponds to what is written in the Torah. Our goal in this final section of our Study Guide is to examine some basic Jewish beliefs while keeping this question in mind – “Do Christian beliefs match what the Torah says?”

We begin by first examining the differing views of the nature of G-d, His Laws and the Jewish people.

Background

A beautiful way to gain insight into the Jewish perspective is to start with an often-quoted passage from the Zohar, the book of Jewish mysticism.

יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאוֹרֵיֶיטָא וְקוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא קֹד הוּא.

Israel and the Torah and G-d are one.

This passage tells us so much in such concise form. What does the Zohar mean when it says that each of these things is all one? Certainly, this does not suggest the Trinity!

- It can mean that each one is unique, with nothing to compare with it.

Who is like you, O Lord, among the heavenly powers? Who is like you, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Exodus 15:11

For what nation is there so great, who has G-d so near to them, as the Lord our G-d is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, who has statutes and judgments so righteous as all this Torah, which I set before you this day?

Deuteronomy 4:7-8

The Torah of G-d is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of G-d is sure, making wise the simple.

Psalm 19:8

- It can mean that all three are so interrelated that they are “as one” in their essence. By being so interrelated, we can learn about each one by studying the other two. We can learn about G-d by understanding His Torah and the Jewish people. We can learn about the Torah by understanding G-d who gave it and the people who keep it. We can learn about the Jewish people by understanding our G-d and His Torah.
- In addition, it can mean that the three are so intrinsically bound that if we try to change one, we must change the other two. If anyone tried to replace the Jews as G-d’s Chosen People, they must change what G-d is and must change His Torah. Just like a three-legged stool, if one leg is shortened, the other two must also be shortened to allow the stool to fulfill its purpose.

If these ordinances depart from before Me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever
Jeremiah 31:35

Just as we are G-d’s witnesses, wherein our mere existence testifies to His existence, so too, our existence testifies that His Law is eternally viable.

G-d: The Unitarian vs. Trinitarian Views

Since the time of Abraham, the most critical message that the Jewish people brought to the world was the Oneness of G-d. This was a revolutionary idea 3,800 years ago, and even today most of the world still does not clearly grasp its significance. To provide clarity, G-d tells us to understand Him as He revealed Himself to our ancestors at Mount Sinai.

For nearly 2,000 years, Christians have tried to convince us that the Trinitarian view of G-d – One G-d existing in three persons of equal status, namely the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is the same as our Unitarian view. Nowhere in the Torah is the Trinitarian view mentioned, and furthermore, the Trinity did not become official Church doctrine until the fourth century. Our ancestors in the Torah “had not known” a three-part G-d manifested in human form, and their direct experiences with the one G-d is sufficient reason for us to reject such an idea.

If there arises among you a prophet... saying, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them; You shall not listen to the words of that prophet...
Deuteronomy 13:2-4

They sacrificed to powerless spirits, not to G-d; to gods whom they knew not; to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.
Deuteronomy 32:17

Oneness of G-d

It is essential for the Jewish people to understand that, in our Bible, no passage describing G-d and His nature contains any words – not even a hint – concerning a Trinitarian view or a human form.⁹

Unto you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord, He is G-d; there is none else beside Him.
Deuteronomy 4:35

You are My witnesses, says the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen; that you may know and understand that I am He: before Me there was no god formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no savior.
Isaiah 43:10-11

... And there is no G-d beside me; a just G-d and a savior; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am G-d, and there is none else.
Isaiah 45:21-22

Yet I am the Lord your G-d from the land of Egypt, and you shall know no god but Me: for there is no savior beside Me.
Hosea 13:4

Are G-d’s Commandments Eternal? The Biblical View

You shall keep therefore His statutes, and His commandments, which I command you this day, that it may go well with you, and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days upon the earth, which the Lord your G-d has given you forever.
Deuteronomy 4:40

And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord your G-d, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our G-d, as He has commanded us.
Deuteronomy 6:24-25

*But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children’s children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them.*¹⁰
Psalm 103:17-18

Will The Commandments Be In Force In The Messianic Era?

And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them.
Ezekiel 37:24

*The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. And many people shall go and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the G-d of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*¹¹ Isaiah 2:1-3

With Whom Does G-d Keep His Covenant?

Know therefore that the Lord your G-d, He is G-d, the faithful G-d, which keeps the covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations: And repays them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack to him that hates Him, He will repay him to his face. You shall therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command you this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if you hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord your G-d shall keep unto you the covenant and the mercy which He swore unto your fathers. Deuteronomy 7:9-12

*And I prayed unto the Lord my G-d, and made my confession, and said, "O Lord, the great and dreadful G-d, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments."*¹² Daniel 9:4

The Commandments: A New Testament Perspective

Although Jesus generally affirms the eternally binding nature of Torah law, the Gospels contain ambiguous statements and relate several incidents where he takes issue with rabbinic legislation. Nevertheless, historical records indicate that Jesus' disciples were Torah observant.

However, the direction of historical Christianity is based primarily upon the teachings of Paul, rather than those of Jesus. Although Paul never met Jesus, he composed the majority of the New Testament writings in which he never relates anything about the life of Jesus nor quotes any of his teachings. Instead, Paul's writings primarily reflect his interpretation of Jesus' nature and mission.

As well, Paul's writings reveal that he often came into conflict with Jesus' actual disciples over the issue of Torah observance, and this schism continued into the second century. During this time, Paul was viewed as a heretic by the Jewish followers of Jesus who were rapidly becoming a small minority in the Church. The thrust of Paul's teachings, along with the historical direction

of Christianity, was that there was no longer any obligation to observe the ceremonial and ritual laws of the Torah, such as the Sabbath, holidays, dietary laws and circumcision.¹³

Compare what Paul said about the Torah in the New Testament to what King David said in the Tanach.

NEW TESTAMENT

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Romans 3:28

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. Romans 10:4

... the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stone... II Corinthians 3:7

... For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Galatians 2:21

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.... Galatians 3:13

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For you are all children of G-d by faith in Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:23-26

VERSUS

TANACH

The Torah of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. Psalm 19:8-9

Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Torah of the Lord. Happy are those who keep his testimonies, and who seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in his ways. You have commanded us to keep your precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep your statutes! Then I shall not be ashamed, when I gaze at all your commandments. Psalm 119:1-6

Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your Torah is the truth. Trouble and anguish have taken hold of me; yet your commandments are my delights. The righteousness of your testimonies is everlasting; give me understanding, and I shall live. Psalm 119:142-144

For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold His face. Psalm 11:7

The Lord rewards me (David) according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he recompenses me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my G-d. For all his judgments were before me; and as for his statutes, I did not depart from them. I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from my iniquity. II Samuel 22:21

So, which way is the right way? Does keeping the law lead us to become righteous, or is righteousness only achieved by faith in Jesus? Here's the bottom line. The Church came to believe that it was not bound to keep the Torah, and therefore did not remain part of the covenant established with the Jewish people. Although all of Jesus' early disciples were Jews, within several hundred years no Jews remained in the Church, and Christianity became a totally non-Jewish religion.

Are The Jews Still G-d's Chosen People?

There is one issue that both Jews and Christians agree upon, namely that the *Tanach* clearly identifies the Jews as G-d's Chosen People and Judaism as the true religion in the world. Where Jews and Christians differ is what happened following the birth of Jesus.

Now therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own treasure among all peoples; for all the earth is Mine... Exodus 19:5

For you are a holy people to the Lord your G-d, and the Lord has chosen you to be a special people to Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. Deuteronomy 14:2

*And the Lord has declared you this day to be His special people, as He has promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments; And to set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that you may be a holy people to the Lord your G-d, as He has spoken.*¹⁴

Deuteronomy 26:18-19

In the New Testament, the Jews are often portrayed as heartless and overly legalistic, rejected by G-d, yet nevertheless, a people who will eventually come to accept Jesus at the End of Days. For the present time, many Christians say that we have been cast out of G-d's grace because we have refused to accept Jesus.

Christian Replacement or Covenant Theology

In the Book of Galatians, Paul laid the foundation for "Replacement Theology," in which the body of believers in Jesus has replaced the Jews as G-d's Chosen People.

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother...

*Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.*¹⁵

Galatians 4:22-31

As we can plainly see, a careful study of Christianity shows that it does not match Judaism in the most fundamental areas. In reality, any words of Truth that are found in the New Testament are not new, because they are already found in the *Tanach*. Conversely, any new concepts that are found the New Testament are not considered true, because they are foreign to the teachings of the *Tanach*.

In Conclusion



*Let us hear
the conclusion
of the whole
matter: Fear
G-d, and keep
his command-
ments: for this
is the whole
duty of man.*

Ecclesiastes 12:13

In Conclusion

This book has only begun to deal with the immense issues concerning Judaism and Christianity. Nevertheless, we have covered many key issues that a Jew must examine to gain clarity and perspective.

Let us summarize these key issues.

- For a Jew, the importance of remaining faithful to our Torah and our people has “life or death” implications. The blessing to remain part of G-d’s covenant with the Jewish people is not to be taken lightly, and it applies to us, as well as our children, grandchildren and generations to follow. Judaism also believes that we impact the eternity that our souls will experience by our faithfulness to G-d and His Torah, and by not serving other gods. The Torah gives us the information we need to make these critical choices.
- For the last 2,000 years, Christianity has served as the main “other god” that we have resisted. Using economic oppression, violence or proselytizing, believers in the New Testament have tried to undermine our attachment to the Torah. Despite the loving face worn by today’s missionaries, we must know that they are aggressively trying to make us adopt a faith that has always resulted in total assimilation.
- Unfortunately, many Jews today have little Jewish education or bad experiences with Judaism. Many are seeking spirituality and are turning to Christianity because they believe that Judaism lacks substance and is incapable of fulfilling their inner needs. With great zeal and startling success, Evangelical Christians and Messianic Jews are taking advantage of our vulnerable fellow Jews. By deceptively presenting the missionary message as authentically Jewish, they offer love and acceptance, together with Christian beliefs to “save” them.
- As attractive as Christianity may appear to an unaffiliated Jew, conversion is a trap with terrible consequences. Our Jewish communities must become more vigilant in promoting the love, spirituality and strength of our religion so that disenchanted Jews will not be enticed by the Christian message.
- Missionaries cannot quote every verse of the Tanach because many of its verses contradict the picture they are trying to fabricate.
- When examining missionary arguments, we see that every verse of prophecy they cite from the Tanach is:
 - Mistranslated or misrepresented
 - Taken out of context
 - Or just made up!

- When we examine our Torah for guidance, we are told to beware of false prophets who perform real miracles, because G-d is testing our faithfulness. We must realize that the Christian missionaries are trying to convince us to believe in a G-d that is foreign to Torah beliefs, "other gods which you have not known." The Jews of the Tanach never worshipped a Trinity, nor spoke of the Messiah as being anything other than a human being.
- The Jewish criteria for assessing a Messianic candidate are precise. He must be a father-son descendant of David through his son Solomon and appear only one time. He will usher in the Kingdom of G-d on earth which includes world peace, an end to war, an ingathering of the exiled Jewish people to Israel, a rebuilding of the Temple, and universal belief in G-d. Obviously, these things did not materialize at the time of Jesus or at any time throughout history.
- Lastly, if we are to believe that Christianity is merely an extension of Judaism, and not a different religion, its beliefs must mirror Jewish beliefs. In fact, very little in Christianity matches Judaism, and furthermore, Christianity can be shown to have incorporated many pagan beliefs within its very foundation.

Answering A Missionary

Choose Life is not intended to prepare you for a debate with the next missionary you encounter. Some of them are very clever in presenting their case and make inexperienced opponents feel awkward and confused. As well, there is no catchy statement that can penetrate their fixed beliefs because their faith is usually based in emotion and a distorted exposure to Jewish scriptures – whereas our beliefs are based on careful study.

Jews for Judaism believes that the best response to a missionary is, in fact, no response. A polite, but firm, "No, thank you" is the best answer – and you are absolutely not obligated to give him/her any personal information, such as your name, phone number or email address.

However, if you do become involved in a discussion with a missionary, remember the importance of checking the accuracy and context of their sources. All of Tanach has a critical context that supports the Jewish position. Taken out of this context, many passages can have deceptive or incorrect meanings.

Our Study Guide has been designed to educate Jews on the vast differences between the authentic teachings of our Torah and the deceptions the Christian missionaries want us to believe and adopt. We hope our Study Guide is informative and thought provoking, and we ask you to contact Jews for Judaism with your questions.

Appendix:

Is a Blood Sacrifice Required for Atonement?

Quite often, missionaries will cite Hebrews 9:22 (NT) which states: "... without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (forgiveness of sin). But is this true? Is this a Jewish concept? After all, the New Testament claims to be the fulfillment of Judaism. Let us examine this question based upon what was revealed in the Tanach and see if the New Testament is correct about this important subject.

The New Testament bases its idea on Leviticus 17:11 which says:

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 makes an atonement for the soul.

From a simple reading, it seems that "blood makes atonement for the soul." Without blood, atonement does not seem possible. But is this the whole story? We must always ask ourselves, "What is the full context of this verse?"

If anyone of the house of Israel or of the strangers who resides among them consumes any blood, I will set My face against that person who consumes blood and I will cut that person off from the people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for as life, it is the blood that makes an atonement. Therefore, I have said to the people of Israel: No person among you shall consume any blood, nor any stranger who resides among you shall consume any blood. And any one of the people of Israel, or of the stranger who resides among them, who hunts down an animal or a bird that may be eaten, shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. For the life of every creature: its blood is its life; therefore I have said to the people of Israel: You shall not consume the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off. Leviticus 17:10-14

A careful reading of this passage in Leviticus clearly reveals that the Torah is speaking about the prohibition against consuming blood, and not about atonement. Blood is important because when an animal is offered for sacrifice, it is the blood that affects the atonement, not the skin or the bones. These passages also tell us that the only permitted use of blood is on the altar in the Temple.

Is a blood sacrifice the only means that G-d has given us to atone for our souls? Absolutely not! Just as a store allows us to pay by cash, cheque or credit card so too, G-d allows us many way to atone for our souls.

To appreciate this concept, we examine the New Testament quote the missionaries use to make their case. We discover that not only do they take verses from the Tanach out of context, but they also do the same thing with the New Testament verses. The entire verse from the New Testament reads:

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. Hebrews 9:22

“Almost all things?” Certainly, Paul was aware that the atoning power of blood did not cover everything, and that other means for atonement were available. Let us now examine the Tanach to see where atonement was achieved without blood.

If a person cannot afford an animal to sacrifice, is atonement, therefore, impossible for him?

But if he is not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering... Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, a memorial part of it, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire to the Lord; it is a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him in regard to his sin that he has sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him; and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meal offering. Leviticus 5:11-13

In fact, sacrifices, in and of themselves, were never able to absolve the person who committed wrong. Many Jews in Biblical times made the great mistake of assuming that the critical antidote to sin was the shed blood of a sacrifice.¹⁶ In the Book of Proverbs, King Solomon warned that “the sacrifice of a wicked person is an abomination to G-d” (15:8, 21:27). Ultimately, a sacrifice was only meaningful when it truly represented a sincere change in the heart and the actions of the person seeking forgiveness. This reformation of the sinner and his returning to G-d (*teshuvah*) is the true repentance that G-d desires and is the only means to achieve forgiveness.

Bring no more vain offerings; incense of abomination they are to me... Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the orphan, plead for the widow.

Isaiah 1:13-17

The sacrifices of G-d are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart. These, Oh G-d, you will not despise. Psalm 51:19

King David desired Bathsheva, and he therefore sent Uriah, her husband, to the front lines of battle to be killed. When the prophet Nathan confronted David with his sin, he repented and was forgiven. Because sin offerings were only brought for unintentional sins (Leviticus chapter 4), no blood offering was involved in David's atonement process and no sacrifice is mentioned in this story.

And David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David, The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. II Samuel 12:13

Nineveh was sinful city comprised solely of gentiles and described in the Book of Jonah:

Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me... And the people of Nineveh believed G-d, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. And word came to the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he took off his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes... And G-d saw their doings, that they turned from their evil way; and G-d repented of the evil, which He had said that He would do to them; and He did not do it. Jonah 1:2; 3:5-6,10

Turning away from sin and returning to G-d in repentance is the exclusive avenue to forgiveness as repeated numerous times in the Bible:

It may be that when the house of Judah hears of all the disasters I intend to do to them, that all of them may turn from their evil ways so that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. Jeremiah 36:3

*Let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord that He may have mercy on them, to our G-d for He will abundantly pardon.*¹⁷ Isaiah 55:7

Christians ask, “How is it possible to attain atonement without sacrifices?” Since no sacrifices can be offered without the Temple, Jews have always done exactly what the Bible has instructed them to do in such a case. When Solomon dedicated the First Temple, he told the people how to attain forgiveness should they be exiled and no longer have access to it:

... They shall think to themselves in the land where they were carried away, and repent and pray to You... saying: We have sinned, and have acted perversely and have committed wickedness. And they return to You with all

of their heart and all of their soul... Then hear their prayer and supplication in heaven... and forgive Your people who have sinned against You...

I Kings 8:47-50

Hosea prophesied to the 10 northern tribes of Israel who were unable to go to the Temple in Jerusalem because of the civil war, and provided an admonition from G-d applicable to all of us:

O Israel, return to the Lord your G-d; for you have stumbled in your iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say to him: Forgive all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we offer the words of our lips instead of calves.

Hosea 14:2-3

The prophet Daniel lived during the Babylonian exile when there was no Temple or sacrifices, and offers his words of confession:

We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly and have rebelled, and have departed from your precepts and from your judgments...

Daniel 9:5

And his plea for forgiveness:

To the Lord our G-d belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him... O Lord, according to all your righteousness, I pray you, let your anger and your fury be turned away from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a reproach to all those who are around us.

Daniel 9:9,16

Daniel asked G-d for forgiveness for himself and his people. Knowing that he could not offer blood sacrifices, would Daniel pray for something inaccessible? Of course not. Daniel knew the teachings of Solomon and Hosea, as well as the words of Nathan the prophet concerning King David's forgiveness. Daniel understood the central teaching of the Tanach concerning the essential actions required to attain G-d's forgiveness - turning away from our transgressions and returning to G-d in sincere repentance.

Footnotes

1. This is the date used by virtually all secular scholars. According to Jewish tradition, the year was 421 BCE.

2. The masculine form of *alma* is *elem* and is always translated, even by Christians, as 'young boy' (I Samuel 20:22). The trend among modern Christian translations of Isaiah is to acknowledge that 'virgin' is not accurate, and they render *alma* as 'young woman'. See, for example, the *Revised Standard Version*, *The New English Bible*, *The Good News Bible* and *The New Jerusalem Bible* among others. *Betulah* is the only clear Biblical word for 'virgin'. See Deuteronomy 22:13-15.

3. Rabbi David Kimchi, often referred to as RaDaK (1157-1236).

4. The prophetic thrust of the Bible is to describe what the world will look like during the reign of the Messiah. This utopian period will include the ingathering of the Jewish exiles to the land of Israel, a reunification of the Ten Lost Tribes with the rest of their brethren, the Jewish people turning to G-d with a renewed commitment to observing the Torah, the building of the Third Temple, peace and safety for the Jewish people in their land, the nations of the world turning to the Jewish people as G-d's representatives and teachers, the spread of monotheism throughout the world and universal peace. As a great leader, the Messiah will likely play some role in realizing these monumental changes. But just as Moses did not redeem the Jewish people from Egypt - it was the Almighty who accomplished this - so too, the Messianic Age will be an accomplishment of G-d. Just as Moses served as G-d's point-man in the Exodus story, the Messiah will play this role during the final redemption.

5. The internal evidence from the Book of Isaiah identifying G-d's servant as the Jewish people is so strong that numerous Christian scholars admit that this is the contextual meaning of Isaiah 53. See, for example, *The New English Study Bible*, Oxford Study Edition 1976, *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, 1989 and *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*, 2003.

6. To understand this chapter, it is critical to know who is speaking at each point. Chapter 52, verses 13-15, is a declaration by G-d. It tells us that in the future, G-d's servant Israel will be lifted up and exalted in the world. This will come as a total shock to the kings and nations of the world who never expected this kind of vindication of the Jewish people. In the next verse, which is the beginning of Chapter 53, these kings and nations begin to reflect on their long relationship with the Jewish people. They will admit that throughout history, they tormented the Jewish people because they assumed

that G-d had rejected them, and because scapegoating them provided relief from their domestic problems. It is these nations and kings who admit in verse 6: All we like sheep have gone astray... and that the Jews suffered as a result of their (the nations') sinfulness (verse 5).

7. The Bible finds human sacrifice to be one of the most terrible acts imaginable. It is decried in Deuteronomy 12:30-31, Jeremiah 19:4-6, Ezekiel 16:2 and Psalm 106:37-38. Some have suggested that the story of the Binding of Isaac also serves to show that human sacrifice is not something that G-d would ever want (Genesis 22:9-14).

8. Sacrifices are only allowed on the altar of the Holy Temple (Leviticus 17:1-9).

9. Some of these many passages are: Deuteronomy 4:9-39; 10:17-18, I Samuel 2:2-10, Nechemiah 9:5-33, Job chapters 38-39, Psalms 103 and 104, Isaiah 40:26-29; 45:5-22, Jeremiah 10:6-16. The absolute Oneness of G-d is so clear in the Tanach that even a famous Christian apologist writing about the topic of the Trinity had to admit, "all Trinitarians agree that the ideas about G-d expressed in the doctrine of the Trinity are not found directly in the Old Testament." Robert M. Bowman, *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity*, page 22; Baker House Books, 1989.

10. See also Deuteronomy 11:1; 12:1; 29:29, II Kings 17:37, Psalm 111:7-10; 119, 152, 160.

11. See also Ezekiel 44:9, 17, 23-24, Isaiah 66:14-17, Zechariah 14:16.

12. See also Deuteronomy 30:9-10, Psalm 103:17-18.

13. The idea that historical Christianity flows from the teachings of Paul rather than those of Jesus is the subject of a tremendous amount of scholarly writings. See, for example: *How Jesus Became Christian* by Barrie Wilson (2008), *The Jesus Dynasty* by James Tabor (2006), *The DaVinci Code: A Jewish Perspective* by Michael Skobac (2006), *Jesus: The Misunderstood Jew* by Robert Kupper (2007), *The Brother of Jesus* by Jeffrey J. Butz (2005), *Paul: The Founder of Christianity* by Gerd Ludemann (2002), *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity* by Hyam Maccoby (1986) and *Those Incredible Christians* by Hugh J. Schonfield (1968).

14. There are numerous references in the Tanach showing that the Jewish people are G-d's eternally Chosen People: Genesis 12:3, Deuteronomy 7:6, Psalm 135:4, Zechariah 2:8, Deuteronomy 32:10, I Kings 8:51-53, Genesis 17:7, Leviticus 26:44-45, Deuteronomy 4:31, Jeremiah 5:8-9; 30:11; 31:35-37; 33:25-26; 46:27-28; Isaiah 54:9-10; 59:21, Ezekiel 20:31-36; chapter 36, Psalm 94:14, Malachi 3:6, II Samuel 7:24, I Chronicles 16:13-18; 17:22, II Chronicles 9:8.

15. Replacement Theology believes that the Church has become the New Israel and is somewhat controversial among Christians today. While many continue to embrace the idea, there is a growing movement of Protestants who reject it as non-Biblical.

16. See Isaiah 1:11-16, Amos 5:2-24, Psalm 51:15-17, Jeremiah 7:1-7, Micha 6:6-8, Proverbs 21:3, Hosea 6:6, I Samuel 15:22, 30-31.

17. See also II Chronicles 7:14, Ezekiel chapters 18 and 33, Job 22:23, Proverbs 16:6, Isaiah 1:18-19.

Addendum:

JEWS FOR JUDAISM: The Response to an Urgent Need

According to recent Gallup and Harris polls, there are over 70 million "born again" Christians in North America, many of whom are totally focused on trying to convert Jews to Christianity. Christian denominations, such as the Southern Baptist Convention, the Assemblies of G-d and others contribute over \$300 million annually to aggressively evangelize Jews. These evangelical Christians have established special "Hebrew-Christian synagogues" to attract Jews. Such "synagogues" have grown in number from 20 to nearly 500 in the last 30 years.

Missionaries convince their recruits that they are not complete as Jews until they accept Jesus as the Messiah, and that a Jew retains his/her Jewish identity even after converting to Christianity. Over the past 25 years, more than 275,000 Jews worldwide have been converted by missionaries using deceptive tactics in which the Gospel is preached by "Messianic rabbis" wearing *yarmulkas* (skullcaps) and *talleisim* (prayer shawls) at "Shabbat" and "High Holiday" services.

Contrary to popular perception, it is not only emotionally vulnerable Jews who fall prey to the missionaries' efforts; in fact, most Jews are susceptible. Missionaries often target college campuses, hospitals, drug rehabilitation

programs, seniors' residences and shopping malls in Jewish neighborhoods, as well as the Israeli community, immigrants from the Former Soviet Union and intermarried couples. They misquote, mistranslate and misinterpret Jewish scriptures and rabbinical texts in order to "prove" that Jesus was both the Jewish Messiah and G-d. They delegitimize Judaism: with their misleading exploitation of Jewish symbols, religious artifacts and even traditional music, they confuse potential converts, making them even more vulnerable.

These missionary groups - over 1,000 in North America alone - are active worldwide, and can be found in almost every Jewish population centre. Several groups have founded "Messianic Jewish" day schools for children and "yeshivot" where they train and ordain "Messianic rabbis." In Israel, there are over 130 "Messianic" congregations, fellowships and yeshivot. These groups prey almost exclusively upon uneducated, unaffiliated and alienated Jews.

In response to this ever-growing threat, **Jews for Judaism** was established in 1985 as the only full-time counter-missionary resource and outreach network spanning North America and beyond. Jews for Judaism has branches in Los Angeles, Baltimore, Toronto, and Johannesburg, South Africa. Our branches work closely with Jewish communities in Israel, the Former Soviet Union, Australia and other locations around the globe in responding to the missionary threat. Our two primary goals are preventive education to strengthen vulnerable Jews and winning back those who have been influenced by missionaries.

Jews for Judaism achieves these goals through counseling "Hebrew-Christians," monitoring missionary activity, a speakers' bureau and intensive counter-missionary courses. **Jews for Judaism** is also a pioneer in worldwide advertising of counter-missionary materials, and has produced an outstanding selection of literature and audio tapes in English, Russian, Hebrew, Spanish, Portuguese, German and French. In addition, we have created award winning websites on the Internet: jewsforjudaism.org, be-true.org and tworoadsonepath.org.

If you would like to receive further information, book a speaker for your group or arrange a personal consultation, please call our Jews for Judaism office. We're here to help.

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Choose LIFE

A COUNTER-MISSIONARY STUDY GUIDE

By **Rick Halpern**

Foreword and Edited by: **Rabbi Michael Skobac**

Today, over 1,000 different Christian missionary organizations specifically target Jews worldwide for conversion. This threat is intensified by the reality that Christianity is the dominant religion throughout North America. Most Jews have had some contact with a fervently Christian friend, neighbour or business associate who was determined to share his or her faith with them.

Unfortunately, most Jewish people are unaware of the nature of these serious challenges and the ways to respond. *Choose Life: A Counter-Missionary Study Guide* is an excellent educational resource because it alerts us to the spiritual threat Christianity poses to our community and provides a critical foundation of essential knowledge to keep our families securely Jewish.

More than just another "Know-How-to-Respond" manual, *Choose Life* sounds a passionate call to all Jewish people to truly appreciate and embrace our 3,300 year-old spiritual treasure – our "Tree of Life."

Choose Life is published by Jews for Judaism, the world's leading counter-missionary organization. If you would like to get additional information, receive assistance for you or someone you know, or arrange a speaking engagement, please contact us.

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