

**WHY JEWISH
PEOPLE DO NOT BELIEVE
IN JESUS**

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INTRODUCTION

Although this topic can fill volumes of work, in this edition of Power Books, we offer a brief journey through some of the objections to Jewish believers in Yeshua and historically, the historical walls that Christian and Jewish history erected against Jewish believers in Messiah.

The reason, or more accurately, reasons that Jewish people do not believe in Jesus is influenced by three areas: **Culture**, **History**, and **Theology**. Immediately one discovers something more complicated than mere Romans 10:9, "If you declare with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Although the same supernatural work is required for everyone, these three obstacles encumber the path for the Jew.

Our aim here is to empower the reader with a greater grasp on how to witness the truth of the Gospel to the Lost Sheep of Israel, given the context of these three areas as, **Culture**, **Theology**, and **History**. Let's begin with Culture.

CULTURE

For Jewish people to believe in Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah is something that has historically represented a contradiction of the very essence of Judaism. Simply, it is not Jewish to believe in Jesus, the Jewish Messiah. Although Yeshua (Jesus Hebrew name) was Jewish in every way, these two principles have been in opposition to one another for centuries.

Judaism also asserts that any belief other than the belief in Jesus is acceptable. This assertion means that a Jewish

person can be a practicing Buddhist, Hindu, New Age Philosopher, even an Atheist, and remain wholly Jewish in the eyes of the Jewish community. It seems that only the belief in Yeshua forms this historical divide that separates a Jewish believer from the Jewish community.

So deeply opposed is Judaism to this concept. Some Orthodox Jewish families will have a formal funeral deeming the person dead, called sitting *shiva*; a 7-day mourning period that is practiced when a Jewish person dies.

What awaits a Jewish person should they receive their Messiah is often wholesale rejection from their Rabbis, Jewish friends, and family. The entire social fabric of their lives is torn apart. Imagine being disowned and considered dead by one's parents, siblings, an entire community for receiving Christ. Therefore, when a Jewish person considers Jesus, he or she weighs the decision carefully.

The good news, however, is *The Good News*. What I mean to say is. Still, the most powerful and enduring truth that transforms a Jewish person like any other non-Jewish person is the power of the Gospel. Often when a Jewish person comes to faith, it is associated with a powerful and dramatic encounter with God. This provides the supernatural strength of the Holy Spirit to help them through some of these early difficulties.

For the Jew then, cultural pressures abound. Messianic faith for the Jew poses real and formidable obstacles. Nevertheless, as more and more Jewish people come to faith, this wall becomes more comfortable to overcome. Familiarity with other Jewish people coming to faith fosters credibility in Jewish Messianic faith.

PLURALISM

Today, many Jewish people view the belief in God differently than in past periods of history. The Post-Postmodernism, for instance, has, in large part, redefined religious thought in Judaism as well as Christianity. The post-postmodern Jew, excluding the Orthodox and Conservative, does not know whether he or she even believes in God.

Radical pluralism, a characteristic of postmodernism, poses great difficulties even to find a consensus on the very doctrine of God, because pluralism eradicates absolutes, replaces it with self, and values inner thought and exploration.

A common belief for many Jews is that spirituality begins from within. It is something derived from one's perception of the universe, coupled with a perspective of one's existence in the context of that universe. For this, the kind of spirituality presented in the New Testament is unfit for this new thought. Jews like to think of God as being outside of creation. They see God as something more as a life force or energy flowing in and through creation.

If there were anything that a Jew could call "God," it would be a Unity, or, a Oneness, which is something that pervades all things, and is found by turning inside oneself. Ironically, Christianity also requires one to turn inside, although its purpose is radically different.

In Christianity, an individual is invited to discover one's own sin and inner darkness. Universally, sin remains the human barrier between God and man; each person must come to this discovery.

Nevertheless, once this is discovered, only then does one turn outward and upward, to receive forgiveness of their sins. Then God restores the right perspective along with the right perception of the universe; both are brought back into alignment with God. This is the purest form of Tikkun Olam (repair of the world.)

MONOTHEISM

A great challenge to Messianic faith is Judaism's foundation of Monotheism, the belief that there is only one God. For thousands of years, Judaism has upheld a monotheistic faith and belief in the One True God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Two thousand years ago, upon Messiah's arrival, this historic Jewish Monotheism was challenged to its core.

The concept and doctrine of One God operating in three persons (the Trinity) were introduced and seen as heretical and blasphemous. So, how Jews perceive the Trinity is vastly different from gentile Christians. Even in our modern-day, Yeshua claiming to come from the Father, remains a blasphemous concept and a source of disdain.

Still and all, many Post-Modern Jews are challenging four-thousand-year old Monotheism in their way. It is coming from *Pluralism* and *Dualism*. In fact, from a pure philosophical monism, (the doctrine that only one supreme being existed,) is a rejection of any dualism, and is the only doctrine that can satisfy many post-postmodern.

DUALISM

Dualism implies that there are two moral opposites at work. Two forces are independent of any interpretation of what might be moral, and independent of how these may

be represented. This, again, is a grave error and a contradiction of both Christianity and Judaism.

Judeo Christian Monotheism, coupled with the belief in Yeshua the Messiah, is the only means to restore balance in one's life; God is God, and this God is over all other gods. Although this is a brief sweep of Jewish objections to the New Covenant faith, immediately one can recognize the layers of Jewish objection in the context of Jewish Culture and belief.

JEWISH HISTORY

History also sheds light on the construct of Messianic Jewish believers in Yeshua. Though the new Jewish community yearned to be liberated from Rome's power and tight grip, its pagan life culture fostered expectations for a Judah Maccabee type to come and smash the oppressive nations, and restore Israel to her former glory.

There were no expectations for the Jewish Messiah to fit the Jewish model of Yeshua's ministry and style. Yeshua claiming to come from the Father, confounded the experts. A humble servant who washed His disciple's feet was unfit for their expectations. It was unacceptable when Yeshua taught people to turn the other cheek,[ii] and the poor and oppressed were called blessed." [iii]

More fundamental, the conflict in what Scripture portrays as Maschiach ben David (son of David, a kingly figure) and Maschiach ben Joseph (son of Joseph, a suffering servant,) was difficult to reconcile in one person. Jewish leaders found it difficult to see both figures bringing about a two-part Tikkun Olam (repair of the world,[iv] This historical "double Messiah" theory is prevalent still today. Although

the Jewish people widely recognize the closeness of the Messiah, a two-thousand-year-old error is about to be made once again.

Double Messiah theory, and Third Temple

Upon Yeshua's first advent, He came according to what the Talmud refers to as the "leper scholar." [1] He arrived at the exact time in history that was prophesied for this suffering servant, the Son of Joseph, or Mashiach ben Yosef (Joseph) as noted. Today, Judaism is still waiting for what the Talmud describes as the "leper scholar." Nevertheless, now He is returning on a white horse as Mashiach ben David bringing the armies of Heaven with Him. [v]

Here is the most accurate portrayal of the *Leper Scholar* from Isaiah 53:3, which was fulfilled two thousand years ago, "He was despised and rejected by humankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised, and we held him in low esteem." However, as already noted, a two-thousand-year-old mistake is going to occur again.

Understanding Jewish Eschatology

In the Jewish understanding of the last days, the term *Mashiach*, or *Messiah*, commonly referred to a future Jewish King from the Davidic line, who was to rule the Jewish people during the Messianic Age; the Messiah is often referred to as King Messiah.

According to Hebrew Orthodox views, He should be descended from his Father through the line of King David and will gather the Jews back into the land of Israel. Then

He will usher in an era of peace and rebuild the Temple, which will fulfill the role of Mashiach ben David, and simultaneously fulfill the role of Mashiach ben Yosef (Joseph.) The Talmud demonstrates this conflict when it describes the future return of the Messiah extensively in a portion of the Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a-99a. Described is a period of freedom and peace that the Jews and the nations will experience together. Here are some examples to consider:

1. R. Johanan said, when you see a generation ever dwindling, hope for him [the Messiah], as it is written, "And the afflicted people thou wilt save."
[vi]

R. Johanan said when thou see a generation overwhelmed by many troubles as by a river, await him, as it is written, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him;" which is followed by, "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion."

2. R. Johanan also said, the son of David will come only in a generation that is either altogether righteous or altogether wicked.[2] *in a generation that is altogether righteous*, — as it is written, "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever." *Or altogether wicked*, — as it is written, "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor," and it is [elsewhere] written, "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it."

The Talmud also relates many stories about the Messiah, some of which are from famous Talmudic

rabbis that have claimed to have personal visitations from Elijah the Prophet.

3. R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai's tomb. He asked him: "Have I a portion in the world to come?" He replied, "if this Master desires it." R. Joshua b. Levi said, "I saw two, but heard the voice of a third." He then asked him, "When will the Messiah come?" – "Go and ask him himself," was his reply.

"Where is he sitting?" – "At the entrance." "And by what sign may I recognize him?" – "He is sitting among the poor lepers: all of them untie [them] all at once, and re-bandage them together, whereas he unties and bandages each separately, [before treating the next], thinking, should I be wanted, [it being time for my appearance as the Messiah] I must not be delayed [through having to bandage a number of sores]." So he went to him and greeted him, saying, "Peace upon thee, Master and Teacher." "Peace upon thee, O son of Levi," he replied. "When wilt thou come, Master?" asked he. "Today," was his answer. On his returning to Elijah, the latter enquired, "What did he say to thee?" – "peace upon thee, O son of Levi," he answered.

Thereupon he [Elijah] observed, "He thereby assured thee and thy father of [a portion in] the world to come." "He spoke falsely to me," he rejoined, "stating that he would come today, but has not." He [Elijah] answered him, "This is what he said to thee, To-day if ye will listen to his voice.[3]

CHRISTIAN HISTORY

To study the institutional church, Jewish and Christian relations were breached numerous times throughout her history. Something that is easily determined, a new gentile expression was needed to be separated from Judaism. This was imperative in order to form a new Roman foundation void of all its former Jewish forms, practices and traditions. Also, key events occurred in history that were misinterpreted by early church fathers, causing an anti-Jewish atmosphere in the early church. One can cite the destruction of the Second Temple, which the early church fathers saw as God's rejection of His people.

The ideas of holding the Jewish people responsible for Christ's death, or Constantine's many anti-Jewish edicts and rulings, all fostered a legacy of Jewish hate. They contributed significantly to walls of separation between the Jew and Gentile, Judaism and Christianity.

In other words, history reveals that the split between the Jew and the gentile[vii] and the church from its Jewish root, began early. It occurred in a crucible of time. However, unmistakably, it was cataclysmic to God's design. Patterns of thinking emerged that germinated anti-Jewish theologies making generations bias against Jews. Naturally, the Jewish people being the victims of these changes, developed an abiding fear, coupled with hostility and distrust towards Christianity.

With false theologies as, "replacement," "displacement," and "supersessionism," seminaries and denominations were inculcated with it, generations lost a prophetic understanding of God's plan for the Jewish people. Then the notion that Israel and the Jew were the rejected of God

was reinforced by a system of interpretive thought that was highly flawed. For the most part, it was a system based upon anti-Semitism. Notwithstanding, there was no credible Biblical exegesis to substantiate it because it cannot be found in the Scriptures.

Nevertheless, following centuries of this misunderstanding, one can see how such terms as **Christ, church, crusade, conversion,** and **Cross,** formed its own crown of thorns for Jewish people. History branded Christianity as a religion that brought much anti-Semitism and suffering.

JEWES & THE ROMAN WORLD

As early as the Roman world of Messiah, two thousand years ago, there was growing hostility between the Jewish people and the Culture of the Roman world. This is brought to light in the words of Cicero, (106-43 BCE) who was politician and philosopher before the destruction of the Second Temple:

"Even while Jerusalem was still standing the Jews were at peace with us, the practice of their sacred rites, however, were at variance with the glory of our empire, the dignity of our name."

Cicero notes, the Roman Christian world was an empire religion, one that was in direct opposition to the Messianic type rule that Jews longed for. Jews wanting to embrace Yeshua, and many did for cultural, political, and economic reasons, had to renounce their Jewish identity from the faith of their biblical forefathers. In essence, Jews were forced to convert to a gentile form of faith.

In his book *Restoring the Jewishness of the Gospel*, David Stern notes that the Jews were required to swear to and sign the following: "I renounce all customs, rites, legalisms, unleavened bread, sacrifices of lambs of the Hebrews, and all the other Feasts of the Hebrews, sacrifices, prayers, aspersions, purifications, sanctifications, propitiations, fasts, new moons, Sabbaths, superstitions, hymns, chants, observances, synagogues, the food, and drink of the Hebrews.

They had to renounce absolutely everything Jewish, every law, rite, and custom— if afterward, I shall wish to deny and return to Jewish superstitions, or shall be found eating with Jews, or feasting with them, or secretly conversing and condemning the Christian religion instead of openly confusing them and condemning their vain faith, then let the trembling of Cain and the leprosy of Gehazi cleave to me, as well as the legal punishments to which I acknowledge myself liable. And may I be an anathema in the world to come, and my soul is set down with Satan and the devils."

Hence, many obstacles were thrown in the path of a Jewish person considering faith in Yeshua as the Messiah. A Jewish saying accurately portrays both Israel and the Jewish people:

"Israel is likened to a man traveling on the road when he encountered a wolf and escaped from it, and he went along relating the affair of a wolf. He then encountered a lion and escaped from it, and went along relating the affair of the lion. He then encountered a snake, escaped from it,

whereupon he forgot the two previous incidents and went along relating the affair of the snake. So it is with Israel; the present troubles cause them to forget the earlier one." [4]

The above saying speaks of the Jew as it does with Israel. Satan has long sought to destroy the Jew, and infect both society and Christendom with anti-Semitism.

Israel & the Nations

An authentic relationship is described in Scripture when it comes to Israel's relationship with the nations. One that is seen with her historical enemy Aram (Syria), and one compared to water and fire. In a prophecy concerning Damascus, it states, "Woe to the roar of the many nations who are tumultuous as the roar of the sea." [5] In Obadiah, the Jewish people are compared to fire, "The House of Yaakov be fire" [viii] This simple analogy, points to a well-known biblical fact: The Jewish people were to be the fire and light to the world and, accordingly, spread the light of the One True God and His kingdom principles.

However, like water that extinguishes fire, nations have shown countless attempts to smother the Jew. This may seem at first as a harsh indictment, but one cannot indeed receive a heart for the Jewish people if we do not understand their historical suffering since much persecution came in the form of a Christian mission.

A religion of Jewish hate

As noted, Christianity came to be seen as a religion of Jewish hate. A persecutory history came in the name of Jesus, and tragically, it came under the sign of the Cross. Judaism, of course, perceived no similitude or attraction to Christianity, even though Judaism was the foundation of

Christianity. To the Jewish people, Christianity came to embody a belief, Culture and history that repelled Jews. The Christian sacraments of early Catholicism, its rituals, worship of saints, and her graven images of these saints, were in direct conflict with the Torah of Judaism. [ix] Of course, the Catholic Church and its edicts that ensued shaped much of this persecutory history.

Nevertheless, Christianity, in the eyes of historical Judaism, became framed in this context. For this reason, one cannot separate this Christian history from Jewish history, particularly when desiring to know why Jewish people reject the belief in Jesus. Thankfully, today large portions of the Christian body are finding new opportunities to understand these errors of history, and Jewish people are considering faith in the Jewish Messiah in a new light.

JEWISH THEOLOGY

Although Judaism asserts that Yeshua Jesus did not fulfill the Messianic prophecies, they claim the Scriptures pointing to Him have been mistranslated.

Yeshua, during his time on earth, and His manner of ministry, according to Judaism, did not fulfill the personal qualifications of the Messiah. Perhaps the most important obstacle to this belief is the fact that Jewish belief in Yeshua must have a national revelation and redemption. This has been prevalent since the coming of Messiah two thousand years ago, and up to our present day.

The point being made here, within Judaism, there is a unique element that distinguishes itself from Christianity. Judaism looks at Messianic fulfillments in very different

ways than Christians. Yet, the Jewish basis for interpretation remains the foundation for both their acceptance in the future and also our present day.

What we are describing, forms a general view from the perspective of the Rabbis. Within Orthodox and Conservative Judaism, revelation is not sufficient if it is based upon personal experience. When it comes to the Messiah, a national revelation is essential. Below we list the following views according to Judaism.

First, no individual experience or account of a miracle is enough to validate Messianic claims. Therefore, the Damascus road experience by the Apostle Paul comes into question. [x] Rabbis state, because the Bible clearly shows that God allows false miracles, who determines which one is from God, and which one is a counterfeit. It is important than to remain fixed in the Torah, and to obey God and God alone (Deuteronomy 13:4.)

Second, Judaism asserts that the Israelites believed in Moses, not because of any miracles. Instead, the revelation at Mount Sinai, for example, was experienced by all—they all saw and heard with their own eyes and ears, and it was not upon the testimony of one or another- "Face to face, God spoke with you..."

The Messiah's coming Rabbis assert every man, woman, and child witnessing it with their eyes and ears as it took place at Mount Sinai 3,300 years ago. This national revelation test, combined with a national return of Israel

test, and the restored Messianic order, all come together upon the return of the Messiah according to Judaism.

Of course, this is correct in the context of the millennial kingdom. But the timing and sequence are incorrect in Jewish thinking. The culmination of this age is predicated upon all Israel coming to national regeneration, and this is true. [xi]Here are some passages to consider, first from the book of Matthew, "for I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

- **Psalm 118:26**, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD, we bless you.
- **Zechariah 12:10**, "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."
- **Hosea 5:15**, "Then I will return to my lair until they have borne their guilt and seek my face-- in their misery, they will earnestly seek me."

All of the preceding passages speak about a national regeneration that will take place upon the return of the Lord. But the return follows a simultaneous recognition of Yeshua. Tragically, Judaism could not accept their humble servant King two thousand years ago, as they could not understand the two-part plan of world redemption that would take place. Yeshua did fulfill the role of the suffering

son of Joseph and is returning as the son of King David. Then and only then will there be a national revitalization of Israel.

Jewish Messianism

In the following, we offer a brief list of Jewish tenets of Messianic belief that Judaism claims remain unfulfilled. Though only a brief survey of a comprehensive study, Judaism holds numerous points of Messianism in the objection that can be categorized in a **Historical, Cultural and Theological**, framework.

1. **Judaism** rightfully claims that Yeshua Jesus must be descended from the house of King David. **Judaism claims Yeshua was not.** [xii]
2. Judaism claims that Yeshua cannot be God and man at the same time. Yet, in the book of John, this is exactly descriptive of the Messiah. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Judaism asserts that Yeshua was to bring peace to the world. **Rabbi's state, since we have more war than ever it proves that Yeshua was not the Messiah.** [xiii]
4. Judaism asserts that Yeshua will gather all Jews back into Israel. **Since the Jewish people remain scattered, Yeshua Jesus was not the Messiah.**

5. Judaism asserts that Yeshua will rebuild the ancient Temple in Jerusalem. **Rabbi's state, since the Temple has not been rebuilt He was not the Messiah.**

6. Judaism asserts that Yeshua will unite humanity in the worship of the Jewish God and Torah observance. **Rabbi's state, since this has not occurred Yeshua was not the Messiah.**

CONCLUSION

This Addition of Power Books has introduced the basic principles of Jewish rejection of the Messiah. For Jewish people to understand Jewish faith in the Jewish Messiah, and for the gentile to understand the Jewish foundation of Christianity, is an important marriage of understanding.

Given both Christian and Jewish history, great significance is found today in the restoration of the Jewish foundation of Christianity. Its greatest work is found according to God's plan for the gentile as spoken in Romans 11:11; "For the purpose of gentile salvation is to provoke the Jew to envy." Yes, the gentile was to provoke the Jewish people to faith.

Still, we have noted formidable obstacles for Jewish people considering faith in Jesus. But increasingly, Jewish people are coming to faith, thereby giving increasing credibility in believing in Jesus. **Rabbi's state, since this has not occurred Yeshua was not the Messiah.**

- [1] Sanhedrin 98b
- [2] Talmud Sanhedrin 98a
- [3] Talmud Sanhedrin 98a
- [4] Berakoth 13a
- [5] Yeshayahu - Isaiah 17:12)

[i] Postmodernism articulates that the world is in a state of perpetual incompleteness and permanent un-resolve. Postmodernism promotes the notion of radical pluralism that there are many ways of knowing, truths. From a postpostmodern perspective knowledge is articulated from perspectives, with all its uncertainties, complexity and paradox.

[ii] John 18:10; Luke 22:49-52

[iii] John 6:38; 16:28

[iv] Matthew 1:1-17, Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15 Isaiah 11:2-5.)

[v] Revelation 19

[vi] II Samuel 22:28

[vii] Jew is capitalized and gentile is not because gentile is a generic and general term that refers to nation groups; Jew speaks of one specific people group, and therefore it is capitalized.

[viii] Ovadiah–Obadiah 1:18

[ix] Exodus 20:4

[x] Acts 9:1-19; retold in Acts 22:6-21 and Acts 26:12-18.

[xi] Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved... (Romans 11.25-26 ESV)

[xii] Isaiah 11:1-9; Jeremiah 23:5-6, 30:7-10, 33:14-16; Ezekiel 34:11-31, 37:21-28; Hosea 3:4-5; Genesis 49:10, Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 23:5, 33:17; Ezekiel 34:23-24.

[xiii] Isaiah 2:1-4, 32:15-18, 60:15-18; Zephaniah 3:9; Hosea 2:20-22; Amos 9:13-15; Micah 4:1-4; Zechariah 8:23, 14:9; Jeremiah 31:33-34.

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