

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
Culture.....	5
Pluralism.....	6
Monotheism.....	7
Dualism.....	8
Jewish History.....	9
Double Messiah Theory	10
Third Temple.....	10
Jewish Eschatology.....	10
Christian History.....	13
Jews & the Roman World.....	14
Israel & the Nations.....	17
A Religion of Jewish Hate.....	17
Jewish Theology.....	18
Jewish Messianism.....	21
Conclusion.....	23

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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 belief in Yeshua and, historically, the historical walls that Christian and Jewish history erected against Jewish belief 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's 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 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 actually have a ritualistic funeral deeming the person dead, called, sitting *shiva*; a 7-day mourning period that is practiced when a Jewish person dies.

Clearly, 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 your parents, siblings and your 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 as 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, and Messianic faith for the Jew poses real and formidable obstacles. But as more and more Jewish people come to faith this wall becomes easier 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-modern age¹ for instance has in large part redefined religious thought in Judaism as well as Christianity. The post-modern Jew excluding the Orthodox, and Conservative, does not know whether he or she even believes in God.

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

For many Jews “spirituality” begins from within. It is something derived from one’s individual perception of the universe, coupled with a perspective of one’s own 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, something that is more as a life force, or, an energy flowing in and through creation.

So 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. Because universally, sin remains the human barrier between God and man and each person must come to this discovery. Once this is discovered, only then does one turn outward, and upward, to receive forgiveness of their sins. Then God restores right perspective along with right perception of the universe; both are brought back into alignment with God. This is the truest form of Tikkun O’lam (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, the belief in the One True God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Two thousand years ago upon Messiah's arrival however, this historic Jewish monotheism was challenged to its core when the concept and doctrine of One God operating in three persons (the Trinity,) was introduced. So how Jews perceive the Trinity is vastly different from gentile Christians. Even in our modern day, Yeshua claiming to come from the Father was and is a blasphemous concept, and historically, it is a source of disdain.

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

DUALISM

Dualism implies that there are two moral opposites at work; two forces 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 New Covenant faith,

one can see the layers of Jewish objection in the context of Jewish culture, both historically, and in our modern day.

JEWISH HISTORY

History also sheds light on the construct of Messianic Jewish belief in Yeshua. Though the early Jewish community yearned to be liberated from Rome’s power and tight grip, along with its pagan life culture, expectations were for a Judah Maccabee type to come and smash the oppressive nations, universally, entering Jerusalem to 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 cheek² and the poor and oppressed were called blessed.”³

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,⁴ 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 the 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 al mud describes as, the "leper scholar." But now He is returning on a white horse as Mashiach ben David bringing the armies of Heaven with Him. ⁵



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 mankind, 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." As already noted, a two-thousand-year old mistake is going to occur again.

Understanding Jewish Eschatology

In 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".

¹ Sanhedrin 98b

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 re-build the Third Temple. This 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."⁶

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

² Talmud Sanhedrin 98a

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 was a new gentile expression apart 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 was misinterpreted by early church fathers causing an anti-Jewish atmosphere in the early church. One can site the destruction of the Temple, which the early church fathers saw as God's rejection of His people.

Additionally, the idea of holding the Jewish people responsible for Christ's death, or Constantine's many anti-Jewish edicts and rulings, fostered a legacy of Jewish hate that

³ Talmud Sanhedrin 98a

contributed greatly 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 gentile⁷, the church from its Jewish root, began early. It occurred in a crucible of course over a period of time. But unmistakably, it was cataclysmic to God's design. Soon patterns of thinking emerged that germinated anti-Jewish theologies making generations bias against Jews. Of course the Jewish people being the victims of these changes, developed an abiding fear, coupled with hostility and distrust towards Christianity.

As false theologies as, "replacement," "displacement," "supersessionism," inculcated seminaries and denominations, generations lost a prophetic understanding of Gods plan for the Jewish people. The notion that Israel and the Jew were the rejected of God was reinforced by a system of interpretive thought that was highly flawed, and based upon anti-Semitism.

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.

JEWS AND THE ROMAN WORLD

As early as the Roman world of Messiah two thousand years ago, there was a 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.”

As 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 and turn from the faith of their biblical forefathers; 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 breads, 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 afterwards 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 confuting 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 be 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 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.

⁴ Berakoth 13a

ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS

An accurate relationship is described in Scripture when it comes to Israel's relationship to 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 seas roar."⁵ In Obadiah, the Jewish people are compared to fire, "The House of Yaakov be fire"⁸ 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 truly 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. This history branded Christianity as anti-Semitic.

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, under the sign of the Cross. Judaism of course perceived no similitude or attraction to Christianity, even though

⁵ *Yeshayahu* – Isaiah 17:12)

Judaism was the foundation of Christianity. To the Jewish people then, 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.⁹ 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. And for this reason, one cannot separate this Christian history from Jewish history when desiring to know why Jewish people reject the belief in Jesus. Today however, 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 and into the future.

The point being made here is truly unique from other religions especially 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 here is the general view from the perspective of the Rabbis throughout the whole of Judaism and, generally, in Orthodox, and Conservative streams. When it comes to revelation, and personal experiences in the context of Messianic anticipation, a National revelation of the Messiah is essential for Jewish fulfillments of a Messiah for the following reasons.



First, according to Judaism, no individual experience or account of a miracle is enough to validate Messianic claims. The Damascus road experience by the Apostle Paul for instance ¹⁰is in deep conflict with Judaism. Rabbis state first that the Bible clearly shows that God allows false miracles as well. So who is to determine which one is from God, and which one is a counterfeit. It is important then 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. 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 involves every man, woman, and child, witnessing it with their eyes, and ears as it took place at Mount Sinai 3,300 years ago. This goes back to the principle of a national revelation. 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 is incorrect in Jewish thinking. The culmination of this age is predicated upon all Israel coming to a national re-generation, and this is true. ¹¹Here 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, because they could not understand the two-part plan of world redemption that would take place. Yeshua did fulfill the role as the suffering son of Joseph, and He is now 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 remains unfulfilled. Though only a brief survey of a comprehensive study, Judaism holds numerous points of Messianism in 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.** ¹²
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.”
3. 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.** ¹³
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 that is underway today.

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 Gods 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 exist for Jewish people considering faith in Jesus. But as more and more Jewish people come to faith, credibility in believing in Jesus grows, and the obstacles of Culture, History, and Theology become easier to overcome.

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¹ 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 postmodern perspective knowledge is articulated from perspectives, with all its uncertainties, complexity and paradox.

² John 18:10; Luke22:49-52

³ John 6:38; 16:28

⁴ Matthew 1:1-17, Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15 Isaiah 11:2-5.)

⁵ Revelation 19

⁶ II Samuel 22:28

⁷ 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.

⁸ *Ovadiyah*–Obadiah 1:18

⁹ Exodus 20:4

¹⁰ Acts 9:1-19; retold in Acts 22:6-21 and Acts 26:12-18.

¹¹ 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)

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.