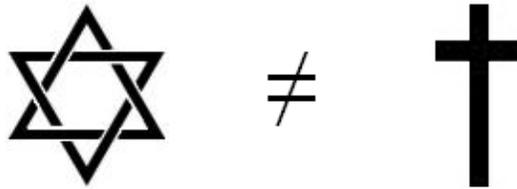


## Why Don't Jews Believe In Jesus?



### Jewish Beliefs About Jesus And Jews For Jesus For 2,000 years, Jews have rejected the Christian idea of Jesus as messiah. Why?

It is important to understand why Jews don't believe in Jesus. The purpose is not to disparage other religions, but rather to clarify the Jewish position. The more data that's available, the better-informed choices people can make about their spiritual path.

### JEWS DO NOT ACCEPT JESUS AS THE MESSIAH BECAUSE:

Intro:

[\(What exactly is the Messiah?\)](#)

1. [Jesus did not fulfill the messianic prophecies.](#)
2. [Jesus did not embody the personal qualifications of the Messiah.](#)
3. [Biblical verses "referring" to Jesus are mistranslations.](#)
4. [Jewish belief is based on national revelation.](#)

→ At the end of this article, we will examine these additional topics:

5. [Christianity contradicts Jewish theology](#)
6. [Jews and Gentiles](#)
7. [Bringing the Messiah](#)

>> [MORE RESOURCES + JUDAISM & OTHER RELIGIONS \(AT BOTTOM\)](#)

### What exactly is the Messiah?

[\(back\)](#)

The word "Messiah" is an English rendering of the Hebrew word "*Mashiach*", which means "Anointed." It usually refers to a person initiated into God's service by being anointed with oil. (Exodus 29:7, I Kings 1:39, II Kings 9:3)

Since every King and High Priest was anointed with oil, each may be referred to as "an anointed one" (a *Mashiach* or a Messiah). For example: "God forbid that I [David] should stretch out my hand against the Lord's Messiah [Saul]..." (I Samuel 26:11. Cf. II Samuel 23:1, Isaiah 45:1, Psalms 20:6)

Where does the Jewish concept of Messiah come from? One of the central themes of Biblical prophecy is the promise of a future age of perfection characterized by universal peace and recognition of God. (Isaiah 2:1-4; Zephaniah 3:9; Hosea 2:20-22; Amos 9:13-15; Isaiah 32:15-18, 60:15-18; Micah 4:1-4; Zechariah 8:23, 14:9; Jeremiah 31:33-34)

Many of these prophetic passages speak of a descendant of King David who will rule Israel during the age of perfection. (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)

Since every King is a Messiah, by convention, we refer to this future anointed king as *The Messiah*. The above is the only description in the Bible of a Davidic descendant who is to come in the future. We will recognize the Messiah by seeing who the King of Israel is at the time of complete universal perfection.

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## 1) JESUS DID NOT FULFILL THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

[\(back\)](#)

What is the Messiah supposed to accomplish? The Bible says that he will:

- A. Build the Third Temple (Ezekiel 37:26-28).
- B. Gather all Jews back to the Land of Israel (Isaiah 43:5-6).
- C. Usher in an era of world peace, and end all hatred, oppression, suffering and disease. As it says: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall man learn war anymore." (Isaiah 2:4)
- D. Spread universal knowledge of the God of Israel, which will unite humanity as one. As it says: "God will be King over all the world—on that day, God will be One and His Name will be One" (Zechariah 14:9).

The historical fact is that Jesus fulfilled none of these messianic prophecies.

Christians counter that Jesus will fulfill these in the [Second Coming](#), but Jewish sources show that the Messiah will fulfill the prophecies outright, and no concept of a second coming exists.

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## 2) JESUS DID NOT EMBODY THE PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF MESSIAH

[\(back\)](#)

### A. MESSIAH AS PROPHET

Jesus was not a prophet. Prophecy can only exist in Israel when the land is inhabited by a majority of world Jewry. During the time of Ezra (circa 300 BCE), when the majority of Jews refused to move from Babylon to Israel, prophecy ended upon the death of the last prophets—Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Jesus appeared on the scene approximately 350 years after prophecy had ended.

### B. DESCENDENT OF DAVID

According to Jewish sources, the Messiah will be born of human parents and possess normal physical attributes like other people. He will not be a demi-god, [\(1\)](#) nor will he possess supernatural qualities.

The Messiah must be descended on his father's side from King David (see Genesis 49:10 and Isaiah 11:1). According to the Christian claim that Jesus is the product of a virgin birth, he had no father—and thus could not have possibly fulfilled the messianic requirement of being descended on his father's side from King David! [\(2\)](#)

→ [SEE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO THIS QUESTION](#)

### C. TORAH OBSERVANCE

The Messiah will lead the Jewish people to full Torah observance. The Torah states that all mitzvot (commandments) remain binding forever, and anyone coming to change the Torah is immediately identified as a false prophet. (Deut. 13:1-4)

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus contradicts the Torah and states that its commandments are no longer applicable. (see John 1:45 and 9:16, Acts 3 and 7:37) For example, John 9:14 records that Jesus made a paste in violation of Shabbat, which caused the Pharisees to say (verse 16), "He does not observe Shabbat!"

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### 3) MISTRANSLATED VERSES "REFERRING" TO JESUS

[\(back\)](#)

Biblical verses can only be understood by studying the original Hebrew text—which reveals many discrepancies in the Christian translation.

#### A. VIRGIN BIRTH

The Christian idea of a virgin birth is derived from the verse in Isaiah 7:14 describing an "alma" as giving birth. The word "alma" has always meant a young woman, but Christian theologians came centuries later and translated it as "virgin." This accords Jesus' birth with the first century pagan idea of mortals being impregnated by gods.

#### B. CRUCIFIXION

The verse in Psalms 22:17 reads: "Like a lion, they are at my hands and feet." The Hebrew word ki-ari (like a lion) is grammatically similar to the word "gouged." Thus Christianity reads the verse as a reference to crucifixion: "They pierced my hands and feet."

#### C. SUFFERING SERVANT

Christianity claims that Isaiah chapter 53 refers to Jesus, as the "suffering servant."

In actuality, Isaiah 53 directly follows the theme of chapter 52, describing the exile and redemption of the Jewish people. The prophecies are written in the singular form because the Jews ("Israel") are regarded as one unit. The Torah is filled with examples of the Jewish nation referred to with a singular pronoun.

Ironically, Isaiah's prophecies of persecution refer in part to the 11th century when Jews were [tortured and killed](#) by Crusaders who acted in the name of Jesus.

From where did these mistranslations stem? St. Gregory, 4th century Bishop of Nazianzus, wrote: "A little jargon is all that is necessary to impose on the people. The less they comprehend, the more they admire."

For further reading on the "suffering servant":

→ [jewsforjudaism.org/ss](http://jewsforjudaism.org/ss)

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### 4) JEWISH BELIEF IS BASED SOLELY ON NATIONAL REVELATION

[\(back\)](#)

Of the 15,000 religions in human history, only [Judaism](#) bases its belief on national revelation—i.e. God speaking to the entire nation. If God is going to start a religion, it makes sense He'll tell everyone, not just one person.

Throughout history, thousands of religions have been started by individuals, attempting to convince people that he or she is God's true prophet. But personal revelation is an extremely weak basis for a religion because one can never know if it is indeed true. Since others did not hear God speak to this person, they have to take his word for it. Even if the individual claiming personal revelation performs miracles, there is still no verification that he is a genuine prophet. Miracles do not prove anything. All they show—assuming they are genuine—is that he has certain powers. It has nothing to do with his claim of prophecy.

Judaism, unique among all of the world's major religions, does not rely on "claims of miracles" as the basis for its religion. In fact, the Bible says that God sometimes grants the power of "miracles" to charlatans, in order to test Jewish loyalty to the Torah (Deut. 13:4).

[Maimonides](#) states (Foundations of Torah, ch. 8):

The Jews did not believe in Moses, our teacher, because of the miracles he performed. Whenever anyone's belief is based on seeing miracles, he has lingering doubts, because it is possible the miracles were performed through magic or sorcery. All of the miracles performed by Moses in the desert were because they were necessary, and not as proof of his prophecy.

What then was the basis of [Jewish] belief? The Revelation at Mount Sinai, which we saw with our own eyes and heard with our own ears, not dependent on the testimony of others... as it says, "Face to face, God spoke with you..." The Torah also states: "God did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us—who are all here alive today." (Deut. 5:3)

Judaism is not miracles. It is the personal eyewitness experience of every man, woman and child, standing at Mount Sinai 3,300 years ago.

→ See "[Did God Speak at Mount Sinai](#)" for further reading.

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## 5) CHRISTIANITY CONTRADICTS JEWISH THEOLOGY

[\(back\)](#)

The following theological points apply primarily to the Roman Catholic Church, the largest Christian denomination.

### A. GOD AS THREE?

The Catholic idea of Trinity breaks God into three separate beings: The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19).

Contrast this to the Shema, the basis of Jewish belief: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is ONE" (Deut. 6:4). Jews declare the Shema every day while writing it on doorposts (Mezuzah), and binding it to the hand and head (Tefillin). This statement of God's One-ness is the first words a Jewish child is taught to say, and the last words uttered before a Jew dies.

In Jewish law, worship of a three-part god is considered idolatry—one of the three cardinal sins that a Jew should rather give up his life than transgress. This explains why during the Inquisitions and throughout history, Jews gave up their lives rather than convert.

### B. MAN AS GOD?

Roman Catholics believe that God came down to earth in human form, as Jesus said: "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

Maimonides devotes most of the "Guide for the Perplexed" to the fundamental idea that God is incorporeal, meaning that He assumes no physical form. G is Eternal, above time. He is Infinite, beyond space. He cannot be born, and cannot die. Saying that God assumes human form makes God small, diminishing both His unity and His divinity. As the Torah says: "God is not a mortal" (Numbers 23:19).

Judaism says that the Messiah will be born of human parents, and possess normal physical attributes like other people. He will not be a demi-god, and will not possess supernatural qualities. In fact, an individual is alive in every generation with the capacity to step into the role of the Messiah. (see Maimonides: Laws of Kings 11:3)

### C. INTERMEDIARY FOR PRAYER?

The Catholic belief is that prayer must be directed through an intermediary—i.e. confessing one's sins to a priest. Jesus himself is an intermediary, as Jesus said: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

In Judaism, prayer is a totally private matter, between each individual and God. As the Bible says: "God is near to all who call unto Him" (Psalms 145:18). Further, the Ten Commandments state: "You shall have no other gods BEFORE ME," meaning that it is forbidden to set up a mediator between God and man. (see Maimonides - Laws of Idolatry ch. 1)

### D. INVOLVEMENT IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD

Catholic doctrine often treats the physical world as an evil to be avoided. Mary, the holiest woman, is portrayed as a virgin. Priests and nuns are celibate. And monasteries are in remote, secluded locations.

By contrast, Judaism believes that God created the physical world not to frustrate us, but for our pleasure. Jewish spirituality comes through grappling with the mundane world in a way that uplifts and elevates. Sex in the proper context is one of the holiest acts we can perform.

The Talmud says if a person has the opportunity to taste a new fruit and refuses to do so, he will have to account for that in the World to Come. Jewish rabbinical schools teach how to live amidst the bustle of commercial activity. Jews don't retreat from life, we elevate it.

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## 6) JEWS AND GENTILES

[\(back\)](#)

Judaism does not demand that everyone convert to the religion. The Torah of Moses is a truth for all humanity, whether Jewish or not. King Solomon asked God to heed the prayers of non-Jews who come to the Holy Temple (Kings I 8:41-43). The prophet Isaiah refers to the Temple as a "House for all nations.

The Temple service during Sukkot featured 70 bull offerings, corresponding to the 70 nations of the world. The Talmud says that if the Romans would have realized how much benefit they were getting from the Temple, they'd never have destroyed it.

Jews have never actively sought converts to Judaism because the Torah prescribes a righteous path for gentiles to follow, known as the "Seven Laws of Noah." Maimonides explains that any human being who faithfully observes these basic moral laws earns a proper place in heaven.

For further study of the Seven Laws of Noah:

→ [The Seven Laws of Noah](#)

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## 7) BRINGING THE MESSIAH

[\(back\)](#)

Maimonides states that the popularity of Christianity (and Islam) is part of God's plan to spread the ideals of Torah throughout the world. This moves society closer to a perfected state of morality and toward a greater understanding of God. All this is in preparation for the Messianic age.

Indeed, the world is in desperate need of Messianic redemption. War and pollution threaten our planet; ego and confusion erode family life. To the extent we are aware of the problems of society, is the extent we will yearn for redemption. As the Talmud says, one of the first questions a Jew is asked on Judgment Day is: "Did you yearn for the arrival of the Messiah?"

How can we hasten the coming of the Messiah? The best way is to love all humanity generously, to keep the mitzvot of the Torah (as best we can), and to encourage others to do so as well.

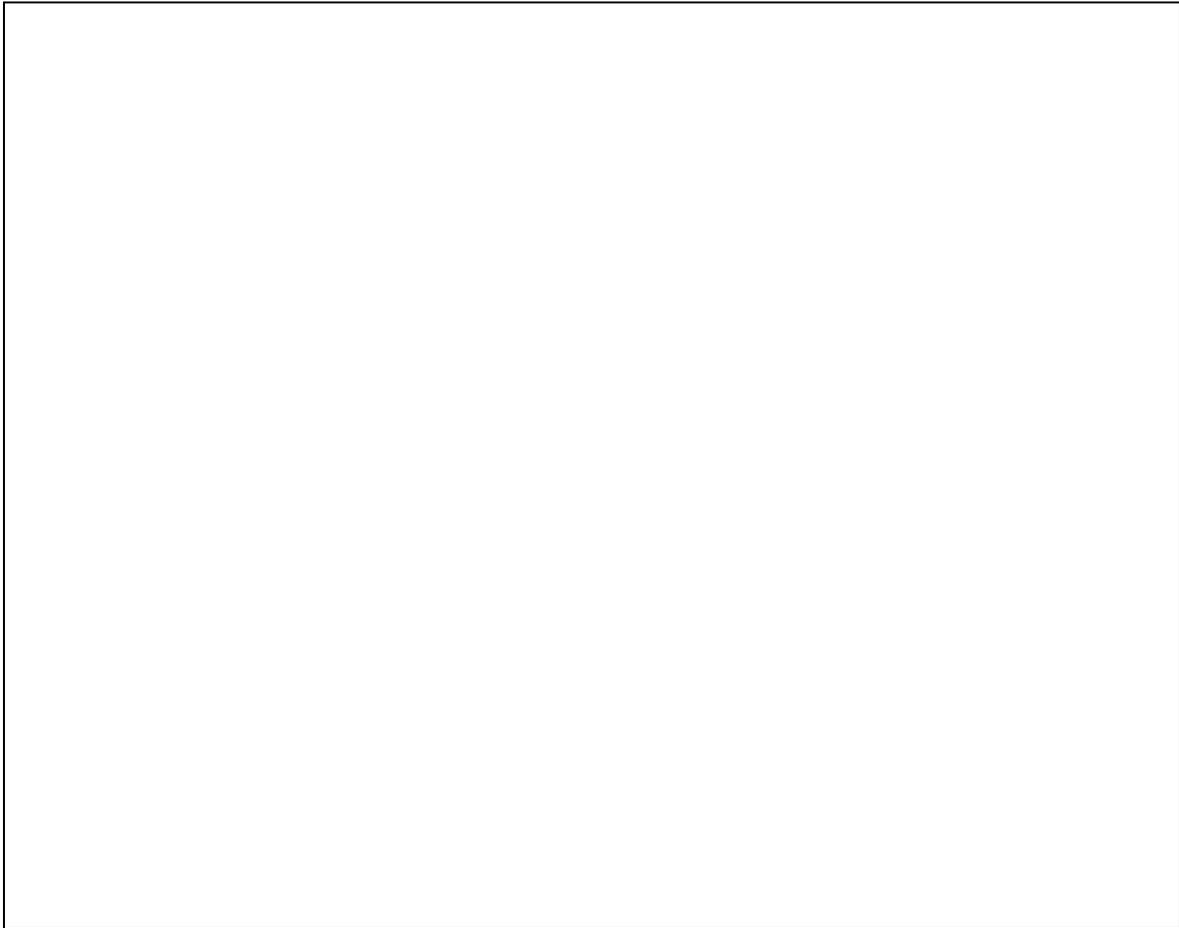
Despite the gloom, the world does seem headed toward redemption. One apparent sign is that the Jewish people have returned to the Land of Israel and made it bloom again. Additionally, a major movement is afoot of young Jews returning to Torah tradition.

The Messiah can come at any moment, and it all depends on our actions. God is ready when we are. For as King David says: "Redemption will come today—if you hearken to His voice."

by Rabbi Shraga Simmons  
Largely adapted from Aish.com

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## Jewish-Christian Disputations



### *Moses Nachmanides and The Debate in Barcelona, Spain, 1263*

The most famous of all Jewish-Christian disputations was between the apostate Jew Pablo Christiani and Moses Nachmanides (the [Ramban](#)).

Nachmanides argued that the central issue separating Christianity and Judaism was *not* the issue of Jesus' messiahship, but whether or not Jesus was divine. There was no basis in Judaism, Nachmanides said, for believing in the divinity of the Messiah or, indeed, of any man. To Nachmanides, it seemed most strange "that the Creator of heaven and earth resorted to the womb of a certain Jewess and grew there for nine months and was born as an infant, and afterwards grew up and was betrayed into the hands of his enemies who sentenced him to death and executed him, and that afterwards... he came to life and returned to his original place. The mind of a Jew, or any other person, cannot tolerate this." Nachmanides told the Spanish monarch, "You have listened all your life to priests who have filled your brain and the marrow of your bones with this doctrine, and it has settled with you because of that accustomed habit." Had King James heard these ideas propounded for the first time when he was already an adult, Nachmanides implied, he never would have accepted them.

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