

# MESSIAH TRUTH

## MESSIANIC JUDAISM: A NEW MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

Messianic Judaism is a Christian movement that began in the 1970s combining a mixture of Jewish ritual and Christianity. There are a vast and growing numbers of these groups, and they differ in how much Jewish ritual is mixed with conventional Christian belief. One end of the spectrum is represented by Jews For Jesus, who simply target Jews for conversion to Christianity using imitations of Jewish ritual solely as a ruse for attracting the potential Jewish converts. On the other end are those who don't stress the divinity of Jesus, but present him as the "Messiah." They incorporate distorted Jewish ritual on an ongoing basis.

The movement has received criticism from mainstream Christian leaders, for these groups claim to believe in the New Testament and yet gloss over the distinction between the two communities instituted in that work, and for the deceptive tactics used to gain Jewish converts. They are typically very pro-Israel and include an unusually high number of Jewish symbols -- the Magen David, Torah, talleisim, shofars, yarmulkes, mezzuzahs, Shabbat candles, and use of Hebrew and Yiddish language -- to assure prospective converts that they are not renouncing Judaism by accepting Jesus. According to Jewish law and tradition, such an acceptance is indeed a renunciation of Judaism.

Like the Christian Missionary, one of the major roles of the Messianic Jew is to proselytize others. They prey on such vulnerable individuals as the lonely, the elderly, the poor, the emotionally unstable, the naive, or those who are just untutored in Scripture. These unfortunates are lured into accepting missionary doctrines out of emotional need, not intellectual conviction. For even after a superficial reading of the missionaries' textual "proofs" within context, one sees that their doctrines are founded solely upon misquotations and mistranslations of Hebrew Scripture.

The term "completed Jews" is now used by some Messianic Jews and Missionary Christians to describe Jews who have accepted Jesus as their savior. This is offensive because of the implication that a Jew who has not accepted Jesus is not "complete." This term has also recently popped up in Washington, DC during House subcommittee support of President Bush's proposal to channel government money to religious social service programs. Jewish and civil liberties groups note that this testimony clearly documents the President's initiative will result in government-financed proselytizing.

## EDUCATION: THE BEST PROTECTION

One of the most significant differences between Judaism and Christianity (or Messianic Judaism) is that the latter rejects the laws that God gave to Moses to teach to the children of Israel. According to the New Testament passage **John 3:36**: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath." Christian theology firmly believes that if you do not believe in Jesus you are going to "burn in Hell." *We Are Not Going to Burn in Hell: a Jewish Response to Christianity* demonstrates how to refute Messianic Jews and Christian missionaries by using passages from both the Tanach and the New Testament. It is a definitive source to counter every argument Christian missionaries may make to sway a Jew to their theology.

It is truly surprising how many people there are who confess a belief in Jesus as the Messiah, without having first obtained an adequate knowledge and understanding of the New Testament, the main source of information about him. When a person is calmly shown the factual mistakes and absurdities that are in the New Testament, and sees where it misinterpreted and mistranslated the Tanach, it awakens the realization that they were misled by people whom they thought were friends.

One should be aware of the fact that Paul, a founding father of the early church, and the most successful missionary that ever lived, confessed to using deception and lies to make converts:

- ❑ **Romans 3:7**: If through my lies God's truth abounds to His glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner?
- ❑ **Philippians 1:18**: In every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Jesus is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

The veracity of everything that Paul stated and wrote is called into question by the fact that these quotes are found in the books he himself authored. *Or, did he?*

## JESUS: THE FALSE MESSIAH

For almost two thousand years, the Christian Church has taught that Jesus was crucified, died, and was resurrected three days later. This has long been one of the church's foundational beliefs, along with the virgin birth, atonement, and future second coming of Jesus.

In the year 325 CE, Constantine (a non-baptized Pagan) convened the Council of Nicea to settle disputes

in the Church. The council changed Jesus from man to God in the flesh, they changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, and the Passover was changed to Easter. Among the nearly 200 Gospels circulating in the first three hundred years of this era, the Catholic Church canonized only four. Origen, the great Catholic father, confirms this fact: "And not four Gospels, but very many, out of which these we have chosen."

A partial list of the different books considered by the Church for inclusion were a gospel written by Jesus' own hand; letters and other correspondences written by Jesus; letters written by the "virgin" Mary; Pilate's official report to the emperor of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, with Pilate's confession of faith; the reply to this from Tiberius, and the trial of Pilate; official documents of the Roman Senate about Jesus; Gospels, epistles, acts, by every single one of the twelve apostles; and official documents of church law and government, written in Greek by the apostles. In his book, *Answering Christianity's Most Puzzling Questions*, Christian apologist Richard Sisson states:

"In fact, after the death of Jesus a whole flood of books that claimed to be inspired appeared.... Disputes over which ones were true were so intense that the debate continued for centuries. Finally in the fourth century a group of church leaders called a council and took a vote. The 66 books that comprised our cherished Bible were declared to be Scripture by a vote of 568 to 563."

Paul and the writers of all four canonical Gospels described the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, as they understood it had happened. There is a acknowledged consensus among academic Christian theologians that:

- ❑ The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were not written by Jesus' disciples but by a person or persons whose names are unknown.
- ❑ Neither Paul nor any of the Gospel writers had been an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry or death.
- ❑ The Gospels record the beliefs and memories of various Christian groups as they had evolved at the time they were written.

**Matthew 1:20** and **Luke 1:31** describe "angels" appearing to Jesus' mother and her husband informing them of her forthcoming "immaculate conception" and "virgin birth" to the "Son of God," the "Messiah." When compared with the way Jesus' family and neighbors treated him, it is absurd to believe that "angels" really visited them:

- ❑ **Mark 3:21:** Upon hearing of it, his family went out to seize him, for they said, "He is beside himself."

To offset the startling fact that Jesus' family thought

that he was insane, some New Testament editions replace "they" with "people," although "they" is in the original Greek text.

- ❑ **John 7:5:** For even his brothers did not believe in him.
- ❑ **Luke 4:16:** And Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the Sabbath day...

There, Jesus hinted to his friends and neighbors that he was the Messiah, however:

- ❑ **Luke 4:28:** When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up, and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong.

How very strange it is, that during all the years in which Yeshu grew up with them, his brothers, friends, and neighbors did not notice that he was a "divine being." And could it have been that his parents forgot or didn't tell anyone what they experienced?

## ORIGINS OF THE JESUS MYTHOS

Christianity is based on the unique belief that Jesus was God's Son, born of a virgin, sacrificed for the Salvation of man. In reality, as sacrificed virgin-born Savior Son of God, Jesus was not unique. Not even close. The Jesus mythos simply followed the traditional model of the ancient pagan savior-gods.

At the time of Jesus of Nazareth, as for centuries before, the Mediterranean world roiled with a happy diversity of creeds and rituals. Details varied according to location and culture, but the general outlines of these faiths were astonishingly similar. Roughly speaking the ancients' gods:

- ❑ Were born on or very near our Christmas Day
- ❑ Were born of a Virgin-Mother
- ❑ Were born in a Cave or Underground Chamber
- ❑ Led a life of toil for Mankind
- ❑ Were called by the names of Light-bringer, Healer, Mediator, Savior, Deliverer
- ❑ Were however vanquished by the Powers of Darkness
- ❑ And descended into Hell or the Underworld
- ❑ Rose again from the dead, and became the pioneers of mankind to the Heavenly world
- ❑ Founded Communions of Saints, and Churches into which disciples were received by Baptism
- ❑ Were commemorated by Eucharistic meals

Krishna was born of the virgin Devaki; the Savior Dionysus was born of the virgin Semele. Buddha too was born of a virgin, as were the Egyptian Horus and Osiris. The old Teutonic goddess Hertha was a virgin impregnated by the heavenly Spirit and bore a son. Scandinavian Frigga was impregnated by the All-Father Odin and bore Balder, the healer and savior of mankind.

Mithras was born in a cave, on December 25th, of a virgin mother. He came from heaven to be born as a man, to redeem men from their sin. He was known as "Savior," "Son of God," "Redeemer," and "Lamb of God." With twelve disciples he traveled far and wide as a teacher and illuminator of men. He was buried in a tomb from which he rose again from the dead -- an event celebrated yearly with much rejoicing. His followers kept the Sabbath holy, holding sacramental feasts in remembrance of Him. The sacred meal of bread and water, or bread and wine, was symbolic of the body and blood of the sacred bull.

The celebration of Christmas on Dec. 25 was originally the pagan birthday of Mithras, the sun god, whose day of the week is still known as "Sunday." The halo of light which is usually shown surrounding the face of Jesus and Christian saints, is another concept taken from the sun god. The theme of temptation by a devil-like creature was also found in pagan mythology. In particular, the story of Jesus's temptation by Satan resembles the temptation of Osiris by the devil-god Set in Egyptian mythology.

## THE SOURCE OF THE ORIGINAL GOSPELS

Theologians have also observed for many decades that two of the synoptic gospels (Matthew and Luke) have many points of similarity. In fact, the writings have many dozens of phrases and sentences that are identical. This observation led to the theory that both gospels were based largely on an earlier document called "Q" meaning "Quelle," which is German for "source," and is comprised of three distinct documents:

- ❑ Q1 described Jesus as a Jewish philosopher-teacher, written circa 50 CE.
- ❑ Q2 viewed Jesus as a Jewish apocalyptic prophet, written circa 60 CE.
- ❑ Q3 described Jesus as a near-deity who converses directly with God and Satan, written circa 70 CE during a time of great turmoil in Palestine.

The authors of the Gospels of Matthew (circa 80 CE) and Luke (circa 90 CE) wrote their books using text from Q, Mark and their own unique traditions. The author of the Gospel of Thomas also used portions of Q1 and Q2 in his writing, but seems to have been unaware of Q3. This gospel was widely circulated within the early Christian movement but did not make it into the Christian

Scriptures.

What is remarkable about Q1 is that the original Christians appeared to be centered totally on concerns about their relationships with God and with other people, and their preparation for the Kingdom of God on earth. Totally absent from their spiritual life are almost all of the factors that we associate with Christianity today.

There is no reference to Jesus' death having any redeeming function; in fact, there is no mention of the crucifixion at all. John E. Remsburg's *The Christ: A Critical Review and Analysis of the Evidence of His Existence*, lists over thirty historians who lived during the time, or within a century after the time, that Jesus is supposed to have lived.

Enough of the writings remain to form a library. Yet in this mass of Jewish and Pagan literature, according to Remsburg, "aside from two forged passages in the works of a Jewish author, and two disputed passages in the works of Roman writers, there is to be found no mention of Jesus Christ." Nor, do any of these authors make note of the Disciples or Apostles -- increasing the embarrassment from the silence of history concerning the foundation of Christianity.

## THE JEWISH MESSIAH

Judaism, unlike the Christianity, does not believe that the Messiah is Jesus. The noun *moshiach* (translated as messiah) annotatively means "annointed one;" it does not, however, imply "savior." The notion of an innocent, semi-divine being who will sacrifice himself to save us from the consequences of our own sins is a purely Christian concept that has no basis in Jewish thought or scripture. In Judaic texts, the term messiah was used for all kings, high priests, certain warriors, but never eschatological figures. In the Tanach, *moshiach* is used 38 times: two patriarchs, six high priests, once for Cyrus, 29 Israelite kings such as Saul and David. Not once is the word *moshiach* used in reference to the awaited Messiah. Even in the apocalyptic book of Daniel, the only time *moshiach* is mentioned is in connection to a murdered high priest. The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Pseudepigrapha, and Apocrypha never mention the Messiah.

The man destined to be the Messiah will be a direct descendant of King David (**Isaiah 11:1**) through the family of Solomon, David's son (**1 Chronicles 22:9-10**). He will cause all the world to serve God together (**Isaiah 11:2**), be wiser than Solomon (**Mishnah Repentance 9:2**), greater than the patriarchs and prophets (**Aggadah Genesis 67**), and more honored than kings (**Mishnah Sanhedrin 10**), for he will reign as king of the world (**Pirkei Eliezer**). Amongst the most basic missions that the Messiah will accomplish *during his lifetime* (**Isaiah 42:4**) are to:

- ❑ Oversee the rebuilding of Jerusalem, including the Third Temple, in the event that it has not yet been rebuilt (**Michah 4:1** and **Ezekiel 40-45**)
- ❑ Gather the Jewish people from all over the world and bring them home to the Land of Israel (**Isaiah 11:12; 27:12-13**)
- ❑ Influence *every* individual of *every* nation to abandon and be ashamed of their former beliefs (or non-beliefs) and acknowledge and serve only the One True God of Israel (**Isaiah 11:9-10; 40:5** and **Zephaniah 3:9**)
- ❑ Bring about global peace throughout the world (**Isaiah 2:4; 11:5-9** and **Michah 4:3-4**).

There are over a dozen additional prophecies which the Messiah will also achieve (there is no mention of any "second coming" in the Tanach or the New Testament). In order to avoid identifying the wrong individual as Messiah, the Code of Jewish Law dictates criteria for establishing the Messiah's identity (**Mishnah Kings 11:4**):

"If a king arises from the House of David who meditates on the Torah, occupies himself with the commandments as did his ancestor King David, observes the commandments of the Written and Oral Law, prevails upon all Israel to walk in the way of the Torah and to follow its direction, and fights the wars of God, it may be assumed that he is the Messiah.

If he does these things and is fully successful, rebuilds the Third Temple on its location, and gathers the exiled Jews, he is beyond doubt the Messiah. But if he is not fully successful, or if he is killed, he is not the Messiah."

- ❑ Over 1,000 years before the attributed birth of the historical Jesus, it was recorded in the Tanach:
- ❑ **Numbers 23:19**: God is not a man, that He should be deceitful, nor the son of man, that He should repent. Would He say and not do, or speak and not confirm?
- ❑ **Psalms 146:3**: Do not rely on princes nor in the son of man, for he holds no salvation.

Even the New Testament concurs that Jesus, in fact, is *not* the Messiah:

- ❑ **Matthew 20:28**: Just as the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve.

## COUNTER-MISSIONARY TRAINING

When confronted by a Christian missionary or a member of the Messianic movement, one should remember that the very existence of Jesus, and events surrounding him significant to the Christian mythos, are

entirely absent from every historical record. Missionary arguments usually appeal to emotion rather than to reason; they will attempt to make you feel embarrassed about denying the historicity of Jesus. The usual response is something like "Isn't denying the existence of Jesus just as silly as denying the existence of Julius Caesar or denying the Holocaust?" One should then point out that there are ample historical sources confirming the existence of who or whatever else is named, while there exists no corresponding evidence for Jesus.

Christian scholar Rt. Rev. George Arthur Butterick, in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, a book written by to prove the validity of the New Testament, states:

"A study of 150 Greek [manuscripts] of the Gospel of Luke has revealed more than 30,000 different readings.... It is safe to say that there is not one sentence in the New Testament in which the [manuscript] is wholly uniform."

There are 304,805 letters (approximately 79,000 words) in the Torah. In the over 3,000 years since Moses received the original Scripture from Mt. Sinai and wrote the 13 copies (twelve of which were distributed among the Tribes), spelling variants have emerged on a total of nine words -- with absolutely *no effect* on their meaning. The Christian Bible, in comparison, has over 200,000 variants and in 400 instances, the variants change the meaning of the text; 50 of these are of great significance.

When countering Christian Missionaries it is important to always base one's arguments on actual Scripture – the original Hebrew text (public domain applications and software are available at <http://www.snunit.k12.il/heb.html> if your browser is not Hebrew-enabled). Remember that the English translation of the Tanach (which they call the "Old Testament") in nearly every Christian Bible is taken from the Septuagint, one of many Greek translations that differed considerably from the Masoretic text. It is this Greek Septuagint, not the original Hebrew, that was the main basis for the Old Latin, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, Slavonic, and part of the Arabic translations of the Old Testament.

Even the earliest English translation of the *JPS Tanach* (Jewish Publication Society) was a slightly modified version of the Old Testament found in the King James Bible, instead of a direct translation of the original Hebrew which accompanied it. Christian Missionaries will almost always use the English translation of the *JPS Tanach* as a "proof text." Far more accurate English translations of the Masoretic text are found in Koren's *The Jerusalem Bible* and Artscroll's *Stone Edition Tanach*.

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