

Messiah Yeshua

'I (God) will put enmity between you (the devil) and the woman (all women) and between your offspring (wicked people) and her Offspring (Jesus). He (Jesus) will bruise your (the devil's) head and you will bruise His (Jesus') heel' (Genesis 3:15).

This verse is the first reference and prophecy to the coming of Jesus to bring salvation to all humanity. God is speaking prophetically saying a woman's (Mary's) Offspring (Jesus) would come. The devil would use his offspring (wicked people) to 'bruise' Jesus, which is what happened when Jesus was crucified. 'Bruising' the devil's head meant Jesus would overcome the devil and that also happened at the cross then Jesus rose from the dead, overcoming death. Death came when the devil deceived Eve and suggested they would not die. Adam disobeyed God's instructions and ate from the forbidden tree. Jesus came to remove the curse of eternal death that was imposed over all mankind via the disobedience of Adam. There are hundreds of Messianic prophecies, most of which were fulfilled when Jesus came, died and was resurrected. The remaining prophecies will be fulfilled to perfection when He returns to earth. The whole purpose of Jesus' coming was to fulfil His ministry then die, bringing salvation and taking many curses and judgements upon Himself. Jesus was The Anointed One (Isaiah 61:1), the Son of God (Luke 1:32), the Son of Man (mankind) (Matthew 12:8) and He is our Jewish Messiah. God chose the Jewish nation to usher in our Messiah. Salvation comes only from the Jews (John 4:22) and Israel, from no one and nowhere else (Romans 3:2).

The birth of Jesus on earth was not the first time He had been manifested. There are several references to the holy Deity Who came and spoke to many righteous people on earth. Jesus was there before the foundations of the earth were laid down and He was there during creation but He was not openly revealed until He started His ministry (John 1:31). 'By Him (Jesus) all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things have been created through Him and for Him' (Colossians 1:16). 'With His precious blood as of a faultless and pure Lamb, the blood of Jesus Who was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of times for your sake' (1 Peter 1:19 & 20). 'He (God) chose us in Him (Jesus) before the foundation of the world so we would be holy and without blemish before Him (God) in love' (Ephesians 1:4). Jesus said, "Father, You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). Jesus met Abraham long before He came to earth. "Honestly I tell you, before Abraham came into existence, I AM" (John 8:58).

Jesus was there when God ordered the devil out of heaven because he had sinned. The devil was once a perfect, beautiful, anointed cherub. He was never an archangel. Angels and cherubim are very different created beings. He was once beautifully adorned, had authority, was free to walk around the Garden of Eden, was the cherub of music, percussion, pipes and stringed instruments but ended up as nothing. The Bible says the devil was evicted from heaven because of his pride due to his beauty and his position of authority, the pomp, arrogance, violence, unrighteousness, iniquity and corruption, plus he profaned the Lord's sanctuary and attempted to exalt himself above the Lord. Those were the reasons why the evil one was thrown out of the highest heaven. God even stripped him of his heavenly immortal body and has left him forever without a body (Isaiah 14:11 to 15; Ezekiel 28:13 to 19). Notice now what Jesus said to the disciples. "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

The Lord God acknowledged Jesus as His Son long before Jesus came to earth. 'Yahweh said to Me, "You (Jesus) are My Son. Today I have begotten You"' (Psalm 2:7). 'To which of the angels did God say at any time, "You are My Son. Today I have begotten You?" And again, "I will be to Him a Father and He will be to Me a Son?"' (2 Samuel 7:14; Hebrews 1:5). 'Jesus did not glorify Himself to be made a high priest, but it was God Who said to Him, "You are My Son. Today I have begotten You."' God says in another place, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:5 & 6; Psalm 110:4). The close relationship Jesus had with God the Father started in childhood. Jesus knew He was the Messiah from a young age. At just twelve years old Jesus said He had to be in His Father's house (Luke 2:42 & 49). About forty times Jesus used the words, "My Father," when He referred to God. In the Old Testament, the phrase 'My Father' is used only once as it refers to the yet to be born Messiah speaking with God the Father. "He (Jesus) will call to Me, 'You are My Father, My God and the Rock of My Salvation!' I (God) will appoint Him (Jesus) My Firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth" (Psalm 89:26 & 27).

Before Jesus was born on earth He was active in the lives of the Hebrews, later known as the Jews. Some Hebrews and Jews Jesus actually visited as Melchizedek or as the Angel of the Lord were: Abraham (Genesis 14:18 to 20 & 22:11), Hagar (Genesis 16:7 & 21:17), Jacob (Genesis 31:11), Jacob wrestled with Jesus as the Angel of the Lord all night and Jacob acknowledge Him as God (Genesis 32:24 to 30), Moses (Exodus 3:2 & 6), all of the Children of Israel (Exodus 14:19; Judges 2:1 to 4), Balaam (Numbers 22:22 to 35), Gideon (Judges 6:11 & 22), Manoah and his unnamed wife, the parents of Samson (Judges 13:1 to 25), Elijah (2 Kings 1:3 & 15), David (1 Chronicles 21:15 to 18), Joshua the high priest (Zechariah 3:1 to 10), Job

(Job 38:1 & 40:1), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:25), Daniel (Daniel 10:5 to 21 & 12:1 to 10). Jesus is also known as the Word of God (Revelation 19:13) so each time it is written, "The Word of God/Yahweh came to ..." it was Jesus speaking. For example, the Word of God came to Jonah (Jonah 1:1 & 3:9). The Word of the Lord was spoken to so many people before Jesus/Yeshua came to earth it is not possible to name all of them in this Bible study.

Daniel gave the exact time when the Messiah would come and after He came, burnt offerings would cease because Jesus is the ultimate sacrificial Lamb. The offerings ceased when the second Temple was destroyed in 70 AD. 'Understand, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem to the (coming of the Messiah) Anointed One, the Prince, will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. The Temple will be built again with street and moat, even in troubled times. After the sixty-two weeks the Prince, Messiah, Anointed One will be cut off (murdered) and will have nothing (to His name) and the people of the (pagan) prince (Roman Emperor) who will come, will destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (second Temple) and its end will be with a flood (of violence and bloodshed) and even to the end will there be war. Desolations are determined ... burnt offerings will cease' (Daniel 9:25 & 26; 12:11).

Jewish people and Christians are eagerly waiting for our Messiah to come. The topic of the Messiah has caused some contention between Jews and Christians. Christians know without any doubt, Jesus our Messiah, or in Hebrew, Yeshua HaMashiach, is the Messiah Who was to come and had hundreds of prophecies written about Him. He is the only begotten Son of God. However, some Jewish people are just as adamant Jesus is not the Messiah. The word, 'Messiah' or Mashiach means 'Anointed One'. Mashiach comes from the Hebrew root word, 'mashach' which means, 'to anoint with oil'. Messiah is not our Saviour's name, it is His title. His name would have been Yeshua Ben Joseph, or Jesus, Son of Joseph. "Is this Jesus, Son of Joseph, Whose father and mother we know?" (John 6:42). When we use His name with His title we are affirming our faith by saying, Jesus our Anointed One, or Yeshua HaMashiach.

Jesus is the most famous and influential person of all people who have ever lived on earth. The disciples and the followers of Jesus while He was on earth were at a great advantage. They saw Him face-to-face, heard His voice as He taught them, they ate with Him, walked with Him, prayed with Him and embraced Him. All Christians need to understand the absolute Jewishness of Jesus/Yeshua and not rely on Hellenistic attitudes and anti-Semitic teaching. Jesus was never a Christian. Our Saviour Jesus/Yeshua was born and lived as an Orthodox Jewish Man, spoke Hebrew and taught in Hebrew, was raised and lived fully within the Torah and all of the Laws of Moses, attended Synagogues and preached in them, He honoured His Jewish parents, lived wholly within the Jewish culture, prayed to the Lord God regularly and died in Jerusalem. To accept Jesus as our Saviour, we need to embrace His Jewishness and not attempt to minimise it. Jesus had a close and loving relationship with God our Creator without any false religiosity, for which He rebuked the Pharisees. Jesus had a very strong identification with His blood family, the Jewish people. The restoration of Israel and Jerusalem as the capital is the fulfilment of promises made by God centuries ago to the Jewish people and what God wants done on earth cannot be stopped by anyone. Jesus will return to Israel as King of all kings. Judaism affirms the incompleteness or a diminished personal salvation and individual holiness, as long as the person is not linked with the Messianic redemption of Israel. The redemption of Israel is God's will. Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is also God's will. If a Christian opposes God's will and stands against Israel, their walk with God, their salvation, their personal holiness is incomplete and questionable. Christianity is the daughter of Judaism. Without Judaism, Christianity could not exist. Without Christianity, Judaism existed and thrived for centuries. All Christians need to fully accept the spiritual roots of their salvation, which is Judaism.

Israel was where Jesus was born, lived, conducted His ministry, died, was resurrected and where He founded the 'Way' which became the Assemblies and later became the church. We must keep in mind when reading the New Testament, the Epistles preserve the nuances, words, parables, examples and ideas, all originally spoken in Hebrew within the culture and laws of the Jewish people. Hidden within the written text of the entire Bible are words and concepts that are uniquely Hebraic. When these words were spoken in Hebrew during the first century they were not hidden but were clearly expressed by the writers. If we want to know more about Jesus, His life, His ministry and His teachings, we need to learn more about the Hebrew language He spoke and the environment in which He lived. When we read the New Testament we must remember it was written entirely in the pure language of Hebrew and not in any other language because every other language is corrupted and God would never allow His holy Word to be written in a corrupted pagan language (Psalm 147:19 & 20; Daniel 2:44; Zephaniah 3:9).

There were no churches until long after Jesus died. The early church was initially made up of mostly Jews so Hebrew was natural to them but in our modern world it seems very foreign because of anti-Semitic attitudes stating the New Testament was written in Greek, which only serves to diminish the remarkable job the Jewish early church did to bring the Gospel to the entire Gentile earth, just as Jesus told them to do

(Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). The purpose of Yeshua's first coming was to bring salvation to the earth for Jews first then Gentiles. Jesus first came for the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24) before He told the disciples to go out into the entire Gentile world to take His salvation message. The purpose of His second coming will be to rule the earth from Jerusalem.

Jesus did not once use the words, "I AM the Messiah." What He did do was claim His holy anointing using other words. When Jesus declared, "I AM," He was rightfully claiming to be God on earth. It is the same phrase God used when He spoke to Moses. God said, "I AM WHO I AM. Tell the Children of Israel this, 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:13 & 14). Jesus stated, "I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). Jesus revealed to the Samaritan woman at the well, He was the Messiah (John 4:5, 25 & 26). 'Andrew found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah!" (John 1:41). Jesus did not correct Peter when he said, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God." But said only God could have revealed that knowledge to him (Matthew 16:15 & 16). He did not correct John the Baptist when he proclaimed Him as the Lamb of God (John 1:36). Jesus did validate His identity using the Hebraic way, by His actions, His miracles, His speech, using Messianic quotes from the Bible and He referred to Himself as the, "Son of Man," which is a quote directly from the Bible. 'I (Daniel) saw in the night visions (dreams) and behold, there came with the clouds of the sky One like a Son of Man, and He came to the Ancient of Days (God the Father and Creator) and they brought Him (Jesus) near before Him (God)' (Daniel 7:13). This reveals very strongly, the close relationship between Father and Son before Jesus had been revealed. When Jesus used the title, 'Son of Man' He was proclaiming His Deity Who had come down from heaven with a specific purpose. A high priest asked Jesus directly if He was the Messiah the Son of God to which Jesus replied, "I AM, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:61 & 62). When Stephen was being stoned to death he also had a vision of the, 'Son of Man' standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56). Every time Jesus used the phrase, 'Son of Man' He was making it very clear, He is the Messiah, the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Initially, everyone seemed to enjoy the teaching of Jesus. He was glorified by everyone but that was until He openly stated He was the One Who was fulfilling the Messianic verses. While teaching in the Synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus read out Isaiah 61:1 & 2, a passage of Scripture the Jewish people understood to be a Messianic study, then they became furious and physically threw Him out of the city and tried to throw Him off a cliff. How quickly religious people become enraged, and at the tiniest offence! 'He taught in their Synagogues, being glorified by all. He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up. As was His custom, He entered the Synagogue on the Sabbath Day and stood up to read. The book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. He opened the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me because He (God) has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to deliver those who are crushed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." He closed the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of all in the Synagogue were fastened on Him. He told them, "Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All testified about Him and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth and they said, "Is this Joseph's son?" Jesus said to them, "No doubt you will tell Me this parable, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done at Capernaum do also here in your hometown.' Most certainly I tell you, no prophet is acceptable in His hometown. Truly I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was shut up three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land. Elijah was sent to none of them except to Zarephath in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." They were all filled with wrath in the Synagogue as they heard these things. They rose up, threw Him out of the city and led Him to the brow of the hill their city was built on so they might throw Him off the cliff but Jesus passed through the midst of them and went on His way' (Luke 4:15 to 30).

What did Jesus look like? The Scriptures give us many hints and clear verses regarding His appearance. Until we get to heaven and see Jesus face-to-face we cannot possibly know what His exact features were but we can consider what the Bible tells us about the ancient Jews. The Scriptures reveal in several places, Jewish people were white skinned Caucasians and very beautiful. The Bible confirms the Jews' white ethnicity by revealing Esau had red hair so he would have had fair skin (Genesis 25:25). King David was fair skinned, had red hair and a ruddy complexion which only fair skinned people have (1 Samuel 16:12 & 17:42). Solomon was white skinned with a ruddy complexion, golden head, red lips and his body was white as ivory (Song of Solomon 5:10 to 14) and Jesus was a direct descendent of David and Solomon so Jesus would have been fair skinned because in those days, Jews only married other Jews. Intermarriage was forbidden so their ethnicity would have remained fair skinned. The Bible says the Jewish people had bodies that were 'whiter than snow and milk' and 'more ruddy than rubies' (Lamentations 4:7). During their international Diaspora many Jews intermarried with other ethnic groups and have changed accordingly but Jesus came before the Diaspora, which began about 70 AD after their Temple was destroyed. 'Among the menorahs was

One like a Son of Man, clothed with a robe reaching down to His feet and with a golden sash around His chest. His head and his hair were white as white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire' (Revelation 1:13 & 14). Fair skinned people often have blue, green or hazel eyes so it is possible Jesus had this colouring. The drawings of Jesus with long flowing hair are incorrect because Jewish men had short hair. Long hair on men was considered to be dishonourable. Two verses written hundred years apart reveal Jewish men had short hair before, during and after the days of Jesus. 'They will not shave their heads nor allow their locks to grow long. They will cut off the hair of their heads' (Ezekiel 44:20). 'Nature itself teaches you, if a man has long hair it is a dishonour to him' (1 Corinthians 11:14). God Himself told us, Jesus was not what people considered to be handsome. "He has no form nor comeliness. When we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isaiah 53:2). Jesus did have a beard that was ripped off during His torture just before He was crucified. "I gave My cheeks to those who plucked off the hair" (Isaiah 50:6). There are two verses in the New Testament that both hint (but do not say outright) that Jesus may have been tall. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52) and 'We should all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a full grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Jesus' (Ephesians 4:13). Whether or not Jesus was tall, He was certainly solidly built because He had a larger than normal lung capacity. Any man who could preach to thousands of people at once, out in the open air without any amplification and without losing his voice would have been a very strongly built man (Matthew 5:1 & 2). He walked all over Israel teaching and preaching, healing and delivering those who were oppressed, and there were no vehicles. Before starting His ministry, Jesus worked as a builder with His (step)father Joseph and there were no power tools or hoists. Building and bricklaying were done with manpower. According to what the Bible tells us, we can picture Jesus our Messiah as an average looking, solidly built, possibly tall Man with fair skin, fair hair, hazel eyes and a booming voice. He was well groomed and wore expensive clothing. If anyone says Jesus was dark skinned, they have obviously not studied the Bible, which reveals the Jews in Jesus' day were white skinned, had ruddy cheeks and fair or red hair.

Why did some of the Jewish people reject Jesus? It was the Messianic claim by Jesus that caused some Jewish people to become extremely jealous of Him and reject Him (Romans 10:19), ultimately making them call for His crucifixion. We must make two points very clear. Although some Jewish leaders wanted Jesus killed, multitudes did not (Matthew 21:45 & 46). Multitudes followed Him everywhere to the point where He had to sneak off to be alone so He could pray (Matthew 14:23). Multitudes listened to Jesus teaching the Word of God (Luke 5:1). There were so many people they began trampling on each other (Luke 12:1). The other very important point is, although a few Jewish people wanted Jesus killed and the religious leaders mocked Him (Matthew 27:41), no Jewish person played any part in His torture or crucifixion. It was the Roman soldiers who did all the torturing, whipping, spitting, stabbing, nailing, stealing His clothing and Roman governor Pontius Pilate gave Him the title, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews" (John 19:19). If people care to study the Bible, nobody could lay blame on the Jews for killing Jesus. They did not. It was all done by the wicked Roman soldiers, Gentiles, as God foretold in Genesis 3:15. The Jewish people who loved Jesus buried Him with love, care and concern.

From a Messianic Jewish point of view, some Jews rejected Jesus but most accepted Him and were devastated when He was murdered. The rejection of Jesus was by no means unanimous or universal. To believe there was wholesale rejection of Jesus by the Jews is to ignore the documented facts. Many thousands of Jewish people accepted Jesus two thousand years ago, just as there are many thousands of Jewish people who accept Jesus today. More Gentiles have rejected Jesus than Jews have at any time in history. The two opposing opinions are just as vocal and fiercely dedicated today as they were in 30 AD. Many of the Jews who rejected Jesus then and now are unfamiliar with the prophecies regarding His first coming. There are many Jewish people today who do not know what is written in the Old Testament. They do not read it, much less study it. It has been said, only a minority of Jewish people follow the entire Old Testament. They rejected Him then and now because of their unfamiliarity with the Scriptures and prophecies outlining their Messiah's supernatural conception (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23), where He would be born (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6), where He would live (Isaiah 11:1; Matthew 2:23), His ministry and the details of His terrible death (Isaiah 53:1 to 12). Jesus came and went but many Jews were not paying attention to the prophecies when they should have been. Some Jewish people have erroneously believed over the last two thousand years, to be a Jew, one has to reject Jesus! Many people today believe the only reason salvation came to the Gentiles was because of this rejection but the Scriptures say otherwise. Yes, the apostles went to the Gentiles but God told Abraham he would bless the entire earth (Genesis 12:3). So it was always God's plan to save the world. 'God so loved the world, He sent His only begotten Son so whosoever (Jew and Gentile) believes in Him will find eternal life' (John 3:16). Ignoring the Bible is not unique to Jews and most Gentiles know even less what God has written in the Scriptures.

Jesus brought the truth of faith in God to the entire world, not just to Israel. Israelites were just the first ones to be blessed by faith and truth. When God gave the Ten Commandments and other instructions regarding ethical and healthy human behaviour, they were for the entire world not just the Jews. Where did we get, 'Do

not kill,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not pervert the course of justice,' 'Do not lie in court' and 'Do not move your neighbour's landmark?' From the Bible! When Jesus wanted to lay the foundations for a new Jewish Charismatic religious movement that departed in a few ways from the original Biblical authority, Galilee was the place to do it. The Galileans were the first Jews to hear the new salvation message spoken by Jesus. At that time, they were known for being less knowledgeable in the Bible than Jews in Judea. The Gospels record many times, Jesus spoke to ordinary folk, not just to religious leaders or politicians. Flavius Josephus the historian wrote, "Jesus, a wise Man, a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure, drew over to Himself many Jews and many Gentiles."

What drew these people to Jesus were the miracles and wonderful works He did. His teaching was so extraordinary people marvelled (Mark 1:22). Other Rabbis of Jesus' day instructed people by quoting the opinions of other teachers but never did they teach from their own authority like Jesus did. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus contrasted the well-known Scriptural interpretations with His own thoughts. "You have heard it was said, but I tell you" ... (Matthew 5:21 & 22). Many Jews rejected Jesus because He rejected some of the oral Torah (first five books of the Bible), without familiarising themselves with the Tenach (the prophets). Jesus did not do away with the Old Testament, He fulfilled it (Matthew 5:17). Some Rabbis believed the Old Testament was a cryptic document, not literal, so when the Messiah literally came, they could not accept Him. When Jesus told them their oral beliefs and traditions were man-made and not inspired by God, it made them furious (Mark 7:6 to 9). He scorned the hypocrisy among the religious leaders (Matthew 22:18; 23:13 to 23:29). When Jesus correctly interpreted the Scriptures, they did not believe Him (John 3:12). The teaching of Jesus resonated with many first century Jews, amazing and blessing them but the religious leaders became jealous of the deep knowledge Jesus had. Jesus was not scorned by all religious leaders. Some sought Him out to learn more about His teaching. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a member of the ruling council (John 3:1) who came to Jesus at night and later defended Jesus openly (John 7:50 & 51) and was involved in preparing Jesus' body for a Jewish burial (John 19:39). Joseph of Arimathaea was a disciple of Jesus (Matthew 27:57) and was a prominent member of the Council or Sanhedrin who was waiting for the Kingdom of God (Mark 15:43 to 46). He was a good and righteous man who had not consented to the Council and the deed of requesting the death of Jesus (Luke 23:50 to 54). He helped prepare Jesus' body for burial with Nicodemus (John 19:38 to 42). The great Rabbi Gamaliel from the House of Hillel defended the apostles (Acts 5:34 to 39). Not all of the religious leaders disagreed with Jesus. Some of them invited Him for meals (Luke 7:36). Many Pharisees responded positively to Him. Some religious leaders warned Jesus to flee from Herod (Luke 13:31).

The story of Jesus could have ended with His death except for the documented fact, He rose again. His resurrection was witnessed by thousands. Sightings of Him were documented. On the first Shavuot after His resurrection about three thousand Jews were added to the numbers of believers (Acts 2:41). The numbers of believers increased rapidly (Acts 6:7). The people accepted Jesus as their Messiah for several reasons. Multitudes had witnessed His ongoing miracles throughout His marvellous ministry. After His death, many other people accepted He really had been the Messiah. One main reason was the huge, thick curtain in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 'Jesus cried out with a loud voice and gave up the Spirit. The veil of the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. When the Roman Centurion who stood by opposite Him saw Jesus cried out like this and breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:37 to 39). The torn curtain would have shocked all of the Jewish people. Even the believers would not have expected that! The rending of this thick dividing curtain drew attention to the fact, Jesus was the atonement for sin, which in turn led the Levitical Priests, Sadducees and Pharisees to trust in Jesus.

Jesus prophesied the destruction of the Temple and when that happened in 70 AD, the Sadducees finally gave up and by 90 AD the cult of the Sadducees had ended. The famous Council meeting in Yavneh, 90 AD was the first time the leaders had met without any animal sacrifices. Judaism was then restructured as a religion without sacrifices. They came to realise Jesus the Lamb of God (John 1:29), was the ultimate sacrifice (Isaiah 53:7), giving His blood and body for the redemption of sin (Matthew 26:28). Jesus had taught His fellow Jews so well, the destruction of the Temple became the perfect opportunity for Jewish people to place their trust and faith in Jesus as their Messiah, even though He was no longer on earth. Throughout the past two millennia millions of Jewish people, including Rabbis have embraced Messiah Yeshua. Nobody could stop the spread of the 'Way' (Acts 19:23), which was the name of the new movement started by Jesus Himself and increased dramatically by the preaching of the Jewish disciples before Gentiles became involved.

There have been many Rabbis and priests who have been discredited by the religious leaders in the Jewish community because they embrace Jesus. Some have even been considered traitors. In spite of the persecution of Messianic Jews by Orthodox Jews, the numbers of believers has never waned. They have remained Jewish and will always be Jewish. They do not have to give up their heritage, religion, feasts, language or culture. All they need to do is believe Jesus is their Messiah – because He is. When Jesus

returns to earth, all confusion regarding His first and second coming and His Kingship will be removed (Zechariah 14:9). All Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26). There will be complete unity between Jews and Godly Gentiles. Of course, not every person will submit to God and be saved but many will. When Jesus returns, He will appear as quickly as a flash of lightning, with the thundering of trumpets and He will stand on the Mount of Olives which will split apart into two mountains with a deep valley between (Zechariah 14:4).

In the third century AD the church leaders with Constantine deliberately divided Christianity and the Jewish people. That resulted in Anti-Semitism that rages until today. The first church embraced everything Hebraic until the great division came, pulling the Christians away from the original culture and religious practices the original disciples and first Christians enjoyed. That brought pagan practices into the church. Passover became Easter with all its pagan idols like Easter bunnies, Easter eggs and the like. Hanukkah became Christmas and New Year which were both pagan Roman festivals. They ignore the 'Holy Feasts of the Lord' and swapped them for non-religious holidays. True believers have been robbed of the Hebraic foundation and heritage. Sadly, most Christians are not interested in knowing about genuine holidays but they love to embrace pagan holidays. The English word 'holiday' once meant 'Holy Day' or the Sabbath Day of rest. It has been shortened and changed to mean time off work! If we get the Jewish context of the New Testament wrong then we get the relationship with Messiah Yeshua wrong. God loves His covenant people, the Jews, and He will never forget them. He is restoring them to their rightful homeland of Israel. No matter who our personal forefathers were or what country they were from, once we accept the blood and sacrifice of our Messiah we become the covenant children of Abraham. It is better for our walk with God to seek our spiritual roots with God's original covenant people. Will we recognise Jesus when He returns? As long as we are seeking our Jewish Messiah, we will not miss Him.

Some people ask, "If Jesus is the Messiah why is there no peace on earth?" "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace and good will toward men" (Luke 2:13 & 14). Jesus came to bring His peace, not the end of all wars. Not yet anyway. He said there would be wars (Matthew 24:6). Jesus came to bring the peace that passes all human understanding (Philippians 4:7). When Jesus comes again that prophesied peace will come but it will last only one thousand years. Weapons will be turned into ploughs (Micah 4:3). After one thousand years of complete peace, wicked men will rise up against God and the Gog and Magog war will take place (Revelation 20:7 & 8). After that final war there will never again be another war. 'Hear Israel. Yahweh is our God. Yahweh is One and you will love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might' (Deuteronomy 6:4 & 5). Some people ask, "If God is One, how can there be the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?" If people care to study the Bible they will see the three-in-one Godhead is one – one in unity. At Creation the Triune God was revealed. 'The Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) was hovering over the surface of the waters' (Genesis 1:2). God spoke in the plural when He said, "Let US make man in OUR image after OUR likeness" (Genesis 1:26). As we have read earlier in this Bible study, Jesus was there at creation and God has acknowledged Jesus as His Son. People who do not study the Bible would have these doubts but people who study the Scriptures in depth would understand what God is telling them.

The issue of Jesus does not cause most Jewish people any concern. Around the world, Jews and Christians attend educational facilities together, work in various types of employment together, they can be close friends, marry and raise their children together. They can see the barrier between Jews and Gentiles is down and they are collectively part of one Spiritual Body (Romans 10:12; 1 Corinthians 12:12 to 14). We are individuals but all part of the Body of Messianic believers. The first century Jewish people who accepted Jesus as our Messiah turned the religious world upside down. They went throughout the entire world preaching the Gospel and proclaiming their faith (Romans 1:8). Millions of Jews and Gentiles were saved, born-again, baptised and walked with the Lord, sometimes amidst shocking persecution. Our Western beliefs are not based on rejection but on acceptance of Jesus and His teaching. Jesus has given all people a choice to accept or reject Him. After death, every person on earth will either go to heaven or the eternal lake of fire, and that is the choice every person on earth has to make for themselves (Revelation 22:17). God will never force anyone to accept salvation but all humanity has been warned of the consequences of rejecting Jesus. God has never said every person will be saved, He said many would be saved. 'Jesus will justify many by the knowledge of Himself ... He bore the sin of many' (Isaiah 53:11 & 12). 'I tell you, many will come from the east and the west and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven ... This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins' (Matthew 8:11; 26:28). For the early believers, Jews and Gentiles alike, Jesus was a revelation Who taught the history and the Sacred Scriptures written in Israel by Jewish men as the Lord gave them knowledge and instructions. Jesus said to His disciples, "Whoever listens to you listens to Me, and whoever rejects you rejects Me. Whoever rejects Me rejects God Who sent Me" (Luke 10:16).

Amen and God bless you.

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