

ISRAEL: THE EPICENTER OF GOD'S PLAN
WEEK 8 – ANSWERING STANDARD JEWISH OBJECTIONS

DON'T SHMEER THE SHMUTZ WITH THE SHMATTA

Terminology

- instead of Christ – say Jesus or Yeshua
- instead of church – say congregation
- instead of Christian – say believer
- instead of Old Testament/New Testament – say Old Covenant/New Covenant or Hebrew Scriptures
- instead of converted – say forgiven

Quick comments/responses:

“Oh, I believe in God”

- “Can you describe your God to me? How did you come to believe in this God? What is your source?”

“Your God is a God of judgment; my God is a God of love”

- “My God is judgmental when it comes to sin. BUT, He paid the ultimate price for sin – that is ultimate love”

“I’m not Jewish; my father is Jewish – not my mother”

- “You would be Jewish enough for Hitler”
- “The Hebrew Scriptures are patriarchal; lineage was recorded through the father”
- “The ruling re: Jewishness coming through the mother came down from the Rabbis following the Crusades when many Jewish women were raped – and the father was unknown. Thus – ones lineage was traced through the mother”

“I’m still waiting for the Messiah”

- “I’m waiting for the Messiah – the second time”
- If Jesus is not the Messiah, we have no Messiah because Hebrew Scripture specifically states that the Messiah would come BEFORE the second Temple was destroyed (Dan. 9:26, Mal. 3:1, Gen. 49:10 [rule in Judah will not depart until He comes – so the Messiah would have to come before 70 AD])

“I believe parts of the Scripture”

- “Oh yeah? Which parts?”

“I don’t believe the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God”

- “What do you believe about your deed to the land?” (Deut. 34; Gen. 15:18)

“Jews don’t believe in Jesus”

- Jesus was Jewish, the Bible was written by 39 Jewish authors, the Bible’s audience – Jewish, the disciples – Jewish, the early church - Jewish

“Jesus is for the Gentiles “

- Isa. 49:5-7
- Isa. 60:1-3
- Gal. 3:8

“If I believe in Jesus, I’ll no longer be Jewish”

- Jesus was Jewish; He will return as a Jew – Rev. 5:5, Rev. 22:16
- Rom. 11:12; Acts 22:3 – Paul considered himself Jewish

“There’s no such thing as original sin”

- Psa. 51
- Jer. 17:9
- Jewish thought: their descendants were in their loins. As a descendant of Adam, we inherit the stain of sin.

“I’m hoping my good deeds will outweigh my bad deeds”

- Jer. 17:9; Isa. 59:2; Isa. 64:6; Eccl. 7:20
- God requires blood to atone for sin (Lev. 17:11). Who gave the Rabbis the right to change the rules?

“Christians believe in 3 gods; Jews believe in one God”

- The Hebrew Scriptures clearly denote three distinct personalities in the Godhead:
 - The Lord Jehovah (YHVH) – noted throughout the Hebrew Scriptures
 - The Angel of Jehovah (YHVH) – Gen. 16:7-14; Gen. 22:9-16; Gen. 31:11-13, Gen. 32:24-30; Ex. 3:1-5; Judges 2:1; Judges 6:11-24; Judges 13:2-24
 - The Spirit of God – Gen. 1:2; Gen. 6:3; Job 33:4; Psa. 51:11; Psa. 139:7; Isa. 11:2; Isa. 63:10; Isa. 63:14.
- Name for God – Elohim (plural)
- Deut. 6:4 – echad vs. yachid
- Genesis 19:24 (and the Lord rained down fire and brimstone from the Lord in heaven)
- Genesis 22:11-12 (the Angel of the Lord states that Abraham didn’t withhold Isaac from Him)
- Genesis 31:11-13 (Jacob’s dream; the Angel of the Lord speaks – “I am the God of Bethel. . . .”)
- Genesis 32:24-30 (Jacob wrestles with the Angel and he says, “I have striven with God”; and Jacob said he saw God face-to-face)
- Isa. 48:16 – tri-unity of God

“If God loves us, why did He allow 6,000,000 to die?”

- God is not directly responsible for the Holocaust.
 - God created man with the ability to choose. The choices we make on a spiritual level, as well as on a physical level, will produce a result. If we choose to love and obey God, we will receive His blessings (Mosaic covenant – blessings and curses; conditional covenant). If we choose to rebel against God, we will experience the removal of the blessings. This is esp. clear for the nation of Israel in Deut. 28.
- God loves the Jewish people – Jer. 31:3, Isa. 49:16, Isa. 54:6-8
- God has promised to preserve His people
- God used that terrible event – the Holocaust – to create the nation of Israel
- Satan went after God’s chosen people. The Messiah promised to establish His Kingdom for the Jewish people – at which time Satan will be bound. If the Jewish people are eliminated – the Messiah won’t return. The Kingdom is for Israel.

“Our Messiah has not come as yet”

- If Jesus isn't the Messiah – we don't have a Messiah. The Messiah had to come, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, before the destruction of the 2nd Temple.
- Dan. 9:26 – the Messiah would come before the Temple was destroyed
- How will you know when the Messiah comes? The Temple has been destroyed – the records have been destroyed.
- Gen. 49:10 – the Messiah would come before the scepter departed from Judah (70 AD). Shiloh – Messianic title – “He whose right it is” (Targum Joseph – recognized this time as the coming of King Messiah). The Messiah would come before Jewish rule departed from Judah in 70 AD.
- Mal. 3:1 – the Lord, the Messiah, would come to the Temple!

“Our Messiah will bring peace; Jesus brought a sword. . . .”

- This objection is based on the false premise that the Messiah will come only once to set up His Kingdom and will reign forever in peace.
- Firstly explain that peace starts within the heart. Jesus promised the peace of God to rule in our hearts at His first coming (Jer. 31:33 [God is focused on the internal over the external], Isa. 26:3, Num. 6:26 [the Aaronic blessing speaks to knowing peace now], John 14:27)
- Matthew 10:34-39 – “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace but a sword” – His first coming. Must stress the two comings of the Messiah (not two Messiahs).
- Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you – Matt. 6:33 – first the internal then the external.

“Jewish people don't think much about the Messiah”

- The Talmud states that “All the prophets prophesied only of the days of the Messiah.” “The world was not created but for the Messiah.”
- The Messiah is spoken of throughout the Prophets.
- Moses spoke of God raising up the Prophet (Deut. 18)
- Among the Lubavitchers there are those who are called the “Messianists” (or Moshichists) – this is a name they adopted for themselves. **Within this movement also exists the expectation that this Messiah will be more than Israel's Anointed One – He will be God/Adonai Himself.

“The Messiah is not deity; God would not become a man”

- (See 4th bullet under “Jewish people don't think much about the Messiah”)
- “. . . Jews cannot believe that a man can be God.” Fruchtenbaum, “Jesus Was a Jew”
- “The NT knows Jesus as the son of God and as Messiah. Judaism, however, does not acknowledge a son of God who was set apart and elevated above other human beings. The Jewish conviction is that all men are equal before God and no mortal can claim divinity.” – whoever said this was referring to modern-day Judaism.
- We have to look at what the ancient Rabbis believed about the Messiah's preexistence. The modern Rabbis believe that the Messiah is only a man (other than the Messianists under the Lubavitcher sect).

- Peter said, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Matt. 16:16 – while that’s recorded in the New Covenant – it had to come from Jewish teaching!
- “I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God” John 1:49
- The Sanhedrin asked Jesus, “Are You then the Son of God?” in Luke 22:70-23:3. (See separate notes for a discussion re: the Sadducees, Pharisees, and the Sanhedrin)
- “Son of Man” – Messianic title – Representative Man; Second Adam
- “Son of God”:
 - Jesus is the Eternal Son in the Godhead; in the one undivided essence of God there are three persons.
 - Messianic title - The Messiah is the Son of God as Israel was the son of God [Ex. 4:22; Hos. 11:1]; Israel is a type of the Messiah. Jesus is the One in Whom true destiny of Israel is to be fulfilled.
 - Psalm 2 indicates that Jehovah is calling the Messiah His Son.
- Isa. 55:8 – “My thoughts are not your thoughts; My ways are not your ways.”
- Gen. 18:24 - “Is anything too hard for Me?” (Jer. 32:27)
- Early rabbinical beliefs (450 BC/BCE to 400 AD/CE) about the mission, character, origin and destiny of the Messiah were radically different from the beliefs held today.
- Dozens of passages in the Tanakh – that the ancient Rabbis believed referred to the Messiah –are interpreted by modern Rabbis as non-Messianic.
- Some 20th Century Jewish scholars have accused Christians of fabricating the belief that the Messiah would be God, born of a virgin and that He would come, suffer and die for the sins of the people and then come again. BUT, the ancient views are in almost perfect agreement with Christian beliefs regarding the character, lineage, birth, mission and destiny of the Messiah.
- “Messiah” means “anointed” – many were anointed in the Hebrew Scriptures. But only One fulfilled the prophecies of prophet (Deut. 18:15; John 6:14), priest (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 6:20), and King (Isa. 9:7; Matt. 1:1, 6/Dan. 2:44; Rev. 17:14)
- Micah 5:2 – He is from everlasting (eternal) – only God is eternal.
 - In the Septuagint version of Micah 5:2 – “. . . and his goings forth were from the beginning, even from eternity.”
- Isaiah 9:6 – He is the Mighty God, the everlasting Father.
- Jeremiah 23:5-6 – He shall be called the Lord our righteousness – Jehovah Tsidkenu. God is speaking of the Branch in this passage. The Branch was recognized as the Messiah.
- Zechariah 12:8-10 – God is speaking, “. . . and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced. . . “
- Isaiah 7:14 – “Immanuel” – God with us!
 - The virgin birth is Jewish!
 - God excels at creating out of nothing – Genesis 1:1; Sarah’s empty womb. . . Hannah’s empty womb, Rachel’s empty womb. . .
 - “Almah” – pure, chaste woman ready for marriage

- Septuagint – (Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) 70 Rabbis who translated the Hebrew into Greek used the Gk. word, Parthenos which exclusively means “virgin” (that’s saying a lot when typically the “saying” goes, “you have 2 Jews, you have 3 opinions”!)
- Genesis 24:16 – “betulah” – commonly considered to mean virgin exclusively. Rabbis today say that if Isaiah had meant “virgin” he would’ve used this word. But, this word does not always mean “virgin:
- Joel 1:8 – it’s used in reference to a widow.
- Gen. 24:16 – because it doesn’t exclusively mean virgin, the phrase, “had never known a man” was added.
- “Almah” is found to be sufficient as “virgin” in Gen. 24:43 as it describes Rebekah who was obviously a virgin when she married Isaac.

“Why have Christians persecuted the Jewish people? Why do the Christians hate the Jews?”

- Most Jewish people relate the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Pogroms, the Holocaust, etc. to Christians. The problem stems from a misunderstanding of what a “Biblical Christian” is compared to a “professing Christian”.
- Explain the meaning of “Christian” – little Christ, follower of Christ. If someone is truly a follower of Jesus the Messiah, he will act like Jesus. Jesus loves everyone. A true Christian loves the Jewish people (Matt. 23:37; Mark 5:19; John 15:12).

“Why are the Jewish people blamed for the death of Christ?”

- Historically, the Romans nailed Jesus to the cross and the crowds demanded the crucifixion. Crucifixion was the mode of execution under the Romans. Capital punishment had been transferred to Rome. Had it remained under Jewish authority, Jesus would have been stoned.
- The sin of the world killed Jesus. It was not an act of maliciousness that caused Jesus to die; it was the love of God for mankind that resulted in Jesus’ death.
- It pleased God the Father to bruise His Son – Isa. 53:10
- Jesus went willingly to the cross – John 10:17, 18.
- Scripture specifically states that the Gentiles mocked, scourged and crucified Jesus – Matt. 20:19.

“The Bible was written by men; it’s full of errors and contradictions. How do we know that the Bible hasn’t been changed over the years?”

- Zechariah 7:12
- Within the prophets – “the Lord saith. . . .”
- 66 books written over 1500 years by 40 different authors (39 of whom were Jewish) – one theme.
- Why would man condemn himself in the Scriptures?
- Approx. 333 prophecies were fulfilled – by the Messiah.
- The Dead Sea Scrolls has proven the purity of the Bible through the years. They date back to 200-300 BC and contain the oldest manuscripts of the Old Covenant available today – and are as much as word for word in relation to our manuscripts today.

- “The Bible was written by men; it’s full of errors and contradictions. How do we know that the Bible hasn’t been changed over the years?” (continued)
 - I Peter 1:11 – the prophets didn’t know what they were writing – they were led by the Spirit of the Messiah.

“What about my relatives who died?”

- Do not tell them if this question is raised that their loved ones have gone to hell. State that you don’t know the spiritual condition of someone that you never met.
- Share God’s love with them.
- Luke 16:19-31 – there is an afterlife in which there is consciousness. “Wherever your loved ones are, they now know the truth and would want you to believe the Scriptures and accept Jesus as your the Messiah.”

“Jews don’t need to accept Jesus; we’re under the covenant”

- Jer. 31:32 – the children of Israel broke the covenant.
- God will make a new covenant with Israel – He will write the law upon their hearts – Jer. 31:33.
- (Malachi 3:1- - the Lord shall come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant - would come BEFORE the second temple was destroyed)
- A requirement of the covenant – blood sacrifice. . . . How are you atoning for your sins now – since the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD?

“We have our own religion. Why don’t you preach to the Gentiles?”

- Convey that what you’re sharing is not a religion but a relationship with the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- Religions are man-made – a way of reaching God.
- Emphasize that you’re not looking for him/her to join a religion or a church – but to know God personally through the Messiah.

“Your Bible is the Christian Bible, it is not our Bible. The New Testament is a Gentile book”

- Often Jewish people think that our Bible is different from theirs. The Hebrew Scriptures have the same verses in them as the Old Testament we use. The only difference is the way they are arranged.
- The comment that the NT is a Gentile book comes from ignorance never having read it. It is very much a “Jewish Book”. And, it has Jewish authorship.
- Matthew begins with, “The book of the generation of Jesus the Messiah (Christ), son of David, the son of Abraham.”

“We believe the Talmud is equal to the Bible”

- Jewish people who accept and study the Talmud consider it to be equal to the Bible in authority. They believe Moses did not write down all that God gave him, and that much of it was passed down by word of mouth. The spoken word was referred to as the Oral Law. The Talmud, written between 200 AD and 500 AD is a commentary on the Oral Law – it was written by men not by God.
- Ex. 24:3-4, 7 – Moses told the people ALL the words of the Lord.
- Joshua 8:34-35 – Joshua read the children of Israel ALL the words of the law – according to all that was WRITTEN in the book of the law.

“If I accept Jesus as my Messiah, how will this affect my relationship with my family?”

- Jesus told us to count the cost if we are going to be His disciple.
- God will enable him/her to handle any situation through Him. But – they need to make a choice.
- If Jesus is the true Messiah, God, there should be no decision about what one should do.
- Isa. 55:6-7
- Proverbs 3:5-6
- I Kings 18:21 – Elijah asked the people when they were going to decide – if the Lord is God – follow Him.

“When the Messiah comes He will raise the dead. Jesus didn’t raise the dead.”

- Matthew 27:50-53 – after Jesus’ resurrection, before His ascension, the dead were raised and they walked in the city of Jerusalem.
- Although this is not a common objection, it is one that is occasionally brought up.
- What about Lazarus?!

“Jesus was an illegitimate child so he couldn’t have been the Messiah”

- Deut. 23:2, John 7:14 – the Mosaic Law taught that an illegitimate child couldn’t enter the Temple until the tenth generation. The Rabbis of Jesus’ day allowed Him to teach in the Temple; they proved He wasn’t illegitimate!

THE GREATEST FORM OF ANTI-SEMITISM IS WITHHOLDING THE GOSPEL FROM THE JEWISH PEOPLE – FOR WHATEVER REASON!