

JEWISH OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS

LESSON ONE

In witnessing to our Jewish friends many of them will question our beliefs and concepts concerning Jesus' Messiahship. The Jewish person will try to defend his position against Jesus, even though he has little factual data, or knowledge about Him. He will also try to defend his religious convictions in Judaism even though he probably has little understanding of them.

The objections which Jewish people state are usually not because of study concerning Christianity, or Christ, but simply a defense to guard them against any belief that would take them away from their conception of Judaism. Your Jewish friend knows that by acknowledging Jesus to be the Messiah, he faces social rejection from family, friends, and possibly his employer if he is Jewish. He is regarded as a traitor to his people and religion, and will be rejected from them and their lifestyle which he loves. This price often seems too great for him to pay. Therefore, he will try to refute many of the teachings concerning Jesus as the Messiah when we witness to him.

When we answer his objections it must be done in love and understanding so that he can sense our personal concern for him even when he rejects our message. We must never argue with a Jewish objector. We may win the argument, but lose the opportunity to witness to him again. We should always agree with him whenever possible. This will strengthen our relationship and give him a feeling that we can have dialogue between our two beliefs. We will also have the opportunity to show him that Christianity is rooted in the "Biblical Judaism" of the Tenach (Old Testament). The Jewish Bible should be the basis of our authority, and we should document our beliefs of the Messiah from the Word of God. Never pressure a Jewish person into believing the way we do. Simply state your answers with Scriptural authority (when possible), and allow the Holy Spirit to convict and convince him of the Messiahship of Jesus.

Although by no means exhaustive, the following verses and suggestions are some ways to deal with the objections listed.

LESSON TWO

- (1) The Messiah is to be a man only, he is not God.

Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Zechariah 12:8-10

The traditional Jewish view of the Messiah is that he is only a man. One of the biggest hurdles a Jewish person has in accepting Jesus is the traditions that have filled his thinking with unbiblical "truths." The best way to overcome this objection, and most objections, is to establish the Word of God as the final authority.

- (2) Jews don't believe in a trinity. We believe in only one God.

Deuteronomy 6:4; Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 48:12-17

In establishing the fact of the tri-unity of God, a much better term than trinity, it is important not to belabor the point. Many people try to "figure out" a truth such as this, and it is impossible. Emphasize that we are not necessarily to understand God, we must only believe Him.

Deut. 6:4 - Shema, Yisrael, Jehovah Elhohenu, Jehovah Echad
Hear Israel LORD our God LORD one

"one" in this passage speaks of a plurality in unity - Gen. 1:5; 2:24

Romans 1:20 - Creation reveals the Godhead - Genesis 1:1

Gen. 1:1 (Universe)

Beginning (time)	Heavens (space)	Earth (matter)
Past Present Future	Height Width Depth	Solid Liquid Gas

- (3) God has no son.

Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 2:7-12; Proverb 30:4

This subject is very difficult for a Jewish person to understand. Jesus related to the Father specifically in obedience. Eternally they are co-equal. Jesus as the Son of God is to be understood as a term of deity and not of the Father "conceiving" Him.

LESSON THREE

- (4) The Old Testament doesn't speak of a virgin birth. The word for virgin in Isaiah 7:14 is "almah" which means 'young woman' not 'virgin'.

Isaiah 7:14; Genesis 24:10-20 (16); 34-46 (43)

This objection is one of the most widely taught to Jewish people to refute Christianity. In Genesis 24 Abraham told his servant to go and find a wife for Isaac. Twice in this chapter, verses 10-20 and 34-46, the story is told. In the first is the actual happenings and in the second is the retelling of the episode. In verse 16 the Hebrew word b'tula is used for virgin and in verse 43 the Hebrew word almah is used for virgin. This shows, Biblically, that the two words are used interchangeably. Also, the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures around 225 B.C., uses the common Greek word for virgin, parthenos, for almah in Isaiah 7:14.

- (5) Isaiah 53 speaks of Israel and not the Messiah.

Many Rabbis and Jewish people of today will try to explain the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah by saying that it speaks of the nation Israel and not of an individual. This is easily refuted within the text.

- "He" and "Our" are used throughout the text both of which can't refer to the same antecedent noun (in this case the servant in Isaiah 52:13)

vss. 3,4,5,6

- "my" people was "he" stricken. If the text was speaking about Israel it would read 'my people were we stricken.'

verse 8

- Israel has never been quiet in oppression

verse 7

- The context of the passage demands that the one spoken of is a man.

"...my servant...he shall be exalted...many were astonished at thee...his visage was marred more than any man...

Isaiah 52:13-14

- The servant of this passage is a "righteous servant." Israel is depicted throughout the Bible and especially in Isaiah as an unrighteous servant.

Isaiah 53:11 Isaiah 1:4-6

LESSON FOUR

- (6) We go directly to God, we don't need a mediator.

Leviticus 1:1-10; 4:13-21; 16:1-2,16-17,30; Isaiah 53:4-6,10-12; Psalm 110:1-4

The priesthood in the Mosaic system was the only way an individual could approach God. Through this divinely appointed system it would be obvious that God required a 'mediator' when someone approached Him. Because of a lack of knowledge of the Tenach the Jewish people don't understand this truth. Isaiah 53 and Psalm 110:1-4 tells us that Messiah would be the "eternal priest" who would die for our sins and represent us before God.

- (7) Our Messiah is yet to come, we are still waiting for him.

Isaiah 53; Daniel 9:26; Zechariah 12:10; Psalm 22

The problem, again, is a traditional concept of the Messiah without a foundation in the Scriptures. Explain to him from the Scriptures that the Messiah has already come, as prophesied. It might also be good, with this question, to ask him when his Messiah does come how would he recognize him. He will undoubtedly have no answer to your question and you could then show him from the Jewish Bible prophecies relating to the Messiah and how he can recognize his Messiah.

- (8) Our Messiah will bring peace, Jesus brought a sword.

Matthew 10:34-39; Luke 17:20-21; Philippians 4:6-7; Daniel 9:26; Isaiah 11:1-12

This objection by the Jewish people is based on the false premise that the Messiah will come only once to set up His kingdom and afterwards reign forever in peace. These verses in Matthew are used as a standard objection. They are to be understood prophetically. Many Jewish people are cut off by their families when they accept Jesus. The Messiah first came to prepare subjects for His kingdom and will return to set up the kingdom. Again, the need would be to show from the Old Testament Scriptures the two comings of the Messiah.

LESSON FIVE

(9) I was born a Jew, I will die a Jew.

Many Jewish people have a problem with "converting." In their understanding you want them to stop being Jewish and become a Gentile (Christian). They understand Gentile and Christian as being synonymous. Conversion, Biblically, is a turning of the heart back to God. It is on a spiritual level and not an ethnic level. Explain that the word "Christian" comes from two Greek words, Christos-anos, and means follower of Messiah or Messiah-like. Their need is to have their sins forgiven and become a "completed Jew", one that has a personal relationship with God by having their sins forgiven in the Messiah. They, thus, become a Jewish follower of the Messiah or a Jewish Christian.

(10) Why did God let six million Jewish people die in the Holocaust if He loves us?

Deuteronomy 31:16-19; Jeremiah 5:19-25; 2 Peter 3:9

This is one of the hardest subjects to deal with when talking with a Jewish person. There is no easy answer, especially for one that has lost loved ones in the Holocaust. One thing that is necessary to share is that God is not directly responsible for the Holocaust. There are a few different ways that this might be dealt with.

- God created man with the ability to choose. The choice we make on a spiritual level, as well as physical level, will produce a result. If we choose to "love and obey" God we will have His blessings. If we choose to rebel, disobey, against God we will have the blessings removed and the consequent problems. This is especially clear for the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26. It is our choices (Deut. 31; Jer. 5) that bring us problems. God is not willing that any of us perish (spiritually).
- Satan throughout history has tried to destroy the Jewish people. The plan of God for the redemption of the world is tied around Israel and the Jewish people. To destroy the Jew, in essence, is to destroy God. From Pharaoh, to Haman, to Antiochus Epiphanes, to Herod, the Crusades and Hitler Satan has tried to wipe out the Jewish people. All anti-semitism, in whatever form, is part of a Satanic desire to destroy the people around whom God's plan centers.

Revelation 12:1-4, 9, 13, 17

- Sometimes it might be best to accentuate the positive aspects of the Holocaust. Specifically, the rebirth of the nation of Israel. As a direct result of the horrors of the Holocaust the nations were moved in November of 1947 to pass a resolution in the United Nations establishing the nation of Israel.
- Finally, it is always good to share God's love for the individual. Try to get the person's attention off of the national tragedy (and sometimes personal - i.e. lost family) and onto God's love for them.

LESSON SIX

(11) Why have Christians persecuted Jewish people? Why do the Christians hate the Jew?

Matthew 23:37; Mark 5:19; John 15:12

Most Jewish people relate the Crusades, the Holocaust, etc. to Christians. The problem is a misunderstanding of what a "Biblical Christian" is compared to a "religious Christian." It would help to explain the meaning of Christian and that if one is truly a follower of Jesus the Messiah he will act like Jesus did. Jesus loved all people. A true Christian will love the Jewish people just as Jesus did. He will not hate or persecute them.

(12) Why are Jewish people blamed for the death of Jesus?

John 10:16-18; 1 Peter 3:18; Isaiah 53; John 3:16

Historically, the Romans nailed Jesus to the cross, and the Jewish people demanded that He be crucified. There are a number of parties responsible for the death of Jesus. Two would be helpful in sharing with the Jewish person. First, Jesus went willingly to the cross to die for the sins of the world. Second, all people - Jew and Gentile - are responsible for His death in that it was our sins that necessitated His dying. It was not an act of maliciousness that caused Jesus to die, but the love of God for mankind that brought on His death.

(13) If Jesus is the Messiah why don't the Rabbis believe in Him?

Hosea 4:6; Isaiah 9:16; Isaiah 29:11-13; Isaiah 53:1

The Rabbis and Jewish people of today don't know and use the Hebrew Bible as their only source of truth. What is used most often in the synagogues today are the prayer books and the Talmud. As a result they don't have the necessary Biblical knowledge to recognize the Messiah. Thus they have acquired a "Rabbinical Judaism", instead of a "Biblical Judaism." Tradition has kept the Rabbis as well as the Jewish people away from God.

LESSON SEVEN

- (14)** The Bible was written by men, it is full of contradictions and errors. How do we know that the Bible hasn't been changed over the years?

Zechariah 7:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16

Although written by men, the Bible claims to be inspired by God. The prophecies of the Bible are an excellent way of showing that it is a supernatural book inspired by God. The overwhelming number of prophecies concerning the Messiah and their fulfillment in Jesus shows the impossibility of the Bible just being a book written by men. The translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls has proven the purity of the Bible through the years. The Dead Sea Scrolls date back to 200 - 300 B.C. and contain the oldest manuscripts of the Old Testament today.

- (15)** What about my relatives who died?

Luke 16:19-31

It is important that you do not tell them that their loved ones have gone to hell. The need is to share God's love with that person. Merely state that you don't know the spiritual condition of someone that you have never met. The use of the above verse is to share the truth that wherever one is after death, heaven or hell, they know the truth and would want their loved ones to believe the Old Testament and accept Jesus as their Messiah.

- (16)** I'll get to heaven because I'm a good person, I have a good heart.

Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 64:6; Isaiah 59:1-2; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Leviticus 17:11

Many Jewish people, especially the elderly, believe they are good enough to get to heaven on their own merits. Judaism has taught them that all God requires is mitzvahs, good works. The need is to show them the sinfulness of man, themselves, as compared to the holiness of God. Stress sin and God's provision for salvation.

LESSON EIGHT

(17) If I accept Jesus as my Messiah how will this affect my relationships with my family?

Isaiah 55:6-7; Proverbs 3:5-6; 1 Kings 18:21

Jesus often said that we have to count the cost if we are going to be one of His disciples. Most often a Jewish person will receive some kind of negative reaction from his family and friends. Impress upon him that God will enable him to handle any situation through Him but that he needs to make a choice. If Jesus is Messiah there should be no decision about what one should do and, thus, he should not worry at all about any reactions he might get from accepting Jesus.

(18) If Jesus is the Messiah why is his name not in the Old Testament?

Isaiah 40:10 and 62:11

The name Jesus is Yeshua in the Hebrew language which means salvation. Sometimes the word "salvation" in the Old Testament can refer to a person and not just a concept.

(19) 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 in the order of the books and the chapter divisions. It might be helpful, though not necessary, to have a Jewish Bible to share. The comment that the New Testament is a Gentile book comes from ignorance and never having read it. It is very much a "Jewish" book. Challenge them to read it and see if this is true or not and then offer to get them a New Testament.

LESSON NINE

(20) We only accept the Old Testament.

Jeremiah 31:31

This statement poses no problem. There is much in the Jewish Bible that speaks of Jesus. Offer to show him the Messiah from the Old Testament. You might also share with him the promise of a new covenant that God made for Israel. Although not speaking of the book the New Testament you might challenge him to read the New Testament to find out what it has to say.

(21) We believe the Talmud is equal to the Bible.

Exodus 24:3-4, 7 Joshua 8:34-35

The 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 is referred to as the oral law, the Talmud, finally being written down from 200 - 500 A.D. Although the Talmud is an ethical set of books it is just a commentary by men and not the Word of God.

(22) Jesus is the Christian God.

Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2 ; Isaiah 49:6

There is only one God for all people. The Old Testament promised that both Jew and Gentile would be redeemed by the Messiah, Jesus, who is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

(23) We have our own religion, why don't you preach to the Christians?

What you are sharing is not a religion but a personal relationship with the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Religions are a man-made vehicle to reach God. Emphasize that you are not looking for him to join a religion or church but to know God personally through the Messiah.