

ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTIONS TO JESUS

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1. GENERAL OBJECTIONS

Objection: 1.1. “Jews don’t believe in Jesus.”

Answer: “That is a serious misconception as well as a gross overstatement. Jews have always believed in Jesus. In fact, in the beginning, it was **only** Jews who believed in him, and today, there are probably more Jewish believers in Jesus than ever before.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, p. 3.)

Objection: 1.2. “I was born a Jew and I will die a Jew!”

Answer: “You’re absolutely right! You were born a Jew, and whether you believe in Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Sigmund Freud, or Rev. Moon, you’ll always be a Jew. The question is, Will you be a faithful Jew in God’s sight? That’s what really matters. You must never forget that as a Jew you have a special calling and responsibility. Will you fulfill the purpose for which God made you? Being a Jew is no small thing. Will you live and die in right relationship with God? Will you love Him with all your heart and soul and strength? And if what we’re telling you about Jesus being the Jewish Messiah is really true (and we’re quite sure it is), will you be a faithful Jew who follows your Messiah or an unfaithful Jew who rejects him?” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 3-6.)

Objection: 1.3. “A person is either Jewish or Christian. I’m Jewish.”

Answer: “You’re mixing apples with oranges. People are born Jewish or Gentile, but in order to become a Christian (or, Messianic) you must be born anew. This new birth comes through putting your faith in Jesus the Messiah. Your sins are forgiven, you receive a new heart, and you become a follower of the Messiah. That’s what it means to be Christian or Messianic. But no one is born Christian. That’s where the misconception lies. Nor is Christianity (or Messianic Judaism) merely another religion. Rather, it speaks of a living relationship between God and His people -- both Jews and Gentiles -- through the Messiah. Through physical birth you are either Jew or Gentile; through spiritual birth you become a follower of Jesus the Messiah.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 6-7.)

Objection: 1.4. “Doesn’t belief in Jesus mean that you’re no longer Jewish? As I understand it, belief in Jesus and Jewishness in any form are incompatible.”

Answer: “You have unknowingly repeated one of the great lies of the Inquisition, namely, that one can be faithful to Jesus only by totally repudiating one’s Jewishness. To the contrary, everything about belief in Jesus was and is Jewish, in the purest and most biblical sense of the word.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 7-9.)

Objection: 1.5. “Messianic Judaism, or Hebrew Christianity thing is just one big deception, designed to lure unsuspecting Jews into Christianity. Half of the people involved aren’t even Jewish. Those that are Jewish were mostly Christian ministers who changed their names to sound more authentic.”

Answer: “Maybe your bad experience with a Messianic Jew has given you a wrong impression of the whole. Is it possible that you have misjudged our hearts and motives without knowing the facts? Most Jews who have come to know Jesus as Messiah have experienced a deep reawakening of their Jewishness. Many have recovered aspects of the biblical Jewish lifestyle, while others have made aliyah (i.e., emigrated to Israel) for life. In fact, their children now attend Israeli schools and fight in the Israeli army. It is because these people have so deeply recovered their Jewishness that some of them have changed their names -- e.g., from Martin to Moishe. Others changed their names so as to refute the lie of past ‘Christian’ anti-Semitism which said, ‘You can’t be Jewish and believe in Jesus.’ As for the Gentile believers who have joined Messianic Jewish congregations, they have done so out of love for Israel and Jewish life. Is this wrong?” (See **Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 9-15.**)

Objection: 1.6. “You have your religion and I have mine. Jesus is for the Gentiles, and if he helps them, great. In fact, Judaism teaches that the righteous of all nations have a place in the world to come. But for us, the Jewish people, we have the Torah. That is our portion.”

Answer: “What an insult to the Gentiles! If Jesus did not fulfill biblical prophecy, if he is not the promised Messiah of Israel, if he was not born of a virgin, if he did not die for the sins of the world and rise from the dead, if he is not coming back as King of all kings to rule and reign here forever--then he is the Messiah and Savior of nobody. He is a false prophet and the writers of the New Testament were either deceivers or deceived. But if he did do all these things, then he is the Messiah and Savior of everyone -- both Jew and Gentile. As for the Torah, it remains our portion, but it is only through the Messiah that we can truly interpret it and live it out.”(See **Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 15-18.**)

Objection: 1.7. “The fundamental problem with Christianity is that it is not Judaism. Therefore all your so-called ‘proofs’ from the Hebrew Scriptures are meaningless. They are simply your interpretation, not ours.”

Answer: “Is it possible that it is **you** who are not getting the point? Who says that Judaism is the faith that is in harmony with the Hebrew Scriptures? Who says that ‘Christianity’ (or, ‘Messianic Judaism’) is **not** for Jews? Who says that ‘your’ interpretation is right? If Jesus is indeed the successor of Moses and the prophets, the Messiah spoken of in our Hebrew Scriptures, then the faith that acknowledges him is the proper faith for those who claim to adhere to those Scriptures. It’s that simple. Of course, much that has been called ‘Christianity’ through the years has hardly been either Christian or biblical -- let alone Jewish. But there is an authentic ‘Christianity’ that is thoroughly biblical and -- I kid you not -- amazingly ‘Jewish.’ It is the right faith -- meaning ‘right’ in the sight of God -- for you and for every Jew without exception.” (See **Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 18-20.**)

Objection: 1.8. “If Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, why don’t more Jews believe in Him?”

Answer: “Actually, there are multiplied tens of thousands of Jews who have believed and do believe in him. The problem is that most Jews have not bothered to check into the facts about Jesus, and the only ‘Jesus’ most of them know is either the baby Jesus of Christmas, an emaciated figure hanging on a cross in churches, or the Jesus of the Crusades and Inquisitions. The question

is: Why don't **you** believe that Jesus is the Messiah? Do you really know who he is?" (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 21-24.)

Objection: 1.9. "I won't betray my ancestors! I won't forsake the faith of my fathers!"

Answer: "That is a noble sentiment and God appreciates the fact that you honor the memory of your forefathers. But the Torah is very clear: When we have to choose between loyalty to our families and loyalty to God, we must choose to be loyal to Him -- no matter what the consequences. If we really love our family and our heritage, then the most noble thing we can possibly do is be faithful to God and His Messiah at any cost. In the end, we will be the shining lights in our family history. And when you say, 'I can't forsake the faith of my fathers,' I remind you: Abraham did!" (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 24-28.)

Objection: 1.10. "What happens to Jews who do not believe in Jesus -- especially those who never heard about him? What happened to my wonderful Jewish grandmother who never hurt anyone her entire life? Is she in hell?"

Answer: "These are not questions to be answered lightly, as if heaven and hell were mere figures of speech. And, to be perfectly frank, we're not just talking about your grandmother. We're talking about my grandmother too! Still, the bottom line is this: While I don't know your grandmother and I am certainly not her judge, I do know that countless millions of Jews and Gentiles have lived lives that have displeased God (and this includes at least some of our grandmothers), countless millions of people have condemned their souls through their words and deeds, and countless millions of people will be pronounced guilty on Judgment Day. It wouldn't be fair to you if I failed to warn you in advance. Of course, I will be the first to say that the New Testament does not explicitly address the issue of what happens to those who never heard the message of forgiveness of sins through Jesus. But of this much we can be sure: God is both a compassionate and righteous Judge, there are consequences to breaking His commandments, His standards are high, and if we reject His ordained means of atonement, we are in trouble." (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 28-35.)

Objection: 1.11. "What would happen to a Nazi murderer who believed in Jesus before he died? Would he go to heaven, while the Jewish men, women and children he killed, many of whom were God-fearing people, would go to hell?"

Answer: "Based on the teaching of the Hebrew Bible, if the Nazi could truly repent before he died, then God would accept him as righteous. But merely 'believing' -- without true repentance -- is meaningless. As for the Jews killed by that Nazi, if they died in right relationship with God, then they would go to heaven; if they died out of favor with Him, they would perish. One thing is very important to remember: The fact that these Jews died in the Holocaust does not necessarily make them 'saints' (even though we often speak of the six million Jewish 'martyrs' of the Holocaust). Our people were indiscriminately exterminated by the Nazis simply because of their ethnic background -- even if they were total atheists or God-haters. Their tragic suffering in the Holocaust did not, in and of itself, transform them into godly people. To the contrary, many actually lost their faith during that time, while a large number of secular and irreligious Jews became overtly hostile to God." (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 35-42.)

Objection 1.12. "No religious or educated Jew would ever believe in Jesus."

Answer: "That is an absolute falsehood. There have been prominent rabbis along with brilliant Jewish scholars who have become believers in Jesus, but you rarely ever hear about them, because they are generally discredited by their own people once they prove unshakable in their faith. Whereas they were revered as saintly giants before they believed, they were reviled as ignorant sinners after they believe. The fact is that Jews who were more religious than you and

more highly educated than you do believe Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 42-45.)

Objection: 1.13. “Those educated or religious Jews in the past who did convert to Christianity did so for monetary gain or because of social pressure. It had nothing whatsoever to do with intellectual arguments or honest theological convictions.”

Answer: “Were the shoe on the other foot, and were I making such statements about the motivations of secular Jews who became traditional, I would be labeled anti-Semitic! No doubt, Christianity, along with every other major religion (including Judaism!), has had its share of ‘convenience conversions.’ These counterfeit conversions ,however, in no way diminish or negate the fact that there have been highly educated or very religious Jews who have followed Jesus unflinchingly, even though it cost them their reputations, their livelihoods, their careers and even their inheritances. There have been many such Jews throughout history and to this very day.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 45-50.)

Objection: 1.14. “Those religious Jews who did become followers of Jesus always had the tendency to stray. If you study their lives, you’ll see that most of them threw out their traditional values and beliefs before they ever considered nonsense like Christianity.”

Answer: “Who told you that? How many of these people have you interviewed? Are you aware that many of the religious Jews who put their faith in Jesus were absolutely shocked to learn that he was the Messiah? They were living traditional lifestyles and were very much against anything Christian, but they couldn’t resist the truth of the Scriptures, in spite of the consequences of believing. As for those religious Jews who did begin to question their traditions before believing in Jesus, there is nothing illogical about this. They found problems with their spiritual foundations and sought the truth elsewhere.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 50-52.)

Objection 1.15. “Missionaries like you target the sick, the elderly, the ignorant, and the young and uninformed.”

Answer: “Actually, we don’t target any one group in particular -- although many of us are especially interested in having exchanges with rabbis and religious Jews whenever we have the opportunity, and we especially appreciate interaction with well-informed Jews. We won’t, however, withhold the good news about the Messiah from anyone, young or old, healthy or sick. Everyone should know about the mercy of God that is available through repentance and faith. As for those who have lived their entire lives without the knowledge of the Messiah and now are nearing death through sickness or old age, isn’t it only fair to reach out to them? This is the time that many of them are finally doing some serious thinking about the meaning of life and their whole relationship with God. Is it right to neglect them?” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 52-55.)

Objection: 1.16. “I’m not a very religious person, but I’m certainly not a bad person. I’m basically a normal, middle of the road, good person.”

Answer: “By whose standards? Did you know that the Hebrew Bible does not even recognize a ‘not too good and not too bad’ class of people? You are either a sinner or you are righteous, a servant of the Lord or a transgressor.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 55-56.)

Objection: 1.17. “If Jesus really is the Messiah, why are there so many objections?”

Answer: “The number of objections that exist is not important, since there are solid answers to each and every objection, and actually, there are far more arguments **for** the Messiahship of Jesus than **against** it. In fact, it would take hundreds of books to document the various proofs. But even if there were more Jewish arguments against Jesus than for him (and there are not), what would that prove? Most Jews today don’t even take the Ten Commandments seriously. Do their objections disprove the truth of the Bible or God’s Law?” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 56-57.)

Objection: 1.18. “Be honest. Christianity simply doesn’t work. It doesn’t produce what it promises. Deep down, you know what I’m saying is true.”

Answer: “Actually, the reverse is true. To speak personally, I am overflowing with almost indescribable blessing since I found new life through Jesus, and I can give you innumerable proofs that he is the true Messiah, that he is alive today, and that he is at work in the earth and in my life. Could it be **your** tradition that cannot produce **intimacy** with God and the **assurance** that your sins are forgiven? Could it be that, deep down, you know what I’m saying is true? In fact, I would like to ask **you** a question: What is the clear evidence of the presence of the living God in **your** life?” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 59-65.)

Objection: 1.19. “You missionaries always use the same old arguments and proofs. Your faith can’t be very deep!”

Answer: “To be perfectly honest, I’ve been a getting a little bored with the standard arguments of the anti-missionaries. New or old, however, truth is truth. We don’t need to come up with some novel, new proofs for the Messiahship of Jesus any more than we need to come up with novel, new proofs for the existence of God. What **you** need to do is carefully examine the evidence. I think you’ll discover that there is a lot more to our position than you ever imagined, and as we continue to study and tap into the rich mine of biblical truth, we are more than happy to provide you with further arguments and proofs. For now, I’ve provided you some real food for thought. Read, study, reflect, and pray. As the Messiah said to our Jewish forefathers who believed in him, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’ (John 8:31-32) It’s time for you to experience that freedom for yourself.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, p. 65.)

HISTORICAL OBJECTIONS

Objection: 2.1. “If Jesus is really the Messiah, why isn’t there peace on earth?”

Answer: “According to the biblical timetable, things are right on schedule, and Jesus is doing everything the Messiah was to expected to do up until this point. The problem is that you have an incomplete understanding of the biblical picture of the Messiah. According to the prophet Malachi, the Messiah would bring purification and purging before he brought peace. He would execute judgment before he established justice. Many would not be able to endure the consequences of his coming. This is written in our Hebrew Bible! For many of our people, his coming would be bad news, not good news. Our Scriptures also teach that the Messiah was to be a priestly King, like David. As a royal Priest, he came to make atonement for sins and offer forgiveness and reconciliation to Israel and the nations. As King, his dominion expands every day, as he rules over those who embrace him as Messiah. Soon he will return and establish his kingdom on the earth, destroying the wicked and bringing world wide peace. So, what you expected to be the **first act** of the play will be actually be the **final act!**” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 69-88.)

Objection: 2.2. “Why have wars, famines, and human suffering only increased since Jesus came?”

Answer: “As we explained in the previous answer, this is the transition age, the age when God's kingdom is being established throughout the earth, one life at a time. During this era, because the population of the world has increased and technology has advanced, there are now more evil people capable of doing more evil things, causing an increase in human suffering. Also, Jesus told his disciples that before the end of this age, there would be great turmoil and upheaval, the final birth pangs before God's kingdom was fully established on the earth. But this is only part of the picture. Throughout the world, the knowledge of the one true God has also increased dramatically since Jesus came. This was one of the key roles of the Messiah -- to spread the knowledge of God to the nations of the world, and it is certainly no small matter that hundreds of millions of people who once lived and died in spiritual darkness have now come into the light of the Messiah.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 88-98.)

Objection: 2.3. “There was no Jewish expectation in the first century that the Messiah would be some great miracle worker, so all of Jesus’ alleged miracles were of no interest to the first century Jewish leaders and they are no interest to me.”

Answer: “I think you are misinformed, and I don’t even believe you are being honest with yourself. First, there most definitely **was** first-century Jewish expectation concerning a miracle working Messiah, in keeping with the predictions of the biblical prophets. Second, if you understood that Jesus the Messiah really did heal the sick, open blind eyes, and raise the dead, and that he is still performing miracles, I think this **would** be of considerable interest to you.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 98-101.)

Objection: 2.4. “Jesus cannot be the Messiah, because more Jewish blood has been shed in his name than in any other name or for any other cause.”

Answer: “Certainly, much Jewish blood has been shed in Jesus’ name by violent and ungodly men who have been a total disgrace to Christianity. This is reprehensible and completely inexcusable. Still, your statement is quite exaggerated and also misses a crucial point. First, more Jews have been killed by people who professed no faith at all in Jesus than by those so-called ‘Christians’ who persecuted our people in Jesus’ name. For example, the atheistic Stalinists who slaughtered our people did not do so in Jesus’ name, nor have the militant Islamic terrorists. Second, there is something important that we must recognize, even though it is terribly painful even to consider. From a biblical perspective, the most common reason that Jewish blood has been shed is that we Jews have strayed from God, violated His covenant, broken His laws, and failed to heed His prophets. Just look at the curses for disobedience promised in the Torah of Moses. We could not have suffered so much if we were guiltless as a people. As for hypocritical **goyyim** (Gentiles) shedding Jewish blood in Jesus’ name -- no true follower of Jesus could ever murder in his name -- this terribly sinful act is also alluded to in the Torah.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 101-108.)

Objection: 2.5. “Christianity is actually a religion of hate, not love. Its bad fruit proves that it is a bad tree, even according to Jesus’ own criteria (see Matt 7:15-20; Luke 6:43-45).”

Answer: “Years ago, some Orthodox rabbis told me that I didn’t know what real Judaism was. Could it be that you don’t know what real Christianity is? The fruit that has been produced through the coming of Jesus into the world -- in the lives of his true followers -- has been wonderful and extraordinary. Anyway, your reasoning about Christianity being a bad tree is faulty. Let me explain.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 109-116.)

Objection: 2.6. “Jesus himself taught that he did not come to bring peace but a sword. We Jews have felt the edge of this sword for more than 1500 years now!”

Answer: “Jesus was actually referring to the Hebrew Scriptures when he said that he did not come to bring peace but a sword (see Micah 7:5-6 and Matthew 10:34). And that same passage is quoted in the Mishnah with reference to family conflicts that will come with the advent of the Messianic age. In any case, what Jesus and Micah were talking about was bringing division into families over the issue of loyalty to God and his Messiah. As for literally taking up swords for the faith, Jesus utterly renounced this.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 116-124.)

Objection: 2.7. “Christians have always hated and persecuted the Jewish people.”

Answer: “It is true that many false followers of Jesus have hated and persecuted the Jewish people and that many true followers of Jesus have been stained with an ugly anti-Semitic spirit, thereby making a mockery of the very faith that they profess. This is tragic and reprehensible. But there is far more to the story than you know! Multitudes of true followers of Jesus – in our day and throughout history – have loved, helped, and defended the Jewish people, thereby demonstrating the reality of the faith that they profess. Also, there is a history of Jewish hatred of Jesus and his followers, including some violent persecution too. Many of the problems that arose were political more than religious. Consequently, things are not as simple as you might imagine.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 124-145.)

Objection: 2.8. “The origins of anti-Semitism can be traced to the pages of the New Testament. From the negative depiction of the Pharisees to the charge of deicide, anti-Semitism is a Christian plague.”

Answer: “It is commonly recognized among scholars today that anti-Semitism existed in various forms in the ancient world long before a single page of the New Testament was written. Further, the New Testament documents primarily reflect friction between Jewish groups – differences between Messianic Jews and non-Messianic Jews (including Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.) – just like the Dead Sea Scrolls reflect legal and religious arguments between different Jewish groups. It is a mistake to read the later history of ‘Christian’ anti-Semitism back into the New Testament. As for passages in the New Testament that have helped fuel anti-Semitism in the Church, you need to remember that passages from our own Hebrew Bible have often been used against us Jews by anti-Semites, while alleged anti-Semitic texts in the New Testament, when properly translated and understood, are really not anti-Semitic at all. In fact, Israel’s greatest support today comes from those who read the New Testament as the literal Word of God. For them, it is the source of philo-Semitism, not anti-Semitism.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 145-175.)

Objection: 2.9. “Without the long, ugly history of Christian anti-Semitism the Holocaust would never have occurred.”

Answer: “Maybe so. Many so-called ‘Christians’ and ‘Christian’ leaders helped pave the way for the demonic and destructive atmosphere of the Holocaust, although it is important to remember that no Church leader in history ever advocated exterminating Jews, that no Church leader in history ever attempted to wipe out the Jewish people, that the Church’s historic anti-Judaism bore no resemblance to Hitler’s racial anti-Semitism, and that the Holocaust itself was **anti-Christian** in every sense of the word. Still, there is blood on the hands of all anti-Semitic leaders who claimed to be Christians, and to this day, sincere Christians around the world agonize over all the things that were done to the Jewish people by Nazis, Communists, and other Jew-haters. As Jews, however, we have a different kind of soul-searching to do, since we must ask ourselves why such calamities overtook us if we were in good standing with God as a people. Why, in fact, was there a Holocaust? This is the real question that needs to be answered.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 176-177.)

Objection: 2.10. “Why did God allow six million Jews to die in the Holocaust?”

Answer: “This is an agonizing question that has been asked millions of times by both Jews and Christians, but in many ways, it is more a question about man’s sin against man than about God’s silence during that sin. In other words, the Holocaust is something that people did to other people. But why didn’t God intervene? Some Orthodox rabbis would say that it was because we, the Jewish people, had sinned against the Almighty and were therefore under His disfavor. The Holocaust, then, would have been a massive, overwhelming example of divine discipline, devastating for the moment but leading to health and healing in the end. To the extent that there is truth to this view, we must then ask what sins we had committed to merit such a fate (or to rob us of divine protection). Other Jewish leaders strongly disagree with this view, claiming that even godless Jews who died in the Holocaust were martyrs in some sense of the word, innocent victims of murderous injustice solely because they were Jews. Which view is right from a biblical perspective? That is something we will consider. But let me suggest something you may never have entertained: The ultimate image of an innocent Jew suffering atrocities at the hands of godless murderers is not so much the image of a Jew dying in the Holocaust as it is the image of our Messiah, the best-known Jew of all time, yet beaten, flogged, humiliated, and nailed to a cross. He is a Messiah with whom we can identify – and who can identify with us.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 178-196.)

Objection: 2.11. “The main reason Christians are so zealous to convert Jews to their beliefs is to legitimize their faith. The fact that Jesus’ own people rejected him is a real problem to Christianity.”

Answer: “ I have never met a single Christian in my entire life – and I have met many – who felt that their own faith would be legitimized if they could convince a Jew to believe as they did. If anything, since the Hebrew Bible indicated to us that most of our Jewish people would reject the Messiah when he first came, it does not surprise us that our people did, by and large, reject him, and that they still reject him today. The main reasons that Christians are often specially zealous to win Jewish people to their faith are: (1) As followers of Jesus the Jewish Messiah, they have a special love for Jewish people. (2) it is especially painful for them to think of the People of the Book missing the Messiah of that Book, of Yeshua’s own flesh and blood not recognizing him. (3) many Christians believe that, at the end of this age, there will be a widespread turning of the hearts of our Jewish people back to God and His Messiah, ushering in the Messiah’s return. Thus they pray for this to take place and make every effort to help speed this process along by telling their Jewish friends and colleagues the good news about Messiah.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 197-199.)

Objection: 2.12. “Although Jews have been forced to hold public debates with Christians in the past, Jews have won every debate. You can even check the Christian records for verification.”

Answer: “To the contrary, the earliest records of debate and dialog between Jews on the subject of the Messiahship of Jesus indicate that it was the followers of Jesus decisively won. Your facts are wrong here. Of course, there is no defense for the forced debates of the Middle Ages, and I would be more than happy if the rabbis won these debates against their theological opponents, since these Christian leaders were hardly faithful representatives of the Messiah. But let’s put history aside for now, since none of us were there to witness any of the debates of the past. For years the Rabbinic community said that Jews who believed in Jesus were deceived and misled because of our ignorance and lack of scholarship. So, we began to challenge rabbinic leaders to discuss the issues in public. Do you know what happened? These debates went so well that we widely distribute audio and video copies of these public forums to interested Jews of every background. The rabbis whom we debated do not.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 199-201.)

Objection: 2.13. “Within two generations, the Jewish followers of Jesus (under the influence of Paul) had largely given up their Jewish practices, setting a precedent that has remained the same right up until today: Jews who become Christians lose all connection to Judaism within two generations.”

Answer: “Your facts are completely wrong. We know that there were Sabbath-keeping, Hebrew-reading, Torah-revering Jewish followers of Jesus for at least the first 400 years of Church history. This was despite the fact that these Messianic Jews were excluded from the synagogue by Rabbinic Jews and misunderstood by Gentile Christians. In our own day, there are fourth and fifth generation Messianic Jews, some of whom have made **aliyah** and whose children now serve in the Israeli army. Again, this has happened despite pressure from the traditional Jewish community and occasional misunderstanding from Gentile Christians.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 201-205.)

Objection: 2.14. “Just look at the Church! Who’s right? The Protestants, the Roman Catholics, the Greek Orthodox, the Mormons, the Messianic Jews? Even so-called Christians can’t agree among themselves.”

Answer: “I’m a little surprised at your objection, since there are several, major variations in Judaism, ranging from Reconstructionist to ultra-Orthodox, and some branches don’t even regard the others as truly Jewish at all. So how can you indict Christianity because of differences? Still, I’m happy to answer your question: First, not everyone who calls himself a Christian really is. Second, there is harmony around the world among true Christians regarding the fundamentals of the faith. Third, major disagreements tend to arise only when the authority of the New Testament is either denied or subjugated to human traditions and interpretations. When you get back to what Jesus and his followers taught, you can see who his real followers are today.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 205-208.)

Objection: 2.15. “Christianity is just another great world religion, like Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. But it is certainly not the true Messianic faith and the only way to find God. In fact, I find it to be the height of arrogance that Jesus claimed to be the only way to the Father. This is small-minded conceit at its worst.”

Answer: “Just as traditional Jews believe that God communicated His will for our people – His one and only will – through Moses, so also followers of Jesus believe that God communicated His way of salvation for all peoples – His one and only way – through the Messiah. While we recognize that there are many beautiful traditions and valuable ethical teachings to be found in all the religions of the world, we believe it is only through the Messiah – who is called the Savior of the world in the New Testament writings – that people can truly be saved from their sins. When you think of it, this is not really that surprising: If there is only one God and we are His creation (as opposed to Him being our creation) it makes sense that He will be the one to dictate to us how we can know Him, serve Him, and receive forgiveness from Him. That’s why Jesus the Messiah told his followers (all of whom were Jews in the beginning!) to go into the whole world and tell everyone the good news that he had come and laid down his life as a payment for our sins.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 208-211.)

Objection: 2.16. “We dealt with Christianity nineteen hundred years ago. There were great Jewish leaders alive in Jesus’ day and in the decades following. They watched him, they watched his followers, and they rejected the whole thing for good reason. There’s nothing to discuss.”

Answer: “Then why are you reading this book? Why are Jewish scholars reevaluating their views about Jesus? Why have Jewish leaders and even rabbis become believers in Yeshua through the centuries? The fact is, our forefathers who rejected Yeshua made a wrong turn and got off track. Now, there’s only one thing to do: Turn around!” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 1, pp. 211.)

THEOLOGICAL OBJECTIONS

Objection: 3.1. “Jews don’t believe in the Trinity. We believe in one God, not three.”

Answer: “Just as Messianic Jews probably misunderstand some of the things you believe, I think you misunderstand some of the things I believe. We do not in any way believe in three gods. My God is one, and his name is the LORD (or, Yahweh, known to Orthodox Jews as HaShem). He revealed himself to us through his Son, the Messiah, who is the very image and reflection of God. And he touches us and speaks to us by his Spirit. These are deep, spiritual truths. Later theologians labeled this relationship the Trinity -- God as a triune One. But the word ‘Trinity’ is not found anywhere in the New Testament and it may confuse the issues for you.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 3-14.)

Objection: 3.2. “If you claim that Jesus is God then you are guilty of making God into a man. You are an idol worshiper!”

Answer: “We believe that the eternally preexistent Son of God, through whom the universe was made, came forth from God his Father and was clothed with human flesh, making himself known to us as Yeshua the Messiah. He lived on this earth, died, rose from the dead, and returned to his Father. He now sits enthroned in heaven next to God. We understand that Jesus, the Son of God, is the very image of God, the one in whom God caused his fullness to dwell, the one through whom he revealed himself completely to mankind. Since the Son came forth from the Father and shares his divine nature, in one sense it is quite correct to say that Jesus is God (or, divine, or deity), always bearing in mind that the overwhelming testimony of the New Testament writings is that Jesus is the Son of God. I can show you from the Hebrew Scriptures that there is absolutely nothing idolatrous about what I believe. God has always revealed himself to his people. He did it most permanently and most fully through Jesus his Son.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 14-37.)

Objection: 3.3. “God doesn’t have a son.”

Answer: “It all depends on what you mean by the word **son**. In the Hebrew Bible, Israel was called God’s son, the king was called God’s son, and the angels were called God’s sons. Is it any wonder that the Messiah, the ideal representative of Israel, the king of all earthly kings, and the one more highly exalted than the angels, should be called God’s Son? More than anyone else who has walked this earth, Jesus the Messiah is uniquely entitled to be called the Son of God.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 38-48.)

Objection: 3.4. “According to the Law (Deuteronomy 13), Jesus was a false prophet because he taught us to follow other gods (namely, the Trinity, including the god Jesus), gods our fathers have never known or worshiped. This makes all his miracles utterly meaningless.”

Answer: “Have you ever read what Jesus and his followers taught? They emphasized, ‘Love the LORD your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. Follow him. Obey him!’ Jesus pointed everyone to God his Heavenly Father -- by his miracles, by his message, and by his life. He lived, died, and rose again for the glory of his Father. Thus Jesus was a faithful and true prophet.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 48-52.)

Objection: 3.5. “The Holy Spirit is not the so-called third person of the Trinity.”

Answer: “Rather than discuss the Trinity again (see 3.1, above), let’s focus on one question: Is the Holy Spirit only a ‘what’ or are there dimensions in which the Spirit is a ‘who’? From the Scriptures, it can be demonstrated that God’s Spirit is more than just an abstract power. The Holy Spirit is part of God’s very essence and clearly has personality. The New Testament simply expands on these established, biblical truths, which, interestingly enough, are treated in a similar way in some later Rabbinic traditions.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 52-59.)

Objection: 3.6. “According to Isaiah 43:11, God alone is our Savior. We don’t need or recognize any other saviors.”

Answer: “Isaiah 43:11 is written with reference to other ‘gods’ and it teaches emphatically that the Jewish people will not be saved by any other so-called god or deliverer. This is clear. It is also clear that God saves through whom he wills to save – whether it be earthly deliverers (such as kings or warriors), angelic messengers, or the Messiah.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 59-60.)

Objection: 3.7. “We are righteous by what we do, not by what we believe. Christianity is the religion of the creed, Judaism the religion of the deed.”

Answer: “The New Testament clearly teaches that faith without works is dead. But it also teaches that without faith, there can be no meaningful works, and the first thing God wants from us is our total trust and dependence. That is called faith, and it is foundational to the Hebrew Scriptures as well. Our forefathers died in the wilderness because of their unbelief, and being pronounced righteous by God begins with absolute faith in him. So, right living is the result of right believing. As a Jew, you should also remember that ‘the creed’ is important in traditional Judaism too.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 60-69.)

Objection: 3.8. “The Scriptures clearly tells us that, ‘To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice’ (Prov. 21:3).”

Answer: “Amen! Who would argue with Scripture? Elsewhere the Bible teaches that obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:23). But these passages do not denigrate the importance of sacrifices, as some anti-missionaries would claim. Rather, throughout the Bible God opposes religious hypocrisy and formal, outward observance of religious rites. He would rather have our simple obedience than our lengthy prayers or costly sacrifices if our hearts are not right with him. And he would prefer that we just do what he says rather than that we sin, repent, and bring a sacrifice for our sins. The sad fact is that we all sin grievously and we all need atonement for our sins, a subject that Scripture clearly affirms and teaches.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 69-71.)

Objection: 3.9. “The prophets indicated clearly that God did not care for blood sacrifices. In fact, they practically repudiated the entire sacrificial system, teaching that repentance and prayer were sufficient. The Talmudic rabbis simply affirmed this biblical truth.”

Answer: “Some later rabbis may have taught this, but the prophets certainly did not. Everything the prophets did, they did out of allegiance to the Torah and to reinforce what was written there. There is no possible way that they would have repudiated the God-given, God-ordained, God-sanctioned system of atonement as laid out in the Torah – especially with the Temple standing. The prophets would not have contradicted Moses. What the prophets repudiated was hypocritical religion. In other words, they rejected the performance of sacred rites and the keeping of special days when those practicing them had polluted hearts. They were perfectly clear on this. It’s also interesting to note that every traditional Jew around the world prays daily for the restoration of the Temple and the sacrificial system. If sacrifices were really unnecessary and unimportant, and if the prophets utterly repudiated them, why pray daily for their restoration?” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 72-103.)

Objection: 3.10. “Even if I accept your premise that blood sacrifices are of great importance in the Torah, the fact is that our Hebrew Bible – including the Torah itself – offer other means of atonement, not just the shedding of blood.”

Answer: “There can be no question that blood atonement is the central and most important form of atonement in the Bible. The blood is essential, foundational, and irreplaceable. Because blood sacrifices form the heart and soul of the biblical system of atonement, both the New Testament and numerous authoritative Rabbinic traditions state that without shedding of blood, there is no atonement. Take away the blood, and the whole biblical system of atonement collapses.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 103-123.)

Objection: 3.11. “According to Proverbs 16:6, love and good deeds make atonement. So who needs sacrifices?”

Answer: “If I were to follow your logic, I just could as easily say, According to Proverbs 16:6, love and good deeds make atonement, so who needs Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement)? That is to say, if atonement can be made between man and God through doing good, then there is no need for suffering and chastisement, no need for prayers and confession, no need even for the Day of Atonement. What Bible-believing Jew would hold to such a view? This points us to the real meaning of this verse, namely, ‘Through loving kindness and truth, sin is **wiped away.**’ In other words, on a practical, person to person level, being loyal, loving, and truthful will overcome and eradicate the prior effects of sin. But the verse is not directly related to issues of atonement, purification, and forgiveness in the sight of God, nor is it reasonable to think that the Lord would overthrow countless verses in the Torah with one phrase in Proverbs.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 123-126.)

Objection: 3.12. “It’s clear that you misunderstand the whole sacrificial system. Sacrifices were for unintentional sins only. Repentance was the only remedy for intentional sins.”

Answer: “We all know that there were different functions for the sacrifices, including ritual purification, thanksgiving, personal consecration, and making of vows, along with atonement for unintentional sins. But the sacrifices on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) provided atonement for both intentional and unintentional sins, something taught emphatically in the Talmud and Law Codes. The Scriptures are clear on this, and Jewish tradition never questioned it. There was also one particular sacrifice (namely the ‘asham -- the guilt offering, or reparation offering) that, in conjunction with repentance, served as atonement for intentional sins (called ‘transgressions’ in the Bible). We should point out too that according to some Rabbinic traditions, repentance could ‘convert’

intentional sins to unintentional, hence paving the way for atonement through sacrifice.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 126-135.)

Objection: 3.13. “Even if I accept your arguments about the centrality of blood sacrifices, it only holds true while the Temple is standing. The book of Daniel teaches us that if the Temple has been destroyed and is not functional, prayer replaces sacrifice. The book of Ezekiel is even more explicit, telling Jews living in the exile – and therefore without any access to the Temple, even if it were standing – that repentance and good works are all God requires.”

Answer: “You are obviously referring to is Ezekiel 18 and 33, where we learn that a wicked man who repents is accepted by God – with no mention of sacrifices – along with Daniel 6:10, where it tells us that Daniel, living in exile, prayed toward the Temple (i.e., facing Jerusalem) three times a day. But the idea that prayer replaces sacrifice is simply not taught in the passages you refer to, nor is it in harmony with other important passages from the Hebrew Scriptures. I also find it interesting that the exiles couldn’t wait to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and offer sacrifices again. They knew how important this was. Further, it is significant that, to this day, many Orthodox Jews kill a rooster or chicken on the Day of Atonement and offer it as an atoning, substitutionary sacrifice on their behalf. Despite the Rabbinic teaching that prayer has replaced sacrifice, they still feel the need to offer a blood sacrifice on Yom Kippur.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 136-152.)

Objection: 3.14. “The book of Jonah totally shoots down all your arguments about sacrifice and atonement, especially with reference to Gentiles. You see, when Jonah preached, the people repented and God forgave them – no sacrifice, no blood offering.”

Answer: “Did you know that traditional Judaism, based on the Torah, teaches that the Temple sacrifices made atonement for the Gentile world? This was part of Israel’s call as a priestly nation, and it was Israel’s Temple offerings that helped make Gentile repentance acceptable to God.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 152-153.)

Objection: 3.15. “Even if I admit that we need blood atonement, I still won’t believe in Jesus. God wanted the blood of a goat or a lamb, not a person. He doesn’t want human sacrifice!”

Answer: “All of us know that God is not interested in human sacrifice. But are you aware that the Hebrew Scriptures, the Talmud, as well as the New Testament teach clearly that the death of the righteous has atoning power? When the Messiah, the totally righteous one, laid down his life, it was the ultimate act of atonement in human history.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 153-167.)

Objection: 3.16. “I can’t believe that the death of Jesus paid for my sins is that the Torah teaches that for the blood to be effectual, it had to be poured out on the altar in a specific way. This obviously does not refer to Jesus!”

Answer: “The specific laws in the Torah regarding the sprinkling of the blood on the altar had to do with the sacrifices offered on that altar. In those cases, specific regulations applied. At other times in the Hebrew Scriptures, blood and sacrifices were offered in different ways and in different places. More importantly, there is obviously no connection between the laws for offering animal sacrifices on the altar and the Jewish teaching that ‘the death of the righteous atones.’ Therefore the blood of those righteous martyrs did not have to be poured out on the altar of Jerusalem.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 167-168.)

Objection: 3.17. “If the death of Jesus fulfilled the image of the sacrificial system, why do the prophets anticipate sacrifices when the Third Temple is built?”

Answer: “I’m actually glad that you raised this objection, since it has the merit of acknowledging the importance of sacrifices and offerings in the prophetic books (which is the exact opposite of the premise of objection 3.9, above). However, from our current vantage point, it is difficult for us to know exactly what God was speaking through the prophets concerning a future Temple with restored sacrifices. Was the language merely symbolic, with the Temple speaking of God’s presence among his people and sacrifices speaking of their worshipful response? Or will the prophecies be literally, not symbolically, fulfilled? In that case, were the prophets speaking of a Temple to be built by the Messiah in the age to come? If so, then we could cite the Rabbinic tradition that in the age to come all sacrifices and offerings will be abolished except for thanksgiving offerings. These sacrifices would then be of a non-atoning character, and therefore would have nothing to do with the once-and-for-all atonement purchased for us by the sacrifice of Jesus the Messiah. In any case, we should use caution in our discussion here, as did the Talmudic rabbis, realizing how difficult it is to clearly interpret some of the key, relevant chapters in the Tanakh.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 169-186.)

Objection: 3.18. “The Christian concept of salvation is contrary to the Hebrew Bible and Jewish tradition. Jews don’t need saving!”

Answer: “It seems to me that you misunderstand the biblical concept of salvation, be it ‘Christian’ or ‘Jewish.’ You probably think of salvation in the Hebrew Bible in terms of earthly deliverance and preservation, whereas you understand salvation in the New Testament in totally spiritual terms, referring only to the salvation of the soul. Actually, the concept of salvation in the Tanakh and in the New Covenant Scriptures is comprehensive, dealing with spirit, soul, and body, both in this world and the world to come; in other words, salvation from sin and its effects. In that sense, all human beings, sinful as we are, need saving.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 186-194.)

Objection: 3.19. “Jewish people don’t need a middleman.”

Answer: “It all depends on what you mean by ‘middleman.’ If you mean no Jew could ever pray to God without a go-between acting on their behalf, I agree with you: We don’t need a middleman. If you mean that any individual Jew (or, the entire nation) could come into God’s presence at any time, without a divinely ordained agent first going to God on his or her behalf, I disagree with you. When God gave us the Torah, he told us in no uncertain terms that only the descendants of Aaron (i.e., the priests) could enter the Most Holy Place or perform the annual atonement rituals. We were completely dependent on them, along with the Levites who assisted them in their work. So, in a general sense, any Jew can cry out to God at any time and plead for mercy; in a specific sense, without priestly atonement and intercession, no Jew has direct access to God.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 195-198.)

Objection: 3.20. “Judaism does not believe in original sin or a fall of man. We do not believe that the human race is totally sinful.”

Answer: “There may be some confusion with our terms. Messianic Jews and Christians believe that we have fallen from the ideal state in which we were created, and now moral corruption is an inescapable part of our nature. We do not believe that people are totally and completely sinful, incapable of doing or choosing anything good. Rather, we believe that **by nature** we are hopelessly **prone to sin** and thoroughly **entangled with sin**. It is because Adam fell – and we must remember that Adam is the father of the human race according to the Torah -- that there are murders, rapes, thefts, and criminal acts committed every moment of every day. Because of Adam’s fall, we kill one another in war, imprison and torture one another for our own cruel purposes, and even commit genocide. We spend millions of dollars annually on every type of sexual perversion -- including pedophilia -- while we waste millions more on addictive and destructive drugs. And even the best of us admit to our moral failures, doing things we wish we wouldn’t do -- in fact, we judge others for doing these very things -- and being ashamed of our thoughts, words, or deeds. We are, tragically, a fallen race.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 198-208.)

Objection: 3.21. “Jews don’t need to repent.”

Answer: “On the contrary, repentance is one of Judaism’s foundations! That’s why our own traditional literature – from the Talmud to the Prayerbook to Maimonides to contemporary Jewish thinkers – is filled with teaching on repentance and prayers of repentance. Jews sin like everybody else, and therefore Jews – just like other human beings – need to repent. That’s why our traditional literature puts such an emphasis on repentance.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 208-210.)

Objection: 3.22. “Jews doesn’t believe in a divine Messiah.”

Answer: “Judaism has never had one, official, universally accepted set of beliefs concerning the Messiah, but it is true that traditional Jewish teaching does not speak unequivocally of a divine Messiah. However, Jewish tradition often describes a highly exalted Messiah as well as a preexistent Messiah, so much so that Jewish scholars have sometimes spoken of the ‘semi-divine’ or ‘quasi-divine’ nature of the Messiah according to these traditions. More importantly, the Hebrew Bible itself speaks of the Messiah’s divine nature, and that must be the deciding factor in what we as Jews do and do not believe.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 210-220.)

Objection: 3.23. “Judaism doesn’t believe in a suffering Messiah.”

Answer: “That is not true. From the Talmud until our own day, important Jewish traditions have acknowledged the Messiah’s suffering. In addition, many Jews believe in **two** messiahs, a triumphant reigning king called Messiah ben David, and a suffering warrior called Messiah ben Joseph. More importantly, the Hebrew Scriptures speak clearly of the Messiah’s sufferings. In fact, it is because our Bible describes the Messiah as a **priest** as well as a king that he had to suffer on our behalf, fulfilling his priestly role. To miss this is to miss an essential part of the Messiah’s work.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 220-231.)

Objection: 3.24. “Jews don’t believe that the Messiah will come twice.”

Answer: “Judaism actually has many different traditions about the coming of the Messiah, including beliefs that there are **two** messiahs who will each come **once**, as well as beliefs that there is a **potential** Messiah present in **each** generation. Scriptures and history teach us that there will be **one** Messiah who will come **twice**.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 232-235.)

Objection: 3.25. “Judaism is a healthy religion. Jews don’t see the world as intrinsically evil, or denounce marriage or call for self-renunciation. Christianity, on the other hand, see the world as evil, advocate celibacy, and say: ‘Deny yourself, take up your cross, and suffer.’”

Answer: “This is an exaggerated and inaccurate statement. Traditional Jews see this world as the corridor to the world to come but stresses the importance of life in this world. As for Christians, while stressing the importance of the world to come, they have been responsible for the building of more hospitals, the feeding of more hungry people, and the establishment of more educational institutions than all other religions of the world combined. The difference between the two is not one of substance but of emphasis. So, the real question is, Which emphasis makes more sense? If this life is only a passing shadow, (as Psalm 90 teaches), and if we are only pilgrims and strangers here (as Jacob and David said), isn’t it logical to live out our few days here in the light of eternity? If we are on this earth for 70 or 80 years and then we enter eternity -- either under God’s favor or God’s judgment -- doesn’t it make sense to give serious thought to the world to come, making sure we are ready to enter our eternal home? Also, both Judaism and Christianity recognize the sinful **tendencies** of the human race; Christianity just puts greater emphasis on subduing those tendencies, calling on its adherents to ‘put to death the harmful desires of the sinful nature.’ Finally, Jesus emphasized that we are not here primarily for ourselves but for God and for others, not to be served but to serve. God’s kingdom is advanced through suffering and sacrifice, and that too is part of our calling as mature followers of the Messiah.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 235-248.)

Objection: 3.26. “Christianity calls on its followers to exhibit unnatural emotions and feelings, such as love for their enemies. This is contrary to Torah as well as contrary to human nature.”

Answer: “Could it be that what you call ‘unnatural emotions and feelings’ are actually lower, more base human attitudes, while the ethical behavior that Jesus requires from his followers actually reflects higher, more lofty, spiritual attitudes? Maybe not everything that is ‘natural’ is good and not everything that is ‘unnatural’ is bad! Could it be that the Messiah calls us to a higher and better life? Could it be that, through his gracious help, he enables us to put to death our earthly, carnal tendencies and more fully reflect the divine image in which we were created? I would suggest to you that this represents a decided step **up** for the human race, a fruit of the Messiah’s work on our behalf.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 248-252.)

Objection: 3.27. “The only thing that keeps a lot of people in the Christian faith -- including Jews -- is the fear of hell.”

Answer: “Of the multiplied thousands of followers of Jesus that I know around the world -- both Jews and Gentiles -- I can not think of one who continues to follow Jesus **primarily** because of the fear of hell, let alone **only** because of the fear of hell. We follow him because we love him and we recognize him to be our Messiah. Having said this, there is no question that, from a biblical perspective (i.e., Torah, Prophets, Writings, New Testament), a healthy fear of the Lord and a recognition that he is the ultimate Judge provides an added incentive to holy living. So, our primary motivation for following the Lord is love; a second motivation is to spend eternity with him in his kingdom; a third motivation is to escape the judgment of hell.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 252-256.)

Objection: 3.28. “I find much beauty in the teachings of Jesus, and I think that there are some good arguments in favor of Christianity. But I find it impossible to believe in a religion that damns all people to hell -- including many moral, good, kind, and sensitive people, not to mention countless millions of religious Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, - simply because they don’t believe in Jesus. I can’t follow a religion whose God will torture people in flames forever for not believing in someone they never even heard of.”

Answer: “To be equally honest with you, I don’t follow that religion either, nor would I be able to put my trust in a God like that. Only one thing really matters: Is there a place called hell, and is there a judgment after death? If so, what is hell like, and who deserves to go there? What about you? Do you deserve heaven or hell? Also, we can argue endlessly about the afterlife, something which neither of us has experienced firsthand. But does your view of sin, judgment, and God agree with the current state of the world, a world filled with suffering and tragedy, and does it line up with the historical experience of our people? What followers of Jesus believe is this: All of us have sinned and broken God’s commandments, resulting in untold tragedy for the human race. In his mercy, God sent his Son, the Messiah, into the world to take our place and pay for our sins. He is our hope and our salvation. If we reject him, we remain lost in this world and we will be lost in the world to come. As to the exact nature of the sufferings of hell, the Scripture do not speak with scientific precision, but the Tanakh, the New Testament, and even the Rabbinic literature give us some frightful descriptions. As for those who never heard about Jesus, God will be their Judge, not you and not me.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 2, pp. 256-263.)

MESSIANIC PROPHECY OBJECTIONS

Objection: 4.1. “If Jesus is really the Messiah, and if he is so important, why doesn’t the Torah speak of him at all?”

Answer: “You would be surprised to see how many passages and concepts actually point to Jesus the Messiah in the Torah. But before you question my beliefs, are you aware that the Torah doesn’t say much about the ‘traditional’ Jewish Messiah? Does this mean that the Messiah is unimportant to traditional Judaism? And the Torah says **nothing** about the Oral Law. What does this imply? You might want to think twice about your argument here.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 3-13.)

Objection: 4.2. “Nowhere in the Hebrew Bible are we told that we must ‘believe in the Messiah.’”

Answer: “This is hardly an accurate statement, and it is not even in harmony with Jewish tradition. Believing in God, his prophets, and his Messiah is basic to the biblical faith, while one of the thirteen principles of the Jewish faith as articulated by Maimonides (Rambam), is that we must believe in the coming of the Messiah, awaiting him every day with unwavering faith.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 13-17.)

Objection: 4.3. “Isaiah 7:14 does not prophesy a virgin birth! And it has nothing whatsoever to do with Jesus, since it dealt with a crisis 700 years before he was born.”

Answer: “Although biblical scholars of varied religious backgrounds continue to debate the precise significance of Isaiah 7:14 (Jewish scholars disagree among themselves, as do Christian scholars), the overall meaning is clear: The prophet speaks of a supernatural event of great importance to the House of David, apparently the birth of a royal child. When read in the larger context of Isaiah 7-11, it is not difficult to see how Isa 7:14 was taken to be Messianic. Matthew therefore had good reason to cite this passage with reference to the birth of Jesus the Messiah. But you have raised some fair questions, so let’s look at them in a little more detail.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 17-32.)

Objection: 4.4. “Isaiah 9:6[5] does not speak of a divine king (or Messiah).”

Answer: “The most natural, logical, and grammatically sound translation of Isaiah 9:6[5] is: ‘For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us, and the government shall be on his shoulder, and his name is called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Father Forever, Prince of Peace’ (my translation). This is in harmony with other verses in our Hebrew Scriptures that point towards the divine nature of the Messiah, and the names of the child should be taken as descriptive of the Messiah himself.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 32-49.)

Objection: 4.6. “Isaiah 53 speaks of the people of Israel, not Jesus (or, any Messiah).”

Answer: “It is impossible, both contextually and logically, for Isaiah 53 to be speaking of the people of Israel. Rather, the text clearly speaks of one individual, and as many rabbis recognized through the ages, that individual was the Messiah.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 49-57.)

Objection: 4.7. “The rabbis only applied Isaiah 52:13-15, not 53:1-12, to the Messiah son of David.”

Answer: “Absolutely not. In fact, an Orthodox anti-missionary made this very claim -- quite emphatically -- in a live radio debate with me in 1991. Needless to say, he had to come back on the air and admit his error.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 57-58.)

Objection: 4.8. “It is not true that the medieval rabbis were the first applied Isaiah 53 to Israel instead of the Messiah. The Israel interpretation is actually very ancient.”

Answer: “You’re partially correct. The earliest reference to this interpretation is found in a second-century Christian source recounting a discussion between a Gentile follower of Jesus and some Jewish teachers who did not believe in him. But, aside from one passing reference in Midrash Rabbah (where part of one verse is interpreted with reference to the righteous), a specific identification of Isaiah 53 with Israel is not found in any Rabbinic literature until almost one thousand years after Jesus. (In other words, it is not found in the Talmuds, the Targums, or in the Midrashim.) Therefore, the view that Isaiah 53 spoke of Israel can hardly be considered a standard (or, ancient) Rabbinic interpretation, and for the traditional Jew, that’s what really matters.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 58-62.)

Objection: 4.9. “Isaiah 53 contains the words of the repentant kings of the nations rather than the words of the Jewish people.”

Answer: “This is not possible. The servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53 was smitten for the sins of his people while he himself was guiltless. In complete contrast to this, the Torah promised that the people of Israel would be smitten for their own sins, not for the sins of the nations. Even more importantly, the sufferings of the servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53 bring healing to those for whom he suffered, whereas when Israel was smitten by its enemies because of its sins, God subsequently judged those nations for overdoing the punishment. Israel’s suffering brought judgment rather than healing to Assyria, Babylon, Greece, or Rome - to name just a few of the nations used by God to judge his people Israel. (See above, 4.5-4.6, for more on these points.) At any rate, the text plainly says that the servant was suffering for the sins of ‘my people’ which in context must refer to Israel, with either God speaking (‘My people’) or the prophet speaking (‘my people’).” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 62-66.)

Objection: 4.10. “Several key words in Isaiah 53 speak of a servant in the plural.”

Answer: “I’m surprised that you’re still using this objection! It is simply not true, as can be seen by checking even leading Jewish translations of the Bible. Those who claim that there are references to a plural servant in Isaiah 53 failed to realize the specific Hebrew grammatical forms being used and consequently mistranslated or misinterpreted the Hebrew text. These objections were answered decisively decades ago.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 66-67.)

Objection: 4.11. “Isaiah 53 cannot refer to Jesus because it says that no one was interested in the servant of the Lord or attracted to him, yet the New Testament records that large crowds followed Jesus.”

Answer: “Actually, the New Testament record agrees with the picture of the servant of the Lord described in Isaiah 53, despite the fact that great crowds did follow Jesus at numerous times during his ministry. This is because he spent most of his life almost unknown, and then, once he became popular, he became the center of controversy and was vehemently rejected by many religious teachers and influential leaders, ultimately dying a criminal’s death on the cross. This is certainly in harmony with Isaiah 53.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 67-71.)

Objection: 4.12. “Isaiah 53 cannot refer to Jesus because it says that the servant of the Lord was sickly and died of disease.”

Answer: “This is the least likely interpretation of the relevant verses in the Hebrew, as confirmed by many major translations, both Jewish and Christian. The text indicates that the servant of the Lord will be a man who is intimately associated with pain, grief, and sickness, a man suffering at the hands of people and crushed by the Lord as a guilt offering on our behalf. Such an understanding of the words is found in some Rabbinic interpretations too.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 71-74.)

Objection: 4.13. “Isaiah 53 does not actually say that the servant would die.”

Answer: “This objection actually contradicts two of the previous objections (specifically, 4.10 and 4.12), both of which understand that, according to Isaiah 53, the servant of the Lord would die. Many standard Rabbinic interpretations recognize this, either interpreting the text with reference to Israel’s suffering and death at the hands of their enemies, or with reference to the suffering and death of the Messiah (either Messiah ben Joseph or Messiah ben David).” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 74-76.)

Objection: 4.14. “Isaiah 53 does not say that the servant will rise from the dead.”

Answer: “If, as we have demonstrated, Isaiah 53 speaks of the servant’s death, then it must be accepted that the text just as clearly speaks of his continued activities after his death. Thus, there is only one possible explanation: The servant rises from the dead!” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 76-77.)

Objection: 4.15. “Isaiah 53 cannot refer to Jesus because it says that the servant of the Lord did no violence, yet Jesus drove out the Temple money-changers with a whip.”

Answer: “Jesus, who was known for his meekness and gentleness -- all the way to the cross -- did not engage in ‘violence’ in the Temple courts. There is no record of anyone being hurt or injured, and, in contrast to some of the ancient Israelite prophets like Moses, Joshua or Samuel, Jesus did not put anyone to death in the name of the Lord. Obviously, he used a whip -- not a sword -- because his design was to clear the area out, not hurt anyone. This is hardly ‘violence’ according to the standards of the Hebrew Scriptures. In fact, it’s unlikely he used a whip to drive people out; rather, the whip was used to drive out the animals.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 77-80.)

Objection: 4.16. “Isaiah 53 cannot refer to Jesus because it says that the servant of the Lord would not lift up his voice or cry out, yet Jesus cried out several times on the cross, once in near blasphemy (Ps 22:1).”

Answer: “One of the most striking aspects of the suffering and death of Jesus was that he went as a lamb to the slaughter, not resisting those who arrested him, not defending himself before his accusers, and even forgiving those who crucified him. In this, he has become the worldwide symbol of a man who truly ‘turned the other cheek.’ As for his quoting Psalm 22:1 on the cross – a beloved passage of Scripture – how is this ‘near blasphemy?’” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 80-83.)

Objection: 4.17. “Isaiah 53 cannot refer to Jesus because it says that the servant of the Lord would see seed, an expression always meaning physical descendants in the Hebrew Bible.”

Answer: “Actually, the passage you refer to is the only occurrence of the Hebrew expression ‘see seed’ in the Tanakh, so it is not wise to be so dogmatic about the meaning of the expression, especially since ‘seed’ is sometimes used metaphorically in the Scriptures, and since it can sometimes refer simply to a future generation. This much is certain: Through his continued life after resurrection, we can honestly and fairly say that Jesus the Messiah fulfills the description of ‘seeing seed.’” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 83-86.)

Objection: 4.18. “Daniel 9:24-27 has nothing to do with ‘the’ Messiah.”

Answer: “There is no question that Christian versions translating the Hebrew **mashiach** here with ‘the Messiah’ are reading something into the text. However, what they are reading into the text is correct, since the prophecy is clearly about the work of the Messiah.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 86-92.)

Objection: 4.19. “Daniel 9:24 was clearly not fulfilled by Jesus.”

Answer: “Since Daniel 9:24-27 speaks of events that must be fulfilled before the destruction of the Second Temple (which took place in 70 CE), the question that must be asked is this: If Jesus did not fulfill Daniel 9:24, who did? Who was it that ushered in everlasting righteousness and made atonement for iniquity before 70 CE if not Jesus the Messiah? In reality, if he did not fulfill Daniel 9:24, then no one fulfilled it and the prophecies of Daniel cannot be trusted.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 92-100.)

Objection: 4.20. “Christian translations of Daniel 9:24-27 divide the seventy weeks incorrectly, and the dates have no relation to the times of Jesus.”

Answer: “There are two different ways to understand the division of the seventy weeks, but both of them are legitimate and in keeping with the rules of Hebrew grammar. More importantly, both of them equally support the Messianic interpretation of the text, and the dates involved clearly point to the times of Jesus. That’s one of the reasons why many Christians point to this text as an important Messianic prophecy.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 100-109.)

Objection: 4.21. “Daniel 9:24-27 speaks of two anointed ones.”

Answer: “It is possible that the text does speak of two anointed ones, the first in 9:25 and the second in 9:26. This depends on how the seventy weeks of years are divided (see immediately above, 4.20). This does not present a problem, however, since it is clear that (1) if there are two anointed ones, the second anointed one is the Messiah, and (2) the Messianic era had to be inaugurated before the Second Temple was destroyed, thus pointing decisively to Jesus as the key figure of whom the text speaks.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 109-111.)

Objection: 4.22. “Psalm 2:12 should not be translated ‘kiss the Son.’ Only the King James Version and modern Christian fundamentalist translations still maintain this incorrect rendering.”

Answer: “The words “kiss the son” are actually not quoted in the New Testament, but one of the greatest of the medieval Rabbinic commentators, along with some noted, modern Hebrew scholars argued for the ‘kiss the son’ rendering. A good case can be made for this translation. In any case, regardless of the translation of this verse, the psalm is filled with important Messianic imagery.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 111-114.)

Objection: 4.23. “Psalm 16 does not speak of the resurrection of the Messiah.”

Answer: “According to the biblical record, Psalm 16 is a psalm of David in which he expresses his confidence that he will be delivered from death and will not rot in the grave. However, since David did, in fact, ultimately die and see physical corruption, the New Testament learns from this that he was speaking prophetically about his greatest descendant, the Messiah, who would actually be resurrected from the grave.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 114-117.)

Objection: 4.24. “Psalm 22 is the story of David’s past suffering. There is nothing prophetic about it.”

Answer: “Actually, Psalm 22 is the prayer of a righteous sufferer, brought down to the jaws of death and then rescued and raised up by God in answer to prayer, a glorious testimony to be recounted through the ages. As such, it applies powerfully to Jesus the Messiah, the ideal righteous sufferer, surrounded by hostile crowds, beaten, mocked, crucified, and seemingly abandoned by man and God, but delivered from death itself and raised from the dead by the power of God, a story now celebrated around the globe. That’s why he quoted words from this psalm with reference to himself when he hung on the cross. How strikingly they apply to him! What is also interesting is that some of the great Rabbinic commentators – including Rashi – interpreted the psalm as a prophecy of Israel’s future suffering and exile, not as the story of David’s past suffering. Not only so, but a famous Rabbinic midrash composed about 1200 years ago said that David spoke of the Messiah’s sufferings in Psalm 22. We can therefore say with confidence that the application of this psalm to the death and resurrection of the Messiah is in keeping with the clear meaning of the text.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 117-122.)

Objection: 4.25. “Psalm 22 does not speak of death by crucifixion. In fact, the King James translators changed the words of verse 16 [17] to speak of ‘piercing’ the sufferer’s hands and feet whereas the Hebrew text actually says, ‘Like a lion they are at my hands and feet.’”

Answer: “It is interesting to note that verse 16 [17] is not quoted in the New Testament even though other verses from Psalm 22 are cited in the Gospels. This means that verse 16 [17] was not the primary verse on which the New Testament authors focused. As to the allegation that the King James translators intentionally changed the meaning of the Hebrew text, their translation (‘they pierced my hands and feet’ verses ‘like a lion [they are at] my hands and feet’) actually reflects an ancient Jewish interpretation along with some important variations in the medieval Masoretic manuscripts. In other words, it’s as much of a Jewish issue as it is a Christian one! In any case, there really is no problem. With either rendering, the imagery is one of extreme bodily violence done to the sufferer’s hands and feet, corresponding to the realities of crucifixion.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 122-127.)

Objection: 4.26. “Some of the so-called Messianic prophecies in the Psalms actually speak of the psalmist’s sin and folly. How can you apply this to Jesus?”

Answer: “No one tries to apply every verse in each ‘prophetic’ psalm to the Messiah. Rather, there is a simple principle behind the Messianic interpretation of these important psalms: As it was with David, so it is with the Messiah. In other words, there are striking parallels that exist between the life of King David and the life of King Messiah, and it is these parallels that are highlighted in the New Testament’s quotation of certain psalms. For example, just as David was betrayed by one of his closest friends, so also the Messiah was betrayed by one of his closest friends, as noted by Jesus himself (see Psalm 41 and John 13:18). But it is obvious that the details of the betrayal don’t have to be the same (e.g., David was betrayed by Ahithopel, Jesus was betrayed by Judas; David’s betrayal led to his temporary exile; Yeshua’s betrayal led to his death).” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 127-129)

Objection: 4.27. “Psalm 40 is absolutely not Messianic in any way.”

Answer: “Did you know that the Talmudic rabbis interpreted all kinds of obscure verses to be Messianic? They saw hints and allusions to the Messiah in hundreds of unusual biblical texts, in passages that are totally unrelated to anything Messianic. In contrast with this, Psalm 40 has some very important Messianic themes.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 129-131.)

Objection: 4.28. “Psalm 45:6[7] does not say that the Messiah is God.”

Answer: “Try this simple test: Write out this verse in Hebrew by itself, give it to anyone who is fluent in biblical Hebrew, and ask him or her to translate the verse. They will say that the meaning of the Hebrew is, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.’ The Hebrew is quite clear. The problem is that the verse refers in context to Israel’s king, who was human. So, the real question is, ‘How can an earthly king be called ‘elohim?’ The answer is simple: This passage ultimately points to the Messiah, the divine King!” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 131-133.)

Objection: 4.29. “Psalm 110 does not say that the Messiah is LORD. Also, the psalm is not written by David about the Messiah. Our traditions indicate that it may have been written by Eliezer about his master Abraham, then added to the collection of the Psalms by David many years later, or it was written by David for the Levites to recite about him (or by a court poet about David). This much is sure: It does not teach that the Messiah is God!

Answer: “Psalm 110 is an important Messianic psalm pointing to the highly exalted status of the Messiah (to the right hand of God!), and to his priestly and royal nature. For these reasons, it is quoted frequently in the New Testament with reference to Yeshua. Yeshua even quotes it himself, pointing out how the Messiah was greater than David, since David called him ‘my lord.’ However, you are mistaken in thinking that the New Testament (or Christian translations of the Hebrew Bible) make the claim that the opening verse of this psalm means that Jesus is LORD (Yahweh).” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 133-145.)

Objection: 4.30. “You claim that Haggai 2 points to the fact that the Messiah had to come before the Second Temple was destroyed, since it says in v. 9 that the glory of the Second Temple would be greater than the glory of Solomon’s Temple. Actually, Haggai is speaking only about the physical splendor of the Second Temple, which surpassed Solomon’s Temple in the days of Herod.”

Answer: “Although there are some clear references in Haggai 2 to an abundance of gold and silver that would be used in rebuilding the Temple, there can be no doubt that the phrase ‘to fill with glory’ refers to the manifest presence of God and not to physical splendor. We can therefore ask, In what way did the glory of the Second Temple surpass that of the First Temple? The answer is inescapable: The Messiah, the King of Glory, the very embodiment of the presence and power of God, visited that Temple.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 145-148.)

Objection: 4.31. “Zechariah 12:10 has nothing to do with Jesus.”

Answer: “Although there are ambiguities in the Hebrew text, the passage clearly speaks of a time of national mourning in Israel over one slain, resulting in the spiritual cleansing of the nation (Zech. 12:10-13:1). One of the oldest Jewish interpretations of this passage, found in the Talmud, refers Zechariah 12:10 to the death of Messiah ben Joseph, the suffering Messiah of Jewish tradition. Why then should it surprise you that the New Testament interprets Zechariah 12:10 with reference to Yeshua?” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 148-152.)

Objection: 4.32. “Jesus fulfilled none of the Messianic prophecies!”

Answer: “To the contrary, we know that Jesus is the Messiah because he fulfilled so many Messianic prophecies. The only real way to deny this is to claim that the many prophecies he clearly fulfilled are not Messianic, which is quite an impossible stretch.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 152-158.)

Objection: 4.33. “Jesus fulfilled none of the provable Messianic prophecies!”

Answer: “By provable Messianic prophecies, I assume you mean prophecies referring to the Messiah bringing about an end to war and ushering in a universal golden age, or the Messiah regathering the exiles of Israel and rebuilding the Temple. But these are not the only provable Messianic prophecies, and there are some very important, provable prophecies of worldwide significance which Jesus – and only Jesus – has fulfilled, giving us every reason to expect that when he returns to earth, he will fulfill the rest.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 158-164.)

Objection: 4.34. “Even modern Christian scholars reject the so-called Old Testament proof texts about Jesus. Just check most modern Christian Bible commentaries and translations.”

Answer: “Those ‘Christian’ scholars who reject the so-called proof texts to which you refer are the very same scholars who reject any clear expectation of a Messiah of any kind -- Jewish or Christian -- in the Hebrew Scriptures. Their findings are just as incompatible with traditional Judaism as they are with traditional Christianity. On the other hand – and you might find this interesting – most of these very same scholars fully recognize the New Testament methods of interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures as thoroughly Jewish -- in keeping with the style of the Dead Sea Scrolls and later Rabbinic writings, except often more sober! In any case, the real issue is not what whether these scholars believe that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah of the Tanakh. The issue is: Is he, in fact, that prophesied Messiah?” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 164-167.)

Objection: 4.35. “Jesus can not be the Messiah because the Messiah was to be a reigning king whereas Jesus was despised, rejected, and crucified.”

Answer: “The prophetic Scriptures indicate that first the Messiah would suffer and then he would reign. This is exactly what happened: Jesus-Yeshua -- who is one of us and has identified himself totally with us -- joined us in our suffering, rejection and pain. We have suffered torture and death; he too was tortured and killed. We have been mocked, maligned, and misunderstood; to this day, he is the butt of ugly jokes and a common curse on people’s lips. (When people get angry, they don’t yell, ‘Moses!’ or ‘Buddha!’ or ‘Mohammed!’ but ‘Jesus Christ!’) But whereas, we have often suffered because we were guilty; he suffered because he was innocent -- and he did it for us. Therefore, Jesus was and is the perfect Messiah for us, the ideal Savior for a despised and rejected people.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 167-169.)

Objection: 4.36. “Jesus can not be the Messiah because the Messiah had to rebuild the Temple, yet the Temple was standing in Jesus’ day.”

Answer: “There is a fatal flaw to your objection, since we know for a fact that many religious Jews in Jesus’ day were expecting the coming of the Messiah in their lifetimes. This means that they were not expecting the Messiah to rebuild the Temple; the Temple was already standing! As for the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures associating the rebuilding of the Temple with the work of the Messiah, we should point out that they were delivered during the time of the Babylonian exile and pointed to the rebuilding of the second Temple – and that Temple has been destroyed for more than 1900 years now. This means that we must reinterpret these passages if we are to apply them to a future rebuilding of the Temple. In that case, it can be argued that these prophecies await the return of the Messiah, when he will establish his kingdom on the earth and build the third Temple.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 170-179.)

Objection: 4.37. “The only true prophecy about Jesus in the Hebrew Scriptures is found in Zechariah 13:1-6 -- a passage dealing with false prophets. It even makes explicit reference to his crucifixion!”

Answer: “Actually, the passage of which you speak has nothing whatsoever to do with Jesus. To be sure, you are right in saying that it is a prophecy about false prophets, but it makes no reference to crucifixion – the Hebrew actually speaks of wounds on the false prophet’s back, not on his hands. The only references to the Messiah in this passage of Scripture are in the powerful, God-centered, repentance-based passages that come before and after Zechariah 13: 1-6. So, you have failed to recognize the true references to the Messiah in Zechariah 12-14 and focused on the one passage that does not apply to him.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 180-181.)

Objection: 4.38. “Paul claimed that the Hebrew Scriptures prophesied the resurrection of the Messiah on the third day. Nowhere in our Bible is such a prophecy found.”

Answer: “Paul’s exact words are: ‘For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures . . .’ (1 Cor. 15:3-4). As a Jew schooled in the Scriptures from his childhood, he was not thinking of just one passage but of several passages that pointed to the Messiah’s resurrection on the third day. And remember: Paul was not trying to ‘pull a fast one’ on anybody! And no one had pulled a fast one on him either. This is the tradition he received, and if someone taught him something that was not in his Bible, he would have known it immediately. In fact, when we study the Tanakh, we see that the third day is often the day of completion and climax – and so it was with the Messiah’s death and resurrection!” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 181-184.)

Objection: 4.39. “I can find prophecies in the Bible that point to Muhammad just as easily as you can find prophecies that point to Jesus. That’s because all of your so-called proofs are either distortions, make-believe creations, or Jewish midrash -- free, homiletical interpretations -- of the worst kind.”

Answer: “Really? Then why didn’t the Muslims find Muhammad everywhere in the Hebrew Bible? Why did they have to completely rewrite their own version of the Scriptures (i.e., the Koran) instead of referring back to the Hebrew Bible -- the Word of God accepted by both Christians and Jews? And where does the Tanakh point to Muhammad’s place of birth, or the time of his coming, or the manner of his death, or his alleged ascension to heaven? (Remember: the Hebrew Scriptures point to the place of Yeshua’s birth, the time of his coming, the manner of his death, and his resurrection!) I also remind you that modern scholars -- both Jewish and Christian -- recognize that the authors of the New Testament were highly sophisticated in their interpretive techniques (see vol. 4, 5.1). Sorry, but you’ll have to do better. Objections like this are hardly worthy of the name.” (See Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, vol. 3, pp. 184-188.)

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