

THE JEWISH MESSIAH... and Why He's Not Jesus

Christian missionaries, like Jews for Jesus, claim that Jesus is the Jewish messiah! Why has Judaism rejected this assertion for 2,000 years?

The concept of the Messiah has its foundation in our Jewish Bible, the *Tanach*, which teaches that ALL of the following criteria MUST be fulfilled before any person can be acknowledged as the Messiah:

Ingathering of the Jewish Exiles

When the Messiah is reigning as King of Israel, the Jewish people will be ingathered from their exile and will return to Israel, their homeland (Deut. 30:3; Isaiah 11:11-12; Jeremiah 30:3, 32:37; Ezekiel 11:17, 36:24).

Jesus never reigned as king and the Jews have not yet all returned to live in their promised homeland.

Rebuilding of the Holy Temple

The Temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt (Isaiah 2:2-3, 56:6-7, 60:7, 66:20; Ezekiel 37:26-27; Malachi 3:4; Zechariah 14:20-21).

The Temple was still standing in Jesus' day. It was destroyed about 38 years after Jesus' crucifixion and it has not yet been rebuilt.

Worldwide Reign of Peace

There will be universal disarmament and worldwide peace with a complete end to war (Micah 4:1-4; Hosea 2:20; Isaiah 2:1-4, 60:18).

Wars have increased dramatically in the world since the advent of Christianity, many fought in Jesus' name.

Embracing of Torah Observance by All Jews

The Messiah will reign as King at a time when all the Jewish people will observe God's commandments (Ezekiel 37:24; Deut. 30:8, 10; Jeremiah 31:32; Ezekiel 11:19-20, 36:26-27).

Again, Jesus never ruled as King nor are all Jews following all the commandments of the Torah.

Universal Knowledge of God

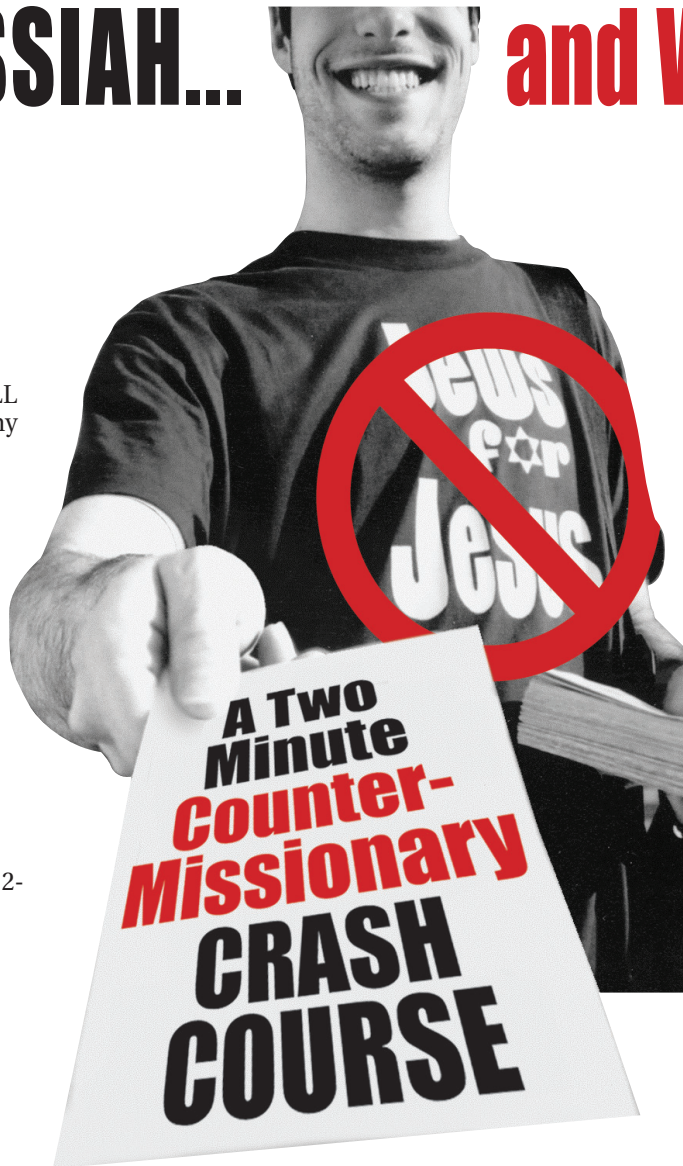
The Messiah will rule at a time when all the people of the world will come to acknowledge and serve the one true God (Zech. 3:9, 8:23, 14:9,16; Isaiah 45:23, 66:23; Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 38:23; Psalm 86:9; Zeph. 3:9).

This, as well, has not yet taken place and we await its fulfillment.

Messiah Must Be from the Tribe of Judah and a Descendant of King David and King Solomon

The Messiah must be a member of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10) and a direct descendant of King David and King Solomon (2 Samuel 7:12-14; I Chronicles 22:9-10). Genealogy in the Bible is ONLY passed down from father to son (Numbers 1:1-18).

There is no evidence that Jesus really had this pedigree, and the Christian Bible actually claims that he did not have a "birth-father" from the tribe of Judah descending from King David and King Solomon (Matthew 1:18-20).



A Biblical Portrait of the Messiah

All of these criteria for the Messiah are found in numerous places in the Jewish Bible. One foundational example is this prophecy in the book of Ezekiel, Chapter 37:24-28:

And My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd, and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them and they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers have lived; and they shall live there, they, and their children, and their children's children forever; and My servant David will be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant, which I will give them; and I will multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever and My tabernacle shall be with them, and I will be their God and they will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.

Anyone can claim to be the Messiah or a group of people can claim that someone is the Messiah. However, if that person fails to fulfill ALL the criteria found in the Jewish Bible, he CANNOT be the Messiah. According to the Christian scriptures, Jesus seems to have understood this. As he was being crucified by the Romans, he cried out "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).

The Christian Rebuttal

In order to deal with Jesus' failure to fulfill the Biblical messianic prophecies, missionaries argue that he will accomplish them when he returns in the future.

It is important to understand that this doctrine of a "second coming" is an admission that Jesus did NOT fulfill the Messianic criteria. This rationalization for his failure certainly provides no reason for accepting him as the Messiah today. Furthermore, the Jewish Bible does not have a Messianic "installment plan" where the Messiah comes, fails in his mission, and then returns thousands of years later to finally succeed.

Missionaries will claim that because Jesus performed miracles, he must be the Messiah. We, however, have no real evidence that Jesus actually performed any miracles. More significantly, even if Jesus did perform miracles, they would not prove that he was the Messiah. Our Bible never says that we will be able to recognize the Messiah through the miracles that he will do. The Torah actually teaches that even false prophets can have the ability to perform supernatural miracles (Deuteronomy 13:2-6).

The Real Messiah

As Jews, we prefer to wait for the real thing according to God's promises and guidelines. The Jewish Bible provides a clear and consistent description of what the world will look like when the Messiah comes – and this has clearly not yet transpired. So, we still await the coming of the real Messiah. May he and a true utopian world come soon! ■

By Rabbi Michael Skobac, Director of Education and Counselling, JEWS FOR JUDAISM © 2019

JEWS FOR JUDAISM is dedicated to countering growing threats to Jewish survival including Christian missionaries, cults, eastern religions, assimilation, anti-Israel propaganda and other challenges to Jewish continuity.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM's goals are to strengthen Jewish pride and identity and to win back Jews who have been influenced by the above challenges.

We achieve our goals through worldwide Internet outreach, social media, free educational programs, literature and counselling services that connect Jewish people to the spiritual depth, beauty and wisdom of Judaism.

I am so grateful to have discovered the wonderful Jews for Judaism YouTube lectures by Rabbi Skobac. I am a Jew who converted to Christianity in college, but now, because of your online outreach, I have returned to Judaism. Thank you. – Rebecca G.

In a nutshell JEWS FOR JUDAISM keeps Jews Jewish.

Please contact JEWS FOR JUDAISM for free educational materials, to book a speaker for your group, arrange a private confidential consultation or make a tax-deductible charitable donation. Thank you.



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קדיש, יארצייט ויזקור • Kaddish, Yahrzeit and Yizkor

Throughout the generations, we Jews cherish the *neshamos* (souls) of our loved ones by saying *Kaddish*, observing *Yahrzeit* or reciting *Yizkor* in their memory.

Kaddish: Jews recite the Kaddish prayer for the merit of one's departed father, mother, sibling or spouse. If a person dies with no children, another relative should assume the task. If that's not possible, then another person can be assigned to recite it. The first time Kaddish is recited is in the cemetery following burial. Henceforth, for a parent, it is recited daily with a *minyán* during the three prayer services for eleven months. For a sibling or spouse, it is recited for thirty days.

Yahrzeit: Kaddish is also recited every year on the Yahrzeit (the anniversary on the Jewish calendar) of a person's passing. On this day, we remember and cherish the life of the departed. During this 24-hour period, Yahrzeit begins at nightfall of the previous evening and ends the following night.

Yizkor (Memorial Prayer) is recited four times a year — on Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret, last day of Passover and second day of Shavuot. Yizkor is said in the synagogue in remembrance of the soul of a departed parent, sibling or spouse. This is a private, solemn moment when we think about our departed loved ones and pledge charity in their memory.

Special Art Print: The painting to the left, *The Yahrzeit Candle*, was created by Julius Ciss, Executive Director of Jews for Judaism. "I remember as a child watching my mother, a Holocaust survivor, light the candle for her parents' Yahrzeit. I asked her why?" Ciss recalls. "She said the flames go up to heaven to let her parents know that she loved them. Today, when I light the yahrzeit candle for my parents and brothers, I go back to that special moment, which I tried to capture in this painting of the Bubbie and her grandchild."

Jews for Judaism is offering an 11" x 14" print of this work of art, suitable for framing, to all who donate \$180 or more to Jews for Judaism. We can print a dedication, in memory of your loved one, in the lower section of the print, if desired. Please check the appropriate box on the remittance coupon to receive your art print. Your gift will help keep Jews Jewish.

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