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## ESSAYS

- [One Person cannot die for the sins of another](#)
- [A blood sacrifice is not required for forgiveness of sins](#)
- [Jesus was not the messiah](#)
- [G-d hates human sacrifices](#)
- [People are born pure and without original sin](#)
- [G-d is one and indivisible](#)
- [There is "The Satan", but not "The Devil"](#)
- [G-d does not become human and humans do not become G-d](#)
- ["Jews for Jesus," "Messianic Jews," and "Hebrew Christians" are not Jews.](#)
- [About the "Jewish roots" of Christianity](#)

### One Person cannot die for the sins of another

IN SHORT... The Bible is clear, and it is consistent: one person cannot die for the sins of another. In other words, the sins committed by one person cannot be wiped out by the punishment given to another. In Exodus 32:30-35, Moses asks God to punish him for the sin committed by the people in regards to the Golden Calf. God tells Moses that the person who committed the sin is the one who must receive the punishment. Then, in Deuteronomy 24:16, God simply states this as a basic principle, 'Every man shall be put to death for his own sin.' This concept is repeated in the Prophets, in Ezekiel 18: 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die... the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.' The prophet Jeremiah looks to the day when the mistaken belief that one man's death atones for another man's sins shall no longer be held by anyone: in Jeremiah 31:29-30, the prophet says: 'In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.'

A MORE COMPLETE EXPLANATION... The Christian understanding is that Jesus, the one they believe to be the messiah, died for the sins of all humanity. In this view, the messiah is supposed to be the blood sacrifice necessary for the forgiveness of sin; in other words, a human sacrifice. However, not only is this concept of the messiah not found in our Bible, but we are also taught quite clearly and consistently that no one can die for the sins of another, that one person's guilt cannot be forgiven because of another person's death. In Exodus 32:30-35, Moses tries to offer himself as an atonement for the sins of the People, by being written 'out of Thy book which Thou has written.' To be written out of God's book means to be written out of the Book of Life; therefore Moses is asking to die for the sins of

the People. God's response is that it does not work that way, each man dies for his own sin:

And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Eternal; perhaps I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Eternal, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin...and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Eternal said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the Eternal plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made. [Exodus 32:30-35]

Please note that the text tells us that the one who sins is the one who receives the punishment, and no one else. The point is made again in Deuteronomy 24:16, where it explicitly says that no one can die for the sins of another: The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the father. Every man shall be put to death for his own sin. [Deuteronomy 24:16]

The whole of Chapter 18 of the Book of Ezekiel expands upon and clarifies this principle. Furthermore, this chapter teaches that all we have to do to gain God's forgiveness is to stop doing the Bad and start doing the Good. Nowhere does it say that we must have a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Please see [Essay #2, 'A blood sacrifice is not required for forgiveness of sins.'](#)

The word of the Eternal came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Eternal God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Eternal God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save

his soul alive. [Ezekiel 18:1-4; 20-24; 26-27]

Again, this same principle is stated in the Book of Jeremiah. In the 31<sup>st</sup> chapter, God tells of a time in the future when no one will continue to believe in such a thing.

In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. [Jeremiah 31:29-30]

This is nothing but a restatement and elaboration on Deuteronomy 24:16: 'Every man shall be put to death for his own sin.' The simple and literal meaning of the biblical text needs no interpretation. It is clear and it is consistent:

No one can die to atone for the sins of another. This is why Jews do not believe there was any redemptive power at all in Jesus' death. Such a belief is unbiblical; it has no basis in the sacred text and no justification in Jewish theology. This doctrine can be seen as an invention for the sake of post-event rationalization, in other words, to give meaning and purpose to the crucifixion after the fact.

Some Christians may choose to interpret other verses in the Bible to indicate the opposite, that one CAN die for the sins of another. If that were the case, this would mean that God changed His mind, or that He did not mean what He said in Deuteronomy 24:16: 'Every man shall be put to death for his own sin.'

But God does not change either His mind or His nature, as we read in Malachi 3:6, For I am the Eternal, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

In a newer technique, some Christians are now quoting rabbinic writings to make it seem as if the rabbis accepted this concept of vicarious atonement. However, even if several respected rabbis did agree with this idea, we must still go by what the Bible states, and the Bible states, in no uncertain terms, 'Every man shall be put to death for his own sin.'

#### A blood sacrifice is not required for forgiveness of sins

IN SHORT... If a person believes that a blood sacrifice were necessary in order for God to forgive human sin, then that person forgot to study the Five Books of Moses. Even a single example where God forgave without a blood sacrifice would prove that this idea is unbiblical. There are many such examples, but the most interesting is found in the Book of Leviticus. The reason this is so interesting is that it appears right in the middle of the discussion of sin sacrifices. In Leviticus 5:11-13, it states, 'If, however, he cannot afford two doves or two young pigeons, he is to bring as an offering for his sin a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering.' In Jonah 3:10, we also see that one does not need a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. There, the Bible simply states that God saw the works of the people of Niniveh. Specifically it says that these works consisted of abandoning their

evil ways, and because they did, God forgave them. There are many other examples. Therefore, as was stated earlier, the idea that one needs a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins is unbiblical.

A MORE COMPLETE EXPLANATION...The God-man relationship was never limited to animal sacrifices, nor was it ever the only means by which a human being obtained forgiveness from God for wrongdoing.

The centrality of the animal sacrifices ceased, not with the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans, but rather with the first destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians. Please remember that the vast majority of Jews never went back to the Promised Land. Instead, they remained in Babylonia, despite the permission and encouragement of Cyrus of Persia to return. By the time Jesus was born, 80% of the world's Jewish community lived outside of the Promised Land, and were unconcerned about the cessation of the animal sacrifices. After the Temple was reestablished, the Jews of Babylonia would make an annual financial gift for the maintenance of the Temple, but never worried that God was not going to forgive their sins without a blood sacrifice. Neither do Diaspora Jews worry about this today. The reason is that the Bible makes it explicitly clear that God had given us other means for obtaining forgiveness.

Those who believe in the efficacy of blood sacrifice look to Leviticus 17:11 for justification: For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. [Leviticus 17:11]

But if you read this verse in context, you will find that it refers to abstaining from eating or drinking the blood of a sacrifice, and nothing more. God commanded this prohibition in order to maintain the distinction between the Jewish people and the pagans. Most pagans ate the blood of their sacrifices as a means of incorporating their gods into their bodies and into their lives. (See 'The Golden Bough' by Sir James Frazer, the chapter entitled 'Eating The God.') Perhaps this is the source of the Christian rite of communion. But the holiness of the People of Israel requires them to abhor the pagan ways and not to hold the same beliefs as their pagan neighbors.

The entire quotation from Leviticus 17 reads: Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood — I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. Therefore I say to the Israelites, 'None of you may eat blood, nor may an alien living among you eat blood. Any Israelite or any alien living among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth, because the life of every creature is its blood.' That is why I have said to the Israelites, 'You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats

it must be cut off.’

Some might still insist that blood is needed to atone for sins. But there are many examples in the [TaNaKh](#) where other things besides blood atone for sins. If you are poor and unable to afford a blood sacrifice, God allows you to use flour, which is not from an animal and therefore has no blood. If the poor were not able to offer a sacrifice of flour, forgiveness would only be for the wealthy — but God would never exclude humans from obtaining forgiveness on the basis of wealth:

If, however, he cannot afford two doves or two young pigeons, he is to bring as an offering for his sin a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering. He must not put oil or incense on it, because it is a sin offering. He is to bring it to the priest, who shall take a handful of it as a memorial portion and burn it on the altar on top of the offerings made to the Eternal by fire. It is a sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for him for any of these sins he has committed, and he will be forgiven. The rest of the offering will belong to the priest, as in the case of the grain offering. [Leviticus 5:11-13]

So here, in the middle of the commandments concerning the sacrifices for sin, the Bible tells us we do not need any blood sacrifice. This is clear, unambiguous proof; any claim to the contrary is unbiblical – some would say antibiblical.

Remember, too, the story of the book of Jonah. Jonah tried to escape from doing God’s will regarding the people of the city of Niniveh. After the incident of the great fish, he goes to Niniveh, says five words to the people, and what do they do? They fast: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water [Jonah 3:7] ...just as Jews do on Yom Kippur. In addition to fasting, the inhabitants of the city also prayed: Let them cry mightily to God...[Jonah 3:8]...just as Jews do on Yom Kippur. And, finally, the people of the city stopped doing Evil and began doing Good: Let everyone turn from his evil ways and from the violence which is in his hands. [Jonah 3:8]...just as we are — we hope — inspired to do on Yom Kippur. What was God’s response? God forgave them their sins because of their works: When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the Evil which He had said He would do unto them, and He did not do it. [Jonah 3:10]

Please note that the text does NOT read that God saw their sacrifices; the people of Niniveh were never commanded to sacrifice. Nor does the text read that God saw that they had the ‘right faith.’ Rather it says that God saw what they did: their works. Nor did God require that the people convert to Judaism. Their repentance was accepted, though they were Gentiles. We can see examples of other non-blood sacrifices for the purpose of atonement: So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them. [Numbers 16:47]

And in the verse below we see jewelry offered for atonement, but no blood is shed: So we have brought as an offering to the Eternal the gold articles each of us acquired—

armlets, bracelets, signet rings, earrings and necklaces– to make atonement for ourselves before the Eternal. [Numbers 31:50]

Another example is that Isaiah had his sin removed with a live coal: Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for. [Isaiah 6:6-7]

It can be pointed out that, without the Temple in Jerusalem, we can no longer offer any kind of ritual sacrifice, bloody or otherwise. This is true. It is not, however, the reason that Jews do not believe in blood sacrifice. Instead, it is the reason that God gave the people many different methods of atonement. There was a time in Israel’s history when the people became all too consumed with the sacrificial ceremonies. For this, God rebuked them, and reminded them that the Laws of God were more important than the sacrifices.

For when I brought your forefathers out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you. [Jeremiah 7:22-23]

Of all the methods God gave to us for atonement, the blood sacrifices were the weakest. (Please see below at ‘There were other methods...’). This is the case because sacrifices only made atonement for one kind of sin. Several verses seem to indicate that there needs to be a sacrifice in order to gain atonement for sins. But it must be pointed out just which sins are forgiven by these sacrifices: unintentional sins AND ONLY unintentional sins. This is stated repeatedly:

The Eternal said to Moses, Say to the Israelites: ‘When anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Eternal’s commands...’ [Leviticus 4:1-2]

If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Eternal’s commands, even though the community is unaware of the matter, they are guilty. [Leviticus 4:13]

When a leader sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the commands of the Eternal his God, he is guilty. [Leviticus 4:22]

If a member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Eternal’s commands, he is guilty. [Leviticus 4:27]

When a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally in regard to any of the Eternal’s holy things, he is to bring to the Eternal as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a

guilt offering. [Leviticus 5:15]

He is to bring to the priest as a guilt offering a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the wrong he has committed unintentionally, and he will be forgiven. [Leviticus 5:18]

Now if you unintentionally fail to keep any of these commands the Eternal gave Moses... [Numbers 15:22]

The priest is to make atonement for the whole Israelite community, and they will be forgiven, for it was not intentional and they have brought to the Eternal for their wrong an offering made by fire and a sin offering. The whole Israelite community and the aliens living among them will be forgiven, because all the people were involved in the unintentional wrong. But if just one person sins unintentionally, he must bring a year-old female goat for a sin offering. The priest is to make atonement before the Eternal for the one who erred by sinning unintentionally, and when atonement has been made for him, he will be forgiven. One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether he is a native-born Israelite or an alien. [Numbers 15:24-29]

That covers the atonement for unintentional sin. However, if someone were to commit a sin intentionally, he would be punished: But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the Eternal, and that person must be cut off from his people. [Numbers 15:30]

God is a righteous judge. For intentional sins to be atoned for, there had to be repentance and restitution — and often punishment — because the sins were committed on purpose.

A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft... If a man grazes his livestock in a field or vineyard and lets them stray and they graze in another man's field, he must make restitution from the best of his own field or vineyard... If a fire breaks out and spreads into thorn bushes so that it burns shocks of grain or standing grain or the whole field, the one who started the fire must make restitution... But if the animal was stolen from the neighbor, he must make restitution to the owner... If a man borrows an animal from his neighbor and it is injured or dies while the owner is not present, he must make restitution. [Exodus 22:3, 5, 6, 12, and 14]

Say to the Israelites: 'When a man or woman wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the Eternal, that person is guilty and must confess the sin he has committed. He must make full restitution for his wrong, add one fifth to it and give it all to the person he has wronged.' [Numbers 5:6-7]

Wouldn't it be nice to live in a society where, if a criminal stole and stripped your

car, he would have to replace it, and then give you 20% in addition to what it was worth?

There were other methods used to gain atonement that were superior to the sacrificial system. This is what God truly desires from us: Teshuvah, which means repentance and return to God.

...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. [2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 7:14]

But if from there you seek the Eternal your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. [Deuteronomy 4:29]

He prays to God and finds favor with him, he sees God's face and shouts for joy; he is restored by God to his righteous state. [Job 33:26]

Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. [Psalm 34:14]

The Eternal is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. [Psalm 34:18]

Note that it is the humble, contrite and penitent soul that is saved. It is true repentance and prayer that God wants from us, NOT sacrifice.

Remember, the Psalms were written to sing praises to God in the Temple, right where the sacrifices themselves were to be offered. Their authors understood quite well God's attitude towards the sacrifices: Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. [Psalm 40:6]

And Samuel said, Hath the Eternal as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Eternal? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams [1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 15:22]

For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. [Psalm 51:16-17]

God wants us to pray for forgiveness. It is prayer that replaces the sacrifices, just as God commanded: Take words with you and return to the Eternal. Say to Him: 'Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the bulls of our lips.' [Hosea 14:2]

Many Christian redactors intentionally mistranslate this passage. The Hebrew is quite clear, פָּרִים שְׁפָתֵינוּ 'Fa-reem S'fa-tey-nu, the bulls of our lips.' Instead they mistranslate



the Hebrew as if it said, פְּרוֹת שְׁפָתֵינוּ 'Pey-rote S'fa-tey-nu, the fruit of our lips.' This means that they change the word of God! for the express purpose of misrepresenting what the Bible plainly says: that God accepts prayer in place of sacrifices — 'the bulls of our lips' is a metaphor for prayer-sacrifice, as opposed to blood-sacrifice. In other words, this expression means sacrifices that are spoken with our mouths, not killed and offered up on the altar like cattle.

Following the recounting of the incident of the spies in Numbers 13:1 through 13:20, God threatens to annihilate the people and build up Moses' line in their place. But Moses prays, reasoning with God and reminding God of His forgiving nature: Therefore, I pray, let my Eternal's forbearance be great, as You have declared, saying, 'The Eternal! slow to anger and abounding in kindness; forgiving iniquity and transgression...' Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to Your great kindness, as You have forgiven this people ever since Egypt. [Numbers 14:17-19]

This description of God's nature was declared by God directly to Moses earlier in the Book of Exodus: And the Eternal passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Eternal, The Eternal God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin... [Exodus 34:6-7]

Following the plea in Numbers 14:17-19, God answers favorably: And the Eternal said: 'I have pardoned as you have asked.' [Numbers 14:20]

Note that it is prayer — Moses' heartfelt and reasonable request — and not sacrifice that secures God's pardon. When Moses is gone, it is the people themselves that will pray to obtain divine forgiveness through their confession and repentance.

King David also knows the forgiving nature of God: For thou, Eternal, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Give ear, O Eternal, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me. [Psalm 86:5-7]

But thou, O Eternal, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. [Psalm 86:15]

The Eternal is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. [Psalm 103:8] He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Eternal is gracious and full of compassion. [Psalm 111:4]

Gracious is the Eternal, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. [Psalm 116:5]

God's essential nature does not change. Forgiveness is always available, and the way to obtain it is described again and again in Scripture: He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. [Proverbs 28:13]

Here again, we are taught that God forgives when the penitent one confesses and declares the intention to cease from sinning. No sacrifice is mentioned. King David, also, confesses his transgressions, and is forgiven. Again, there is no sacrificial offering: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. [Psalm 32:1]

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. [Psalm 32:3]

I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Eternal; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. [Psalm 32:5]

In beautiful parallel phrases, the prophet Isaiah expands upon the concept of Teshuvah as a means of obtaining divine forgiveness: Seek the Eternal while He may be found; Call upon the Eternal while He is near. Let the wicked abandon his ways, and the evil his designs. Let him return to the Eternal and He will have mercy upon him; let him return to our God, for He is ever ready to forgive. [Isaiah 55:6-7]

The process described by the prophet could not be simpler or clearer: Abandon wrongful behavior, return to God in repentance, and God will forgive and wipe the slate clean. Not only will God forgive, but God's nature is such that God is eager to forgive, and ready to meet us and lead us the rest of the way, if we will only take the first step. This can be compared to having offended a good friend, and then seeking him out to apologize. If he is truly a good friend, he was only waiting for you to make the effort.

Another superior method of obtaining forgiveness is Tzedakah, often translated inadequately as 'charity' but actually meaning 'righteousness / justice.' We share what we have with the less fortunate mainly because God wants us to do the right and just thing, not just because it makes us feel good.

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings. [Hosea 6:6] Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the Eternal a man avoids evil. [Proverbs 16:6] To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Eternal than sacrifice. [Proverbs 21:3]

The three methods above are neatly summarized in the Jewish liturgy for Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, where it is stated, 'Teshuva (return), Tefillah (prayer), and Tzedakah (righteousness) avert the harsh decree.'

The following quotations all come from 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8, in which King Solomon dedicates the only Temple in the world to the One True God. It was in this very Temple that the sacrifices were to take place. Yet at the dedication of the Temple, Solomon calls upon God to forgive the penitent, not with any sacrificial offerings, but only with prayer and petitions. Solomon understood well the nature of God, and knew that nothing more

than this was required.

...and when a prayer or plea is made by any of your people Israel — each one aware of the afflictions of his own heart, and spreading out his hands toward this temple — then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men)... [1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8:38-39]

The Gentiles too, were to pray directly to God for the forgiveness of their sins, without need of a sacrifice. Solomon continues: As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name — for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm — when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel and may know that this house I have built bears your Name. [1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8:41-43]

Notice, here, that God allowed the Gentiles to pray directly to Him, without the need of an external mediator or savior. God Himself, in God's unique, singular oneness, is the savior — and the ONLY savior — of humankind. God never excluded anyone from forgiveness. All God asks for is a contrite heart, and the willingness to follow God.

Keep in mind, still, that the whole of the sacrificial system was centered around the Temple; nonetheless, God will forgive based on prayers and repentance. Solomon goes on: When they sin against you — for there is no one who does not sin — and you become angry with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to his own land, far away or near; and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their conquerors and say, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly;' and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their fathers, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name; then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause. And forgive your people, who have sinned against you; forgive all the offenses they have committed against you, and cause their conquerors to show them mercy. [1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8:46-50]

So if you repent, God will save you. No mention is made of a requirement to believe in a certain way — rather, only the act of confessing and pleading for forgiveness is needed, and God will restore your righteousness, even though you sinned.

Again we find this idea in the Book of Job, this time in a poetic declaration of God's forgiving nature: He prays to God and finds favor with him, he sees God's face and shouts for joy; he is restored by God to his righteous state. [Job 33:26]

The Bible has repeatedly shown us that sacrifice is not necessary for atonement. God has made it abundantly clear to Israel what we are to do for atonement: With what shall I come before the Eternal and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Eternal be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Eternal require of you? Only to do Justice, and to love Mercy and to walk humbly with your God. [Micah 6:6-8]

\*Tanakh is Hebrew for Bible, referring to the 24 books of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is an acronym composed of Torah (the Five Books of Moses); Nevi'im, (the Prophets); and K'tuvim, (the other biblical writings).

### Jesus was not the messiah

Christians believe Jesus was the Messiah; Jews do not. Some think this is the only difference between Christianity and Judaism. What you should understand is that there is an entire theology that one must accept in order to believe as Christians do. Jews see this theology as diametrically opposite to what the Bible states.

IN SHORT... Most Christians identify the messiah with Jesus, define him as God incarnate, and believe he died for the sins of humanity as a blood sacrifice. This requires that one accept the concept of vicarious atonement. However, as was illustrated and explained in the essay "One person cannot die for the sins of another," this idea is the opposite from what is written in Deuteronomy 24:16, 'Every man shall be put to death for his own sin' — also expressed in Exodus 32:30-35 and Ezekiel 18. The mainstream Christian idea of the messiah also assumes that God wants and will accept a human sacrifice. After all, it was either Jesus-the-human or Jesus-the-God who died on the cross. Jews, and presumably, Christians as well, believe that God cannot die, and so all that Christians are left with, in the death of Jesus on the cross, is a human sacrifice. However, in Deuteronomy 12:30-31, God calls human sacrifice an abomination, and something He hates: 'for every abomination to the Eternal, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.' All human beings are sons or daughters, and any sacrifice to God of any human being would be something that God would hate. Therefore, the Christian conception of the messiah consists of ideas that are unbiblical.

A MORE COMPLETE EXPLANATION...You must understand that although both Jews and Christians use the word "messiah," the meaning of the word is quite different in each faith. The Christian understanding is that their messiah, Jesus, died for the sins of the people. The messiah, according to this Christian definition, is supposed to be a human offering: a blood sacrifice necessary for the forgiveness of sin. But we are taught in our Bible that no one can die for the sins of another. In Deuteronomy 24:16 it says this unequivocally: The

fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin. [Deuteronomy 24:16]

(Please see Essay #1, [‘Jews Believe That No One Can Die for the Sins of Another,’](#) and Essay #2, [‘Jews Believe That a Blood Sacrifice Is Not Required for Forgiveness of Sins’](#)).

The Bible is clear, in verse after verse: no one can die for the sins of another. Regarding what the Bible says about human sacrifice, please see Essay #4, [‘God hates human sacrifices.’](#)

Jews do not believe that after forbidding human sacrifice, God had a change of heart and decided to require it; and we certainly do not believe that it was the sacrifice of God’s own human ‘son’ that God wanted. After telling Israel to stay away from pagan practices and pagan beliefs, did God change God’s mind and say, ‘Okay, now go ahead and believe in a human sacrifice, just as these very pagans believe?’ No — as we saw in Malachi 3:6, God is constant and unchanging. (Please see Essay #1, [‘Jews Believe That No One Can Die for the Sins of Another’](#)).

God tells us that any human sacrifice is an abomination, something God hates, and so horrible that it would never even come into God’s mind to demand it of us. Human sacrifice was practiced by the pagans — those who worshipped and made offerings to one or more imaginary deities — it was NOT to be practiced by believers in the One God.

It should be understood that the Christian definition of the term ‘messiah’ is pagan. How do Christians define the term messiah? They understand it exactly as the pagans understood their dying-saving man-gods and heroes. The ancient world is filled with examples. Mithra, Adonis, Dionysis, Attis, Ra, and many others were born in the Winter, died in the Spring, and came back to life. This should sound familiar to anyone conversant with Christian theology.

Alongside this, they believed that their followers would have immortal life, since the death of the hero-god acted as the sacrifice for their sins. This should also sound familiar. The pagan world was filled with gods who were the product of a human mother and a god for the father. Heracles had Zeus for a father, and a human mother named Alcmene. Dionysus’s human mother was Semele, and his father was Zeus; Dionysus was considered a savior god. The parallels to Christian theology are plain to see.

When the earliest Christians would come into the synagogues and missionize, they would get kicked out; they were not allowed to stay and preach. They were rejected because their message was pagan and was recognized as such by the Jews. Thus, they were removed and separated from the Jewish people. This shows the real reason why Judaism and Christianity parted ways, dating from the very beginnings of Christianity. It also shows that one cannot be a Jew and a Christian at the same time. (Please see Essay #9 [‘Jews’ for Jesus,](#)

Messianic 'Jews', and 'Hebrew' Christians are not Jews').

So how have we Jews, who invented the term, always defined the term 'messiah?' Our definition is based on Scripture:

1. The Messiah is born of two human parents, as we said. But Jesus, according to Christian theology, was born of the union between a human woman and God (as were many other pagan deities, see above) rather than two human parents.
2. The Messiah can trace his lineage through his human biological father, back to King David (Isaiah 11:1,10; Jeremiah 23:5; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:21-28; Jeremiah 30:7-10; 33:14-16; Hosea 3:4-5). According to Christian theology, Jesus's father was God. Therefore, Jesus' lineage does not go through his human 'father' — Joseph, the husband of Mary.
3. The Messiah traces his lineage only through King Solomon (2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7:12-17; 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 22:9-10). But according to Luke 3:31, Jesus was not a descendant of Solomon, but of Solomon's half-brother Nathan. Therefore Jesus was not a descendant of King David through King Solomon, and fails this test as well.
4. The Messiah may not be a descendant of Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, or Shealtiel, because this royal line was cursed. (1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 3:15-17; Jeremiah 22:18,30). But according to Matthew 1:11-12 and Luke 3:27, Jesus was a descendant of Shealtiel.
5. The Messiah is preceded by Elijah the prophet who, together with the Messiah, unifies the family (Malachi 4:5-6). This is contradicted by Jesus himself (Matthew 10:34-37).

According to the traditional Jewish definition of the term, the Messiah will make changes in the real world, changes that one can see and perceive and be able to prove, precisely because they take place in the real world. It is for this task that the Messiah has been anointed in the first place, hence the term, messiah — one who is anointed. These perceptible changes include:

6. The Messiah reestablishes the Davidic dynasty through his own children (Daniel 7:13-14). But Jesus had no children.
7. The Messiah brings an eternal peace between all nations, all peoples, and all people (Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-4; Ezekiel 39:9). Obviously there is no peace. Furthermore, Jesus said that his purpose in coming was to bring a sword, and not peace (see Matthew 10:34, as referenced above).
8. The Messiah brings about the world-wide conversion of all peoples to Ethical Monotheism (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Zechariah 8:23; Isaiah 11:9; Zechariah 14:9,16). But the world remains steeped in idolatry.

9. The Messiah brings about an end to all forms of idolatry (Zechariah 13:2). But the world remains steeped in idolatry.
10. The Messiah brings about a universal recognition that the Jewish idea of God is God (Isaiah 11:9). But the world remains steeped in idolatry.
11. The Messiah leads the world to become vegetarian (Isaiah 11:6-9).
12. The Messiah gathers to Israel all of the twelve tribes (Ezekiel 36:24).
13. The Messiah rebuilds the Temple (Isaiah 2:2; Ezekiel 37:26-28).
14. After the Messiah comes, there will be no more famine (Ezekiel 36:29-30).
15. After the Messiah comes, death will eventually cease (Isaiah 25:8).
16. Eventually the dead will be resurrected (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Ezekiel 37:12-13; Isaiah 43:5-6).
17. The nations of the earth will help the Jews materially (Isaiah 60:5-6; 60:10-12).
18. The Jews will be sought out for spiritual guidance (Zechariah 8:23).
19. All weapons will be destroyed (Ezekiel 39:9,12).
20. The Nile will run dry (Isaiah 11:15).
21. Monthly, the trees of Israel will yield their fruit (Ezekiel 47:12).
22. Each tribe of Israel will receive and settle their inherited land (Ezekiel 47:13-13).
23. The nations of the earth will recognize that they have been in error, that the Jews had it right all along, and that the sins of the Gentile nations – their persecutions and the murders they committed – have been borne by the Jewish people (Isaiah 53).

These biblically-based changes in the world are very real, perceptible, noticeable, and knowable. The changes that Christianity claims were made by Jesus are not perceptible at all. They must be accepted on faith, and faith alone. How can one establish that Jesus died for one's sins, except by faith? The changes made by the Messiah according to Judaism would be provable, but the changes made by the messiah according to Christianity can only be taken on faith.

Even Christians recognize that the changes the real Messiah will make, according to the Bible and Judaism, have not yet happened. This is why Christianity had to invent the idea of a Second Coming.

The real Messiah has no need to come a second time to do those things — he must do them the first time around in order to actually be the Messiah.

#### God hates human sacrifices

IN SHORT... What, EXACTLY does God say about human sacrifice in the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible? In Deuteronomy 12:30-31, God calls human sacrifice something that He hates, and an abomination to Him, 'for every abomination to the Eternal, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.' In Jeremiah 19:4-6, God tells us that human sacrifice is so horrible a concept to Him, that it did not even come into His mind to demand it from His creation, 'They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind.' We see the same thing in Psalm 106:37-38, and in Ezekiel 16:20. This teaches that God would not accept Jesus' death on the cross as a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. The very idea of that God would accept a human sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins is unbiblical.

A MORE COMPLETE EXPLANATION...The Christian idea of the messiah is that Jesus was the blood sacrifice that saves everyone from his or her sin. But who, exactly, died on that cross? If it was Jesus-the-god, that would mean that God can die. But how can God die? If it was only Jesus-the-human, then all Christians are left with a human sacrifice. What, exactly, does God say about human sacrifice in the TaNaKH?

In Deuteronomy, God calls human sacrifice something that God hates; an abomination to God.

Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Eternal thy God: for every abomination to the Eternal, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. [Deuteronomy 12:30-31]

In Jeremiah, God tells us that Human sacrifice is so horrible a concept, that it did not even come into God's mind.

Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spoke it, neither came it into my mind: Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The Valley of



the Son of Hinnom, but The Valley of Slaughter. [Jeremiah 19:4-6]

Similarly, in Psalm 106 and in Ezekiel 16:

Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. [Psalm 106:37-38]

Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter? [Ezekiel 16:20]

Some Christians might claim that God seemed to want human sacrifices, because God appeared to demand one from Abraham, when He commanded the sacrifice of Isaac. This is a misreading of the biblical text in Genesis. When one reads this section carefully, one sees something quite different.

Most Jewish biblical commentators interpret this incident as a test of Abraham's loyalty: God wanted to see if he would actually kill Isaac, his own son. However, a number of Jewish commentators from the medieval era, and many in the modern era as well, read the text somewhat differently. The early rabbinic midrash 'Genesis Rabbah' imagines God as saying 'I never considered telling Abraham to slaughter Isaac.' Rabbi Yona Ibn Janach (Spain, 11<sup>th</sup> century) wrote that God demanded only a symbolic sacrifice. Rabbi Yosef Ibn Caspi (Spain, early 14<sup>th</sup> century) wrote that Abraham's imagination led him astray, making him believe that he had been commanded to sacrifice his son. Ibn Caspi writes 'How could God command such a revolting thing?'

Rabbi Joseph H. Hertz (Chief Rabbi of the British Empire), writes that child sacrifice was actually 'rife among the Semitic peoples,' and suggests that 'in that age, it was astounding that Abraham's God should have interposed to prevent the sacrifice, not that He should have asked for it.' Hertz interprets the Binding of Isaac as demonstrating that human sacrifice is abhorrent. 'Unlike the cruel heathen deities, it was the spiritual surrender alone that God required.'

Let's examine the text: And it came to pass after these things, that God did test Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. [Genesis 22:1-2]

The text reads that Abraham should 'offer him there for a burnt offering'. It does not read that God told Abraham to kill him for a burnt offering!

The original Hebrew is actually even clearer on this issue. The Hebrew reads, וְהֵעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה 'v'ha-ah-lei-hu sham l'o-lah.' It translates as, 'Raise him up there FOR a sacrifice.'

The text does not say that God demanded Isaac to BE a sacrifice, that he be killed, but rather only that he should be raised up for one.

Furthermore, a close reading of the text tells us that this was a test, and that Abraham did not pass it. What is the test to which Abraham is being put? God wants Abraham to tell God, 'NO! I WON'T DO IT!' Abraham had just defended people he did not know in Sodom and Gemorrah. God's test of Abraham is whether or not he would defend his own family as vigorously as he had defended strangers. Like many of us, he did not. He flunked. Many of us, for example, will talk sweetly to a voice on the phone, get off the phone, and then speak disrespectfully to our kids or our spouse, treating others, even strangers, better than we treat those we love.

When the test is first put before Abraham, the day before he actually takes the knife, preparing to kill his own son, God speaks to him directly: And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. [Genesis 22:1-2]

Please not that it is God speaking directly to Abraham, and not an Angel of God. However, after he takes hold of the knife, it is only an Angel of God who speaks to Abraham: And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the Angel of the Eternal called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. [Genesis 22:10-11]

And then later it is still only an Angel of God who speaks to Abraham: And the Angel of the Eternal called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time... [Genesis 22:15]

As a matter of fact, God never spoke directly to Abraham again. From the very moment that Abraham demonstrated his willingness to actually kill his son, God never again spoke directly to Abraham.

Note also that the promises of the Angel of God to Abraham are nothing new, they are only reiterating what God, directly, had already promised to him (cf. Genesis 12:2, 12:3, 12:7, 13:15, 13:16, 13:17, 15:1, 15:5, 15:7, 15:14, 15:18, 17:2, 17:4, 17:6, 17:8, 17:16). It is as if God was saying to the Angel, 'I am through with him. Pat him on the head because he thinks he did right, remind him of his reward for his previous faith, but I am done with him!'

You see, God had already told Abraham His covenant would go through Isaac. God wanted Abraham to say, 'Wait a minute, You, God, are now going against Your own word!' God knows that we are always closer to those we will argue with, than with those we will not.

When a person does wrong, who are you more likely to admonish: someone you know, or someone you do not know?

God wants us to be that close to God. God wants us to be like Abraham, who was willing to argue with God regarding strangers in Sodom and Gemorrah. God wants us to be as close to God as Moses was, indicated by the fact that Moses argued with God — repeatedly — on behalf of the People of Israel. God wants us to be like Job, who felt so close to God that he could argue with God for justice. We can argue with God like true close friends can argue with each other, because God is truly our Closest Friend. Abraham flunked God's test, and so God never spoke to Abraham directly again. Note also the true meaning of the word, 'Israel,' which is 'One who wrestles with God.' We are not to be blind followers (the word 'Christian' means 'follower of the Christ'), and we are not to merely submit to God ('Islam' means 'voluntary submission to God.' A Muslim is one who submits to God).

We Jews are to be wrestlers with God, like True Friends can do with each other. THAT is how close God wants us to be with Him.

#### People are born pure and without original sin

Jews believe that one is born into the world with original purity, not with original sin. We know human beings can choose to do evil, but Judaism does not dwell on that fact. Rather, we rejoice, as we believe God rejoices, when human beings choose to do good.

IN SHORT... Jews do not believe in the existence of Original Sin. The concept of Original Sin states simply that because Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they brought Death into the world. In this view, every human being dies because the origin of the human race was tainted with sin: Adam and Eve committed a sin, all humans bear guilt of that sin, and are therefore punished with death. However, the Bible describes something entirely different. Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden because if they remained, they could eat the fruit of the Tree of Life, which would make them immortal. If Adam and Eve had to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life to become immortal, then they were created mortal. They did not bring Death into the world, and we do not die because they sinned. The first essay on this website explains how, in the view of the Bible, one person cannot die as a punishment for the sins committed by another. We die because Death is a natural part of existence, and has been from the moment the first human beings were created. This explains why, before Adam and Eve ate the fruit from The Tree of The Knowledge of Good And Evil, God told the animals to be fruitful and to multiply, since they needed to replace themselves. God also said the same thing to Adam and Eve before they ate that fruit as well.

A MORE COMPLETE EXPLANATION...The Christian concept of Original Sin is that since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, all human beings are born not only with a tendency to sin, but they are also born with the guilt of Adam and Eve, and for this guilt, all

human beings die (see 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:21-22 where it states, 'For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive'). In other words, Adam and Eve brought death into the world as a result of their sin, and because of this sin, all human beings die.

This is simply unbiblical. The text does not tell us that Adam and Eve were removed from the Garden of Eden because they sinned. (Please note that the first time the Bible uses the term, 'sin,' it is NOT in reference to Adam and Eve, it is in reference to the jealousy of Cain against Abel in Genesis 4:7.) Rather, Adam and Eve were removed from the Garden of Eden because there was another tree in the Garden from which God did not want them to eat. That tree was the Tree of Life.

But think about this logically. If Adam and Eve had to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life to become immortal, then God made them mortal to begin with. Adam and Eve were created in such a way that Death was a natural part of their existence, from the moment of their Creation.

The text of Genesis 3:22-24 tells us that Adam and Eve were almost like God and the Angels because they knew the difference between Good and Evil. Both God and the Angels know the difference between Good and Evil, but both God and the Angels are immortal as well. Because Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit of The Tree of the Knowledge of Good And Evil, they instantly knew the difference between Good and Evil. However, Adam and Eve were not yet immortal because they had not yet eaten from the Tree of Life. Therefore God separated Adam and Eve from the Tree of Life by casting them out of the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve did not bring Death into the world.

And the Eternal God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree Of Life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Eternal God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life. [Genesis 3:22-24]

The verses above make it abundantly clear. Why were Adam and Eve driven out of the Garden of Eden? 'Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree Of Life, and eat and live for ever, THEREFORE THE ETERNAL SENT HIM FORTH...' God evicted Adam and Eve so that they could not become immortal by eating from the Tree of Life. Just as Adam and Eve (and their descendants) became responsible for their choices between Good and Evil because they ate that first time from that tree, so would they and their descendants become immortal the first time Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Life as well. Additionally, to ensure that Adam and Eve and their descendants would remain separated from the Tree of Life, God placed the Cherubim and the flaming sword 'to keep the way of the Tree Of Life.'

We human beings do not die because of their sin, we die because God made Death a part of life from the moment of Creation. There may be such a thing as The Original Mistake, but there is no such thing as Original Sin.

### God is one and indivisible

IN SHORT... Jews do not believe in a trinity. The Jewish idea of God is that God is One and Indivisible. God cannot be divided up into separate parts, where each part is unequal to each of the other parts, yet somehow they are all one and the same. The Hebrew Scriptures describe God as an absolute One, but the Christian Scriptures describe God as divisible into three parts called a trinity. In the Christians' scriptures, Jesus at one point claims to have different knowledge than other parts of the Christian trinity. For example, Matthew 24:36, or Mark 13:32. In another verse, Jesus does not have the same power as other parts of the Christian trinity, for example, Luke 23:34. And in Matthew 26:42, Jesus' will is not the same as the will of the Father. Indeed, Jesus often contrasted himself with the Father, for example, in John 14:28, or Luke 18:19. Furthermore, Jesus supposedly said that the punishment for blaspheming against one part of the trinity is not the same punishment for blaspheming against another part of the trinity. In the Hebrew Scriptures, however, God is One, as we read in Deuteronomy 6:4, as well as in Isaiah 44:6, where God tells us, 'I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.' When Isaiah tells us that God said, 'I am the first,' it means that God has no father. When Isaiah tells us that God said, 'I am the last,' it means that God has no literal son, a divine piece of God. And when Isaiah tells us that God said, 'Besides me there is no God,' it means that God does not share being God with any other God, or demi-God, or semi-God, or persons, and there is no trinity.

A MORE COMPLETE EXPLANATION...Just because there are various manifestations of God in the Bible, this does not mean that each manifestation is to be regarded as separate and unequal to God, yet somehow at the same time one and the same as God. It also does not mean that each manifestation of God is to be treated differently. The Hebrew Scriptures tells us that God is One.

Hear, O Israel: The Eternal is our God, the Eternal is one. [Deuteronomy 6:4]

But how do we know that the term 'one' at the end of the above verse, does not refer to some sort of compound unity, that God is made up of different parts that total up to one? The reason is that the word 'one' is an adjective. Here it is describing a proper noun, which is the word 'The Eternal.' (In Hebrew, this is a one-word designation.) Most people forget that the word that is here translated as 'The Eternal' is actually a Name, the holiest name for God, told to us in Exodus 3:14-15. The English word, 'God,' is a job description; the four-letter Name of God יהוה, on the other hand, is God's personal Name. When the word, 'one' modifies a personal name, it must mean that this entity is only One, not a compound One, but rather an absolute One.

As an example, let us consider a man named William Jones. He may be 'Dad' to his

kids, but 'Honey' to his wife, 'Billy' to his parents, and 'Mr. Jones' or 'Boss' to his employees. However, in all instances William Jones has the same knowledge, the same power, and the same will. In the Christians' New Testament, Jesus at one point claims to have different knowledge than other parts of the Christian trinity. For example, Matthew 24:36, or Mark 13:32.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. [Matthew 24:36]

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. [Mark 13:32]

In another verse, Jesus does not have the same power as other parts of the Christian trinity, for example, Luke 23:34, where he must ask the part which is called the Father to forgive, instead of doing it himself: Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. [Luke 23:34]

And in Matthew 26:42 or Mark 14:36, Jesus' will is not the same as the will of the Father.

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. [Matthew 26:42]

And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. [Mark 14:36]

Indeed, Jesus often contrasted himself with the Father or with God, for example, in John 14:28, or Luke 18:18-19:

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. [John 14:28]

And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. [Luke 18:18-19]

Furthermore, Jesus is quoted as saying that the punishment for blaspheming against one part of the trinity is not the same punishment for blaspheming against another part of the trinity.

And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. [Matthew 12:32]

The parts of the trinity cannot be one and the same. They are separate, they have different strengths, different powers, different wills, different knowledge from each other, therefore the concept of the trinity is not monotheistic.

Some Christians, including Messianic 'Jews,' try to interpret Deuteronomy 6:4, the biblical verse which states God's essential unity, to allow for the concept of the trinity. From the website of the Messianic 'Jewish' Alliance of America (MJAA): 'We believe that the Shema, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one' (Deuteronomy 6:4), teaches that God is Echad [one], as so declared: a united one, a composite unity, eternally existent in plural oneness...and that He exists forever in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as mentioned in Romans 8:14-17 (Father, Spirit, and Messiah – Son) and Matthew 28:18-20 (immersing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).'

Not only are these concepts of a 'composite unity' and 'plural oneness' contradictory and untenable, as well as unbiblical, as we have seen, but there are more than just three manifestations of God in the Hebrew Scriptures. There is of course, the Spirit of God, as we read in Genesis 1:2: And The Spirit Of God רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים (Ruach Elohim) moved over the face of the waters. [Genesis 1:2]

But there is also an Evil Spirit of God, as we read in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16:23: And it came to pass, when The Evil Spirit Of God רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים רָעָה (Ruach Elohim Ra'ah) was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him. [1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16:23]

There is also a Lying Spirit of God, in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:23: Now therefore, behold, the Eternal hath put a lying spirit שֶׁקֶר (Ruach Sheker) in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Eternal hath spoken evil concerning thee. [1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:23]

In Exodus 12:23, we are told that God will smite the Egyptians. But later in the same verse, we see that it is the Destroyer who smites the Egyptians.

For the Eternal will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Eternal will pass over the door, and will not suffer the Destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. [Exodus 12:23]

One could claim that the Destroyer should be seen as a Person in God, just as the Spirit of God is seen as a Person in God. To this we could add that the Lying Spirit of God should be seen as a Person in God, and the Evil Spirit of God should be seen as a Person in God. This would mean that instead of the trinity in the Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit, one should have the Father, the son, the Holy Spirit, the Lying Spirit, and the Evil Spirit, as well as the Destroyer. Should we add to this the Burning Bush?

Why did the Christian community stop at the three of the trinity, when they could have also had more persons in the supposed compound unity of God? The reason is that the highest deities in the other religions of the area also came in threes:

Babylon had: [1] Anu [2] Bel and [3] Ena;

Egypt had: [1] Osiris [2] Horus and [3] Isis  
 India had: [1] Brahma [2] Vishnu and [3] Shiva;  
 Rome had: [1] Jupiter [2] Pluto and [3] Neptune;  
 Greece had: [1] Zeus [2] Hades and [3] Poseidon;

And so the Christian community took their own trinity of only the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit, disregarding the Lying Spirit, the Evil Spirit, and the Destroyer, not to mention the Burning Bush.

Jews are taught that God is One, God is Indivisible, and this is found throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, as we read in Isaiah 44:6: I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. [Isaiah 44:6]

When Isaiah tells us that God said, 'I am the first,' it means that God has no father. If God had a father, Isaiah would have quoted God's word as, 'I am the second.' When Isaiah tells us that God said, 'I am the last,' it means that God has no literal son. If God had a son, Isaiah would have told us that God said, 'I am the second-to-last.' And when Isaiah tells us that God said, 'Besides me there is no God,' it means that God does not share being God with any other God, or demi-God, or semi-God, or persons. If God shared or would later share God's God-ness with Jesus, Isaiah would have told us that God's words were, 'Besides me and the son that will come after me, there is no God.'

This is why God told us in the Ten Commandments, in Exodus 20:3, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.' Even if you think they are gods, you cannot have them before God. You do not pray to them in order to get to God, and you do not pray in their names. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. [Psalm 16:4]

Christians may tell us, 'Behold Your God,' but the last time we heard something similar was in Exodus 32:4, when the ex-slaves pointed to the Golden Calf and said, אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ 'Eileh elohecha — these are your gods.'

#### There is "The Satan", but not "The Devil"

IN SHORT... For Jews, anything that even remotely conflicts with the idea that God is One and Indivisible will be rejected out of hand because it precludes true pure monotheism. The idea that there is a God in heaven above who fights against a god of the underworld, or of hell, is not monotheism. It is, however, the same duality found in other pagan faiths. The Bible speaks of a character known as The Satan, who acts like a prosecuting attorney, or a district attorney, in God's court. However, The Satan has no power or authority in and of himself, rather he must get permission from the Judge, God, to do anything.

A MORE COMPLETE EXPLANATION...For Jews, anything that even remotely conflicts with the idea that God is One and Indivisible will be rejected out of hand because it



precludes true pure monotheism. The idea that there is a God in heaven above who fights against a god of the underworld, or of hell, or a Good God who is in eternal opposition to an Evil God, is not monotheism. Other faiths had this same duality:

Greek: Zeus/Hades

Roman: Jupiter/Pluto

Norse: Odin/Loki

Mesopotamia: Marduk/Tiamat

Zoroastrian: Ahura Mazda/Angra Mainyu

Christian: God/Devil

This duality is expressed in the Christians' New Testament in two places. In Luke it states, "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." [Luke 10:18]

And this is also found in Revelation: And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. [Revelation 12:9]

God in heaven, according to Christian theology, cast out the devil, where he became the master and tempter of human beings, fighting against God over human souls. Christians will refer to a passage which they misunderstand, claiming it shows this idea to be in the Jewish Scriptures, too. In Isaiah it states: That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The Eternal hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. [Isaiah 14:4-14]

Please note that the biblical text itself states that this is all about the King of Babylon, who had raised himself up to be like God — another example of the pagan confusion between God and man. (Please see Essay #8, '[God does not become Human, and Humans do not become God.](#)') The text also compares the King of Babylon to Lucifer, who fell from the sky. 'Lucifer' is Latin for 'light-bearer,' and is the name given to Venus, the Morning Star. This term, 'light-bearer,' is used exactly in this way in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:19, without

any association of it to the devil. The biblical text above from Isaiah is saying that the King of Babylon had achieved greatness as a ruler, but just like a falling star, he was brought low by God for his arrogance.

Now, of course, the Hebrew Scriptures tell of a character called The Satan. Every time the term is used in the Hebrew Scriptures, it reads, השטן HaSaTaN, which means THE Satan. When the definite article, 'the,' is in front of a word it indicates a title, like 'the rabbi,' or 'the reverend.' So, in the Bible, the term 'HaSatan,' which means, 'The Satan,' is a title. The one with that title has a specific job, the same way it is used in speaking of 'the rabbi,' or of 'the reverend.'

The concept of The Satan, or the job description, is radically different from that of the devil. For Christians, who erroneously use the two terms as if they are synonymous, the devil has power and authority in and of himself. However, in the Bible, The Satan only has power granted by God, and has no authority in and of himself. For the devil to have power and authority is to have more than one God, as we saw above concerning the Greeks and the Romans.

The Satan is described in only a few places in the Hebrew Scriptures. In every instance, he is an angel who works FOR God, not against God, and must get permission from God for everything that he does. Chronicles, Job, Psalms, and Zechariah are the only places where The Satan is mentioned. In each instance, the job description of The Satan is to act like what we now call a Prosecuting Attorney, or District Attorney, and accuse and show evidence against the defendant. Furthermore, like a D.A., The Satan must obtain permission from God, the Judge, to begin a sting operation.

In the following quotation from the Book of Job, please take note of who is doing the talking, as The Satan asks God for permission to conduct a 'sting operation' against Job: And the Eternal said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the Eternal, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Eternal said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. [Job 2:3-6]

In the above verses, The Satan must get permission from God to perform this sting operation on Job. The Satan has no power or authority of his own, just like a District Attorney who must also obtain permission from The Judge for anything he does.

Furthermore, the biblical text paints this same picture of The Satan, when it uses the character of The Satan in what appears to be the end of a court scene. In the following two quotations, The Satan is standing near the accused like the D.A. stands at the end of a court

drama on television. In the verses from Zechariah, God is siding with the defense against The Satan, on behalf of Joshua the high priest. Joshua had been sent into exile where he paid for his sins, and now purified like a brand plucked out of a fire, God allowed him to return to Jerusalem against the wishes of The Satan:

And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Eternal, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the Eternal said unto Satan, 'The Eternal rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Eternal that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' [Zechariah 3:1-2]

Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin. [Psalm 109:6-7]

As we see from Psalm 109 above, the Satan again is like the District Attorney who prosecutes the wicked man.

In the Bible there is also a verse which show that it is God, the Creator and Ruler of the whole universe, who is responsible for both the Good and the Bad, and not a devil or God of the underworld: I am the Eternal, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Eternal, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Eternal do all these things. [Isaiah 45:5-7] For God, the Bible, and for Judaism, to have an entity that competes with God, that has power and authority of his own in opposition to God, is to violate the basic biblical idea of monotheism. God is One.

#### God does not become human and humans do not become God

IN SHORT... It is the hallmark of idolatrous faiths to confuse God with human beings: either that God becomes human, or that humans become God. In biblical history, one sees this confusion with Pharaoh, and with Haman (boo, hiss!), as well as with Antiochus, the Syrian King against whom the Maccabees rebelled. Contrary to pagan thought, throughout the Bible we are taught not to confuse God and Man. For example, in Hosea 11:9, God explicitly tells us, '...for I am God and not a man.' All of the great Jewish figures of the Hebrew Bible — the Patriarchs and Matriarchs, Moses, King David and others — are shown as fully human, not divine.

A MORE COMPLETE EXPLANATION...Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, there is a sharp contrast made between God on one hand, and human beings on the other. First of all, there is always a reprimand against any human being who claims to be God, or Divine, as we read in Ezekiel 28:2: Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Eternal God; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God. [Ezekiel 28:2]

Then there is the verse from Hosea in which God specifically tells us that God is not a human being: I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God and not a man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city. [Hosea 11:9]

In Numbers 23:19, God specifically tells us that if God were a human being, then He would be a liar, as all human beings do lie on occasion. Furthermore, this verse tells us that if God were a human being, He would be in need of repentance because all human beings sin at some point in their lives. Finally, this verse also tells us that if God were a human being, then He would make promises, but not keep them: God is not a man that he should lie; neither the Son of Man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? [Numbers 23:19]

God is the same, God does not lie, and God is God and Human Beings are Human Beings, and God does not become a Human Being, and Human Beings do not become God.

There are three Jewish Holy Days that express this idea, most dramatically in the well-known Jewish holiday of Passover. Let's examine it first.

Passover is the celebration of the Exodus of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. God brought the Jews out of slavery by performing miracles, which were in the form of plagues. These plagues were not against the Egyptians, as most people think. They were actually against the gods of the Egyptians, as we are explicitly told in Exodus:

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Eternal. [Exodus 12:12]

The Egyptians worshipped the Nile — but Moses, on behalf of God, struck the Nile and it bled. The Egyptians worshipped the sun-god, Ra — but one of the plagues of God was darkness for three days. The plagues of the locusts and the hail which destroyed the crops were against the Egyptian gods of the harvest. The tenth and final plague was against the first-born sons, who had or would become the priests of these Egyptian gods. Remember that Pharaoh was held to be a god by the Egyptians. That is why the text in Exodus 11:5 tells us that the plague of the death of the firstborn went all the way to the throne of Pharaoh.

And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. [Exodus 11:5]

The holiday of Passover has a way of saying, 'Sorry, Pharaoh, you are not God!'

The next holiday we will look at is Chanukah. Antiochus of Syria wanted to unify his empire by making all of the inhabitants of his empire into Hellenists, followers of Zeus. But the Jews refused to assimilate, of course, because they believed in only One God. Antiochus saw this as insurrection, and began persecuting the Jews. He called himself Antiochus Epiphanes, which means, ‘Antiochus who is God manifested.’ Through commemorating the Maccabee rebellion, the holiday of Chanukah is a way of saying, ‘Sorry, Antiochus, you are not God!’

Finally, let us look at Purim, the holiday that celebrates the events of the Book of Esther. In this story, there is a character named Haman (boo! hiss!). He hated the Jews because the Jewish hero, Mordechai, would not bow down to him. The holiday of Purim has a way of saying, ‘Sorry, Haman (boo! hiss!), you are not God!’

Each of these three holidays has, as part of its theme, the idea that God is God, humans are humans, and God does not become a human, and humans do not become God.

Perhaps this idea of confusing God and man also explains Christian belief in the Virgin Birth — the joining of God and the human woman Mary, who supposedly became pregnant without the sex act in some mysterious way not related to reality as we know it. Numerous gods and heroes in the ancient world were the product of a human mother and a god for a father. As we have noted [elsewhere](#) in this website, Heracles’ mother was the human woman Alcmena and his father was Zeus. Dionysus’ human mother was Semele and his father was Zeus. Perseus’ human mother was Danae and his father was Zeus. As a matter of fact, Zeus made Danae pregnant without the sex act, and therefore her pregnancy was a form of immaculate conception, and her son’s birth was like a virgin birth, in that it was not the result of the sexual act.

This confusion, the mixing of man with gods, was common in the ancient pagan world. But in the Hebrew Bible, all of the Jewish greats — the three Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah; Joseph, Moses, King David, etc. — are never portrayed as being divine or free of sin; they are shown as fully human, with all the passions and flaws of human beings. They are all born in the natural, non-miracle way, and all die, returning to the dust, just as all humans do.

Basic to the faith of the Bible and of the Jewish People is the distinction between God and man, a distinction which is contradicted in mainstream Christianity by the belief that Jesus was the literal son of God, or even God Himself.

“Jews for Jesus,” “Messianic Jews,” and “Hebrew Christians” are not Jews.

IN SHORT... Many people — some but not all Christians, and some Jews as well — erroneously believe that just as one can be Black and Christian, just as one can be Oriental and Christian, one can also be Jewish and Christian. This is not true. The Jews are not a race. There is no genetic code passed from either mother or father to the child that makes

that child a Jew. Genetics might indicate that one's ancestors were Jews, but that does not, in fact, make one a Jew. Even if all, or some, of the genetic code in a child proved to be of Jewish origin, that would not make the child a Jew. Jewish law determines who is a Jew, and Jewish law is quite clear. If a person's mother is a Jew, and that person has not converted to another faith and wishes to identify solely as a Jew, then that person is considered fully Jewish. In addition, a convert to Judaism is fully Jewish. Although one cannot convert to become a member of a race (for example one cannot convert to become an Asian or an African-American), one can convert to become a Jew. If someone who is Asian or African-American converts to Judaism, that person obviously remains an Asian or an African-American, and at the same time is a Jew. However, if one converts from Judaism to another faith, one is no longer a Jew.

A MORE COMPLETE EXPLANATION...When the non-Jewish world makes the claim that one who was Jewish but converts to Christianity can retain the 'Jewish Culture and Ethnicity,' one must ask, 'Which Jewish Culture? Which Jewish Ethnicity?' The culture and ethnicity of a Jew from Morocco has little in common with the culture and ethnicity of a Jew from Eastern Europe. Yet both are Jews because their faith, their Jewish theology, their Jewish belief system, their Judaism, is Jewish.

Just as many people convert to Judaism, and thus become Jews, those Jews who convert to another faith are no longer Jews. Remember, the Jews determine who is a Jew — not ex-Jews who have become Christians, and not Christians themselves, not even Christians who are Jewish-wannabees. The Jews determine for themselves who is a Jew.

The Biblical basis for this is 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 18:21. Elijah the prophet asked Jews who were beginning to slip into the worship of the idol, Baal.

How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the God of the Jews is God, follow Him! but if Baal is god, then follow him! [1<sup>st</sup> Kings 18:21]

Elijah told the Jews, one or the other, not both! You cannot believe in two opposite, mutually exclusive ideas simultaneously. Judaism and Christianity believe in opposite, mutually exclusive ideas, and you cannot be a Jew and a believer that Jesus was the Christ at the same time. (Please see Essay #3, '[Jews Believe that Jesus was not the Messiah](#)')

A rabbi in the later Middle Ages named the Hai Gaon, as quoted by Aderet in Responsa, VII #292, stated that a Jew who converted out of the faith was no longer a Jew. This view was shared by numerous rabbis, which can be seen in the Responsa literature of Simon ben Zemah of Duran, Samuel de Medina, Judah Berab, Jacob Berab, Moses ben Elias Kapsali and others in the Middle Ages.

It can also be seen more recently in the Responsa of the Satmar Rov in his Divrei Torah, Yoreh Deah #59, paragraph 5, as well as in the Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Even Haezer Volume 4 Number 53.

The very famous rabbi, Moses ben Maimon, called Maimonides (the Rambam), also wrote that if a Jew converted to Christianity, he or she was no longer a Jew. See Maimonides, Hilchot Mamrim Perek 3, Halacha 1-3, as well as in Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, Avodat Kochavim 2:5.

Rabbi Moses Isserles demanded a formal conversion back to Judaism for those who had converted out, but then wanted to return. He demanded ritual immersion (mikveh) and repentance before a court of three (Beit Din). You will see this also in other Responsa literature: Radbaz, Responsa III, 415; Moses Isserles to Yoreh Deah 268.12; and Hoffman, Melamed Leho-il II, 84.

After the experience of the Anusim (sometimes called Marranos, a derogatory term), who were Jews forced by the Church to convert to Catholicism, the Rabbis stated that one who converted involuntarily out of Judaism did not have to reconvert in the opposite direction, and could be welcomed back into the community as a Jew. Many Anusim even risked their lives by continuing to practice Judaism in secret. It was assumed that because the decision to convert was forced upon them, these Jews in their hearts never really left the Jewish religion. This concerns only those who wish to return to Judaism and turn their backs on Christianity. It says nothing about those who accept the theology of Christianity as their own – these people remain Christian unless they have a change of heart and return to Judaism, abandoning their Christian beliefs and practices. It is necessary to pick one or the other; it's either Christianity or it's Judaism, but it cannot be both.

In the modern world, no one is given the three choices: leave the country, be put to death, or convert to Christianity, which were frequently the only options available to the Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages. Nonetheless, most rabbis today allow modern Christian converts, previously Jewish, back into the fold without requiring a formal ceremony of return. This is a modern extension of the leniency which had as its purpose easing the reintegration of the Anusim into Jewish society.

Modern Israel has a law called the Law of Return. This means that because Israel is the Jewish homeland, one who is Jewish can come to Israel, and immediately become an Israeli citizen, as one coming home.

Daniel Rufeisen was born Jewish, of two Jewish parents. Because of the Nazi persecutions, his parents hid him with a couple who were Catholic. The couple raised him as a Catholic, and he became a Catholic priest. Brother Daniel, aware of his parents' heritage, came to Israel and applied to become a citizen of Israel under the Law of Return. The Israeli Supreme Court denied his application, stating that since he converted, he was no longer a Jew. He had to wait the customary time for any other non-Jew to become a naturalized Israeli citizen, just as in the U.S., one has to wait six years in order to become a naturalized U.S. citizen.

It is important to note that the family who hid Daniel Rufeisen did not follow the wishes of Daniel's parents. They had wanted to save their child as a Jew, but as a Jew he was lost. More recently, Israel made the same decision concerning a so-called Messianic 'Jewish' couple. The Beresfords from South Africa tried to become citizens of Israel under the Law of Return. They were denied on the same basis as Father Daniel. Remember that all of the parents involved — the parents of Daniel Rufeisen, and the parents of both of the Beresfords — were Jews.

Furthermore, this is the attitude of many Orthodox rabbis today. In his book 'The Real Messiah,' Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, writing for the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America and the Orthodox youth group 'National Conference of Synagogue Youth,' wrote (on page 21): This brings us back to our original question: What can a Jew lose by embracing Christianity? The answer is: Everything.

Christianity negates the fundamentals of Jewish faith, and one who accepts it rejects the very essence of Judaism. Even if he continues to keep all of the rituals, it is the same as if he abandoned Judaism completely.

A Jew who accepts Christianity might want to call himself a 'Jewish Christian,' but he is no longer a Jew. He can no longer even be counted as part of a Jewish congregation. The only connection he can claim to Judaism is that of having been born a Jew, but by accepting Jesus as his messiah, he has forfeited his birthright.

You can most certainly have a Hebrew-speaking Christian, just as you can have an Israeli Christian or a Christian Israeli. But 'Hebrew Christian,' or 'Jewish Christian,' or 'Messianic Jew,' or 'Christian Jew,' or 'Jew for Jesus,' etc. is an oxymoron — a contradiction in terms: once you're out, you're out, even if it only seems to be partially. This is a fundamental tenet of all the movements of Judaism. However, as was stated above, few rabbis today ask the ex-Jew who wishes to rejoin the Jewish people to go through a formal ceremony of conversion. This might be a 'stumbling block before the blind,' (cf. Leviticus 19:14) placed in the way of those who wish to come back. As long as one remains a Christian, one is no longer a Jew. But if one wishes to return, the road is made easy as an act of compassion. However, a return must be made, because the person left both Judaism and the Jewish people by converting to another faith.

Conversely, as long as one believes that Jesus was anything more than a human being who lived and died around 2000 years ago, that person cannot convert TO Judaism, and become a Jew. In order to convert, one has to pass examination by a court of three, a 'Beit Din,' and no Beit Din will approve a conversion candidate who is unable to give up belief in Jesus as the messiah. There are some Christians who believe that, since their brand of Christianity does not believe that Jesus was God or a part of a trinity, their theology is acceptable to Jews and to Judaism. This is not the case. The reason is that these people still



hold to the Christian definition of the term, 'messiah,' that Jesus died for the sins of humanity, which is unbiblical. (Please see Essay #1, ['One person cannot die for the sins of another.'](#))

The two faiths of Judaism and Christianity are simply mutually exclusive and incompatible. Messianic 'Jews' are not Jews. Were you to compare the theology of the Messianic 'Jews' (as well as the theology of the organization that calls itself the 'Jews' for Jesus) with the theology of the Southern Baptist Convention, you would see no difference. Compare the statements of faith of the Messianic 'Jewish' Alliance of America (whose original name was the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America) with the statement of faith from the Southern Baptist Convention. Both the MJAA and the SBC have web sites; you can see this for yourself.

Christian missionaries claim that this deceptive technique, teaching that one can be a Jew and a Christian at the same time, originates with Paul, in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:20, where he says that it is okay to pretend to be anything, so long as it gets converts to Christianity: And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. [1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:20-22]

One can also see this in Phillipians 1:18, where Paul distinguishes between pretense and truth, but states that both are acceptable practices if it helps Christians obtain converts: What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. [Philippians 1:18]

Furthermore, it is expanded in the idea of Indigenous Cultural Evangelism. This is the name given to the missionary technique 'as long as you make the targets think that they can be both a Christian and whatever they were before their conversion, then missionizing will be easier.' See 'Understanding Church Growth' by Donald A. McGavran, the chapter on The Sociological Foundation.

Messianic 'Jews' are merely dressing up their Christian theology in Jewish clothing. This leads to other questions:

Q: Are the majority of Jews who are secular, many not believing in God at all, really Jews?

A: Yes, just as a U.S. citizen is still a citizen even if that person never votes, never celebrates July Fourth, never has turkey on Thanksgiving. But if they become a citizen of another country, especially another country who is hostile to America, they lose their U.S. citizenship. Similarly, if one converts out of Judaism one is no longer a Jew. A Jew is a member of a nation that has been defined by the religion of Judaism. Let me explain:

First, understand that I am not talking about a nation meaning a country (like the State of Israel), which is defined by borders and passports. Rather, I am talking about a nation in the same sense we understand it in relationship to the Native American Indians. We used to use the term 'tribe,' but the term 'nation' is more accurate. For the Jews, the analogy to a nation is a perfect one, because that, indeed, is what God told Abra(ha)m God would make Abra(ha)m into, in Genesis 12:2, And I will make of you a great nation... [Genesis 12:2]

Note that the verse above does not call us an ethnic group, or a culture. It calls us a nation. We are a nation: a nation defined by our religion, because it was God and our religion that defined us in this way in our Bible.

For a person to become a citizen of a nation the process is called Naturalization. To become a citizen of the Jewish nation, the naturalization process is called Conversion to Judaism. On the other hand, just because a 'citizen' of this Jewish nation is totally non-practicing (of the Jewish religion) does not mean that he or she is no longer a citizen (no longer a Jew) — unless that person converts to a religion other than Judaism. This can be explained by taking a look at four analogies:

Andy is born in the U.S. of two U.S. citizens, but Andy moves to Australia. There he remains involved in every U.S. election, he knows every issue for his home city, his home county, his home state, and even on the federal level. He writes his congressional leaders, he has turkey on the fourth Thursday in November, and celebrates July Fourth with fireworks. Even though he lives in Australia, does Andy remain a U.S. citizen? Yes, he remains a U.S. citizen because he has done nothing to give up his citizenship.

Similarly, there are those Jews who actively pursue being Jewish: Jews who affiliate, celebrate the holidays and holy days, life cycle events, etc. Many of them live permanently outside of Israel.

Bert is born in the U.S. of two U.S. citizens, but Bert moves to Belgium. There Bert cannot care less about anything of, or from, the U.S.. So long as Bert has a job and his food and his TV, Bert is quite content. Bert cannot remember who is president, is unconcerned regarding any of the political or social issues of his native country, does not even realize that the fourth Thursday in November means anything, nor does Bert think that July fourth is significant. Even though Bert lives in Belgium and does nothing to actively be a U.S. citizen, to express the values of democracy, etc., does Bert remain a U.S. citizen? Yes, he remains a U.S. citizen because he has done nothing to lose his U.S. citizenship.

Similarly, there are those Jews who do nothing Jewishly, who do not affiliate, but who nevertheless remain Jews, until such time as they convert to another religion.

Charlie is born in the U.S. of two U.S. citizens, but Charlie moves to China. There, Charlie does everything Charlie can do to overthrow the U.S. government. Charlie puts on

sackcloth and ashes every July fourth, and ignores Thanksgiving. Charlie attempts to smuggle arms into the U.S. to overthrow it, and works to fight against the freedoms and liberty for which the United States stands. Even though Charlie lives in China and works to destroy the U.S., does Charlie remain a U.S. Citizen? Yes, because working to overthrow the U.S. does not constitute grounds to lose one's citizenship. Those who oppose the U.S. in this way merely go to jail.

Similarly, there are those Jews whose actions could be, and are, detrimental and destructive to Judaism and to the Jewish People. However, they nevertheless remain Jews until such time as they convert to another religion.

The ONLY time that Andy, Bert, or Charlie would ever lose their U.S. citizenship is if and when they accept the citizenship of another country, an act that usually voids their U.S. citizenship. Of course, both the U.S. and the State of Israel recognize dual citizenship in some instances with certain countries, but Judaism and the Jewish 'nation' do not recognize dual citizenship (dual religious loyalties) at all. The act of accepting another faith removes that person from citizenship in the Jewish nation. In other words, a Jew who has accepted the theology of another faith is no longer a Jew. (See Aryeh Kaplan, 'The Real Messiah,' p.21, referencing Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, Avodat Kochavim 2:5, as quoted above. See also the Responsa of other rabbis quoted above.)

Now, we come to Danny. Danny is born in the U.S. of a father who is a U.S. citizen, but Danny's mother is Dutch. At the age of 17 Danny must choose between Dutch and U.S. citizenship. But Danny cannot choose, say, Brazilian citizenship because he was not born there, and has no connection to Brazil through his mother or father. So, according to international law and U.S. law, we can obtain the rights of citizenship in a country through either the mother or the father as an inherited right.

By Jewish Law, citizenship rights in the Jewish nation only come through the mother, while inheritance rights, which are related to lineage, come through the father. An example of the latter might be for inheriting property or for being a member of a specific tribe, like that of Benjamin, or Levi, which come through the father. Now, in the past few decades, only the Reform movement of Judaism has accepted the idea that citizenship rights in the Jewish nation may also come through the father. However, this is true for them only if the child was raised with specific and exclusively Jewish ceremonies and affiliations (a fact usually not stated when referring to the Reform movement's position, but nevertheless true).

Jews, even those who might not follow Judaism, are members of a nation defined by Judaism, as long as they have not joined any Wholly Other faith. This is no different than citizens of the United States who do not exercise their right to vote. They may not do what one is supposed to do as a citizen, but they remain citizens. However, if they become citizens of China, for example, they lose their U.S. citizenship.

One important note: as a Jew, one has been chosen by God to act as God's advertising agent in the world. God needs Jews to be a constant reminder to the rest of the world that God exists, and that God demands moral and ethical behavior from God's creation. Jews have a mission in the world. That mission, as defined by our covenant with God, is to be a light unto the nations by our actions, and by our willingness to have others join us in our mission by becoming Jews themselves, through the conversion process established by our tradition. Those actions that make us a light unto the nations are not merely ethical behavior on our part; they also serve to make us different, through the observance of the commandments (mitzvot).

So, being Jewish does not mean belonging to a race or a culture, but a religion, and if one joins a Completely Other faith, as messianic 'Jews' have done by accepting Jesus as their personal savior and messiah, they are no longer Jews. To deny an element of a faith is not the same thing as joining another faith, getting baptized into it, worshipping its gods, etc. The messianic 'Jews' want to see themselves as still Jewish even though they now believe exactly the same as the members of the Southern Baptist, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and Assemblies of God churches. It is these churches and denominations that fund and establish and maintain messianic 'synagogues.'

This leads to two related issues.

First, if these Christian groups are still Jewish, how come the people who fund them are not their 'fellow Jews?' They do not receive their monies from any recognized national Jewish religious organization such as the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, or the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The messianics do not receive their monies from donations from individual synagogues or temples. When these messianic 'synagogues' form, they usually start meeting in churches. They do not begin meeting there because the 'liberal' Christian church is being nice, which happens often for real Jewish congregations. Rather, the church where they start meeting is sponsoring the messianic 'synagogue' as a technique to convert Jews to Christianity. The messianics also do not receive any monies from any national Jewish secular organizations, such as the Federations, the Anti-Defamation League, or the American Jewish Committee. As a matter of fact, these organizations have committees and sub-committees to fight the Christian missionaries that call themselves as messianic 'Jews.'

Second, what do these same messianic 'Jews' say about their supposed 'fellow Jews?' They will say that the real Jews are going to 'Hell' because they do not accept Jesus. This means that the messianic 'Jews' condemn the very group of which they still claim to be a part. To the Jewish community, it is absurd to claim one can be a Jew and a Christian at the same time, and knowledgeable Jews are not fooled.

### About the “Jewish roots” of Christianity

IN SHORT... The newest technique used by Christian missionaries and some other Christian clergy is to be found in what they teach when they use the terms, ‘The Jewish Roots of Christianity,’ or ‘The Hebraic Roots of Christianity.’ One might think this means how, in their opinion, Christianity began with Jews, or developed from Judaism. However, this is not what they mean by ‘the Jewish Roots.’ The way these people try to show that the roots of Christianity are to be found in Judaism is by putting a Christian theological interpretation into a Jewish ceremony or ritual. They then claim that this planted Christian theological interpretation, having been ‘found’ in something Jewish, demonstrates that Christianity was a natural outgrowth of Judaism.

A MORE COMPLETE EXPLANATION...A Story: David had a garden that was absolutely beautiful. In it, he grew the most perfect tomatoes that you have ever seen! One day, Matthew came along and planted cucumbers right in the middle of David’s garden. When the cucumbers started sprouting, Matthew told everyone that the tomatoes were the root of his cucumbers. In other words, that the cucumbers had developed from the tomatoes, and were the natural result — the goal — of the tomatoes as they grew to maturity.

The above story may seem to you to be ridiculous, but this is exactly what many people who teach ‘The Jewish Roots’ or ‘The Hebraic Roots’ of Christianity actually do. They plant Christian cucumbers, so to speak, in the midst of the Jewish tomatoes, and then claim that what they planted there sprouted naturally from the tomatoes that were already growing there. In other words, they put a Christian theological interpretation into a Jewish ceremony or ritual. Then they claim that this planted Christian theological interpretation, having been ‘found’ in something Jewish (it was planted there by them in the first place), shows that Christianity came from Judaism.

This clearly does not make any sense. It is merely an effort to claim Jewish legitimacy. Let me give you an example: Most people are aware that there are three pieces of matzah on the Passover Seder plate. Most people know that the middle matzah is taken out, broken into two, and one of the two pieces is then hidden away, brought out at the end of the meal, and is called the Afikoman. The matzah has stripes and lines of holes on it. Some Christians will claim that the matzah as well as the ritual with the Afikoman is symbolic of Jesus, and therefore indicates that the basic theology of Christianity can be found in the Jewish ritual of the Passover Seder. They will claim that the stripes and holes represent the marks on Jesus from the scourging he received, and the holes represent those on Jesus that were caused by the crucifixion. They will claim that the three pieces of matzah represent the trinity of 1. the Father, 2. the son, and 3. the Holy Spirit. Please take note that it is the middle matzah, the ‘son’ in the trinity, that is taken out and broken (crucified), hidden (buried), and brought back out (resurrected).

The problem with this is that it is an absolute fabrication, wedged into its ill-fitting place by the Christian agenda. There was no Seder, no Haggadah, no three pieces of Matzah

on any Seder plate, at the time of Jesus. There was not even so much as a Seder plate. The entire ritual developed over hundreds of years after Jesus lived. There was no need for a seder at Passover during the time of Jesus, because the Temple still stood, and all rituals for Passover would have taken place at the Temple, as prescribed in the Torah. When the Temple fell to the Romans in the year 70 C.E., that is when the Jews had to develop a home ritual to commemorate the Passover, and when the Jews would have first begun to develop the Passover seder.

The first discussions of a Passover ritual describe only one and a half pieces of matzah. The half piece is itself broken in half, then one of these two smaller pieces is set aside, to be eaten as the last part of the meal. It is not hidden, it is merely set aside, remaining in plain view. The idea of hiding it came in the middle 1600's, in Germany, as a way to keep the children interested in the service, a very successful idea that eventually caught on throughout the world. The reason the matzah has stripes and holes is that it is machine made. The machine causes the stripes and the holes as it pulls the dough through the machine. This machine was invented only about 150 years ago, in the middle of the 1800's.

How can something invented many hundreds of years after an event be considered a foreshadowing of an event that occurred before it? The answer is, it cannot, without ignoring the rules of logic.

Of course, Christian missionaries, and those who want to see Christianity as coming from Judaism, can interpret anything at all in a Christian way. But that does not mean that Christianity developed from whatever they are interpreting.

One might ask, 'But weren't the first Christians actually Jews?' Yes, but this is irrelevant. The first Protestants were Roman Catholics. Martin Luther was a Roman Catholic Priest. The Roman Catholics do not consider Protestant Christianity to be merely another form of Catholicism.

If you read the Apocryphal Book of 1<sup>st</sup> Maccabees, you will see that the first person killed in the Maccabee rebellion was a Jew. He was willing to go ahead and sacrifice a pig to Zeus, which Mattathias had refused to do. Obviously, he had to have been a very assimilated Jew. Had he survived Mattathias' attack, and later formed a religion that was dedicated to the worship of Zeus and Zeus' half-human sons, would that make his newly formed faith just another form of Judaism? Would that mean that his new faith had 'Jewish Roots' since the founder of this faith was originally a Jew?

Just because it is a Jew who creates something, does that mean that what was created is Jewish? Just because a Jew holds to an idea, does that automatically mean that the idea the Jew holds to is a Jewish idea?

Christian missionaries, including 'Jews' For Jesus, Messianic 'Jews,' and 'Hebrew' Christians, will go to amazing lengths to get even one real Jew to convert. They will claim that, since they can now find Christian symbolism in a Jewish ritual, this proves that Christianity developed as a natural outgrowth of Judaism, that Judaism was the source of Christian theology, and that the Jews are too stubborn to see how Christian theology is what God wanted to lead them to in the first place.

However, this convenient trick can be done with a thing that is not Jewish as well.

Let's take pizza. Pizza has three basic elements to it, the bread, the tomato sauce, and the cheese. The middle element is the tomato sauce, which is red. One could easily give a Christian interpretation to these three elements that define pizza.

The bread: Jesus is called the bread of life. The dough is kneaded. This image of kneading the dough is the same as someone being beaten which could represent Jesus being scourged. The dough to make the bread is rolled over with an instrument, which pokes holes in the dough to allow air to escape during baking. This could be likened to Jesus receiving the holes in his body from the crucifixion, just as certain people erroneously say of the matzah.

The tomato sauce: The sauce is red like Jesus' blood, and it is spread all around the dough like the blood of a sacrifice is put on an altar.

The cheese: The cheese covers the rest, like the death of Jesus 'covers the sins of the people.'

From this hypothetical interpretation, you can easily see how even pizza could be used to symbolize Jesus. But this clearly does not mean that the symbolism one could find in pizza indicates The Pizza Roots of Christianity.

Although Jesus himself was Jewish, and preached to Jews, the religion that now considers him the messiah is clearly not Jewish.

While there may be historical Jewish Roots to Christianity, there are no theological Jewish Roots to Christianity because the theology that supports Christianity is antithetical to what the Bible says, and diametrically opposite of what Judaism believes.

## CHRISTIAN PROOFTEXTS

- [Genesis 1:1](#)
- [Genesis 1:26](#)
- [Genesis 3:22](#)
- [Genesis 49:10](#)
- [Leviticus 17:11](#)
- [Isaiah 7:14](#)
- [Isaiah 9:6](#)
- [Isaiah 53](#)

- [Jeremiah 31:31](#)
- [Proverbs 30:2-4](#)
- [Psalms 110:1](#)

Genesis 1:1 בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

ANALYSIS: When one reads the very first verse of the Bible, one may not see how it could possibly be used by Christianity to prove a Christian claim.

However, Christians see in this verse an indication of the trinity, the belief that God is made up of three ‘persons,’ the Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. To understand how Christians see this, one must read the verse in the original Hebrew. Transliterated, it reads: B’reysheet Bara Eloheem Et Hashamayim V’et Ha-aretz.

Christians see that the word in the verse used for ‘God’ is the word אֱלֹהִים ‘Eloheem.’ They point out that the ending of ‘eem’ indicates a plural in the Hebrew language, and they are right: usually the ‘eem’ at the end of the word indicates a plural. For example, סֵפֶר ‘sefer’ is ‘book,’ while סְפָרִים ‘sefareem’ is ‘books.’

However, not all words with ‘eem’ on the end are plural. For example, the word מַיִם ‘mayeem’ is ‘water,’ and not ‘waters.’ One would not say, ‘pass the waters,’ one would say ‘pass the water’ as in English. The same is true for the word, פָּנִים ‘paneem,’ which means ‘face’ and not ‘faces.’

In the above examples, in order for the nouns to be understood as plural, whatever verbs and adjectives that apply to פָּנִים ‘paneem’ and מַיִם ‘mayeem’ would have to match, and also be plural. However, the verb in Genesis 1:1 is בָּרָא ‘Bara’, and is not in the plural, which would be Bar-u. This means that the Hebrew does not recognize the word for God, אֱלֹהִים Eloheem, to be in the plural.

The most important response to this Christian claim is to understand that there is no reason to assume a plural reference to God must mean three. A plural is simply more than one, and can indicate 2, 3, 5, or even 235,000. There is nothing to indicate that any plural reference to God must specifically mean three. If one was required to see plurals, in relationship to God, to be references to a trinity, would that meant that someone with a פָּנִים ‘paneem,’ a ‘face’ in Hebrew, would have to be three-faced?

The way in which someone interprets a biblical verse will be influenced by that reader’s experiences and beliefs. A Christian assumes that the plural references to God always mean three, because a Christian begins with the assumption that God is a trinity. However, what if a Hindu, with the belief in multiple gods, read the same verse? The Hindu certainly could claim that the verse referred to the multiplicity of Hindu gods, while the



Christian would claim that the verse referred to their trinity, and the Jew will maintain that it refers to an absolute one God. Of course, the Jewish claim will be based on the verb being in the singular, and the existence of other words that, like אֱלֹהִים Eloheem, appear to be plural but are not.

Furthermore, the Jewish claim will be based on the Jewish idea of absolute Monotheism, that God is One and indivisible. However, Christians and Hindus are free to reject the Jewish claim, which is what makes them Christians or Hindus. Were they to accept the Jewish understanding of this verse, leading them to the Jewish understanding of God, that God is One and Indivisible, it would be a first step to abandoning their own religions, just as if Jews were to accept the Christian understanding of this verse it would be a first step in abandoning their Judaism.

It also must be noted that the word אֱלֹהִים 'Eloheem' is also used in the Bible to refer to pagan idols. In the Ten Commandments we read, Thou shalt have no other אֱלֹהִים gods before me. [Exodus 20:3]

And the word in that verse used for 'gods' is the same word, אֱלֹהִים 'Eloheem,' that we have in Genesis. To be accurate, the word, אֱלֹהִים 'Eloheem' comes from the root which means 'power.' The Bible uses the word אֱלֹהִים 'Eloheem' to mean God, because God is the Ultimate Power, however when it does so, it uses a verb that is singular, not recognizing the subject אֱלֹהִים 'eloheem' as plural.

#### Genesis 1:26

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

ANALYSIS: One sees the same problem (as we saw in Genesis 1:1) resulting in a plural reference to God, in another verse commonly used by Christians in an attempt to prove that their concept of the trinity is to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Because the above also refers to God in the plural, 'Let US make man.' Christians will claim that this plural reference to God indicates the trinity. However the same objection mentioned above regarding Genesis 1:1 can also be applied here. Just because the term 'us,' referring to God is in the plural, it does not necessarily have to referring to a trinity. Plurals are more than one, and this plural can also be interpreted to mean 2 or 3 or 3 million. It can be interpreted by Hindus to indicate the multiplicity of their gods, as well.

To understand the Jewish interpretation of this verse, please note that preceding this verse, God had called upon the Earth to aid Him in the creation of plant life as well as animate life: And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. [Genesis 1:11-12]

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. [Genesis 1:24-25]

Judaism believes that human beings are made up of both flesh and blood (the material) as well as the soul (the spiritual). The Earth provides the material while God provides the spiritual. Furthermore, when a person dies, Judaism believes that the flesh and blood of the deceased goes back to the earth, while the soul returns to God. This is seen in Ecclesiastes, where it explicitly states this: Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. [Ecclesiastes 12:7]

From the Jewish perspective, in saying, 'Let us make man,' God was speaking to the Earth, which is evidenced in the biblical account just a few verses before when he also used the Earth in the Creation of plants and animals.

#### Genesis 3:22-24

And the Eternal God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Eternal God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

ANALYSIS: Just as we saw in Genesis 1:26, Christians see the use of a plural in relation to God, and assume that it means the trinity.

There is nothing in verse 22 that indicates that God was speaking to Himself or to a part of any trinity. There are other explanations of this verse that do not agree with the Christians' interpretation that God was speaking to one or both of the other two in the trinity. For example, God could have been using what is called the 'pluralis majestatis,' the 'majestic plural,' or the 'royal we.' Many are familiar with the statement made by Queen Victoria in the early 1900's, 'We are not amused,' referring to herself. Again, even if this were a plural reference to God, it doesn't have to mean three, it could mean three thousand. If the Hindus were to interpret these verses as referring to the multiplicity of Hindu gods, how could Christians claim that the Hindu interpretation was any less valid than their Christian interpretation?

There is a more obvious meaning to be found in the entire passage and in the simple meaning of the verses. God is speaking to someone who, like God, knows the difference

between Good and Evil, and who, like God, is immortal. Just a few verses before Genesis 3:22, God had already created the angels, the hosts of heaven.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. [Genesis 2:1]

From the Jewish perspective, in Genesis 3:22, God was speaking to the Heavenly Hosts, the angels. The angels, like God, are immortal, and, like God, they know the difference between Good and Evil. This is what the verses here are saying. Man, both Adam and Eve, have eaten of the fruit of The Tree Of The Knowledge Of The Difference Between Good And Evil, and therefore know the difference between Good and Evil. However, unlike God and the angels, Adam and Eve remain mortal. If they were to then eat from the Tree Of Life, they would become immortal, and so God separates them from the Tree Of Life by kicking them out of the Garden Of Eden, and then keeps them away from the Tree Of Life by placing Cherubims with flaming swords to guard the way to the Tree Of Life. This is exactly what the verses state: ...lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Eternal God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Again, just because there is some use of a plural word in relation to God, it does not necessarily indicate a trinity, and it can be interpreted in various ways other than meaning a trinity.

#### Genesis 49:10

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

ANALYSIS: Christians understand this verse to mean that when the Messiah comes, whom they believe to have been Jesus, the kingship will no longer belong to the tribe of Judah, and that the rule of the Jews over their own Promised Land will end.

The scepter is the symbol of royal power. When the text reads that ‘the sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come,’ Christians interpret this to mean that when Shiloh comes, whom they believe to mean their Messiah, Jesus, then the rule of the Tribe of Judah will end. Since the Jews were exiled from the Promised Land almost 40 years after Jesus came, Christians will say that this prophecy was fulfilled at the coming of Jesus.

However, there are a few things wrong with this interpretation.

First of all, if I were to say to you ‘there will be money in your bank account until you get paid,’ would that mean that after you get paid there will no longer be any money in your bank account? Wouldn’t that mean, instead, that even after you got paid there would still be money in your bank account? The Messiah is supposed to reign over Israel and he is

supposed to be from the Tribe of Judah, which means that until the Messiah comes, and even after the Messiah comes, the sceptre will still belong to a member of the Tribe of Judah, namely to the Messiah.

Secondly, even if Jesus had been the Messiah, according to Christianity, Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, and so the sceptre would still belong to Judah during Jesus' 'reign,' although Jesus never reigned over anything. For the Jews, the Messiah has yet to come, and so until he comes, the sceptre belongs to him, and when he comes, the sceptre will still be his.

The biggest problem with the Christian interpretation, is that in the year 586 B.C.E., the Babylonians overcame Jerusalem, carried off King Zedekiah into exile, and destroyed the Temple. Zedekiah was the last descendant of King David to sit upon the throne over the Promised Land. Since the Babylonians, there have been a long succession of foreign domination over the Land of Israel: the Persians, then the Greeks, then the Romans (who had been ruling the land of Israel for 64 years before Jesus was born), then the Turks, and then the English. During these periods of foreign rule over the Promised Land, there might have occasionally been a Jew to govern the land for the foreign powers, however there was no Jewish King who alone had sovereignty over the land. Historically, therefore, even if one agreed with the Christian interpretation of this verse, then 'the sceptre' had 'departed from Judah' almost 600 years before Jesus was born.

#### Leviticus 17:11

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

ANALYSIS: Christians believe that in order for one to be forgiven of one's sins, there has to be a blood sacrifice. This is how they interpret Leviticus 17:1.

Taken out of context, one could understand this quotation in the same way as the Christians. However, when you read the entire passage from Leviticus, you will see that this verse is part of a whole passage that is simply trying to say that one is not to drink the blood of any sacrifice, as the pagans of that period used to do. Let's look at the surrounding verses to see the context.

And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. [Leviticus 17:10-12]

Often, when Christians use verses to try to convert Jews, they will only show a single verse. Always look at the entire context in which that verse is found, because the context may show that the Christian interpretation is simply a misinterpretation.

At the time in which Jesus lived, 80% of all the Jews in the world lived outside the land of Israel, away from Jerusalem, away from the Temple, without the ability to perform any animal sacrifices. They did not live in the fear that their sins were not forgiven by God. The reason for this is quite simply that the Jews never felt that animal sacrifices were the only means to forgiveness.

Christians claim that one must have a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin. However, if one can see even one place in the Hebrew Scriptures where God forgives sin without a blood sacrifice, then one does not have to have a blood sacrifice to be forgiven. And there are many, many quotations throughout the entire Bible that prove this point. For the sake of brevity, we will only look at a very few.

It is in the Book of Leviticus where the whole of the sacrificial system is discussed. And in Leviticus, right in the midst of the description of the sacrifices, we have a quotation that proves that blood sacrifices are not necessary for the forgiveness of sin.

But if he cannot afford two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he shall bring, as his offering for the sin which he has committed, a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for the sin offering...And he shall bring it to the priest...Thus the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed in any one of these things, and he shall be forgiven.  
[Leviticus 5:11-13]

Thus we see that if someone could not afford any of the animals, that the offering of flour would attain for him the same forgiveness that the animal sacrifices would bring. Flour has no blood, flour has no life to be sacrificed, and yet with the sacrifice of the flour the sinner would still be forgiven. If, in fact, a blood sacrifice was absolutely necessary for the forgiveness of sin, then the use of flour would not have been possible, even if it was only for the poor.

We have another example of the forgiveness of sin without the need of any blood sacrifice. In the Book of Jonah we read how Jonah was told by God to go to the Ninevites to get them to repent of their sins. I am sure that you are familiar with the story. Jonah did not like the people of Nineveh. He knew that they would repent if he warned them, but he preferred their destruction. Jonah tried to run away from God, but instead was brought back to the land in the belly of the great fish. Jonah then obeyed God and came to Nineveh. There, he warned them of God's intent to destroy them if they did not seek atonement for their sins. The people, from the King on down, prayed to God for forgiveness, fasted by neither eating nor drinking, and they stopped their evil ways. And then what happened?

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which He had said He would do to them; and He did not do it. [Jonah 3:10]

The people of Nineveh did not perform any sacrifices. They did much the same as the Jews do all over the world on the Day of Atonement, spending the day in prayer and fasting. The People of Nineveh were forgiven for their sins without the need of any blood sacrifice, just as we, now, are forgiven for our sins without the need of any blood sacrifice.

Most people are aware of the function of the scapegoat described in Leviticus 16:20-22. The sins of the people were symbolically placed on the head of the goat who was then banished to the wilderness. Even though the ritual described in the Bible does not call for the goat to be killed, even though there was no blood sacrifice, the sins of the people were forgiven.

Similarly, most people know that the blood sacrifices were to take place only in the Temple which was built by Solomon. In 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8:44, Solomon dedicates the Temple to the One True God, the only Temple on Earth dedicated to the One True God. At that dedication, Solomon states that there would come a time when the Jews, as a result of their sins, would be exiled from the Promised Land. He prayed that when they were in the land of their enemies, that all they would have to do to be forgiven of their sins was to pray, and to pray towards the Temple (which is why Synagogues and Temples face East, when they are in the West), to repent of their sins, and to stop sinning, just as we learned above from Jonah.

If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them. [1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8:46-50]

The interesting thing about the above verses is that Solomon, who offered this prayer at the dedication of the very place where the blood sacrifices were to be offered, had to have known that a blood sacrifice was not necessary for atonement. Had he felt that a blood sacrifice was, in fact, necessary, he would not have bothered praying this prayer. Indeed, God does forgive our sins and grant us atonement when we repent, when we

confess our sins, when we pray for forgiveness, and when we do not do the sin, again, when given the chance.

There are many other places in the Bible where the sins were forgiven without the need of a blood sacrifice of an animal. For example, if you wish to look up in the Bible these nine quotations you can read this for yourself: Numbers 31:50; Hosea 6:6; Hosea 14:1-2; Micah 6:6-8; Jeremiah 18:1-8; Jeremiah 29:10-14; Psalm 51:15-17; Psalm 69:30-32; and Ezekiel 18:20-22.

Isaiah 7:14: לֵבָנִי יִתֵּן אֶדְנִי הוּא לָכֶם אֹת הַנִּיחַ "הָעֵלְמָה" הָרָה וְיִלְדֶּת בֵּן וְקָרָאת שְׁמוֹ עִמָּנוּ אֵל:

Matthew describes how the miraculous birth of Jesus from a virgin fulfills a Biblical prophecy:

Matthew 1:18-25 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

This quotation from Matthew is based on a story found in Isaiah 7:1-16 which you can read below. This story in Isaiah is about Ahaz, King in Jerusalem over 700 years before the time of Jesus. Ahaz was terrified of two enemy kings who were marching on Jerusalem. Isaiah is sent to Ahaz to calm his nerves and to give Ahaz a sign that would prove that God was on Ahaz's side. When told to ask for a sign, out of fear, Ahaz refuses to test God by requesting a specific sign. Isaiah then names the sign that God would give to Ahaz. That sign is that a woman who was already pregnant would soon give birth to a male, and that child was the sign for Ahaz.

Remember, a sign is not a miracle. A sign is something real, that points to something else, just like a stop sign is real metal and real paint, and points to the place in the road where one is to stop. The child himself is the sign, and his conception was not meant or referred to by Isaiah to be anything special or miraculous. Isaiah calls the son a sign, and not a miracle. As a sign, every time Ahaz would see the child, he would be comforted to know that God was on his side, and that he had nothing to worry about from

those enemy kings. That is what made the child a sign to Ahaz.

This is also why the son's name was to be עִמָּנוּאֵל "EmanuEl," which means "God Is With Us." Every time Ahaz had to call the child by name, he would be reminding himself that "God is with us," and not with Ahaz's enemies. The name does not mean that the child would be God, but rather the child's name was a reminder to Ahaz that God was with Ahaz and his people. This is similar to the name given to the prophet Elihu. Elihu means, My God Is He, or He Is My God. It does not mean that Elihu was God, it means that He (God) is my God.

Isaiah tells Ahaz that by the time that child was old enough to be able to tell the difference between Good and Evil, the two enemy kings would be dead. How old is a child before he or she is old enough to know the difference between Good and Evil? Some might say by the age of two or three. Others may claim around the age of 12 or 13, the ages of a Bat or Bar Mitzvah. This means that the sign was meant for Ahaz's own time as the first verse below states, and not for a time that was 700 years in Ahaz's future:

Isaiah 7:1 And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, King of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. 2 And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. 3 Then said the Eternal unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-yashuv thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; 4 And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, 6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal: 7 Thus saith the Eternal God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. 8 For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. 9 And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. 10 Moreover the Eternal spoke again unto Ahaz, saying, 11 Ask thee a sign of the Eternal thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. 12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Eternal. 13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Eternal himself shall give you a sign; Behold, the young woman הַעֲלֵמָה "ha-almah" has conceived הָרָה "harah" and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. 15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. 16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

The word which is mistranslated is the word for "the young woman" (in Hebrew:



הַעַלְמָה ha-almah). The fact that she is called “the young woman,” and the definite article, הַ “the” is used, indicates that the young woman was known to both Isaiah and to Ahaz and therefore must have lived in their day. The fact that this all took place in the time of Ahaz is further indicated by the past tense “has conceived הָרָה (Harah).” One may argue that a young woman could also be a virgin, but the sign was not the birth, the sign was the child himself, who would be the reminder, the sign, to Ahaz that he had nothing to worry about because, With Us Is God. The word עַלְמָה almah does not refer to the young woman’s sexual status. Had the Biblical Author wished to express the idea that the woman was a virgin, the Author would have used the Hebrew word for virgin, which is בְּתוּלָה “b’tu-lah.” Even if the text had called her a virgin, there is no reason to believe that the virgin would have conceived her child through any other means than through a sexual act. It is only reading the verse through the eyes of Christianity, assuming a virgin birth, that would lead one to interpret the verse in this way.

The fact that עַלְמָה “almah” does not mean virgin can be shown by looking at the use of the same word in Proverbs 30:18-20. Here again the word עַלְמָה “almah” is used in the Hebrew. However, here there is no question that the young woman is not a virgin. These verses are an expression of amazement that things can happen which leave no trace that they have occurred. These things include the fact that two people can make love and leave no trace that they have had sexual intercourse. This can only be true if the woman was not a virgin, because the loss of her virginity would be an indication that she had engaged in sex. We also know this because “the young woman” is likened to an adulterous woman who commits adultery through the act of sexual intercourse but leaves no trace of the transgression. This could only make sense because she, as an adulterous woman, was not a virgin:

Proverbs 30:18 There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: 19 The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a young woman עַלְמָה “almah”. 20 Likewise is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.

Christians might say that there is a dual prophecy regarding these verses, that one prophecy was fulfilled in the days of Isaiah and Ahaz, but another prophecy based on the same verse was fulfilled by Jesus. If that is true it means that the birth of Jesus by Mary was not the first virgin birth in history. Furthermore, why claim that there is only a dual prophecy to this or to any other verse in Scripture? Perhaps there is a third or triple prophecy and the third prophecy was fulfilled by any of the many gods who were the product of a virgin birth, the result of a human woman being made pregnant by a god, but without the sexual act? Perhaps this was a triple prophecy, the third being fulfilled by Perseus, who was the son of the human woman named Danae and who had Zeus for a father? Zeus made Danae pregnant by showering her with gold rather than through the sexual act, which was like a virgin birth. Or maybe this could have been a quadruple

prophecy or more. If one allows for a dual prophecy, there is no reason to say that the number would stop at two, except through the wishful thinking of Christian theology.

So we see that the whole story of the virgin birth appears to be proven on a mistranslation of the word הַעֲלָמָה “ha’almah.” Therefore remember that when a Christian missionary, or missionary literature, references a verse from the Hebrew Scriptures, look up the verse in the original Hebrew. The Christian translation may be a mistranslation.

It is possible that the early Christians wanted to have the birth story of their Jesus to reflect the same miracle nature as the birth stories of the pagan gods of their day, and so they latched onto the mistranslation found in the Septuagint (Greek translation) of the verse from Isaiah and built their story of Jesus’ birth upon this verse. It is not that the mistranslation of a Biblical verse led to the belief about Jesus, but rather that the belief in Jesus, that he had to be born of a virgin, for example, led to the use of a mistranslated verse to validate the already held belief.

The earliest Christians might have been Jews, but they were very assimilated into Hellenism and the culture of that time. Since other gods had miracle births, like that of Perseus explained above, it is possible that they first had the belief about the virgin birth of Jesus, and then found a verse that had already been mistranslated to use to indicate that Jesus was fulfilling that verse. The earliest Christians who were Jews used the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, far more often than the original Hebrew. This is another great indication of just how assimilated into Greek pagan culture these early Christianized Jews were.

The word “Septuagint” should only refer to the Greek translation of the Torah, the five books of Moses, and not to the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures. The word “Septuagint” comes from the Greek word for “seventy,” a reference to the story of seventy Jewish scholars who translated the Torah into Greek in rooms separated from one another, but who came out with exactly the same translation. Later Greek translators took the remaining books of the Hebrew Scriptures, but we do not know who they were, and their translations are just not that accurate to the original Hebrew. Isaiah was translated by one of these unknown translators. Eventually, all of the books of the Jewish Bible were translated into Greek and collected together. Unfortunately, these translations are incorrectly collectively called the “Septuagint,” but in truth, the term “Septuagint” really should only refer to the Greek translation of the Torah and not to the translation of the rest of the books of the Jewish Bible.

Whether these early Christians first had the belief that their Jesus was born of a virgin like so many other pagan gods and then found a passage in the Septuagint’s mistranslation to justify their belief, or that they just based their story on the mistranslation of the word הַעֲלָמָה “ha’almah,” cannot be known. What is known is that the basis of their interpretation remains an incorrectly translated Hebrew word.

Isaiah 9:5-6

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Eternal of hosts will perform this.

ANALYSIS: Christians see the above verses from Isaiah 9 to be speaking of Jesus, who came into the world as a child. However, after having read the above quotation, a few questions should come to mind. When did Jesus ever run any government? When was Jesus ever called a Wonderful Counselor, or a Mighty God, or an Everlasting Father, or a Prince of Peace? Jesus was never called by any of these names anywhere in the Christians' New Testament and not at all in his own lifetime.

Christians always seem to misunderstand this quotation. This is because they do not understand Hebrew, nor do they understand names, nor do they understand Hebrew names.

First, let us understand names. In most languages, every name has a meaning. The name 'Anthony' means 'priceless' and the name 'Alexander' means 'protector.' If we were to give a child the first and middle names of Anthony Alexander, would that mean that we are saying that this child is a 'priceless protector?' Would we call out to them, 'Hey, Priceless Protector, how are you?' Of course not.

Hebrew names sometimes say something about God. The name Michael means 'who is like God.' The name Elihu means 'my God is He,' or 'He is my God.' The name Immanuel means 'God is with us,' just to give a few examples. If someone has the name, Elihu, (again, meaning 'He is my God') would that mean that the human being known as Elihu is God? These names say something about God, even though they are the names of ordinary human beings. A better translation to the verse in question might be: ...and his name will be called, 'A wonderful counselor is the mighty God, an everlasting father is the ruler of peace.'

This means that there are really only two Hebrew names in the verse, which are given to a human being and not to a divine being, even though the names make a statement about God. Those names, like Anthony Alexander in our example above, would be פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ: 'Pele Yoetz El Gibor Avi Ad Sar Shalom.' The way it is written in the original Hebrew, the names would be hyphenated as פֶּלֶא-יוֹעֵץ-אֵל-גִּבּוֹר 'Pele-Yoetz-El-Gibor' and אָבִי-אֶד-סָר-שָׁלוֹם: 'Avi-Ad-Sar-Shalom.' Lengthy names like these were not uncommon in the Bible, and in Isaiah specifically. For example, in Isaiah 8:3, we find the name, מַהֵר שָׁלַל מְהֵרָה חָשׁ בָּז 'Maher-shalal-chash-baz,' which means 'the spoil speeds, the prey hastens.'

But let us suppose that this verse really did contain four names. How well would they apply

to Jesus? Is this a case where at first the description of the person described in Isaiah 9:6-7 sounds like the story of Jesus, but, on closer examination, it isn't?

#### 'Wonderful Counselor'

In the Christian's New Testament we find two stories about Jesus that certainly do not describe him as a Wonderful Counselor:

Another of the disciples said to him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.' [Matthew 8:21]

What kind of 'Wonderful Counselor' would tell a man who had recently lost his beloved father not to see to his father's funeral?

When he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, 'Is that how you answer the high priest?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?' [John 18:22-23]

Everyone is familiar with the quotation from Jesus, 'Do not resist one who is evil, but if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.' [Matthew 5:39] In the quotation above from John 18, Jesus does not turn his other cheek to the one who struck him, but rebukes him instead. One who says one thing but does another is called a hypocrite, and how can a hypocrite be a 'Wonderful Counselor'?

#### 'Mighty God.'

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' [Matthew 27:46]

If Jesus were the 'Mighty God,' why would he have to call upon another as God in order to save him? How can God forsake himself? This also denies the very idea of a trinity, and shows how Jesus does not fit the description of the Isaiah 9 quotation.

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. [Matthew 19:16-17]

In the above verses, Jesus distinguishes between himself and God. How could he have been the 'Mighty God,' if he himself made a distinction between himself and God? If Jesus knew that only God is good, and that he should not be called good, then Jesus knew that Jesus was not God.

#### 'Everlasting Father'

In the trinity, Jesus is the son, and not the Father. He cannot be both at the same time. As a

matter of fact, Jesus himself showed that he was not the Father, and claimed not to have the same will, or the same knowledge as the Father.

And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' [Matthew 26:39]

Jesus calls the One to whom he prayed his Father, so how can Jesus be 'the Everlasting Father,' if he called another his Father? How could Jesus be the Father if the will of Jesus is not the same as the will of the Father? This denies the very idea of the trinity.

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. [Mark 13:32]

In the above verse, Jesus claims there is something that he does not know, but that only the Father knows. So how can Jesus, 'the son,' also be the Father if their knowledge is not the same?

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. [John 20:17]

How can the Father ascend to Himself? In the above verse, Jesus not only distinguishes between himself and his Father, but he also makes it sound as though the relationship that he has with God, 'The Father,' is exactly the same relationship that all people have with God, who is, in fact, the Father of all.

'Prince of Peace'

First of all, this is a mistranslation. The words in the original Hebrew are, שַׁר-שָׁלוֹם 'sar shalom.' The word שַׁר 'sar' does not mean 'prince,' it means 'ruler.' Now, one might say that a 'prince' is a 'ruler.' However, the reason why the Christians choose the word 'prince' instead of the word 'ruler' in Christian translations is that the word 'prince' makes one think that the original verse is speaking of a 'son of the king,' which in the Christian mind alludes to Jesus whom they believe to have been the son of God, the King. However, the word is 'ruler,' and not 'prince.' 'Prince' in Hebrew is נָסִי 'nasee' and not שַׁר 'sar.' The Christian translators intentionally chose the English word 'prince' to lead the reader into thinking about Jesus.

In the Christian's New Testament, we also find a quotation which certainly does not show Jesus to have been a 'ruler' or even a 'prince of peace.'

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. [Matthew 10:34-36]

How could anyone who said such a thing be considered a prince or ruler of peace? How could anyone who said such a thing have been the Messiah? We know that the true Messiah will bring an everlasting peace and, along with Elijah the Prophet, will bring families closer to each other and not further apart (see Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:1-4, and Malachi 4:5).

I have already stated that Christians rarely include verse 7 when they quote Isaiah chapter 9. The reason is that in verse 7 it states, 'Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.' Perhaps they do not quote verse 7 because Jesus never brought peace to the world, nor did he ever intend to, as the above quotation from Matthew 10:34-36 shows.

Jesus was also a violent man, and neither a 'Prince of Peace,' nor even a 'Ruler of Peace.' There are other verses in the Christian's New Testament that indicate this. Here are two more: But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. [Luke 19:27]

The verse above comes at the end of a parable that Jesus told, of a man that leaves his land to go to be anointed as the King. When he comes back to his land, he says the above verse. Every single Christian commentator claims that Jesus was referring to himself as the man who left his land to be anointed King, and so in his own parable, Jesus is saying the above, asking that those who do not wish to have him reign over them be murdered in front of him.

In the verse, below, Jesus tells his followers to go and buy a sword.

And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. [Luke 22:35]

We have shown from quotations from the Christian's New Testament that Jesus was not a 'Wonderful Counselor, Jesus was not a 'Mighty God,' Jesus was not an 'Everlasting Father,' nor was Jesus a 'Prince of Peace' or even a 'Ruler of Peace,' in spite of how Christians wish to interpret the original verses from Isaiah 9:6-7.

So, according to the Jewish interpretation, who is Isaiah 9:6-7 speaking about? According to Judaism, the answer is in the names chosen. The name 'Hezekiah' which in Hebrew is הִזְקִיָּה 'Hizkiyah' comes from the words הָזַק 'hazak' and 'Ya.' הָזַק 'Hazak' means 'strong' or 'mighty' and 'Ya' is the shortened name for God used as a suffix. Many might recognize the Ya' in the word, הַלְלוּ-יָהּ 'halleluyah' which means, 'praise God.' Judaism believes that Isaiah 9:6-7 refers to Hezekiah, who reigned for almost 30 years. The name Hezekiah, Hizkiyah, is the same name in meaning, as one finds in the verses from Isaiah

9:6-7, a 'Mighty God.'

### Isaiah 53

Isaiah 52:13-15, 53:1-12 52:13

Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

14) As many were astonished at him — his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men — 15) so shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand. 53:1) Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? 2) For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. 3) He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4) surely he has born our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5) But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. 6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7) He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. 8) By oppression and judgement he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? 9) And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. 10) Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; 11) he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities. 12) Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

ANALYSIS...To missionary Christians, Isaiah 53 is the perfect description of the life and death of Jesus. Because it is so perfect a description, they feel that Jesus must have been the Messiah because he seems to have fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53.

Some of these Fundamentalist Christians are told that this is so perfect a description of Jesus that the Jews are forbidden to read it! Furthermore, they are told that the Jews read from the Prophets every week in their religious services, but the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah was intentionally left out of those readings because it is so obviously a description of Jesus.

No part of the Jewish Bible was ever censored by the Jewish people; at no time were

Jews forbidden by Jewish authorities to read certain parts of the Bible. Had the Jews wanted to censor any part of the TaNaCH (the Hebrew Bible), they simply would have removed it from the TaNaCH to begin with, or not included it in the Canon. It was, after all, the Jews, specifically the Rabbis of the post second-Temple period that determined what would, and what would not, be in the Bible.

Of course, it is a matter of history that Christians were not allowed to read the Bible on their own. Translators of the Bible were killed by the Church because they made the Bible accessible to the common people.

The reason that Jews do not read Isaiah 53 at any time of the year during a weekly service is that there are no parallels to Isaiah 53 in the Torah (the Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). Remember that the portion from the Prophets (the 'Haftarah') is read because there was a certain time when Jews were forbidden by non-Jews to read from the Torah on pain of death. In order to remind the people what the Torah portion would have been, sections of the Prophets were chosen which were parallel to — or contained references to — the actual Torah portion. After the Jews were once again allowed to read from the Torah, the custom of reading the Haftarah remained because it enhanced the meaning of the Torah.

An example of this can be shown from the Haftarah reading for Genesis 1:1, the Creation story. On the Sabbath morning when this portion is read, the parallel reading from the Prophets is Isaiah 42:5-12, 'Thus says God, the Lord, Who created the Heavens and stretched them out...'

Isaiah 53 does not parallel anything in the Torah, and therefore it was not chosen to be read as a Haftarah portion.

The only reason Christians believe that the Jews are forbidden to read Isaiah 53 is that they cannot understand how the Jews can read Isaiah 53 and not immediately admit that Jesus was its fulfillment and therefore the Messiah. Of course, as we shall see, there are quite a few reasons why the Jews do not view the prophecy of Isaiah 53 as being fulfilled in Jesus.

Despite what we have just stated, as you read the text of Isaiah 53, you may indeed see within the verses what seems to be a description of Jesus. There is a reason for this which we shall discuss below.

Please understand and keep in mind that the quote from Isaiah 53 shown above is, indeed, a mistranslation of the original Hebrew. However, we are using it here because it is the (mis)translation most often used by Christian missionaries.

Let's look at just two of the many mistranslations in the quote.



In verse 5, the text is translated as 'But he was wounded FOR our transgressions, he was bruised FOR our iniquities.' The mistake is that the prefix to the words meaning 'our transgressions' and 'our iniquities' is the Hebrew letter ׀ mem. This is a prepositional prefix meaning 'from' and not 'for.' A more accurate translation would be, 'But he was wounded FROM our transgressions, he was bruised FROM our iniquities.' This means that Isaiah 53 is not talking about a man who died 'for our sins,' but rather it is about a man who died 'BECAUSE of our sins,' or 'AS A RESULT of our sins.' In other words, they died because we sinned against them by murdering them. This, indeed, is the Jewish understanding of Isaiah 53: the nations of the earth will finally understand that the Jews have been right all along, and the sins committed against the Jews by the nations of the earth resulted in the death of countless innocent Jews.

In verse 9, the text is translated as, 'And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death.' However, this last word in the Hebrew should be translated as 'in his deaths,' because the word appears in the Hebrew in the plural. The text reads, בְּמָוְתוֹ 'b'mo-taYv.' The Hebrew letter, ׀ Yod, indicated by the capital Y in the transliterated word, indicates the plural, as anyone who knows Hebrew would know. To read, 'in his death,' the text would have to read בְּמָוְתוֹ 'b'moto.' Since the word בְּמָוְתוֹ 'b'mo-taYv' actually means 'in his deaths,' then for Jesus to fulfill this verse, he must therefore come back to earth and die at least another time. The Jews, personified as the servant as we shall see below, have fulfilled this verse time and time again, because countless millions have died an undeserved death.

As you read the above verses, you may have been reminded of the image of Jesus, how he lived and how he died. You may be wondering why Isaiah 53 is not a prophecy concerning the Messiah which Jesus fulfilled, according to the Jewish understanding of the passage.

According to Jewish tradition, Isaiah was writing about the People of Israel personified as The Suffering Servant of the Lord. There are no less than 8 quotations that show this to be the case. Please note that in the following four quotations, all from the Book of Isaiah, it is the People of Israel who are called the Servant of God: But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend. [Isaiah 41:8]

Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant; I formed you, you are my servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me. [Isaiah 44:21]

For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I surname you, though you do not know me. [Isaiah 45:4]

And He said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.' [Isaiah 49:3]

And see also Isaiah 43:10; 44:1; 48:20, 49:7

Isaiah 43:10 is a very interesting verse.

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Eternal, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. [Isaiah 43:10]

The above verse tells us that the Jewish People are plural when God uses the term 'witnesses,' but the People of Israel are also referred to in this same verse in the singular in the word, 'servant,' the very same word that we find in Isaiah 53.

Furthermore, Isaiah 43:10 states that there will be 'no God formed,' which means that Jesus, who was formed in Mary's womb well after God spoke these words in Isaiah 43:10, cannot be God.

From the many above quotations we can see that Isaiah 53 was referring to the People of Israel as a Suffering Servant of the Eternal, just as in all of the quotations which came before Isaiah 53.

Christian missionaries will claim that the Jewish Biblical commentator Rashi made up the association of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 with the People of Israel personified. This is simply untrue, which can be proven from the writings of Christians themselves well before Rashi was born. In 'Contra Celsum,' written in 248 C.E. (some 800 years before Rashi), the Christian Church Father Origen records that Jews contemporary with him interpreted this passage as referring to the entire nation of Israel. He wrote: 'I remember that once in a discussion with some whom the Jews regard as learned I used these prophecies [Isaiah 52:13-53:8]. At this the Jew said that these prophecies referred to the whole people as though of a single individual, since they were scattered in the dispersion and smitten, that as a result of the scattering of the Jews among the other nations many might become proselytes.' (Origen, Contra Celsum, trans. Henry Chadwick, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Book 1.55, 1965, p. 50)

This can also be found on the internet at [Early Christian Writings](#). Scroll down to Chapter LV.

This shows that Jews subscribed to the belief that the people of Israel were the suffering servant spoken of throughout the entire passage, and this pre-dates Rashi by many centuries.

Before we look directly at Isaiah 53, we must first ask a question. The Bible is explicitly clear, as we read in Deuteronomy: Every one is to be put to death for his own sin. [Deuteronomy 24:16]

This is also found in Exodus Chapter 32: And the Eternal said unto Moses, Whosoever hath

sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book [Exodus 32:30-35] and again in Ezekiel Chapter 18: Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.' [Ezekiel 18:1-4; 20-24; 26-27]

Please note that in Ezekiel 18:20 it does not say that the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon the righteous, but rather the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon the wicked.

Repeatedly, consistently, and without any need of interpretation, the text literally and clearly states that the person who sins is the person who gets the punishment for the sin. The question we must ask in light of the Christian interpretation of Isaiah 53 is, When did God change His mind? If, indeed, 'every man is to be put to death for his own sin,' then the only way one can interpret Isaiah 53 to mean the opposite, that Jesus died for your sins, is if God changed His mind, or He did not mean what He said when He said, 'every man is to be put to death for his own sin.' Understand that the interpretation Christians give to Isaiah 53 is exactly that, an interpretation, and an erroneous one, as we can see when we examine it in light of other verses from Scripture.

Read the passage from Isaiah 52:13 to Isaiah 53:12 again. Certainly, if one does not read carefully, it does sound a lot like a description of a man who dies for the sins of others. How do Jews explain that the life and death of Jesus is not reflected in these verses?

First of all, it should not surprise you that the life and death of Jesus seems to be reflected within the verses of Isaiah 53. This is no coincidence. Remember that the Hebrew Scriptures came before Jesus. The authors of the Christians' New Testament could use images they found in the Hebrew Scriptures and create stories about Jesus to fit those images.

The Hebrew Scriptures served as blueprints do to an architect. But instead of constructing a building, the authors of the New Testament constructed stories about Jesus. This is not only true for Isaiah 53, but is also true for many of the other biblical texts that stories of Jesus seem to fulfill. Whenever a story seems to fit biblical prophecy, the story of Jesus was probably accommodated to the images found in the Hebrew Scriptures. By comparing different renditions of the same story in two different Gospels, one can easily see that stories were written about Jesus to make it appear that Jesus fulfilled prophecy.

Let us look, for example, at two versions of the story of the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem. Please note that Matthew describes Jesus riding upon two animals while Mark describes Jesus riding upon one.

‘And when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethpage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and he will send them immediately.’ This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, ‘Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass.’ The disciples went and did as Jesus directed them; they brought the ass and the colt, and put their garments on them, and he sat thereon.’ [Matthew 21:1-7]

‘And when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethpage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, and said to them, ‘Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘the Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’ And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door out in the open street; and they untied it. And those who stood there said to them, ‘What are you doing untying the colt?’ And they told them what Jesus had said; and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw their garments on it; and he sat upon it.’ [Mark 11:1-7]

Why is it that the two stories, supposedly describing eyewitness reports of the same event, are so different? Of course one might respond by saying that eyewitnesses will describe the same event differently. But these stories are supposed to be ‘Gospel Truth’ and inspired by God. Matthew again makes it seem as though Jesus were fulfilling a prophecy concerning the Messiah by riding upon two animals. If this is indeed a prophecy, then according to Mark, Jesus did not fulfill the prophecy, because according to Mark, Jesus entered Jerusalem while riding on only one animal.

Why then is there a difference between the two stories? To understand this you must examine the source of the prophecy concerning the Messiah, Zechariah 9:9-10: Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. [Zechariah 9:9-10]

Was Zechariah talking about one ass or was he talking about two asses? Matthew understood Zechariah to be talking about two animals, so he wrote his story about Jesus riding on two. Mark understood Zechariah to be talking about one animal, so he wrote his story about Jesus riding on one. Zechariah was talking about only one animal. He was using the ancient form of Hebrew poetry which involves a rhyming by repetition of idea not of sounds. Look at almost any Psalm and you will see this clearly. By the way please note that the Zechariah quotation also tells us that the Messiah ‘commands peace to the

nations,' (compare this with Jesus' own statement in Matthew 10:34) and that the Messiah shall rule 'from sea to sea,' which of course Jesus never did.

Many of the passages in the Christians' New Testament contradict the image described in Isaiah 53. No matter how hard the authors tried to create stories about Jesus that would fit images found in the Hebrew Scriptures, the factual stories about the man Jesus were also recorded by them, and it is these stories that deny any messiah-ship of Jesus, as well as contradict the image of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53. Let us take a closer look at what Isaiah 53 says, and then compare it with other passages from the Christians' New Testament.

Two verses in the Isaiah passage describe the servant of the Lord as having been either too ugly to be human in appearance, or too plain-looking to make us notice him:...his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men. [Isaiah 52:14]...he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. [Isaiah 53:2]

But every single picture painted of Jesus shows a man who was both handsome and tall and generally muscular, as any carpenter would be. These texts from Isaiah are not referring to The Servant at only a single time and place, like after a scourging, or crucifixion, but rather it refers to the way The Servant looks, in general, to the non-Jewish world. There is also evidence in the Christians' New Testament that Jesus was a handsome man, whose company was desired by others: 'And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.' [Luke 2:52]

This is not what we read in Isaiah. One verse in Isaiah 53 describes the servant as a loner, without anyone to call a friend: He was despised and rejected by men. [Isaiah 53:3]

Isaiah 53:3 is not describing a man who, at one point in his life, is rejected by some, but rather one who has known rejection throughout his life. But in many places within the Christians' New Testament, like the above quotation from Luke 2:52, Jesus is described as having a huge following, from the beginning of his ministry all the way to the scene at the crucifixion: But when they tried to arrest him, they feared the multitudes, because they held him to be a prophet. [Matthew 21:46]

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. [Luke 23:26-27]

See also Mark 14:1-2; Matthew 4:24-25; 21:9,11; Luke 4:14-15; 7:11,12,16-17; 8:4,19,45; and John 12:11, 42

So we see that unlike the servant described in Isaiah 53:3, Jesus was neither despised nor rejected by all men, and instead, he maintained a large following even up until he was crucified.

Two quotations from the Isaiah passage describe someone who remains silent when accused by his captors, one who is innocent of any wrongdoing:...like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. [Isaiah 53:7]...and there was no deceit in his mouth. [Isaiah 53:9]

But there is one quotation in the Christian's New Testament that states that Jesus did rebuke his captors and in so doing did in fact 'open his mouth.'

When he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, 'Is that how you answer the high priest?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?' [John 18:22-23]

In the above quotation, Jesus rebukes his captors for what he considers mistreatment. He demanded an explanation of why he had been struck. In 'opening up his mouth' to rebuke his captors, he contradicts his own idea of 'turning the other cheek,' found in Matthew 5:39. This makes Jesus a hypocrite, and hypocrisy is a form of deceit because it deceives people in to doing what the deceiver himself does not do.

One of the verses in the Isaiah passage describes an innocent man of peace:... although he had done no violence... [Isaiah 53:9]

But most people are familiar with at least one of the many acts of violence that Jesus did: the 'cleansing of the Temple:'

And Jesus entered the Temple of God and drove out all who sold and bought in the Temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.' [Matthew 21:12]

Furthermore, in the version of this act of violence in John 2:15, it states that Jesus made for himself a scourge or whip, with which to beat the people in the Temple: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables... [John 2:15]

Although a Christian might say that the violence done by Jesus in the Temple might have been justified, the verse in Isaiah describes one who had done 'no violence' at all to make him deserving of the persecution he received. Jesus was seen by Rome as an insurrectionist, and that is why they crucified him. The Christians' New Testament states that the accusation placed above his head by Rome read, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews,' as we see in Matthew 27:37 as well as in Mark 15:26. His crime, according to the

accusation for which he was crucified, was in trying to be the King of the Jews in place of the Emperor in Rome. The violence he perpetrated brought attention to him, and for that violence he was seen as an insurrectionist, and so he was crucified.

Above, it was stated that the Jews were the servant of Isaiah 53. Some may argue that the Jews certainly did violence over the millennia, and that is true, but the Jews did no violence to deserve their persecutions. What violence did the Jews of Europe perpetrate to deserve the Holocaust?

Furthermore, those who 'bought and sold in the Temple' were there because of God's command. In Deuteronomy 14:24-26, God told the Jews to sell the animal they wanted to sacrifice for money, take the money to Jerusalem, and then after changing the money to the local currency, to buy the same type of animal and sacrifice it. Therefore the money changers and sellers of sacrificial animals were supposed to be there, as commanded by God:

And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Eternal thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Eternal thy God hath blessed thee: 25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the Eternal thy God shall choose: 26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the Eternal thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household. [Deuteronomy 14:24-26]

There are other places in the New Testament that describe Jesus's violence. Here are a few more examples.

In Mark 11:12, Jesus condemns an innocent fruit tree to death because it did not have any figs on it for Jesus to eat, even though it was not even the fruit season: And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. And his disciples heard it. And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. [Mark 11:12-14; 20-21]

Jesus also stated that his purpose in coming to earth was not for the sake of peace: Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. [Matthew 10:34-36]

Jesus states in the following that those who won't accept him should be slain. In almost all

Christian interpretations of the parable in which the following verse is found, Jesus is understood to have been the ruler who speaks:

But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. [Luke 19:27]

Perhaps the verse above from Luke 19 has been the Christian justification for the slaying of so many Jews throughout the centuries, simply because we still reject Jesus.

And in Luke 22:36, Jesus tells his disciples to go and buy swords. So we see that here again, Jesus, a violent man, could not have been the peace-loving servant who did 'no violence,' as described in Isaiah 53.

Finally, there is one verse in the Isaiah passage which describes the servant as living a long life and having children:...he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; [Isaiah 53:10]

But quite obviously, Jesus was never married and had no children. He also died in his thirties, at a young age. Christians may respond by saying that Isaiah meant Jesus' disciples by the word, 'offspring,' or that the Christians themselves are like his children, but the word in the Hebrew is זֶרַע 'zerah,' which means seed, and can only refer to one's blood-line descendants, his children. One can see this clearly in the following passage from Genesis 15:2-4. Abram is afraid that he has no biological heirs, the only one to inherit him is his servant, Eliezer, whom Abram calls his 'ben,' his son. However, God tells him that it will not be his ben, his son, to inherit from him, but rather his seed, his זֶרַע 'zerah.'

And Abram said, 'Eternal God what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the son בֶּן "ben" of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?' Then Abram said, 'see to me you have given no seed זֶרַע (zerah = biological child), and see the son בֶּן 'ben' of my house is my heir.' Suddenly the word of God came to him, saying, 'that one will not inherit you. None but him that shall come forth from within your bowels shall be your heir.' [Genesis 15:2-4]

So again we see that Jesus did not fulfill the description of the servant in Isaiah 53 because he had no seed, which means no children, no offspring.

For the sake of argument, let us assume that Isaiah was making a prophecy of his future, rather than interpreting his past as the past-tenses of his speech indicate. In that case, Isaiah 53 could be applied not only to the People of Israel in the days of Isaiah, but also throughout history. Try re-reading the Isaiah passage, but think of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, the pogroms, the Inquisition, the Crusades, or other Christian persecutions of Jews, as you read it. Ask yourself, what violence did these Jews do to deserve the fate they endured at the hands of Christians?

Jesus did not fulfill this 'prophecy' of Isaiah 53, nor did he fulfill any of the real and



important prophecies concerning the true Messiah.

Jeremiah 31:31

Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, declares the Eternal. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Eternal. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, Know the Eternal, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Eternal. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

ANALYSIS: Jeremiah 31:31-34 speaks of a ‘new covenant,’ and the term ‘covenant’ means ‘testament.’ So, in these verses, Christians see a prophecy of their New Testament.

Have you ever seen an advertisement on television where a manufacturer has come out with the new and improved version of a product they are already known for, like a laundry detergent? They might say that it is the new and improved version of the old laundry detergent, and the implication is that one is to no longer use the old version. This is the meaning of the term ‘New Testament’ in relationship to the ‘Old Testament,’ that the ‘old’ has been replaced by the ‘new.’ The term ‘testament’ means ‘agreement,’ or ‘contract,’ or ‘covenant.’ When Christians use the term ‘New Testament,’ it is a way of referring to the new covenant that they feel exists between God and believing Christians, which replaced the old contract, or old covenant, the old testament, between God and the Jews.

For this reason, Jews who respect their own faith and their own Hebrew Scriptures should never refer to their own Scriptures as the ‘Old Testament.’ The reason is that the term is insulting to Judaism and to Jews. We don’t believe in a New Testament, and so we certainly should not call ours the ‘Old Testament.’

Jeremiah 31:31 speaks of a ‘new covenant.’ But one could ask the question, ‘is this new covenant a covenant which replaces any of the covenants that God made with the Jews beforehand?’

When God makes a new covenant with the Jews, it is only to re-establish and re-affirm the covenants with the Jews that came before. The covenant God made with Isaac did not replace or break the covenant God made with Abraham. The covenant that God made with Jacob did not replace or break the covenant God made with Isaac or with Abraham. One example of this can be seen in Leviticus 26:42, where the Jews were told in the verses just before verse 42 that when they sin, they will be punished for their sins, but then they are told that God’s covenant with them is eternal: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. [Leviticus 26:42]

Had the covenants that God made with Isaac and Abraham been made null and void by the covenant God made with Jacob, there would have been no need to have specified the covenants God had made with Isaac and Abraham in the verse above.

The covenant that God made with the People of Israel through Moses, did not replace or break the covenant God made with Jacob, or with Isaac, or with Abraham. Every subsequent covenant that God makes with the Jews, re-affirms and re-establishes the covenant that God made with the Jews before it.

The covenant that God made with the Jews is an eternal covenant, and it is a covenant made with them, with their descendants, and with all those who convert to Judaism. God's promise to the Jews, that His covenant with them is eternal, is repeated over and over again throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Here are just a few examples:

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. [Genesis 17:7-8] See also Genesis 17:12-13, Genesis 17:19

O ye seed of Abraham His servant, ye children of Jacob His chosen. He is the Eternal our God: His judgments are in all the earth. He hath remembered His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant He made with Abraham, and His oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant. [Psalm 105:6-10]

The above verses from Psalm 105 are also found in 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 16:13-17. More importantly, that the covenant between God and the Jews is eternal is also found immediately following the very passage in question, of Jeremiah 31:31-34, beginning with the very next verse: Thus saith the Eternal, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Eternal of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Eternal, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. [Jeremiah 31:35-36]

If ever the sun and the moon and the stars, as well as the sea and the waves ever ceased to exist and stopped following the laws governing them, then, of course, the People of Israel would not exist, because all of life would no longer exist.

So the covenant between God and the Jews is an eternal covenant, and when God makes a new covenant, it is with the Jews, and it only reaffirms and reestablishes the earlier covenants which God had made with the Jews, as we saw regarding Leviticus 26:42 above.

Again, let us look at the first verse of our passage from Jeremiah 31:31-34: Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.

This is considered a prophecy because of the first words of the verse, 'Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal.' However, immediately before these few verses that begin with verse 31, there are additional verses that also begin the exact same way, with the words, 'Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal.' When Christians refer to Jeremiah 31:31-34, they are leaving out half of the prophecy because the whole prophecy actually begins with verse 27. As you will read, when one looks at the whole prophecy of Jeremiah 31:27-34, this passage could not be referring to Christianity at all. Here is the whole passage:

Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Eternal. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, declares the Eternal. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Eternal. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, Know the Eternal, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Eternal. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

These verses are, indeed, speaking of the Messianic age, however, they are not speaking of the coming of Jesus and Christianity. Verse 27 speaks of a time when the House of Israel is reunited with the House of Judah, and when they increase in size as well as in resources.

Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. [Jeremiah 31:27]

Then God states that just as He watched over the Jews when He saw fit to punish them, so, too, will He continue to watch over the Jews as everything gets better: And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Eternal. [Jeremiah 31:28]

The next verses actually deny the most basic belief of Christianity, that Jesus can die for your sins: In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and

the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. [Jeremiah 31:29-30]

Verses 29-30 above are saying that in this future time, no one will continue to believe that one person can die and thereby take away the guilt for another person's sins. This is shown by those who recite an old saying (also found in Ezekiel 18) that the father eats sour grapes, but that it is the children who taste the sourness. This old saying expressed the erroneous belief that the parents would sin, but that it was the children who inherited the guilt of their parents' sins. Instead, Jeremiah is saying that when those days come, all will recognize, as the Bible has said repeatedly (See Exodus 32:30-35; Deuteronomy 24:16; and Ezekiel 18:1-4) that the person who sins will always be the only one who gets the punishment for that sin. This is what it states quite simply in Deuteronomy 24:16, No man shall be put to death for the sins of his children, no child will be put to death for the sins of his father. Every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

This description of this messianic age continues with Jeremiah 31:31, which is the passage that Christians usually quote without the verses that come before it. Just a simple overview of these verses indicates that what it describes has not happened yet.

The first verse of the passage reads: Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.

However, the House of Israel, which was made up of the Ten Lost Tribes, have been lost and scattered around the world since the fall of the Northern Kingdom around 721 B.C.E.. The House of Israel, the Ten Lost Tribes, cannot be re-united with the House of Jacob, because the House of Israel has not been around for thousands of years, That is why they are called the Ten LOST Tribes. This passage in Jeremiah is describing a Jewish People where all of the descendants of every tribe thrives, and has made their way to the Promised Land. Because it speaks of both the House of Israel and the House of Judah together, with God, in a single new covenant, and since the House of Israel cannot be unified with the House of Judah, this entire passage has not happened yet, and cannot refer to Christianity or their 'new covenant.'

There is another reference, also in Jeremiah, in the 23rd chapter, that describes the same thing, where all the Jews have returned to the Promised Land, and which also begins with the same words found in Jeremiah 31:27 and 31:31

Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Eternal Is Our Righteousness. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, that they shall no more say, 'The Eternal liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;' But, 'The Eternal liveth, which brought up

and which led the seed of the House of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land. [Jeremiah 23:5-8]

This leads us, now, to look at the next two verses of our passage: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Eternal: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Eternal, I will put my Torah in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. [Jeremiah 31:32-33]

What these verses are saying is that everyone will no longer need to look in any book, neither a 'New Testament,' nor even the Hebrew Scriptures, to tell them what is Right and what is Wrong. They will know it instinctively because it will be in their hearts, truly making God their God, and in turn, truly making them God's People. Certainly this has also not happened yet, and so this passage cannot be referring to Christianity, nor can it be referring to their New Testament.

What, precisely, does it mean to have God's Torah written in our innermost parts? I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy Torah is within my heart. [Psalm 40:8]

Because God's Torah is within us, we know what we are to do, and we are happy to do it. Please also read carefully. Jeremiah 31:33 does not say 'I will put my NEW Torah in their inward parts' It says, 'I will put my Torah in their inward parts.' The laws of God do not change or get changed, they are eternal as God is Eternal: The secret things belong unto the Eternal our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this Torah. [Deuteronomy 29:29]

The Torah of the Eternal is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Eternal is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Eternal are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Eternal is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Eternal is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Eternal are true and righteous altogether. [Psalm 19:8-9]

The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. [Psalm 111:7-8]

As a matter of fact, Ezekiel 11:17-20 reflects the ideas found in Jeremiah 31:27-34: that God's laws will be in our hearts, not books, in the messianic age, which will last forever: Therefore say, Thus saith the Eternal God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things

thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. [Ezekiel 11:17-20]

As I wrote above, this new covenant that God speaks about in Jeremiah 31 is not talking about a new covenant, a new contract, and He does not mean a new set of laws, a new Torah, a new scripture. It means the covenant between God and the Jews and the laws of that covenant are eternal.

Finally, the text from Jeremiah 31 reads, And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Eternal: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Eternal: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. [Jeremiah 31:34]

This new covenant means that no one will have to missionize anyone to 'Know the Eternal,' because the whole world will already believe in God. This part of the passage especially has not happened yet, and this is proven because had it already happened, then Christianity would have no need to missionize anyone! Since they spend hundreds of millions of dollars every year, just to missionize the Jews, just to get the Jews to 'Know the Lord,' then this prophecy in Jeremiah 31 has not happened yet, and these Christian missionaries prove it every day.

#### Proverbs 30:2-4

Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

ANALYSIS: Christian missionaries will show Jews these verses, and ask them to answer the question at the end of verse 4.

Because the verse ends with the questions, 'What is his name and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?' then Christians will tell you that this is a reference to Jesus, the son of God, who, because he was God, can do all the things listed in these verses. Of course, this interpretation can only be valid for those who assume that Jesus was God.

This is not the Jewish interpretation of these verses. These verses are asking rhetorical questions. The Psalmist knows that no one, other than God, can 'gather the wind in his fists, bound the waters in a garment, or establish all the ends of the earth.' These verses are saying that there is no one other than God who can do these things, by asking 'who can do these things' in a rhetorical way. The Bible is clear, only God controls nature, and only God was the author of Creation. Since the answer is that no human can do it, then

there is no name of any human who can do it, and since there is no one who can do it, there is no son of this non-existent person, either.

The text then asks what is the name of the son of God, since it is only God who controls and creates nature. The Bible is clear, there are others besides the Christian Jesus who is called the first born son of God. One example is the Jewish people.

In the following verses, God is telling Moses what to tell Pharaoh. And here, God explicitly states that the People of Israel, the Jews, are God's firstborn son: And the Eternal said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Eternal, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn. [Exodus 4:21-23]

As I wrote in the beginning, there are other interpretations that are equally valid. Perhaps the son of God that Proverbs 30:4 is speaking of is King David, because we have the following biblical verses in Psalm 89 that say exactly that:

I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. [Psalm 89:20]

Or, perhaps, Psalm 30:4 is referring to King Solomon, whom God also calls His son, in 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 22:9

Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever. [1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 22:9]

So there are a few interpretations of this Proverb, however they do not require us to interpret the Bible in a way that is contrary to the Bible, like believing that God had a human son, just as Zeus had human sons.

Psalm 110:1 A Psalm of David. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

ANALYSIS: Christians see this verse as a statement that God, referred to in the first use of

the word 'Lord,' was speaking to Jesus, referred to in the second use of the word, 'Lord.' Christians understand this verse to be saying, 'God said to Jesus...' Of course, this leads me to ask the question, if Jesus were God, than why would God the Father have to make Jesus's enemies into Jesus's footstool? If Jesus were God, wouldn't he be able to do that on his own?

Be that as it may, there are other great problems with this verse. There are no capital letters in Hebrew. By capitalizing both instances of the word 'Lord,' used in the verse, it makes it seem as though both words refer to deity, or to someone who is divine. It is a way of leading the reader to view this verse as one divine entity speaking to another divine entity, which is an interpretation in and of itself because they are choosing to capitalize the first letter of the word in both uses of the word 'Lord.'

To really understand this verse, or for that matter any verse from the Hebrew Scriptures, one must read it in the original Hebrew. This verse begins, in transliteration: L'David mizmor. Ne'um Y.H.V.H. L'Adonee...

לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר נְאֻם יְ-הוָה לְאֲדֹנָי...

There are numerous ways to translate the first phrase of this verse, לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר 'L'David mizmor.' The reason is that the prefix of לְ L' can mean 'of,' or 'for,' or 'to.' This means that there are three possible translations of this phrase, and each one is possibly correct. They are 'Of David,' or 'For David,' or 'To David,'

If the correct translation is "Of David," then it would mean that David wrote this psalm. However, if the correct translation is "To David," or "For David," then it would mean that this was written by someone other than King David, the author is unknown, and this unknown author dedicated it TO King David, and he wrote it FOR King David. Please also notice that the first word used that is translated as 'Lord,' is, indeed, the holiest name for God, יְ-הוָה called the 'Tetragrammaton,' which means 'the four lettered name.' However, the second word that is translated as 'Lord' is not the four letter name for God, the Tetragrammaton, but rather it is the word אֲדֹנָי 'Adonee,' which means 'my master,' or 'my lord' as in the 'lords and ladies' of England's nobility as the author of the King James translation would have understood it. The better way to translate this phrase, then, would be 'God said to my master,' and would have been written by a Psalmist other than King David, about King David, and for King David.

This verse was written about King David, for King David, and the author is saying that God was going to make King David's enemies into King David's footstool, meaning that King David was going to walk all over his enemies, and, indeed, this is what happened, King David defeated the Philistines and forced the Moabites to pay tribute.

Although Christians wish to see this verse as a proof text for their Christian theology, it is interesting the way in which Jesus uses this verse in their own New



Testament. Jesus quotes this verse to 'prove' that the messiah was not going to be a descendant of King David, in spite of the fact that the Jewish people have always believed that the messiah had to be a descendant of King David.

In the verses below, Jesus quotes this verse from Psalm 110:1, and also sees this as King David writing about how God spoke to the messiah. However, Jesus asks how can the messiah be the descendant of King David, if King David himself refers to the messiah as King David's Lord?

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions. [Matthew 22:41-46]

Christian missionaries wish to view Psalm 110 as though it proves that the messiah will be God, but Jesus, in the Christian's New Testament, uses the very same verse to prove that the messiah, if he is divine, cannot be a descendant of King David. Jesus, according to Christian theology was, himself, a descendant of King David, so, according to Jesus in the above verses, Jesus could not have been the messiah. Christians cannot have it both ways.