



A Jewish Woman Explains Why She Reexamined Her Faith

Racquel Hall was born to a Jewish-Israeli mother and an Austrian father who had converted to Judaism. Her maternal grandparents were Zionists who immigrated to Israel in 1948, the year it became an independent State. *Awake!* asked Racquel what made her look more closely at her Jewish faith.

Tell us about your background.

I was born in 1979 in the United States. When I was three, my parents divorced. Mother raised me according to Jewish traditions and sent me to yeshivas, or Jewish schools. When I was seven, we moved to Israel for a year, and I attended school in a work community called a kibbutz. Then Mother and I moved to Mexico.

Although there was not a synagogue in the area, I kept up my Jewish customs. I would light candles for the Sabbath, read our Torah, and pray with the aid of a siddur, or prayer book. At school, I often told my classmates that my religion was *the* original one. I had never read what is commonly called the New Testament, which focuses on the ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ. In fact, Mother warned me not

to, for fear of my becoming polluted by its teachings.

Why did you decide to read the New Testament?

Upon turning 17, I moved back to the United States to finish my secular education. There, an acquaintance who said that he was a Christian told me that my life would be incomplete without Jesus.

"People who believe in Jesus are lost," I replied.

"Have you even read the New Testament?" he asked.

"No," I answered.

"In that case," he said, "aren't you being ignorant, expressing an opinion on something you know nothing about?"

His words cut deeply, for I had always considered it foolish to give opinions blindly. Chastened, I took his Bible home and began to read the New Testament.

How were you affected by what you read?

To my surprise, I discovered that the New Testament writers were Jewish. Also, the more I read, the more I saw Jesus as a kind, humble Jew who wanted to help people, not exploit them. I even went to the library and borrowed books about him. None of these, however, convinced me that he was the Messiah. Some even referred to him as God—a view that made no sense to me. After all, whom did Jesus pray to—himself? What is more, Jesus died. Yet, the Bible says of God: “You do not die.”¹

How did you deal with those issues?

Truth does not contradict itself, and I was determined to find the truth. So I prayed to God sincerely and tearfully—for the first time without the aid of my siddur. No sooner had I finished than there was a knock on the door. It was two of Jehovah’s Witnesses. They gave me one of their Bible study aids. This publication, along with the subse-

quent discussions that I had with the Witnesses, convinced me that their beliefs are based on the Bible. For example, the Witnesses recognize Jesus, not as part of a Trinity, but as “the Son of God”² and “the beginning of the creation of God.”³

Soon thereafter, I returned to Mexico, where I continued to study Messianic prophecies with the Witnesses. I was amazed at how many prophecies there are! Still, I remained somewhat skeptical. I wondered: ‘Was Jesus the *only* one who fit the profile?’ and ‘What if he was simply a clever actor playing out the role?’

What was your turning point?

The Witnesses showed me prophecies that no impostor could act out. For example, more than 700 years in advance, the prophet Micah said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, Judea.⁴ Who can control where he is born? Isaiah wrote that the Messiah would be killed as a despised criminal, yet he would be buried with the rich class.⁵ All these predictions were fulfilled in Jesus.

The final piece of evidence involved Jesus’ ancestry. The Bible said that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David.⁶ Because the an-

cient Jews kept public and private genealogical records, if Jesus had not been of David’s family line, his enemies would have shouted this from the rooftops! But they could not, for Jesus’ link to David was incontestable. Crowds even addressed him as “the Son of David.”⁷

In 70 C.E.—37 years after Jesus died—Roman armies devastated Jerusalem, and the genealogical records were either lost or destroyed. Thus, to be identified genealogically, the Messiah *had* to appear before 70 C.E.

How did this realization affect you?

At Deuteronomy 18:18, 19, it was foretold that God would raise up in Israel a prophet like Moses. Anyone “who will not listen to my words that he will speak in my name, I shall myself require an account from him,” God said. My in-depth study of the *whole* Bible convinced me that Jesus of Nazareth was that prophet. ■

1. Habakkuk 1:12.

2. John 1:34.

3. Revelation 3:14, *King James Version*.

4. Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1.

5. Isaiah 53:3, 7, 9; Mark 15:43, 46.

6. Isaiah 9:6, 7; Luke 1:30-32.

Matthew chapter 1 records Jesus’ paternal ancestry, and Luke chapter 3, his maternal ancestry.

7. Matthew 21:9.