

“Ask the Rabbi”
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Sunday, June 02, 2019

- Please tell us a bit about yourself.
 - Could you please share the journey that has brought you to your current position?
 - We know the Methodist trek, but what about for the Jewish people who following the call?
- Jesus and the Messiah.
 - Jesus
 - The Messiah
 - Explain the first century conditions that caused some Jews to decide to follow Jesus and others not to.
- Scriptures
 - Hebrew Scriptures
 - Rabbinic Literature
 - What is Midrash, their origin and use in the Jewish faith?
 - Explain what constitutes the Jewish scriptures, their origins, and the impact of subsequent translations thereof.
 - Do Jews believe that the New Testament provides any new or different perspectives on God?
- Hebrew Calendar
 - Please explain the Jewish festivals and their importance to the Jewish people.
- Choseness
 - What does it mean for the Jewish people to be "God's chosen people"? What does that mean for non-Jews?

- Jesus in Judaism
 - Who Was Jesus?
 - The Historical Jesus
 - 1st century Jew
 - Scholars believe born sometime in the decade before the Common Era and crucified sometime between 26-36 CE (the years when the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, ruled Judea)
 - Teacher of Torah (“rabbi” = “teacher”)

Messiah—

- מָשִׁיחַ, *Mashiach* translated into Greek is Χριστός, *Cristos*
 - Jesus was known as The Christ, meaning “Anointed One.”
 - The Council of Nicea (325) made the doctrinal assertion that made “Jesus the Christ,” according to Christian Doctrine.
- In Judaism—
 - Scriptural Approach:
 - The whole world will worship the One God of Israel (Isaiah 2:11–17)
 - Knowledge of God will fill the world (Isaiah 11:9)
 - The "spirit of the Lord" will be upon him, and he will have a "fear of God" (Isaiah 11:2)
 - He will be a messenger of peace (Isaiah 52:7)
 - Evil and tyranny will not be able to stand before his leadership (Isaiah 11:4)
 - He will be descended from King David (Isaiah 11:1) via Solomon (1 Chronicles 22:8–10, 2 Chronicles 7:18)
 - All Israelites will be returned to their homeland (Isaiah 11:12)
 - All of the dead will rise again (Isaiah 26:19)
 - The Sanhedrin will be re-established."(Isaiah 1:26)
 - Historical:
 - During the Second Temple Period (586BCE-70CE), there was no textual reference to an individual end-time messiah.
 - Discussions arise regarding a messiah in the Talmud (500-600 CE).
 - Maimonides’ Mishneh Torah discusses a messiah. According to Maimonides, Jesus of Nazareth is not the Messiah, as is claimed by Christians and Muslims.

○ Modern Approach:

▪ Orthodox Judaism—

- maintains that Jews are obliged to accept Maimonides' 13 Principles of Faith as formulated by in his Mishneh Torah. Each principle starts with the words *Ani Maamin* (I believe). Number 12 is the main principle relating to *Mashiach*. The text is as follows:

אני מאמין באמונה שלמה בביאת המשיח,
ואף על פי שיתמהמה עם כל זה אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא

Ani Maamin B'emunah Sh'leimah B'viyat Hamashiach.

V'af al pi sheyitmahmehah im kol zeh achake lo b'chol yom sheyavo.

I believe with full faith in the coming of the Messiah.

And even though he tarries, with all that, I await his arrival with every day.

▪ Conservative Judaism—

- *Emet Ve-Emunah*, the Conservative movement's statement of principles, states the following:
 - Since no one can say for certain what will happen in the Messianic era each of us is free to fashion personal speculation. Some of us accept these speculations are literally true, while others understand them as elaborate metaphors... For the world community we dream of an age when warfare will be abolished, when justice and compassion will be axioms of all, as it is said in Isaiah 11: "...the land shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." For our people, we dream of the ingathering of all Jews to Zion where we can again be masters of our own destiny and express our distinctive genius in every area of our national life. We affirm Isaiah's prophecy (2:3) that "...Torah shall come forth from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

We do not know when the Messiah will come, nor whether he will be a charismatic human figure or is a symbol of the redemption of humankind from the evils of the world. Through the doctrine of a Messianic figure, Judaism teaches us that every individual human being must live as if he or she, individually, has the responsibility to bring about the messianic age. Beyond that, we echo the words of Maimonides based on the prophet Habakkuk (2:3) that though he may tarry, yet do we wait for him each day.

- Reform Judaism—
 - Does not accept the idea that there will be a Messiah. Some believe that there may be some sort of "messianic age" in the sense of a "utopia" or a return to Eden, which all Jews are obligated to work towards (thus the tradition of *Tikkun Olam*).

In 1999, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the official body of American Reform rabbis, authored "A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism", meant to describe and define the spiritual state of modern Reform Judaism. In a commentary appended to the platform, it states:

- **Messianic age:** The 1885 Pittsburgh Platform rejected the traditional Jewish hope for an heir of King David to arise when the world was ready to acknowledge that heir as the one anointed (the original meaning of *mashiach*, anglicized into "messiah"). This figure would rule in God's name over all people and ultimately usher in a time of justice, truth and peace. In the *Avot*, the first prayer of the *Amidah*, Reformers changed the prayerbook's hope for a *go-el*, a redeemer, to *geulah*, redemption. Originally this idea reflected the views of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and the French Positivist philosophers that society was growing ever more enlightened. The cataclysmic events of the first half of the 20th Century smashed that belief, and most Reform Jews saw the messianic age as a time that would probably be far off. Still, we renew our hope for it when we express the belief that *Shabbat* is *mey-eyn olam ha-ba*, a sampler of the world to come, when we sing about *Elijah*, herald of the messiah, when *Havdalah* brings *Shabbat* to a close, when we open the door for *Elijah* late in the *Pesach Seder*, and when we express the hope in the first paragraph of the *Kaddish* that God's sovereignty will be established in our days.