

The Jewish Jesus

12 LESSONS

ALL THINGS NEW

CREDITS

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WAS JESUS A JEW?

I. THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What was Jesus' ethnic or religious identity?

Many people today struggle to answer this question clearly. Common responses often reflect modern assumptions, portraying Jesus as Christian, Catholic, European, a Middle Eastern guru, or a Palestinian figure. The New Testament, however, provides direct testimony from those who encountered him.

II. How Was Jesus Identified by Others?

1. What title did the Wise Men from the East use for the newborn child?
Read: Matthew 2:1, 2

2. How did the Samaritan woman describe Jesus?
Read: John 4:7-9

3. What title did Pilate place above the cross?
Read: John 19:19

III. How Did Jesus' Followers Describe Him?

4. What do the genealogies say?
Read: Matthew 1:1; Luke 3:23-34

5. From which lineage did Jesus descend?
Read: Romans 1:3

6. From which tribe did Jesus come?
Read: Hebrews 7:14

7. From which people did he come?
Read: Romans 9:4, 5

IV. What Kind of Jew Was Jesus?

8. Was Jesus circumcised?

Read: Luke 2:21 (cf. Genesis 17)

9. What was his name, and what does it mean?

Read: Luke 2:21; Matthew 1:21

- A Jewish name, meaning "He will save"; in Hebrew– *Yeshua*ʿ

10. Was he presented in the Temple?

Read: Luke 2:22-24

11. Did Jesus participate in Jewish festivals?

Read: John 2:13; Luke 2:41, 42

12. Did Jesus observe the Sabbath?

Read: Luke 4:16

13. Did Jesus read Scripture in the synagogue?

Read: Luke 4:16-21

14. Did Jesus wear *tzitzit* (fringes) in his clothes, as a Jewish man should do?

Read: Matthew 9:20; Mark 6:56 (cf. Numbers 15:37-41)

15. What did Jesus teach about the Law?

Read: Matthew 5:17, 18

16. What is the greatest commandment for Jesus?

Read: Mark 12:29, 30 (cf. Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

17. How did Jesus pray?

Read: Matthew 6:9; 14:19

18. How was Jesus buried?

Read: John 19:40-42

V. Conclusion

Jesus was deeply rooted in Jewish life, faith, and practice. He was a Jew, a religious Jew, and understanding this context helps clarify his life and teachings.

ANSWER KEY

1. **King of the Jews**
2. **As a Jew**
3. **King of the Jews**
4. **Son of David, son of Abraham**
5. **From David**
6. **Judah**
7. **The people of Israel**
8. **Yes, on the eighth day**
9. **Jesus**
10. **Yes, according to the law of Moses**
11. **Yes**
12. **Yes, it was his custom**
13. **Yes**
14. **Yes**
15. **He came not to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them**
16. **To love God fully; commandment known by the Jews as the Shema**
17. **"Our Father"; he pronounced a blessing before breaking bread for a meal**
18. **According to Jewish customs**



JESUS' BIRTH: A JEWISH CONTEXT

I. The Central Question

Is the birth of Jesus a real event?

When people think about Jesus' birth, they often mix the biblical story of the manger, shepherds, wise men, and the star with later Christmas traditions such as Santa Claus, reindeer, gifts, and decorated trees. This mixture may lead some to wonder: Is Jesus' birth simply a religious legend, or is it a real event rooted in history?

II. The Historical Setting

1. In what historical context does Luke place the birth of Jesus?

Read: Luke 2:1, 2

- Caesar Augustus ruled from 27 B.C.E. to 14 C.E.

III. What Kind of Jewish People Appear in the Birth Narratives?

2. Who were Zechariah and Elizabeth?

Read: Luke 1:5-7

3. What is the significance of Gabriel's appearance to Zechariah?

Read: Luke 1:11, 19; Daniel 9:21-25

- Gabriel's appearance links Jesus' birth to Daniel's vision of the coming messianic age.

4. What role would the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth fulfill?

Read: Luke 1:17; Malachi 4:5, 6

IV. Mary and Joseph: A Devout Jewish Family

5. How is Mary presented in the Gospel narratives?

Read: Luke 1:26-38

6. How does Matthew connect Jesus' birth to prophecy?

Read: Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 7:14

- The Hebrew *'almah* in Isaiah refers to a young woman of marriageable age, and the Greek *parthenos* in Matthew has a similar meaning. Mary fit this description: she was a young woman who was engaged and had not had relations with a man.

7. How is Joseph described?

Read: Matthew 1:18-25

V. Jesus Within Jewish Life and Practice

8. Was Jesus circumcised according to the covenant?

Read: Luke 2:21; Genesis 17:10-12

9. What name was given to him, and what does it mean?

Read: Luke 2:21; Matthew 1:21

- It was a common Jewish name in the Second Temple period.

10. Was Jesus presented in the Temple according to the Law?

Read: Luke 2:22-24 (cf. Exodus 13, firstborn dedication; Leviticus 12, purification rites)

VI. Recognition by Faithful Jews

11. Who was Simeon, and what did he expect?

Read: Luke 2:25-32

12. Who was Anna, and how did she respond?

Read: Luke 2:36-38

VII. The Announcement to the Shepherds

13. To whom was Jesus' birth first announced?

Read: Luke 2:8-20

14. How did the shepherds respond?

Read: Luke 2:17, 20

VIII. The Visit of the Wise Men (the Magi)

15. When did the Wise Men arrive in Judea seeking the child who had been born?

Read: Matthew 2:1-12, 16

16. How did the Wise Men identify Jesus?

Read: Matthew 2:2

17. Which prophecies guided their search?

Read: Numbers 24:17; Micah 5:2

IX. Conclusion

The birth narratives of Jesus are deeply rooted in the faith, practices, and messianic hopes of Israel, presenting faithful Jews living within the world of the Torah, Temple, and biblical prophecy. Jesus is introduced not outside Judaism, but within the history, covenant, and hope of the Jewish people.

ANSWER KEY

1. **The census ordered by Caesar Augustus throughout the Roman world**
2. **Highly devout and observant Jews from a priestly (*kohen*) family**
3. **The time for the coming of the Messiah had arrived**
4. **He would prepare the way for the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah**
5. **As a faithful young Jewish woman from Nazareth**
6. **Matthew connects Jesus' birth to Isaiah's prophecy**
7. **As a righteous man faithful to the Torah**
8. **Yes, on the eighth day as a regular Jewish baby boy**
9. **Jesus/*Yeshua*ʿ—"He will save"**
10. **Yes**
11. **A righteous man waiting for the consolation of Israel**
12. **A Jewish prophetess devoted to prayer and fasting who thanked God and told others about the child**
13. **To shepherds near Bethlehem**
14. **They glorified God and spread the message about the child**
15. **As much as two years later they found the child in a house**
16. **As "King of the Jews"**
17. **The prophecy that a star would come out of Jacob and a scepter from Israel, and that the promised ruler would be born in Bethlehem**

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JESUS AS A RABBI IN FIRST-CENTURY JUDAISM

I. The Central Question

Was Jesus recognized as a rabbi?

How was Jesus viewed by those who encountered him? Was he recognized by many of his contemporaries as a Jewish teacher? And how did his methods of teaching and interpreting Scripture compare with those of other Jewish teachers of his day?

II. Jesus as a Rabbi

1. How was Jesus addressed by those who followed or encountered him?

Read: John 1:38; John 3:2; John 6:25

- This shows that Jesus was recognized as a Jewish teacher.

III. Jesus and the Synagogue

2. Did Jesus teach in synagogues?

Read: Luke 4:16-21; Matthew 4:23

- This reflects the Jewish practice of public Scripture reading and instruction.

3. Did Jewish communities gather in synagogues for instruction on the Sabbath?

Read: Luke 4:16-21

- Jesus' synagogue teaching fits the broader Jewish practice of Sabbath instruction and interpretation of the Torah.
- Second Temple Jewish sources describe Jews gathering in synagogues especially on the Sabbath for learning and instruction.

IV. Jesus as an Itinerant Jewish Teacher

4. Where else did Jesus teach besides the synagogue?

Read: Matthew 5:1, 2; Mark 4:1; Luke 6:17-20

- This reflects the itinerant activity of Jewish teachers in the first century.

5. Did Jesus teach large groups of people publicly?

Read: Matthew 4:25; Mark 2:13

- Like other Jewish teachers, Jesus instructed both disciples and the wider public.

V. Jesus and Jewish Methods of Teaching

6. What was one of Jesus' preferred methods of teaching?

Read: Matthew 13:3-9; Luke 15:3-32

- Parables were a common Jewish form of instruction using everyday life to communicate spiritual truths.

7. What method of reasoning did Jesus frequently use?

Read: Matthew 6:26; 7:11

- The rabbinic principle known as *kal va-ḥomer*—"from the lesser to the greater"—argues that if something is true in a lesser case, how much more in a greater one.

8. Did Jesus interpret Scripture?

Read: Luke 4:16-21

- One of the functions of a rabbi was to interpret and explain the Scriptures to the audience gathered around him.

9. Did Jesus participate in Jewish discussions about the Law?

Read: Mark 2:23-28; Mark 7:1-23; Matthew 19:3-9

- These were internal Jewish debates about how the Torah should be understood and practiced.

10. How did people respond to Jesus' teaching?

Read: Matthew 7:28, 29

VI. Conclusion

The Gospels portray Jesus as a Jewish teacher who was recognized and addressed as a rabbi by many of his contemporaries, and who engaged in the teaching methods and activities typical of Jewish rabbis of his time:

- Teaching in synagogues and public places
- Interpreting Scripture
- Using Jewish methods of argumentation and parables
- Living within the religious world of Judaism

Understanding Jesus as a Jewish rabbi helps clarify both his teaching methods and the historical setting of his ministry.

ANSWER KEY

1. **As Rabbi, meaning "Teacher"**
2. **Yes, Jesus read and interpreted Scripture in synagogues**
3. **Yes**
4. **In mountains, fields, villages, and by the sea**
5. **Yes**
6. **Parables**
7. **"If . . . how much more . . ."**
8. **Yes, Jesus interpreted and applied Scripture to his listeners**
9. **Yes, he participated in discussions about Sabbath, purity, and divorce**
10. **They recognized that he taught with authority**

The Jewish Jesus



JESUS AND THE TORAH

I. The Central Question

Did Jesus reject the Torah and establish a new religion?

Many assume that Jesus replaced the Torah with a new set of beliefs and ethics. But what did Jesus himself teach?

II. Jesus and the Commandments of the Torah

1. What did Jesus identify as the greatest commandment?

Read: Mark 12:28-30

- Jesus quotes the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5), the central confession of Jewish faith.

2. What did Jesus identify as the second greatest commandment?

Read: Mark 12:31

- Jesus quotes Leviticus 19:18.

3. Was this understanding shared by other Jewish teachers?

Read: Luke 10:25-28

- A Torah scholar cites the same two commandments, and Jesus approves his answer.

III. Jesus and Biblical Ethics

4. How did Jesus summarize ethical behavior?

Read: Matthew 7:12

- A similar principle appears in Hillel's teaching (Talmud, Shabbat 31a): "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah."

IV. Jesus' Proclamation of the Torah

5. What did Jesus say about his relationship to the Torah?

Read: Matthew 5:17

- The Greek verb *plēroō* ("to fulfill") means "to complete" or "bring to full expression." Jesus sought to reveal the Torah's fullest meaning.

6. How important did Jesus consider the Torah?

Read: Matthew 5:18

7. Did Jesus replace God's commandments with his own?

Read: Matthew 5:21, 22, 27, 28

- He affirmed the Torah, intensified its demands, and revealed its deeper spiritual implications.

V. Jesus and the Torah of Kedoshim (Leviticus 19; 20)

8. What common theme links Leviticus 19 and Jesus' teaching?

Read: Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 5:48

- "You shall be holy . . ."; "Be perfect . . ."

9. How does Leviticus connect murder with attitudes of the heart?

Read: Leviticus 19:16, 17

10. How does Jesus deepen this commandment?

Read: Matthew 5:21, 22

11. How do both texts conclude?

Read: Leviticus 19:17b; Matthew 5:23-26

12. How does Jesus deepen the commandment against adultery?

Read: Leviticus 20:10; Matthew 5:27-32

13. What does the Torah teach about oaths?

Read: Leviticus 19:11, 12

14. How does Jesus apply this principle?

Read: Matthew 5:33-37

15. What does the Torah teach about vengeance?

Read: Leviticus 19:17, 18

16. How does Jesus develop this teaching?

Read: Matthew 5:38-42

- Like Jeremiah during the Babylonian crisis (Lamentations 3:22-33, especially verse 30), Jesus calls people to trust God's justice rather than pursue vengeance.

17. Whom does the Torah command Israel to love?

Read: Leviticus 19:18, 33, 34

18. How does Jesus expand this principle?

Read: Matthew 5:43-48

- Jesus calls his followers to imitate God's love for all people.

VI. Conclusion

Jesus did not reject the Torah. Rather, he affirmed its greatest commandments, summarized its ethical vision in the golden rule, explicitly denied any intention of abolishing it, and revealed its deepest spiritual and moral implications.

ANSWER KEY

1. **Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength**
2. **Love your neighbor as yourself**
3. **Yes**
4. **"Do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the law and the prophets"**
5. **"I have not come to abolish but to fulfill"**
6. **Not even the smallest letter would pass away until all is accomplished**
7. **No**
8. **Imitating God's character**
9. **The Torah condemns slander and hatred, linking them to the commandment against murder**
10. **Anger, insults, and contempt violate the spirit of the commandment against murder**
11. **With the necessity of reconciliation**
12. **Lustful desire is adultery in the heart, and marriage is a sacred covenant**
13. **God's people must not lie or swear falsely**
14. **Truthfulness should be so consistent that oaths become unnecessary**
15. **Do not take vengeance or bear grudges**
16. **He calls for nonretaliation instead of personal revenge**
17. **Both the neighbor and the resident foreigner (*gēr*)**
18. **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you**



JESUS AND THE SHABBAT

I. The Central Question

Did Jesus reject the Shabbat?

Many people assume that Jesus opposed the Shabbat because of his disputes with some religious leaders. The Gospels, however, present him as a faithful Shabbat observer whose disagreements concerned the interpretation of the commandment rather than its validity.

II. Jesus as a Shabbat-Observing Jew

1. Did Jesus regularly observe the Shabbat?

Read: Luke 4:16

- Luke states that Jesus entered the synagogue on the Shabbat, "as was his custom." The Shabbat was a regular part of his life, worship, and ministry.

2. Where did Jesus commonly teach on the Shabbat?

Read: Mark 1:21; Luke 4:31

III. Jesus and the Purpose of the Shabbat

3. What principle did Jesus use to explain the Shabbat?

Read: Mark 2:27

- Jesus presents the Shabbat as God's gift for human benefit and well-being.

4. What question did Jesus ask concerning Shabbat observance?

Read: Mark 3:4

- For Jesus, Shabbat observance cannot be separated from concern for human life.

IV. Jesus' Shabbat Healings

5. Did Jesus perform healings on the Shabbat?

Read: Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 13:10-17; John 9:1-17

- Many of Jesus' most famous miracles occurred on the Shabbat.

6. How did Jesus describe the healing of the bent-over woman?

Read: Luke 13:16

- The Shabbat is presented as a day of healing, restoration, and freedom.

V. Creation, Redemption, and Mercy

7. What two great biblical themes stand behind the Shabbat commandment?

Read: Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15

- The Shabbat commemorates both God's creation of the world and Israel's liberation from slavery.

8. What prophetic text did Jesus use to defend his actions?

Read: Matthew 12:7 (cf. Hosea 6:6)

- Jesus teaches that mercy is one of the Torah's highest values.

VI. Parallels in Jewish Thought

9. Is there a similar emphasis on mercy and the preservation of life in Jewish tradition?

Read: Leviticus 18:5

- Jewish tradition developed the principle of *pikuach nefesh* ("the preservation of life"), according to which saving life takes precedence over most Shabbat restrictions. Maimonides (Rambam) taught that God's commandments were given so that people might live through them and that the Torah brings "mercy, kindness, and peace into the world" (*Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Shabbat* 2:3).

10. Would all Jewish teachers have considered the disciples' plucking grain on the Shabbat to be unlawful?

Read: Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5

- David Flusser (*The Sage From Galilee*, 4th ed. [2007], p. 35) noted that some Galilean Jewish traditions permitted rubbing grain in one's hands on the Shabbat and pointed to a similar tradition in the Talmud (*b. Shabbat* 128a). The dispute is best understood as an intra-Jewish debate over Shabbat observance rather than a rejection of the Torah.

VII. Conclusion

Jesus faithfully observed the Shabbat and affirmed its importance. His disagreements concerned interpretations that, in his view, obscured the commandment's humanitarian and redemptive purposes. For Jesus, the Shabbat was a divine gift intended for worship, rest, healing, liberation, compassion, and the preservation of life. Rather than abolishing the Shabbat, he sought to restore its original purpose and reveal its fullest significance within the life of God's people.

ANSWER KEY

1. **Yes**
2. **In the synagogues**
3. **"The Shabbat was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Shabbat"**
4. **"Is it lawful on the Shabbat to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?"**
5. **Yes**
6. **As an act of liberation appropriate to the Shabbat**
7. **Creation and redemption**
8. **"I desire mercy and not sacrifice"**
9. **Yes**
10. **No**



JESUS AND JEWISH TRADITION (MASORET)

I. The Central Question

Did Jesus reject Jewish tradition and religious authority?

Many people assume that he did. What do the Gospels actually reveal about Jesus' attitude toward Jewish tradition and the religious leaders of his day?

II. Jesus and Religious Authority

1. Did Jesus recognize the authority of Jewish teachers?

Read: Matthew 23:2, 3

- Jesus acknowledged that the scribes and Pharisees "sit on Moses' seat," recognizing their authority to teach and interpret the Torah. His criticism was directed at those who failed to practice what they taught.

III. Jesus and Jewish Customs

2. Did Jesus participate in Jewish traditions not explicitly commanded in the Torah?

Read: Luke 4:16; John 10:22, 23

- Jesus regularly attended synagogue services and was present in Jerusalem during Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication. These customs developed within Jewish tradition rather than the written Torah.

IV. When Tradition Conflicts With Torah

3. What happened when tradition contradicted God's commandments?

Read: Matthew 15:1-9

- Jesus criticized the Corban tradition because it could prevent people from honoring and supporting their parents, thereby nullifying the commandment of God.

4. How did Jesus summarize his attitude toward such traditions?

Read: Matthew 15:13

- Traditions are legitimate only when they remain in harmony with God's will and commandments.

V. Jesus and the Pharisees

5. Were all Pharisees opposed to Jesus?

Read: Luke 13:31; John 7:50, 51

- Some Pharisees warned Jesus about threats from Herod, while Nicodemus defended him before the Jerusalem authorities. Their relationship with Jesus was more complex than simple opposition.

6. In what ways was Jesus closer to the Pharisees than to the Sadducees?

Read: Matthew 22:23-33; Acts 23:6-8

- On these important doctrines, Jesus stood much closer to the Pharisees than to the Sadducees.

7. How did Jesus differ from the Essenes and the Zealots?

Read: Matthew 5:38-48

- Unlike the Essenes, Jesus associated with ordinary people and sinners. Unlike the Zealots, he taught love for enemies and prayer for persecutors.

8. What important teachings did Jesus share with the Pharisees?

Read: Mark 12:28-34; Matthew 7:12

- Many of Jesus' debates with the Pharisees took place within a shared commitment to the Torah and its interpretation.

VI. Pharisees and Jewish Leaders Who Followed Jesus

9. Did any Pharisees or Jewish leaders become followers of Jesus?

Read: John 19:39, 40; Matthew 27:57; Acts 15:5

- Nicodemus supported Jesus and helped prepare his body for burial. Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the council, provided his own tomb for Jesus' burial. The book of Acts also mentions Pharisees who became believers.

VII. Conclusion

Jesus recognized the authority of Jewish teachers, participated in important Jewish traditions, and often agreed with Pharisaic interpretations. His criticism was directed toward traditions that displaced or contradicted God's commandments. Rather than rejecting Judaism or its traditions, Jesus called God's people to distinguish between human customs and those traditions that truly reflected the will of God.

ANSWER KEY

1. **Yes**
2. **Yes**
3. **Jesus rejected it**
4. **“Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted”**
5. **No**
6. **He shared their belief in the resurrection, angels, and spirits**
7. **He emphasized outreach rather than separation, and love rather than violence**
8. **Love for God, love for one’s neighbor, and the golden rule**
9. **Yes**

The Jewish Jesus



JESUS AND THE PROPHECIES OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

I. THE CENTRAL QUESTION

Is there a relationship between Jesus and the prophecies of the Hebrew Bible?

The Hebrew Scriptures contain promises concerning the future of Israel, the coming of a ruler from the house of David, the Servant of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead, and God's eternal kingdom. Did Jesus or his earliest Jewish followers see any connection between these prophecies and his life and mission? And what did Jesus teach about the future of Israel, humanity, and God's kingdom?

II. Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus

1. Did the Hebrew Bible foretell the birthplace of the promised ruler from the house of David?

Read: Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-6; 1:1

- The promised ruler was expected to come from Bethlehem and to descend from the house of David. The New Testament presents Jesus as fulfilling both expectations.

2. How does the New Testament understand Isaiah's prophecy of Immanuel and the promised Son of David?

Read: Isaiah 7:14; 9:6, 7; Matthew 1:22, 23; Luke 1:32, 33

- The child called Immanuel becomes part of Isaiah's larger vision of a royal Son whose kingdom will never end. The New Testament identifies Jesus as this promised ruler.

3. How is Jesus connected with Isaiah's Servant of the Lord and the Akedah of Isaac?

Read: Isaiah 42:1; Genesis 22:2; Matthew 3:16, 17

- At Jesus' *tevilah* ("baptism"), God's words echo both Isaiah's Servant of the Lord, in whom God delights and upon whom He places His Spirit, and Isaac, Abraham's beloved son in the *Akedah* (Genesis 22). In this way, the Gospels present Jesus as both the Servant and the beloved Son whose mission will culminate in sacrifice.

4. Did Jesus understand his ministry in light of Isaiah's Servant prophecies?

Read: Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:16-21

- Jesus applied Isaiah's words to himself and understood his ministry of preaching, healing, and restoration as the work of the Servant of the Lord.

5. Did the Hebrew Bible predict the suffering and sacrificial death of the Servant?

Read: Isaiah 53:5-12; Psalm 22:1, 16-18

- Isaiah describes the Servant as suffering

for others and bearing the sins of many. Psalm 22 portrays a righteous sufferer. The New Testament applies both passages to Jesus' crucifixion (John 12:38; Acts 8:32-35; Matthew 27:46; John 19:23, 24).

6. Did the Hebrew Bible anticipate the Servant's resurrection and vindication?

Read: Isaiah 53:10-12; Psalm 16:10

- Although the Servant dies, Isaiah declares that he will live, prosper, and be exalted. Peter and Paul apply Psalm 16:10 directly to Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:25-32; 13:35-37).

III. Prophecies Jesus Taught About

7. What did Jesus predict concerning Jerusalem and the Temple?

- Read: Matthew 24:2, 21; Luke 21:20, 21

- Jesus warned of a time of unprecedented suffering for the Jewish people. His prediction was fulfilled in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 CE.

8. What did Jesus predict about God's message?

- Read: Matthew 24:14

- Jesus taught that the good news of God's kingdom would be proclaimed throughout the world.

9. What did Jesus teach about his return?

- Read: Daniel 7:13, 14; Matthew 24:30

- Drawing on Daniel's vision, Jesus foretold his future coming with power and great glory.

10. What did Jesus teach about the resurrection and judgment?

- Read: John 5:28, 29

- Both the righteous and the wicked will be resurrected and stand before God.

11. What did Jesus teach about God's eternal kingdom?

- Read: Matthew 24:30, 31; 25:31-34

- Jesus taught that God's purposes for Israel and for all humanity will reach their fulfillment when he returns and establishes God's everlasting kingdom.

IV. Conclusion

The New Testament presents Jesus as fulfilling prophecies concerning the promised Son of David, the Servant of the Lord, his suffering, death, resurrection, and future reign. It also portrays him as a prophet who announced future events. Some of these, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, were fulfilled within history, while others—including the worldwide proclamation of God's message, the resurrection of the dead, his return in glory, and the establishment of God's eternal kingdom—still await their fulfillment.

ANSWER KEY

1. **Yes**
2. **As pointing ultimately to Jesus**
3. **Jesus is presented as both the Servant and the beloved Son**
4. **Yes**
5. **Yes**
6. **Yes**
7. **Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed**
8. **It would reach all nations**
9. **He will return in glory**
10. **All the dead will be raised and judged**
11. **God's kingdom will be fully revealed at his return**

The Jewish Jesus



JESUS AND THE MESSIAH

I. The Central Question

How should the messianic prophecies of the Hebrew Bible be understood?

The Hebrew Scriptures contain prophecies about a descendant of David who establishes God's everlasting kingdom, but they also contain passages describing a servant who suffers and dies. How are these two pictures related?

II. The Messiah in the Hebrew Bible

1. What future did the prophets associate with the coming of the Messiah?

Read: Isaiah 2:1-5; 11:1-10; 35

- The prophets describe a future in which Israel is restored, Jerusalem becomes a blessing to the nations, war ceases, and the knowledge of God fills the earth.

2. Did the Hebrew Bible also contain prophecies of a suffering messianic figure?

Read: Isaiah 52:13–53:12; Zechariah 12:10; Psalm 22:1-21

- Several passages describe a righteous servant who suffers, is rejected, and endures affliction before the final redemption is established.

III. Two Proposed Solutions

3. How did some rabbinic interpreters explain these two different portraits of the Messiah?

Read: Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a

"One said that this eulogy is for Messiah ben Yosef who was killed . . . prior to the ultimate redemption with the coming of Messiah ben David. . . . Once Messiah ben David saw Messiah ben Yosef, who was killed, he said: 'Master of the Universe, I ask of You only life.' . . . 'He asked life of You, You gave it to him; even length of days for ever and ever.' "

- According to this interpretation, Messiah ben Joseph would suffer and die, while Messiah ben David would establish God's kingdom and bring final redemption.

4. How does the New Testament explain these two groups of prophecies?

Read: Luke 24:26; Acts 3:18-21; Hebrews 9:26-28

- According to the New Testament, the same Messiah first comes in humility to suffer and redeem, and later returns in glory to establish God's everlasting kingdom.

IV. Daniel and the Timing of the Messiah

5. Which biblical book played a major role in shaping Jewish expectations about the Messiah?

Read: Daniel 7:13, 14; 9:24-27

- Daniel contains prophecies concerning both the coming of God's Anointed One and the establishment of God's eternal kingdom.

6. What does Daniel 9 predict concerning the Messiah?

Read: Daniel 9:24-27

- The prophecy announces that God's Anointed One would appear after a defined prophetic period, bring reconciliation, and then suffer a violent death.

7. What does Daniel predict would happen after the Messiah is "cut off"?

Read: Daniel 9:26

- The prophecy states that a foreign people would destroy the city and the sanctuary, followed by a prolonged period of war and desolation.

8. When does Daniel place the establishment of God's eternal kingdom?

Read: Daniel 2:44; 7:13, 14, 27

- Daniel describes a succession of earthly kingdoms before God finally establishes His everlasting kingdom and gives dominion to the Son of Man and to the saints.

V. Conclusion

How did many Jewish followers of Jesus understand these prophecies? They understood Daniel 9 as pointing to the Messiah's first coming to address the problem of sin, confirm God's covenant, and suffer death on behalf of others. They understood Daniel 2, 7, and 12 as pointing to his future coming in glory at the end of history to establish God's eternal kingdom and bring God's purposes for Israel and humanity to their fulfillment.

Thus, the rabbinic solution proposes two distinct messiahs—one who suffers and one who reigns—whereas the New Testament proposes one Messiah whose mission unfolds in two stages: first, suffering and redemption; then, glory and kingdom.

ANSWER KEY

1. **A time of peace, justice, restoration, and God's universal reign**
2. **Yes**
3. **By proposing two messiahs**
4. **As two stages in the mission of one Messiah**
5. **The book of Daniel**
6. **He would come at a specific time, deal with sin, and be "cut off"**
7. **Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed**
8. **At the end of history**



JESUS AND THE SERVICE OF THE TEMPLE (AVODAT BEIT HAMIKDASH)

I. The Central Question

How did Jesus view the Temple and its service?

Many people view the sacrifices, rituals, and priesthood of the Temple as primitive religious practices. Did Jesus share this view, or did he recognize a deeper divine purpose in them?

II. Jesus and the Temple

1. Did Jesus recognize the importance of the Temple?

Read: Luke 2:49; John 2:16; Mark 11:17

- Jesus called the Temple "my Father's house" and defended its holiness. He affirmed its role as a place of worship, prayer, and communion with God.

III. The Service of the Temple

2. What were the two central institutions of the Temple service?

Read: Deuteronomy 12:5, 6; 2 Chronicles 26:18

- Sacrifices could be offered only at God's chosen sanctuary, while only the priests could officiate in its services.

3. What was the purpose of the sacrifices?

Read: Leviticus 17:11

- The Hebrew word *qorban* ("offering") means "to draw near." Through sacrifice God provided a means of forgiveness and reconciliation.

4. What was the role of the priests?

Read: Deuteronomy 33:10

- The priests offered sacrifices, taught God's law, interceded for the people, and pronounced God's blessings.

IV. The Purpose of the Temple Service

5. What problem did the Temple service address?

Read: Isaiah 59:2; Ezekiel 18:20

- Through sacrifice and priestly mediation God provided a way for sinners to receive forgiveness and remain in a covenant relationship with Him.

V. The Temple Service and the Messiah

6. Did the Hebrew Bible point forward to a greater sacrifice?

Read: Genesis 3:15, 21; Genesis 22:8-14; Isaiah 53:4-12

- The promise of the coming Seed, the sacrifice of the ram in Isaac's place, and Isaiah's Suffering Servant all point toward God's future provision of redemption.

7. Did the Hebrew Bible also announce a future priestly Messiah?

Read: Psalm 110:4

- The Messiah would be "a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

VI. Jesus as Sacrifice and Priest

8. How does the New Testament identify Jesus?

Read: John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7

- Jesus is presented as the sacrifice to which the Temple offerings pointed.

9. How does Hebrews describe Jesus?

Read: Hebrews 4:14; 7:17, 25

- Unlike the Levitical priests, Jesus offered himself once for all and now lives forever to intercede for God's people.

VII. What Does This Mean for Us?

10. According to Hebrews, what do believers receive through Jesus?

Read: Hebrews 4:16; 7:25; 10:19-22

- Because Jesus is both the sacrifice and the high priest, believers may approach God with confidence and receive forgiveness and grace.

VIII. Conclusion

Jesus affirmed the sacred purpose of the Temple and fulfilled what its sacrifices and priesthood anticipated. The Temple service pointed to him as the Lamb of God and the eternal high priest through whom sinners receive forgiveness, reconciliation, and access to God.

ANSWER KEY

1. **Yes**
2. **Sacrifices and priesthood**
3. **To provide atonement and a way to approach God**
4. **To serve as mediators between God and His people**
5. **Sin separates us from God and brings death**
6. **Yes**
7. **Yes**
8. **As the Lamb of God**
9. **As our heavenly high priest**
10. **Direct access to God, forgiveness, and continual intercession**

The Jewish Jesus



JESUS AND THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

I. THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How did Jesus and his earliest followers understand the prophecies of Daniel?

The book of Daniel contains some of the most influential prophecies in the Hebrew Bible. It speaks both of God's eternal kingdom and of an Anointed One who would appear at a specific time to address the problem of sin. Many Jews in the first century accepted Jesus as the Messiah because they understood these prophecies as corresponding to key events in his life, ministry, death, and future return.

1. What does Daniel teach about God's future kingdom?

Read: Daniel 2:44, 45; 7:13, 14, 18, 27; 12:1-3

- Daniel describes a kingdom that replaces all earthly kingdoms and endures forever. It is given to the "Son of Man" and shared with God's people. Daniel also places the resurrection of the dead and final redemption at the end of human history.

2. What problem does Daniel 9 say the Messiah would address?

Read: Daniel 9:24

- The prophecy announces that God would deal with transgression, provide atonement, bring forgiveness, and establish everlasting righteousness.

3. What event marks the beginning of the prophecy of the 70 weeks?

Read: Daniel 9:25; Ezra 6:14; 7:12-26

- Many interpreters identify the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 BCE as the starting point because Ezra describes the decrees of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes as together fulfilling God's command for the restoration of Jerusalem and its Temple.

4. When does Daniel place the appearance of the Messiah?

Read: Daniel 9:25

- Many interpreters understand the 69 weeks (483 years) as reaching the autumn of 27 CE, corresponding to the time of Jesus' *tevilah* (baptism) and the beginning of his public ministry.

5. What does Daniel predict would happen to the Messiah?

Read: Daniel 9:26

- The prophecy predicts that the Messiah would suffer a violent death after his appearance.

6. What would happen in the middle of the final week?

Read: Daniel 9:27

- Many interpreters understand this to refer to the Messiah's sacrificial death in the middle of the final week. Through that death God's covenant is confirmed and the purpose of the sacrificial system is fulfilled.

7. What events follow the Messiah's death?

Read: Daniel 9:26, 27

- Daniel foretells that a foreign people would destroy the city and the sanctuary, followed by a prolonged period of conflict and desolation.

8. How does the New Testament connect the coming of Jesus with Daniel's prophecies?

Read: Luke 1:19, 26; Mark 1:15

- Gabriel, the angel who explained Daniel's visions, announces the births of John the Baptist and Jesus. Jesus also begins his ministry proclaiming, "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15). Many interpreters understand these details as pointing to the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah.

9. Which themes from Daniel did Jesus apply to himself and to future events?

Read: Daniel 7:13, 14; Matthew 24:15, 30; 25:31

- Jesus frequently referred to himself as the "Son of Man," a title drawn from Daniel 7. He also referred to Daniel's prophecy of the "abomination of desolation" when speaking about the future destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

10. How do Jesus' words at the last Passover relate to Daniel 9?

Read: Matthew 26:28; Daniel 9:24-27

- The combination of these themes appears together only in Daniel 9 and Jesus' words at the last Passover. Many interpreters therefore conclude that Jesus understood his approaching death in light of Daniel's prophecy.

II. Conclusion

Many Jews in the first century, as well as many others throughout history, have concluded that the life, ministry, and death of Jesus fulfilled the timing and events foretold in Daniel 9. They understood the prophecy of the 70 weeks as pointing to the Messiah's appearance, his work of dealing with sin, his confirmation of God's covenant, and his death on behalf of others. They also understood Daniel 2, 7, and 12 as pointing to his future return at the end of history, when the Son of Man will receive God's eternal kingdom and when God's people will reign and live forever in His presence.

ANSWER KEY

1. **God will establish an everlasting kingdom at the end of history**
2. **The problem of sin**
3. **The decree to restore Jerusalem**
4. **Sixty-nine prophetic weeks after the decree**
5. **The Messiah would be "cut off"**
6. **The Messiah would confirm a covenant with many**
7. **The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple**
8. **It presents Jesus' coming as occurring at the time anticipated by Daniel**
9. **The Son of Man and the future of Jerusalem**
10. **Both speak of covenant, forgiveness of sins, and sacrificial death**

The Jewish Jesus



JESUS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

I. The Central Question

How is Jesus portrayed in the book of Revelation, the last book of the New Testament?

The book of Revelation is one of the most Jewish books of the New Testament. Its symbols draw heavily from the Hebrew Scriptures, the Temple, and Israel's festivals. Through these images Revelation presents Jesus as the Messiah who fulfills God's promises and brings history to its appointed goal.

II. Jesus in the Book of Revelation

1. How does Revelation first present Jesus?

Read: Revelation 1:12-18

- The vision combines imagery from Daniel 7:13, 14 and Ezekiel 1:26-28. The humble Jesus of the Gospels now appears as the exalted ruler of heaven and earth.

2. What does Jesus mean when he calls himself "the Alpha and the Omega"?

Read: Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13

- The title expresses Messiah's eternal sovereignty over creation and history, and parallels the statement about God in Isaiah 44:6.

3. How does Revelation portray Jesus as a heavenly high priest?

Read: Revelation 1:12, 13; 5:6; 11:19

- Jesus appears among the lampstands, before God's throne, and within the heavenly Temple.

4. What is the most common title used for Jesus in Revelation?

Read: Revelation 5:5-10

- The Lamb stands at the center of heaven's worship, redemption, and final victory (Rev. 5:6, 9; 7:14; 12:11; 17:14; 21:9, 22, 23; 22:1).

5. Why is it surprising that John sees a Lamb instead of a Lion?

Read: Revelation 5:5, 6

- The Messiah conquers through sacrifice rather than force.

6. How does the Lamb fulfill the meaning of the Passover?

Read: Exodus 12:1-14; Revelation 5:9, 10

- As the Passover lamb delivered Israel from Egypt, Jesus delivers humanity from sin and death.

7. How does Revelation connect Jesus with *Shavuot* (Pentecost)?

Read: Revelation 1:4; 5:6

- In Jewish tradition *Shavuot* became associated with God's revelation at Sinai and the gift of the Spirit. Revelation presents Jesus as the Messiah who sends God's Spirit to humanity.

8. How does Revelation's throne room recall Sinai?

Read: Exodus 19:16-19; Revelation 4:5

- Thunder, lightning, and fire connect God's heavenly throne with the covenant revelation at Sinai.

9. How do the seven trumpets relate to the Feast of Trumpets?

Read: Revelation 8-11

- The trumpets announce that God's judgment and kingdom are approaching.

10. What proclamation marks the climax of the trumpets?

Read: Revelation 11:15

- The Messiah's universal reign is certain.

11. How does Revelation reflect the themes of Yom Kippur?

Read: Revelation 11:19; 14:6, 7

- The opening of the heavenly Temple and the ark of the covenant point to the Day of Atonement.

12. What messages are proclaimed before the Messiah returns?

Read: Revelation 14:6-13

- Humanity is called to worship the Creator, reject false worship, and prepare for judgment.

13. Why is God's judgment good news for His people?

Read: Revelation 14:7; 19:1, 2

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14. How does Revelation portray Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords?

Read: Revelation 19:11-16

- The promises of Daniel 7 reach their fulfillment in him.

15. How does Revelation fulfill the meaning of Sukkot (Tabernacles)?

Read: Revelation 21:1-4

- The hope symbolized by the Tabernacle reaches its ultimate fulfillment.

16. What happens when the New Jerusalem descends from heaven?

Read: Revelation 21:2-4

- God's dwelling place comes to humanity.

17. What promises accompany the new creation?

Read: Revelation 21:4-6

- The effects of sin are completely removed.

18. How does Revelation conclude?

Read: Revelation 22:7; 22:12-17; 22:20

- The Spirit and the Bride invite all who thirst to come, while Jesus promises: "Surely I am coming soon."

III. Conclusion

Revelation presents Jesus as the glorious Son of Man, the Alpha and Omega, the heavenly High Priest, the Passover Lamb, the giver of the Spirit, the righteous Judge, the King of kings, and the Lord of the new creation. Through him the sanctuary, the biblical festivals, and Israel's messianic hopes find their fulfillment.

The final response of God's people is: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20)

ANSWER KEY

1. As the glorious Son of Man who shares in God's heavenly glory and authority
2. He is the beginning and the end of all things
3. He ministers in the heavenly sanctuary on behalf of his people
4. The Lamb
5. Because the conquering Lion of Judah appears as a slain Lamb
6. His blood brings redemption and deliverance
7. Jesus sends the fullness of God's Spirit into the world
8. It reflects the heavenly reality revealed at Sinai
9. They warn the world and call people to repentance
10. "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah"
11. Through scenes of judgment, cleansing, and covenant faithfulness
12. The three angels' messages
13. Because it vindicates the faithful and defeats evil
14. As the victorious Messiah who reigns over all earthly powers
15. God comes to dwell permanently with His people
16. Heaven and earth are united forever
17. No more death, sorrow, crying, or pain
18. With Jesus' promise to return and an invitation to receive the water of life

The Jewish Jesus



JESUS AND GOD'S CALL

I. The Central Question

Does God call human beings into a relationship with Him?

Many people think of religion as the result of humanity's search for God. Abraham Joshua Heschel, in *God in Search of Man*, offered a different perspective: according to the Bible, God is the one who seeks human beings, calling them into a covenant relationship with Himself and inviting them to receive His blessings and become a blessing to others.

How does Jesus fit within this biblical pattern of God's call?

II. God's Call

1. Who takes the initiative in the relationship between God and humanity?

Read: Genesis 3:8, 9; 12:1-3

2. What did God establish with Israel at Mount Sinai?

Read: Exodus 19:3-6; 24:3-8

3. How did the people prepare themselves to enter into a covenant with God?

Read: Exodus 19:10, 11

- Before the covenant was ratified, the people washed and consecrated themselves. Later Jewish tradition associated this preparation with *tevilah* (immersion), which became a symbol of entering into a covenant relationship with God.

4. What does *tevilah* symbolize in Jewish tradition?

Read: In his book *Becoming a Jew* (pp. 159-163), Rabbi Maurice Lamm explains that *tevilah* symbolizes a new beginning and a new birth. Through immersion the convert leaves behind the past and enters a new life in covenant with God. It is "the spiritual drama of death and rebirth," a "leap of faith," and "the total commitment," expressing the desire to share in a relationship with God and in the covenant destiny of His people.

5. Why did many Jews in the Second Temple period practice *tevilah* (immersion)?

Read: Matthew 3:1-6

- Groups such as the Qumran community and John the Baptist's movement emphasized the need for each person to enter into—or renew—a covenant relationship with God.

6. How did Jesus participate in this Jewish practice?

Read: Matthew 3:13-17

7. What did Jesus teach Nicodemus about entering God's kingdom?

Read: John 3:3-5

- Jesus explained that entry into God's kingdom requires a new birth through "water and Spirit," expressed through *tevilah* and covenant commitment to God.

8. How is this new life connected with God's gift of salvation?

Read: John 3:14-16

- Jesus connects the new birth and the covenant relationship with God's provision of salvation. Through faith in God's Son, people receive forgiveness and eternal life.

9. How did Jesus summarize life with God?

Read: Mark 12:29-31

- According to Jesus, the heart of covenant life is wholehearted love for God and active love for other people. This relationship is nurtured through Scripture, prayer, obedience, and service.

10. What character should God's people reflect?

Read: Luke 6:35, 36

11. Is God's call only for our personal benefit?

Read: Genesis 12:2, 3

- God blessed Abraham so that he might become a blessing to others. The same principle applies to everyone who responds to God's call.

12. How did Jesus describe the mission of his followers?

Read: Matthew 5:13-16; Acts 1:8

- Those who follow Jesus are called to share God's love, teach His Word, serve others, and bear witness to God's salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit.

13. How should we respond to God's call?

Read: Acts 2:37-39

- At *Shavuot* (Pentecost) in Jerusalem, Peter called the people to repentance, *tevilah*, forgiveness, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

III. Conclusion

The Bible presents God as the one who seeks human beings and invites them into a life of faith, repentance, *tevilah*, prayer, obedience, and service. God's call is an invitation to trust Him, walk with Him, and discover the future He desires for your life. Why not respond to His call today and begin—or renew—a covenant relationship with Him?

Answer Key

1. **God takes the initiative**
2. **A covenant; God entered into a covenant relationship with Israel**
3. **Through washing and consecration**
4. **A new beginning, a new birth, and entrance into a covenant relationship with God**
5. **As an expression of repentance and covenant commitment**
6. **Jesus underwent *tevilah***
7. **A person must be born from above**
8. **God offers eternal life through His Son**
9. **Love God and love your neighbor**
10. **God's mercy and goodness**
11. **No**
12. **As being salt, light, and witnesses**
13. **By entering into a covenant relationship with God**

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