

**Bridging the Gap: Finding Middle Ground in Judeo-Christian Expression**



Jonathan Esterman MDiv

DMin 736: Judeo-Christian:

A Theological Overview of Judaism, Christianity, and the Noachides

Advisor: Dr. Douglas Balzer

December 14, 2017

## Contents

<b>Introduction &amp; Background Information .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Overview of Christianity .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Key Components of Christian Theology .....	8
Summary of Doctrinal Christian Praxis.....	10
<b>Overview of Judaism .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Key Components of Jewish Theology .....	10
Summary of Doctrinal Jewish Praxis.....	11
<b>Comparative Analysis.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Similarities Essential to Bridge-Building .....	15
Roadblocks to Integrative Partnership .....	15
<b>Proposed Solution .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix I: Practical Application Addendum.....</b>	<b>23</b>

## Introduction & Background Information

Throughout history, the Jewish people have relentlessly fought for their right to exist as a people group and as a nation.<sup>1</sup> From the struggles of the Patriarchs thousands of years ago to the Jewish State in Israel today, the Jewish people have toiled and strived to maintain their existence. In fact, the existence of Israel today, against all the odds, is evidence for the existence and active role of a Creator.<sup>2</sup> In earlier times, the Jewish people stood strong against the neighboring nations in the land of Canaan (Philistines, Midianites, etc.) as well as being the only nation to break free of the bondage of slavery.<sup>3</sup> These smaller skirmishes transitioned into fighting against larger foes, such as the Maccabean revolt against the Greeks and the rebellion against Roman occupation.<sup>4</sup> After Christianity became the state-sponsored religion of Rome, the battles were no longer solely against the swords and arrows of a battalion, but also against religious frameworks that sought to undermine and replace Judaism altogether. For better or for worse (and it has been both), Christianity is historically responsible for some of the worst atrocities against the Jewish people, such as the blaming of the Black Death, the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, the Holocaust, and more.<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that despite these horrors, Christianity has also provided a vehicle in which ethical

---

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Kelemen, *Permission to Believe: Four Rational Approaches to God's Existence* (Southfield, MI: Targum/Feldheim, 1990), 69-80.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>5</sup> Tzvi Fischer, host, "Mesora," *Jewish History: Seven Eras, Portland Kollel*, March 15, 2017.

monotheism became the default setting of societal belief instead of pagan polytheism.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, many Christians, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, stood in unity to protect and support the Jewish people. Today's recognition of Israel is credited in part to the many Christian leaders who fought for that reality. Thus, Christianity as a whole has had both a profound negative and profound positive impact on the Jewish people.

To complicate the matter, early Christianity had little noticeable difference from the Judaism of the time.<sup>7</sup> Early Christianity had no clear doctrinal confession in its infant years. In fact, early Christianity was exclusively Jewish and operated more as a Jewish sect. Jesus was an apocalyptic preacher in a land expecting the end of days. There were no beliefs in anything than the Torahs-defined<sup>8</sup> concept of HaShem.<sup>9</sup> As a result, the earliest Christians did not have a concept of the Trinity, had no "New Testament" works to follow, observed Jewish ritual and life, and believed Jesus could have been an earthly messiah (but only from a traditional Jewish definition).<sup>10</sup> It was not until after the Christian faith began to spread among the non-Jews in the area that the Christian doctrine took on pagan practices of the Greeks and Romans that were

---

<sup>6</sup> Rabbi Tovia Singer, host, "Let's Get Biblical," Rabbinic View of Christianity, *Outreach Judaism*, 2006, <https://outreachjudaism.org/rabbinic-view-christianity/>.

<sup>7</sup> Lawrence H. Shiffman, "How Jewish Christians Became Christians," *My Jewish Learning*, accessed November 30, 2017. <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/how-jewish-christians-became-christians>.

<sup>8</sup> Written Torah (Torah) and Oral Torah (Talmud) – see section of Jewish theology for detailed explanation.

<sup>9</sup> Hebrew, "The Name." Honorific title out of respect for the Holy Name.

<sup>10</sup> The concept of the Messiah in Judaism is drastically different than the Christian view. These differences will be elaborated on later in this paper.

converting.<sup>11</sup> From this point on the Christian sect gradually became less Jewish and more similar to pagan practices, with the final changes instituted by the Council of Nicaea.<sup>12</sup> At this meeting, Christian doctrine was formalized and the Trinity, New Testament, and Son of G-d statements became the official definitions of the Christian faith.<sup>13</sup> While there was a general majority vote at the Council of Nicaea, it was anything but a clear-cut agreement among the bishops. The Council of Nicaea aimed not only to clearly define the acceptable ranges of Christian doctrine but also to decisively separate itself entirely from the Jewish faith,<sup>14</sup> relying on forged documents to establish a belief system incompatible with Jewish thought<sup>15</sup> and instituting methods to determine the dates of Christian celebrations<sup>16</sup> independently of the rabbinic calendar.<sup>17</sup> This



<sup>11</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee* (New York: HarperOne, 2015), 231.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

<sup>14</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *Forged: Writing in the Name of God - Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 144.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>16</sup> One such example of this is that prior to the Council, Easter was scheduled to occur during the Passover holiday. After the Council, Easter was scheduled independent of the Jewish calculations to schedule Easter. Thus, while the two often coincide on the Gregorian calendar, due to the holidays being scheduled “independently” on separate calendars, the holidays can be scheduled as much as a month apart from each other.

<sup>17</sup> David Price, "How the Council of Nicaea Intensified Antisemitism and a Bible Ban," *Truth Beyond Price*, 2017, accessed December 3, 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/Blogs/Truth-Beyond-Price/How-anti-Semitism-was-exacerbated-at-the-Council-of-Nicaea-500930>.

separation attempt, in fact, is not limited to this single event, but is rather the default approach the Christian church has taken throughout history.<sup>18</sup>

In response to the clarifications of Christian doctrine being clearly different than acceptable Jewish theology and the loss of the ability to perform animal sacrifices at the Temple, the tannaim (early rabbinic sages in Judaism) implemented adjustments to Jewish praxis to (i) adapt Judaism to be observed in a Diaspora with no Temple and (ii) clearly separate itself from “incorrect” Jewish theology such as that espoused by modern-day Messianic Judaism.<sup>19</sup> As time went on, these initial divisions fostered an expanse to clearly differentiate between these two faith groups.<sup>20</sup>

In short, Judaism and Christianity have historically been at odds with each other, drawing a proverbial line in the sand to define the differences instead of similarities. This served to guide both groups independently for quite some time. Currently, Judaism and Christianity are light-years apart from each other and have built a reservoir of mistrust and misunderstanding.<sup>21</sup> While this status quo is easily maintained, it does little good for the world as a whole. Both groups self-identify as a “light to the nations” and

---

<sup>18</sup> Joshua Ezra Burns, “The Dissociation of Judaism and Christianity in the Roman near East, First to Third Centuries C.E.: Historical Sources and Interpretation” (Yale University, 2010), 45.

<sup>19</sup> Lawrence H. Shiffman, *From Text to Tradition, a History of Judaism in Second Temple and Rabbinic Times: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Brooklyn, NY: Ktav Publishing Inc, 1991).

<sup>20</sup> Burns, 46-47.

<sup>21</sup> Nathan Guttman, "Jews Cast Wary Eye on Evangelicals," *The Forward*, accessed November 30, 2017. <https://forward.com/news/154727/jews-cast-wary-eye-on-evangelicals/>.

believe in tikkun olam,<sup>22</sup> yet their independent operations are not as effective as they could be if the two groups partnered together in these endeavors. In my personal interactions with the Portland Jewish community, it was made clear that one of the largest issues that prevents the Jewish community from working collaboratively with the Christian community is the continued evangelization of the Jews by local churches and the theological belief that Jews need to be saved from their Judaism and committed to following Jesus instead. This is particularly problematic as the Jewish ruling on the matter permits Christians to follow Jesus without issue, but for Jews to follow Jesus or become Christians would be to commit idolatry.<sup>23</sup> There are indeed halachot<sup>24</sup> to consider as well in regard to Talmudic prohibitions on working and partnering with non-Jews,<sup>25</sup> but this paper will not focus on historical arguments against partnership and instead look at a practical contemporary approach.<sup>26</sup> In order to unite these two groups to be able to respectfully work together and support each other, there must be a bridge built to help clarify misunderstandings and actively work toward reconciliation. In the process of developing a model to implement, it is clear that one of the larger hurdles to overcome is in regard to doctrinal views that Christianity has of Judaism and Judaism

---

<sup>22</sup> Repairing the world.

<sup>23</sup> Aryeh Kaplan, Pinchas Stolper, and Berel Wein, *The Real Messiah?: A Jewish Response to Missionaries* (Toronto: Jews for Judaism, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Jewish Talmudic Laws

<sup>25</sup> Christians in particular.

<sup>26</sup> For the purposes of this paper, it is assumed that precedent in history can be established to permit progress.

has of Christianity.

This essay will examine a general approach in which establishes compatibility between both the Jewish and Christian faith constructs: one that permits Jews to be Jewish and Gentiles to be Christian by means of Noachide status within a Jewish theological framework. To examine compatibility, this essay will examine (i) the core theology and praxis of Christianity, (ii) the core theology and praxis of Judaism, (iii) key differences and similarities between the two faith groups, and (iv) a proposed solution to the theological dilemma.<sup>27</sup> The guiding research question in this paper is: *how can Jews and Christians forge a theologically practical solution to enable them to resolve differences to offer a unified salvific solution?*

It is necessary to construct a bridge between Jews and Christians by first clearly defining the compatibility of Christianity to a Jewish Noachide<sup>28</sup> status as well as establish and assert a Christian theological concept of covenantal consistency in that the Jewish people have a “pre-existing” covenantal coverage with HaShem that repudiates any notion of Jesus being a Jewish messianic figure or son of G-d<sup>29</sup> as well as asserts their status in that they do not “need” Jesus for salvation. This unified salvific solution will establish long-term success in Jewish-Christian relations and ministry partnership as it provides a level of trust that is otherwise unavailable if one group feels the other

---

<sup>27</sup> This solution has been proposed by leading rabbis such as Tovia Singer and is the view elaborated on in this paper.

<sup>28</sup> The Noachides are “righteous non-Jews” that keep the Laws of Noah.

<sup>29</sup> The “o” is omitted out of reverence.



has an ulterior motive to “save” them from their own faith construct.

### **Overview of Christianity**

Christianity may be a recent religious movement when compared to the age of other historical faiths, but it nonetheless has developed a complex system of its own, rife with scores of denominational differences. While many of the smaller issues define the differences between each denomination, there are also larger doctrinal differences.<sup>30</sup> Despite these denominational variations, there are core doctrinal statements that each denomination must be in agreement with in order to be considered “Christian.”<sup>31</sup> These core beliefs are known as a type of Christian creed. It is easiest to summarize the main principles by looking at the key components of systematic theology. The main principles will be expressed in thirteen points in order to provide an easy comparative analysis to Judaism and Jewish thought.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, theology requires praxis (or expression), so there will be a brief synopsis of the common praxis found across all denominations.

#### **Key Components of Christian Theology**

The summarized “thirteen principles” of Christian are (based on standard systematic theology paired with the Nicene Creed):

---

<sup>30</sup> Examples include modern use of prophecy and “spiritual gifts” as well as procedures for communion, baptism, etc.

<sup>31</sup> Note: for the purposes of this essay, the term “Christian” includes sects related to evangelical Christianity as well as Catholicism and the Greek Orthodox Church.

<sup>32</sup> Maimonides, also known as the Rambam, constructed the Thirteen Principles, which is widely accepted as the definition of essential Jewish beliefs. To give the easiest comparison, Christianity will be summed in thirteen principles in a similar layout.

1. Belief in the sufficiency and inerrancy of the Christian canon of the Bible.<sup>33</sup>
2. Belief in the personal knowability and infinite existence of G-d.<sup>34</sup>
3. Belief in the Trinitarian nature of G-d.<sup>35</sup>
4. Belief in the person of Christ.<sup>36</sup>
5. Belief in the necessary death of Christ for the salvation of mankind.<sup>37</sup>
6. Belief in water baptism and the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>38</sup>
7. Belief in repentance, justification, and sanctification.<sup>39</sup>
8. Belief in eternal salvation for the perseverance of the saints.<sup>40</sup>
9. Belief in the punishment of those who do not repent or believe.<sup>41</sup>
10. Belief in one holy church and the need for regular participation in the Christian community.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 54-89.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 141-55.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 226-61.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 529-67.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 568-607.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 634-56.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 709-62.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 788-809.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 810-27.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 853-949.

11. Belief in the sanctity and necessity of the sacraments.<sup>43</sup>

12. Belief in the messianic era and the world to come.<sup>44</sup>

### Summary of Doctrinal Christian Praxis

For the purposes of this study, the key Christian practices are based on the “average” Christian observance. This includes attending Sunday worship (songs, prayer, pastoral message, tithing, announcements), having a small group to meet with once a week each week, attending any church classes as desired, reading Christian Bible as desired, and praying as desired. The average Christian life is very independent-driven, which results in those who are committed and those who are not being side by side every Sunday. Spirituality over study is a general focus with the emphasis on one’s “relationship” with G-d.

### Overview of Judaism

#### Key Components of Jewish Theology

Maimonides constructed the Thirteen Principles,<sup>45</sup> which is widely accepted as the definition of essential Jewish beliefs.

The Thirteen Principles of Judaism are:<sup>46</sup>

1. Belief in a perfect Creator that is the primary cause of existence.

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 988-1002.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 1091-167.

<sup>45</sup> Located in Chapter Ten of the Tractate Sandhedrin in the Talmud.

<sup>46</sup> Dovid Lichtenstein, *Headlines 2: Halachic Debates of Current Events* (New York: OU Press, 2017).

2. Belief in the unity singularity of G-d.
3. Belief in the non-corporeality of G-d.
4. Belief in the eternal existence of G-d.
5. Exclusive worship of G-d and no other gods.
6. Belief G-d communicates via prophecy.
7. Belief in Moses as the primary prophet and teacher.
8. Belief in the divine origin of the Torah.
9. Belief in the immutability of the Torah.
10. Belief that G-d is all-knowing and providential.
11. Belief in divine reward and divine punishment.
12. Belief in the messiah and a messianic era.
13. Belief in the resurrection of the dead.

These principles are clarified within Jewish thought (Yiddishkeit<sup>47</sup> and mesora<sup>48</sup>) to give a narrower path to follow, such as how the belief in the messiah must meet certain conditions.<sup>49</sup>

### Summary of Doctrinal Jewish Praxis

Within the Jewish fold, there are many varieties of observance, which results in different practices. While the Thirteen Principles is the required “creed” of the Jewish

---

<sup>47</sup> Jewish heritage and culture

<sup>48</sup> Tradition passed from Avraham to today.

<sup>49</sup> For example, belief in Jesus as messiah or Rabbi M. Schneerson as messiah are both incorrect views since they did not meet the qualifications of the position. Belief in either of these individuals would fail to meet the requirement needed, since it must be proper belief in the messiah.

faith, one's own Jewish faith and observance can be influenced by community practice, family tradition, regional styles, and even commitment. The three "main" groups in religious Judaism are Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. Haredi are a form of ultra-orthodox. Another differentiation typically found in the Orthodox society is Hasidic (Chassid) or Yeshiva (Yeshivish). Chassid are typically more mystical and emotional whereas the Yeshivish are more logic and study-oriented. Family tradition typically comes from Ashkenazi (from Europe & Middle East), Sephardic (mainly from Spanish areas), and Mizrahi (Asian cultures). Regional styles will blend one's family tradition with a particular flavor of religious fervor. For example, the West Coast Orthodox groups will be more lenient and integrated into society than East Coast Orthodox groups. Community practice takes it a step further. Specifically, in the community I am learning from, the Portland community is more relaxed than other West Coast groups, and the Orthodox community is split between Ashkenaz and Sefard practice. For the purposes of this essay and dissertation analysis, I refer to communities that are similar to the Portland crowd: Orthodox that are mainly Yeshivish, a mix of Ashkenaz and Sefard, and more modern in their leniencies and daily life (such as watching television or attending sporting events). This selection most closely matches the average Jew who subscribes to the Thirteen Principles. Most of the Orthodox Chassidic Jews attend the Chabad House and operate within their own mini-culture that is separated from the rest of the Orthodox Jews, and often fall along the Haredi approach, and thus is not the ideal

group to focus research on at this time.<sup>50</sup> There are also Conservative and Reform Jews in Portland, but by and large their leniencies, such as driving on Shabbat, make them appear nearly fully-assimilated into the non-Jewish culture. Additionally, the Conservative and Reform movements are leaning more toward an embrace of goyish (as in non-Hebrew roots and not Messianic Judaism) Christianity<sup>51</sup> already. If the Orthodox community accepts the thesis of my dissertation, then the Conservative and Reform movements will accept it as well.

In this particular setting (Portland, Orthodox, Yeshivish), the average Jewish individual will daven shacharis, mincha, and maariv.<sup>52</sup> They are also observant of all other prayer practices including blessings.<sup>53</sup> Through all prayer times during the day, one hundred blessings are recited daily.<sup>54</sup> Davening is typically done with a minyan<sup>55</sup> at



---

<sup>50</sup> This is due to differences in approach with Jewish observance and Jewish outreach.

<sup>51</sup> Christianity for non-Jews. Goy is the Yiddish term for non-Jew. Gentile is not a preferred term due to the Christian-Roman origin of the word.

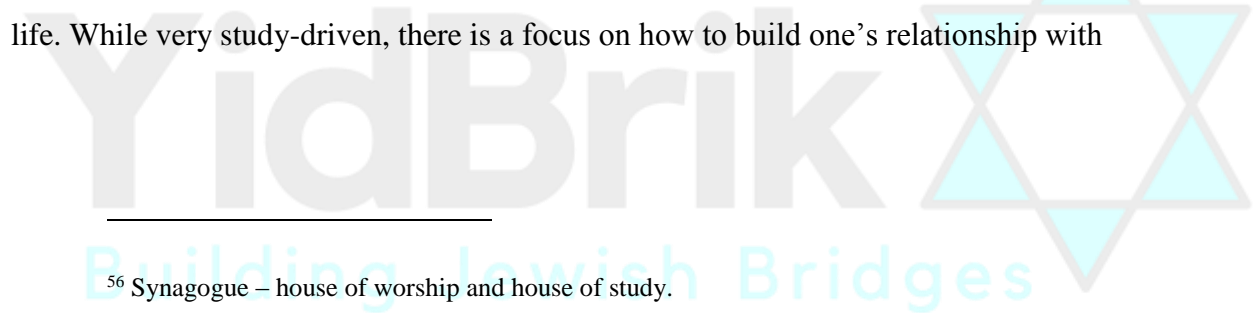
<sup>52</sup> Liturgical prayers found in Siddurim (prayer books). Shacharis is morning prayer (sunup to midday). Mincha is afternoon offering (midday to prior to sunset). Maarive is evening prayer (sundown to sunup).

<sup>53</sup> Morning blessings, evening shema, etc. Includes all blessings for food, drink, smells, interactions, etc., as well as bensching/benching (after meal prayers including Psalms and additional blessings).

<sup>54</sup> Solomon ben Joseph Ganzfried, Eliyahu Meir Klugman, and Yosaif Asher Weiss, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, Kleinman ed. (Brooklyn, NY: Artscroll, 2011), Siman 6:7.

<sup>55</sup> Quorum of ten adult Jewish males.

a shul.<sup>56</sup> Friday evenings include Kabbalat Shabbat<sup>57</sup> service and community meals.<sup>58</sup> Shabbos<sup>59</sup> shacharis is a longer service, taking three hours of prayer and reading of weekly Torah portion.<sup>60</sup> Weekday shacharis is typically forty-five minutes long. Shabbos mincha is about thirty minutes (includes haftarah<sup>61</sup> portion) whereas weekday mincha lasts about fifteen minutes. Closing Shabbos maariv and Havdalah is about fifteen minutes compared to weekday ten minutes. Essentially, the weekly Jewish life is davening three times each day, making one hundred blessings each day, reading Torah each week (twice – once at shul and again on own), and reading the Talmud portion each day.<sup>62</sup> Orthodox Jewish practice involves following mitzvot,<sup>63</sup> studying, and being intentional with how one lives each day. Orthodox Jewish living is a communal life. While very study-driven, there is a focus on how to build one's relationship with



<sup>56</sup> Synagogue – house of worship and house of study.

<sup>57</sup> Liturgical psalms welcoming the Sabbath.

<sup>58</sup> There are three main Shabbat meals: First Meal, Second Meal, and Seudah Shleshit (Third Meal). First Meal is Friday evening. Second Meal is after Shabbos morning service. Third Meal is after mincha but before maariv and Havdalah. All meals typically feature invites to homes so that the community eats together in celebration. First and Second meals opened with Kiddush ceremony (drinking wine and breaking challah bread to “sanctify” the day).

<sup>59</sup> Also known as: Shabbat, Shabbes, Sabbath.

<sup>60</sup> Entire Torah is broken into weekly segments to read so that all of Torah (Genesis through Deuteronomy) is read each year.

<sup>61</sup> Passage from prophets or writings that aligns to the day's Torah portion.

<sup>62</sup> Called Daf Yomi, if a “Daf” is read every day, it takes seven years to complete the Babylonian Talmud.

<sup>63</sup> Jewish Laws/Commands

HaShem. This is accomplished via good deeds,<sup>64</sup> being observant, learning, and being a light to the nations by living the words of Torah.

## **Comparative Analysis**

### **Similarities Essential to Bridge-Building**

There are many similarities that enable Judaism and Christianity to work in partnership. Within an understanding of ethical monotheism, both Judaism and Christianity are proponents of being a light and living righteously. Both groups study their religious texts and find a relationship with G-d. Both groups care about helping those less fortunate (mercy ministries compared to acts of tzedakah). Both groups believe in an observant lifestyle and being “sanctified” or “set apart” from the culture of the world. Both have a form of Sabbath and do not overlap each other (of all the mitzvot, Shabbos is reserved for the Jew alone, and thus Christians could not keep Shabbos on Shabbos itself).<sup>65</sup> The similarities are many, despite the divergence of these two groups long ago. The mutual goal of ethical monotheism points in a same general direction, which permits for Christianity to be considered a “Noachide” faith in some regards. While the guiding principles have key differences, there is much to work with.

### **Roadblocks to Integrative Partnership**

The key differences between the guiding principles are rather large, however. These differences create an effective roadblock to a successful partnership. The main

---

<sup>64</sup> Tzedakah (literally charity).

<sup>65</sup> Rabbi Tovia Singer, "What Is a Former Christian Minister to Do? Convert?," Outreach Judaism, accessed December 3, 2017. <https://outreachjudaism.org/former-christian-minister-convert/>.



roadblocks with Christianity are related to Christian doctrine. The Jewish approach takes issue with: (i) the messiah being G-d,<sup>66</sup> (ii) Jesus being the messiah,<sup>67</sup> (iii) the concept of the Trinity,<sup>68</sup> (iv) worshipping/praying to idols,<sup>69</sup> and (v) the evangelization of the Jews.<sup>70</sup> Rabbi Tovia Singer, counter-missionary against Jews for Jesus, covers why these are issues with the Jewish people in great depth.<sup>71</sup> If Christianity were to clarify that Jesus “may” be the Messiah, the messiah is not necessarily G-d, the Trinity is monotheistic but just misunderstood,<sup>72</sup> discontinue reliance on images like the Cross, etc., and agree that the Jews do not need Jesus for salvation, then an immediate solution is available. This, however, is not realistic as these changes would decimate too much of the core of Christian doctrine. I propose, then, a middle ground solution that does



<sup>66</sup> The Jewish concept of the Messiah is that the Messiah will be a man, from the line of King David through Solomon, and not related to Jehoakim.

<sup>67</sup> Jesus did not have the necessary lineage, did not complete the main prophecies of world peace, world-wide acknowledgement of G-d, and all the Jews returning to Israel, and died (there is no second coming established as a known fact in Jewish prophecies).

<sup>68</sup> This is viewed as polytheism (three in one) and was not even an original Christian doctrine).

<sup>69</sup> Crucifixes on display to indicate “the Cross” are considered physical idols. Portraying HaShem in the representation of Jesus is also considered a form of idolatry, since Judaism maintains that there is no representation of G-d.

<sup>70</sup> The most lenient position a Jew can take with Christianity is to call it Noachide, which is acceptable and preferred for non-Jews. Jews themselves, however, must adhere to their covenant status of Torah observance, and to try to live as a Noachide instead would be outright idolatry and disobedience.

<sup>71</sup> Rabbi Tovia Singer, *Let's Get Biblical! Why Doesn't Judaism Accept the Christian Messiah?*, vol. 1 (Forest Hills, NY: Outreach Judaism, 2014).

<sup>72</sup> Modalism is a better way to present this concept.

require concessions on both sides but would ultimately work to resolve the primary issues<sup>73</sup> preventing partnership in tikkun olam.

### **Proposed Solution**

Judaism would need to permit Christianity to be classified as a form of Noachide observance and promote it as an alternative for non-Jews (but not a requirement by any means). Christianity would define the Trinity and Jesus to be metaphoric, which is in keeping with the writing styles of TaNaKh and New Testament.<sup>74, 75, 76</sup> With Christianity as an acceptable method of Noachide life for non-Jews, it would need to be clear to both groups that the Jews are required to live shomer<sup>77</sup> Torah and that Jews cannot worship Jesus, attend any churches with crosses or other idol-like objects on display, and cannot pray with Christians since the prayers are typically directed to Jesus. While not ideal to either side, the only way for Jews to work with Christianity is to permit the division of Jew and non-Jew with leniency, and the only way for Christians to work with Judaism is to recognize that Jesus may be for the non-Jew but is not in any way a means of salvation for the Jew (pre-existing covenant clause in this regard).

### **Conclusion**

---

<sup>73</sup> Such as evangelization of the Jews.

<sup>74</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus before the Gospels: How the Earliest Christians Remembered, Changed, and Invented Their Stories of the Savior* (New York: HarperOne, 2016), 38.

<sup>75</sup> Barney Kasdan, *Matthew Presents: Yeshua, King Messiah* (Clarksville, MD: Lederer Books, 2011).

<sup>76</sup> Kent Walters, host, "Len Sweet Seminar at I.W.S.," Leonard Sweet: Narraphor—the Language of this Culture, *The Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies*, 2013.

<sup>77</sup> Observant

In order to build a bridge of mutual trust and understanding between Jews and Christians, there must first be a possible foundation to build on. From my research and experience, this foundation is twofold: defining Christianity in acceptable terms for the Jew and defining Judaism in acceptable terms for the Christian. This is not a popular concept since both faith groups are exclusive and restrictive on the types of acceptable theologies. Can Orthodox Judaism view Christianity as Noachide? Can Christianity view Judaism, and any other monotheistic faith, as an alternative to Jesus?

Not only is it necessary, but it is indeed a possible reality to construct a bridge between Jews and Christians by defining Christianity to a Jewish Noachide status as well as establish from the earliest Christian foundations that Christianity is not an exclusive faith based on Jesus as G-d but rather an inclusive faith to all non-Jews that uses Jesus as a messenger to point to HaShem. The earliest texts and archeology support this notion, with the only valid objection being church history and tradition.<sup>78</sup> These objections fall short, however, when one sees the NT condemns reliance on tradition.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, the NT texts that focus on a high Christology and exclusivism are likely forged by the early church.<sup>80</sup> This follows the precedent that history is written by the victors (in this case, Christianity as we know it was the victor).<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them)* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 246.

<sup>79</sup> Colossians 2:8

<sup>80</sup> Ehrman, *Forged: Writing in the Name of God - Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are*, 254.

<sup>81</sup> Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them)*, 267.

This unified salvific solution is necessary in order to establish long-term success in Jewish-Christian relations and ministry partnership as it provides a level of trust that is otherwise unavailable if one group feels the other has an ulterior motive to “save” them from their own faith construct. Many will be averse to the approach of a unified salvific solution (on both sides of the table) as it does tip over sacred cows, but in a Judeo-Christian sense, is it not proper to destroy the golden calf?<sup>82</sup>



---

<sup>82</sup> Exodus 32:19

## Bibliography

- Burns, Joshua Ezra. "The Dissociation of Judaism and Christianity in the Roman near East, First to Third Centuries C.E.: Historical Sources and Interpretation." Yale University, 2010.
- Cohen, Abraham. *Everyman's Talmud: The Major Teachings of the Rabbinic Sages*. New York: Random House, 1995.
- Donin, Hayim. *To Be a Jew: A Guide to Jewish Observance in Contemporary Life*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.
- Dosick, Wayne. *Living Judaism: The Complete Guide to Jewish Belief, Tradition, and Practice*. New York: HarperOne, 2010.
- Ehrman, Bart D. *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them)*. New York: HarperOne, 2009.
- . *Forged: Writing in the Name of God - Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are*. New York: HarperOne, 2011.
- . *How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee*. New York: HarperOne, 2015.
- . *Jesus before the Gospels: How the Earliest Christians Remembered, Changed, and Invented Their Stories of the Savior*. New York: HarperOne, 2016.
- . *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005.
- Esterman, Jonathan. *Multicultural Judaism in a Contemporary Setting*. Portland, OR: Portland Seminary, 2017.
- Fiddes, P. S. "The Hiddenness of Wisdom in the Old Testament and Later Judaism." PhD Dissertation, University of Oxford, 1976.
- Fischer, Tzvi. "Mesora." *Jewish History: Seven Eras*. Portland Kollel, March 15, 2017.
- Ganzfried, Solomon ben Joseph, Eliyahu Meir Klugman, and Yosaif Asher Weiss. *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*. Kleinman ed. Brooklyn, NY: Artscroll, 2011.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

Guttman, Nathan. "Jews Cast Wary Eye on Evangelicals." *The Forward*. Last modified 2012. Accessed November 30, 2017. <https://forward.com/news/154727/jews-cast-wary-eye-on-evangelicals/>.

Kaplan, Aryeh and Abraham Sutton. *The Handbook of Jewish Thought*. Vol. 1. Brooklyn, NY: Moznaim Publishing Corporation, 1979.

———. *The Handbook of Jewish Thought*. Vol. 2. Brooklyn, NY: Moznaim Publishing Corporation, 1979.

Kaplan, Aryeh, Pinchas Stolper, and Berel Wein. *The Real Messiah?: A Jewish Response to Missionaries*. Toronto: Jews for Judaism, 2004.

Kasdan, Barney. *Matthew Presents: Yeshua, King Messiah*. Clarksville, MD: Lederer Books, 2011.

Kelemen, Lawrence. *Permission to Believe: Four Rational Approaches to God's Existence*. Southfield, MI: Targum/Feldheim, 1990.

———. *Permission to Receive: Four Rational Approaches to the Torah's Divine Origin*. Southfield, MI: Targum, 1996.

Lichtenstein, Dovid. *Headlines 2: Halachic Debates of Current Events*. New York: OU Press, 2017.

Price, David. "How the Council of Nicaea Intensified Antisemitism and a Bible Ban." *Truth Beyond Price*, 2017. Accessed December 3, 2017. <http://www.ipost.com/Blogs/Truth-Beyond-Price/How-anti-Semitism-was-exacerbated-at-the-Council-of-Nicaea-500930>.

Shiffman, Lawrence H. *From Text to Tradition, a History of Judaism in Second Temple and Rabbinic Times: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism*. Brooklyn, NY: Ktav Publishing Inc, 1991.

———. "How Jewish Christians Became Christians." *My Jewish Learning*. Last modified 2017. Accessed November 30, 2017. <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/how-jewish-christians-became-christians>.

Singer, Rabbi Tovia. "Let's Get Biblical." *Rabbinic View of Christianity*. Outreach Judaism, 2006, <https://outreachjudaism.org/rabbinic-view-christianity/>.

———. *Let's Get Biblical! Why Doesn't Judaism Accept the Christian Messiah?* Vol. 1. Forest Hills, NY: Outreach Judaism, 2014.

———. "What Is a Former Christian Minister to Do? Convert?" Outreach Judaism. Last modified 2017. Accessed December 3, 2017.

<https://outreachjudaism.org/former-christian-minister-convert/>.

Telushkin, Joseph. *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History*. Revised. New York: William Morrow, 2008.

Walters, Kent. "Len Sweet Seminar at I.W.S." *Leonard Sweet: Narraphor—the Language of this Culture*. The Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies, 2013.



## Appendix I: Practical Application Addendum

In the reading, field research, and active participation in this module's studies, it is clear that the answer to the biggest problem posed in my dissertation research thus far may very well be the Noachides. This is a difficult topic to approach, however, since many will find reason to be offended (and perhaps they should be). For example, the Orthodox rabbis in the community I live in all have a different perspective on Christians. The lenient view is that Christians are already Noachides as long as they don't require the name of G-d to be "Jesus." The middle of the road is that Christians are ethical monotheists but commit idolatry (having a human representation of G-d and having a cross displayed as an association or relation to the human representation of G-d). On the more restrictive end, however, Christians are viewed as anti-Semitic polytheistic idolaters. These views are often the result of one's interaction with Christians. Those who work with them regularly as a Mohel<sup>83</sup> often take a more lenient view as a result of regular interaction. On the other end, the more restrictive views typically originate from only historical knowledge of Christians and Christianity or limited interactions with Christians who are unable to accurately define their faith.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Rabbi who performs a b'rit milah, or circumcision, ceremony.

<sup>84</sup> It is easy, and natural, for one to construe the Trinity as polytheism. Correlations are made to Greek/Roman pagan religions of the time that Christianity was birthed, resulting in the definition of paganism due to the numerous similarities.



As previously indicated,<sup>85</sup> Christianity does not need a “Jews for Jesus” approach or Messianic Judaism. Rather, as argued, Christianity needs to be willing to abdicate pagan associations and clarify religious definitions.<sup>86</sup>

Regardless of the attempts to harmonize the two faith structures to get along, there will always be those that reject and refuse to engage. As a result, there will be the necessity to have lenient Jews, of whom are in good standing in the Orthodox community, who maintain the Jewish side of the bridge, as well as Christians in a similar position on the other side of the bridge. If an organizational approach such as my dissertation artifact can be maintained and implemented on a large-scale rollout by engaged Jews and Christians, then those who are participants can take the progress and ideas back to their respective tribes and affect actual change to make tikkun olam no longer an ideal or a dream but a reality and active work in progress.

The first step toward repairing the world is building a bridge between Judaism and Christianity that is founded on tolerance and similarities. Both sides need to adjust their views and be willing to move forward. Both sides need to forgive and be forgiven, starting with a clean slate. Both sides need to learn what it means to be a light to the nations by shining brightly together. Both sides need to welcome the messianic age not by world devastation but by finally providing an environment deserving of the messiah.

---

<sup>85</sup> Jonathan Esterman, *Multicultural Judaism in a Contemporary Setting* (Portland, OR: Portland Seminary, 2017).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.