

Children of Abraham: Judaism, Christianity & Islam Session #3: Basic Beliefs

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Rabbi Michael Lotker

Welcome to Rabbi Michael Lotker's website. Here, you will find information about Rabbi Lotker, his services and his book, *A Christian's Guide to Judaism*.

On this site, you will learn about Rabbi Lotker, be able to contact him, learn about the services he offers, learn about his classes and talks, access class materials, hear some of his sermons, and learn about his book, *A Christian's Guide to Judaism*.

A Christian's Guide to Judaism

Rabbi Lotker opens a session at the US House of Representatives.

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CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM CLASS

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- > Session #3: Basic Beliefs
 - > Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity
 - > A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People (Christian Scholars' Statement)

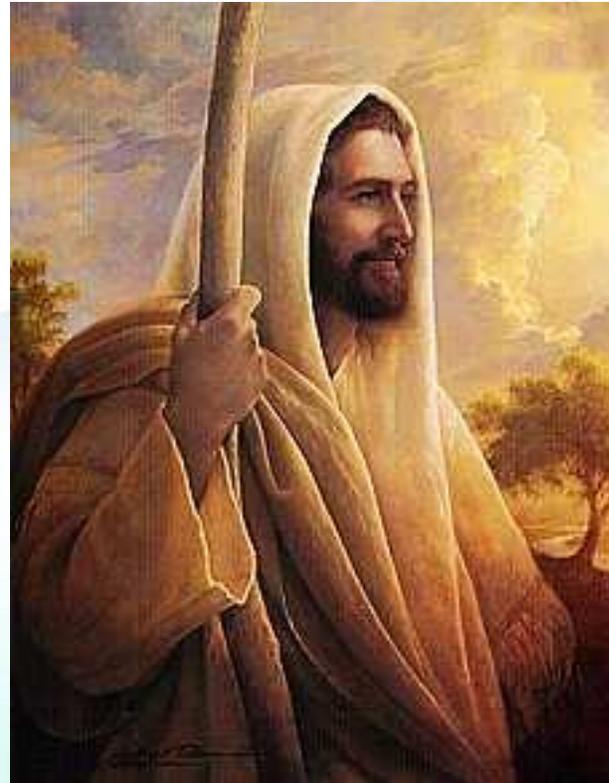
Introduction

- **Which is the best religion?**
 - It depends on what's bothering you and what your religious goal is.
- **In any religion, there are two leaps of faith:**
 - **#1: Belief in God**
 - **#2: Belief in Revelation – Does God Care?**

Judaism

- For Judaism, God's primary concern is what we do -- not what we believe
- Judaism is both a religion and a people/nation
- Mitzvot
 - In the Torah and Bible
 - Expanded in the Talmud
 - Example: Work on Shabbat
 - Example: Kashrut
- The different Jewish Movements: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform & Reconstructionist
- These movements developed only recently (early 1800s) and only in the Ashkenazi world.

Judaism and Jesus



Why Don't Jews Accept Jesus as the Messiah?

The Word “Messiah”

English “Messiah” is a translation of the Hebrew “*Mashiach*” [משיח]

- *Mashiach* means “anointed.”
 - Kings of Israel were anointed by pouring holy oil on their heads.
 - 39 references to “messiah” in Heb. Bible
 - Not one refers to future redeemer
- When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek (about 200 BCE), the Hebrew *Mashiach* became the Greek “*Christos*” [Χριστός].
- The Greek *Christos* gives rise to the English “Christ.”

Jewish Understanding of Messiah

- Fully Human and Only Human
- A Political and/or Military Ruler like King David
- Not God in any sense
- Not the son of God in any sense beyond the idea that we are all children of God
- Not connected with redemption of sin
 - Only we can atone for our sins
 - For sins against God, God forgives
 - For sins against others, God cannot forgive unless the person offended forgives
- Messiah not at the heart of Judaism

Jewish Prophecies Concerning Messiah

- A time of peace on earth
 - Peace among people
 - Peace among animals
- All the world will come to know the one God
- Details unresolved
 - Mystics see the time as supernatural
 - Rationalists believe that we will do the work to make the world perfect
 - Many believe in a Messianic Age rather than an individual Messiah.

My “Has the Messiah Come?” Test

- Read the LA Times cover to cover every day for a month.
- If there’s no story of war, or hatred or hunger or disease, the Messianic Age may be here!



Why Don't Jews Accept Jesus As Messiah?

- No world peace, no Messiah
- The Second Coming not a Jewish idea
- But the larger issue is whether Jesus is God
 - The idea of God taking human form, suffering with us and dying for our sins is
 - Beautiful and inspiring
 - But not Jewish!
- This is why I can have great respect for Christianity but less sympathy for “Jews for Jesus” and “Messianic Jews”

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 - **This issue is not “Who was Jesus” but “ Who is God.”**

Judaism (continued)

- Why didn't the Jews accept Jesus as a prophet?
 - Didn't speak in God's name
 - Competition between Judaism and Christianity
- The role of Jews in the world
 - To repair the world (*Tikkun Olam*)
 - To teach the world about God
 - Not to convert others
 - Judaism is the one true religion -- for Jews
- Jewish Services: *Minyan, Shema, Amidah & Torah Service*

Christianity

- This is a “true” or “pure” religion in that there is:
 - No ethnic requirement
 - Based only on beliefs – if you accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and God as a Trinity, you are Christian
- Problem of Original Sin and the nature of people as sinful
 - Solution of the problem is the perfect sacrifice, God becomes a sinless human
 - Jesus dies for all the sins of the world
 - Everyone in the world must accept Jesus – i.e., everyone should be Christian
 - If you can get the benefits of heaven without Jesus, why did he have to die?
- Christianity is the path to the God of Abraham for non-Jews
 - Many Christian Churches now hold that Jews need not convert
 - Not always viewed this way
- The idea that Jesus is both god and man is settled in 325 in the Nicæan Creed.

Christianity

- Main Divisions of Christians
 - Catholic Church
 - Orthodox Church – split
 - Many oriented along national lines – Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, etc.
 - Protestant – split by Martin Luther and others
 - Many split along doctrinal lines
 - Lutherans, Episcopalians, Baptists, Presbyterians, etc.
 - There are some 43,000 different Protestant movements
 - Some churches consider themselves Christian but are not considered so by Christians
 - Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses
- Heart of Services is the Eucharist

Islam

- Basic idea of the last and best revelation to Mohammed
- Main concept is submission to the will of *Allah*.
- 5 pillars
 1. Proclamation “There is no God but *Allah* (God) and Mohammed is His Prophet”
 2. Prayer 5 times per day – intense, highly regulated, formal observance including prostration in the direction of Mecca.
 3. *Haj* – pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in your life
 4. *Ramadan* – fasting, worship and charity
 5. Charity
- Sometimes a sixth pillar, *jihad* meaning “striving” or “exertion,” is added
 - Holy war is only one element of jihad
 - Personal striving toward piety is a key meaning.

Islam

- Islam believes in prophets (including Hebrew prophets, Jesus and others – but Jesus is not crucified or resurrected), angels (including the angel *Iblis* or Satan), the final judgment, heaven and hell, predestination (generally),
- Main service is Friday afternoon
 - Liturgy taken from the *Qur'an*
 - Friday is not considered a Sabbath, however.
- Holy Days
 - *Ramadan* – month of daytime fasts (from food, drink, sex)
 - 9th month of the lunar year [5/15/18 - 6/14/18]
 - 1st revelation of Qur'an given during this month
 - Children, ill, pregnant and nursing mothers exempt from fasting
 - *Kurban Bayram* (Feast of Sacrifice)
 - 2 months after end of *Ramadan*
 - Commemorates Abraham's sacrificing a ram instead of his son.
 - Prophet's birthday [11/30/17 – 12/1/17 days begin at sunset)

Islam – Holy Days

Dates of holidays and other days of note [[edit](#)]

	Hijri date	1438 AH	1439 AH	1440 AH	1441 AH	1442 AH
Islamic New Year	1 Muḥarram	2 Oct. 2016	21 Sep. 2017	11 Sep. 2018	31 Aug. 2019	20 Aug. 2020
Ashura	10 Muḥarram	11 Oct. 2016	30 Sep. 2017	20 Sep. 2018	9 Sep. 2019	29 Aug. 2020
Arba'een ^[a]	20 or 21 Ṣafar ^[b]	20 Nov. 2016	9 Nov. 2017	30 Oct. 2018	19 Oct. 2019	8 Oct. 2020
Mawlid an-Nabī ^[c]	12 Rabīʿ al-Awwal (Sunni)	11 Dec. 2016	30 Nov. 2017	20 Nov. 2018	9 Nov. 2019	29 Oct. 2020
	17 Rabīʿ al-Awwal (Shia)	16 Dec. 2016	5 Dec. 2017	25 Nov. 2018	14 Nov. 2019	3 Nov. 2020
Birthday of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ^[a]	13 Rajab	10 Apr. 2017	30 Mar. 2018	20 Mar. 2019	8 Mar. 2020	25 Feb. 2021
Laylat al-Mīʿraj	27 Rajab ^[d]	24 Apr. 2017	13 Apr. 2018	3 Apr. 2019	22 Mar. 2020	11 Mar. 2021
Laylat al-Baraʿat	15 Shaʿbān	11 May 2017	1 May 2018	20 Apr. 2019	8 Apr. 2020	28 Mar. 2021
Birthday of Muhammad al-Mahdī ^[e]	15 Shaʿbān	11 May 2017	1 May 2018	20 Apr. 2019	8 Apr. 2020	28 Mar. 2021
First day of Ramaḍān	1 Ramaḍān	27 May 2017	16 May 2018	6 May 2019	24 Apr. 2020	13 Apr. 2021
Laylat al-Qadr	19, 21, 23, 25, 27, or 29 Ramaḍān ^[f]	between 14 & 24 June 2017	between 3 & 13 June 2018	between 24 May & 3 June 2019	between 12 & 22 May 2020	between 1 & 11 May 2021
Chaand Raat ^[g]	29 or 30 Ramaḍān ^[h]	24 June 2017	14 June 2018	3 June 2019	23 May 2020	12 May 2021
Eid al-Fitr	1 Shawwāl	25 June 2017	15 June 2018	4 June 2019	24 May 2020	13 May 2021
Hajj	8–13 Dhū al-Hijja	30 Aug. – 4 Sep. 2017	19–24 Aug. 2018	9–14 Aug. 2019	29 July – 3 Aug. 2020	18–23 July 2021
Day of Arafah	9 Dhū al-Hijja	31 Aug. 2017	20 Aug. 2018	10 Aug. 2019	30 July 2020	19 July 2021
Eid al-Adha	10 Dhū al-Hijja	1 Sep. 2017	21 Aug. 2018	11 Aug. 2019	31 July 2020	20 July 2021
Eid al-Ghadeer ^[a]	18 Dhū al-Hijja	9 Sep. 2017	29 Aug. 2018	19 Aug. 2019	8 Aug. 2020	28 July 2021
Eid al-Mubalahah ^[a]	24 Dhū al-Hijja	15 Sep. 2017	4 Sep. 2018	25 Aug. 2019	14 Aug. 2020	3 Aug. 2021

^[3]^[4]

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_holidays

Islam

- Dietary Laws- *Halal* – all Kosher foods are acceptable food is slaughtered in the name of God
 - Carrion (anything that was not properly slaughtered), pork, blood, forbidden
 - Predators (animals and birds), dogs, donkeys and some other animals forbidden
 - Shellfish permitted, however
- Circumcision
 - Not mentioned in the Qur'an
 - Generally observed at varying ages from 7 days to puberty depending on local custom.
- Jews and Christians are “People of the Book” and not to be forcibly converted.
 - Historically they were *dhimmis*, protected so long as subservient.
- We owe Islam the science of Hebrew grammar and theology.