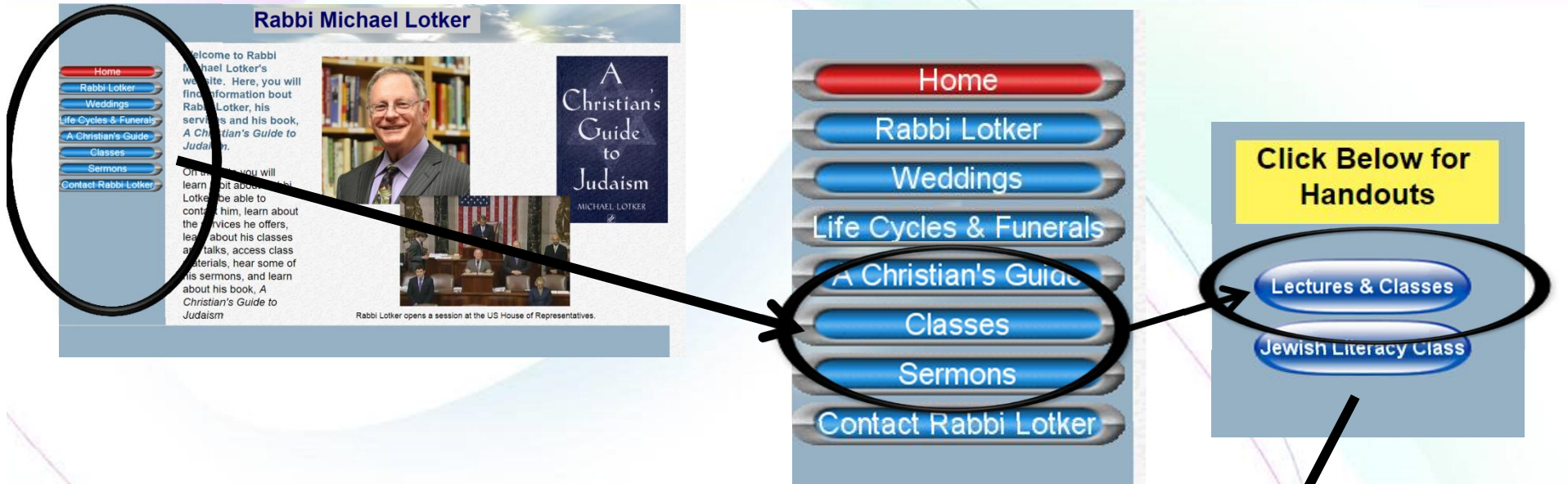


Understanding Judaism, Rituals, Holidays and Prayer

**Rabbi Michael Lotker
Camarillo, California**



To get copies of these slides available at lotker.com



Click a link below to access a handout from Rabbi Lotker's presentations.

> [What Every Christian Should Know About Judaism](#)

> [Understanding Judaism, Rituals, Holidays & Prayer \(a talk to CLU Religion, Identity and Vocation class\)](#)

> [Jewish Mysticism & Kabbalah](#)

Relationship Between Christianity & Modern Judaism

The background of the title area features a faint, stylized illustration. On the left, there is a menorah. In the center, a hand is shown holding a pen over an open book. On the right, a woman with dark hair and a man with glasses are depicted in profile, looking towards the left.

BIBLICAL JUDAISM

Text: The Hebrew Bible

Relationship Between Christianity & Modern Judaism

BIBLICAL JUDAISM

Text: The Hebrew Bible

CHRISTIANITY

Event: Arrival of Jesus as God/Messiah/Redeemer of Sin (c 30 CE)

Text: The Hebrew Bible & The New Testament

Relationship Between Christianity & Modern Judaism

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Text: The Hebrew Bible & The New Testament

RABBINIC JUDAISM

Event: Destruction of the 2nd Temple (70 CE)

Text: The Hebrew Bible & The Mishna and Talmud.

Faith & Works



- Emphasis on Judaism is Actions
 - Commandments
 - Jewish Law
 - Faith is Important but Secondary
- Emphasis in Christianity is Faith
 - Acceptance of Jesus
 - But Faith Without Works is Dead



A Religion of Commandments

- Hebrew for Commandment = *Mitzvah*
 - *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is someone obligated to observe commandments
- Not just the big 10
- 613 commandments in the Torah alone!
 - Love thy neighbor
 - No pork
 - Paying wages to day laborers each day



How Many Commandments?

- 613 in the Torah [1st 5 Books of Bible]
- The Rabbis of the Talmud add 1000s more
 - Against mixing milk and meat
 - Kosher slaughtering
 - Shabbat candles
 - Bar/Bat Mitzvahs
 - Hanukkah candles
 - Detailed rules for Passover Seders
 - Daily prayers

Jewish Peoplehood



- In ancient times, one's religion and nationality were the same.
 - Romans worshiped Roman gods.
 - Egyptians worshiped Egyptian gods.
 - Greeks worshiped Greek gods.
 - And Israelites worshiped the Israelite God.
- Judaism is the sole survivor of this system.
 - Not every Jew is an Israeli.
 - But every Jew is a member of *Am Yisrael*, the people Israel.

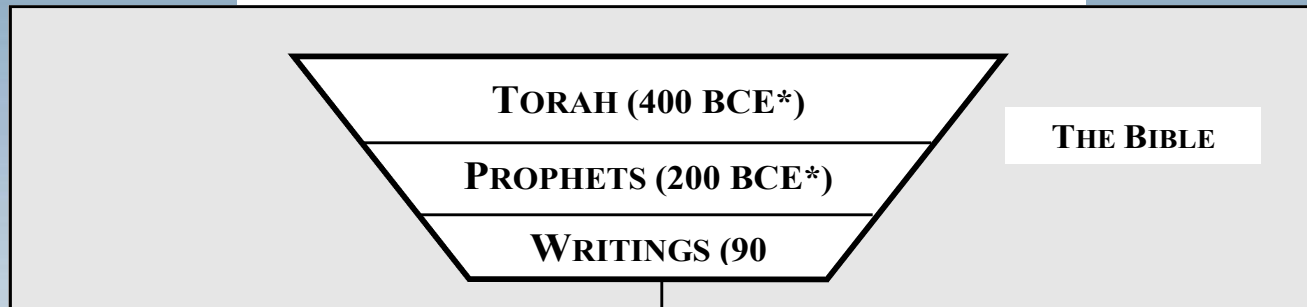
Who Is a Jew?



- Biblical: Goes with Father's line.
 - Joseph marries daughter of Egyptian priest.
 - His sons become heads of tribes.
- Talmudic (& Current Traditional Law)
 - You are Jewish if your mother is Jewish.
 - Your beliefs don't matter.
- But anyone can convert to Judaism (although converts are not sought).
- Reform Position: Child of Jewish father or mother is Jewish if raised Jewishly.

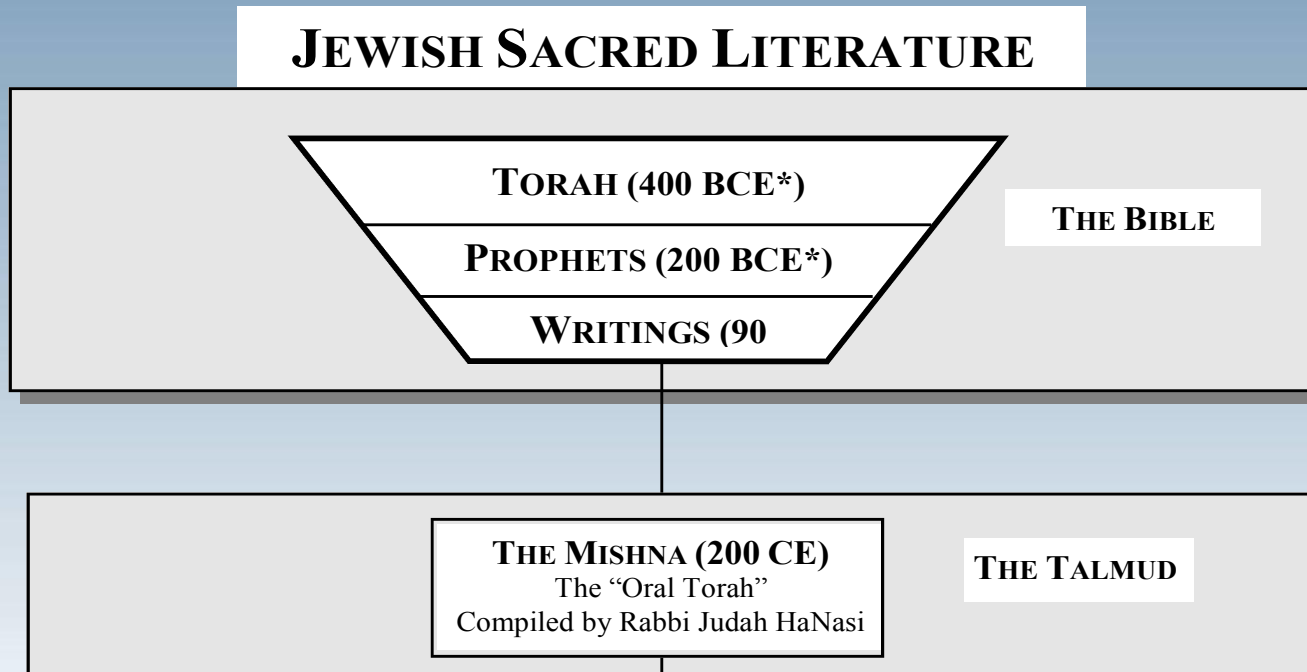
Jewish Sacred Texts Beyond the Bible

JEWISH SACRED LITERATURE



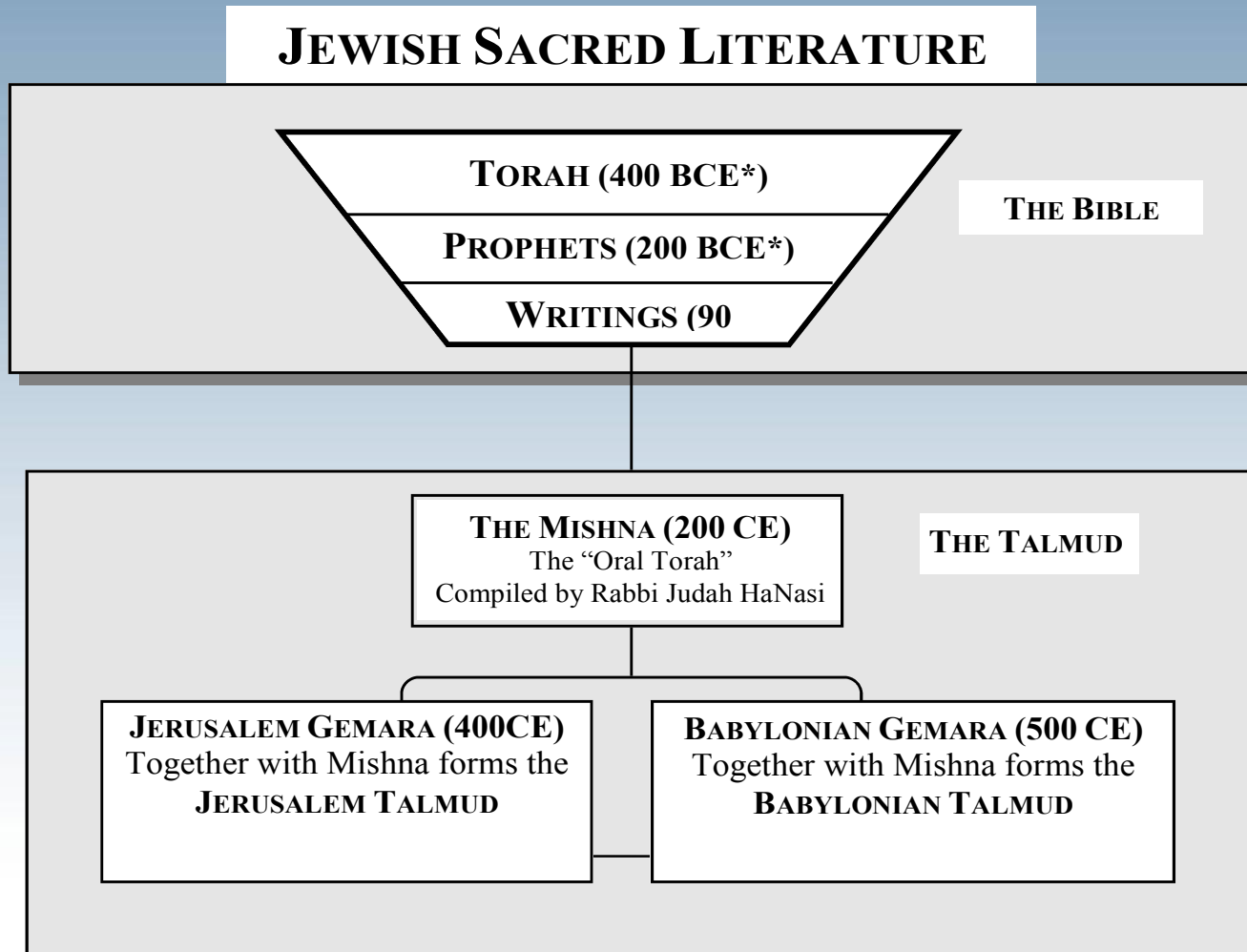
* Approximate Dates of Canonization

Jewish Sacred Texts Beyond the Bible



* Approximate Dates of Canonization

Jewish Sacred Texts Beyond the Bible



* Approximate Dates of Canonization

Torah Scroll



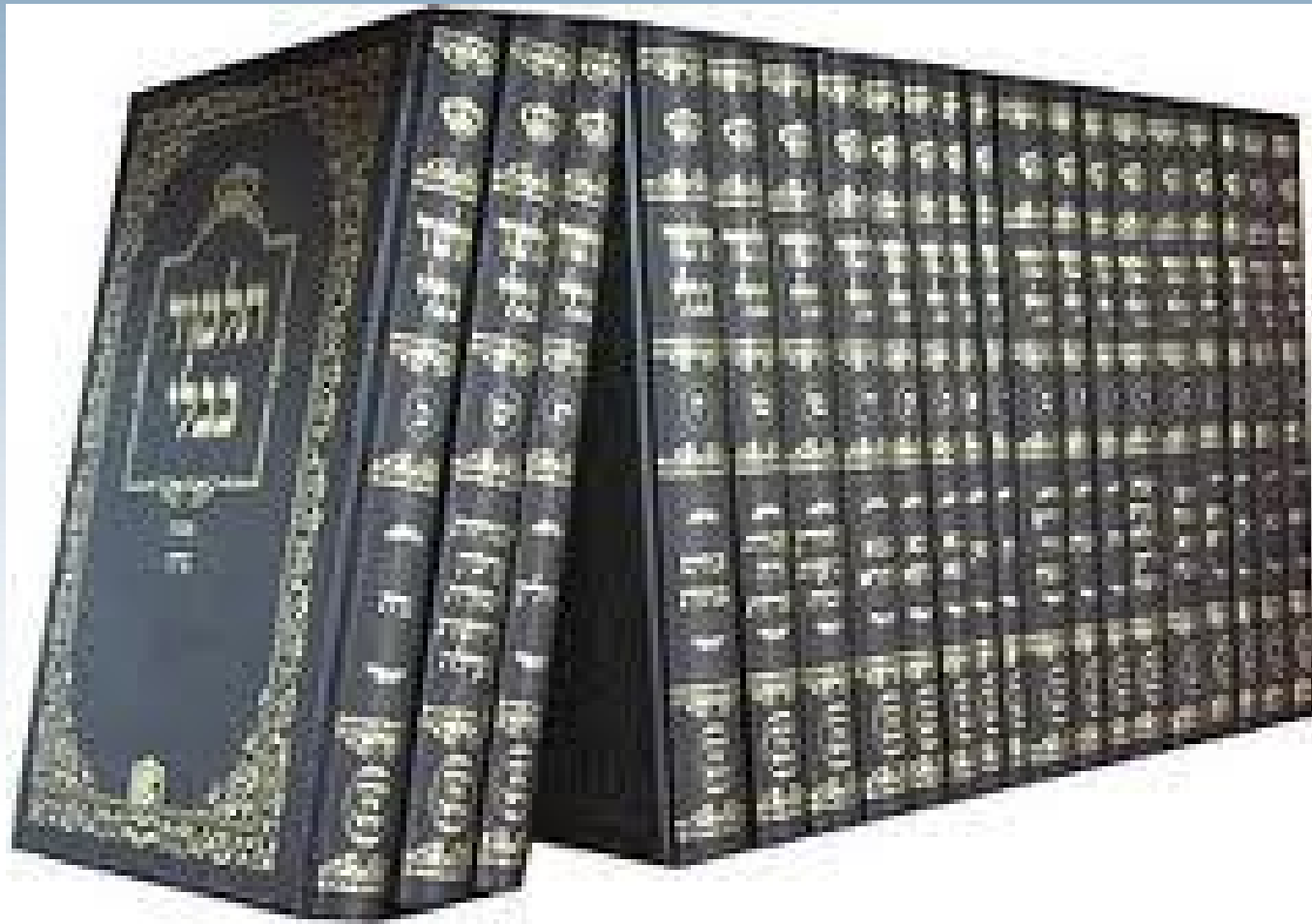
Mishna Texts – Six Orders (Sections)



A Page of Talmud



A Set of Talmud – 63 Tractates





The Sabbath in the Torah: Exodus 20

20:8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

20:9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work:

20:10 But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:



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So, how do you define work?



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But how does God define work?



The Sabbath in the Mishna & Talmud

- **MISHNAH (Shabbat 7:2)** The primary classes of work are forty less one, [viz.:] Sowing, ploughing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, cleansing crops, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, bleaching, hackling, dyeing, spinning, stretching the threads, the making of two meshes, weaving two threads, dividing two threads, tying [knotting] and untying, sewing two stitches, tearing in order to sew two stitches, capturing a deer, slaughtering, or flaying, or salting it, curing its hide, scraping it [of its hair], cutting it up, writing two letters, erasing in order to write two letters [over the erasure], building, pulling down, extinguishing a fire, kindling a fire, striking with a hammer, [and] carrying out from one domain to another: these are the forty primary labours less one.



The Sabbath in the Mishna & Talmud

- **MISHNAH (Shabbat 2:2)** The primary labours are forty less one, [viz.:] Sowing, ploughing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, selecting, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, bleaching, hackling, dyeing, spinning, stretching the threads, the making of two meshes, weaving two threads, dividing two threads, tying [knotting] and untying, sewing two stitches, tearing in order to sew two stitches, capturing a deer, slaughtering, or flaying, or salting it, curing its hide, scraping it [of its hair], cutting it up, writing two letters, erasing in order to write two letters [over the erasure], building, pulling down, extinguishing, kindling, striking with a hammer, [and] carrying out from one domain to another: these are the forty primary labours less one.
- **GEMARA (Shabbat 73b)** Why state the number? — Said R. Johanan: [To teach] that if one performs them all in one state of unawareness, he is liable on account of each separately.

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.”**

Jewish Movements



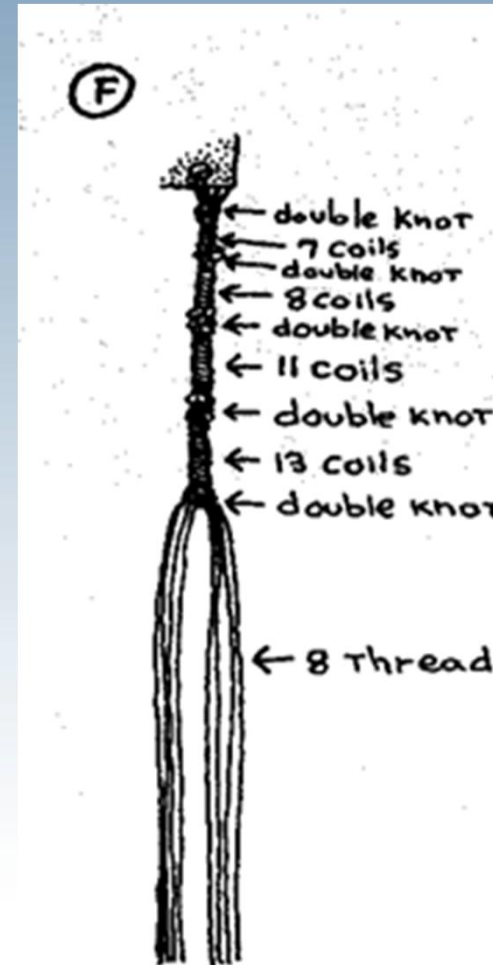
- **Orthodox:** All Jewish law unchanging & binding on all Jews.
 - Hasidic & Chabad are well known examples
- **Conservative:** All Jewish law binding on all Jews but laws change with the times.
 - Example: OK to drive to synagogue on Shabbat.
- **Reform:** Ethical Jewish laws binding but ritual laws (head coverings, kosher laws, Sabbath observance) should be studied and each individual decides if s/he hears God's voice.

Gematria

Aleph	א	1	Lamed	ל	30
Bet	ב	2	Mem	מ	40
Gimmel	ג	3	Num	נ	50
Dalet	ד	4	Samech	ס	60
Heh	ה	5	Ayin	ע	70
Vav	ו	6	Pey	פ	80
Zayin	ז	7	Tzadi	צ	90
Chet	ח	8	Kof	ק	100
Tet	ט	9	Resh	ר	200
Yod	י	10	Shin	ש	300
Kaf	כ	20	Tav	ת	400

Thus *Chai* = חַי = life = 18

Gematria of the Tallit & Tzitzit



Gematria of the Tallit & Tzitzit

צ Tzadi = 90

י Yud = 10

צ Tzadi = 90

י Yud = 10

ת Tav = $\frac{400}{600}$

5 knots/tzitzit = 5

8 strings/tzitzit = $\frac{8}{13}$

613 Mitzvot

1st group = 7 = Number of Days in Creation

2nd group = 8 = Number of Days of Brit Milah

Sum of 1st 2 groups = 15 = 1st 2 letters of יהוה

3rd group = 11 = last two letters of יהוה

4th group = 13 = value of echad אחד

Total of windings = 39 = value of אחד יהוה

More on the Value of Echad

א = 1 = The one Tallit

ח = 8 = The 8 strings per Tzitzit

ד = 4 = The 4 corners of the Tallit

Mezuzah & Tefillin

Deut 6:4. Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; 5. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. 6. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart; 7. And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8. **And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.** 9. **And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates.**



Shabbat



Shabbat
שבת
שלום
Shalom



Shabbat

Shabbat in Overview: “More than Israel has kept the Shabbat, the Shabbat has kept Israel.” Of all of creation, God calls only the Shabbat holy. It’s the first thing holy in the Torah and the only thing holy in the 10 Commandments. The Shabbat is the only thing in the creation story that is wholly new to the world.

- Two reasons given in the Torah for Shabbat – on the 7th day, God rested and to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt.
- All Jews agree that Shabbat is a time for spiritual refreshment. That we should do something to reflect the holiness of the day. There is a wide variation on what should be done. It is a reminder not to let the need to make a living make us blind to the need for living.



Shabbat

Shabbat is a day in which we pretend we have achieved the redemption of the world. We don't do anything classified as work because there's nothing to do!

- **The Shabbat as a bride – Lecha Dodi.**
- **We don't do anything that effects creation because creation is complete.**
- **It's as though we pause in our painting to view the painting.**
- **We dress in our best clothes, sing songs, relax with family, and study Torah.**
- **We try to help unify God's male and female aspects in heaven by being one on earth. This is why sex is a double mitzvah on Friday night.**
- **Tradition that you have an extra soul on the Shabbat. When this extra soul returns to heaven, God asks what it has learned in this world. Woe to the soul that has not had the opportunity to study.**

Ethics is the way to serve God, ritual is the way to connect with God. Shabbat combines the two.

Gefilte fish – so you don't have to separate the bones on Shabbat.

Havdalah – the separation back into the world of the profane.



Shabbat Observance: Friday Night

- **Set a special table, flowers, good dishes, dress up, etc.**
- **Invite guests, if possible**
- **Mitzvah of tzedakah**
- **Start with candle lighting (traditionally, 18 minutes before sunset). Two candles for the two words, zachor/remember and shamor/guard. Light candles first then say b'racha . Family blessing.**
- **Kiddush on the wine Motzi on the challah. Challah is covered so it won't be jealous about the blessing on the wine. Custom of silence between the motzi and eating the bread. The meal and blessing after the meal.**



Shabbat Observance

Erev Shabbat in the Synagogue

- Orthodox – before dinner.
- Conservative/Reform – after dinner. In many Reform congregations, this is the main Sabbath worship service with the Torah reading. More traditional congregations read Torah only on Shabbat morning.
- Oneg Shabbat: Sabbath joy.

Shabbat Day Observance – from the traditional to the Reform.

- The principle is to make the day different and sacred and holy. A key is to avoid changing the world.
- You should decide what you will do and not do. This may change over time. This is the beginning of spiritual discipline.
- Don't adopt an “all or nothing at all” approach
- Services and Torah study.



The Sabbath: Bottom Line

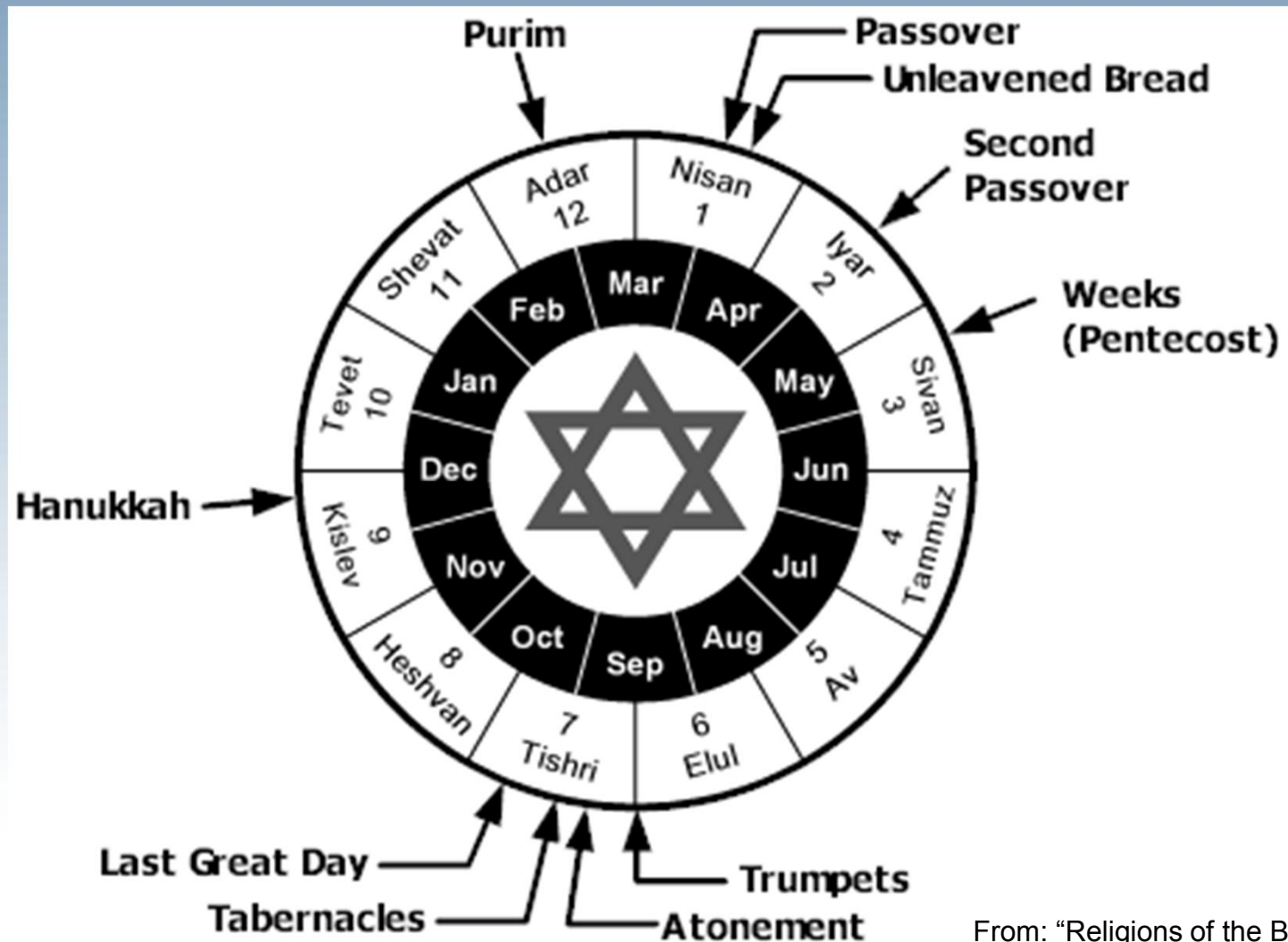
Don't let the best be the enemy of the good. Start observing Shabbat in some way and then let your soul be your guide.



Hebrew Calendar: “Lunisolar”

- Twelve “months/moons” (alternating 30 or 29 days)
- Total 353, 354 or 355 days (cf. $365\frac{1}{4}$ solar days)
 - or 383, 384, or 385 days in “Leap Years”
- Extra month (Adar II) added in Leap Years
 - Years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 & 19 of each 19-year cycle
- So months remain in the same solar seasons:
 - Tishri in Fall (Sept/Oct); Nissan in Spring (Mar/Apr), etc.
- *Rosh Codesh* (1st day each month)
 - Specials Psalms; Women free from work

Months and Festivals/Holy Days



From: "Religions of the Book" by Felix Just



Major Jewish Holidays (Overview):

- 1. Rosh Hashanah / Jewish New Year**
- 2. Yom Kippur / Day of Atonement**
- 3. Sukkot / Tabernacles/Booths**
- 4. Pesach / Passover**
- 5. Shavu'ot / Weeks/Pentecost**
- 6. Hanukkah / Feast of Lights**
- 7. Purim / Feast of Lots**
- 8. Simchat Torah / Rejoicing in the Torah**
- 9. Tisha B'Av / 9th of Av: Destruction of Two Temples**



The Holidays: Deeper Meanings

Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur & the 10 Days of Awe

- RH not identified in the Bible as New Year 's Day (in fact, it's in the 7th month).
- A time for introspection.
- Image of being on trial for your life. "On RH it is written, on YK it is sealed."
- The fast is a way of tasting death.
- Focus is on confession of sin and teshuvah – "where a *baal teshuvah* stands, a *tzadik* cannot."
- The solemn period actually begins back in July with *Tisha B'Av*.

Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur

A Good and Sweet Year
Shana Tova Umetukah



On
Rosh
Hashanah,
it is
written...

On
Yom
Kippur,
it is
sealed.

Rosh Hashanah / New Year



From: "Religions of the Book" by Felix Just

Yom Kippur / Day of Atonement

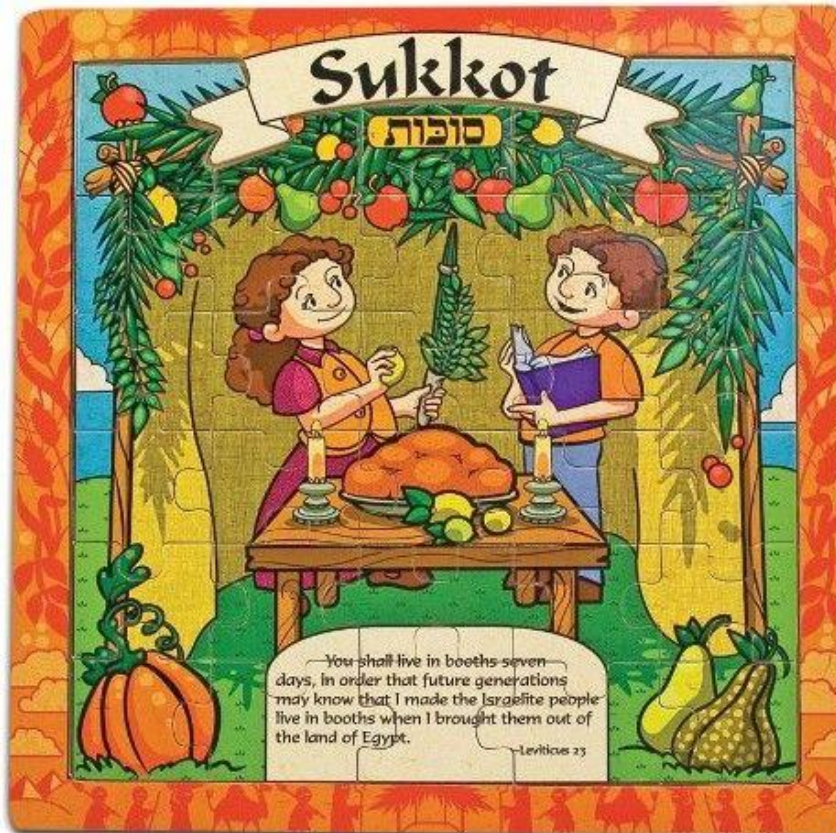


From: "Religions of the Book" by Felix Just



- Joyful holiday immediately following the solemnity of the HHD
- Living in booths to commemorate the 40 years wandering and the need to live in huts during the harvest.
- The booths are a reminder of the fragility of life itself.
- Biblical reading is the Book of Ecclesiastes.
- On the last day of Sukkot, we pray for rain (now that the rainy season has begun).
- Most important holiday in biblical times.

Sukkot



ארבעה מינים

Four Species
Lev 23:40

ערבה
Willow
branches

לולב
Date Palm
branch

הדרס
Myrtle

תנוּפָה
Tenufah
Waving the Lulav

אתרוג
Citron



Sukkoth / Tabernacles/Booths



From: "Religions of the Book" by Felix Just

Chanukah





Chanukah

- Story - 167 BCE - Syrian/Greek rulers who would destroy Judaism.
- Chanukah means “dedication.”
- Without Chanukah, there would be no Christmas (Judaism would have ended some 160 years before the birth of Jesus). And with out Christianity we would know little about Chanukah (because the Church preserved the Book of Maccabees).
- Menorah - 8 candles + *shammes*. Place from right to left and light from left to right. Menorah should be seen (as from a window).
- *Latkes & sufganiot* (jelly doughnuts) – for the oil
- Dreidle: Has the letters for the words *nes gadol haya sham* (“a great miracle happened there” – in Israel, *nes gadol haya po*, “a great miracle happened here”). How to play: *Nun* (get none), *gimel* (take all), *hay* (get half), *shin* (put one in).
- Deeper meanings
 - You have enough
 - What was impure can be made pure.
 - Note that we don’t celebrate the original dedication of the Temple, only it’s re-dedication that we observe.

Purim





Purim

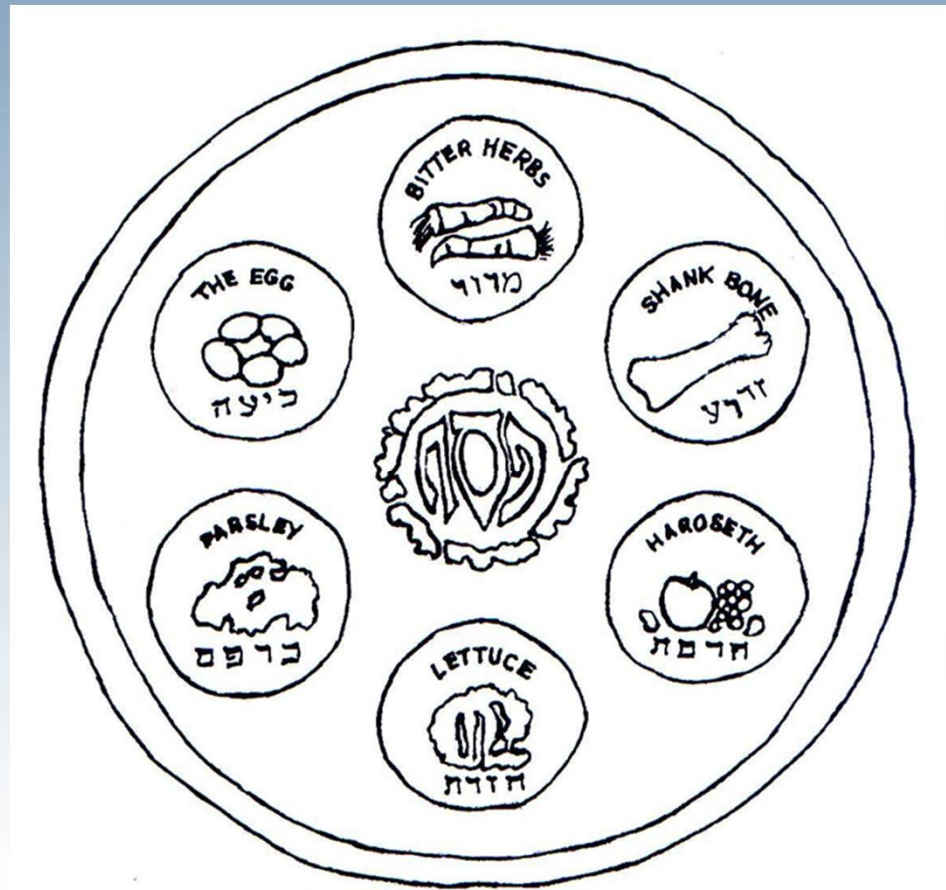
- Story of Haman, Ahasuerus, Mordecai and Esther in Persia.
- Name refers to the lots used to select the day of execution.
- Deeper meaning: no matter how good you have it in the diaspora – even if a Jew can become queen – at the whim of a government official, all Jews can face death. We are never safe in the diaspora.
- Another lesson – never write off assimilated Jews like Esther and Mordecai
- Another lesson – whosoever would be God must destroy the Jews totally!

An illustration at the top of the slide features a menorah, a scroll, a Star of David, and a man and a woman looking at each other.

Passover

- 8 day holiday commemorating the Exodus.
- Must eat matzah and cannot eat chometz.
- Haggadah read – it does not contain mention of Moses (concern that Moses would be worshipped as God).
- 90% of Jews attend a Seder (the word means “order”)
- Deeper meaning – live as though you were personally freed from Egypt. Examine you life to see what you are slave to.

Pesach / Passover



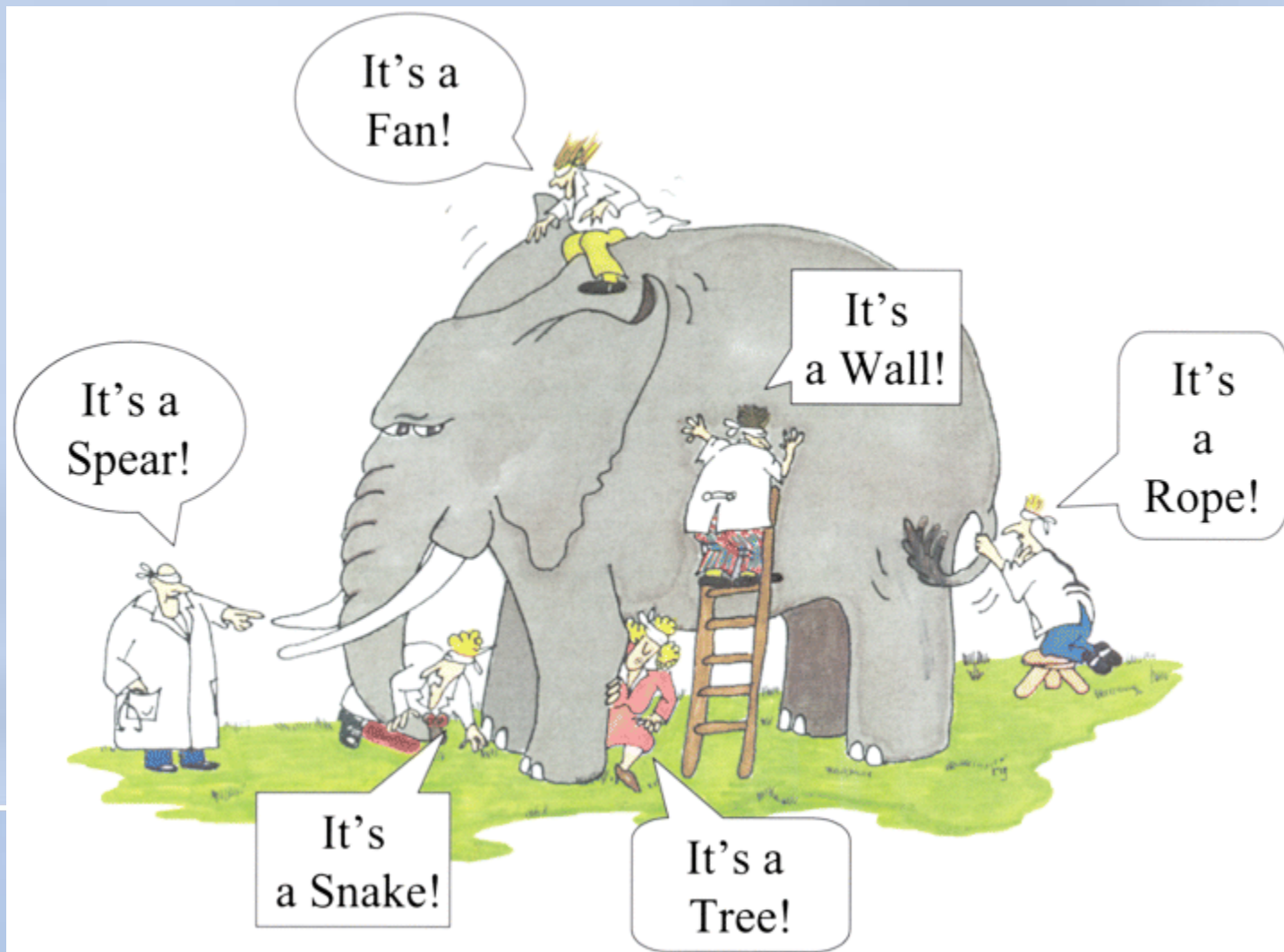
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Jewish Contributions to the World

- The Bible – First System of Ethics & Monotheism
- Ten Commandments
- Ideas like “Love thy Neighbor as Yourself”
ואהבת לרעך כמוך
- Judeo Christian Heritage founded on Jewish ideas
- 740 Nobel Prizes Between 1901 and 2004
- 156 are Jews
- Medicine – 29%
- Chemistry – 19%
- Economics – 38%
- Physics – 26%
- Peace – 10%

The Blind & the Elephant



Perhaps we each can see/understand
only a portion of God's totality.



Our error is in our certainty that our
view is the only truth.



The blind people all hear the creature speak and they all hear the Golden Rule, this rabbi's test for a *Kosher* religion.

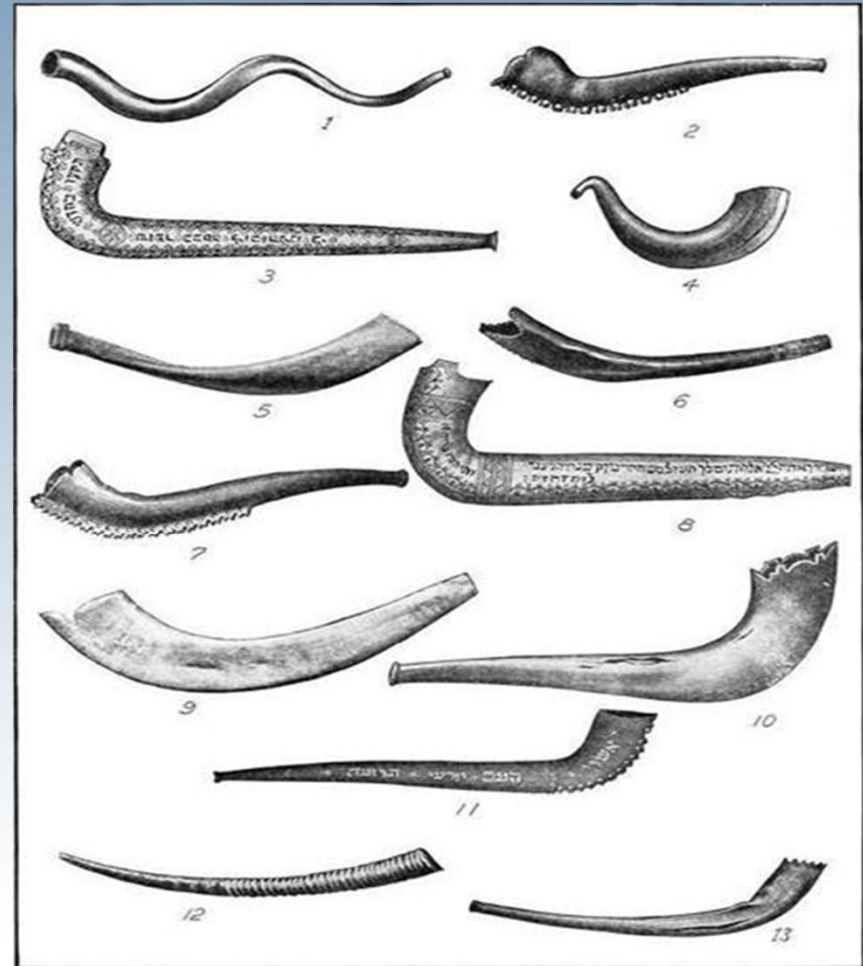


YOUR TURN

QUESTIONS ??????

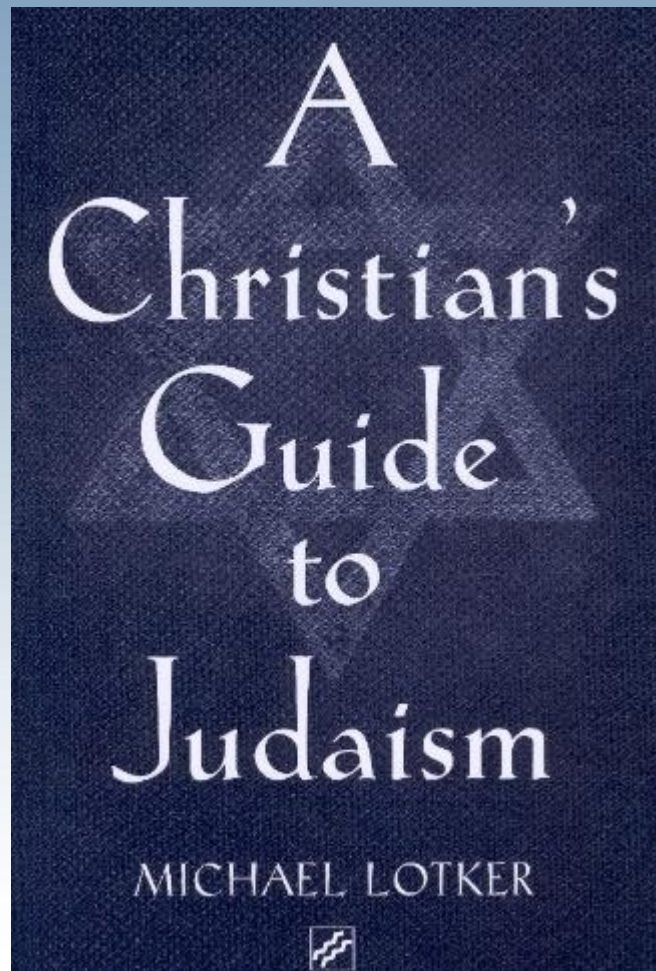
AND (I HOPE) ANSWERS

The Shofar



SHOFAR.
 1. Used by Beni-Israel of Bombay. 2, 3, 7. In the Great Synagogue, Aldgate, London. 4. From Bagdad, eighteenth century. 5, 6, 9. In the United States National Museum, Washington. 8. With carved Hebrew inscription (after Weinstein). 10. Alleged to belong to the pre-expulsion period (1290) of English Jews. 11. In the possession of Mrs. E. F. Aaron, New York. 12. In the possession of the late A. L. Cohen, London. 13. In the possession of F. L. Cohen, Sydney, N. S. W.
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