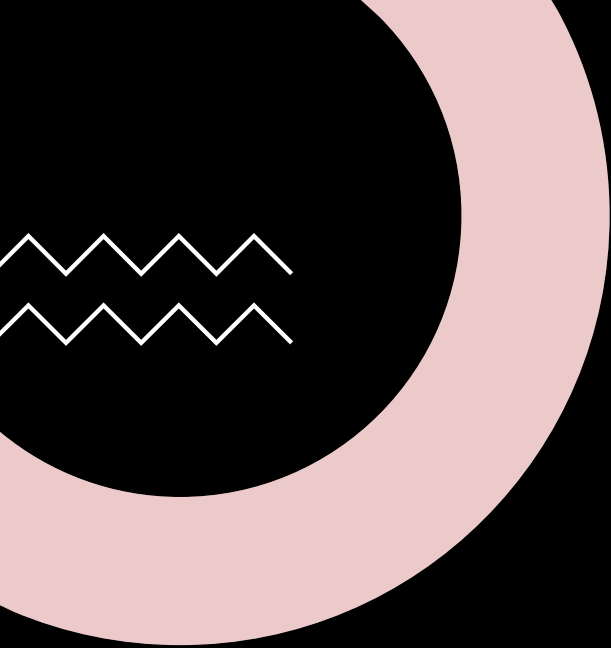


Judaism

Dialoging with Jewish People

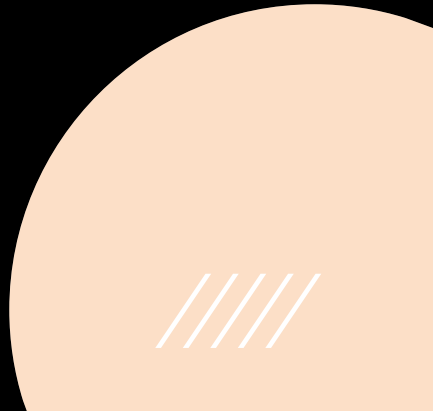
Shawn Nelson, 2024





- **Christians Are Familiar**
- From AD 70 to Today
- Practices
- Beliefs
- Tips for Sharing

Outline





As a Christian...

You're in a great position to witness to Jewish people because:

- You know some **Jewish history** and **culture!**
- You can use what you already know to build bridges into their lives.



You know a lot of
Jewish history!

The Old Testament is the **history** of **Jewish** people.

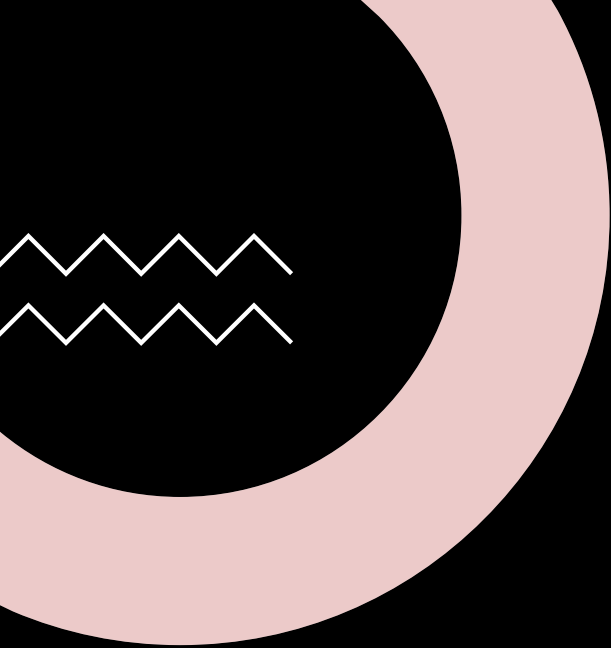
You're probably familiar with the **big themes** of:

- **Creation** – Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, Flood and Tower of Babel.
- **Covenant** – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph in Egypt, redemption from Egypt, plagues, giving of Law at Sinai.
- **Conquest** – Joshua and Judges.
- **“C”ingdom** – King Saul, David, Unified Kingdom under Solomon.
- **Collapse/Restoration** – Divided Kingdom, Assyrian/Babylonian Captivities, return to land under Ezra and Nehemiah.



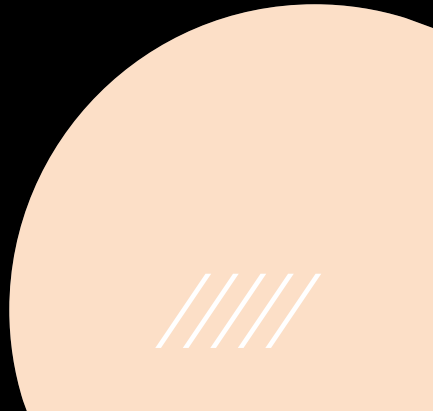
You're familiar with Jewish customs

- **Groups** like Sadducees & Pharisees
- **Festivals** like Passover (Luke 22:15; John 2:13-23; 13:1-3), Unleavened Bread (Matt. 26:17-28; Mk. 14:12-25), Pentecost (Acts 2) and Booths/Tabernacles (John 7:2-3).
- Jewish customs like **circumcision** (Acts 15; 16:3; Rom. 2:25), **dietary laws**, **Sabbath** rest, etc.



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Jewish people lost their temple (AD 70)

- 3 main groups in NT times: Zealots, Sadducees, and Pharisees.
- **Zealots** died at Masada, Herod's Fortress, in AD 73 with the mass suicide of 956 people.
- **Sadducees** were the priests. But they could no longer do sacrifices without a temple, so they lost control.
- So after the temple was destroyed, the **Rabbis (Pharisees)** became the leaders. This is why Judaism is called Rabbinic Judaism.
- Focus became keeping the law, but without sacrifices.



Jewish people lost their land

- **Simon bar Kokhba** led a revolt against the Romans (132–136 AD).
- **Three rabbis** declared him to be **messiah**.
- In response, Roman Emperor Hadrian **leveled Jerusalem** in AD136.
- Romans rebuilt the city, changing Jerusalem's name to **Aelia Capitolina**, dedicated to god Jupiter.



Diaspora & Persecutions

- Many Jews fled from Jerusalem to **Persia** (Babylon).

They **stayed scattered** for a long time and were **persecuted** (even by Christians!)

- Over time, Jewish groups **emerged in Europe** (16th/17th centuries)
 - **Sephardic Jews** – Spanish roots / Islamic Arab
 - **Ashkenazic Jews** – German roots; spoke Yiddish (German with Hebrew characters)



ישראל · ISRAEL

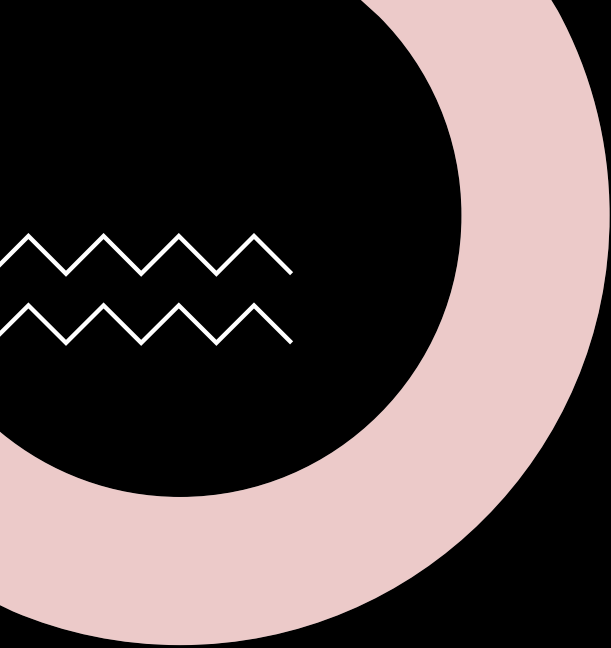
- ⊙ National capital
- ⊙ District (mehoz) centre
- City, town
- ✈ Airport
- International boundary
- - - Boundary of former Palestine Mandate
- - - Armistice Demarcation Line
- - - District (mehoz) boundary
- Main road
- - - Secondary road
- - - Railroad
- - - Oil pipeline



Israel Rebirth

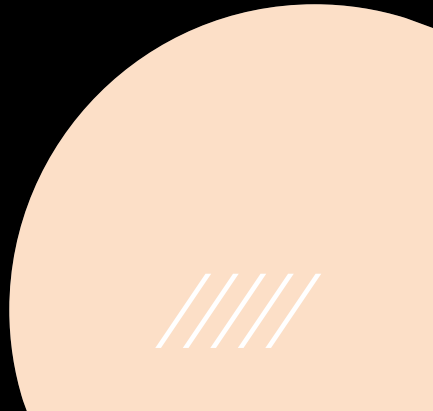
- **Six million** Jewish people were killed by **Hitler** and **Nazi** persecution.
- After WWII, the Jewish people were allowed to form a **Jewish state** under support of the United Nations in 1948.
- Today Israel has **9 million people**—with 6.7 million Jewish people. (USA has 5.3 million).





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Practices

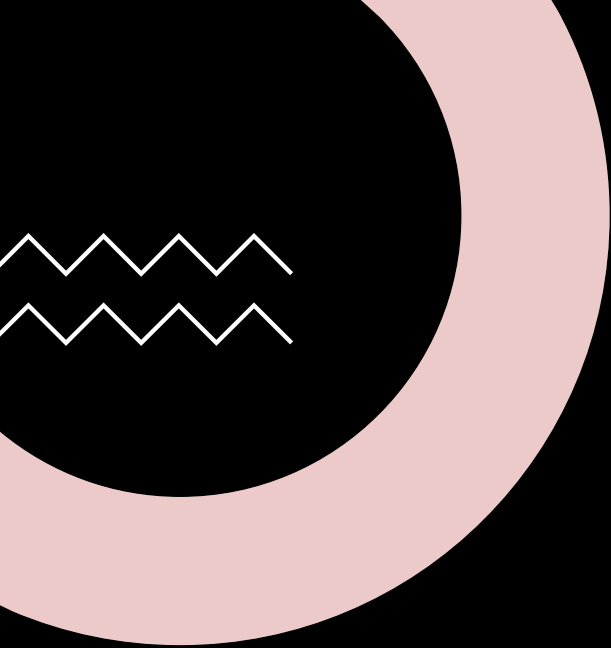
- **Keeping Kosher**
 - Eating only certain foods; not mixing meat and milk foods, etc.
- **Clothing**
 - Wearing certain clothing as a sign of devotion (e.g., *kippah*).
- **Sabbath**
 - Saturday prayer service at the synagogue (Fri. for Reform).
 - Not supposed to work: no turning lights on/off, answering phone, driving.
- **Life Events**
 - **Circumcision** – Males are circumcised on 8th day. Based on God commanding Abraham to circumcise male descendants in Gen. 17: 9-14.
 - **Bar/Bat Mitzvah** – A Rite of passage ceremony at age 13 (considered morally responsible).
 - **Weddings** – Ceremony under a canopy (*chuppah*). Smashing of glass symbolizes destruction of temple in AD 70.

Holidays

Virtually all Jewish people observe at least some Jewish holidays.

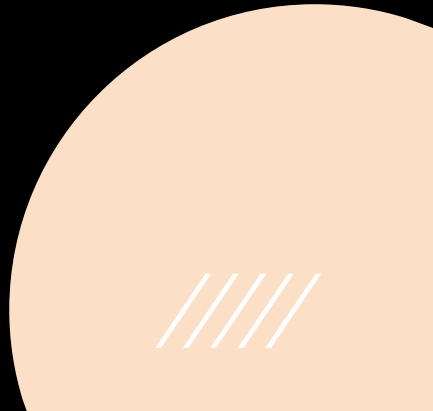
- **Rosh ha-Shanah** (Jewish New Year) – Sep or Oct.
- **Yom Kippur** (Day of Atonement) – 10 days after previous.
- **Sukkot** (Booths) – 5 days after previous. Booth constructed in yard; waving branches.
- **Hanukkah** – Nov/Dec. Remembering Jewish victory over Syrian army (c. 175 BC) by lighting a menorah for 8 days.
- **Purim** – Feb/Mar. Celebrates God's deliverance of Jewish people from Persians through Esther.
- **Passover** – Mar/Apr. Biggest holiday. Families gather to remember events of Exodus. Unleavened bread eaten for a week.
- **Shavuot** (Weeks or Pentecost) – May/June. Not widely observed. Celebrates harvest, giving of Law.





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Why do Jewish people reject Jesus?

You might hear...

- “The true Messiah will **gather Jewish exiles** to their homeland, **rebuild the Temple**, and bring in an **age of peace.**”
 - “The **Temple already existed** in Jesus’s day.”
 - “Jesus **did not reign** as king.”
 - “Jesus was **killed** instead!”
 - “Jesus caused the Temple to be **destroyed** and the Jewish people to be **scattered.**”
- “It’s idolatry to **worship a person.**”

How could we respond?

Do all Jewish people reject Jesus?

Answer: No!

There are about **350,000 Jewish people** worldwide today **who do believe in Jesus**. They are called Messianic Jews.

Peter, James, John, Paul, etc., were all Jewish. Christianity started as a Jewish sect. Acts 24:5 says, “For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the **sect of the Nazarenes.**”

Some great Messianic Jewish resources are Jews for Jesus (www.jewsforjesus.org) and Arnold Fruchtenbaum (www.ariel.org).



How do Jewish people think they're forgiven without a temple?

How do Jewish people think they're forgiven today if there's **no temple** and **no animal sacrifices**?

Answer: they don't think sacrifices required.

- **God took away the temple**, so they think they're not obligated.
- They also think their **repentance** is what's important. Even if they had a temple, they still believe repentance is what's most important.



Three main branches of Judaism today

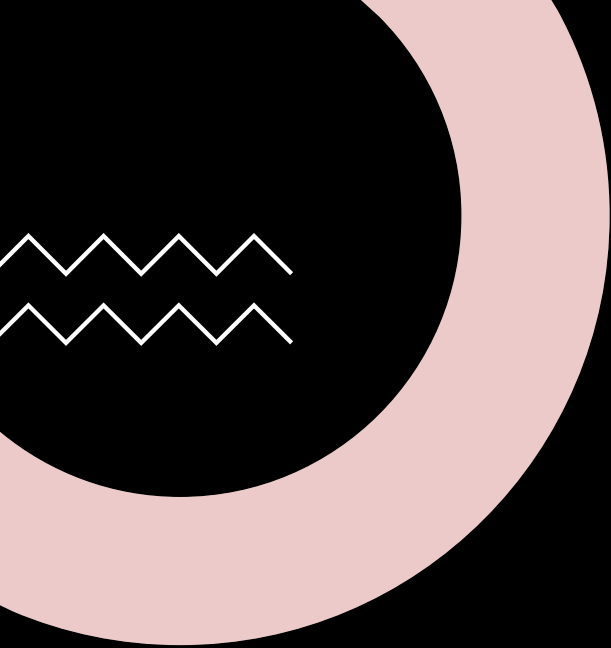
	Orthodox (10% USA)	Reform (35%)	Conservative (18%)
Description	Before 18th century.	Modernized Judaism after 18th century Enlightenment.	Between Orthodox and Reform.
Scripture	High view of Hebrew Bible and oral law.	Low view of Hebrew Bible. Rejects miracles. Not historically or scientifically accurate. Still valuable for morality.	Hebrew Bible and law are mix of God's Word and man's word.
God	Belief in a personal God.	Don't even have to believe in God.	Non-dogmatic and flexible. God is impersonal and unknowable.
Mankind	People are born morally neutral with both good and evil inclination	People are basically good. Can improve through education and evolution.	Usually like Reform view.
Salvation	Repentance, prayer and obedience to the Law are required.	People should better themselves to advance society.	Usually like Reform view.
Messiah	Coming messiah will restore kingdom and rule over entire earth.	Mankind is progressing toward a Utopian age	Usually like Reform view.
Life after death	Physical resurrection followed by judgment.	No concept of life after death.	Usually like Reform view.

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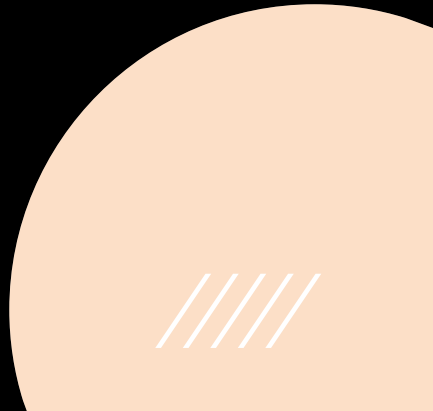
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Evangelism Tips

- **Jewish people are not as concerned about “going to heaven” or being “saved.”** Don’t be surprised if that type of message does not make sense to them. As Christians, we rightly see ourselves as sinners, cut off from God, and who need to believe in Jesus to save us from our sins in order to get to heaven. But most Jewish people **feel they are already in a good relationship with God** (as God’s chosen people). Most are concerned with **“how to live in the here and now”** (Intl. Students, 8). They believe they are to demonstrate to the rest of the world how to live righteously on earth.
- **Jewish people are not as concerned about doctrine.** “Judaism, in all its branches, is a religion of **deed, not creed**” (Intl. Students, 2).
- **Jewish people reject that people are born sinners.** Judaism rejects the idea of original sin (that people are born with a sin-nature). They see a “sinner” as somebody who is extremely immoral and evil. Try to show how **all people are sinners from the Old Testament**. Some examples:
 - 1 Kings 8:46 – (Solomon praying) “If they sin against you—*for there is no one who does not sin*—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy...”
 - Psalm 51 – the great king, David, confesses his own sin.



Evangelism Tips

- **Ask questions that go into conversation.** A suggested opening could be: “As a Christian, I’m discovering that our faith is basically Jewish. I guess you could say that I believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **Why do you suppose it’s mostly Gentiles who believe in Him even though Christianity is basically Jewish?”** (*Compact Guide*, 134)
- **Avoid Christian jargon** like “the precious blood of Christ,” “saved,” and “born-again.” These do not carry meaning for secular or Jewish people. (*Compact Guide*, 132)
- **Try not to offend** with anti-Semitic phrases. Instead of saying “you Jews” or “a Jew” say “the Jewish people” or “a Jewish man.” (*Compact Guide*, 132)
- **Be patient.** Realize that as a Christian you likely know the Old Testament better than a Jewish friend. You might be showing them Scriptures they are not familiar with. (*Compact Guide*, 139)



Have a plan for...

Proving Jesus is Messiah





There are many free lists online.
This comes from Jews for Jesus [here](#).

The Messiah would...	OT Reference	NT Fulfillment
Be born in <u>Bethlehem</u>	Micah 5:2 (Hebrew Bible verse 1)	Matthew 2:1–6 John 7:40–43
Be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:22–23 Luke 1:31–35
Be called a Nazarene	Isaiah 11:1 Isaiah 53:3	Matthew 2:23
Perform signs of healing	Isaiah 35:5–6	Matthew 11:4–6 Luke 7:20–23
Be the rejected cornerstone	Isaiah 61:1–2	Luke 4:17–21
Be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12–13	Matthew 26:14–15 Matthew 27:3 Matthew 27:9–10
Bear our <u>sins</u> and suffer in our place	Isaiah 53:4-6,11	Matthew 8:16–17 Matthew 20:28 Matthew 26:28 Matthew 27:59–60 Mark 10:45 Mark 14:24 Luke 22:20 John 12:37–38 Acts 8:32–35 Romans 10:16 Hebrews 9:28 1 Peter 2:21–25
Be pierced	Malachi 4:5–6 (Hebrew Bible 3:23–24)	Matthew 11:14–15 Matthew 16:14 Matthew 17:9–13 Mark 6:14–16 Mark 9:11–13 Luke 1:16–17 John 1:21
Be <u>resurrected</u>	Psalms 16:8–11	Acts 2:22–32 Acts 13:35–37
Bring in a new covenant	Psalms 22:1–31	Matthew 27:39 Matthew 27:43–44 Matthew 27:46 Mark 15:34 John 19:24 Hebrews 2:12

Show Old Testament Imagery Points to Christ

Luke 24:27 – “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He (Jesus) expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

- **Passover lamb.** Blood put on doorframe of every house so the angel of death would pass over and spare that house (Ex.12:7). This foreshadows need to be covered by blood of Christ to be spared of God’s wrath (Rom. 5:9).
- **Bronze snake.** People sinned, and God sent snakes. When people cried out to Lord, he replied, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” (Num. 21:8). This foreshadows salvation by looking to Jesus lifted up on the cross (John 3:14).
- **Abraham’s sacrifice.** God tested Abraham’s obedience by asking him to sacrifice his only son Isaac whom he greatly loved (Gen. 22:1-18). This foreshadowed God sacrificing his only son (John 3:16).
- **Jonah.** Jonah was swallowed by a large fish (Jonah 1:17) for three days. This points to Jesus being buried for three days (Matt. 12:40; Luke 11:30).
- **Joseph.** He was rejected by own brothers, sold into slavery, but then becomes second to Pharaoh. When his brothers encounter famine, Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and delivers them from famine. Points to how Jesus would be rejected by his own people, but this would result in their salvation.
- **Yearly feasts.** Elements of Messiah found throughout the feasts that the Jewish people celebrate every year (Leviticus 23). Passover points to need for each family to be covered by blood of lamb; Unleavened Bread points to removal of sin; Firstfruits points to Jesus being resurrected first; Pentecost points to Holy Spirit being poured out; Trumpets speaks to Israel’s gathering to Messiah in future; Atonement speaks to Israel’s acceptance of Messiah in future; Tabernacles points to the future millennial kingdom.
- **Tabernacle.** Each element represents something. For example, there was one door into the camp (John 14:6). The **brazen altar** points to the need for a sacrifice to enter God’s presence (John 1:29). The **bronze laver** points to need for being cleansed before going into God’s presence (John 13:8). The **table of showbread** and **lampstand** point to the light and bread a person has in the presence of God (Jesus claimed to be both light and bread of world in John 8:12; 6:35). **Veil of curtain** leading into holy of holies was torn at Jesus death. We have an eternal **high priest** who offered a single blood sacrifice (his own perfect blood), and he sat down because there’s no more need for sacrifice (Heb. 10:11-14). Therefore, we now have boldness to enter God’s presence (Heb. 10:19).
- **Burnt offerings.** Worshipper would bring sacrifice, lay hands on its head, sin transferred to animal. Speaks to substitutionary sacrifice of Christ (John 1:29).

Important Terms

Askenazi Jews – Jewish people settling around German lands.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah – Rite of passage ceremony at age 13 (considered morally responsible).

Gemara – illustrations of the law (aka Haggadah).

Kabbalah - Jewish mysticism that began in the middle ages.

Midrashim – Homiletical commentaries on the Old Testament

Mishna – The oral law. Jewish people believe God also gave an oral law along with written law.

Schema – Refers to Deut. 6:4: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” Emphasizes belief in one God.

Sedar – Jewish feast during Passover

Sephardic Jews – Jewish people setting around Spain, Islamic Arab influence.

Septuagint (or LXX) – Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures (3rd to 2nd c. BC).

Synagogue – building where Jewish congregation meets.

Talmud – Mishna (oral law) + Gemara (illustrations)

Tanakh – Stands for Torah, Prophets, Writings. Refers to three major sections of Hebrew Bible.

Torah – First five books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy); aka, the Pentateuch. Can also refer to entire written and oral law.

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