

World Religions:

*Judaism – Foundation of Christianity,
but Still Looking for Christ*

- Judaism is the religious system of the Jewish people.
- Being Jewish is a national designation as much as a religious one.
 - You can be Jewish without following the Jewish religion.
 - Being a Christian always includes a personal commitment to a set of religious beliefs. Being a Christian is never an ethnic or a cultural barrier.

An explanation

- Judaism is a religion based on relationships: God's relationship with a human person, a person's relationship with God, people's individual relationships with each other, and the Chosen People's relationship with other nations.
All of these relationships are based on rules and traditions that are said to have originated with God.

Contrasting Philosophy

- Judaism does not revolve around a set of doctrines or a plan of salvation.
- The common denominator is the need to make a difference in the world through a life of righteousness.

It's Origin

- Because Judaism is concerned with relationships, they date the start of their religion with Abraham.
- Genesis 12:1–3 (NAS)

¹Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you;

²And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;

³And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Notable Dates

- 2100 BC – God makes a covenant with Abraham
- 1900 BC – Joseph in Egypt
- 1425 BC – Exodus and Law given at Sinai
- 1400 – 1050 BC – Period of the Judges
- 1050 – 931 BC – United kingdom under Saul, David, Solomon
- 931 BC – Divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah
- 722 BC – Fall of Samaria, end of kingdom of Israel

- 587 BC – Fall of Jerusalem, end of kingdom of Judah, exile to Babylonia
- 537 BC – End of exile, restoration of Judah, Persian overlordship
- 440 BC – Last biblical prophet – Malachi
- 332 BC – Conquest by Alexander the Great, Greek rulers
- 166 BC – Maccabean revolt, Hasmonean kingdom, Herod the Great installed by Romans (37 BC)
- AD 70 – Destruction of Jerusalem and the temple

Their Scriptures

- Judaism believes that the OT Scriptures, as we know them, are inspired by God.
- They organize the OT differently than we do.
 - Torah, Prophets and Writings.
 - Torah – First five books revealed to Moses
 - Prophets – Josh, Jug, 1-2 Sam, 1-2 Kgs, Is, Jer, Ezek, and the "Twelve" (Minor prophets)
 - Writings – Ps, Job, Prov, Ruth, Songs, Ecc, Lam, Est, Dan, Ez, Neh, 1-2 Chr.

Their Scriptures

- They also add:
 - The Mishnah – Commentary on the OT
 - Explains in detail how one should obey the Law.
 - The Haggadah – Further commentary on the OT

The Mishnah + The Haggadah = Talmud

- The Talmud translated in English is 48000 pages long!

Dominate Groups within Judaism

- Orthodox Judaism
 - Follows a traditional practice of Judaism
 - Strict adherence to the Sacred Writings, all are inspired
 - Keep kosher
 - Religious education for children
 - Reject idea of original sin
 - Man can become righteous through observance of Jewish law

– In respect to future things, they await arrival of Elijah and Messiah to rebuild temple and usher in the Messianic Age (Kingdom of God)

– Approximately 27 percent of Israeli Jews, and 10 percent of the Jewish population in the US are orthodox.

Dominate Groups within Judaism

- Conservative Judaism
 - Believe the legal, moral, and spiritual commandments of the Torah may be adjusted with society.
 - Following Sacred Writings is up to the interpretation by individual congregations.
 - 33 percent in America (and declining) 15 percent in Israel.

Dominate Groups within Judaism

- Reform Judaism
 - Most liberal in Judaism
 - Relationship with God is realized through keeping the commandments from man to man.
 - The ultimate authority is whatever is accepted in society.
 - By far the largest group within Judaism worldwide.

Dominate Groups within Judaism

- Secular Judaism
 - National Jewish people that do not practice Judaism as a religion.
 - Large group, but it is shrinking.

Religious Practices

- Because the Temple was destroyed, Judaism does not practice sacrificial system described in the Old Testament.
- Worship in Synagogues
- Sabbath is Friday sundown through Saturday sundown.
- Rabbi's are their pastors.

Holy Days

- Rosh Hashanah – Jewish new year, in September or October. Considered a day of reflection and repentance.
- Yom Kippur – 10 days after Rosh Hashanah. Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement. While no sacrifices are offered, this is a day of personal repentance.
- Sukkoth – Feast of the Booths, commemorates Israel's wandering in the wilderness.

Holy Days

- Simchat Torah – directly after Sukkoth, this day celebrates the Torah.
- Hanukkah – festival commemorating the purification of the temple by the Maccabees. Only having oil for one day, the festival was supposed to last eight days and miraculously it did. This is a time of family togetherness.

IT IS NOT A JEWISH CHRISTMAS!

Holy Days

- Purim – Day of celebration of the events that took place in Esther. Celebrated in community with dancing and singing.
- Passover – lasts seven or eight days. Celebration of God's protection in the last plague that led to the exodus from Egypt.
- Shavuot – celebrated seven weeks after Passover, celebrates the giving of the Law on Sinai.

About Jesus

- Viewed as a Jew whose teaching and practice was essentially in harmony with the teaching of the day.
- Believe that Paul and the church (primarily Jewish) transformed Jesus into a Messianic Savior.
- Deny He is the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God.

About Jesus

- Rejection due to inability of Jesus to rescue Israel from enemies and regather the scattered people, reunite the 12 tribes, redeem Israel spiritually, rebuild the Temple, and reign over Israel and nations as King.

Common Ground

- Judaism and Christianity share:
 - Belief in OT and teachings
 - Belief in the same God
 - Of holiness
 - Justice
 - Purity
 - Righteousness
 - Unity
- A need to worship God
- Importance of family
- Obligation to love others.

So You Meet a Jew...

- Respect their traditions.
 - Kosher
 - Sabbath
 - Holy Days
 - Clothing is a sign of devotion to God, not holiness.
 - They are endowed with “heritage”, it is a tradition into which one is born.
 - Due to persecution, all Jews esteem their heritage as being paid by the blood and pain of their forefathers.

So You Meet a Jew...

- Just because we know the Old Testament, that doesn't mean we understand Judaism.
- All attempts to evangelize Jews come under heavy suspicion. Remember their persecution!
- Jewish people do not lose sleep worrying about the Messiah or the reestablishment of the Temple.
- Avoid using Jewish terms in derogatory ways. It is Sin!

So You Meet a Jew...

- Make sure your motives and attitudes are biblical when sharing the Gospel with a Jewish person.
- Have an attitude of sacrificial love.
- Build a relationship.
- Remember, when a Jew accepts Jesus as Messiah, they are still nationally a Jew. They become a “completed” Jew.