

Rabbi Journal II

Now, How Do I Answer That?

By Rabbi Chanoch Oppenheim, Charlotte Torah Center

This subject might make some people uncomfortable but it is a question I am often asked. When someone in the Jewish community asks, it's usually in response to a question asked by a non-Jewish person at the office (and the Jewish person didn't have an answer). When a non-Jewish person asks me the question, it's usually out of curiosity about something that seems so obvious that they can't understand how someone could disagree. The question: Why don't the Jews accept Jesus as the Messiah? Although people get fidgety and try to slip away from the situation, the answer, like all others in the Torah and our heritage, is something for which we neither apologize nor evade. That being said, we are not here to disparage the beliefs of other people, especially those who do so much social welfare for the world, rather we just want to speak rationally and provide a safe space for the person's question. Here goes.

Judaism has three fundamental issues with Christian theology.

I. Trinity. Jewish belief has never, will never, and does not believe that God has a human form. God is beyond space and time; God not taking a physical form is one of the central ideas in Judaism. Making a corporealization of the Deity is a violation of

a basic Jewish tenet.

2. Classical Jewish literature does not accept the notion of a second coming. Once messiah reveals himself, he will accomplish a designated mission of getting the Jews back to Israel and rebuilding the Temple and establishing world peace. Jesus was crucified before he completed any of these things and therefore we cannot accept him as the Messiah. The way Christianity got around this was to develop the concept of a second coming in which he will complete his mission. Our version is that when the messiah comes, he is going to get the job done and that he is not coming back.

3. Judaism is based on mitzvot, i.e. proper conduct and good deeds (action). Christian theology (i.e. either Jesus, the apostles, or architects of the early Church) states that God abrogated and replaced His covenant. A major ramification of this is Paul's innovation that one gets redemption not by actions but by faith. That is a theological postulate that is inconsistent with Judaism. One might argue that this is Paul's innovation not Jesus', but the main point is that it is diametrically opposed to Judaism.

There is nothing negative above these three points, they are merely meant to articulate why Jews have not historically accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

At this point, one question is usually asked: Doesn't the Old Testament predict the events of the New Testament? No, not if you read them in the original Hebrew or in accurate translations such as Artscroll's Stone Edition or the Jewish Publication Society's Eitz Chaim. (This subject is too broad to discuss in the limited space of this article.)

So where does this leave us? What do Jews actually believe concerning the Messiah? Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Britain's former chief Rabbi, closed one of his talks on the subject with these words.

"Our task – to repeat – is to be true to ourselves and to be a blessing to others; to bring forward the Messianic Age, the narrative of redemption, to do so by the example of our lives and, through our lives, to reduce that dissonance ... We bring Moshiach – we bring redemption – one day at a time, one act at a time, one life at a time – respecting the faiths of others because we are confident in our own; inviting others to join with us in building a world worthy of being a home for the Divine Presence. I have to tell you that although that is a lofty goal, ... there is not one member of the Jewish world today that does not have an important and unique task in that process ... And we are part of a people that we can be proud. That is what is bringing

the Messianic moment closer, one day at a time.

"The Jewish Messiah does not come to atone for our sins, he instructs us how to live without them and usher in an age of peace, something humanity with its own devices has failed to accomplish. At that time, ... they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into prun-

ing hooks- Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." ☆



Women's News

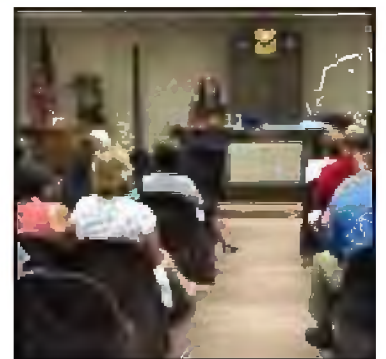
Temple Kol Tikvah Sisterhood

On Monday, August 27, the Sisterhood of Temple Kol Tikvah sponsored a talk on "Human Trafficking In Our Community."

Bo Quickel, founder of Vigilante Truckers, spoke to our congregation and members of our community about human trafficking and sex slavery.

It was a revealing talk of the hideous crimes that plague our community and society. We were also privileged to have a new member of our congregation, Mindy Sanchez, who added to this conversation. Mindy is an Attorney and was a Professor of Criminal Procedure.

If you would like more information regarding this topic, please visit VigilanteTruth.com. ☆



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