# Podcast on Judaism

### References —

* Scriptural:
  + For Jews, the Gospels (esp. that of St. Matthew)
  + For Christians, the Old Testament
* Ancient Jewish authors:
  + **Flavius Josephus**, Jewish historian of 1st century, fought against the Romans in the Jewish revolt, later became advisor of Roman emperor Vespasian, wrote *Jewish Antiquities, The Wars of the Jews* (recounts destruction of Jerusalem)
  + **Philo of Alexandria**: Jewish neo-Platonic philosopher of 1st century
  + **Moses Maimonides**: 12th century Jewish philosopher, born in Cordoba (part of Islamic Spain), died in Egypt. Often quoted by St. Thomas Aquinas as « Rabbi Moses ».
* Ancient Christian authors:
  + St. Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus*
  + St. Thomas Aquinas: Summa Theologica, I-II, on the Old Law.
* Recent works:
  + Giuseppe Ricciotti, *The Life of Christ* and *The History of Israel* (two volumes)
  + Dr. Brant Pitre, lecture course on *The Old Testament: A Historical and Theological Journey through Jewish Scripture –* also author of many relevant books, and co-authored *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament* (Ignatius Press)
  + Eitan Bar, *Refuting Rabbinic Objections to Christianity and Messianic Prophecies*

### Names of Peoples and Places

* Semite: a descendant of Sem (Shem), one of the sons of Noë (Noah), ancestor of Abraham
* Hebrew: from Heber, a great-grandson of Sem and ancestor of Abraham
* Israelite: a descendant of any of the twelve tribes of Israel (Jacob), son of Isaac, son of Abraham
* Jew: from Juda, one of the sons of Jacob, and ancestor of King David. The tribe of Juda received its inheritance in the southern part of Canaan, which includes the city of Jerusalem. When the northern ten tribes split off from the tribes of Juda and Benjamin, they called themselves the kingdom of Israel, whereas the two southern tribes (Juda and Benjamin) called themselves the Kingdom of Juda. The kingdom of Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians in 722 BC and never returned. The kingdom of Juda was taken captive by the Babylonians in 586 BC but later permitted to return to their land by king Cyrus. Those who returned were known as Jews, because they were in large part from the tribe of Juda.
* Samaritan: as opposed to the Jews, the Samaritans were a mix of Israelite and Gentile ancestry resulting from an effort of the Assyrian empire to repopulate the northern part of Canaan, and were regarded by the Jews as heretics and schismatics.
* Canaan: the original name of the Promised land, from the Canaanites who inhabited it.
* Palestine: a deformation of Philistine, one of the tribes that inhabited Canaan along the border of the Mediterranean and against whom the Israelites fought; eventually the name became synonymous with all of the Promised Land.
* Judea: the southern part of Palestine, corresponding roughly to the ancient kingdom of Juda. To the north of Judea is Samaria, and to the north of Samaria is Galilee.

### Religious Terms

* **Torah** (Heb. « Instruction, Law ») –
  + Strictly speaking, the Pentateuch or five books of Moses,
  + But also used in a wide sense to include the entire Hebrew Bible, which is called by modern Jews the « **Tanakh,** » an acronym for the Torah, the Nevi’im (prophets) and the Ketuvim (the Psalms and other wisdom books). – Christ refers to this same division at the end of the Gospel of St. Luke where he affirms that the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms all spoke of Him.
  + In an even wider sense, the Torah can mean all traditional Jewish doctrine.
* **Talmud** (Heb. « Doctrine, Learning ») – an encyclopedia of anecdotes, ritualistic opinions and legends compiled between the 2nd and 6th centuries and colored by a hostile attitude toward Christianity. It is composed of two parts:
  + **Mishnah** – traditional oral law (supplementing the written Law of Moses) which was committed to writing c. 200 A.D.
  + **Gemara –** a body of traditional Jewish legends and which serves as a commentary on the Mishnah.
* **Targum** – Originally, a translation of a passage of the Hebrew bible into Aramaic, to be read in the Synagogue. Over time these translations became loose paraphrases with commentary.
* **Synagogue** – a Jewish house of prayer but not of sacrifice. Instituted during the Babylonian captivity (587-537 B.C.) i.e. some 1,000 years after the Mosaic Law and Aaronic priesthood were established.
* **Rabbi** (Heb. « Master ») – until the Christian era, simply a title of respect for teachers or learned men. Not an official function until 1st century – after the destruction of the second Temple and the cessation of priestly activity.
  + « A rabbi is simply a teacher, a person sufficiently educated in **halakhah** (Jewish law) and tradition to instruct the community and to answer questions and resolve disputes regarding halakhah. When a person has completed the necessary course of study, he is given a written document known as a semikhah, which confirms his authority to make such decisions. » (https://www.jewfaq.org/rabbi#Kohein)

### Historical Outline of Judaism

* Genesis 1-11: Creation, Adam, the Fall, Cain and Abel, Noe and the Flood, the tower of Babyl.
  + Original unity and innocence of human race; sin introduces division
* 2000 – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and twelve sons
  + Triple promise to Abraham: land, offspring, universal blessing
* 1450 – Moses and Exodus from Egypt, Joshua, Judges
  + Law just for the Jews, but detailed foreshadowing of Redemption (preparing Jews to receive Messiah)
* 1050 – United Kingdom: Saul, David, Solomon and the Temple
* 930 – Divided Kingdom
  + 722 – Assyrian Exile
  + 586 – Babylonian Exile
* 520 – Rebuilding of Temple
* 167 – Forced Hellenization; Maccabees
* 63 – Romans take control

### Modern vs. Ancient Judaism

* Three schools of modern Judaism:
  + **Orthodox Judaism** – direct descendant of the Pharisaical Judaism of the first century. These Jews pray for the coming of the Messiah, the re-institution of the Aaronic priesthood, Temple sacrifice, etc.
    - Deut. 12:13-14 forbids offering sacrifice anywhere other than the one place that God will select, in one of the tribal territories. This is the Temple of Jerusalem. God has not indicated any other place.
    - A second obstacle is the uncertainty surrounding who are real descendants of Aaron. There are family traditions, but no genealogical records proving descendance from Aaron. This was all lost with the destruction of the Second Temple and the ensuing exile. These records were formerly required, as appears evident from Nehemiah 7:63-65. In modern Judaism certain Jews are still recognized as priests (*kohanim*) but this is based on presumption of legitimate descent.
  + **Reform Judaism –** Founded in Germany in the 19th century, it is a hybrid of Judaism and Modernism. Reform Judaism rejects the notion of a personal Messiah, veers toward a Spinozian Pantheism (although expressed in Mosaic verbiage), and cares nothing for rebuilding the Temple or re-instituting the Aaronic priesthood.
  + **Conservative Judaism** – Founded in the 20th century, it maintains a moderate regard for tradition (observing the Sabbath and traditional dietary laws) but avoids Talmudic legalism.
* N.B. - All three schools represent only a small percentage of Jews who tend to be Jewish in name only e.g. agnostics who celebrate Christmas, etc.

### Analysis : why not Judaism ?

1. What is good about Judaism
   1. It was the true religion, in which the one true God revealed himself to mankind
   2. Incomparably superior to all other known world religions
   3. Moral law, afterlife, etc.
2. The problem
   1. Modern Judaism ≠ ancient Judaism
      1. No temple, no sacrifice, no exercise of the Aaronic priesthood, scattered for millenia across world
      2. Very different idea of a Messias—is he even personal? If so, no idea when he is going to come, etc.
      3. No miracles or visible signs of God’s accompaniment (versus Moses, Elias, etc.)—why has God been silent for so long?
      4. Divisions between orthodox and liberal Jews
   2. What happened to the Messias, anyway?
      1. Leading up to the time of Jesus Christ, there was growing anticipation that the Messias was supposed to come very soon
      2. External proofs: Tacitus, Suetonius, Flavius Josephus
      3. Internal proofs:
         1. repeated prophecies (Isaias, Jeremias, Micheas, Zacharias, etc.),
         2. a time frame given by Daniel that appears generally consistent with Christ’s coming,
         3. the passing of the scepter of Juda into the hands of the Romans.
      4. Why would there be this convergence of indicators if in fact nothing was to happen?
   3. Judaism was never meant to be a permanent religion.
      1. Moses spoke of another prophet that God would raise up, similar to him… and Moses, who represents the Old Testament, was not able to enter into the Promised Land. It was Josua (Jesus) who led the Israelites in.
      2. Jeremias 31: « Behold the days shall come, saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Juda: Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, the covenant which they made void... »
      3. Imperfections and limitations in Judaism: The priesthood was limited to the tribe of Levis and finally Aaron’s lineage because of sin (the worship of the golden calf, idol worship on the plains of Moab)… Originally it was supposed to be the firstborn of every household. And the knowledge of the true God is not supposed to be limited to one nation. And one place of sacrifice for all of humanity? Impossible.
      4. Promise to Abraham: in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. We are all children of Adam; how can God limit his salvation and the knowledge of the true religion to one nation? Abraham’s seed is indeed the *vehicle* of God’s blessing, but the blessing is destined for all mankind.
      5. Prophecy of Malachy, that in every place a clean offering is made to God, and his name is great among the Gentiles; of Isaias, that God will take to himself priests from among the nations.
3. The solution: Jesus Christ
   1. Perfect fulfillment of OT—who could imagine a better Messias?
      1. Moral teaching: beatitudes, sermon on mount bring to perfection the moral law of OT
         1. Sanctity is above all something internal; it is not enough to avoid external sins, and external rituals of purification are of secondary importance (it is what comes out of a man that defiles him)
         2. Mercy is exalted above justice (e.g., woman caught in adultery) and charity is to be shown even to one’s enemies
         3. There is no direct link between temporal prosperity and being pleasing to God (man born blind, Lazarus and Dives)
         4. What matters above all is the immortal soul, eternal life
         5. Temporal honors are to fled as much as possible (the first shall be last)
      2. Atonement for sin:
         1. OT sacrifices were insufficient (since the brute animals only represented the offerers and could not perfectly substitute for them; and besides, sin, being an infinite offense, demands reparation of infinite value, which no mere man can offer)
         2. God-made-man can offer a perfect sacrifice: sacrifice and oblation you would not, but a body you have fitted me (Ps. 39); he was struck for our sins (Isaias)...
      3. Restoration of unity to the human race, divided by sin
         1. Salvation is not just for a certain ethnic group; Jesus is a « light to the revelation of the Gentiles » as well as a cause of glory for his own people
         2. This ambitious project was actually accomplished; Christ did what no OT prophet could do, spreading knowledge of the one, true God throughout the world (fulfills prophecies of Isaias and Malachias about expansion of Jerusalem, inclusion of the Gentiles who would even become priests)
         3. Languages divided in tower of Babel; reunited in the upper room of the cenacle (through gift of tongues)
   2. Astonishing fulfillment of prophecies
      1. Very specific prophecies: from tribe of Juda, son of David, from Bethlehem… miraculous healings (cf. Is. 35), details of passion (cf. Ps. 21)
      2. Perhaps more importantly, beautiful figures (no human intelligence could foresee or arrange this)
         1. Abraham and Isaac (the latter carrying the wood of sacrifice up the mountain, very likely able to overpower his father and escape, but instead offers himself obediently)
         2. Exodus: paschal lamb = Christ sacrificed on Cross (blood on doorposts) and Holy Eucharist (only to be eaten by the circumcised, i.e., baptized, and not to be carried outside the house, i.e., the Church)
         3. Exodus: crossing of Red Sea = Christ’s resurrection (triumph over enemies, happens on the morning of the third day) and sacrament of baptism (forms the people of God, just as the Israelites became an independent nation as they emerged from the Red Sea)
         4. Exodus: giving of law on Sinai (approx. 50 days later) = Pentecost, law of grace written by HG on tablets of heart
         5. Manna: figure of Holy Eucharist
         6. King David: figure of Christ (persecuted by Saul as Christ by OT leaders, promised an everlasting succession on the throne as Christ will have vicars on earth until the end of time, etc.)
   3. As Gamaliel said, if this is from God, you cannot stop it—remarkable triumph of Christianity over Roman paganism and all other historical obstacles; continuation of miracles in the Catholic Church until the present day
4. God has providentially permitted the survival of Jews who reject the Messias because in fact they are a perpetual witness to the authenticity of the prophecies that point to Christ—these OT prophecies and figures were not made up by Christians after the fact of Christ’s coming.
5. Famous Jewish converts to Catholicism: Alphonsus Ratisbone, etc.