

## Q. Why don't most Jews believe in Jesus?

A. First, I want to point out that some Jews do believe in Jesus. The distinction between believers and unbelievers is not drawn along national or ethnic lines. There are believers and unbelievers among all kinds of people.

The questioner specifically referred to the article, "Why Jews Don't Believe in Jesus" by Rabbi Shraga Simmons (<http://www.aish.com/jw/s/48892792.html>). The objections brought out in the article are not new and are, in fact, answered by Jesus and the New Testament writers. We read in Philippians 3:5-6, of the man who became the apostle Paul, that he was, "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." He was a devout, observant Jew. And he persecuted the Christian church because of what they taught—that Jesus was the Messiah and Savior. Yet, he became a Christian who believed in Jesus as Messiah and Savior and taught the very doctrines he once hated. Why?

The answer is found in Acts 9. Saul had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ that changed his mind. This was not an ordinary change of mind, it was a miraculous change of mind called regeneration, being born from above, and being born again. It is the Holy Spirit's implanting of faith into someone causing him to become a believer. No other facts changed. The Christian message that Jesus was Messiah and Savior remained the same. What changed was Saul. He went from disbelieving and hating that message to embracing it.

The unbelieving Jews will say that they have had the Scriptures for millennia and they have a certain understanding of them. They may say, Prove that your Christian understanding that contradicts ours is correct.

Let me ask you a question. If you met a man who had been blind from birth and was skeptical that other people actually saw and experienced something he did not, how could you prove to him that you see, that

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you see in millions of shades of colors, that you see textures and patterns, that you see far and near, that you see in 3D? How can you prove something so subjective?

The Christian is in that same predicament. Jesus said to the Pharisee Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). So, unless a man is born again, he is blinded to the kingdom of God. The Christian sees what the unbeliever cannot. In Matthew 15:14, Jesus said to His disciples to let the unbelieving Pharisees alone and said that these unbelievers "be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." In Matthew 23, Jesus several times called the unbelieving Jews "blind" and "blind guides."

In John 8:43-47, Jesus told the Jews, "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

In Acts 13:26-27, Paul specifically says that the Jews did not know the voices of the prophets and, in condemning Jesus, have fulfilled their prophecies: "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him." It is as Paul said to the Jews at the end of Acts: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it" (Acts 28:25-28).

To answer each of the charges listed individually would do no good for a blind person who refuses to see. For example, one of the charges is

that the Messiah is supposed to build the third temple. I say that Jesus did this—that temple is the church (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19-22). Will a Jew who is not born again believe this? Of course not. And in not believing, he shows himself condemned already (John 3:18).

In summary, the Jews make these accusations because they are spiritually blind. This has caused them not to see that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and that He fulfilled the Old Covenant and thus ended it. God gave the Jews forty years from the time of Jesus to the destruction of the temple in AD 70, which ended His special relationship with them as His people. During this time, some came to believe and were saved. But the rest heaped up condemnation upon themselves. Without the temple, it was impossible to continue their religion as stipulated in the Old Covenant. So, being blind, those who survived the destruction made up the new, templeless religion of modern Judaism.

The situation remains the same today. Some people of all nationalities, including Jews, believe because they have been born again. God has lifted their spiritual blindness. Others are like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, who asked this question: "And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?" The wording of the Greek shows that they expected a negative answer. So, it was as if they had said, We are not blind, or We see. If they had admitted to spiritual blindness, they would have taken the first step in repentance and would have been not far from the kingdom of God. But they did not admit to their blindness, so Jesus answered them, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

In Revelation 6:15-17, we read, "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" This is not just describing a one-time event. It shows the way people naturally are. They don't want to face the truth about Jesus. Going into a cave is like the proverbial ostrich hiding his head in the sand. It is a form of blindness. But notice that to maintain their blindness, they even ask for the rocks to fall on them. By wanting blindness, they are at the

same time asking for death, for that is the end result of spiritual blindness.

The passage ends with, "Who shall be able to stand?" The question is answered in the next chapter: The 144,000 of the children of Israel and the innumerable multitude of all nations who "stood before the throne, and before the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9). How are they able to do this? Because they are "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (verses 9 and 10). And again, it is said that they have "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God" (verses 14-15).

They can stand before the throne because they believe in Jesus as the Christ or Messiah and trust in Him as their Savior. They are clothed in His righteousness, pictured by their white robes, made white by washing them in His blood. They submit to Him as the Messiah, pictured by the palms in their hands (compare this to John 12:12-15; Matthew 21:7-9, 15; and Mark 11:7-10). They "serve him day and night in his temple" (Revelation 7:15), not one made with hands (Mark 14:58; Acts 7:48; 17:24; 2 Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 9:11, 24), as the unbelieving Jews expect. These people, believing Jews and Gentiles alike, "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Why don't most Jews believe in Jesus? Because they are spiritually blind, and this is true of most non-Jews, too. They are in need of spiritual rebirth.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.... And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the

world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:3, 5, 14-19).

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