

Feb. 16 Topic: Judaism

Homework Feb. 17-22 (for discussion on Feb. 23)

To view the Judaism lecture online:

<http://www.tlc.org/tuesday-morning-bible-study/>

Day 1: The Promised Messiah

What is a messiah?

The Hebrew word for messiah, *mashiach*, comes from a word meaning to anoint, literally, usually with oil. When someone or something was anointed, it was a sign that they were consecrated, or set apart, for a particular God-given task. Priests were anointed (Exodus 28:41), the sacrificial altar of the tabernacle was anointed (Ex. 29:36), kings of Israel were anointed (I Sam. 16:12-13). Eventually, the term didn't refer so much to the physical anointing, but the spiritual anointing—being chosen and set apart for God's purposes (e.g., Ps. 105:15).

There are early hints in Scripture of “one who is to come” (Genesis 3:15). This developed in later scriptures into a full blown Messianic figure—an “anointed one”, a *Mashiach*, who would come to fulfill God's most important purposes. However, a puzzle emerged in these messianic passages of scripture. Some seemed to portray a suffering *mashiach*, others seem to portray a victorious *mashiach*. Some ancient Jewish scholars wondered if there might even be *two* Messiahs! But perhaps we can see now, looking back, how victory might actually be accomplished *first* through suffering—the suffering that brings final redemption to mankind—then through triumph in the last days!

For the first few days of homework, you are going to look at descriptions and prophecies about the *Mashiach* and see how these are fulfilled by *Yeshua* (Jesus).

Prophecy	Fulfillment	Description
Genesis 49:10	Luke 3:33	
Isaiah 9:6-7	Luke 1:32	
Micah 5:2	Luke 2:4-7	
Isaiah 9:1-2	Matthew 4:13	

Prayer: Today, try praying the prayer that Jesus undoubtedly prayed: Sh'ma Is-rah-el, Ah-doe-nigh elu-heh-nu, Ah-doe-nigh e-hahd. Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is One! Meditate on the meaning of the word “one”—(one-of-a-kind, nothing else like it, unrivaled sovereignty)—and praise God for his oneness!

Day 2: The Suffering and Victorious Messiah

Prophecy	Fulfillment	Description
Psalms 22:7-8	Mark 15:25-32	
Psalms 22:16-18	John 19:23 & John 20:27	
Isaiah 53:3	Luke 4:28-29, Matt. 27:21-23, Mark 14:32-24	

Prophecy	Fulfillment	Description
Isaiah 53:8	John 18:13-22; John 19:16-18	

OPTIONAL READING: Read *all* of Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53

Prophecy	Fulfillment	Description
Isaiah 53:10-11	Matthew 28:1-7	
Daniel 2:44-45	Luke 1:33	
Jeremiah 31:31-34	Hebrews 10:1-18	
Isaiah 49:6-7	Acts 1:8	

Prayer: Prayer: The suffering of the Messiah was vividly described hundreds of years before the cruel act of crucifixion was even invented. Thank the Messiah for suffering in your place—for taking upon himself your rejection, your infirmities, your sorrows, your transgressions, your iniquities, your sins, your punishment. Praise the Lord for this glorious suffering that has brought you peace, healing, and a reconciled relationship with God! And thank God for the New Covenant! Ask him how you can be a more active part of his plan to bring his salvation to the ends of the earth!

Day 3: Jesus and the Torah

Jesus was Jewish (Luke 1:26-27). He came from a Jewish family who were observant (Luke 2:21-24). His community was Jewish (Luke 4:16). He clearly learned to read Hebrew (Luke 4:17-20) and was quite a good student (Luke 2:41-47). He knew the Torah through and through—not in a legalist way, like the Pharisees of his day, but he understood its deep, underlying principles. (Matthew 5:28-29).

Read Matthew 5:17-18

What was Jesus' attitude toward the Torah (the Law)?

Read Matthew 12:9-14

The rabbis taught that healing on the Sabbath was breaking the law, unless the person was in danger of dying. Would the man with the shriveled hand meet that criteria?

What is Jesus' reasoning that it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

Why do you think the Pharisees were so furious? (If you need more insight, read Matthew 23:4-7)

Read Matthew 22:35-40

How does Jesus summarize the Law?

Do you ever make “Christian rules” more important than the deep underlying principle of loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself, that is at the heart of all God’s commands? How?

Prayer: Confess where you have gone off track being a “rule follower”. Confess where you have failed to love God and love your neighbor (sometimes by being a “rule breaker”). Ask God to help you live by his “law of love”.

Day 4: Paul and the Law

All of the Apostles of the church were Jewish. Paul was particularly observant, from an observant Jewish family(Philippians 3:4-6). He was even a Pharisee, thoroughly educated in the Law! His encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus left him reeling and confused. But he finally realized that *justification and salvation*, meaning a right standing before God, could never be based on trying one’s hardest to keeping the Law.

Read Romans 7:12

How did Paul describe the Law?

Read Romans 2:17-24

What is one of the *human* problems Paul identifies for those who think having the Law puts them in a higher status with God?

Read Romans 3:20,23

Rather than being declared righteous by observing the Law, what’s the real situation?

Read Romans 3:21-24

What’s the answer to this problem of not being able to achieve righteousness by observing the Law?

Prayer: Thank God for the righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus Christ!

Day 5: Jews and Gentiles in the Body of Christ

Bringing together Jews and Gentiles into one new covenant, a “new creation”—the church—was not easy. Even in first century there was already a *history* of each looking at the other with disdain. Gentiles viewed Jewish people as “a hostile, prickly people, quick to take offense and unfriendly to aliens.” Jewish people viewed Gentiles as idolaters with low morality and questionable hygiene.

Read Ephesians 2:11-22, and Ephesians 3:1-6

How does Paul describe the situation of the Gentiles before coming to Christ? (vs. 11-12)

What is the result of bringing Jews and Gentiles together in Christ? (vs. 14-18)

What is the new situation for the Gentiles who are in Christ? (vs. 19-20, 3:1-6)

Read Ephesians 4:2-6

How does Paul think this strange new unity can be maintained? Has the church historically done a very good job? What about today?

Prayer: In your heart, review Paul’s instructions to the Ephesians for how to maintain unity in the church. Confess where you have not been practicing these important principles. Ask God to help you live these ideals.

Day 6: Redeeming a sad history

It’s hard for people who aren’t Jewish to fully understand how much the history of persecution shapes their attitude toward the Church, toward the Christians, and unfortunately toward Jesus himself. The anti-semitism in the Church that spiraled out of control for hundreds of years, beginning in the fourth or fifth century, has done unimaginable damage to the cause of the true Gospel. Unfortunately no major branch of the Christian faith (Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant) is exempt from the sin of wretched anti-semitism and violence against Jews.

In today’s homework, we are going to review what is a Biblical view of the Jewish people, even those who have not accepted Yeshua as their Mashiach.

Read Romans 3:1-2; Romans 11:28; and Romans 9:1-5

Paul never said there was no advantage to being Jewish! Make a list of everything he notes. How does Paul feel about the lack of overwhelming response to the gospel message from his Jewish family?

Read Romans 11:16-24

Paul warns the Gentile believers against taking an arrogant posture toward unbelieving Jews. Why? Where do you need to adjust your own attitude toward Jewish people?

Prayer: Ask God to root out any arrogance or anti-semitism that might be in your heart. Ask him to use you to show love to Jewish people. Thank him for choosing Israel, through whom came our Lord Jesus!

IF YOU ARE JEWISH: Are you surprised verses like these are in the New Testament? How do these verses make you feel? How do you think you can look passed the centuries of un-Christlike behavior by those who called themselves Christians. . . and may even current behavior. . . to see the true message of the gospel?

From faithstreet.com

With a name like Aaron Abramson, I don't exactly fly under the radar. I'm Jewish. I also believe in Jesus. Because of this, I interact with a lot of non-Jewish Christians, who, though well intentioned, have said some pretty astonishing things to me over the years.

American evangelicals often view Jewish people as fascinating specimens of biblical history. Some recognize their interlaced association with the Jewish people; others seem to ignore it altogether. Regardless, the broader context of history shows a tumultuous connection between Christians and Jews.

Christians persecuted Jewish people. Jewish people feared Christians. Even to this day, there are self-proclaimed Christians around the world who continue to persecute Jews. Anti-Semitism still exists in extreme forms. But it can also quietly seethe beneath the surface, popping up occasionally in the way of racial stereotypes.

Of course, stereotypes may simply be born of ignorance and not hate. As the Jewish people remain a minority, they are often seen as an enigma to outsiders — and where there is a lack of understanding about other cultures, stereotypes abound. Where there are stereotypes, offenses abound.

Here are a few offensive things I've heard firsthand from the mouths of Christians:

1. "So, you're a Jew?"

When that term is used to label someone, my mind conjures up images of surly Dickensian characters like *Oliver Twist's* Fagin. Pejorative references throughout history have loaded this word with too much baggage. Calling someone a "Jew" or "Jewess" is like calling someone a "Polack" or a "Chinaman." Is this appropriate? But, being called "Jewish" is different. Like "Chinese" or "African," it is an ethnic designation. If you must ask (perhaps first take a moment to make sure it's appropriate to ask at all), try, "Are you Jewish?" not, "Are you a Jew?"

2. "Jews love money."

This one makes me nauseous. It stems from the same lunatic, anti-Semitic rhetoric that precedes the burning of synagogues and rounding up of Jewish people. It can also take the form of: "Jews control the media," "Jews run all the banks," etc. Once, while visiting a church, a man from Mississippi asked me why Jews are so good with finances. "They just can't get enough of that money, can they?" he said. Before I could respond, a pastor interjected, asking him why there was so much inbreeding in Mississippi. The man turned red with irritation, and neither question needed answering.

3. "I always wanted to be Jewish!"

First of all, how should I respond to that? "I'm sorry you aren't Jewish?" That's always an awkward interaction. Secondly (and more importantly), it diminishes the individual's unique identity. Each family and ethnicity is special to God. He put us on this earth in a strategic place: each born into different cultures, backgrounds, and families. God's plan of redemption extends to all peoples of the world, not just Jewish people. Our ethnic backgrounds factor into his plan. But also, being Jewish isn't easy. It can feel like both a burden and a blessing. I can't visit most Arab countries today because of my identity, and many of my relatives experienced anti-Semitism.

4. "Old Testament."

This one isn't as much offensive as it is loaded. Most Jewish people do not believe in the Old and New Testament. The scriptures contained within the Old Testament comprise their entire holy book. So labeling it "old" makes it sound, well, antiquated. Replaced. Passé. More appropriate terms to use would be "Tanach" (an acronym of the first Hebrew letters of: Torah or law, Nevi'im or prophets, and Ketuvim or writings), "Hebrew Bible" (even though Daniel is partially in Aramaic), or even, simply, "Jewish scriptures." Using one of these terms not only shows respect, but cultural awareness.

Other mistakes Christians make that can cause Jewish people to cringe include:

- Assuming a person does or doesn't keep Kosher. It's always better to sensitively ask.
- Assuming anything is dangerous — that goes for political affiliation and attitudes about Israel, the Middle East conflict, etc. Not all Jewish people feel similarly.

When it comes down to it, we all do and say inappropriate things. But working to dissolve harmful attitudes and stereotypes can change our relationships with those around us. Why alienate people? Why cause offense? The gospel itself does enough of that. Let's not create more.