

## Why Do the Jews Reject Jesus?

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I have been leading trips to the Holy Land for the last eighteen years. Each trip is memorable and exhausting. I usually visit 56 sites with 90 stops in the nine days of touring. I warn those going with me beforehand they will be taking a drink from a firehose!

First-time pilgrims are always shocked at the fierce opposition to the Christian Gospel that most Israeli Jews express. Orthodox Jews do believe in the Messiah's arrival and the messianic era.

According to the rabbinical interpretation of the Torah, there are thirteen principles of the Jewish faith, called *Shloshah Asar Ikkarim* ("Thirteen Fundamental Principles"). The twelfth of the thirteen principles is the belief in the arrival of the Messiah and the Messianic era.

Building upon that twelfth principle, religious Jews (typically Orthodox) have developed nine Jewish expectations of the Messiah based on Scripture:

1. *The Messiah will be preceded by a time of terrible tribulation* (Ezekiel 38:16; Hosea 3:4).
2. *An Elijah-like forerunner will appear before the Messiah comes* (Malachi 4:5-6).
3. *The Messiah will then appear* (Deuteronomy 18:15; Jeremiah 23:5).
4. An alliance of nations will arise to fight against the Messiah (Ezekiel 38:16; Daniel 9:26).
5. Those nations will be destroyed (Zechariah 9).
6. Jerusalem will be restored (rebuilt or a new one built) (Isaiah 11:11-12).
7. The Jews who have been scattered around the world will return to Israel (Jeremiah 23:8).
8. Jerusalem will become the center of the world (Isaiah 2:2-4).
9. The Messiah will establish His kingdom and be a time of peace and righteousness (Hosea 3:5; Jeremiah 33:15,18; Zephaniah 3:9; Zechariah 14:9).

So why do they reject Yeshua as the Messiah and how can they be so adamant in their rejection? Here is the simple answer: Jesus only met the first three of the nine Messianic expectations (*italicized* in the list above).

Christians would assert that He has only met the first three expectation... so far. Yes, Jesus was preceded by terrible tribulation and Roman oppression. Yes, John the Baptist fulfilled the role of an Elijah-like forerunner; Jesus confirmed this in Matthew 17:11-13. As for the third expectation, yes, Jesus did claim to be the Messiah. But, what about the fourth and fifth expectations? Nations did not rise to fight against Jesus, nor were those rising nations destroyed.

Here is where our Jewish brothers and sisters have it wrong. Jesus will fulfill all nine of these Messianic expectations throughout Scripture. He has to because God's Word does not contradict itself. It is just a matter of timing.

The Church Age must be placed between the third and fourth expectations. Then, when Jesus returns, the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth expectations will be fulfilled. Then in the Millennial Age, the ninth and final biblical expectation of the coming Messiah will be completed.

The Old Testament prophet Zechariah (12:10) reveals how those of the Jewish faith will ultimately respond to recognizing and accepting Jesus as the One who fulfills all nine of the Biblical expectations of the coming Messiah.

*"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."*

Traveling to Israel and seeing firsthand how strongly many who live in the Holy Land oppose the Christian gospel is disheartening. However, it is enlightening to know that someday our Blessed Hope will return in all His glory. Then, the Jews will receive the Messiah with open arms.

So, why do the Jews reject Jesus? Because they have expectation bias and misunderstand the current church age. Someday soon, though, their eyes and hearts will be open. Until then, Maranatha, come quickly, Lord Jesus!