

# WHY JEWS

## Do Not Accept Jesus

Michael Medved has made the point that the one thing all Jews have in common is that we will not accept Jesus as Savior— that's the one and only thing on which all Jews agree. For many Jews, tragically, that's where their Judaism ends. For them, Judaism means we don't believe in Jesus. That's really a sad, impoverished version of Judaism. It is emotional to the core.

The history of Christianity has placed deep scars on the Jews' psyche that have been passed down through generations. My parents shared with me that Christianity has not only been the enemy of the Jewish people through history, it has targeted the Muslims as well. Jules Isaac, a Jewish historian, has called the Christian ideology "the teaching of contempt." For him and other Jewish historians, Christianity has been responsible for thousands, even millions, of innocents losing their lives, their children, and their hope, from a refusal to accept the claims of Jesus. From their perspective, the chronicle of Christian anti-Semitism is one of the most gruesome, disheartening chapters of human history.

They believe that the most abominable tragedy, the systematic slaughter of millions in World War II, the Holocaust, cannot be entirely separated from centuries of Christian teachings that the Jews were a contemptible people forever cursed of God. As the theologian Elieser Berkowitz put it, the Nazis who killed Jews may not have been Christians, but they were all the sons and daughters of Christians. This Christian teaching goes back hundreds of years. The key turning point in history that stirs the emotions of the Jewish people in their rejection of Jesus came about in the fourth century.

In 325 A.D., Constantine, who was the emperor of Rome, oversaw the Council of Nicea. It was here that a conscious effort was made to remove all the Jewish elements from Christianity. When early Christians remembered the death, burial, and Resurrection, they did so in the context of Passover. The decree at the council was that no Christians should keep the Passover. The calendar

was changed so that the two annual celebrations would seldom fall on the same day. Later the church made Jewish people who came to faith take vows that they would remove themselves from all Jewish practices as evidence of their genuine conversion.

Christian theologians were surprised that there was such strong resistance to Jesus by the Jewish community. If Jesus is the Messiah and the New Testament is the truth, the only reason they could conclude as to why the Jewish people were not responding to their message was that they (the Jews) were demonic. Luther accused the Jews of being "a people forever cursed of God and a living witness of God's wrath on those who killed our Savior."

Still another reason why Jewish people are reluctant to embrace Jesus is the fear of being estranged from family and friends. To become a believer means for most Jewish people that they will become part of a community that is removed from everything familiar to them. This is why Messianic congregations have been so helpful to many Jewish people in making the transition to faith in Jesus. These congregations celebrate the Jewish holidays and demonstrate the Jewishness of Christianity.

For these and other reasons a Jewish person's acceptance of Jesus as Messiah and Lord is viewed by the average Jewish person as one of the greatest acts of treason. The feeling is that to embrace the God of the Christians is to somehow endorse the years of tragic history of Christian persecution of the Jews. We need to always be patient and kind, waiting on God's Holy Spirit to move in the hearts of all people that we witness to. Yeshua said it so clearly that "no man comes to the Son unless the Father draws Him." (John 6:44)

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