

## **Jews vs Christian Beliefs –**

- 1. Salvation – works vs faith**
  - 2. Bible – OT without New Test**
  - 3. Eternity – No Hell, only happy place with reincarnated perpetual spirit**
  - 4. Election, Tradition, Elite Religious Rite**
  - 5. Jewish “Holy days” vs Christian holidays**
- 

A Basic mutual agreement of:

1. Monotheistic God
  2. He spoke to prophets, revealed Himself (through Abrahamic covenant and Mosaic law)
  3. Led His people to a promised Holy Land (sacred)
  4. Separated a Nation of people from all other Nations
  5. Promised a Messiah
- 

In contemporary Judaism, redemption (Hebrew ge'ulah), refers to God redeeming the people of Israel from their various exiles. This includes the final redemption from the present exile. Judaism holds that adherents do not need personal salvation as Christians believe. Jews do not subscribe to the doctrine of original sin. Instead, they place a high value on individual morality as defined in the law of God — embodied in what Jews know as the Torah or The Law, given to Moses by God on biblical Mount Sinai.

In Judaism, salvation is closely related to the idea of redemption, a saving from the states or circumstances that destroy the value of human existence. God, as the universal spirit and Creator of the World, is the source of all salvation for humanity, provided an individual honours God by observing his precepts. So redemption or salvation depends on the individual. Judaism stresses that salvation cannot be obtained through anyone else or by just invoking a deity or believing in any outside power or influence

---

Redemption / salvation...

- Jews are awaiting fulfillment of what Christians have already received.

The essential difference between Jews and Christians is that Christians accept Jesus as messiah and personal savior. Jesus is not part of Jewish theology. Amongst Jews, Jesus is not considered a divine being. Therefore all holidays that have a connection to the life of Jesus are not part of Jewish life and/or practice (Christmas, Easter, Lent, Advent, Palm Sunday, etc.).

Judaism originates as a result of the covenantal relationship between God and Abraham. The Bible (Hebrew Bible which doesn't include New Testament for reasons stated previously) is our

sacred literature. The relationship between the Jewish people and God is documented in the text. In the Bible, the history, culture, language, theology, and practices of the Jewish people are presented.

Christians often ask me what I think of Jesus. My answer: It depends on what his followers make of him.

If, as has been the case far too often over the past 2,000 years, Jesus's name is invoked as justification for persecuting Jews – forcing us to convert, exiling and killing us – then Jesus does not rate high with me.

Of course, Jews will never see Jesus as God or as an object of worship as Christians do. But when Jesus is the inspiration to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, and do the things I see so many churches in Germany do today in his name, then I look at him very positively.

And when, as in the case of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Jesus's example is the impetus to sacrifice position, comfort, and even his life to oppose the scourge of Nazism, then I become an admirer of Jesus. In fact, I become a very big fan indeed.

---

Faith begins in mystery. Among the greatest mysteries we face is the afterlife. What happens when we die? Do we see our loved ones? Do we know them? Do they know us? The questions are endless. Jewish wisdom offers no definitive answer. We can identify, however, several core teachings.

1. **There is an afterlife:** Texts from every era in Jewish life identify a world where people go when they die. In the Bible it's an underworld called [Sheol](#). In the rabbinic tradition it's known by a number of names, including the *yeshiva shel mallah*, the school on high. The Hebrew word for skies, *shamayim*, also came to refer to heaven.
2. **Heaven has open door policy:** Heaven is not a gated community. The righteous of any people and any faith have a place in it. Our actions, not our specific beliefs, determine our fate. No concept of Hell exists in Judaism. The closest we get is the fate of apostate (a person who renounces God, faith and morality in this world), who is said to be “cut off from his kin.”
3. **The afterlife can take many forms:** [Professor A.J. Levine expresses this truth most eloquently](#): “Jewish beliefs in the afterlife are as diverse as Judaism itself, from the traditional view expecting the unity of flesh and spirit in a resurrected body, to the idea that we live on in our children and grandchildren, to a sense of heaven (perhaps with lox and bagels rather than harps and haloes).”
4. **The afterlife is here on earth:** One strand of Jewish thought sees heaven as a transitory place where souls reside after death. They reside there until they reunite with their physical bodies at the time when the Messiah comes. Rabbi Shmuley Boteach articulates this view in his early book, *The Wolf Shall Lie with the Lamb: The Messiah in Hassidic Thought*. This approach differs from reincarnation since the return to life happens only in the messianic era, not as a regular occurrence, as in Hinduism.

5. **We live on through others:** The Reform Jewish prayerbook expresses this idea through the metaphor of a leaf and a tree. A leaf drops to the ground, but it nourishes the soil so more plants and trees spring up. The same is true in our lives. We nourish the future through the influence we have on those who follow us. It can happen in unimaginable ways.
- 

**Rosh Hashanah - New Year**Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the Jewish year and the Ten Days of Penitence. The holiday concludes with Yom Kippur. This two-day holiday is observed with day-long synagogue services, the blowing of the shofar (ram's horn) and the eating of apples and honey, symbolic of our hopes for a sweet year.

**Yom Kippur - Day of Atonement**The most holy of all Jewish holidays is devoted to synagogue services, fasting, prayer and repentance.

**Sukkot – Feast of the Tabernacles, Shemini Atzeret and Simhat Torah**This eight-day harvest festival is a holiday of thanksgiving and remembrance of the Israelite wanderings in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt. Although Sukkot lasts for eight days, Jews traditionally refrain from working on the first two days and the last day of the holiday. The concluding day of Sukkot is called Shemini Atzeret.

**Simhat Torah** follows and marks the conclusion of the annual readings of the Torah - The Five Books of Moses. The conclusion of Simhat Torah marks the end of the High Holy Day season.

**Passover**This eight-day festival commemorates the Israelite Exodus from Egyptian slavery. Two home services (Seders) occur in Jewish homes on the festival eve and first night. Work is prohibited on the first two and last two days of Passover.

**Shavuot - The Feast of Weeks**This holiday commemorates the receiving of the Torah (Five Books of Moses) by the Israelites on Mount Sinai and is observed by two days of synagogue attendance.

**Shabbat - The Sabbath**This weekly celebration begins on sundown Friday and concludes one hour after sundown on Saturday. Shabbat celebrates God's completion of Creation and the desire to see peace and harmony in the world. As God rested on the Seventh Day of Creation, Jews are commanded to rest and refrain from work on Shabbat as a way to recreate an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. This weekly holy day is the most revered on the Jewish Calendar. Other major Jewish Holidays where it is permissible to work or attend school:

**Hanukkah -** This eight day festival marks the victory of Jewish forces over the ancient Assyrians, and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem. The Jewish people fought for religious freedom and were able to throw off the yoke of their Hellenistic oppressors.

Purim This day of Jewish merrymaking marks the salvation of the Jewish community from near destruction by the Persian tyrant Haman. The story of this victory is recorded in the Book of Esther.

Yom Ha'Shoah - Holocaust Memorial Day Dedicated to the memory of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis during World War II.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut - Israel Independence Day Commemorating the State of Israel's Declaration of Independence in 1948.

---

### **Common Christian Holidays**

**Catholic or Mainline**

**\* (Non Religious American Holidays)**

**Christmas, Easter,** **All Saints** - Halloween **Holy week** - Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Ascension day, Epiphany, Advent,

Memorial Day, Independence day, Labor day, Thanksgiving, New Year, Mothers day, Fathers day, Valentines day, st patricks day,