

A Personal Testimony: The Light of Jesus Amid Talmudic Darkness

By [Mi-cha-el](#)

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Note from the editor of Three Sages:

The following account was written and submitted to the Three Sages for publication by a Jewish American writer who converted to Christianity but wishes to remain anonymous. Part of his account is his personal experience living in an Israeli Orthodox community informed by Talmudic teachings.

This is a rare treatment of an urgently important topic given the tragedies and dramas being played out today in the Middle East, where conservative Jewish interests are a driving force. I believe many sensitive readers will agree that the voice of “Mi-cha-el” desperately needs to be heard and that reading him will introduce a world of vital spiritual experience most of us didn’t know existed.

Disclaimer: The editor is not an expert in the subject matter and disclaims any responsibility for the content. The account is being presented to the public due to “Mi-cha-el”’s personal experience in the subject matter and the urgency of resolving today’s existential crisis facing the world that is due at least in part to religious conflict. The editor also disclaims any accusations of “anti-Semitism.” In fact, the author has restored the editor’s respect for the Jewish people and faith by making it crystal clear that the Holy Family: Jesus, his mother Mary, and his father, Saint Joseph, represent the pinnacle of the Jewish contribution to the world. Nothing could be more important now, during the 2024 Christmas season, when people have so much fear and uncertainty about what 2025 will bring.

Following is “Mi-cha-el’s” account, with headings added by the Three Sages editor.

Born and Raised in the U.S.A.

Call me “Mi-cha-el.” I was raised in a comfortable and affluent upper-middle-class Jewish-American home and was given the Hebrew name Menachem at my circumcision ceremony. All Jewish children born outside of Israel are given a Hebrew name and a vernacular name, the boys at their birth, while the girls have a ceremonial baby-naming “kiddush” on the first or second Sabbath after their birth.

Both my parents were raised in traditional Jewish homes, but after graduating from elite colleges, they discarded almost all Jewish practices. Our family did not keep kosher, for example. We had a Passover meal every year. We lit a Hanukkah menorah. We went to the

synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. But we had no daily religious practices or prayer life such that all Orthodox Jews follow.

Our parents sent me and my two younger brothers to Hebrew school and Sunday school at the local Reform synagogue. We learned to read Hebrew letters but didn't understand what they meant. (Many Muslims are similarly educated to recite the *Qur'an* in Arabic without knowing the meaning.) In our Sunday school class we studied Jewish history mainly in the New World, which was regarded as a paradise for Jews, especially compared to the difficulties of the Jewish Diaspora in Europe. We learned nothing about the Jewish experience in the Muslim world.

One of our teachers had been in World War II and told us about his encounter with the concentration camps liberated by Allied soldiers. It appeared to have scarred him for life. Every year our Sunday school had to watch a grizzly documentary about the German concentration camps. Many of my friends shed tears during the broadcast, but I sat there cold and silent, feeling nothing. In high school my German language class went to see the film *Cabaret*, but I was the only person in the group who expressed distaste for the depraved culture depicted in the movie. The only song that inspired me was *Tomorrow Belongs to Me*. Nevertheless, I began to acquire a sympathy for the German people who have experienced their own brand of suffering historically.

In our Jewish Sunday school we never opened the Bible except to learn how to recite the Torah reading for our Bar Mitzvahs. I also remember learning that there were Jewish synagogues dotting the Caribbean islands. But we were never told the Jews were there as major participants in the trans-Atlantic African slave trade. The same was the case with the Jewish presence in the American South prior to the American Civil War. I only learned about these unsavory aspects of Jewish history many years later from contacts with the Nation of Islam and the work of Wellesley College African Studies professor Tony Martin.

My father was a medical scientist and eventually became dean of a major American medical school. My maternal uncle was a Nobel Prize winner in nuclear physics. My family highly valued education and achievement. I grew up on the university campus where my father worked. Most of my friends were the product of intermarriages between a Jewish professor father and a Christian mother housemaker. These kids practiced cultural Christianity celebrating Christmas at home. I don't believe they ever attended church or had a meaningful knowledge of the Christian religion.

Only two friends came from a solid Jewish background where both parents were Jews. One of them named Joshua was a big influence on me. After our Bar Mitzvahs we made a pact to keep kosher. One night I told my mother I couldn't eat her spare ribs anymore. When she asked why and I explained, she reacted with anger and grounded me for a month, forbidding me from seeing Joshua again.

My few Christian friends came from religious homes. One I have stayed in touch with over the years is a prominent attorney and active in his Lutheran Church. His father was a professor of Reformation history and knew eight languages, including Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. How I wish I could speak with him today! I asked my friend why he never shared his faith with his Jewish friends, and he said his parents warned him it was not socially acceptable. My impression is that my childhood Christian friends fared much better in life than we Jews without any meaningful identity or belief system.

I was introverted and a good student through the end of my high school years. I graduated number three in my class and was admitted to all the colleges to which I applied. In retrospect I should not have gone directly to college because I was immature and lacking in self-confidence, which quickly became a problem when I began my college education. Most of my friends were boys; we played sports together, socialized, and talked about girls, though my mother wondered if I was gay because I didn't have girlfriends. I was late entering puberty, and my mother's concerns were completely allayed during my years of college promiscuity. This was a tragic experience for which I was completely unprepared and which almost destroyed me.

In my freshman year at college there were eight guys rooming together in a double suite. Three were Jewish and five were Catholic. The Catholics were very religious and went to Mass every Sunday. I had never met Catholics before and was amazed at their devotion on top of their difficult academic studies. I tried to engage them in discussions, but they were uneasy speaking to me. They probably didn't understand why this strange Jewish guy wanted to learn about their faith. Once I asked if I could go to church with them and they said, "No, it has a lot of strange rituals that you would not understand." If those roommates had been Baptist or Mormon they would have grabbed me by the collar and dragged me off to their church! But not the Catholics.

I met some Orthodox Jewish students at college, but they too were extremely cloistered, devoted to their studies, and unwilling or unable to explain their faith to an outsider. In my junior year I took a philosophy survey course nicknamed "From Plato to NATO." The two professors were both Jewish intellectuals with little interest in religion. My section leader was a philosophy graduate student who said he was a born-again Christian. In the small section that would meet twice a week, he would try to raise the biblical perspective as a counterpoint to the arguments of people like Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche. I was the only Jewish student in our group of about ten, and this man would frequently turn to me and say something like, "Michael, what does the Torah say about this argument of Karl Marx?" I was completely unable to answer because, as I mentioned earlier, we never studied the Bible in all my years of Jewish education. This man was not trying to embarrass me, but I was inwardly humiliated. This experience played a role in my decision to enter an Orthodox Jewish yeshiva a few years later.

I had been majoring in economics, but the philosophy course raised questions of morals and values that made me feel exposed as a person who was devoid of any true ideals or principles. I barely graduated and never did the thesis I was supposed to do since I was preoccupied with these deeper questions. In my senior year I took a vocational aptitude test which scored me at my highest ranking as a Catholic priest. The counselor laughed nervously and said "Well, you're Jewish so that must be a fluke." But truly that was probably my calling in life.

I encourage any Catholics reading this to be much more assertive about sharing your faith with others, especially with Jewish people who often are proud of their culture but completely ignorant of their religion. These are lost souls who desperately need the life preserver offered by Jesus. So don't be embarrassed or reticent to share your faith.

In the summer after my sophomore year in college I went on a Zionist youth trip to Israel. We worked on a kibbutz for a month and traveled around the country for three weeks. This included the Sinai Desert that Israel had recently conquered in the Six-Day War. It was an exhilarating experience for me. I fell in love with Israel. Israelis were brash, confident, and

even arrogant, which contrasted notably with the large Jewish student population of my college who were generally insecure, withdrawn, reticent, and constantly on the lookout for anti-Semitism and discrimination. Israelis were not like that at all. If they saw anti-Semitism they attacked it and disabled it. It appealed greatly to my adolescent sense of aggression. I finished college without any clear educational or professional direction but feeling completely devoted to the Zionist cause.

After I graduated, I moved back home with my parents and spent two years doing odd jobs and trying to work up the courage to move to Israel. I did a lot of crazy things. Liberal Jews who wrote articles in the local newspaper critical of Israel I would phone up and try to meet with them and challenge their perspective. One writer was the wife of a college department chairman. She invited me to her home and opened up a filing cabinet of hundreds of articles on the history of Israel and what she claimed was its abuse of the Palestinians. Then she dropped a bombshell claiming that she was a direct descendant of Theodore Herzl, the founder of Zionism!

Another time I was at a traffic light. The car in front of me had a bumper sticker saying *Stop the Israeli Genocide in Lebanon*. This was following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon 1982 in which they regularly fired aircraft missiles at apartment buildings. This is a tactic the Israelis have used repeatedly and especially in today's Gaza genocide. I was outraged that these people would accuse Israel of waging an unrighteous war and I followed them home. I went up to their door, rang the doorbell, and a quiet American man answered. I asked him about his bumper sticker. He told me he had worked for Aramco in Saudi Arabia but didn't know very much about the Middle East. While we were talking, his wife, an Egyptian Muslim, came to the door and started berating me wildly about Israel's brutal attacks against civilians in Beirut and other places. I was shocked at her vehemence. After I left, I thought to myself that if I really cared so much about Israel I should move there and stop bothering Americans with my one-sided propaganda.

Moving to Israel

And that's what happened. In the fall of 1982, I bought a one-way plane ticket to Tel Aviv. I had distant relatives on a kibbutz near Haifa so I took a bus there and enrolled in their Ulpan program, which is a crash Hebrew language course designed to allow a person to obtain rapid citizenship and serve in the army within six months of arriving in the country.

We worked in kibbutz factories and industries in the morning and studied the Hebrew language in the afternoon. None of the young American Jews in my group was religious and the kibbutz was secular. During this time, I discovered an English Bible in our Ulpan classroom. I opened it up randomly to some terrifying prophetic warnings from Moses about the future consequences of Jewish disobedience to the law. I read the famous [Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32](#). I felt the hair standing on my head as I read the wild, angry language. I had read portions of *Mein Kampf* a few years earlier when I was working in a small bookstore and discovered it on the shelf. The language of Moses in the Bible frankly reminded me of the passionate anger of Adolf Hitler. I also spent about a month wandering the hills outside the kibbutz during our daily breaks asking myself if Moses was really a great prophet or a deranged megalomaniac!

I wasn't even addressing God. I wasn't sure if I even believed in Him. But I was doing what Hassidic Master [Nachman of Breslov](#) (1772-1810) called *Hitbodedut* or vocalizing questions in a personal dialogue with the Creator. Perhaps in answer to my perplexity after a month a

pair of ultra-Orthodox Jewish men showed up in our kibbutz asking permission to give a series of seminars to our Ulpan group. They spoke about things like Hebrew numerology and very lightweight but intriguing aspects of the Jewish religion. They came once a week to speak to us about the weekly Torah passages. There they introduced rabbinical commentaries that I had never heard of. And I quickly saw there is a depth of Jewish scholarship behind the Bible, which was not just a book of children's stories.

Encountering Orthodox Judaism

The men eventually invited us to spend the Sabbath in their community. They lived in a new Jewish town next to Nazareth. It was called Upper Nazareth to distinguish it from the old Christian Nazareth. I wasn't planning to go, but a friend asked me to escort his girlfriend and her twin sister who were interested in attending. I guess he sensed my own interest.

We took a two-hour bus trip to get to this community. There I saw for the first time in my life the intimacy of the Jewish Sabbath, when a family spends 24 hours in close communion. They go to the synagogue together, they have meals together, the parents pay attention to their kids and speak to them asking questions, everyone sings, and the food is terrific. My father back home was a workaholic who rarely came home for dinner. The idea of my parents setting aside 24 hours for family and God was unfathomable to me. This experience touched me to my core and made me suspect that the Orthodox Jews knew something that the rest of us were missing.

I had an unpleasant conversation with the community rabbi during this sabbath. I felt he was arrogant and intolerant, unlike my hosts who were doing everything possible to be welcoming and understanding to me. The rabbi knew of my interest in Christianity and tried to claim that Christianity is a pessimistic religion that believes everything is falling in quality since the time of Jesus, while Judaism believes things are getting better and better. Later I learned this isn't really true, because Jews believe that earlier sages are superior in knowledge and intellect to later sages. (For example, the Talmudic rabbis of the first two centuries AD would be considered far superior to Maimonides of medieval Spain and all the more so to any Orthodox rabbi today.)

They call this Yeridat Hadorot, or Decline of the Generations. This is a great example of Jews projecting their own flaws and imperfections onto others, especially Christians. In fact, after I read the New Testament I discovered that Christians believe precisely the opposite of what the rabbi claimed, because Jesus said his followers would perform greater works than He! See John 14: 9-14.

Experiences with Christianity and Further Jewish Studies

After I returned to the kibbutz, I discovered a pair of Dutch Christian volunteers and started attending their private Bible study in their quarters. This was the first time I'd ever seen the New Testament, and I remember feeling a sense of shock at the outrageous language of Jesus. Many years later I discovered that English author C.S. Lewis had said the same thing: that Jesus cannot be regarded as merely a great rabbi because his language was grandiose and forces us to consider him either as "[Lord lunatic or liar.](#)"

I didn't know that terminology at the time, but I definitely sensed the grandeur of the rhetoric of Jesus as reported in the New Testament. I then started attending a Messianic group in Haifa which one Saturday had a group baptism on the beach that I witnessed. I felt

a sense of dread that I was being invited into something that I felt was powerful but which was alien to me. I was afraid to embrace Christianity because it was just completely different from the identity I had been raised in. Still, I wrote an angry letter to my friends in Upper Nazareth and told them that I was considering being baptized. They immediately came out to the kibbutz and invited me to move in with them for a month so I could learn about Judaism more comprehensively.

My friends asked me at least to understand something about Judaism before I decided to reject it in favor of Christianity. They opened their home to me, and I went to the synagogue with them every day. I studied with people in the community. And at the end of that month was the Jewish holiday of Shavuoth or Pentecost, when Orthodox Jews stay up all night studying the Torah and other texts. The next day they sent me off on a bus to Jerusalem to enroll in one of the yeshivas that were opening up for Jews like me: college-educated people who had been raised as secular Jews and had virtually no knowledge of the Jewish religion. I visited a couple of classes and decided to enroll in an institution called [Ohr Samayach](#) or Happy Light, named after the book of Torah commentaries written by a Polish rabbi named [Meir Simcha haCohen of Dvinsk](#).

Although the atmosphere in the yeshiva was very alien at first, it did remind me of college. The students all wore black trousers with white shirts. Everyone was studious, disciplined, and polite. The teachers were excellent educators who knew how to convey the complexity of Orthodox Jewish practice and scholarship to completely unseasoned though intelligent students. I quickly fell into the routine of morning prayer breakfast, classes throughout the day, supper, and sleep. We never saw a woman for three years. The one woman who worked in the yeshiva kitchen never came out into the dining room. Our contact was only with male rabbis and our fellow male students.

For me it was a great relief to be in such an environment completely lacking in sexual tension and competition. I have read claims of homosexual abuse in yeshiva institutions but I never saw or heard of such a thing in the three years I was at Ohr Samayach. All of our rabbis were married with families of their own, and I could not imagine one of them trying to engage in an inappropriate relationship with a student. The students were focused and directed. I can say that in my three years at the yeshiva I never had an untoward sexual thought or fantasy. It was a completely focused environment. Unlike college, where the professors enjoy challenging and denigrating the students, the rabbis at the yeshiva were encouraging and nurturing us, hoping we would decide to permanently join their community and adopt their way of life.

Adopting Orthodox Judaism

I hope this account conveys some of the advantages and attractions of the Orthodox Jewish way of life compared to the derangement of Western secular culture. Even so, Jesus entered the picture early on. I told the rabbis about my experience with the Dutch missionaries at the kibbutz, so they had me take an anti-missionary course taught by a man who had been prominent in the Anglican Church but converted to Judaism and now lived in Jerusalem and taught anti-Christian propaganda in his apartment. I took some of his classes and was considered safely deprogrammed in order to be fully embraced by the yeshiva community. Although I felt fully committed to the Orthodox Jewish community, I didn't realize that the rabbis were holding judgment in reservation, waiting to see if I truly would renounce my interest in Christianity. Their suspicions were always just below the surface, although in my naivete I didn't realize that they had placed a question mark over my head.

Over the next three years, I became one of the top students in the yeshiva. Every month a friend would get married in an arranged marriage coordinated by our yeshiva and its sister seminary for Jewish girls. Eventually my time came, and I was matched up with a very nice Jewish girl from England who was studying at the seminary in Jerusalem. Her parents were both doctors and we were compatible on many levels, even including our physical stature. The rabbis definitely did their homework! She had graduated from an English university with a degree in math and computer science. She was extremely intelligent and idealistic and a wonderful woman, far better than I deserved. This was especially so because since I was in college, I decided I would never get married or have a family of my own.

My wife was very ambitious and wanted me to become an ordained rabbi. She prodded me to move out of the yeshiva into a more advanced program. My teachers warned me it was premature and that I shouldn't do this, but I did not listen to them which led to difficulties. Eventually I found myself in a radical Messianic Hassidic group called Breslov. My wife was not happy with this group of people, and this eventually led to our divorce after six years of marriage and three children.

Those children all live in a different Hassidic community in Israel to this day. They do not communicate with me due to my eventual Christian baptism, which is considered an act of treason against Judaism. My wife remarried a prominent member of a Hassidic sect who is a community leader in their city in Israel. Her sister back in England is a leader in Jewish education and her brother is a computer scientist who apparently has a prominent role in the British government. After our divorce, I had no further contact with anyone in her family.

Christian Baptism

We had been married in December 1985, and I was baptized in June of 2000. I stayed within the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel and had a couple of unsuccessful attempts at remarriage, as I did not have a job or professional livelihood. But I stayed within the Hasidic community. Eventually this led to my meeting a married couple who were Christian missionaries from South Africa working in the city of Safed in the northern Israeli mountains of Galilee. Safed is the home of Jewish Kabbalah. These Christian missionaries deliberately targeted this city as a ground zero of spiritual warfare. They were extremely courageous and probably the most exemplary Christians I've ever met. They led me to Christ and baptized me. I will say more about them later. But for now I want to describe the experiences I had studying the Talmud that started opening my eyes to the negative reputation of Jesus within the Jewish community.

The Talmud and Its Treatment of Jesus

As an introduction, let me say that there was definitely a Messianic fervor in our yeshiva. Every sermon ended with an exhortation about the imminent arrival of the Messiah. Weddings and Bar Mitzvah celebrations also expressed this sentiment. The feeling was that the restoration of Israel so soon after the Holocaust was a miracle and that Messiah must be near.

After my anti-missionary deprogramming seminar, life proceeded inside the yeshiva with complete normalcy. I never consciously thought about Jesus or Christianity for the next three years. However, Jesus was speaking through the cracks trying to get my attention before I realized it. Every year in late July or early August is the solemn Jewish fast day called Tisha beAv, named for the ninth day of the Hebrew month Av, on which supposedly

both Jerusalem Temples were destroyed, first by the Babylonians in 586 BC (420 BC according to rabbinic chronology) and then by the Romans in 70 AD.

This is very different from the fast day of Yom Kippur which is a time of joyous repentance. Tisha beAv is more like mourning when someone has died. It's a tearful day of saying good-bye to all that was precious in the Jewish religion: namely the Temple and its capital city of Jerusalem. The Jewish aspiration to rebuild this Temple is very strong. Orthodox Jews pray for this fervently three times every day, and even more on the Sabbath and festivals. This is an essential aspiration of the Jewish religion and something that Christians are not aware of even in their desire to support the Jews as recompense for the Holocaust.

Consequently, Christians do not seem to realize they are helping to bring to pass a blood sacrificing Temple that the New Testament *Book of Hebrews* says was made obsolete by the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. In [this link](#) are some articles discussing the ominous implications of a rebuilt animal-sacrificing blood-spilling Jewish temple in Jerusalem. I might even speculate that American Evangelicals who don't believe they are consuming the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharistic communion ceremony might see their faith subverted by supporting a bloody rebuilt Jewish Temple.



Destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, by Francesco Hayez (From the Public Domain)

On Tisha beAv, all Torah study is forbidden, apart from the book of Lamentations that mourns the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians and passages in the Talmud that discuss the later Roman destruction of Jerusalem. The most famous such passage occurs in

the Tractate Gittin about divorce. This long passage discusses the historical events behind the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. In this passage is the notorious section that describes a person punished in boiling excrement for eternity. That passage relates that a Jewish Sage who had been a Roman convert to Judaism conjured up the spirits of three great enemies of Israel to ask them how they are faring in the afterlife.

[Three Sages editor's note: This kind of "spiritism," evidently similar to the modern idea of seances or use of an Ouija Board, seems to point to the occultist nature of Talmudism.]

The alleged "three enemies" are the Old Testament pagan prophet Balaam, the Roman general Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem on behalf of his father General Vespasian after he was crowned emperor of Rome, and the third person identified only as That Man [Oto Ish] or Sinner of Israel. The first two enemies have a dreadful afterlife of constant torture but notably they continue to express enmity against Jews. The third person, who is described as suffering in boiling excrement, announces that the nations of the world should treat the Jews with kindness because they are the apple of God's eye. This person is never named explicitly, but when we asked our rabbis who it might be they were evasive. Only later did I discover that this third person is Jesus of Nazareth.

Delving Further Into the Talmud

The Talmud is a massive production of 20 volumes, each over 100 pages long. These are long folio pages with tiny print in the central columns surrounded on all sides by intricate rabbinical commentaries and explication. The Talmud was redacted in 500 AD and hand-copied laboriously for many years. During the Renaissance period a Catholic printing house in Venice was given permission by the Vatican to print the first copies of the Talmud, but only on condition that all anti-Christian passages would be censored and removed. These were passages that denounced Jesus, his mother Mary, his apostles, and Christians in general.

No doubt the printing contract for this version of the Talmud was extremely lucrative for the Venetians. The Vatican was surprisingly tolerant to allow it to go through it all. The censored passages were preserved in separate volumes called *Deletions* of the Talmud. I had never studied these separate volumes and only heard of them vaguely. I had no idea what was in them. But in the 20th century two new editions of the Talmud inserted these deleted passages or alluded to them in explicatory footnotes. The first was the famous Soncino English translation of the Talmud produced in England. Later came the Steinsaltz Hebrew translation of the Talmud. Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz spent 40 years on this enormous project in which he translated the core Aramaic text of the Talmud into modern colloquial Hebrew. Besides the traditional commentaries, Steinsaltz added his own narrative that explicated many technical complexities of the text. Steinsaltz also clearly indicates that these scandalous passages refer to Jesus and Christianity.

The allusions to Jesus are very subtle and devious. Sometimes he's called "That Man" or "Sinner of Israel." Sometimes he's called Joshua son of so-and-so. Traditional Orthodox rabbis tried to deflect criticism by claiming that Sinner of Israel could refer to anyone and that there were many Joshuas in Jewish history who might be subject to criticism. But it's pretty clear that these passages refer to Jesus.

For example, one of them states that a notorious Jesus was hung by the leaders of Israel on the eve of Passover. In [this link](#) are documents that carefully explain how these Talmudic

passages are indictments of Jesus and Christianity. Also, the famous Letter to Yemen of the great sage Maimonides explicitly states that the leaders of Israel had Jesus executed, something for which Maimonides seems proud. See pages iii, iv, xvii [here](#).

I became aware of these passages for the first time during a year of independent study that I undertook with a Steinsaltz edition of the Talmud. The yeshiva I had been studying in was involved in a painful split between two different Orthodox groups, to both of which I had connections. So I dropped out of the yeshiva and did my own independent study. And that's when I started noticing that the Steinsaltz edition had extremely eye-opening and controversial footnotes that explicated the strong anti-Christian bias of the Talmudic rabbis.



A page of a medieval Jerusalem Talmud manuscript, from the Cairo Geniza (From the Public Domain)

Even the Jewish prayer book contains aspersions against Jesus. The famous Amidah, or Standing Prayer, that Orthodox Jews are supposed to recite thrice daily, contains 18 benedictions plus an added 19th that is a malediction against the enemies of Israel, one of whom is described as Minim. This means “heretics” in Hebrew, but some Christian scholars believe it is a Hebrew acronym for Ma’amin Yeshu’a Notzri, or Believer in Jesus of Nazareth. [The Aleinu prayer](#) that concludes every public prayer service contains a passage that some think alludes negatively to Jesus.

Later, when I read the New Testament for the first time and saw that the enemies of Jesus claimed that he cast out demons by the prince of demons, I recalled a passage in the Talmud which stated that he used “sorcery” to perform miracles. I believe these are the same basic narrative. Only recently have I considered that the passage in the Gospel of Mark, [Chapter 3](#) that discusses the unpardonable sin of attributing Jesus’s miracles to witchcraft, might be a terrible indictment of the Jewish religion. That’s because, whether Jews are aware of these passages or not, the fact that they are printed in the Talmud enshrines them as a fundamental belief of Orthodox Judaism, which is the official state religion of Israel. Many people are surprised to learn that non-Orthodox branches of Judaism have no standing in the state of Israel and that their rabbis are forbidden to perform marriages, preside over divorces, or conduct funerals.

Ignorance of the law is no excuse. While most Orthodox Jews probably have no explicit knowledge of these anti-Christian passages in the Talmud, I believe that the fact that these passages exist puts a spiritual dark cloud over the entire contemporary Jewish religion and paints it as an explicitly anti-Christian ideology with immensely negative spiritual repercussions. Specifically, the [Gospel of Mark](#) claims that attributing Jesus's miracles to magic sorcery or witchcraft constitutes the "unpardonable sin." And I do believe now that Judaism suffers under this terrible indictment of being in unpardonable enmity to Jesus Christ of Nazareth and renders it the premier anti-Christ force on earth today.

I have asked numerous Christian pastors about this, and they all are anxious to deflect my concerns and to be apologetic on behalf of Jews. It seems that the Holocaust is the reason for this obsequious policy to Judaism. No one wants to give needless offense, remembering that most German churches supported Hitler and that Hitler himself was raised as a Catholic.

Anti-Christian Claims by Jewish Rabbis and the Answer

When I first met the missionaries in Safed in the year 2000, they opened their home to me and allowed me to use their computer, which allowed me access to the internet where I could do research about the strongly anti-Christian claims of Jewish anti-missionary rabbis. It's worth noting that the leading anti-missionary rabbis traditionally are drawn from the ranks of the Chabad Hassidic movement, to which President-Elect Donald Trump's daughter and son-in-law have a strong connection.

I also discovered some fascinating websites of what's called "Christian apologetics." The best is called [Christian Thinktank](#), which is a labor of love by a software designer in Silicon Valley named Glenn Miller who is a devout Christian and has devoted virtually all his free time to compiling this website of literally thousands of web pages and probably millions of words of answers to every conceivable objection to the Christian faith from atheists, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, etc. Going through this website gave me confidence to ignore the deprecations of the rabbis and my friends in Israel against Christianity and to literally take the plunge of baptism. For my life had fallen into great despair, and I was eager to find my Savior. I highly recommend this website. The author is virtually an unknown and unacclaimed hero of the Christian faith.

But back to my journey.

The Christian Missionaries

When I was involved with these Christian missionaries in Israel, I witnessed great spiritual power in their lives. While Orthodox Judaism is almost a totally intellectualized religion and in fact teaches that a Talmudic sage is superior to a biblical prophet, Christians emphasize what they call "gifts of the spirit" through prayer intercession, healing and so forth. Usually once a month the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community would organize a noisy protest outside the apartment of the missionaries. Their landlord was a respected member of the local Orthodox community and the other people tried to pressure him to evict the missionaries under threat of a business boycott. But the landlord knew that the missionaries were good people who always paid their rent on time, took care of the apartment, and were kind and gracious to him. So amazingly he stood up against the pressure of the boycotters. The missionaries themselves would undertake a three-day fast, only drinking water and only speaking words of prayer, without any idle conversation. And invariably after these three

days were over the protesters dispersed and left them alone.

Let me add that the first time I had met the Christian missionaries, I had been sent there by friends in my Hassidic community to spy on them. They had heard about a Christian cell operating in town and wanted me to find out more about them. So I knocked on their door one night. I was standing there in my Hassidic garb with a long black coat, a hat, a long beard, and side-curls. A man opened the door not knowing who I was or what I wanted, but he was gracious. He invited me inside, gave me some tea, and we engaged in a conversation. They had just had a prayer meeting, and there was an unusual atmosphere inside the apartment like being in a cloud. I had a kind of dizzy feeling. It was intensely spiritual. I recognized that these people were friendly, sincere, and extremely knowledgeable about the Bible, which they read cover to cover every year. Orthodox Jews know relatively little about the biblical text. The Talmud engages in detailed textual analysis of almost exclusively the Pentateuch (Five Books of Moses). In fact, Orthodox Jews have a saying that only women and children recite Psalms and read the later books of the Bible because they're not smart enough to engage in the intricate intellectual acrobatics of Talmudic analysis.

The missionary man was very tall and of Scottish descent and once a year he put on a kilt and walked around town playing a bagpipe. He also grew his hair and beard long like a Russian Orthodox icon of Jesus. He did it to attract attention to what they were doing in town. He was not obnoxious and was utterly fearless. They allowed me to watch their copy of the famous [Jesus Film](#) produced by Campus Crusade for Christ back in 1979. They had a copy dubbed in modern colloquial Hebrew. I watched this usually once a week which helped me see Jesus as an authentic Jewish person for the first time in my life.

This is a very powerful film. It's the only Jesus film to my knowledge ever produced entirely in the Holy Land. It was filmed in 1979 with permission of the Israeli government who thought they might win some PR points with the Christian community. However, there were noisy Orthodox Jewish protests against the film the entire time they were making it. The lead actor, Brian Deacon, contracted pneumonia, which jeopardized the entire project. Like Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, which also was produced under very adverse circumstances, this film triumphed unexpectedly. I highly recommend it. It's been dubbed into many more languages and really is a phenomenal depiction of Jesus based on the Gospel of Luke.

Final Years in Israel

After my Christian baptism I lived for a year in Jerusalem, but I was unable to associate with my old Jewish venues. On the Sabbath I would go to the Christian or Muslim quarters of the Old City of Jerusalem and use an internet cafe. I abhorred the Western Wall. Jews would go there and arrogantly and excitedly engage in their religious rituals despising Christians and Muslims, always eyeing the Temple Mount above them with envy. I once had a vision of [Isaiah 53](#) written across the Western Wall in giant red letters dripping blood. Much later, after I returned to the States and was able to do more historical research, I came to understand that the Western Wall had been erected by the Edomite imposter King Herod and represents hatred of Jesus Christ.

Christians and Muslims have erected beautiful houses of worship in Jerusalem, including mosques and cathedrals, while the Jews worship at this ugly stone wall which is the remnant of the retaining wall around the Temple that the Romans utterly destroyed. Jesus says in the

Gospels that not one stone would remain of the Temple, and Jewish anti-missionaries use the Western Wall as a refutation of Jesus's prophecy. However, once I understood that the Western Wall was not part of the Temple compound at all but was simply an outer retaining wall I was able to surmount this rabbinical claim against Jesus. The Western Wall is ghastly. It symbolizes Jewish nostalgia for the past embracing an ugly ruin as the centerpiece of their religion rather than accepting the reality that Jesus inaugurated the Messianic era 2,000 years ago.

I also learned that Jews believe that history only lasts for 6,000 years before the world is destroyed. We're in the year 5785, but some Jewish scholars claim that there's a missing 200 years from the Jewish chronology, meaning we're very close to the end. That means that the Jewish Messianic vision is for a great leader to emerge and rule over the nation for 40 years, like David and Solomon, before the whole world and all humanity are destroyed.

For the Jews, the Messiah is an afterthought, like icing on a cake or a cherry on a sundae, expressing Divine affirmation of Jewish self-righteousness and stubborn clinging to their traditions. The Jewish Messiah will enslave and destroy all Gentiles. In the Christian view Jesus inaugurated a 2,000-year process of elevating all of humanity into the light of God. But the Jews don't see this at all. They don't even give Christians credit for translating the Bible into every language and disseminating it around the globe. The Jews are spiteful and denigrating of anyone outside their community. Their Messiah is a ruthless destroyer of people and an extinguisher of the hopes of humanity.

I also learned that the Hanukkah story that is so favored not just by Jews but also by Christian Zionists was a civil war of Jewish religious zealots and extremists against Jews who had embraced the positive virtues of Greek Hellenism. All the Jewish academics and secular professionals who dominate American society today would have been targeted for destruction by Hanukkah's heroic Maccabee family (and by the fanatical Jews who increasingly control Israel today).

Prior to my meeting the Christian missionaries and getting baptized, I had a couple more experiences in Israel that raised red flags in my mind about my ultra-Orthodox practices. Once during a hospitalization, I would converse with the male nursing staff who were Palestinian Muslims. This was the first time I learned anything about the Islam, and I was shocked to realize how similar it is to Judaism. Regular prayers, dietary laws, divorce and purity laws for instance. I was shocked to see that these Palestinians were devout and God-fearing people, so that years later when I heard about the anti-Zionist Naturay Karta movement ("Guardians of the City" in Aramaic) which respects Palestinians as Godly people I was able to understand why.

Another time I was with my Hasidic friends and saw a group of American tourists who were lost. They were looking for the famous artist quarter of Safed. I went over to help them and when I came back my friends asked what they wanted and I explained. My friends were irate saying, "Why did you help them? They're goyim. Evil people. It's a sin to do anything to help such people!" So I said to them in shock, "But they're tourists. They've come to our country, and they're supporting our economy. Why can't we be gracious to them?" My friends just snickered at me, and I realized that somehow along the way I had crossed a line. I was certainly not raised in my childhood to think I was superior to any other person or to look down on people because of their race, religion, or ethnic background. And something turned inside my stomach, and I started to wonder if I was involved with an evil cult.

In 2005 *The Passion of the Christ* was released. A movie theater in Tel Aviv had pre-sold thousands of tickets but the ultra-Orthodox political party in the government succeeded in getting the film banned from the country. So people had to buy pirated DVDs. I bought such a DVD from a Palestinian video store in the Old City of Jerusalem. I watched the video at an internet cafe in the Jewish part of Jerusalem. While I was there a group of Orthodox Jewish teenagers came in to use the computers to watch sports, violent movies, and porn. Orthodox Jews do not own televisions and their access to media is restricted, so they used to flock to internet cafes for this kind of entertainment. I should have been braver and asked if they wanted to watch the movie about Jesus. They probably would have killed me on the spot, but maybe that would have been a good way for me to go. I always regret huddling in the corner watching the movie on my computer monitor and hoping the throng of ultra-Orthodox teenagers would leave me alone.

When I left Israel in December of 2005 I told the security guard at the airport that without the help of Christian countries like America and Germany, Israel would be a piece of rotten wood floating in the Mediterranean. He just sneered at me and said good riddance as I walked onto the airplane.

Return to the US and a Message

Since returning to the States in 2006, I've availed myself of countless books and articles on the internet. I've learned much about the hostile nature of Orthodox Judaism and Jewish culture in general against the Christian world. I've learned how the Jews seized control of the global financial system mainly due to Catholic stupidity that granted them monopolistic banking privileges. During the Middle Ages, the Catholics thought it was forbidden to lend money on interest, but a Catholic could borrow money on interest from a Jewish banker. In reality, Old Testament law forbids both lending and borrowing on interest equally. But no one pays any attention to that today.

I have uploaded some articles [here](#) that demonstrate the hostility and animosity of rabbinical writings against the person of Jesus, his blessed mother, his apostles, and Christianity in general. These articles have been written by scholars who are much more informed than I am. There's no need for me to try to replicate what they have done. I couldn't do it even if I wished to, but I happily refer the reader to the fruits of their research and investigations.

My message today is that you don't have to be Jewish to believe in Jesus, but you can't be a Jew if you don't! For Jesus was the greatest Jew in all human history!

The root of the Hebrew word for Jew—**YEHUDI** is **HODA**, meaning one who admits when he's wrong and who is thankful to God. Really the two meanings of the word **HODA** are the same: **CONFESSION**. To confess when we have made mistakes and to admit that God is Great. Exactly as Muslims do every day when they shout **ALLAHU AKBAR**.

The essence of being Jewish is to admit the truth about our own flaws and imperfections and about God's greatness and blessedness. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's **Confessing Church** could be rightfully called the **Essential Jewish Church**. So I invite all of my Jewish friends and acquaintances to say:

We confess that we were wrong about Jesus Christ of Nazareth and we confess that God is Great for sending the Messiah born of a Jewish woman the

Blessed Virgin Mary, Amen!

Unless we can say that Jesus is God, we will invariably see ourselves as God, the very definition of idolatry. Judaism brought knowledge of the **ONE TRUE GOD** to the world and always confronted the idolatry of other cultures. But God became too personal for them 2000 years ago and frightened them into ignoring and denouncing **His Son Jesus**. They think they are being true to their faith and opposing idolatry. But in reality they have idolized themselves by rejecting **The Word Become Flesh, Jesus**. This is tragic for them and for the rest of us as current events demonstrate their incredible hubris and rampaging genocidal behavior against the rest of humanity, who can be united only under the reign of the **ONE TRUE GOD and His Son Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Also, very importantly, the idea of Chosenness is totally different between Judaism and Christianity. Jews think Chosenness confers privilege based on their supposed superiority to Gentiles, whom they view with contempt as sub-humans akin to animals worthy only of enslavement or extermination. Christians see Chosenness as a responsibility to work hard to bring the light of God to a darkened humanity. As Jesus said: **The greatest among you shall be a servant.** This notion of service to humanity is completely antithetical to Judaism.

God Bless You All and Merry Christmas.

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