

# The Messiah משיח

## Introduction to Judaism

### *Old Testament, New Testament?*



For many people the term Judaism refers to the faith of the Jewish people in the Old Testament. Today's Judaism, includes much more than the what is read in the Old Testament. First, we have to understand Jews do not view the Old Testament as an Old Testament replaced by the New Testament. Secondly, when Jews refer to their Bible, The Hebrew Bible, it is known as the *Tanach*. This is essentially the same as the Old Testament in both the Catholic and Protestant Bible. The only difference being the order the books are arranged<sup>1</sup>, the first book being Genesis and the last II Chronicles.

### *Who is a Jew?*

Who is a Jew? For many this is a confusing question. Is being Jewish a religion or ethnic group? The term applies to both the religion and the ethnicity of a person. Someone can be a Jew and an atheist, because they are applying the term to their ethnic background as opposed to a religious background.

The Jewish faith is linked to the group of people known today as the Jewish people. The majority of people who are Jewish in faith, have an ethnic descent from the people of the land. The word, Jew comes from the Hebrew word, יהודי *Y'huwdiy*, meaning Judah. Judah was the southern kingdom of Israel, the name and religion of descendent of Israel is linked with the southern kingdom, Judah. So when someone becomes Jewish they convert to the faith of the people of the land of Judah.

### *Are there different Jewish faiths?*

Just like Christianity has Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox divisions with many subdivisions, there are different Jewish sects. Each Jewish sect has a their own history and circumstances on how they developed. There are three main Jewish sects, *Orthodox*, *Conservative* and *Reform*. The Orthodox is the oldest, tracing their heritage to the Pharisees mentioned in the New Testament. The Reform movement began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in Germany, challenging many of the Rabbinic traditions. The Conservative movement formed out of the Reform movement in the 1840's, seeing the importance of keeping some laws and traditions.

### *Jewish History*

Jewish history dates back to the time of Abraham 2100 B.C, who was the founder of the Jewish people, and who is buried in Hebron. Next to the Temple Mount, the Tomb of Abraham is the most hotly contested piece of property in the world. Judaism can be broken down into 4 periods for simplicity.

Biblical Judaism 2100 to 332 B.C  
Hellenic Judaism 332 B.C to 135 A.D.  
Rabbinic Judaism 35 A.D. to 1750 A.D  
Modern Judaism 1750 A.D. to Present

<sup>1</sup> The Christian Bible's Old Testament is organized according to the order of the Septuagint, the Greek Translation of the Old Testament.

*Reaching Jewish People*

Questions:

Do the Jewish people need to accept Jesus for salvation?

Why a special class to reach Jewish people?

Do all Jewish people believe the Old Testament?

Do the Jews accept Jesus as a prophet, but not the Son of God?