



Can Jewish people believe in Jesus? I have a friend who says that he can't believe in Jesus, because Jews don't do that.

I've heard that many Jewish people make comments like that when asked about Jesus. Many say they are taught that you can't be Jewish and a Christian at the same time. In fact, the *Jews for Jesus* organization lists that reply as one of the most frequent objections they receive when trying to talk to their Jewish friends about Jesus.

So, to answer your question, I went to the Jews for Jesus web site: www.jewsforjesus.org. On the web site is a YouTube video of some Jewish believers in Jesus who have been asked the question "How can you believe in Jesus and still be a Jew?" Here are some excerpts that say it quite well:

1. If someone had just walked up to me out of a church and said that I needed to believe in Jesus, I would have probably said no. Contemporary Jews are open to many things, but Jesus as we understand "the Christians" believe in him is not an option. Buddhism? Secularism? Those are OK. But Jesus? He's the god of the Gentiles - so we are taught. Yet ...God brought me to an interest in thinking about the real Jesus of the Bible.

Once I reached that place, the question wasn't, "Is believing in Jesus a Jewish thing to do?" That's a question we Jews have mostly answered ahead of time in the negative, as though we were leaving a voice mail for an interviewer who will be calling while we're out. The question for me became, "Is the gospel true?" If it was, then of course it was also Jewish to believe it, because shouldn't Jewish people believe in what's true? I concluded that it is true, and that by believing in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles can come to know the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

2. "Jesus was Jewish. His first followers, the disciples were Jewish. Just about all the writers of the New Testament were Jewish."

3. "It's the most Jewish thing to do. Jesus was Jewish himself. The Messiah was promised to the Jewish people."

4. Really the question ought to be "How can you be Jewish and not believe in Jesus?" You see, if Jesus is the Messiah, the most Jewish thing you can do is believe in Him. I was raised to look forward to the coming of the Messiah. If Jesus is the Messiah, not only can we believe, we should believe.

The morning after I prayed to receive the Lord into my life I didn't look into the mirror and see that God had turned me into a Norwegian. I was born Jewish. I'll die Jewish. If Jesus is the Messiah, we Jews must believe in him. If he's not the Messiah then we should have nothing to do with him - and neither should anyone else. It all gets back to the real question: "Who is Jesus? Is he the Messiah or not?" If he's the Messiah we have to believe in him. It doesn't make us ex-Jews. It's an affirmation of our Jewishness not a denial of it.

5. To me there's nothing more Jewish than believing in the Jewish Messiah.

6. The way that you can be both Jewish and Christian is the fact that Judaism spoke of a Messiah to come. And when that Messiah came everybody who believed in him didn't lose their Jewishness, they were just Jews who believed in Jesus. The term "Christian" came up because they didn't know what to call people who weren't Jews who believed in Jesus. So they're like "What do we call them? Well, we'll call them "little Christ's" that's where the term (Christian) came from... There wasn't such thing as "a Christian" when Jesus was around. There was such thing as "Jews who believed that God had fulfilled the promise and that this is their Messiah and that now you are to follow him." You can be 100% Jewish and 100% Christian and be the absolutely most fulfilled person. I love it!

I hope that answers the question. I believe these Jewish Christians said it very well.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to <mailto:pastor@livingwordlutheran.net>