

My interview with a jewish friend essay



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Introduction of the religion The religion I decided to do this interview on is Judaism. I have always been interested in this religion and was ready to learn more. One of the three great monotheistic world religions, Judaism began as the faith of the ancient Hebrews, and its sacred text is the Hebrew Bible, particularly the Torah. Fundamental to Judaism is the belief that the people of Israel are God's chosen people, who must serve as a light for other nations.

God made a covenant first with Abraham, then renewed it with Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. The worship of Yahweh (God) was centered in Jerusalem from the time of David. The destruction of the First Temple of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (586 BC) and the subsequent exile of the Jews led to hopes for national restoration under the leadership of a messiah. The Jews were later allowed to return by the Persians, but an unsuccessful rebellion against Roman rule led to the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70 and the Jews' dispersal throughout the world in the Jewish Diaspora.

Rabbinic Judaism emerged to replace the temple cult at Jerusalem, as the Jews carried on their culture and religion through a tradition of scholarship and strict observance. The great body of oral law and commentaries were committed to writing in the Talmud and Mishna. The religion was maintained despite severe persecutions in many nations. Two branches of Judaism emerged in the Middle Ages: the Sephardi, centered in Spain and culturally linked with the Babylonian Jews; and the Ashkenazi, centered in France and Germany and linked with the Jewish culture of Palestine and Rome. Elements of mysticism also appeared, notably the esoteric writings of the Kabbala and,

in the 18th century, the movement known as Hasidism. The 18th century was also the time of the Jewish Enlightenment, or Haskala.

Conservative and Reform Judaism emerged in 19th-century Germany as an effort to modify the strictness of Orthodox Judaism. By the end of the 19th century Zionism had appeared as an outgrowth of reform. European Judaism suffered terribly during the Holocaust, when millions were put to death by the Nazis, and the rising flow of Jewish emigrants to Palestine led to the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948. The interview location I placed the interview with an individual (who wishes to remain nameless) at the Jewish Federation Of Central Alabama. They have only a post office box and it is P. O.

Box 20058 Montgomery, AL 36120. Interview Summary I went through a lot to actually be able to have an interview with someone from this organization. I was defiantly aiming for a face to face interview. I did finally receive that. The person whom I interviewed was very open minded and did not mind discussing his religion with me.

In fact he stated that it is his mission in life to help others now the depth and greatness of his religion. I was able to learn so much information from this kind gentleman that I interviewed. He was so kind and informative. I have always been a little open minded about different religions. But he really broadened my few of what the Jewish life is really like. I honestly believed that I was going to have a very great time interviewing this gentleman and I did succeed in that.

He taught me more in depth of Judaism. We talked so much and he taught me so many things that I had to sum it up in my question list. I was very

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comfortable and asked him my list of questions. As follows: 1. Were you born into this religion or did you choose it later on in life? Answer: I was born in this religion but I also choose it later in life.

If you can imagine, throughout life I have had trails that tempted to swayed different ways. But I remained a proud Jewish man who is very strong in my faith. 2. What principles is your religion based on? Answer: Let see, I can some our beliefs up like this: the unity of God, God's concern for humanity, the partnership of God and humanity, the concern that one person should show for another, the belief in a world to come or in the Messiah or in the Messianic Age, and the covenant, an agreement between God and the people of Israel expressed through God's laws for the proper use of the universe. These are things that all Jews share.

3. What different methods of worship does your religion practice? Answer: Traditionally, Jews use certain rituals on a daily basis, too. Some of these are: putting on the Tallit (a prayer shawl) and Tefillin (phylacteries, which are small leather boxes containing verses from the Bible that remind Jews of their duties—one worn on the forehead and one on the arm), praying three times a day, and keeping the dietary laws called Kashrut. 4. Is there a particular day you practice these methods of worship? Answer: Yes of course.

Jews have long revered Shabbat, the Sabbath, as a “taste of the world to come,” a time of rest, of peace, and of contentment. From sundown on Friday night until sundown on Saturday night, observant Jews set aside time to pray and study—a day to refrain from work and everyday cares. 5. What is

your place of worship called? 6. What are the important holidays and traditions of this religion? Answer: Yes a few are: the high holy days, sukkot, hannukkah, pesach, the omer period, Shavuot, and tishah.

7. How has religion shaped your life? Answer: Of course it has. Being Jewish is what I am. I was raised this way, left this way of life and came back.

I love being the Jewish man I am. 8. What are the challenges, if any, to practicing this particular religion? Answer. The stereotypes from being Jewish and the racism towards my religion. People who know nothing about this religion gets all upset when I mention I am a Jew.

9. Is there any other language that your religion requires you to speak? Answer: when I was brought up I had to learn Hebrew. Now that was a challenge. 10. Would you ever try to convert someone from a different religion to your religion? If so, how? Answer: I would not try to convert anyone to my religion.

I would, however, inform them of the greatness of being Jewish. The interview was great and the gentleman I interviewed made me feel very interested in his religion. Compared to Christianity Of the major world religions, Christianity and Judaism are likely the most similar. Christianity and Judaism both believe in one God who is almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, and infinite. Both religions believe in a God who is holy, righteous, and just, while at the same time loving, forgiving, and merciful. Christianity and Judaism share the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) as the authoritative Word of God, although Christianity includes the New Testament as well.

Both Christianity and Judaism believe in the existence of heaven, the eternal dwelling place of the righteous, and hell, the eternal dwelling place of the wicked. Christianity and Judaism have basically the same ethical code, commonly known today as Judeo-Christian. Both Judaism and Christianity teach that God has a special plan for the nation of Israel and the Jewish people. The all-important difference between Christianity and Judaism is the Person of Jesus Christ. Christianity teaches that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of a coming Messiah / Savior (Isaiah 7: 14; 9: 6-7; Micah 5: 2).

Judaism often recognizes Jesus as a good teacher, and perhaps even a prophet of God. Judaism does not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Taking it a step further, Christianity teaches that Jesus was God in the flesh (John 1: 1, 14; Hebrews 1: 8). Christianity teaches that God became a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ so He could lay down His life to pay the price for our sins (Romans 5: 8; 2 Corinthians 5: 21). Judaism strongly denies that Jesus was God or that such a sacrifice was necessary. Jesus Christ is the all-important distinction between Christianity and Judaism.

The Person and work of Jesus Christ is the one primary issue that Christianity and Judaism cannot agree upon. In Matthew 15: 24, Jesus declared, “ I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. ” The religious leaders of Israel in Jesus’ time asked Him, “ Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One? ” Jesus replied, ‘ I am,’ ...

And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14: 61-62). But they didn’t

believe His words or accept Him as the Messiah. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Hebrew prophecies of a coming Messiah. Psalms 22: 14-18 describes an event undeniably similar to Jesus' crucifixion, " I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me.

They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing. "

Clearly this messianic prophecy can be none other than Jesus Christ whose crucifixion fulfilled each of these details (Luke 23; John 19). There is no more accurate summary of Jesus than Isaiah 53: 3-6, " He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. " The Apostle Paul, a Jew and a strict adherent of Judaism, encountered Jesus Christ in a vision (Acts 9: 1-9) and proceeded to become the greatest witness for Christ and the author of almost half of the New Testament. Paul understood the difference

between Christianity and Judaism more than anyone else. What was Paul's message, "I am not ashamed of the gospel (of Jesus Christ), because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (Romans 1: 16). Conclusion When interviewing someone about their faith that you never meet things can be a little shaky.

But in reality, it is not that bad. Before this interview, I believe that interviewing a Jewish man was going to be very uncomfortable. They could not be as friendly as us southern Christians who always have open arms for any one and ready to preach the word. Boy was I wrong. I was a pleasant surprise to know that Jews are just as friendly as everyone else.

For someone as open minded as I, I was being a little closed minded at that point. The religion or background of a person does not determine their personality. The person with it themselves determines their attitude towards to others. I learned a great bit about Judaism and the great similarity to my religion which is Christianity. I believe in God and that Jesus Christ is my savior. I learned that Judaism is very similar minus Jesus Christ.

After looking more into it I understood that we share a lot. The main thing I learned from this experience is to learn more about a religion from someone that practices that religion. Reference: Judaism, http://www.religioustolerance.org/jud_desc.htm, retrieved August 31, 2008 Judaism and Christianity, http://www.important.ca/judaism_christianity_comparison.html, retrieved August 31, 2008 The Holy Bible

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