

Gabriel Keresztes

Professor Omar Suleiman

Comparative Religions

29 July 2011

The Reasons Behind the Denial of Jesus Being the Messiah of the Jews

Humanity since the time of Adam can be compared to a drunkard whose drunken periods are lengthier than the sober periods¹. Going from darkness to light, and back within short periods of times, struggling to find meaning and purpose in existence. For those who have taken the path of faith in God, a spiritual journey of finding the true meaning of life, of existence, beyond our shared attributes with animals, to a higher platform which does not have a scientific reasoning behind it, nor a chemical equation to explain it, life has been but a quest for guidance, for spiritual content, for purpose and meaning in the scriptures that each one holds claiming to be the true word, the instruction manual that the Creator gave to humanity. Messengers have come and gone, scriptures have been recorded and studied, prophecies have been confirmed and denied; yet the world still lies in confusion as to what and who is correct. One of such confusions, is that of Jesus the son of Mary, a historical figure that lived in Palestine more than 2000 years ago, whom some call God or the son of God, others call a teacher, a reformer, the Messiah while others call him a bastard and a liar. The topic of Jesus is a very long and this is not the place to get into the fullness of it, however this paper is focused to discuss the issue of the Messiah², and what lead the Jews to deny Jesus as the Messiah, the one who Christians claim that He fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament.

¹ Ghazali Muhammad, *Fiqhu Al Seerah*, Riyadh, IIPH 1999. Print.

² A title, which has been attributed with a full flavor of divinity to Jesus by Christians, denied by mainstream Jews and Muslims.

To achieve this, I have organized my paper in two major parts. The first part deals with the issue of the Jews denying Jesus at the time of his ministry, almost 2000 years ago, in present day Palestine. In this section we will look at the signs that the Jews were looking for in the Messiah, why Jesus did not fulfill such prophecies or signs? To do this we will have to look at the prophecies as recorded in the Old Testament with regards to the Messiah, as well as the life of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament, as those are the only sources appropriate for this discussion. In the second section we will look at why the Jews deny Jesus today after scriptures and doctrines about Jesus have crystallized and have become almost fully a Christian monopoly. To do this we will look at the core belief of Christianity about Jesus and the fundamental objections of Jewish theology to that.

THE DENIAL OF OLD

Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus the son of Mary is claimed to have lived in Palestine a Jewish area almost 2000 years ago, walking, talking and preaching to people that he was the Messiah, the promised one of the Old Testament. This is the claim of Christians³, however the Jews cannot entertain such a claim based on claims that Jesus did not fulfill any of the prophecies that the Messiah should have. We have to shift paradigms and look at the issue from a Jewish point of view, as they are the ones who came before Christianity, as they are the ones who held the scriptures and prophecies about the Messiah long before he was born. We will look at the reason of why they rejected Jesus as the Messiah based on their scriptures and prophecy. To achieve this we will take some of the main prophecies that the Jews held about the Messiah and we will try to align them with the history at the time of Jesus and after.

³ Even though there are Messianic Jews who hold a similar claim, but they are very few in numbers.

The Messiah as stated in the Old Testament was supposed to come on earth and bring the messianic era, a time where all the Jews would be gathered to the land of Israel⁴, a time when all nations would be at peace, the temple would be built, and the law would be established⁵, fighting the war of God, destroying all those nations that have fought against Israel and securing Jerusalem⁶. Even more specific, the Bible records in Jeremiah 33⁷ that the Messiah will be a king in the line of David, a king who will rule with the law, will fight for God, and secure the land of Israel. There will be Levitical priests offering burn offerings at the rebuilt temple, and the king will reign on the throne of David forever. Jesus did not fulfill any of these prophecies. Actually the Jews were expelled from Israel after that, they were persecuted and killed in many areas, and no temple was build whatsoever. The law of the Tawra became less and less popular, as many people converted to Christianity, which stated that the Law is not to be followed anymore, and deemed it as an old covenant. From a scriptural point of view, the New Testament records nothing in the favor of Jesus achieving any of the above points, or many others that are signs of the Messiah as recorded in the Old Testament. Christians would try to deal with these clear difficulties by saying that Jesus will fulfill these prophecies in his second coming, however that is easily refuted by the fact that the messianic age was only one age and there is no concept of a second coming in Judaism. There are many other signs that should accompany the Messiah or even predate him⁸ and others but the purpose of this paper is not to exhaust all the prophecies the Jesus did not fulfill according to Jewish scriptures, but

⁴ Isaia 43 vs 5-6

⁵ Isaia 2 vs 1-5

⁶ Zachariah 14

⁷ New Living Translation, Red Lettered, 2004.

⁸ Such as the coming of Elijah Malachi 4 vs 5

merely to point out with sufficient proof why Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah⁹. I believe we have done that with much ease, however this paper would be incomplete without showing the most important reason for the Jews rejecting Jesus. It is not out of place here to point out that there was a so-called Messiah by the name of Shimeon ben Kosiba who lived about a century after Jesus, and who beat Jesus in the race of messianic characteristics. He was a very brilliant, charismatic but brutal warlord. Rabbi Akiba one of the greatest scholars in Jewish history believed that Shimeon was the Messiah. Bar Kokhba as he was nicknamed, fought a war against the Roman Empire, catching the Tenth Legion by surprise and retaking Jerusalem. He resumed sacrifices in the temple, he established a provisional government and began to issue coins in its name. This is what the Jewish people were looking for in a Messiah, however the Romans crushed his revolt and killed him in the end, which proved that he was not the Messiah¹⁰.

THE THEOLOGICAL REJECTION

For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.¹¹ This is the verse that sums up the concept of Jesus being God, the son of God, and a third party in the trinity which is not three but one. The problem that Jews, many Christians, Muslims and much of mankind have

⁹ It's important to point out here that this paper does not validate the position of the Jews in rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, rather it points out their position. From an Islamic point of view we accept Jesus as the Messiah (the anointed like other prophets), and we explain that the so called prophecies about the Messiah in the Old Testament are in many cases nationalistic and ideological distortions trying to uplift the Jews from their disobedience to a promise of salvation and world domination – which has not arrived, and as no prophet has brought that or will ever entertain such a selfish idea, they have denied them, killed them and accused them of many other things.

¹⁰ Taken from Judaism 101 www.jewfaq.org

¹¹ 1 John 5 vs 7 To mention that this verse is an interpolation, an injection into the New Testament by corruptors to try to establish at least one proof for their polytheistic theology.

with this apart from it not making any sense, is that it violates any kind of scriptural consistency with the Old Testament. For any Jew who knows his book and reads Christian theology today in its crystal form¹² cannot help but reject that Jesus was the Messiah as a Messiah who claims divinity can only be a liar and a violator of scriptures. The Jews do not have to go past the first commandment¹³ in the Old Testament to smash the claim of Christians that Jesus is the Messiah, God Almighty. That can happen at the hand of any Jewish child, however more learned Jews will point out to the Christians who themselves believe in the Old Testament that there are dozens of verses¹⁴ which reject the idolatry that Christians are involved in. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity mixed with the Messianic claim for Jesus is something that will never find place in the Jewish theology or in the Old Testament scriptures. To sum it all up: the Jews never believed that the Messiah who will come will be a demigod or a full man full god, or a God himself, and will die for the sins of humanity on a cross abrogating the Old Testament covenant of circumcision, abrogation the oneness of God and introducing a multi personal god. The destiny of such people and their identity is clearly indicated in the Old Testament, to show the evil of such a path.¹⁵

In conclusion, the Jews of old and the Jews of today reject the one known as Jesus based on the fact that he did not fulfill most or all of the prophecies that were expected to be fulfilled by the Messiah, such as world peace, gathering the Jews etc, and based on the fact that what is claimed about him (i.e. that he is god) is not only

¹² As it evolved over time from the council of Niceea to other council, to philosophies of different theologians over time trying to compare it to something that would make sense.

¹³ I am The Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me (Exodus 20 vs 2-3)

¹⁴ Deut 6 vs 4, Numbers 23 vs 19,

¹⁵ Deut. 13 vs 1-4

something that cannot be found in the Old Testament but something that goes against the base of Judaism (monotheism) and something that goes against the whole text of the Jewish Scriptures. No matter how hard Christian missionaries try to inject meaning in different verses of the Old Testament such as Isaia 53, Psalms 110 and others, in order to make a link between the Jewish Scriptures and their perverted theology of a Human-God-Messiah, they will only prove their mental gymnastics and not the truth of the matter.