

Are We Jews Saved by Our Ethnicity?

Some argue that we Jews are automatically saved, simply because we're Jews. Is that what the Scriptures teach?

In order to discuss whether or not we Jews are automatically "saved" because of our ethnicity, we first need to define what we mean by "saved." Simply put, "saved" means rescued from the penalty that our sins deserve, freed from the power that sin exercises over our daily lives, and restored to an intimate, personal relationship with God.

In the Law, God exhorted us to heed a unique coming messenger who would be like Moses. If we failed to heed that special messenger, God would hold us accountable (Deuteronomy 18:15-19). God also promised to give us a New Covenant; one which would grant us an intimate relationship with God and afford us the forgiveness that the Mosaic Covenant could not provide (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Yeshua (Jesus) fulfilled several Messianic prophecies from the Hebrew Scriptures, whose resurrection was the indisputable proof of His divinity and Messianic identity. The Messiah will rise from the dead according to Psalm 16:8–11, which is confirmed in Acts 13:35–37. King David's future resurrection was only possible because of the resurrection of his descendant, the Messiah. Yeshua (Jesus) is a descendant of David, as mentioned in Hebrews 1:5. The Messiah would also be forsaken, pierced, bear our sins and suffer in our place, according to Isaiah 52:13-53:12, which Yeshua (Jesus) completed in Matthew 8:16-17. The Messiah would bring in a new covenant, according to Jeremiah 31:31, which Yeshua (Jesus) did according to Matthew 26:28. The Messiah would also come riding on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9), be called out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1), be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12–13), be the son of man (Daniel 7:13–14), called the son of God (Psalms 2:1–12), was a willing sacrifice and the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:1–51), born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14) and come at a particular time (Daniel 9:24–27), which Yeshua (Jesus) did.

Even Holocaust survivor and former rabbi student Rachmiel Frydland, who grew up as an Orthodox Jew, came to the conclusion that Yeshua (Jesus) is the Jewish messiah and is our savior after carefully examining the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.

Yeshua (Jesus) is the messiah and our true savior.

The nation of Israel cannot be the sacrificial lamb, because the nation of Israel has repeatedly fallen into sin.

Since Yeshua (Jesus), has provided that New Covenant as He asserted (Luke 22:20), and since He is that messenger like Moses whom we're commanded to heed, then we need to ask, "What did *Jesus* say about our being saved on the basis of our ethnicity? Is it enough that we're born Jewish?" Not according to Yeshua.

Jesus told an entirely Jewish group, "No one comes to the Father but by Me" (John 14:6).

He told another gathering of Jewish people, “unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24). And in a conversation with His fellow Jew, Nicodemus, the “teacher of Israel,” He said, “unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:5, 10).

If we Jews are saved by our ethnicity, then why did Peter, a Jew, tell the Sanhedrin, the Jewish High Court, “And there is salvation in no one else” besides Jesus (Acts 4:12)? Similarly, why did Saul of Tarsus, the apostle Paul, tell his fellow Jews, “through Him [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39).” In fact, why did Paul unequivocally state that the Gospel is the power of God for the salvation for all people, but to the Jewish people *first* (Romans 1:16)?

In short, if we Jews are saved because of our ethnicity, then why did Jesus and His Jewish disciples proclaim His message of exclusive salvation so persistently and so passionately to their fellow Jews?

We might ask, “If we’re not saved simply because we’re Jews, then how were we Jews saved before Jesus’ first coming?” We were saved by looking forward to the promised Messiah who, according to Moses and the messengers, would die for our sins and rise from the dead. Jesus Himself explained, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). Today, we are saved by looking back to the Messiah who died for our sins and rose from the dead. But there has always been only one Savior, and one means of salvation.

We might further ask, “But aren’t we Jews God’s chosen people?” Yes, we are. “And doesn’t that mean that we Jews are automatically saved?” No, it doesn’t. When the Bible calls us Jews “chosen,” that title refers to our national calling, not our individual standing before our God. We still need to be saved through our faith in Yeshua. In fact, we really can’t fulfill the call until we’re saved. We are called to be an evangelistic light to the nations. God chose the Jewish people to give the world the Scriptures and the Savior. Throughout history, Jewish missionaries have brought His message to the nations. In the future, a saved Israel will stand in the forefront of God’s final wave of global evangelization (Revelations 7:4, 9-10).

If we Jews don’t need to believe in Jesus in order to be saved, then what the New Testament teaches about salvation is wrong. And in that case, then *no one* should believe in Jesus as Savior. For Jews to do so would be apostasy; for Gentiles to do so would be idolatry. There’s really no middle ground. Either Yeshua is the Savior of all, or Jesus isn’t a Savior at all.

But isn’t it possible that Jesus is just the necessary Savior of the Gentiles but not the necessary Savior of us Jews? Not according to our Hebrew Scriptures. Speaking through the Old Testament messenger Isaiah, God said, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make you a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6). This passage makes it clear that Yeshua is not the Savior of Gentiles alone, but that He is the Savior for Jews and Gentiles alike.

The matter really comes down to whether or not Jesus is who He and His Jewish followers claimed Him to be. For nearly 2,000 years, Jews from every cultural, religious and educational background have embraced Yeshua as Messiah and Savior after giving the evidence from the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament a prayerful and open-minded consideration. Let me end with a heartfelt question: Would you be willing to do the same?

(For a fuller examination of this question, refer to *Jews Don't Need Jesus – and Other Misconceptions*, © 2017, Avi Snyder)

© Jews for Jesus, Avi Snyder 2023

Contact: www.jewsforjesus.org; avi.snyder@jewsforjesus.org