

# WINNING JEWS TO CHRIST

A Handbook to Aid Christians in their Approach to the Jews

by

Jacob Gartenhaus, Lrrr. D.

Copyright @ 1963

## CHAPTER THREE

### TYPES AND SEGMENTS

After some initial talk with a Jew, you will soon discover what type of Jew he is; whether he is learned in Jewish lore, or in general knowledge, or if he is ignorant in one or in both, and you will have to deal with him accordingly.

With the intellectual, well-informed Jew you may cite Scriptures, hold a theological, philosophical discourse. He will easily understand what you will have to say; he probably harbors in his heart less prejudice; he no longer believes the puerile fairy tales that were circulated within the walls of the ghetto about Jesus. But he may also be better equipped to dispute and to argue against your views. In him you have a well-armed opponent.

But with the uninformed and ignorant as far as religion is concerned — and there are many Jews who know little about Judaism and less about Christianity — you have to deal quite differently.

The great majority of Jews today belong to this type. All they may know about Jesus and His teaching is a collection of grotesque tales, and all that they have heard of Christianity is a distortion of facts or outright falsehoods. You will first have to disprove his erroneous conceptions, and that should not be a hard task (See Chapter on “Some Practical Ways of Approach”).

Then you will show him (as is the case with all Jews) that his faith in those leaders who condemned Jesus may have been wrong, unjustified. You might have to prove that others of the Jewish leaders have erred \*, and often the whole people has erred also.

**1 “O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths” (Isaiah 3:12).**

They almost stoned Moses, they persecuted the greatest of the prophets, etc. Finally you will show him that he (like you) and everyone else, is a sinner and in need of pardon, and that there is no pardon except by Jesus. From this stage on, your whole dealings with him will be on that point (sin and salvation) which we will discuss later on.

After your introductory conversation, you will have discovered what are his religious convictions, what are his views on Judaism in general, and you may deal with him accordingly.

## **THE AVERAGE JEW** The Spiritual Heir to Traditional Judaism

The various views which the Jews of the present day hold about their religion (Judaism) are not now so marked and clearly defined as they were two to three generations ago. Then the various segments of Jewry often fought bitterly with one another in defense of their particular convictions. Today there are not many Jews who are ready for a serious wrangle in order to defend and enforce their own views and opinions. Doubt and skepticism are gravely undermining old beliefs. Religious disputes are now regarded as petty bickerings, fighting windmills and shadows.

What the Jews, in general, want now is the survival of the nation. They feel, somehow, that the existence of the nation ought to be perpetuated for some purpose, for some mission to be fulfilled which is not yet defined, not yet clear. They feel that there is some brilliant star behind the clouded heavens which will soon break through the clouds and shower on them beams of light and waves of warmth to quicken them and lead them on the way to salvation — their own and that of all mankind. It is a vague feeling, a blurred vision (a stirring of dry bones), but it is there in the heart of every conscientious Jew. They feel that things cannot and ought not to go on as they were before; that something cataclysmic will happen, must happen, to save the Jewish people from extinction and lead them on to the destiny for which they have been elected and preserved. They feel that the only place where this greatest of all miracles will happen is in Israel — the Promised Land.

Thus present-day Judaism, with hardly any significant exception, revolves around the State of Israel. Jews all over the world, whatever their religious or social views, feel that with the new State of Israel there lies their finest and the final hope of survival as a people. Therefore, weave your conversation with them around Israel.

Knowing the Bible and the everlasting covenant you can readily confirm the Jew in his conviction, and clear up things for him in the light which to him is still nebulous but to you is already shining brightly. The future of the Jewish people according to prophecy really lies in the Promised Land.

Thus the more you are informed about the Promised Land in prophecy and in its current events the more likely you are to touch and activate tender chords in the Jewish heart and get a harmonious response.

Yet, although Israel has now become, to most Jews, the center and circumference of “Judaism,” large numbers of Jews feel impelled by some inner urge to cling to the old traditions. While the world around the Jew is cold, unfriendly, even hostile, he feels at home only among his own brethren, and the best bond of affinity is in the synagogue or the center — the religious home of the Jews throughout the Diaspora — where he may always meet them.

Out of atavism, nostalgia, habit, inertia, or in honor of his parents' memory, and especially his spiritual longing to be an inseparable member of historic suffering Jewry, he will usually affiliate with an Orthodox synagogue. Some Jews, to compromise between their own liberal views and those of their observant parents, may join a conservative synagogue, which is halfway between Orthodoxy and Reform Judaism. Still others may think that they would derive enough "religion" and maintain a bond with fellow Jews, in the Reform Temple. Some who care little for religion are satisfied with Zionism alone — unaware of the fact that this, too, is a form of religion.

Until recently there were quite a number of Jews who adhered to Socialism or Communism — this adherence, too, was a kind of religion. When Jews believe in some idea, they stick to it with religious fervor and are ready to sacrifice their all for its defense. Finally, there are also some Jews who are unconcerned and indifferent to Judaism in any form. All they want is to live as ordinary human beings without any national or religious commitments and problems, or social complexities. They want to be mixed and absorbed by the Gentile people around them.

### **ORTHODOXY**

*(Or "Traditional Judaism")*

This as we have seen is by far the largest sect in Judaism. In principle though not always in practice, these Jews firmly believe that the Bible (Old Testament) is the revealed Word of God to His chosen people Israel, and that they ought to keep holy every iota of it, and live their whole life in accordance with it. Furthermore they still cling to the idea that since not everything in the Scriptures is clear to everyone the wise Rabbis are authorized to expound and elucidate difficult passages. And that whenever there arise new problems and the necessity for new laws and ordinances, the Rabbis have the authority to enact such laws, etc. But because nothing should be added nor subtracted from what has been written in the Torah, the Rabbis by some clever twist of a certain verse, word or even some dot, could sanction and incorporate their new precepts into the Torah as if it had been given by God to Moses on Sinai — even when some rabbinic laws circumvent or nullify the written Law of Moses.

In the course of the centuries, since the close of the Hebrew Canon of Scriptures, the Rabbis have introduced thousands of new laws that govern the whole life of the Jew, from cradle to grave, "from womb to tomb," in all his waking hours. From the moment of awakening until he falls asleep, he is to observe his religion as it is written:

**"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates"** (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

These six verses he repeats several times daily, and on various special occasions. This is his most solemn prayer; it is the essence of Judaism. It has been the very life of the observant Jew.

His frequent ablutions, his dressing, his eating, his walk and talk have been bound up with specified regulations and ceremonies. Besides his three daily prayers which are quite lengthy, there are “a hundred specified blessings” which he has to recite during each day. And there are the various feasts and fasts and memorial days which the Jew has to observe; and these holidays are extremely solemn and highly impressive. In short, all his life, day by day, is inseparable from his religion. Thus, as we have previously pointed out, to give up his religion has often been tantamount with giving up life itself.

Throughout the centuries the Jewish people submitted faithfully to the “Law” as the Rabbis taught it. Judaism has, rightly, often been called “Rabbinism.” There were some exceptions. During the Second Temple there were the Sadducees who had their own interpretation of the Bible. Later (in Dispersion) there arose the Karaite sect, who denied the Rabbis’ authority to do as they pleased with the Word of God. \*

**\* The Karaites in course of time seceded from traditional Rabbinic Judaism and kept strictly to the laws of the Bible only. Today there are only a few left of this sect.**

The great mass of Jewry kept strictly to Judaism which was, theoretically, composed of two parts, the Written Law which Moses wrote down at Sinai, and the Oral Law which Moses supposedly delivered to the Elders and by whom it was in later years entrusted to the Rabbis.

It was only hundreds of years later when the Jews were dispersed and there was danger that the Oral part might be forgotten, that the Rabbis put these laws into writing. This Code came to be known as the “Talmud.”

This is the “Judaism” that has been recognized and established by Jewry (as a whole) through the ages. And this type of “Judaism” is what Orthodoxy wants to perpetuate (and no effort or cost is spared to keep it alive).

I want to stress here that a great many Jews are Orthodox only in name and affiliation, though there are large numbers who earnestly try to conform to the tenets and precepts of Orthodoxy. I say “try,” because many of the Rabbinic laws are very difficult, some even impossible, to observe and obey in modern life. Especially the young generation could not and would not be subjugated to Orthodoxy as they see no sense in observing meaningless, obsolete practices.

## **DOCTRINES OF ORTHODOXY**

According to traditional Judaism the Jew is to believe in the thirteen Articles of Faith formulated by Maimonides (1135-1204).

Although part of these are so defined as to distinguish between the Jewish and the Christian doctrines of faith, they are basically the same as those of Christianity. For instance, they believe in the unity of God, but this unity is so defined as to preclude any thought of plurality.

Of course, as we shall later see, this has no biblical basis, since the very word which in the Hebrew Bible means “**God**” (*Elohim*) is in the plural. Among these doctrines are the “Coming of the Messiah,” the “Resurrection of the dead,” and divine retribution for man’s acts.

The only real difference between the two faiths is that Judaism rejects the Messiahship of Jesus, as we shall see later when we discuss the Jewish contentions against Christ.

## **PRACTICES OF ORTHODOXY**

### *1. Kosher Food — (Dietary Laws)*

While many of the old practices have fallen into disuse in recent years, the greatest part of Jewry, especially the “Orthodox” Jews, still observe the so-called Kosher laws.

The observant Jew’s life is, as we have seen, rigidly regulated by innumerable laws and customs. He is particularly punctilious and scrupulous in regard to his food. It sometimes seems that contemporary Orthodox Judaism is but a matter of prescribed eating and drinking known as kosher. Few domestic animals: wild beasts, birds and fish are Kosher — i.e., ritually fit to eat.

The pig is especially taboo and abhorrent. The animals which are Kosher have to be slaughtered in a particular manner by an authorized pious man, and even then their meat has to be prepared ritualistically in order to render it fit to eat. And even then not all the Kosher foodstuffs may be mixed together.

Milk products and meat; products could not be eaten at the same meal. Separate vessels and utensils have to be kept for each of these two sorts of food (See KASHER in chapter on “Customs”).

The intake of food must be preceded and followed by a benediction. Each kind of food has a special benediction and the benediction after meals is quite lengthy.

Meals must also be preceded by ritual washing of the hands.

For the Sabbath and feast-days special food is prepared, and the meals are eaten “religiously,” accompanied by singing of pious sacred songs.

### *2. Prayer*

The observant Jew’s life was taken up mostly by prayer, or rather the reciting of prescribed “prayers.” As soon as he awakes from the night’s sleep he is obliged to recite a certain prayer, then after proper ablution he is to go to the synagogue for the morning service which on week days, lasts about an hour, and on Sabbath, festival, and fast days, several hours.

In the late afternoon and in the evening there are again two services (usually combined) at the synagogue which every Jew should attend (See Chapter on “Prayer Life”).

### *3. Sabbath and Feast Days (See Chapter 7)*

The Sabbath, and to a large extent also the festivals, is to the observant Jew a holy day in the fullest sense of the word. It is a day fully dedicated to the LAW. From Friday evening to Saturday night the Jew is aware that he must keep it holy. No physical work or carrying of any burden is done, no business is transacted, no secular, profane thoughts are harbored in his mind. Most of the day is spent in prayer and in the study of sacred books.

The prescribed meals, too, are a kind of divine service, and even sleep is counted as a virtue — because the Sabbath and festivals are to be observed joyfully and pleasantly.

These (Kosher, Prayer and Holy Days) are the three pillars that uphold the structure called “Orthodoxy,” but as mentioned before there are thousands of other laws and usages, which contemporary Orthodox Jews try to keep somehow or find some excuse for evading or overlooking them.

Thus, if there is still a sect that exercises some zeal for God, though “**without knowledge**” as Paul termed it, it is the Orthodox sect. For the other sects have not much zeal, and less knowledge.

This is also the only sect that holds the Bible (Old Testament) as the supreme authority on “Judaism,” because, they firmly believe, it is the peremptory Word of God.

### **REFORM JUDAISM**

Those who do not adhere to tradition but yet would not abandon or repudiate Judaism altogether call themselves Reformed.

This religious movement is about one hundred years old. It is the outgrowth of the age of enlightenment.

In Western European countries, as previously mentioned, where the Jews were allowed to come out of their ghettos and live with the other citizens and enjoy the same civil rights and privileges, many of the Jews thought the time ripe to shake off old shackles and join the new tide of equality and liberty. Here was a chance “**to be as the heathen**” (See Ezekiel 20:32).

To achieve this end, the Jewish religion which tended to keep the Jews apart from Gentiles, had to be modified. But how may man modify and change the God-given Word? Well, there were liberal Rabbis who began teaching that the Word was not God-given. Thus neither the Bible nor the Talmud had any authority which the Jew must obey. This new movement underwent many radical changes. Some of its leaders held that all usages which tended to keep the Jews apart from their Gentile neighbors should be abrogated: such were circumcision, the dietary laws, the keeping of Sabbath on Saturday, praying in a foreign language (in Hebrew), praying for the coming of the Messiah and return to Zion, which suggest that the Jews are foreigners, and wishing to return to their ancient home.

These and many other such laws and customs were abolished and later re-established partly or entirely according to time and place.

Zionism, which was formerly taboo to Reform Judaism, is now sponsored by many of its leaders. Prayers are conducted partly in Hebrew and partly in the language of the country of residence. Some laws, as the dietary Kosher laws, are left to the conscience of the individual.

This “sect” is by far smaller, but more conspicuous, than the Orthodox. Their “temples” (synagogues) are more imposing and impressive; their Rabbis are masters of rhetoric and oratory; they are good “mixers” in society and know how to encourage the friendship of Gentiles to Jews and Judaism. The services are held in the manner of the Christians, accompanied by organ music, men and women are seated together and the men are bareheaded.

The members of the Temple are generally of the upper class, merchants and professional people. Except on the High Holidays they seldom attend the services of the Temple, because they have little time to spend for it, and less faith in it. They claim to be very proud of their “Judaism,” because of its high ethical and social values.

Reform Judaism does not believe in the coming of a “Messiah” or in anything supernatural, but many of its leaders and spokesmen have expressed their high regard for Jesus — as a great teacher and reformer.

### **CONSERVATISM**

This sect is “Made in America.” It occupies a position midway between Orthodoxy and Reform Judaism. The latter, it seems to them, has diverged and strayed too far away from traditional Judaism, while Orthodoxy is too antiquated and outgrown for modern times. They opine that Judaism, if it is to remain alive, must “grow” and undergo the natural changes of growth.

In other words it has to comply with and conform to contemporary life and changing conditions. Generally it is much nearer to Orthodoxy than to Reform Judaism. It retains many of the traditional laws and usages, but the individual may modify and adjust his religion to his needs. To a great extent this adjustment and modification of old laws to modern life is in general the practice of most contemporary Jews of all sects.

### **CONSTRUCTIONISM** (“*Made in America*”)

This is quite a recent innovation in American Judaism and has not many followers. They hold that Judaism is a civilization rather than a religion. It is a particular kind of life of a particular people who have their own language, literature, law, and customs which may be called “religion.” All these things may be changed to fit time and place.

For example, the Jews of America may speak the American language, read its literature and observe its laws and customs.

In short, Judaism was intended for the Jew, and not the Jew for Judaism. This recalls what Jesus said about the Sabbath, but there is a vast difference. It denies the existence of a personal God and thus also divine revelation; consequently there is no “chosen people,” etc.

Although they have their rabbis and their synagogues and services, yet their queer sort of “religion” is so far away from what is generally understood by the term religion, that we may dismiss it from further consideration as an unimportant segment of Judaism.

## **ZIONISM**

Zionism does not claim to be a religious sect, and many agnostics and atheists are among its adherents. Yet if we consider the basic principles of Zionism we may conclude that this is the real Judaism — the true religion of Israel. Otherwise, why should it (Zionism) want to go “back” to Zion; and by what right may it put a claim to that far away strip of land which, according to secular common opinion, belongs to someone else?

The “non-religious” Zionist may find two or three reasons why Palestine belongs to the Jewish people and why the Jews should go back thereto. But, if pressed with questions, he will finally resort to the Bible as the legal charter saying that God, the Lord of all lands, gave this particular land to the Jews.

When you ask him why they should want to “go back” after an absence of 1,900 years, what assurance they have that it would “be better for them over there politically, economically, physically or spiritually, he will, after evasive replies, have only one answer: The Jews feel an inner urge that they have to go “back,” that they feel something grand and glorious is going to happen there, that they have a most sacred mission to fulfill. Zionists, consciously or subconsciously, are a religious sect in the truest meaning of religion, although they may not observe certain rites.

## **INDIFFERENT JEWS**

There is a large number of Jews who do not identify themselves with any particular -Jewish Segment. Some indifferently belong to the one or the other segment, on social or economical grounds. For these or similar reasons, a Jew may belong to two or even more opposing segments. He is not obliged to do much in order to be “a member” as long as he dutifully pays the required membership fees.

There are also a great many who do not “belong” at all. They find that they can get along nicely without having to be “affiliated.”

Then there are the socialists and communists who think that religion would not help the Jews, nor any religion help any people. They claim that the only salvation for both, Jew and non-Jew, is socialism or communism, which would equalize human society in dividing the wealth of the world according to the needs of each individual without any distinction between race, sex, etc.

Up to a few years ago socialism (in its various forms) had a firm grip on Jewish workers and intellectuals. Now, after Communist Russia has demonstrated how socialism works when being materialized, its Jewish adherents have become totally disillusioned. Only a few fanatics and paid propagandists still cling to it.

Most of the Indifferent Jews have little knowledge of the Bible, yet could, with the Lord's help, be led to it and its wonderful revelations.

### **SUMMARY OF SEGMENTS**

Summing up the segments, those that we have mentioned and others that we did not think it necessary to mention, we may roughly divide Jewry into three general parts (from a religious viewpoint).

1. Those who believe the Bible as the Word of God.
2. Those who do not believe so, who waver or doubt whether all or only part of the Bible is His Word.
3. The indifferent — those who do not care whether it is right or wrong, true or false. They think that one can get along without religion.

As already mentioned contemporary Judaism has practically no religious divisions which take their sectarian affiliation very seriously. With few exceptions modern Jews, unlike their forefathers, are not eager to endure persecution, inconveniences, torture or death in defense of their religious convictions.

However, Judaism (in its various segments) is now undergoing a radical transformation which will bring forth a new type of Jew — the type whom the prophets longed to see — the type which the Lord promised Abraham, when He said that in his seed all the nations will be blessed.

Summing it up; the Jews who lived traditionally “Jewish” are rare exhibitions from the past. I still remember them. I was born and reared in their midst. But one should have some knowledge of them because one could not understand the present-day Jews without knowing whence they came.

The Jews of today are the products, offspring and heirs of those of yesterday. The Judaism of their fathers has become inadequate, impossible for present day life, but they still claim Judaism as their priceless heritage, their dearest possession, transmitted to them from hoary antiquity (which has no practical use).

Only, they are at a loss what to do with this dearest possession, this glorious heirloom. Some Christians view this present indifference of the Jews toward Judaism as a calamity. But it is not so. They may be likened unto a receptacle which was filled with water and became stagnant and contaminated. The water has to be poured out and the receptacle sterilized before filling it again with pure water.

There is a stirring of the dry bones and great events which will yet occur until God will revive them with His spirit and they will again be His Holy People ready to fulfill the mission entrusted to them since the Covenant with their patriarch Abraham.

Really it is not essential for us to know with what sect or party the Jew is affiliated. All we need know is, what is his conception of God and what he thinks of the Bible. And this we may discover easily after our initial talk with him, soon after we have gained his attention and confidence.

There are two topics which are bound, unfailingly, to arouse the attention of every Jew today:

1. The State of Israel;
2. Anti-Semitism.

Just start on any of these subjects and you will get his immediate attention.

Furthermore, since these two topics are the heart of evangelization (Anti-Semitism — the result of the fall from grace, and the State of Israel — the beginning of the return to grace) you may enlarge upon them and continue your conversation around these two; or rather condense the two into one topic: “The Solution of the Jewish Problem,” or if you find him truly religious, call it: “The Jews’ Reconciliation With God.”

**~ end of chapter 3 ~**

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

\*\*\*