I. Introduction

Historical objections go from “If Jesus is really the Messiah, why is there so much suffering in the world” to “Jesus cannot be the Jewish Messiah because more Jewish blood has been shed in his name than any other name” to “Without Christian anti-Semitism, the Holocaust would have never happened”.

II. Historical Objections

A. If Yeshua is the Messiah, why is there so much suffering?

Suffering of the Jewish people goes back as far as they can remember. We have been the scapegoats of humanity for over 2000 years. The Crusades, the Inquisition, the Pogroms and the Holocaust are key examples of persecution and destruction of the Jewish people among others.

We all know that suffering is caused by man. God gave us free will that enables us to do right or wrong. As much as people try to, nobody should hold God responsible for what men did to other men. Ultimately God does not accept man’s wickedness and will judge him (Psalm 37:7-11, Daniel 12:2).

Ps. 37:7 Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret, it leads only to evildoing.

9 For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.

10 Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; and you will look carefully for his place, and he will not be there.
11 But the humble will inherit the land, and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

Daniel 12:2 “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

Jewish people do not understand why suffering continues and even has increased worldwide since Yeshua came. The expectation was that the Messiah would establish his messianic age of peace, yet the opposite took place, so logically—at least in the Jewish mind—Yeshua cannot be the Messiah let alone God in the flesh.

Yeshua first came to bring peace in the heart of men as He gave His own life for all humanity as Mashiach ben Yoseph. Then He will return to establish peace on earth and reign on the throne of King David from Jerusalem as Mashiach ben Dovid. The same person will have two roles: To die and atone at His first coming and to conquer and reign at His second coming.

The concept of two messiahs: Mashiach ben Yoseph and Mashiach ben Dovid goes back to the Rabbi Hai Gaon (939-1038) from Plumbedita, modern day Iraq. Hai Gaon wrote that Mashiach ben Yoseph would suffer and die for his people¹. This is a parallel to the “suffering servant” found in Isaiah 53:12-52:13 and also found to be Messiah in Midrash Tehilim.² As to Mashiach ben Dovid, we can read about His triumphal reign throughout the Bible as in Psalm 2:7-8:

Psalm 2:7 “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee.

8 ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession.

² ibid.
It is even mentioned in the *Talmud* in tractate *Sukkah* 52a\(^3\)

Additionally, Satan is working overtime to destroy the Jewish people who, from the beginning, were, still are and always will be in God’s master plan for mankind.

The return of Yeshua, which also means the end of Satan’s career, will be ushered in by the national regeneration of Israel (Zechariah 12:10, 13:9, Matthew 23:37-39). Thus Satan is doing everything in his power to stop Yeshua’s return by attempting to annihilate the Jewish people and/or stop them from believing in Messiah.

So, the concept of two messiahs: *Mashiach ben Yoseph* and *Mashiach ben Dovid* accurately paints suffering and then reigning. While in Jewish religious thought it is only seen as two people coming at two different times, within orthodox Christianity, it is accepted as two offices of the same Messiah Yeshua, held at His first and second comings respectively.

**B. Jesus cannot be the Jewish Messiah because more Jewish blood has been shed in his name than any other name.**

There is no doubt that a tremendous amount of Jewish blood has been shed unnecessarily over the centuries. It is also probably true that more Jewish blood has been shed than any other people group in the history of mankind, but we must be careful when we assign that responsibility exclusively to Christians. The reality is that a vast majority of the Jewish people has been killed by atheists and people from other religions such as Islam.

So, an honest question needs to be asked: “Is Yeshua really responsible for so much Jewish bloodshed or are the Jewish people responsible for it?” This is a bit of a trick question, because while we know that Yeshua cared and suffered for His Jewish people, we also know that the

\(^3\) ibid.
Jewish people are not fully responsible for all the persecution they have endured and continue to endure.

Yet, God cannot be any clearer about the blessings and curses reserved for the Jewish people as He has been in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

_Leviticus 26:_

2 ‘You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the LORD.

3 ‘If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out,

4 then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit.

5 ‘I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land.

8 five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword.

9 ‘So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you.

11 ‘Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you.

12 ‘I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.

13 ‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you should not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

14 ‘But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments,

15 if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant,
16 I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that shall waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you shall sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies shall eat it up.

17 ‘And I will set My face against you so that you shall be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when no one is pursuing you.

18 ‘If also after these things, you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

19 ‘And I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze.

20 ‘And your strength shall be spent uselessly, for your land shall not yield its produce and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.

21 ‘If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins.

22 ‘And I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which shall bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted.

23 ‘And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me,

24 then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins.

25 ‘I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands.

26 ‘When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied.

27 ‘Yet if in spite of this, you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me,

28 then I will act with wrathful hostility against you; and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins.
29 ‘Further, you shall eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you shall eat.
30 ‘I then will destroy your high places, and cut down you incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols; for My soul shall abhor you.
31 ‘I will lay waste your cities as well, and will make your sanctuaries desolate; and I will not smell your soothing aromas.
32 ‘And I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled over it.
33 ‘You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.
34 ‘Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies’ land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths.
35 ‘All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it.
36 ‘As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them and even when no one is pursuing, they will flee as though from the sword, and they will fall.
37 ‘They will therefore stumble over each other as if running from the sword, although no one is pursuing; and you will have no strength to stand up before your enemies.
38 ‘But you will perish among the nations, and your enemies’ land will consume you.
39 ‘So those of you who may be left will rot away because of their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their forefathers they will rot away with them.
40 ‘If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me —
41 I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies — or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity,
42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land.
43 ‘For the land shall be abandoned by them, and shall make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, shall be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes.
44 ‘Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God.
45 ‘But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.’”
46 These are the statutes and ordinances and laws, which the LORD established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai.

Some of Israel persecution and suffering has been due to her own sin of disobedience against her God and some has been due to overzealous people around the world and over the span of history. God continues to allow Israel and the Jewish people to be at the mercy of the nations, yet He will not allow these nations to go unpunished, especially if they go to extreme measures to hurt the Jewish people. Isaiah provides us with a strong example of that in Isaiah 10:5-7, 12:
5 Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hands is My indignation,
6 I send it against a godless nation And commission it against the people of My fury To capture booty and to seize plunder, And to trample them down like mud in the streets.
7 Yet it does not so intend Nor does it plan so in its heart, But rather it is its purpose to destroy, And to cut off many nations.
12 So it will be that when the Lord has completed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, He will say, “I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his haughtiness.”

Assyria was used by God to discipline Israel, yet God destroyed Assyria (between 612-605 BC) to such an extent that a child could count the trees left standing after divine judgment,

Isaiah 10:19 And the rest of the trees of his forest will be so small in number That a child could write them down.

Israel and the Jewish people have suffered greatly over the centuries and will continue to suffer until the return of the Prince of Peace. The suffering is due to their sin. They were promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

The overzealous acts of anti-Semitism from the nations are far from justified yet they are at the very least partially related to the extent of Israel’s sins. Yeshua is NOT responsible for anti-Semitism, as a matter of fact he taught the opposite in Matthew 25:31-46 regarding the sheep and the goats,

Matthew 25:40 “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.”

B. The origins of anti-Semitism can be traced to the New Testament

While the New Testament writings have been mistranslated and misused by both Jewish people and the enemies of the Jewish people, we must recognize that a proper, literal, grammatico-historical interpretation of the many “so-called” anti-Semitic passages will really lead one to a philo-Semitic view instead.
We will review a few key verses on the New Testament in and out of context to better understand how they can be misused and drive one to believe that the NT is anti-Semitic.

After the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate told the assembled Jewish crowd that Yeshua should be released since He was not guilty of any crime. Matthew records that the crowd kept shouting “crucify him!”

• **Matthew 27:22-25**

  22Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Yeshua who is called Messiah?" They all said, "Crucify Him!"
  23And he said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they kept shouting all the more, saying, "Crucify Him!"
  24When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man’s blood; see to that yourselves."
  25And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us and on our children!"

It is tragic but true, this verse has been used for centuries to justify anti-Semitic acts of violence by “Christians”. In the words of one Rabbi (C.G. Montefiore 1858-1938) this verse has been responsible for: “oceans of human blood and a ceaseless stream of misery and degradation.” But is the verse anti-Semitic?

Historically, it is quite believable and the language is actually quite Jewish.

• Religious people could have possibly disliked Yeshua
• In Yeshua’s days, religious opposition often led to violence
• It is best to speak of responsibility not guilt.

From a Jewish perspective, there are several Talmudic parallels to that phrase: *His blood shall be on us. (b. avodah zarah 12b, b. yoma 21a, Sifra*
24.14, b. Avodah Zarah 30a, Pirkei d’rabbi Eliezer 10, Berakoth 7:6, 11c, b. Pesachim 111a, and b. Megillah 17a.), so the language is actually quite Jewish.

Additionally, the very concept of one's blood guiltiness is also found throughout the Tenach as well,

Deuteronomy 19:10 “So innocent blood will not be shed in the midst of your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, and blood guiltiness be on you.

Joshua 2:19 “And it shall come about that anyone who goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be free; but anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if a hand is laid on him.

1Kings 2:33 “So shall their blood return on the head of Joab and on the head of his descendants forever; but to David and his descendants and his house and his throne, may there be peace from the LORD forever.”

2Samuel 3:28 And afterward when David heard it, he said, “I and my kingdom are innocent before the LORD forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner.

29 “May it fall on the head of Joab and on all his father’s house; and may there not fail from the house of Joab one who has a discharge, or who is a leper, or who takes hold of a distaff, or who falls by the sword, or who lacks bread.”

Ezekiel 18:13 he lends money on interest and takes increase; will he live? He will not live! He has committed all these abominations, he will surely be put to death; his blood will be on his own head.

The Jewish leadership and the rioters found in that group hardly represented all segments of the Jewish community. They were angry at Yeshua YES, but they were angry first and Jewish second.

They accept responsibility (not a self afflicted curse upon themselves), the fact that they also include their children in the mix, does not mean that they represent the entire Jewish race to come. It is much more inline with the immediate context, that the children of those who rejected Messiah and
turned Him over to the Romans to be crucified suffered the consequences of their parent’s sin when JERUSALEM WAS DESTROYED 40 YEARS LATER. And that event of history once it took place, completed the price to pay as a consequence of their parents’ sin of rejecting Messiah.

This verse did not initially cause Jewish suffering; rather its misuse provided an alleged theological justification for anti-Semitism.

**Solution:** Responsibility, Not Curse and children are first generation not all descendants.

- **John 8:44 (also Revelation 2:9)**

  44”You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

  *Hoi Ioudaio* “The Jews” in Greek appears 71 times in the Gospel of John and they are described as children of the devil, enemies of the Messiah and of God. Is this true?

  Clarification for this one will come from the Tanach. We learn there that the term “The Jews” (Hayehudim) in Hebrew can be used in several different ways sometimes meaning the inhabitants of Judea or “The Judeans”. This explains a verse like Nehemiah 2:16:

  16 The officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; nor had I as yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials or the rest who did the work.

  Nehemiah obviously means the Judeans as the rest of the people in his list are all Jewish.

  Similarly, when John speaks of “The Jews” he is either referring to the Jewish inhabitants of Judea (who were divided on their opinion of Yeshua), or of the Jewish leadership who was generally speaking very hostile to
Yeshua. So, all the negative comments about “the Jews” in the Gospel of John are directed at the Judean leadership and not the Jews in general. Translation is at fault here.

Add to it the fact that “the Jews” have acquired a very negative connotation over 2000 years of anti-Semitism, and if we read it back with 21\textsuperscript{st} century glasses, we get the wrong message.

Note: Dead Sea Scrolls (“sons of Darkness” or “sons of the pit”) and Josephus (“brigands, imposts and the bastard scum of the nation”) have described Jewish people in much worse terms and never were accused of anti-Semitism.

John 8:44 is justified from Yeshua’s viewpoint since the Jewish leadership of the time thought they were in by virtue of being sons of Abraham and law keepers. He tells them otherwise.

Solution: Better Translation and 1\textsuperscript{st} Century context.

- Acts 2:22-23

22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—
23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

One of most common accusation from gentiles against Jewish people, is that they crucified Yeshua. This also known as Deicide (killing God). Acts 2:22-23 is one example of what appear to be the Jewish guilt for crucifying the Messiah.

In, Verse 23 we see the accusation from Peter and it appears to be directed to the Jewish people. The YOU of “you nailed” is directed to the
Jewish leaders but it is closely followed by “godless men” or “wicked men” depending on the translation. The Greek word here means “lawless” which is clear and direct reference to gentiles who were not bound by the Mosaic Law.

Acts 4:27-28 clearly confirms that statement:

27"For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Yeshua, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

In conjunction with John 10:17-18:

17"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.

18"No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again

This commandment I received from My Father."

Solution: Context and parallel passages.

If Jewish people feel that the New Testament is anti-Semitic, they also need to look at the Tenach. Many passages describe the Jewish people and Israel in no uncertain terms that would be deemed anti-Semitic if found in the New Covenant, yet they are never mentioned.

Ezekiel 3:7

Yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me. Surely the whole house of Israel is stubborn and obstinate.
Isaiah 1:4

4 Alas, sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him.

Isaiah 30:9

9 For this is a rebellious people, false sons, sons who refuse to listen To the instruction of the LORD;

Malachi 2:1-3

1 "And now this commandment is for you, O priests.  
2 "If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name," says the LORD of hosts, "then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings; and indeed, I have cursed them already, because you are not taking it to heart.  
3 "Behold, I am going to rebuke your offspring, and I will spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your feasts; and you will be taken away with it.

Amos 8:1-3

2 " Then the LORD said to me, "The end has come for My people Israel I will spare them no longer.  
3 "The songs of the palace will turn to wailing in that day," declares the Lord GOD "Many will be the corpses; in every place they will cast them forth in silence."

The Tenach is no more anti-Semitic than the New Testament. In fact, neither is anti-Semitic when the proper translation, interpretation and context are considered.