

# Summer 2 - Week 8 RE

## Lesson 2

Can I understand myths and misconceptions about Judaism?

This lesson we are looking at the misconceptions people have about Judaism as a religion.

Judaism itself is the smallest of the main religions in the world with 14 million followers compared to the 2.3billion Christians (this is 142 times smaller).



Star of David

# Misconception - Hanukkah is the Jewish Christmas

It is often mistaken that Hanukkah is the same holiday celebration for Jews that Christmas is for Christians. This is mostly because people do not understand what Hanukkah represents.



A hanukiah - a specific menorah used during Hanukkah.

# This is not true.

It is true that some Jews try to make Hanukkah a substitute for Christmas, so their children don't feel left out. In reality it is a minor not a major festival in the Jewish calendar.

The festival of Hanukkah really only happens in the evening when the candles are lit. There may be small presents for each day but there may not. Unlike Christmas it is not the same day every year because of the calendar but it will always be in November or December.



Children lighting a hanukiah on the first eveing of Hanukkah

So even though Hanukkah is sometimes celebrated around the same time as Christmas for Christians, it is not a Jewish version of Christmas. Both holidays are celebrated for different reasons.

# Misconception - Jewish people keep Kosher because it is healthier

People who do not understand Judaism as a religion can sometimes think that the personal choice to eat Kosher for a Jew is to do with the health benefits.

This clip is a fun song explaining a bit more about what foods are Kosher. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zqwmv4>

# This is not true.

If a Jew chooses to keep kosher it is one of two reasons: they are fulfilling the commandments in the Torah or they are doing this for reasons to identify themselves as a part of their culture. Jewish people see it as a source of their identity, their history and their culture.



Some symbols to identify Kosher foods.

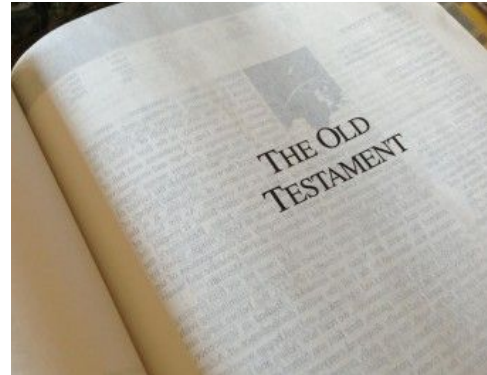
So there are no specific health reasons for keeping kosher. People have eaten pork, which is considered not Kosher, in the Middle East for thousands of years with no ill effect.

A Jewish scholar named Maimonides states that these commandments of how to keep Kosher were given to Moses and Israel to distinguish them from other peoples so that their eating could become a witness to the presence of God in the world.



# Misconception – The old testament is the Jewish bible

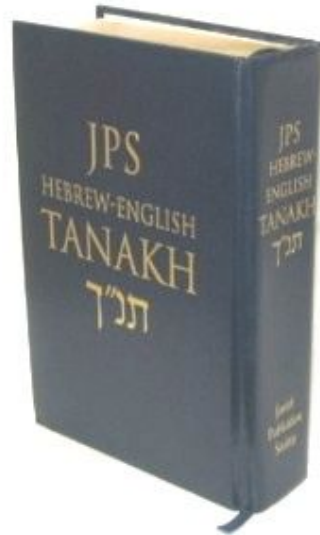
Many people incorrectly believe that the Old Testament of the Christian Bible is the Jewish Bible.



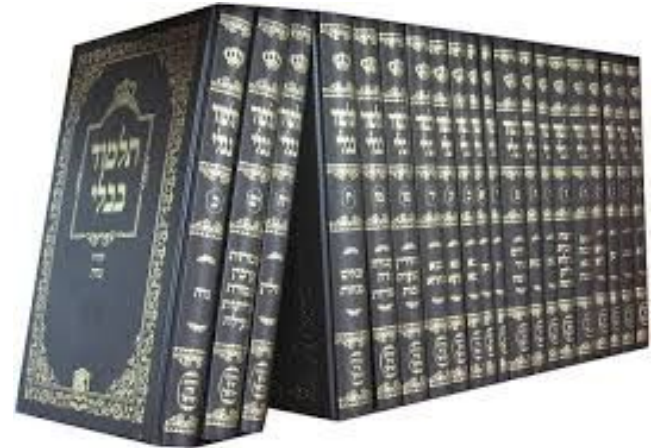
# **This is not true.**

In truth, Jews follow the teachings of the Talmud and Tanakh, which are made up of the Torah, Nevi'im, and K'tuvim (Teaching, Prophets, & Writings). It is true that many of these books are found in the Old Testament, but the Old Testament is only made up of parts of these books. The Tanakh and Talmud offer guidance for the practices of Judaism and can be considered a compilation of sources that make up the Hebrew Bible.

So although there are parts of the Jewish religious texts that appear in the Christian Old Testament, the Old Testament itself is not the Jewish Bible.



Jewish Tanakh



Jewish Talmud

There appears to be more misconceptions about Judaism as opposed to Christianity. This could partly be down to the fact that there are less Jews in the world, which means the religion is less widely understood by others.

Your task. Over this unit we are going to make our own folio style project for myths and misconceptions in religion.

Carrying on from the work of Lesson 1.

In the next third of the page we will write about Judaism.