

What happens to someone of the Jewish faith when they die?

This question actually has two parts. First, does someone have to be Catholic to be saved? Second, in addition to the principles that apply across the board to anyone who has not been baptized into the mystical Body of Christ, are there any distinctive principles that apply in the case of someone who is Jewish?

In response to the first part, all salvation comes through Christ. There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved (Acts 4:12). All salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church, which is His Body (see [*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 846-48](#)). The ordinary means of salvation is through the means Christ established.

In saying that, the Church does hold out the possibility of salvation for those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and His Church, and who are faithful to the lights they have been given.

For more on this issue, see our previous responses to ["Are many people going to hell?"](#) and ["Is Baptism necessary for salvation?"](#)

All people, Jews and Gentiles, need Christ. So in the most basic sense Jews are not different from others who have not been incorporated into the Body of Christ. Yet the Church recognizes the unique role of the Jewish people in salvation history as the bearer of God's unfolding revelation (see [*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 839](#)). So, as St. Paul describes in Romans 9-11, the Church earnestly desires that our older brothers will be united with us in Christ.

There has been some confusion in recent years, as some have advanced a "dual covenant" theory, which at best is ambiguous and at worst erroneously proposes that adherence to the Old Law (i.e., Judaism) is in itself a means of salvation apart from the acceptance of Christ. Such a view is spiritually perilous and undercuts the Church's mission of evangelization, which includes speaking the truth in charity to Jewish people.

For more on this issue, see [this article](#).