

Salvation Is from the Jews

By [Wayne Jackson](#)

No Christian can be anti-Semitic toward the Jews. Christ was a Jew, and that by divine intent. In a conversation with a Samaritan woman, Jesus declared: “[S]alvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22). The focus, of course, was upon his personal identity as the Messiah (vv. 25-26). All people are indebted to the Hebrew nation for the Savior.

Christians are to love all people, but that does not mean that they are permitted to ignore history. The Jews have both a positive and negative history concerning Christ. What did Jesus mean by his statement: “[S]alvation is from the Jews”?

There are two important preliminary points. First:

The affirmation, “It is from the Jews that salvation proceeds,” stands as an effective answer to the charge of anti-Jewish bias frequently laid against the Evangelist [John] nowadays (Bruce 1983, 110).

Jesus acknowledged his Jewish heritage, and Christians should rejoice in this fact as well.

Second, the term “salvation” is preceded by the article in the Greek Testament, “**the** salvation,” signifying that **his** salvation is the **only** plan of deliverance made available to humanity. Hence none who rejects it will be saved. Christ’s is the **exclusive** way (cf. John 14:6; Acts 4:11-12); men do not have the option of designing their own plan! This is an uncompromising truth in a day when many contend that no religious system can claim to be the only way. Religious pluralism is heresy.

Note the following **background relationship** that Judaism sustains to God’s plan of redemption.

1. Jehovah selected Abraham to be the founder of a new nation, and promised that through him a **potential** blessing for “all nations” would come (Genesis 12:1-4). As a result of his obedient faith, Abraham was chosen to produce a “seed” (offspring) who ultimately would be the key to the reception of that blessing (22:18); that seed, of course, was Jesus (Galatians 3:8, 16; cf. Acts 3:25-26), and none other.
2. The separation of the Hebrews from familial associations with their pagan neighbors, by providing them with a land rich in sustenance (Exodus 3:8), bordered by natural barriers (sea, mountains, deserts) designed to isolate them from idolatry, further enhanced their redemptive role. Once that function was fulfilled, Israel’s “deed” to Canaan was terminated. Modern political skirmishes over that territory involve no legitimate claim to “divine right.” (See: [God and the Nation of Israel.](#))
3. A written legal code was designed to provide a nobler standard for moral and spiritual growth. It was far superior to anything previously known in the ancient world (e.g., the 288 laws of the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi). Though the law of Moses was inferior to the “better covenant” of the Christian regime (Hebrews 8:6), it was ideal for its time in the progressive unfolding of Heaven’s great plan.
4. The “prophecies” of the Old Testament library (involving more than 3,300 Messianic passages; Payne 1973, 645-650) are replete with intriguing details of the coming Savior, not a few of which had to do with his identification as the seed of Abraham, Judah, Jesse, and David (Genesis 22:18; 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5).
5. The biblical genealogies contribute significantly to establishing the fact that the salvation provided through Christ has Jewish roots. Bible genealogies served two primary functions: legal and physiological. The lineage of Jesus, as detailed in Matthew’s record, is a legal genealogy because Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus. Matthew’s genealogy was intended to establish a legal connection between Abraham, David, and Jesus (cf. 1:1). This sort of record was important to the Hebrew mind, and there was a respectable level of generational proximity in the chain. Luke’s genealogical record is biological, traced through Mary, hence, is more complete, emphasizing the solidarity of the Savior with the whole human family.

6. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament economy pictured the eventual death of Jesus as the price for satisfying God's justice, allowing him to provide salvation for sinful humanity, while preserving the integrity of divine holiness (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 3:21-26). Those typical (pictorial) images prepared the Jews for the coming of the Messiah, and through their influence Gentiles likewise were conditioned for the message of Christ.

Conclusion

The phrase, "Salvation is from the Jews," however, should not be misconstrued. (a) Jews are not exempt from gospel responsibility as proclaimed by Christ (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 1:16; 11:26-27). (b) The Jewish historical relationship to the Messiah does not guarantee that **all** Jews will be saved.

But did not Paul declare that "all Israel" would be saved? (Romans 11:26). No, not in the sense of a massive conversion of the Jews. The phrase, "**so** [houtos—an adverb of manner pertaining to what follows; Danker et al. 2000, 742] **all Israel shall be saved**" (Romans 11:26a), reveals the **method** of salvation, i.e., by means of the "the Deliverer" who would come "out of Zion" (26b), i.e., Christ. It is not a promise of **national** salvation for Israel. A "remnant" of the Jews will be saved (Romans 9:27; 11:5), but there is no promise of Jewish salvation *en masse* (*contra* Moule 1977, 199).

It is a tragedy of indescribable magnitude that the nation God chose, through whom to bring his Son, should reject, in considerable measure, their hope of salvation (cf. John 1:11; Romans 11:5, 14, 25).

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Scripture References

John 4:22; John 14:6; Acts 4:11-12; Genesis 12:1-4; Galatians 3:8, 16; Acts 3:25-26; Exodus 3:8; 1 Thessalonians 5; Hebrews 8:6; Genesis 22:18, 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5; John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 3:21-26; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 1:16, 11:26-27; Romans 11:26; Romans 9:27, 11:5; John 1:11; Romans 11:5, 14, 25

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