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How Christianity Hijacked the New Testament

By Shani Sorko-Ram Ferguson

When her daughter was born, she had the same dreams as every mother. From ponytails to wedding dress, she could envision it all. She would raise her daughter to be a lovely bride and capable wife and be rewarded one day with—grandkids!

All her hopes came crashing down when her daughter started having fits. Not the toddler kind of fits that

everyone eventually outgrows. These were wild—supernaturally violent fits. No man would want her daughter now. And if she had any other children—no one would want to be associated with them either. As far as everyone else was concerned, they were cursed by the gods.

Then one day, she heard a rumor that a man with an unknown god's power was traveling nearby

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performing incredible miracles. It wasn't a god her people worshipped, but she didn't care. Clearly, her gods were incapable or uninterested in her affliction.

"Sir, my daughter needs your help!" she said, both pleading and excited when she finally found him.

The man ignored her and kept walking.

She repeated herself, each time a little louder, thinking perhaps he hadn't heard her.

Still, he acted as if she wasn't there. The only response she received was annoyed glances from those walking alongside the man.

'I should be more specific; perhaps he thinks I'm simply begging for money.'

"My daughter is suffering terribly from an evil power," she tried.

When one of the bystanders finally spoke, it wasn't to her, it was to *him*, "Send her away already—she's disturbing everyone."

When she persisted, the man finally addressed her, "I'm not here to help your people; I'm only here for mine. It isn't right to take this precious gift intended for the Children of Israel and throw it to a people as worthy as dogs."

We all know her response. "Even dogs get to eat the crumbs," impressed Yeshua so much that the woman got the crumb she had come for. Her daughter was set free, and her story was immortalized in the Scriptures.

What most people overlook, however, is that this was Yeshua's attitude toward *every* Gentile who approached Him during His lifetime. He wasn't there to save the nations of the world. He had come only for Israel. (Matthew 15:24)

*After supper, He took another cup of wine and said, "This cup is the **new covenant between God and His people—an agreement confirmed with My blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.** (Luke 22:20) The covenant was called "new" because other covenants already existed.*

How it Started

It's worth Christians taking a moment to process that if you were not Jewish when Yeshua died—or when the Holy Spirit came down on Pentecost—you weren't invited to the party. All the disciples Yeshua called to follow Him were direct descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The thousands of new believers added to the Kingdom the day the Holy Spirit came down, were exclusively Jews, many of whom were visiting Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish Feast of Shavuot (First Fruits).

What Christians today often consider to be burdensome rules from the Law were simply a way of life for Yeshua and His followers. After three years of the disciples traveling with Yeshua, and even after the Holy Spirit arrived, nothing changed in their behavior as Jews. They continued to go to the synagogue and Temple. They never desired to be "free" to eat unclean food and did not begin meeting on Sunday—as Sunday is a workday in Israel to this day.

Yeshua never heard the name "Jesus" while on earth. His mother Miriam was never called Mary, and Yeshua's brother Jacob wasn't called James until King James translated the Bible over 1,000 years later. They did not celebrate Easter, Christmas, or Lent. They did not start a new religion.

Then the World Flipped

The mission to reach the lost sheep of the House of Israel was clear to Yeshua's followers—**until the world turned on its head.** In a supernaturally coordinated effort, God set up a meeting between Cornelius and the Apostle Simon Peter (see Acts 10). Cornelius was a centurion, who, like the other Gentiles who had approached Yeshua, identified the God of Israel as powerful. When an angel appeared to Cornelius, he explained it was Cornelius' devout prayers and generosity towards the Jewish people that resulted in the visitation. *He would be the first non-Jew invited into the New Covenant.*

Simon Peter was a rambunctious loudmouth who always seemed to be willing to push the limits of what was permitted. This made him a great candidate for doing something that seemed crazy to the Jewish mind—offering the Jewish

When she persisted, the man finally addressed her, "I'm not here to help your people; I'm only here for mine."

New Covenant to an ‘unclean human’—a Gentile. So right before Cornelius’ messengers arrived where he was staying in Jaffa, God gave Simon a difficult vision and showed him *heaven’s* perspective of the true status of non-Jews.

*Upon arriving at Cornelius’ house, he [Simon Peter] addressed the people there saying, “You are well aware that it is **against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile.** But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. **May I ask why you sent for me?**” (Acts 10:28-29)*



Peter meets Cornelius

Credit: GoodSalt

The story goes on to tell how Simon Peter, upon hearing of Cornelius’ angelic visitation, shares the story of Yeshua and is shocked when the Holy Spirit comes down on the people in the room. Simon promptly recognizes God has “changed the rules”—at least as far as he had understood them—and has them all partake in the Jewish spiritual cleansing practice of immersion. Consequently, Simon receives fierce opposition from other Jewish believers until he shares the supernatural way in which the entire event happened, and they, too, are in awe that the God of Israel is now accepting other nations into His fold.

When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.” (Acts 11:18)

What follows are years of heated discussions about how the Jews’ New Covenant applied to these Gentiles. Believers from among the Pharisees

(yes, they existed; see Acts 15:5) insisted on circumcision and adherence to the Law of Moses in order to partake of the New Covenant. But Simon Peter, Paul, and Barnabas—who continued to adhere to the Jewish practices themselves—shared proof of God’s acceptance of the Gentiles when they merely embraced the New Covenant by faith. Subsequently, the Jewish leaders agreed on some fundamental points and sent instructions regarding morality and generosity for non-Jews who wanted in on the Covenant.

Years pass and large numbers of Gentiles all over the Roman Empire accept this message of salvation and forgiveness of sins through Yeshua, the Son of the one true God. Those people gained the name “Christians”—the Greek word for “little anointed ones” (followers of the Anointed One). But the learned Jewish Apostles who brought the New Covenant message to the nations were only there in the beginning. When the Roman empire crushed Jerusalem, many Jewish believers were killed. Those who were scattered were so few in comparison to the number of Christians that much of the Church’s doctrine was developed independently of Jewish understanding. With the Scriptures written in large, heavy, and expensive scrolls, many of these Christians would only have access to parts of Scripture. Few ever saw even half of the Bible as we know it today.

As generations passed, and the message of the Savior continued to spread, the New Testament letters circulated widely, but their context as having been written by Jews was all but forgotten. Without Jewish input, the Gentile belief in Yeshua, which became known as Christianity, went through dark times. It became institutionalized with a mixture of pagan culture, idolatry, and a hierarchy which would make up the rules as they went.

Where Jews knew better than to create idols to worship, Christians with their Gentile background of paganism, erected and prayed to statues. And where Christians from many nations had once been grateful to be included in God’s New Covenant with His chosen Israel, they now fancied themselves to be the new people of God!

Thankfully, in the last century, much of the error has been shaken off. Even today, however, you can find remnants of this approach as New Testament Bibles are printed without the “less relevant” Old Testament. It is also not uncommon

to hear preachers teach their parishioners, “Wherever you see God’s promises to Israel in the Bible, just replace Israel with your name—because when God says Israel, He means you!”

For the record, reading the Bible and asking God for the blessings He has promised Israel is an excellent practice—as long as it is clear that the original promise also remains for Israel!

The historical context laid out above is essential, in order to understand the absurdity of the fact that Christians today are not unanimous in their answer to the following question:

No one was surprised when influential Jews in Israel opposed the airing of this channel; what surprised everyone was the fierceness by which some Christians objected to this channel airing.

Should Jews be told about Yeshua?

This question recently set off a firestorm because of the April launch of a TV station in Israel which for the first time ever, obtained licensing to air shows in Hebrew and Arabic about Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah.

No one was surprised when influential Jews in Israel opposed the airing of this channel; what surprised everyone was the fierceness by which some *Christians* objected to this channel airing.

I wanted to understand their reasoning before I responded, but as I watched all the arguments

go back and forth, I realized many of the areas of disagreement were nuanced and weren’t addressing the central issue. And so, the question I raise in this article is whether a TV channel should exist in Israel or whether one theological approach when witnessing is better than another, but rather, fundamentally, should the message of the New Testament be shared with the Jewish people?

Hijacked Covenant

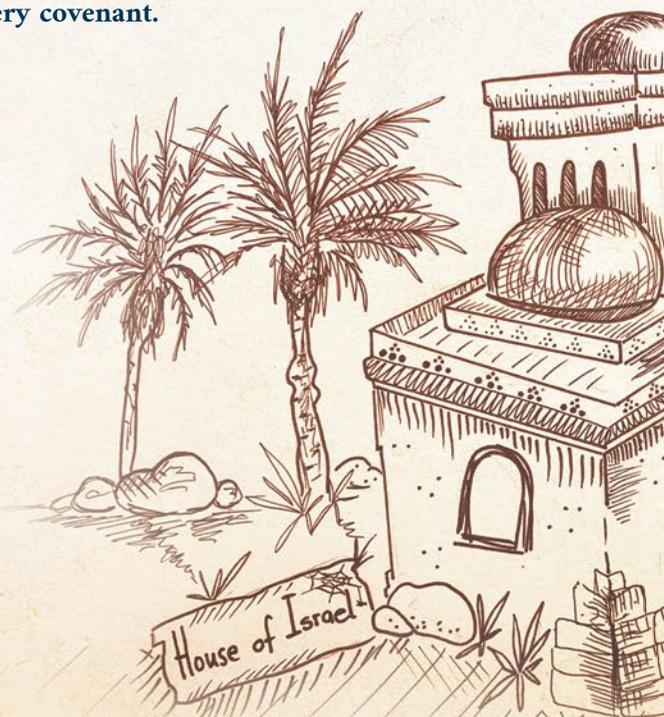
Imagine inviting people over to your home—a home that has been passed down for generations in your family, with beautiful jewels, vases, paintings, and furniture. Upon entry, your guests are awed by the beauty of your home—they have never seen anything like it and ask before they dare touch any item.

They return often, bringing friends. Soon they know your place well enough to show off everything without your guidance. Your original guests bring more friends, and those friends bring their friends—some of the newer ones barely nod your way. It feels odd, but it’s still wonderful to see the joy on people’s faces as they go through your home and marvel at its wonder. People are so mesmerized they come by the droves to take pictures in front of your now-famous home. Some even begin moving into the neighborhood just so they can be close and visit more often.

Then one day you come home, and your house is full of people—friends of friends of friends—and none of them recognize you. You try to go in the door, but people near the front door look you up and down and decide, you don’t look like you belong in a neighborhood like this. They won’t let you in.

Then on second thought, one of them offers, maybe if you changed your clothes to look more like them ...they’ll let you enter to enjoy *their* house.

Only if you can imagine the feeling of this scenario can you begin to grasp what it’s like to be a Jewish believer in Yeshua and watch Christians indulge in the blessings of our covenant and then try to ban us and our people from having access to that very covenant.



I wonder what the Apostle Paul would have thought if he had known that the descendants of those Gentiles whom he risked his life to reach with the message of Yeshua would shut the Kingdom out for his own people? For the very people of which he said:

My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief for my people, my Jewish brothers, and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Yeshua!—if that would save them. (Romans 9:2-3)

You could argue that Christians should not try to convert Jews to Christianity. May I add, it's entirely unnecessary and even counterproductive! Christians are grafted into the Jewish New Covenant; Jews aren't grafted into a Christian covenant. Jews who abandon their Jewish heritage for a Gentile-type Christian life may enjoy the benefits of forgiveness of sins and eternal life, but will miss out on the unique calling God has bestowed on Israel.

You could argue that Christians should study the uniqueness of the Jewish people before they run off trying to witness to them in the same way they would approach any other people group.

You could even argue that Christians have a lot of bridge-building to do because of centuries of atrocities committed in the name of Yeshua (see "The Church History They Don't Teach You" in this issue for more details).

You could definitely argue that it is much more effective—and even more appropriate as a whole—to support Jewish believers to reach their own people rather than sending Gentiles from the outside.

However, Christians who argue that Jews should not be told about the New Covenant display an incredible ignorance of the source of their own salvation. Remember, Yeshua said, "Salvation is from the Jews."

Furthermore, Christians who take action to block Jews from having access to the Covenant Yeshua Himself came to make with His people Israel—risk standing in the way of God's fierce love for the people He affectionately refers to in Isaiah as His "inheritance."

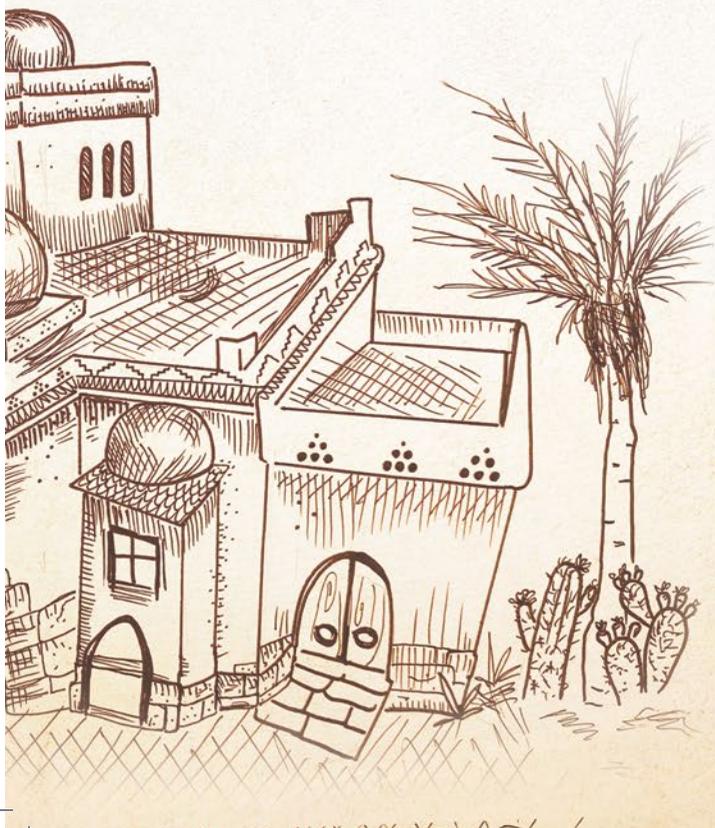
To be clear, it was always God's intention to restore all of mankind to Himself. When John the Baptizer saw Yeshua, he spoke by inspiration when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

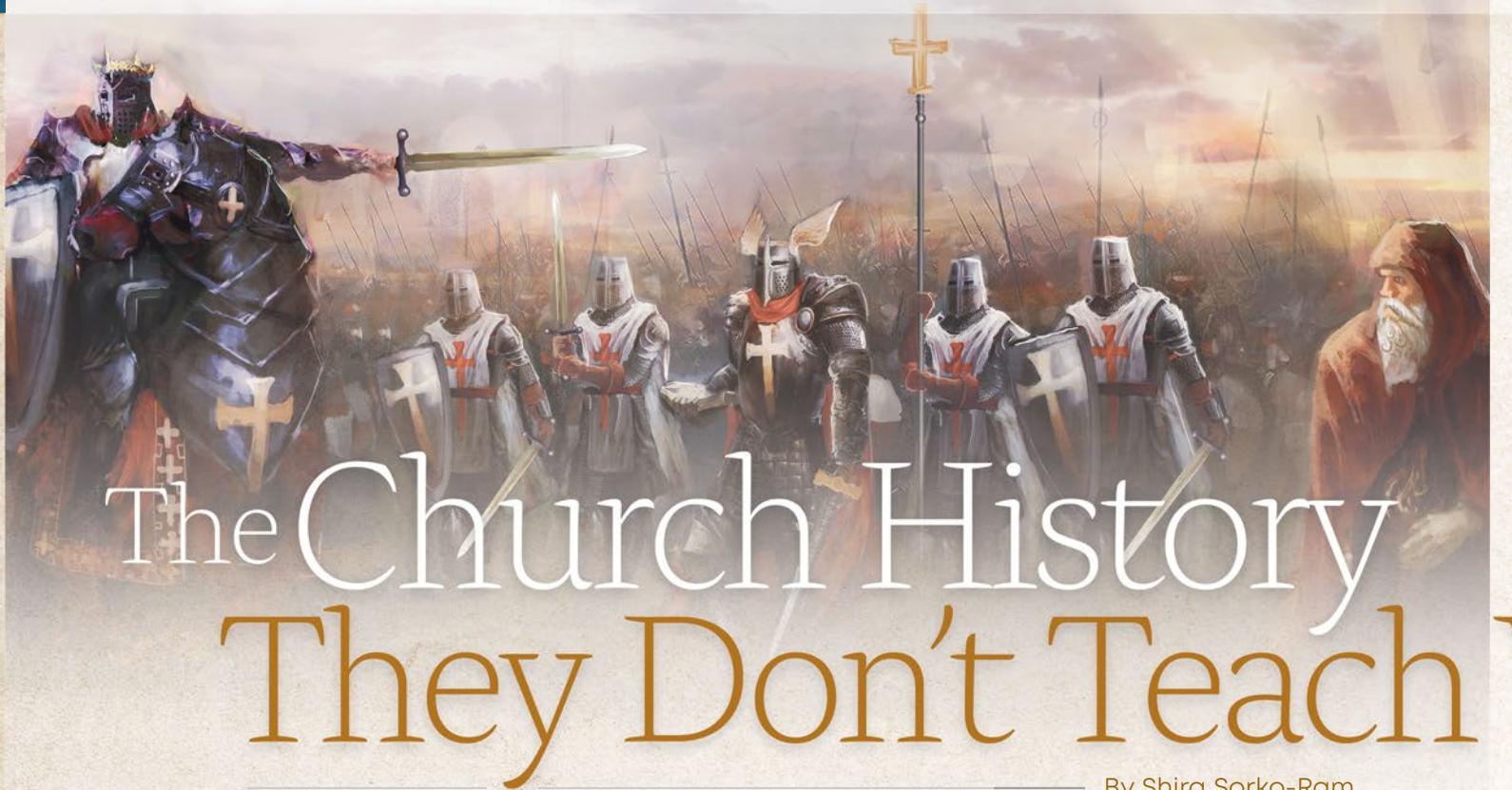
But when God is the one doing the rescuing, He gets to make His own rules. And His plan was to take in the Jewish people and, through them, save the world. He knew they would reject Yeshua and He used that rejection to reach the nations.

Now, it is the Christians' turn to demonstrate their gratitude by both carrying Israel as a burden of prayer and provoking them to jealousy.

This provocation won't happen by merely backing Israel politically and apologizing for Church history, or worse, declaring Israel already had a Covenant, and doesn't need another one. Rather, it will happen when Jews observe the changed lives of Gentiles and their intimacy with the Ancient of Days, and discover it is all made possible through a New Covenant God offered the Jews first. ■

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The Church History They Don't Teach

By Shira Sorko-Ram

Last year a Christian ministry posted a video on Facebook showing a preacher walking down a main street in Jerusalem declaring the Gospel. The street happened to border what is arguably the most religious Orthodox Jewish community in the world. He used a Bluetooth mic with a speaker hanging from his belt and a cameraman following behind to capture “the action.”

“Furious Jews threatened to stone us for preaching the Gospel,” and, *“angry men, teenagers and even the IDF tried to stop them but essentially had no legal leverage,”* the text above the video post read. I’ll set aside the obvious—that any loud person walking down a pedestrian street is going to get on peoples’ nerves even if he’s selling ice cream. But this man wasn’t selling anything sweet. He was selling Christianity.

Had this preacher taken time to study what Jews have endured from Christianity for nearly 2000 years, he would have more appropriately come humbly, begging for forgiveness from the Jewish people rather than declaring that Jews need to convert—or else.

Today when Jews explain why they don’t believe in Yeshua—the list begins, but doesn’t end, with the Holocaust, the Crusaders and the Inquisition. For a Jew, discussing belief in Yeshua rarely relates to the actual person of Yeshua. It focuses on how Christians

who claimed to represent Yeshua have proven to be the most significant existential threat to the survival of the Jewish people.

It is a dark and sad history, but a history that, once realized, can be redeemed in our day!

The Good ‘Ole Days

For a full generation after the crucifixion, Jewish followers of Yeshua crisscrossed the land of Israel, preaching the glorious news that Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah, had come to earth to die for the sins of His people, the children of Israel. Some estimate there were at least 50,000 Jewish believers in Jerusalem, in a city of about half a million people. That is far more than all of the Jewish believers in the land of Israel today. The former Israeli statesman and scholar, Abba Eban, went further, and wrote that he believed around one third of all Jerusalemites were followers of Yeshua.

Soon, a number of Jews, led by Shaul (Apostle Paul) were commissioned by God to take this amazing news to non-Jews. The number of non-Jews who abandoned their pagan lifestyle for the new message began to grow and grow into the hundreds of thousands throughout the Roman Empire.

Then came the year 70AD. Three days before Passover, as Jerusalem filled with masses of Jewish

pilgrims who had come for the holiday, Titus surrounded the city with three Roman legions. They besieged the city for four months until the Roman army breached the walls.

Rome ravaged Jerusalem and burned down the Temple. Starving Jews who survived snuck out of the city, hoping to find food. Some of those who were caught were sold as slaves. The rest, some five hundred a day, were crucified. Those who were fortunate enough to escape, fled to areas around the Mediterranean. Those who remained in Judea would be eradicated by the next Roman ruler, Hadrian. By the end of his rule in c. 138 virtually all evidence of Jewish believing communities had vanished.



Credit: Wikipedia

The Judensau (Jewish sow) image was replicated in carvings, paintings and church architecture throughout the Middle Ages. It depicted Jews suckling milk from a pig's teats while a Rabbi eats its excrement from behind. As recently as February of this year, German courts refused to have a sculpture of this image removed from a protestant Church—sighting the historical nature of the building.

You

The New Gospel

Nevertheless, the New Testament seeds sown by the Jewish followers of Yeshua in fertile Gentile soil had taken deep root and began to sprout, despite heavy persecution by the Roman Empire. Though all the books of the New Testament had been written by now, circulation among new Christians was slow and uneven. As the numbers of Christians grew while the number of Jewish believers almost disappeared, the first hints of anti-Semitism became discernable.

As a result, just 50 years after the last Apostle died, Justin Martyr (who was martyred by the Romans) allowed a hateful, unloving, and even jealous spirit to enter his life. He asserted that the Jews were a blind and stubborn people, clinging to a now defunct faith.

Justin's dual influence as a Christian hero and inciter against Jews affected the mainstream of Christian thought by planting the sinister seed of Christian anti-Semitism. It would grow into a monstrous, inseparable axiom of the Roman Catholic church.

Fathers of the Faith

The Church Fathers listed below are revered for the growth and expansion they brought to Christendom. However, despite what good influence they may have had, their expressed hatred toward the Jewish people not only cost countless Jewish lives, but is probably the saddest case of repaying evil for good in recorded history. Many Christians today would be surprised to realize some of the most widely accepted Christian doctrines were birthed during these dark times.

Origen of Alexandria

(c. 184-254) was one of the earliest voices to blame the whole nation of Jews for the death of Christ. He also insisted Christians were the "true Israel." These two declarations soon became precepts in Roman Catholic Church doctrine.

Tertullian (c. 155-240)

followed suit and argued that 1. Christians have taken over from the Jews as the people of God, 2. The New Covenant replaces the Old Testament: circumcision, observance of the Sabbath and the temple sacrifices belong to the past, and 3. The Church is now the (sole) heir to the promises of the Old Testament.

Eusebius of Alexander (c. 270-340) saw good reason to want to convert the Jewish people, but simultaneously detested what they represented as the people who rejected the Messiah. He once gave a sermon beginning every paragraph: "Woe to you, stiff-necked and uncircumcised, from being the Elect of God you became wolves, and sharpened your teeth upon the Lamb of God. Hell...shall imprison you with your father the devil!" With an invite like that, it's no wonder he drew no interest from Jews.

Despite what good influence Church Fathers may have had, their expressed hatred towards the Jewish people not only cost Jewish lives, but is also likely the greatest injustice purported on any people group in history. The ultimate repaying of evil for good.

Emperor Constantine who ruled from c. 306-337, became a Christian, absorbing the growing hatred toward Jews from his advisor, Eusebius. His position of power allowed him to act on the animosity the Church Fathers had for the Jews. He forbade mixed marriages, decreed a separation between Easter and the “dirty” Jewish Passover. Conversion of a Jew to Christianity was always encouraged, though the conversion of a Christian to Judaism was punishable by death.

By the end of the 4th Century, hatred of the Jewish people was in full bloom.

John Chrysostom, (c. 347-407) the renowned theologian preached, “*Eight Sermons against the Jews*” in which he asserted, after a long list of crude insults, that for the Jews there is “*no expiation possible, no indulgence, no pardon.*” He declared that, in accordance with the sentiments of the saints, he hated both the synagogue and the Jews, as demons dwelled in both.

Chrysostom’s sermons were written down verbatim by his audience and subsequently circulated throughout the Christian world. These sermons are considered to be the turning point in the history of Christian anti-Judaism.

During World War II, the Nazi Party in Germany used Chrysostom’s work in an attempt to legitimize the Holocaust in the eyes of German and Austrian Christians.

“Jewish synagogues and schools should be set on fire, their prayer books destroyed, rabbis forbidden to preach, homes burned, and property and money confiscated...We are at fault in not slaying them”.

- Martin Luther

Martin Luther (c. 1483-1546), one of the most influential Christian leaders in history, was the founder of the first Protestant movement. In his early life, he wanted to convert Jews to Lutheranism (Protestant Christianity). His early writings express empathy towards Jews who had been badgered and forced to become Christians by Catholic authorities:

“If I had been a Jew and had seen such dolts and blockheads govern and teach the Christian faith, I would sooner have become a hog than a Christian. They have dealt with the Jews as if they were dogs

rather than human beings; they have done little else than deride them and seize their property.”

Yet in his later years, Luther himself would tire of the Jews’ continued rejection, and wrote that Jews were “*full of the devil’s feces ... which they wallow in like swine.*”

He argued that Jewish synagogues and schools should be set on fire, their prayer books destroyed, rabbis forbidden to preach, homes burned, and property and money confiscated. “*These poisonous envenomed worms should be drafted into forced labor or expelled for all time.*” And concluded, “*We are at fault in not slaying them.*”

In his book *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, William L. Shirer wrote:

It is difficult to understand the behavior of most German Protestants in the first Nazi years unless one is aware of two things: their history and the influence of Martin Luther. The great founder of Protestantism was both a passionate anti-Semite and a ferocious believer in absolute obedience to political authority. He wanted Germany rid of the Jews. Luther’s advice was literally followed four centuries later by Hitler, Goering and Himmler.

England - The Crusades

The end of the 11th century saw the rise of the Crusaders—essentially the militant wing of the Church. They were on a mission to conquer the Muslim-occupied land of Israel for Christianity. But on the long road to the Holy Land, Crusaders found it in the public interest to round up and lock Jewish families in their synagogues, burning them alive. Some accounts record the Crusaders marching around the burning synagogues singing worship hymns.

At times, burning Jews and their possessions was sometimes seen as a waste. So the Crusaders would sell captured Jews as slaves and take their possessions. Some Jews were converted by force to Christianity. Many chose to die rather than join the idol-worshipping Church. Still others who were selectively left alive committed suicide fearing the horrors awaiting them.

The attacks found public support as false stories of Jewish depravity were spread. The murder of a 12-year-old English boy in 1144 generated a new kind of rumor. While Jews were a fantastic scapegoat for any bad situation, the story behind the murder would mutate until Jews would be blamed all over Europe for their annual ritual of murdering Christian children and using their blood to make Matzoh for

the Passover. The accusation was especially offensive as Jews have strict laws against consuming any blood—let alone human sacrifice. But the masses believed it and now Jews were not only evil, they were a threat to Christian families. To this day, many in the Muslim world believe this fabrication known as Blood Libel.

In the year 1290, in the middle of this mayhem, King Edward I of England expelled all Jews from the Kingdom of England. Yes. Every single British Jew was thrown out of the country. Most were only allowed to take what they could carry. For almost 400 years, Britain was void of Jews. The same hatred toward Jews was replicated in France, Germany, and across the entire European continent.

Spain - The Inquisition

The Spanish Inquisition is remembered even today for its brutality and thoroughness. Few people know this, but of the hundreds of thousands of Jews living in Spain in the Middle Ages, the *majority* converted to Christianity as a result of violent persecution, known as pogroms in the late 14th century.

There were few things the hierarchy and the common people agreed upon; the need to convert Jews to Christianity, however, was one of those few things. So, in the summer of 1391, a public mob had gathered outside the Jewish community in Valencia demanding that all Jews convert. A riot broke out. Of the 2500 Jews present, 200 were converted on the spot; the rest were murdered. The city of Seville was next with 4000 Jews murdered. Similar riots continued across Spain.

Jews who converted were known as “conversos,” but those who continued to secretly practice their Jewish faith were called “Marranos” (swine). To make sure these conversos, or “new Christians,” stayed true to their new faith, the Catholic monarchs established the Holy Office of the Inquisition in 1481. Their role included the standard duty of purging the fakers by torture, death or exile. Of course, offenders were always given a last chance to renounce their evil ways and be baptized.

Finally, in 1492, after 100 years of Church leaders struggling with who is really a Catholic and who is not, the new Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand had had enough. Jews and Marranos were to be exposed and expelled. This decree brought with it one final wave of Jews who gave into Catholicism. Those who chose exile would wander for years from region to region in search of a safe place to exist. Some fled

Credit: Wikipedia



Jews who refused to convert or leave Spain were called heretics and could be burned to death on a stake.

to Portugal but were soon expelled. Others escaped across the sea to South America. According to DNA* tests today, Modern Spaniards and Portuguese have an average 20% Jewish ancestry DNA! In Latin America, the figure is even higher: 23%, where many Marranos fled. This gives a scientific window into the massive number of Spanish Jews who were forced to convert and were absorbed into the Christian population.

Russia - The Pogroms

If it's possible to rate on a scale, the Russian Orthodox Church (which separated from the Roman Catholic Church in the 11th century) was perhaps the most consistently hostile to the Jews who lived among them.

Of course, the first option was always conversion to Orthodox Christianity. Though having rejected that, Jews were rarely allowed to live in or near the rest of the Russian people. This resulted in highly isolated Jewish communities. Despite the segregation and discrimination, Jews excelled in every part of society where they were allowed to participate, including education.

However, while Europe entered the Reformation and Renaissance, Russian rulers bore down on their Jewish citizens. In 1791, Catherine the Great drew a circle

*The American Journal of Human Genetics

around an area in Russia, and ordered all Jews to live only there. Five million Jews who were scattered all over Russia were forced to leave behind everything and move to this area called the Pale of Settlement. Still, the hate festered and mobs of rioters led by Church leaders would invade the Pale and attack the Jewish shtetls (villages), killing, raping and stealing.

During the period 1880-1920 these pogroms were rampant and over two million Jews fled Russia. Some 50,000 of them landed in Israel and became the early pioneers who built the infrastructure for what would become the State of Israel. Ari Sorko-Ram's mother fled Russia during this time, as well. The boat she was on attempted to dock in Israel but was denied entry. Eventually sailing from France, she ended up in the United States. She wouldn't live to see it, but the youngest son of her seven children, Ari, would eventually immigrate to Israel. He would fulfill her dream of planting the family roots in their ancestral land, and would become one of the pioneers of the Messianic movement in modern Israel.

In conclusion, it is very important to remember that by no means did all who called themselves Christians despise the Jewish people. In addition, Christians—and Christianity—have come a long way since the Dark Ages. Since the birth of modern Protestant denominations—the ones who have walked out their faith based on the Word of God, not church doctrine—have shown, by far, the most love for the Jewish people. However, if you know what to look for, you can still find an anti-Jew residue in modern church ideology. And entire denominations still exist that exclude and even shun Israel's place in God's plan.

Most significantly, however, Israel is still reeling from this history. Wounds of thousands of years don't heal overnight. If anything can be said about Jews who did not recognize the gift of Yeshua, it is that out of devotion to the God of Israel they rightly rejected the idolatrous and heretical religion that was being forced on them.

While the Lord had always planned to use the Jews to

reach the world and the world to, in turn, reach Israel, it is clear the enemy had its own plans. First, in order for God's plan to succeed, Israel had to exist! Exterminating Israel from the earth would render God's word void; as such you will find this evil pattern repeat itself throughout history even before the dawn of Christianity. Second, knowing the Church's calling to provoke Israel to jealousy (Romans 11:14), what better way to render that calling void than to make the mere mention of the Church a stench in the nostrils of Israel?

These facts don't change the truth that Jews need Yeshua for the same forgiveness of sins as anyone else who desires to be reconciled with the Father. But it does mean this is a history that won't be overcome with a smile and a handshake.

It will take intentional humility, compassion and patience to rebuild bridges based on love and trust—not with the demand of "conversion" but for sheer gratitude towards the people who brought the knowledge of God to the world. **Today, though Israelis still consider Christianity taboo and even dangerous, they do recognize the change in overall attitude and even use the term *Evangelical* to differentiate between the traditional Church and "born-again Christians" who love Israel.**

It's not a complete healing but it is a good first step towards the plan God had from the beginning. ■



An Evangelical Christian blesses the Israeli border patrol as thousands of Christians from dozens of nations march through Jerusalem in solidarity with Israel.



July 2020

Shalom from Jerusalem!

I (Shani), recently found a letter my grandfather, Gordon Lindsay, wrote to his supporters in 1966 about Israel.

In it he explained two things that were wildly out of the box for the thinking of the day: 1) The Jews have given us so much, it's time we did something for them in return, and, 2) We must reach the Jewish people with a "Messianic message."

His first idea seems to have found overwhelming traction these days. I can't count how many organizations thrive on the message of "blessing Israel." The second idea, however, has proven much more difficult to fulfill. **There's a lot of water under that bridge, and so many terms such as "mission," "Gospel," "crusade," and even "Christ" carry with them centuries of cruel baggage.**

Many Jews will never listen to the full Message of Life because they can't get past the first few words.

Maoz has been in Israel for over 40 years, and we have dedicated our lives to helping Israelis see the truth of the Jewish Messiah. Reaching them requires much patience, prayer—and creativity.

Church history should not shame today's Christians into silence today. If anything, it should drive Christians even more to right the wrongs committed by their predecessors and give the New Covenant back to the Jewish people.

This is the very thing you are doing when you support the work of Maoz in Israel.

Every gift you give and every prayer you pray is pushing back and helping to wash the stain history has left on us.

The Gentile church tried to go it alone the first time—what if we tried to do it together this time?

Your Fellow Servants in the Kingdom,

Ari and Shira Sorko-Ram

Kobi and Shani Ferguson



Ari & Shira Sorko-Ram
Founders - Maoz Israel Ministries



Kobi & Shani Ferguson
Directors - Maoz Israel Ministries

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