

PART 17

Typical Jewish Objections to the Gospel

I object to the practice of Christians trying to convert the Jewish people. IT IS ANTI-SEMITIC!

Jewish people have disarmed Christians with the argument that to share with them the exclusive claims of Christianity is anti-Semitic. Let me answer that objection by sharing with you my experience with Christians who shared the Good News of Messiah with me.

I was raised with the idea that Christianity was one of the main sources of ideas and actions that led to the persecution of the Jewish people. My mother grew up in Berlin, Germany, and because of the Nazis her family was forced to forsake their business, home, friends and family. Since they were living in the capital, they were fortunate that persecution against them came so hard and quick. They knew that they had to go if they wished to remain together as a family. My uncle, my mother's brother, and his uncle, my grandmother's brother, became the target of the SS and fled for their lives. At this point the door to America was still open and very quickly they were able to raise the money needed to bring the rest of my immediate family over.

Those who had to flee believed that it was the Christian church that fostered such hatred against them. My parents, like most of the Jewish community, have a long memory. From our earliest years we learned about the terrible deeds endured by our forefathers: the slaughters at the hands of the Crusaders; the anti-Jewish laws introduced by Catholic kings and lords; the forced conversions and expulsion from

Christian lands; the Inquisition; the blood

libels; the hateful writings of Luther; the pogroms of Tsarist Russia and, of course, the Holocaust. If those terrible actions weren't enough, added to that was the teaching that God had rejected the Jews for killing their Messiah and transferred all the promises He had made to the Jewish people to the Church. These things and the personal attacks endured by my parents left the indelible impression that Christianity despised the Jews. Is it any wonder then that we as Jews would believe that accepting Jesus as the Messiah would be the highest act of treason to our people?

This was my impression as I travelled from New York City across America in the summer of 1971 heading to the promised land of California. I had long ago rejected Judaism based on my experiences in the Orthodox synagogue as I prepared to become Bar Mitzvah (Son of the Commandments). While I had rejected Judaism, I never rejected Israel and my identity as a Jew.

The second night of my cross country journey brought me to LaCrosse, Wisconsin, where I met a few of what were called "Jesus freaks". These were young people who dressed and acted like hippies but instead of being involved in the drug culture were fully committed followers of Jesus.

They began sharing their faith with me and telling me I needed Jesus. I did not feel threatened, I did not feel persecuted, I just

*Typical Jewish Objections to the Gospel
continued*

felt intellectually challenged to engage in a philosophical dialogue with these hapless misguided souls. However I found that with every argument I made I was given a quote from the Bible. Their worldview and basis of truth were from Scripture rather than from reason and logic, at least that is what I thought at the time. Later when I came to faith, I realized that I was the illogical one operating from a prejudice that was the warp and woof of my very being. My prejudice was that I believed that Christianity was the enemy of Israel and the Jewish people.

My worldview caused me to believe that Jesus and Christians were bent on my destruction, the destruction of my people and society as a whole. Christianity was a primitive religion that worshiped idols and was as far removed from everything Jewish as I could imagine. When I thought of Christianity, my thoughts were of Catholicism, Eastern and Greek Orthodoxy, and some Protestant denominations. They were all one and the same to me.

Finally after what seemed to me to be an hour of debate I was exhausted and frustrated for not making any progress in my arguments. My ace in the hole for disentangling myself from these kinds of debates with "Christians" was to tell those who would witness to me that I was Jewish. The response of the Jesus freaks stunned me.

Instead of rolling their eyes and nodding their heads in sudden understanding of my strong and negative reaction to their evangelistic attempts, they responded with great joy and excitement. "You're Jewish? Praise the Lord! If it wasn't for the Jewish people we wouldn't have a Bible or a Messiah!" They then began to share from the Old Testament about the prophecies concerning the Messiah and about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and King David. I found myself overwhelmed. Here were Christians who knew more about my people and my Bible than I did.

I couldn't take it any longer and needed to get out of there. So I told them I had to go. They made me promise to ask the God of Israel if Jesus was really the promised Messiah which I assured them I would do. As I was walking away I muttered a short prayer under my breath not thinking that anything would come of it. But with their prayers coupled with my feeble request, God began His mighty work in opening my eyes to the truth that Jesus really is the Messiah.

In the months that passed I came to realize that I had prejudged Christianity and Jesus in a way that I accused so many others of doing when radical thoughts came out in conversations. I came to understand that believing in Jesus was very Jewish. And since I have come to faith I now believe that one of the most anti-Semitic actions we can have is not to share the Gospel with Jewish people.

Whereas Hitler and his minions killed millions of Jews through the concentration camps causing them to suffer and die, those that fail to share Yeshua with Jewish people cause them to continue in a state of separation from God leading to everlasting death. While the death camps of Hitler were an unspeakable horror for which God's judgment and wrath will rightly fall on those who were a part of it, they only killed the body. Failure to share the Gospel imperils the soul for eternity. Many Jewish people came to saving faith and eternal life in Hitler's camps through the loving testimony of many Christians like Corrie ten Boom, Miep Gies, and a myriad of others. Jewish men and women like Rachmiel Frydland, Eliezer Urbach, Rose Price, Fred Wertheim and untold others came to faith in those camps or because of the Holocaust.

I will be eternally grateful to those dear Christians who were not ashamed of the Gospel knowing that it was for the Jew first and also for the Gentile that Jesus came to earth. Their bold and sensitive witness had an eternal impact on me. Their love for the Jewish people and their willingness to begin to understand their Jewish roots were the very elements that provoked me to jealousy to come to the promised Messiah of Israel.

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