

The Israel Story

Chapter 12 – Israel and the Church: Ignorance and Pride

“Yeshua’s early Jewish disciples’ understanding that the Gentiles could also become followers of Yeshua was a paradigm shift for them but once they understood it, they received Gentiles into the “family” with humility, joy, mercy, and grace. Conversely and tragically, when the Gentiles became the overwhelming majority of followers of Yeshua, many of them rejected Messianic Jews, expressed hatred toward and persecuted non-Messianic Jews, and intentionally severed connection with the Jewish roots of their faith. Out of the pride and arrogance that motivated these attitudes and actions, a belief system (theology) developed, which asserts that due to the Jewish people’s failures, the greatest being the majority’s failure to believe in Yeshua that the Church (followers of Yeshua) has replaced Israel as the people of God, and that God no longer has a unique plan, purpose, or destiny for the Jewish people. The treatment of the Jewish people by many who have professed faith in Yeshua during the last two thousand years has created a major stumbling block to the Jews even considering that Yeshua could be their Messiah.” (Myers)

1. Last week we read about Jesus telling the Samaritan woman at the well that “*salvation is from the Jews.*” (John 4:22) There was another time that Jesus said that “*I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.*” This was when He had traveled up to Sidon and Tyre which is modern day Lebanon. The account is recorded in Matthew 15:21-28. Read Matthew 15:21-28.
2. Just to set a foundation, the woman is referred to as a “Canaanite woman”. What do you suppose is the significance of this title for the woman? She would have been viewed as an enemy by the Israelites. Wasn’t Israel a part of Canaan at one time? Yes. How was it taken? By Force. Barclay said, ‘Of the Phoenicians, the Tyrians have the most ill-feeling towards the Jews.’ This Canaanite woman could have said that her people were very anti-Semitic. Phoenicia was Syria, Lebanon and northern Israel.
3. There are numerous prophecies in the Old Testament that a Messiah would come and deliver Israel. Jesus was that Messiah. It wasn’t until He came to the earth that Gentiles would have known about Him. Consider that the Jews thought that the Messiah would come as a great military leader. Daniel 2:44

says, *“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.”*

There would be no foreseeable benefit to any other nation but Israel in this prophecy because they believed that the Messiah would come and save them.

4. Jesus chose Jewish disciples. However in Mark 16:15, Jesus instructed them to tell the world about Him. It says, *“He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”* I wonder when it truly sunk in that He meant the whole world, not just the Jews.
5. Just like Jesus’ interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well, He is testing the Canaanite woman to see how much she really believes that He can do what He says. She had more faith than He expected. She knew that even “His scraps” were more than enough to save her daughter’s life.
6. Sound like the centurion in Matthew 8:10b–11. “Just say the word Lord and it will happen.” This is a rhetorical question but “Where is your faith right now?” Do you believe “I must ask Jesus.” There is an old hymn with the chorus, “I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus! I cannot bear my burdens alone; I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus! Jesus can help me, Jesus alone.” These Gentiles believed it.
7. In Galatians 2:11-21, Paul rebukes Peter for not treating Gentile Christians as equals. Verses 12b and 13 say, *“when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn’t eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. 13 As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter’s hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.”* Not only did Peter question his beliefs but it also led others astray.
8. In verses 19-21, Paul sets Peter right. Paul says, *“19 “For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for*

me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” By accepting the part of the “root” that contained the Law, Peter was saying that a Jewish Christian was better than a Gentile Christian. Paul was saying salvation cannot come through the Law, it can only come by faith in Jesus. It is all about God’s grace, not our own righteousness.

9. Since the time of Abraham, believers in God were predominantly Jewish. As Christianity spread the Jewish leaders tried to hold the Gentile Christians to their Jewish roots. Remember in Acts 10 where God spoke to Peter telling him *“Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”* God wasn’t just talking about food, but also Gentile believers. If God gave Gentiles salvation through Jesus, then they too are clean. Peter went and baptized Cornelius and his household.
10. In Acts 15, Peter repeats this story before the Christian Counsel in Jerusalem and they were in awe. But they still added that the Gentiles must not do 4 things. Verse 20 says, *“telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.”* They had to hang onto some of their Law.

“Once Gentiles became the overwhelming majority of followers of Yeshua, and particularly after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and dispersion of the Jews from Israel in 70 AD, the Gentile leaders of the early church (followers of Yeshua), and those who followed them, made decisions to intentionally sever faith in Yeshua from its roots in Judaism.

In 175 AD, Pope Victor condemned the use of the Bible’s Jewish calendar for dating Christian holy days.

In 325 AD, the Council of Nicea rejected the biblical date for celebrating Resurrection Day to sever its connection with Passover. They stated, “It is unbecoming beyond measure that on this holiest of festivals we should follow the customs of the Jews. Henceforth let us have nothing in common with this odious (repulsive) people.” This is why today Easter and Passover, unless by

happenstance, are not celebrated at the same time. This is crazy when you consider that God intentionally and specifically chose the time of the Passover celebration for Yeshua's sacrificial death. Why? Because the initial Passover sacrifice and the protection provided by the slain lambs' blood on the doorposts and lintels of the Hebrew's dwellings in Egypt were a foreshadowing of deliverance and protection from God's judgment provided to followers of Yeshua through His death on the cross.

Then there is Saint Augustine, who described the Jews this way in 415 AD: "The true image of the Hebrew is Judas Iscariot, who sells the Lord for silver. The Jew can never understand the Scriptures and forever will bear the guilt for the death of Jesus." Thank you, Saint Augustine! He could have said that the true image of the Hebrew is Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Peter, James, John, or Paul. But instead, the Jews get Judas Iscariot. Then Saint Augustine goes on to say that the Jews will never understand the Scriptures. That's interesting when you consider that Jews wrote almost the entire Bible, including the New Testament. He also includes the pervasive accusation of the Jew's guilt for the death of Yeshua.

In 787 AD, the Council of Nicea II required Jewish believers in Yeshua to formally renounce and condemn observance of the Sabbath, biblical festivals, and all expressions of Jewish worship. It's a good thing that Yeshua and the apostles were no longer on earth when this decision was made because all of them would have been banned from the church.

During the Middle Ages, Jews were subjected to baptism under the threat of expulsion, torture, or death. Jews were beaten as the highlight of Easter celebrations because they were considered to be the murderers of Yeshua. A common slogan during the Crusades was, "Kill a Jew and save your soul."

The Protestant Reformers were not immune to this form of anti-Semitism. Three years before his death, Martin Luther published a 65,000-word treatise entitled, "On the Jews and Their Lies." Luther advocated that Jewish homes be destroyed, Jewish prayer books confiscated, Jewish travel rights suspended, Jewish prayer prohibited, and rabbinic teaching banned under the threat of death. Four hundred years later, Hitler's Third Reich implemented Luther's "advice" and expanded upon it. As a result, six million Jews were murdered during the Holocaust,

including one and a half million Jewish children. The sign that greeted the Jews arriving at Dachau, one of the most infamous Nazi death camps, read, “You are here because you killed our God.”

11. Once the Christian religion became predominantly Gentile, they had forgotten that “*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” and Jesus came to erase our sin but it required His death. So was it just the Jews that killed Jesus or was it the Romans, they nailed Him to the cross. No, it was all sin that hung Jesus on the cross, including yours and mine.
12. When Mel Gibson produced the movie, “The Passion of the Christ”, there were numerous outcries from the public and news media that said that this movie was anti-Semitic or that it would turn people against the Jews. They said that people would blame the Jews for Jesus death. True believers knew the truth, we all hung Him there.
13. Isaiah 53:5–6 says, “*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*” He was wounded for our sin. This was written more than 700 years before Jesus was crucified. Why did He have to die? “*For without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness from sin.*” (Hebrews 9:22)
14. John 10:17–18 – “*Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.*” They did not take His life, He gave it up freely. He could have called down 70,000 (12 legions) angels to save Him but He died for you and me.
15. Jesus, the one who freely gave up His life for us was born a Jew. At 12 years old, He taught part of the Israel Story to the Jewish Rabbis in the Temple. (Luke 2:41-49). Verse 47 says, “*Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.*” Why wouldn’t He be able to teach the Israel Story at 12, it was His Story too. Even His Mother was a Jew.

16. The Jewish people were mistreated for the last 2000 years. Even without the veil preventing them from seeing Jesus as the Messiah, the mistreatment alone would have prevented them from accepting Jesus as the Messiah. Remember early on in this study, we said that the behavior of the Jews reflected on God's face. The same thing applies here. The behavior of Christians reflects on Jesus' face. It became a stumbling block for the Jews.
17. So how did Christians get so far off from what Jesus taught? Remember when Jesus came, He spoke mostly to the Jews. When Paul went into a city, He went first to the Jews at the Synagogue, then to the Gentiles. "The Church" reached a point where Jews were not only excluded from the mission outreach but they were hated.
18. Let's start back at Romans 11:25-26a which says, *"25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved."* Paul is warning the Roman Christians and us of potential pride and arrogance toward Jews, who don't fail to believe that Jesus is the Messiah. The ignorance and pride results from knowing God's heart and plan to save them.
19. Our look at the history above shows us how ignorance and pride led to anti-Semitism. We learned that the Jew's blindness is temporary. God has not replaced the Jews as His Chosen people. When we went through Revelation with Pastor Brian, we learned that the 144,000 Jews will be God's missionaries to save those still on the earth during the End Times.

Myers says, "It was also ignorance and pride that gave birth to the theology that undergirded, contributed to, and in some instances sought to justify this painful history. This false belief system, referred to as either replacement theology or supersessionism, asserts that due to the Jewish people's failures, the greatest being the majority's failure to believe in Yeshua, that the Church (followers of Yeshua) have replaced Israel as the people of God, and that God no longer has a unique plan, purpose, or destiny for the Jewish people."

20. Remember in Chapters 10 and 11, we talked about the “cultivated” and the “wild” olive trees and how we as Gentiles are the wild olive trees grafted into the root that supports our faith. Those that believe replacement theology have not only rejected the Jewish people but they have negated the covenants and promises made by God to the Jewish people. God said that these covenants were forever. This would be equivalent to the “wild” olive trees cutting down the root that supports them. This would be saying that an immutable or unchangeable God changed His mind.

“The content in this episode is disturbing and painful to examine. Nevertheless, it is important to clearly observe and understand the grave errors of the past, so that we don’t repeat them. My intention in sharing this history is not to motivate you through guilt. Guilt is a very poor motivation for our actions. Love is infinitely better! In our next episode, we’ll discuss the relationship that Yeshua desires between His followers and the Jewish people.” (Myers)