

## **Israel: God's Everlasting Covenant**

### **Study 5 – Where Are Our Jewish Roots?**

#### **Review**

We learned last week that in God's sovereignty, He chose Israel. He loves her just because He loved her. He chooses whom He chooses. And He chose to save the world through a Jewish Messiah. We learned through our own scriptures that Jesus was indeed Jewish in every way. He was Bar Mitzvah, he studied Torah, he taught Torah in the temple, he celebrated the Feasts, he wore the traditional four-cornered garment with the tassels or *tzitzit* (today it is called a *tallit* or prayer shawl) and he was called Rabbi by both his followers and even the Pharisees. We also learned how our Messiah, Jesus, identifies with Israel in a very unique and special way. As the Jewish people have suffered, He chose to suffer. And we drew some parallels in Isaiah 53. We also talked about the correct interpretation of Matthew 23:23-28. Jesus so intimately identified with His Jewish brethren that He equated whatever is done to them as the same as doing it to Him. We are clearly not saying that salvation is based upon how we treat the Jewish people for that would be a gospel based upon works, and "it is by grace that you have been saved." However, I believe that Jesus did teach us that true salvation is evidenced by how we treat the Jewish people, "*the least of these brothers of mine.*"

Now we turn to the early church after Jesus' death. Although it may be obvious, we should make the point here that Jesus' first followers were, like Him, Jewish in every way. The apostles taught from the Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament). They continued to keep the Sabbath. They continued celebrating the Feasts. Remember, there were three times that Jewish adult males needed to make pilgrimage to Jerusalem – one of those was during the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot). In Acts 2:1-5, they were all gathered together on Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks, fifty days after Passover. This is the day which we call Pentecost. And in Acts 20:16, we are told about Paul sailing past Ephesus because he was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost, which is Shavuot. He was trying to get to Jerusalem in time to celebrate this major Jewish feast! They still circumcised their male children. They still went to the temple. (see Acts 2:46; 5:12, 42). And they were present in the temple daily during the normal hours of prayer. (See Acts 3:1). Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, was still an observant Jew. If you read the book of Acts, Romans and others of his writings, he defended his observance of the law and his Jewishness. So what happened? Why have things changed?

#### **I. Partners in Crime - The seeds of anti-Semitism**

- *Replacement Theology* is simply the belief that believers in Jesus Christ are the "New Israel" – that "Old Israel" has been rejected by God because they rejected the Messiah. He's finished with them, and now He's working with us. This is a lie, and as we shall see, it has been birthed in the pit of hell.
- *Islam*, in brief, is a religious, social and political system of belief that teaches its followers they are destined by Allah, the god of Abraham, Ishmael and Mohammed to rule the earth through *Sharia* law according to his will.

We will see how these two have worked in the past and are working together today to destroy God's plan.

#### A. History of the Church

In **Romans 11:11-12**, Paul wrote these timeless words: "So, I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their *fullness* bring!

In the Greek, the word *fullness* is "**pleroma**", and can be translated "*completion*" or it can mean "*finishing a task*."

QUESTION: In light of what this word means, what do you think Paul is really saying?

ANSWER: Israel's sin (rejecting Messiah) has meant spiritual riches for the world and for the Gentiles because the gospel was brought to them. But Paul is saying even greater riches will be brought to the world, and those of us who already believe, when Israel believes.

Contrary to what some believe, God is not *finished* with His task about Israel. He has not *completed* what He means to accomplish where Israel is concerned. As the saying goes, "We ain't seen nothin' yet!"

Paul goes on to say in **Romans 11:13-14**, "I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them."

Dan Juster writes in *Jewish Roots*, "Here we read the wonderful directive of God through Paul – that Jewish people see the riches of the Gospel in the lives of non-Jews and be moved to jealousy because of the reality which such a life and love so manifest. By this jealousy, they would turn to the Messiah and receive Him. Sadly, the history of the Church hardly fulfilled this mission."

The Church has done little to arouse the jealousy and envy of the Jewish people. In fact, the Church has done the exact opposite.

Juster again writes on p. 141, "Soon after the Jewish apostles died, leadership of the Church was transferred to people who had no great respect for Jews or Judaism. Rather than seeing Jewish people as erring brethren to whom they were indebted for the gifts of Scripture, the Messiah and Old Testament saints, the Jewish people were looked upon as reprobates hated by God. Sentiment expressed against some Jewish leaders by Jewish followers of Yeshua was used by later non-Jewish leaders as an indictment of all Jewish people."

We don't have time for a full church history lesson, so we'll touch on a few key things that happened to "gentilize" the church and remove all vestiges of Jewishness.

- **They were blamed for killing Jesus.** Don Finto on p. 88 of *Your People Shall Be My People*, explains that around the middle of the third century, it was widely believed among Christians that the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews were God's method of showing the world that he was finished with them. Origen, a popular theologian had written that the Jews had "committed a crime of the most unhallowed kind, in conspiring against the Saviour of the human race." (written in *Against Celsius*). The Jewish people were blamed for killing the Messiah.
- **First Nicene Council - 325 A.D.** Constantine called the Nicene Council in order to bring resolution to doctrinal disputes and divisions, and they changed the date of the Resurrection celebration. Passover was too Jewish, and they wanted to further separate themselves from Jewish influence. They renamed the Resurrection Easter, and that forever changed the Church's calendar, "estranging the Church from her roots and her spiritual 'parents'." (Don Finto, p. 89) Finto further explains that when Jewish people came to faith in Jesus, they had to renounce everything Jewish. If they refused, they were considered heretics.
- **Second Nicene Council – 787 A.D.** By this time, Jewish Believers had to prove they were truly Christians. They had to forsake Sabbath observance or any other Jewish custom in order to receive Communion. In some cases, they were forced to eat pork in front of church witnesses in order to prove their disdain for their heritage.
- **Lateran Councils of A.D. 1179 and A.D. 1215** – Finto points out that Jews had to live in separate neighborhoods of the city and had to wear distinctive dress. "This paved the way for ghetto living and the yellow badge required prior to and during the time of the Nazi Holocaust." (p. 90)
- **Martin Luther** – was one of the heroes of the Reformation. Martin Luther was instrumental in returning the Church to the Bible and he is considered the father of Protestantism. He inspired Believers to cast off the yoke of oppression imposed by the Roman Catholic Church. Few of us know that he was an anti-Semite, and he wrote and preached of his vitriolic hatred of the Jews. This is something of which he was proud and not at all ashamed. Unfortunately, he helped bring about further disdain for the chosen people of God. Let me quote from a tract he wrote entitled *Concerning the Jews and Their Lies*: (excerpted from John Hagee's book *Jerusalem Countdown*.)

First, their synagogues or churches should be set on fire. And whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread over with dirt so that no one may ever be able to see a cinder or stone of it. And this ought to be done for the honor of God and of Christianity in order that God may see that we are Christians...

Secondly, their homes should be broken down and destroyed. Thirdly, they should be deprived of their prayer books and the Talmud in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught. Fourthly, their rabbis must be forbidden under the threat of death to teach anymore...

Fifthly, passport and traveling privileges should be absolutely forbidden to Jews. Let them stay at home. Sixthly, they ought to be stopped for usury...Seventhly, let the young and strong

Jews and Jewesses be given the flail, the axe, the hoe, the spade, the distaff, and spindle, and let them earn their bread by the sweat of their noses as is enjoined upon Adam's children. We ought to drive the lazy bones out of our system.

If, however, we are afraid that they might harm us personally, or our wives, children, servants, cattle, etc...then let us apply the same cleverness (expulsion) as the other nations...and settle with them for that which they have extorted from us, and after having it divided up fairly, let us drive them out of the country for all time.

To sum up, dear princes and notables who have Jews in your domains, if this advice of mine does not suit you, then find a better one so that you and we may all be free from this inseparable Jewish burden...the Jews.

Luther's writings were quoted in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*! Unfortunately, Hitler found exactly what he needed to justify his own hatred of the Jewish people. Paul had seen the potential danger signs of "replacement theory" and the seedlings of disdain growing for the Jewish people in the last days of his life. This is why he wrote a warning to the Roman church: "Do not boast over those branches," (speaking of the branches who had been broken off so they could be grafted in). "If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. Do not be arrogant" (see Romans 11:18, 20).

It is very unfortunate that the Church has not heeded his warning. Believers have, in many cases, unwittingly followed the devil and continued down the seemingly harmless path of belief that we have replaced Israel in all that God has promised the Jewish people. Given all the persecution the Jews have endured from the supposed Christian Church, it is no wonder that they look upon the Cross with such abrogation. It is no wonder that when a Jew comes to faith in Messiah, he struggles with feelings of betraying his people. And the members of his family and community feel betrayed by him as well.

### **10-15 minutes of DISCUSSION.**

QUESTION: If you're Jewish, how do you feel about the lack of understanding the Gentile church has about their Jewish roots? Have you experienced anti-Semitism? From your perspective, how has your Jewishness been viewed in the Church?

QUESTION: For Gentile Christians, have you been taught in church about the Jewishness of your faith? Have you heard that Christians are the "New Israel"?

QUESTION: How does the Jewish view of Messiah differ from the traditionally Christian view?

Dan and I were talking this past week, and we'd like to make some parallels between Replacement Theology and Anti-Semitism. Replacement Theology is a nice, "churchy" term that disguises what it's really about: Anti-Semitism. We contend that the influence of this belief has led to not sharing the gospel with the Jews. Dan and I believe that modern Christianity has been *influenced* by replacement theology. We have been influenced by the view that since the Jews rejected their Messiah, God subsequently rejected them and went after the Gentiles instead. How have we been influenced? Let me ask you a question. How many of us have sought to share the gospel with the Jewish people? How many of us have sought to build relationships with Jews? How

many of us have prayed for the Jewish people? Please understand, these questions are not meant to bring condemnation, but only a realization of how we have all been affected by this false doctrine. I myself, have repented of forgetting about the Jewish people. Though it is perhaps more by naïve omission rather than overt commission, nonetheless, we are not directly taught about how Jewish was our Messiah, nor how Jewish was the early church. We are not widely taught in sermons or bible studies how the final act of God's glorious plan of salvation will be to spectacularly reveal Himself to *Israel*. In the final showdown on Earth, He will demonstrate how much He unequivocally loves Israel – not just in order to restore the land, but in order to save the Jewish people. We are taught these truths from the perspective of how much God loves us, the Church. This is most certainly true, because we have been grafted into Israel. But we are forgetting that we have been given the gospel to not only reach the rest of the Gentile world with God's love for them, but we also have a responsibility to reach out to the Jewish people, through whom these glorious truths have come. So, let's begin anew and bring joy to the heart of the God of Israel by doing what our Jewish Messiah has commanded. Let's get back to our Jewish roots, and understand fully what He taught and lived, to understand those He came to first, by loving and serving them in humility to such a degree that they become envious and jealous of what we have, and they too want to know the Messiah they have rejected.

**Zechariah 12:10** says, “And I will pour out on the house of David and on those living in Jerusalem a spirit of grace and prayer; and they will look to me, whom they pierced. They will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son.” There will be great grieving on that day because the remnant, the Jewish people will finally recognize as a nation, that Yeshua is their Messiah. They will grieve so bitterly that mourning will be heard throughout the land. It is not written in the Scriptures, but I believe there is an implication taught, that we, through God's power and grace, we may be equipped by Him to reduce the number who mourn because many will come to faith in Him ahead of this time. We can do that through a number of ways, which we will discuss in our final study.

### **VIDEO of Walid (12 minutes)**

#### **Discussion of Islam (8:30-9:00):**

Islam is Satan's modern day plan for the destruction of God's people. It is the ultimate in Hitler's Final Solution. And we need to understand this. For after radical Islamists kill all the Jews (Abraham's children), their intention is to kill Israel's offspring, the Christians. The Jews are the pigs, and the Christians are the monkeys. First they kill the Saturday people. Then they kill the Sunday people. This is what the Quran teaches.

Grand Mufti of Jerusalem conspired with Hitler on the Final Solution for the Jews in the Middle East.

This family feud between Abraham's physical children is not about land, though they are trying to make it about that in order to gain the sympathy of the world. This conflict is about whose god is greater...the God of Israel or Allah. Let's see that this is true.

**The Counterfeit Beliefs** – Just a few of the differences. We have a handout for you called Islam vs. Christianity, which is found on [www.geocities.com](http://www.geocities.com).

- The God of Israel is love vs. Allah is a god of the sword
- The God of Israel is personal and can be known vs. Allah is not personal and cannot be known
- Isaac is the child of promise vs. Ishmael is the child of promise
- Land belongs to Abraham's descendants through Isaac vs. the land belongs to Abraham's Arab children through Ishmael
- The Jews pray facing Jerusalem vs. Muslims pray facing away from Jerusalem toward Mecca
- Jerusalem is the holiest place for Jews & Christians vs. Mecca is the holiest place for Muslims (so why are they fighting over Jerusalem???)
- Isaac was laid on the altar for sacrifice vs. Ishmael was laid on the altar
- Jesus is the Son of God and is Diety vs. Jesus is the son of Mary and is not Diety.
- The Bible is the infallible Word of God vs. the Bible was corrupted over the years and the Qur'an, as revealed to Mohammed has superceded the Bible
- Jesus was a Jew and is the Messiah of the world sent by the God of Israel vs. Jesus is a messenger of Allah who will come back as a Muslim
- Jesus died on the cross for the salvation of mankind vs. Jesus was taken to heaven by god and Judas Iscariot, who was made to look like Jesus, died on the cross
- Man is born a sinner and needs a savior vs. man is not born a sinner and does not need a savior.
- Salvation by grace and complete faith in Jesus vs. salvation by works and complete surrender to Islam

Unlike what we've heard in the media "Allah Akhbar" does not mean "god is great." It means "god is greater. The Muslims are challenging the God of Israel and taunting His people, just as Goliath and the Philistines did long ago. They are saying, "Allah is greater than the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Allah, the enemy of our God, today in the form of Islam, has rallied his troops to fight once again against the God of Israel and His people. Why? To destroy God's people and to take God's land for himself. He knows his time is short. Long ago, the God of Israel gave a solemn warning to Israel to make no peace agreements with their enemy.

Contrary to what the world teaches, the Old Testament teaches Israel was to make no peace agreements with the enemy – See **Exodus 23:31-33**. Why? God Himself says it will cause them to sin against Him and will be a snare to them. **Deut 7:1-4** explains that the nations the Israelites have driven out need to be destroyed. No peace treaties! Why so severe? Because these enemies would cause them to commit idolatry. I also believe it is because it would set them up to make a covenant of death in the future – see **Isaiah 28:15, 18**. This is exactly what is happening today. Israel is ready to make agreements with their enemies, they are trading away the very land God gave them.

They are desperate for peace. And God knew that someday, the Antichrist would come and make a covenant with them that would be broken. Interestingly, Islam allows for a temporary cease-fire, called a “*hudna*” to be made with infidels if it is to their advantage. If your enemy is stronger, the Quran teaches, you may make a treaty with him until the time comes when you are stronger; then you may break it and overpower him with the sword. This is part of *Sharia* law and is called the principal of “*taqiah*”. A muslim may lie to his enemy in order to gain advantage over him.

So now what. What is the solution? We need stand up for the God of Israel, like David did to Goliath. Read **Jeremiah 6:16** “This is what the Lord says: ‘Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.’”

We need to turn to the God of Israel. We need to repent for ignoring our Jewish roots, which has given birth to Anti-Semitism. I believe it is Anti-Semitism that is the cause of all the division in the Church. As we divided ourselves from our Jewish brethren, the seeds of division have taken root in Christianity. Jesus prayed for unity and that He would be known because of our love. Christianity has not left that legacy that He prayed for...I believe the solution is rekindling the dying embers of the Jewishness of our faith. I believe those who get back to basics, to the ancient paths, will find more than rest for our souls. We’ll find more of the sweetness of God’s presence in our lives – first a sprinkling, then a stream, then a river, then a fountain gushing forth from our lives, touching everything we do and everyone with whom we come into contact. We are at a crossroads. Will we return to the good way, and walk in it?