

WHEN THE CROSS BECAME A SWORD

This is the first of a series of four articles from my soon-to-be-printed book

Throughout history satan has tried to use many peoples, nations and false religions in his attempts to exterminate the Jews. In Scripture we find prophecies that many nations would be enemies of Israel, but the church was never meant to be an enemy of God's chosen people.

When the early church passed from Jewish to Gentile leadership, the historic church began veering off course, embracing replacement theology—the belief that the original promises God made to the children of Israel were nullified by Christ, and that Israel is no longer God's chosen, covenant people. This attitude eventually resulted in a bloody history of the church's slaughter of Jews during the crusades, inquisitions and pogroms, setting the stage for Hitler's holocaust.

Christianity began as a sect of Judaism with a Jewish Savior. How could such hatred have developed towards Israel? The cross, a symbol of God's love, literally became a sword, a symbol of hatred—what a bloody stain on the church's legacy! We Christians are a people redeemed by the Jewish Messiah and taught by Jewish prophets and the apostles. We are grafted into Israel's olive tree (Romans 11:17). Our heritage is that of the Jewish people. The Jewish Scriptures unite us. How could we be so uninformed regarding two thousand years of Jewish suffering? How could we have become such an instrument of destruction towards the Jewish people?

Thankfully, there has always been a small remnant that have loved and blessed the Jewish people, even when it was not popular to do so. Unfortunately, many pages of church history have been torn out and forgotten by most people; however, I can assure you that the Jewish people have not forgotten. Part of their God-given heritage is remembering their past. If the church had paid attention to Paul's warning against wrong attitudes and ignorance against the natural branches in Romans 11:12, 20, 25, history would have been very different.

We cannot correct the wrongs of the past, but we certainly can do something about the present, and in so doing, we can help change the future and make restoration possible between the church, the Jewish people and the nation of Israel. The Jewish people have a prophetic role in the unfolding, redemptive purposes of God in the earth. Fred Wright states, "Replacement theology needs to be replaced." The church needs to explore, learn, understand and appreciate the hundreds of scriptures relating to God's covenantal plans for the land of Israel and His chosen people.

As we study the scriptures, may our hearts be attuned to the heart of God's love for His people and how we, the church, fit into His plan for Israel's restoration. The church is at a critical crossroads. The day of opposition or neutrality is a thing of the past. Wendy Beckett has said, "The Lord is dropping a plumb line in the church—it is frightening to see who is on the wrong side."

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Christian ministry helping the Jewish people return to Israel