

Judaism & Christianity

Important Issues

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Apostolic Halakha

- By the end of the New Testament period, the Apostles had made several halakhic rulings regarding the relationship between Gentile believers and Jewish believers.
- We've discussed these thoroughly two lessons:
 - *Defense of Messianic Judaism*
 - *Shaking the Olive Tree (A Review of Romans 11)*

Acts 15: Gentile Believers

- Acts 15 settled several issues:
- Gentile believers did not have to convert to Judaism and take on the totality of Jewish lifestyle.
- They were to abstain from immorality and other practices which would preclude their fellowship with their Jewish brethren.
- They were to grow in their understanding of the Tanakh by Apostolic teaching (2Tim 3:16-17)
 - *All Scripture is God-breathed and is valuable for teaching the truth, convicting of sin, correcting faults and training in right living; thus anyone who belongs to God may be fully equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 CJB)*
- They were to respect the heritage of Jewish people, since this heritage clarified the meaning of their own faith.

Acts 21: Jewish Believers

- In Acts 21, the Apostles asserted that Jewish believers were to maintain their Biblical heritage and continue to “stay in line and keep the Torah of Moshe.” Acts 21:17-26
- Paul’s personal testimonies reflect his own faithfulness to his Jewish heritage in Acts 18:18, Acts 28:17 and elsewhere.
 - Sha'ul remained for some time, then said good-bye to the brothers and sailed off to Syria, after having his hair cut short in Cenchrea, because he had taken a vow; with him were Priscilla and Aquila. (Acts 18:18 CJB)
 - After three days Sha'ul called a meeting of the local Jewish leaders. When they had gathered, he said to them: "Brothers, although I have done nothing against either our people or the traditions of our fathers, I was made a prisoner in Yerushalayim and handed over to the Romans.(Acts 28:17 CJB)

Gentile Pride: Root of Replacement Theology

- During the New Testament period, Gentile pride had already begun to take root.
- Non-Jewish believers considered themselves a total replacement of Israel because Israel (as a nation) had rejected Yeshua.
- Paul countered this argument in Romans 11 (see *Shaking the Olive Tree*).
- Nevertheless, and Scripture notwithstanding, this attitude later led to anti-Jewishness.

Gentile Dominance

- From 70-400 CE, after the fall of Jerusalem, the leadership of the “Church” was primarily Gentile.
- The “Church’s” rejection of the Torah and Messianic Jews ironically lead the mainstream Jewish community to completely reject them AND the Messianic Jews.

Messianic Jews: Caught in the Middle

- Our understanding of a Messiah who came to die a shameful death on the stake contradicted the Jewish expectation of a messiah who would come and throw off Roman rule.
- Messianic Jews brought Gentiles into their communities and homes which simply wasn't done.
- Messianic Jews fled Jerusalem before the Roman siege in obedience to Yeshua's prophecy in Mathew 24 and Luke 21, causing them to be branded as traitors.
- When Bar Kochbah was proclaimed the Messiah by Rabbi Akiva, all Messianic Jews who had been involved in the Jewish Revolt refused to fight under him (there is only ONE Messiah)... Again, they were branded as traitors.

G-d's "judgment" against Israel

- The Gentile Church interpreted the fall of Jerusalem and later Jewish hardships as clear expressions of G-d's judgment and a final rejection of Israel.
- Consequently, they believed this eliminated the Old Testament Order.
- The Church was the new Israel.
- They Church tried to replace pagan traditions by super-imposing Christian traditions and meanings to pagan holidays.
- This carried over to include saints and Mary as mediators.
- Some elements of the Church even argued that the Old Testament should not be canonized as Scripture. As an alternative, modern replacement theologians choose to believe that all promises made to Israel as a people now apply to the Gentile church, but all the curses to Israel.

Anti-Semitism in the Church

- Gentile arrogance and these heresies lead to Anti-Semitism in the Church.
- Any Jew who accepted Jesus had to:
 - Renounce Jewish practice
 - Change his name to a Christian name
 - Eat pork to prove his conversion

Martin Luther

- A man of courage
- Had some degree of passion for the L-rd.
- But... in his later years became extremely anti-Semitic.
- Wrote "*The Jews and their Lies*," which was used by Hitler as justification for Jewish annihilation.