

CAN A CHRISTIAN BE ANTI - SEMITIC ?

A Scripture study
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PREFACE

In the days we are now living, anti-Semitism is again becoming stronger and more prevalent. If we are to be true to our Christian faith, we need to stand up to it, and speak out against it. Christians, who are not firmly grounded in the Scriptures, can easily be swept along in the tide.

It is the Christian's duty and responsibility to study God's Word, to help and encourage others. In particular, there is the need for new Christians to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of His Word. The subject matter of this study is to gain a better understanding in relation to Israel in the eyes of God, and our attitude to Israel.

The Bible student needs to make others aware of what the Scriptures teach on this subject.

It is my prayer that this study may be a helpful tool to that end.

May God guide you in all truth by the power of His Spirit and His Word, and may you be willing to follow His leading.

TRUE BELIEVERS

Before we can answer as to whether or not a Christian can be anti-Semitic, we must first define just what a Christian is:

The word Christian was first used in Scripture, in Acts 11: 26. It reads, "... *And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch*". We can readily observe from this reading that the term was used in defining Christ's disciples. A disciple is one who follows (adheres to) the teachings of his/her leader. (John 8: 31.) The leader in this case was Christ, and so the term 'Christian', or Christ's one, was coined so as to distinguish those that followed, adhered to, and practised the teachings of Christ as distinct from all the other teachings.

Just because people may think of themselves, or call themselves Christian, does not make them a Christian. The same no doubt is true of most, if not all religions.

One is not a true believer, (a Christian) if he/she is not also a disciple of Christ.

I trust I have now made it clear, that there are both true and false Christians: False Christians tend to believe only those parts of Scripture that suite them, and some it would appear do not believe any of the Scriptures are inspired by God. - Their allegiance is not to Christ's teachings and to His Holy Word. These ones need to first search their own hearts and motives, and then search the Scriptures.

Now the issue is; can a Christian be anti-Semitic?

First; let's look at Christ. We can see clearly from Mat. 1, & Luke 3: 23-38, & Gal. 3:16, that Christ's genealogy is traced right back through His Jewish ancestry to Abraham. There can be no question to the fact that Christ is (in the flesh) a Jew. - He is also God. - John 10: 30, reads, "*I and My Father are one*" This must bring us to the simple conclusion, that if we hate Jews, then we hate Christ, and if we hate Christ, then it follows that we hate God. Jesus said in John 5: 23. "*He who does not honour the Son, does not honour the Father who sent Him.*"

GOD'S COVENANT

In spite of our sins, God loves us. Rom. 5: 8, reads, “*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” and in spite of Israel’s sins, God still loves His chosen people, and will one day restore them all to Himself. Rom. 11: 2, reads, “*God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. ...*”. Read also, Rom. 11:1-27, & 2 Cor. 3:15-16. , & Jer. 23: 6, & 31: 35,36, & Ezek. 34: 11 – 31, & 39: 21-29, & Zech. 8: 13 – 23.

Many of the anti-Jewish people who call themselves Christians tend to cling to the idea that the Covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was conditional on them maintaining their faith in, and allegiance to God. It is claimed that Israel forfeited the Covenant promises and blessings due to their sins, and they were then given to the Christian Church. However, if these people believed their Bibles, they would see quite clearly that the Covenants of God are not conditional, but are irrevocable. I must attempt to make it clear here, when God makes a Covenant, be it with Jew or Gentile **He never revokes it** but by us turning our backs on God (Habitual sin) we break our side of the Covenant and so cut ourselves off from God & His Blessings, be we Jew or Gentile. God’s Covenant always stands and if we truly repent /confess our sins/seek God’s forgiveness we will be reinstated back into the Covenant. God has repeated over and over again in both the old & New Testament that like The Prodigal Son’s Father He is always there to receive back the repentant one.

Gentile believers now share the promise, but Israel is not excluded. Eph. 3:1-21, shows that Gentile Christians have now been made fellow heirs with Jewish believers, through and in Christ; this is particularly brought out in verse 6. – Here is the full reading;

¹ *For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles,*
² *if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,*
³ *how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,*
⁴ *by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),*
⁵ *which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the*
⁶ *Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:*
⁷ *that **the Gentiles should be fellow heirs**, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ*
⁸ *through the gospel,*
⁹ *of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective*
¹⁰ *working of His power.*
¹¹ *To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach*
¹² *among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,*
¹³ *and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages*
¹⁴ *has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;*
¹⁵ *to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the*
¹⁶ *principalities and powers in the heavenly places,*
¹⁷ *according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,*
¹⁸ *in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.*
¹⁹ *Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.*
²⁰ *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
²¹ *from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*
²² *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might*
²³ *through His Spirit in the inner man,*
²⁴ *that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,*
²⁵ *may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height -*
²⁶ *to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of*
²⁷ *God.*
²⁸ *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according*
²⁹ *to the power that works in us,*
³⁰ *to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

This shows that Christians are fellow heirs, not heirs exclusive.

The Abrahamic Covenant, as given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Gen. 12:1-3, & 17: 1-9, & 28:1-15, & 32: 24-30. & 33: 20, has no mention of conditions attached, but rather states that it is an **everlasting** Covenant. Proof of the unconditional nature of the Covenant can be found in 2 Sam. 7, in which, God confirms the Covenant through David. For from the time the Covenant had been given to Abraham, to the time of this Covenant with David, Israel had sinned grievously many times and cut themselves off from the Covenant but when they repented they were welcomed back in.

Yet, in 2 Sam. 7: 24, we read, “ *For You made Your people Israel **Your very own people forever;** and You, LORD, have become their God.* ”

We also find in verse 6, God is saying that He has been with Israel continuously since the Exodus. In the New Testament, God is shown to still make distinctions, between the Jew and the Gentile, but now also between them and the Christian Church. For we read in 1 Cor, 10: 32. “*Give no offence, either to the Jews or to the Greeks (Gentiles) or to the church of God.* ” These three distinctions God still makes today. - Yet **within** the Christian Church, God sees all as being equal, whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, for He says in, 2 Cor. 5: 17.

“*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.*” See also, Gal. 3: 26-29. & 6: 15, which shows that **in Christ**, Jew and Gentile become one, but outside the Church, the distinctions of 1 Cor. 10: 32 remain.

DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT REJECT JEWS?

We find Jesus said in John 14: 6, *“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”, - and in Acts 4: 12 we read, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* Some have said that the above verses rule out salvation to the Jews and others who lived in pre-Christian times. This of course is ridiculous, but nevertheless requires an answer.

As we saw in the previous chapter, God had made an everlasting Covenant with Israel, which must therefore still be in place. – So, what then is the answer to this seeming anomaly?

The problem comes from a misunderstanding of how Jews were saved in Old Testament times. – Jews were not saved because they observed the Law or the Sabbaths or any animal sacrifices, ceremonies or traditions. Nor were they saved by any good works or Holy living on their part. There was then as now, the requirement that to be delivered and cleansed from sin, it was necessary to accept the sacrifice for sin, which God Himself provides. From the foundation of the Earth, God had made and shown the way of salvation. God kept a book, which He called the “Book of Life of the Lamb Slain”, and we are told that those who follow Satan are not found named in it. Reference to this is found in Rev. 13:8 which reads, *“All who dwell on the earth will worship him, (The Beast) whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*

When Adam & Eve sinned, God said to the serpent in Gen: 3: 15, *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel”*. This is a hint as to the fact that Satan would bruise Christ’s heel on the cross, but Christ would step on Satan’s head in victory. The plan of salvation was there from the beginning. The seed of the serpent refers to Satan, and the seed of the woman refers to Jesus Christ.

Cain & Abel both offered sacrifices to God. Gen, 4:3-5, reads; *“And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the first-born of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering”*. Heb. 11:4 reads; *“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks”*. Abel’s was accepted, Cain’s was not. – Cain’s was a sacrifice which represented nothing other than the labours of his hands. – Abel’s was accepted because it represented the sacrifice which God was providing, i.e. it represented the Lamb of God (Jesus Christ). Abel was acknowledging that accepting God’s will and provision of justification, showed both God’s love to man and his own love and gratitude to God. He was also showing that the shedding of blood was required in the process of cleansing from sin. The shedding of the lamb’s blood and its death were even then a type of Christ.

Heb. 9:22 reads, *“And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”* - It was not the animals blood which credited forgiveness in Old Testament times; it was faith in the sacrifice which God provided, i.e. the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, of which the animal sacrifices were just a type. Old Testament people were saved by their faith in what the animal sacrifices represented.

Abraham, when tested by God, (Gen. 22: 1-19.) was prepared to offer his son Isaac to God, for he trusted God would raise him up again to claim God’s promises: God stopped him and instead provided another sacrifice, i.e. a lamb, the type of Christ. In this God also showed that we all, no matter what dispensation or race, must accept by faith the sacrifice which God provides. We find this sacrifice in the words of John 3: 16, which reads, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

ORIGIN OF NAMES

The term '**Semite**' is derived from 'Shem' the name of a son of Noah. The term was originally used to describe peoples that lived in, or came from the northern side of the Euphrates. It therefore has a similarity in meaning to the word 'Hebrew'. – Though Arabs are also Semites, these days the term appears to be used more exclusively in reference to Jews. Hence the term 'Anti – Semite' now mostly refers to someone that is anti-Jewish.

The first recorded use of the term '**Hebrew**' is in Gen. 14:13.

The word is derived from 'Eber', the name of the great grandson of Shem, and has the meaning, 'From the other side'. (Abraham was a descendant of Eber).

The term was used to describe Abraham as 'One from the other side of the Euphrates'. Thus, Abraham was the first to be recorded as a Hebrew.

Over time, in any language the usage of words and their meanings often change.

In Acts 6: 1, The Hebrews referred to were Jews of northern Israel, as distinct from the Greek speaking Jews, (or Hellenists) as they were then called and who were mainly from southern Israel. (Then known as Judea) (Jerusalem, being close to the border of North and South.) The Lord Jesus Christ often spoke in Aramaic, which was more common amongst the Northern Jews. Greek was used mainly as a business or trade language.

The first recorded use of the term '**Israel**' is in Gen. 32: 28.

Here God renames Jacob as Israel. So, Jacob was the first Israelite. As Abraham was before this time, he is not therefore an Israelite.

The term '**Jew**' is a derivative of the word Judah. The first apparent use of the word is in Ezra 4: 12. During the time of David, the 12 tribes divided into Southern and Northern Kingdoms. The two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to David making him their king, and gradually became distinguished as Jews. – The other ten tribes of northern Israel made Ishbosheth their king, and retained the name of Israel. – These however were man made divisions.

A little later, many out of the northern ten tribes moved in with Judah because of Israel's apostasy. (1 Chron. 15: 8.), and later, after the Babylonian captivity at the dedication of the second Temple 12 goats were offered representing the 12 tribes. (Ezra 6:17.) The terms Judah and Israel were then used mainly as territorial distinctions. The terms, Judah (Jew) and Israel became very interchangeable as far as religion and race were concerned, and remain so today.

The name 'Israel' is now used to apply to the land as granted when Israel was declared an independent nation in 1948 A.D. - They also acquired more land in the June 1967 war.

A mixture of all 12 tribes now occupies Modern Israel.

In our day, we have come to use the terms Jew, Hebrew, and Israel, interchangeably.

This modern land of Israel is still only a small portion of the land as originally promised by God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Read, Gen. 12: 2. / 22: 15 – 18. / 26: 1 – 6. / 28: 13 – 15. / Exod. 3: 16, 17. / Num. 33: 1 to 36: 13.

Deut. 3: 12 – 22. / Deut. 7: 1. / Josh. 1: 1 - 4.

Ezek. Chapters 36 & 37, show how that in the last days, God will bring the whole house of Israel back from its dispersion amongst the nations. - This reading shows that God regards both Kingdoms still in the way He had made them, i.e. one people, 'Israel'.

In Ezek. 37: 15 – 23, God declares He will bring to an end man's division of His people, and have a united Israel forever.

In Rev. 7: 1 – 8, all twelve tribes are referred to as the 'Children of Israel'

God has promised to regather His people Israel, and in 1946 the Jews began returning in large numbers to Israel. Then on 14 May 1948 Israel was declared an independent State. The regathering will not be complete until towards the end of the Tribulation period. Read the following Scriptures.

Isa. 11:10-16 / Jer. 16:14-16 + 23:3-8 + chapt. 30 & 31. / Ezek. 28:25-26 + 34: 11-31 + 36:1-38 + 37:1-14 / Amos 9:14-15 / Zech. 8:13-15 / Rom. 9:27-28 + 11:1-5.

NOTHING NEW

Anti-Semitism is not new. It existed long before the Christian Church came into existence. Ever since God called Israel as His chosen people, Satan has sought to discredit, malign, and even destroy them. In Exod. Chapter one, we see the beginnings of Anti-Semitism and Satan's efforts to destroy them with slavery and the murder of Israel's first born. Then in Esther, chapter three, we read of the attempt to exterminate all the Jews in the provinces of Persia, and chapt.1, verse 1, shows this to be 127 provinces, from India to Ethiopia. The decree was made in the city of Shushan (Susa), during the twelfth year of the reign of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes), BC 485-465. These examples are sufficient to show that Anti-Semitism is certainly no new phenomena; and while Satan is still free until the end of the Tribulation, Anti- Semitism will continue.

Satan knew that Christ would come through the seed of Israel, and the line of David. He wanted to wipe out Israel in the hope of preventing Christ's birth. He failed, and knowing that his time is short. – He wants now to vent his frustration, anger, and hatred on Israel, knowing that they are still God's chosen people, and that they will soon repent as a Nation, and call for Christ's physical return, (at the end of the coming Tribulation). For at the end of the Tribulation as a Nation they will cry out "*...Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!*" Mat. 23: 39.

Many peoples and nations have sought to exterminate the Jews, but all have failed, and will continue to fail. God's covenant stands and He will deliver His people and return them to the land of Israel, and towards the end of the Tribulation, will bring them to repentance, and salvation. He will then return, establishing His Kingdom with them.

Satan therefore seeks through Anti-Semitism and other methods to wipe out Israel and prevent fulfilment of prophecy.

The blind hatred towards Israel by many peoples and nations is simply the work of Satan as he expresses his hatred towards God, His Christ, and His People.

God has said in Zech. 2: 8. "... He who touches you (Israel) touches the apple of His eye"., and Numbers 24: 9, reads, "*Blessed is he who blesses you (Israel), and cursed is he who curses you.*" See also -, Gen. 12: 1-3, & Deut. 32: 8-10.

It should also be noted that most of the disciples and Apostles, (with the possible exception of Luke) including the Apostle to the gentiles, (Paul) were Jews, as were also the other writers of the books of the Bible.

To hate Jews is to hate all of the above!

Can you be Anti-Semitic, yet still be a Christian? I think not!

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "*May they prosper who love you.*" Psm. 122: 6.

Pray that Israel will quickly find real peace through the salvation their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, has made available to them.

Pray that God will quickly open the eyes, ears, hearts, minds, and souls of His chosen people Israel. For Christ will not physically return to Earth, until Israel repents and cries out to God, as in Mat. 23: 39, which reads, "*For I say to you (Israel), you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'*"

Recommended reading that covers this subject.

'The Basis of the Pre millennial Faith', by Charles C Ryrie.

God be with you.

End