

The Valley Beit Midrash

October 29, 2017

The Rabbis and Christianity: Jewish Schizophrenia?

Rabbi Dr. Eugene Korn

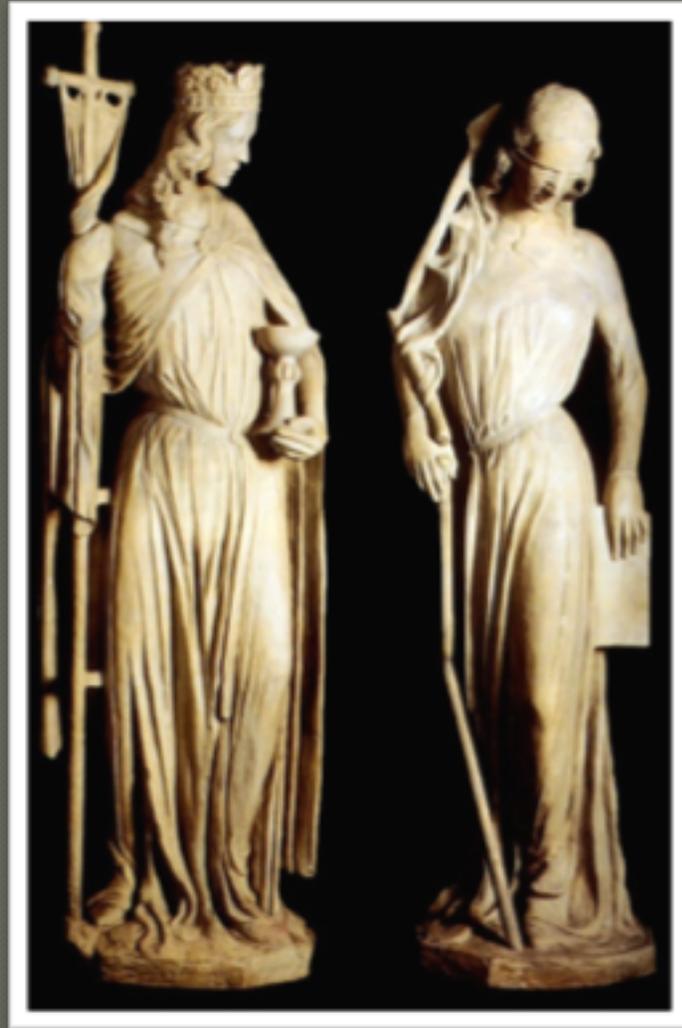
**“It is a known law that
Esau hates Jacob.”**

early rabbinic commentary on Genesis 33:4

Traditional Church Teachings ***(Adversus Judaeos)***

- **Christianity *supersedes* Judaism**
- **Church *replaces* the Jewish people**
- ***Extra ecclesiam nulla salus***
- **Jews are blind to Jesus as Messiah**
- **Subordination and humiliation**
- **Curse of Cain as deicides**
- **Lose rights to Biblical homeland**

Ecclesia et Synagoga



“City of God” Augustine (4th century)

- ❖ **“Jews should have their back bent down always”**
- ❖ **Jewish misery is will of God**
- ❖ **Humiliation is “negative witness” for world to see to the truth of Christianity**

Church Persecution of Jews

- **Crusaders (11th century) massacred thousands of Jews in Rhine Valley**
- **Inquisitions (12th-15 centuries) tortured, killed and forced hundreds of thousands of Jews to convert**
- **Pope Innocent III (12th-13th centuries) forced Jews to wear distinctive badges on their garments (later adopted by Nazis in 20th century)**
- **Popes Innocent IV (13th century) and Julius III (16th century) ordered the burning of the Talmud**

Church Persecution of Jews

- ◉ **Pope Gregory XIII (16th century) forced Jews to attend weekly sermons aimed at conversion**
- ◉ **Pope Pius VI (18th century) forbade Jews to put up tombstones in Jewish cemeteries and renovate synagogues**
- ◉ **Vatican confiscated numerous Jewish schools and synagogues and transformed them into churches and monasteries**
- ◉ **Church seized valuable Jewish manuscripts**

“Judensau”
(1305, Stadtkirche Wittenberg)



Pope Pius X (1904)

“It is not in our power to prevent you going to Jerusalem, but we can never give our support. I cannot give you any other answer. The Jews do not recognize our Lord, hence we cannot recognize the Jewish people.... so when you come to Palestine, we will be there to baptize all of you.”

Rabbinic Evaluations of Christianity

- **1st – 2nd centuries: Jewish Christians belief in Jesus and new covenant = “*avodah zarah*” (idolatry)**
- **Middle Ages: Trinity and Incarnation are *avodah zarah***

Rabbinic Evaluations of Christianity

- **Late Middle Ages/Early Modernity: Christianity = idolatry for Jews, but not *avodah zarah* for gentiles**
- **17th- 20th centuries: Christianity is positive phenomenon, spreading some Jewish beliefs (God, revelation, Noahide moral commandments) + advancing Jewish religious mission**

Rabbi Moshe Rivkis

(17th century, Lithuania)

“The gentiles in whose shadow Jews live and among whom Jews are disbursed believe in creation of the world and the exodus from Egypt and many tenets of faith.

Their intention is to the Creator of heaven and earth and we are obligated to pray for their welfare.”

Rabbi Jacob Emden

(18th century, Germany)

- **“Jesus brought a double kindness to the world. Christians removed idolatry from the nations, obligating them in the 7 commandments of Noah so they would not behave like animals, instilling moral traits firmly in them.**
- **Jews should consider Christians instruments of the prophecy that the knowledge of God will one day spread throughout the earth. Christianity spread among the nations to the furthest ends of the earth that there is One God who rules the world, who rewards and punishes and who reveals Himself to humans.”**

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (19th century, Germany)

“Christianity became estranged from Judaism in order to bring to the world—sunk in idol worship, violence, immorality and the degradation of man—the tidings of the One God, the brotherhood of all men and human superiority over the beast....It was a major step in bringing the world closer to the goal of all history.”

The Shoah



***Nostra Aetate* (1965)**

- **Church condemns all anti-Semitism**
- **Jews not responsible for death of Jesus**
- **God's covenant with the Jewish people is *not revoked***
- **“Church draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles”**

Ecclesia et Synagoga Today



Pope John Paul II (2000)

“God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your Name to the Nations. We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused your children to suffer, and *asking forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the covenant.*”



Tabgha Church, 2015



Tabgha Church, 2015



“To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven” (2015)

- ◉ **We seek to do the will of our Father in Heaven by accepting the hand offered to us by our Christian brothers and sisters. Jews and Christians must work together as partners to address the moral challenges of our era.**
- ◉ **The *Shoah* was the climax to centuries of disrespect, oppression and rejection of Jews and the hatred that developed between Jews and Christian. The failure to break through this contempt and engage in dialogue weakened resistance to evil forces of anti-Semitism, murder and genocide.**

“To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven”

- **The emergence of Christianity in history is neither an accident nor an error, but the willed divine outcome and gift to the nations. God willed a separation between partners with significant theological differences, not a separation between enemies.**
- **Neither of us can achieve God’s mission in this world alone.**

“To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven”

- ◉ **Jews and Christians have more in common than what divides us: the ethical monotheism of Abraham; the relationship with the One Creator of Heaven and Earth, Who loves and cares for all of us; Jewish Sacred Scriptures; a belief in a binding tradition; and the values of life, family, compassionate righteous-ness, justice, inalienable freedom, universal love and ultimate world peace.**
- ◉ **Jews and Christians have a common covenantal mission to perfect the world under the sovereignty of God, so all humanity will call on His name and abominations will be removed from the earth.**

“To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven”

- ◉ **Our partnership does not minimize the significant differences between Judaism and Christianity. G-d employs many messengers to reveal His truth.**
- ◉ **Jews and Christians must be models of service, unconditional love and holiness. We are all created in G-d’s Holy Image, and Jews and Christians will remain dedicated to the Covenant by playing an active role together in redeeming the world.**

Our Covenantal Hope

“Instruction shall come forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem...

Let the peoples beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nations shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war anymore.

Let every man sit under his vine and under his fig tree; and no one shall make him afraid....

Let all the people walk, each in the name of his God; and we shall walk in the name of our Lord our God for ever and ever.”

Micah 4:2-5

