

# Christianity and the Holocaust



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## Christians Need to Repent of Anti-Semitism

I want to bring an awareness to Christians of the anti-Semitism that has existed in the Church because there is quite a lack of knowledge and understanding of this history. I realize this is difficult for us to accept, but the Church has been guilty of horrific persecution against the Jewish people, and the doctrines and writings of the Church were used to justify the Holocaust.

As Christians and as Americans, we are grossly unaware of this history, but believe me, the Jewish people are extremely aware of it. And the impact on them, which remains even to this day, is huge. You can say, “I didn’t play a part in that. That was all in the past.” However, you are a part of the Church, and the Church is riddled with these doctrines, these thought processes, and this guilt. There must be a repentance on our part to get rid of this leaven of anti-Semitic thinking and the anti-Semitic actions that go along with it (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). We should be looking to root out any future events that could absolutely transpire if we are harboring in our hearts, in our minds, and in our spirits these hateful anti-Semitic concepts that are not of God. We want to free ourselves from this and be able to move forward into a different future for the Church.



## The Church Became an Instrument of Destruction to the Jews

Read the history of persecution against Jews by Christian society in Europe. For centuries Jewish communities were subjected to forced conversions, expulsions, massacres, and the destruction of their homes and synagogues. This continued into the twentieth century, leading ultimately to the Holocaust. Many Church doctrines were built on false premises, such as teaching that the Jews were collectively guilty of killing Christ. Ultimately, the Jews were viewed as a people to be destroyed.

One way the Church tried to accomplish this was through forced conversions. However, if you study history, you realize that behind it was not a heart for Jews to believe that Jesus was the Messiah; it was just pure anti-Semitism. It was hatred for the Jewish people because in many cases the Jews who were forced to convert were still thrown out. They were still killed in mass killings because Christians were not satisfied with their conversion. Many Christians believed, "These Jews are an evil people who must be eliminated."

In my opinion what was done to the Jewish people is proof that satan exists. How could acts so egregious, so horrifying, and so terrible be perpetrated by normal human beings, especially human beings who call themselves Christians? The people who committed these acts were those who said the foundation of their faith was love, that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). How Christianity went from that foundation into a state of hatred and slaughter, I am not sure. From the very beginning, satan has been set for the destruction and annihilation of the Jews because they were chosen by God, and God's covenant is with them (Deuteronomy 7:6-9). And satan has come very close to succeeding in that goal. What is horrible, and should be the point of our repentance, is that he has used the Christian Church as his greatest ally and instrument of that destructive process.



## The Responsibility of Church Leaders in Destructive Acts Against the Jews

The destructive actions against the Jewish people were fomented in society on the strength of statements made by Church leaders. Around 1550, the Protestant leader John Calvin made this statement: “Their [the Jews] rotten and unbending stiffneckedness deserves that they be oppressed unendingly and without measure or end and that they die in their misery without the pity of anyone.”<sup>1</sup> This quote by the respected John Calvin is representative of what so many Church Fathers have said and written.

It is important to study these statements, not so much for what was being said, but because of what resulted from them. A prime example of this is the book titled *On the Jews and Their Lies*, which Martin Luther wrote in 1543.<sup>2</sup> This document lays out a seven-point plan to get rid of the Jews as a distinct group, either by religious conversion or by expulsion.

Luther’s first point was “to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them.”<sup>3</sup> He continued by making statements that are very difficult to read or tolerate. He actually recommended that rabbis be threatened with having their hands cut off if they were caught teaching.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *The Devil That Never Dies: The Rise and Threat of Global Antisemitism* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2013), 106.

2. Martin Luther, *On the Jews & Their Lies*, edited by Domenico d’Abruzzo (Eulenspiegel Press, 2014), 165-169.

3. *On the Jews*, 165.

4. *On the Jews*, 166.





## Martin Luther's Influence on the Holocaust

The following quote demonstrates how Luther's tirades against the Jews were later used:

Heinrich Himmler wrote admiringly of Luther's writings and sermons on the Jews. A first edition of *On the Jews and their Lies* ... was publicly exhibited in a glass case at the Nuremberg rallies and quoted in a 54-page explanation of the Aryan Law by Dr. E. H. Schulz and Dr. R. Frercks.<sup>5</sup>

This quote, as well as other examples, points to the fact that the persecutions, expulsions, and annihilation of Jews were the result of the actions and teachings of the Church. In his publication *Vom Schem Hamphoras*, Luther wrote, "If they were also punished so cruelly, that the streets ran full of blood, that one would expect to count their dead not by a hundred thousand, but by ten hundred thousand [one million] ..., these are the children of the devil, damned to hell."<sup>6</sup> Comments like this are horrible enough on their own, but what makes them worse is that the term millions is exactly the body count of the Jewish people under this anti-Semitism that was rooted in the Christian Church.

These Christian writings were literally put into action by Hitler and Nazi Germany during the Holocaust. Hitler created a system and an organization that systematically implemented what the Church Fathers had said against the Jewish people: burning their homes, robbing them, taking their wealth, locking them up in ghettos, casting them out of their nations and their countries, literally destroying them and causing their blood to run in the streets. These are ideas that, without question, were stated in no uncertain terms by Christian writers.

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5. "Martin Luther and antisemitism," Wikipedia, quoted from Graham Noble, *History Review*, no. 42 (March 2002).

6. Martin Luther, *Vom Schem Hamphoras* (March 1543), <https://www.mori.bz.it/Luther-Vom%20Schem.pdf>, 3.

It is unconscionable that these teachings have literally been the source that allowed the pogroms, including the Holocaust, to occur. Just think about that for a moment and recognize the serious responsibility that rests on the shoulders of the Church, of which we Christians are a part. You cannot absolve yourself simply by saying, “Well, it wasn’t me. I didn’t do that.” It was not you, but you have been influenced by these men who are still read and studied in seminaries.



## The Problem with Trying to Convert the Jewish People

This brings to light why the Gentile Church should not be attempting to convert the Jewish people. The Jewish people know what Christianity has done to them, and they are very aware of these statements by the Church Fathers. Christians need to understand how offensive it is to Jews to hear a Christian say, “Let me tell you about the love of Jesus. I want you to accept Jesus as your Savior,” because what they experienced at the hands of Christians was not love and it was not salvation. If we want the Jewish people to know Jesus, that is, Yeshua—this Jewish person we believe in—we would be better off to keep our mouths shut because our actions speak so loudly that they cannot hear our words. And when they do hear them, those words are more offensive than helpful.

If there is anything we should be doing, it is following the Scriptures about comforting God’s people, about being a blessing to the Jewish people (Isaiah 40:1-2). If we want them to have a different perception of Christ than the one they have after 2,000 years of Church history, then Christians need to start behaving differently. We will not be able to talk our way out of



those kinds of actions. We will not be able to talk our way out of our responsibility for those who have been on the receiving end of those actions. If there is any hope for reconciliation between Jews and Christians, it will start with a different set of actions. If we believe Jesus is a manifestation on earth of the love of God, then we should start manifesting the love of God in our actions toward the Jewish people, not talking to them about ending the State of Israel or Judaism as a faith or converting them out of it.



## Conversion of the Jews

What is the end result of conversion? If you convert every Jew, then you have just ended Judaism; you have just ended the Jewish people as a race. I do not believe that is something God wants for any race, let alone the Jews. The Kingdom of God will involve different people, different cultures, and different ways. He has implanted a little bit of Himself everywhere, even in the Gentile nations, and those attributes will be brought forth in the Kingdom (Ephesians 3:8-10). The Jewish people are not supposed to be destroyed further by another Holocaust by Christians in the name of conversion. If you are driven to evangelize in the name of Jesus, there are many Gentiles out there; and I would encourage you to bring as many Gentiles as you can into a revelation of Christ and His love and salvation. But it is different with the Jews. The Jews have a covenant. The concept of salvation is different for Jews than for Christians and that is part of what brings the confusion. You can see the hatred coming out of Martin Luther because the Jews refused to be converted by him. That was the beginning of Martin Luther's anger against the Jewish people. But look how insensitive he was to the history of the Jewish people from the start of the Church up to that point.





## Removing Anti-Semitism from the Church

**I** encourage you to pray over this. Take it before the Lord. Let the Lord speak to your heart. Put some time into studying the results of what the Church has stated and enacted against the Jews over the last 2,000 years. Let us have love and grace for them. Let us find ways to comfort God's people and determine that the next history of relations between Jews and Christians will be from a completely different place. How can God bless us when He swore to Abraham that He would curse those who curse the Jewish people (Genesis 12:3)? It is hard to think that we can be anointed by God on one hand and violate His Words of covenant with Abraham and the Jewish people on the other hand. Instead of saying, "How does this apply to me? I wasn't there; I didn't do this," let us drop our excuses. Get on your knees and ask the Lord, "Show me where the anti-Semitism is in my heart. Show me where I am engaged in these activities or this process. Show me where my church is doing that." Let us aggressively search for the leaven in our midst and get rid of it.

Lord, help us find a place in Your presence of repentance. And let our repentance be deep enough to go back and wash the Church of this horrible history. Let Your grace, Your love, and the blood of Christ sweep over us and wash the Church, the Church Fathers, and all of us from this satanic impartation of anti-Semitism that we have somehow fallen into. Amen.

*All Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible 1995 (NASB1995).*



# ABOUT GARY HARGRAVE



GARY HARGRAVE has a passion for leading people into spiritual maturity. Gary effectively ministers the life-changing truth of God's Word through Bible teaching and prophetic revelation that emphasizes the Lordship of Christ.

Gary embraces the teachings and insights of the Hebrew Scriptures as the essential foundation of God's Kingdom and the roots of Christian faith.

By cultivating spiritual maturity in Christians, Gary is deeply committed to teaching and inspiring unity in the Body of Christ and between Christians and the Jewish people.

Throughout decades of ministry, Gary has worked closely with leaders in the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant communities to build relationships based on commonality and understanding. He frequently leads study tours to Israel and the lands of the Bible.

Gary is the host of a weekly podcast entitled *Growing In God*, and is the founder of Shiloh University, an accredited online Bible college and seminary.

Gary and his family reside in Hawaii.

**For other insightful resources by Gary Hargrave, including podcasts, books, articles, videos, and other educational materials, please visit: [www.HargraveMinistries.org](http://www.HargraveMinistries.org).**

## ABOUT HARGRAVE MINISTRIES

The calling of the Lord upon this ministry is to lead people into spiritual maturity by revealing biblical truth. **Our passion is to see the Kingdom of God manifest on earth** as the Body of Christ grows in unity, power and love.

Everything we do flows from the revelation of the Jewish roots of our Christian faith. It is our desire and privilege to bless the land and people of Israel. Our Israel outreach includes:

- **Feed the poor and break the cycle of poverty in Israel**
- **Support the orphans and widows of fallen Israeli soldiers**
- Provide physical and emotional care to **child victims of terrorism**
- **Build bridges between Christians and Jews with biblical study and research**
- Support archaeology and preservation of the **biblical City of David**
- Provide 24/7 **care for Holocaust survivors**
- **Help persecuted Jews around the world return to Israel and start new lives**
- Plant trees to **reforest Israel** and help create **"The Gospel Trail"** between Nazareth and Capernaum

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