

## Jesus Regards The Jewish People As His Family

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people from one another as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats; and He will cause the sheep to stand at His right hand, but the goats at His left. Then the King will say to those at His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. I was hungry and you gave Me food. I was thirsty and you gave Me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed Me. I was naked and you clothed Me. I was sick and you visited Me. I was in prison and you came to see Me.’”

Then the righteous will ask Him, “Lord, when did we see You hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave You a drink? When did we see You a stranger and welcomed You, or naked and clothed You? When did we see You sick or in prison and came to visit You?”

The King will answer them, “Truly I tell you, in so far as you did it for one of the least of these, My brothers, you did it for Me.”

Then He will say to those at His left hand, “Begone from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me, I was naked and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.”

Then they also will ask, “Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not help You?”

He will answer them, “Solemnly I declare to you, in so far as you failed to do it for the least of these, you failed to do it for Me.” Then they will go away into eternal punishment, but those who are just, will go into eternal life’ (Matthew 25:31 to 46).

When we read Jesus’ attitude to Christians who help the Jews and those who do not, and the way He calls the Jews His brothers – His brethren – His family, we can see how seriously the Lord regards our attitude to the Jewish people. Jesus is our example, and to follow His example we must also accept His attitudes. That means we are to help and bless the Jews in any way we can. Jesus calls them His brothers, and giving them a mere glass of water, is as important to Jesus as giving that same glass of water to Jesus Himself. From the other perspective, if we do not support the Jews, then we are failing to do these things for Jesus.

Just as Moses regarded the Hebrews as his blood family (Exodus 2:11), and Paul called the Jews his blood family (Romans 9:3 & 4), so Jesus also called them His family. If we study the verses in the above passage of scripture, we see clearly that Jesus was speaking about two different peoples; the Christians (the righteous; verse 37) and the Jewish people (His family; verse 40). If we refuse to help the Jewish people in their hour of need, then we are considered ‘goats’ and will be banished from heaven forever and sent to the lake of fire. That is a frightening and sobering thought. We will be judged according to how we regard the Jews, and we can be born-again, walk with God to the best of our ability, but if we reject or even ignore the Jews when they need assistance, then we bring a curse on ourselves and can lose our hard-earned salvation.

Jesus said, “Begone from Me, you accursed!” That truth is something to take note of. Where does the curse originate? The Lord told Abraham thousands of years ago, “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you. In you will all the families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). If we bless the descendants of Abraham, we will be blessed; but if people curse, ignore or disregard Abraham’s descendants they will be cursed. God meant exactly what He said, and that blessing or curse still applies today. So in the above text, the ‘sheep’ are the genuine believers, and the ‘goats’ are people who profess to be Christian but show little fruit and who refuse to acknowledge the Jews as the Lord’s people. We, as committed Christians, have an obligation to support Israel both financially and through prayer. Jesus said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 13:43).

‘Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May they prosper who love you!’ (Psalm 122:6). It is God’s will for us to pray for Israel and by doing so, we bring the blessing of prosperity to our lives. The former sins of Israel have been pardoned and God is calling Christians to minister love to the Jews. By doing that, we could win them over into the Kingdom of God. God said, “Comfort, comfort my people,” says your God. “Speak kindly to Jerusalem and call out to her ... that her iniquity is pardoned” (Isaiah 40:1 & 2). God is calling Christians to pray for, bless and help His people. If it were not for the Jews, we Gentiles would not have our salvation and we would all be facing eternity without God (John 4:22). ‘Did God reject his people? Absolutely not! ... God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says?’ (Romans 11:1 & 2).

Jews have to be re-grafted into the vine, just as Gentiles have to be grafted in. We must all remember that the root of our Christian belief is the God of Abraham, who was a Hebrew (Genesis 14:13), and the commandments given to Moses, also Hebrew (Exodus 2:11). It is that root that sustains our Christian walk and without the root, Christians become Hellenistic and empty, self-serving, money-driven and no better than people in the world, and they become like 'goats'. 'There will be the root of Jesse, He who arises to rule over the Gentiles; in Him the Gentiles will hope' (Romans 15:12).

Many Christians are fiercely jealous of the fact that God chose the Jews, thousands of years before He allowed Gentiles to be offered salvation through the shed blood of our Jewish Messiah. That foolish jealousy brings about anti-Semitic feelings in many Christians, and that causes a rift between them and God. We must hold tightly to our God-given roots and not be proud or boastful. 'If the first fruit (Abraham and the patriarchs) is holy, so is the lump (the nation of Israel). If the root (Abraham) is holy, so are the branches (the Jews). If some of the branches were broken off, and you (Gentiles) being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partakers with them of the root and of the richness of the olive tree (the Kingdom of God), do not boast over the branches. It is not you who support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in." True; by their unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but have reverential fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. See then the goodness and severity of God. Severity toward those who fell; but goodness toward you, if you continue in His goodness; otherwise you also will be cut off. If they (the Jews) do not continue in their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God is able to graft them in again. If you were cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more will these, who are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? ... So all Israel will be saved. Even as it is written, "There will come out of Zion the Deliverer, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. This is my covenant to them (the Jews), when I will take away their sins" (Romans 11:16 to 27).

It is the job of Christians to reach out to the family of Jesus and help them accept Jesus as their Saviour. Jews will always be Jews and it is wrong to expect them to move away from their beliefs and feasts. On the contrary, we need to embrace their feasts because they were all ordained by God. There is not one so-called 'Christian' celebration that has been ordained by God, but all of the Jewish festivals were.

There are many Messianic Jews in Israel and there has been for decades. Here is a wonderful piece of text written by a Messianic Jew during the Second World War. (This piece of text was adopted from the internet.)

#### THE TENTH JEW      By Ben Ami.

Somewhere in France our division lay that night, the front three hundred yards away behind a small hill that hid us from the enemy's sight, but could not hide us from his guns.

Soaked and weary, we had driven ourselves fifteen miles in a forced march over muddy roads to the position we now held. Most of the men found what shelter they could in the wrecked homes and barns. Our two companies crawled into the remains of an old church.

Two of the church walls and part of the roof were still standing. The rest lay in crumbled ruins at our feet. Stones that had once reared themselves in Gothic grandeur mingled with the splintered remains of stained glass windows. Fortunately the wind was hurling the rain against the outer sides of the two walls. Curled up in the corner, we protected ourselves against the rain, but the cold splashed us like a sharp, steel knife.

Hour after hour we lay there, shivering, listening tautly for the intermittent whines of the great shells. The only human sound was Max's wracking cough. Max had been a shipping clerk in his uncle's dress factory. Drafted, he came to us wide-eyed and innocent. Seven months of shock-troop work had neither lessened his innocence nor hardened him. His cough was worse now than it had ever been. His slim body gnarled and wracked itself with every spasm.

The shells came closer. With each explosion the church vibrated. The wind had shifted and the rain drenched us to our skins. We smoked cigarettes to keep warm. The rain doused the cigarettes before they were smoked.

A messenger rushed in to tell us we were to move forward at 5 o'clock. At 4:20 Max died of an internal haemorrhage. Before he died he pleaded with us not to leave him unburied.

With sharp rocks we scooped out a shallow grave for him. Jacob, who had spent three years at a Rabbinical Seminary, was to perform the service. Suddenly we noticed that there were only nine of us, and Jacob insisted that we need ten, a *minyan*.

Silently we stood in the dim half-light of approaching dawn, the rain lashing our wet uniforms. Silently we stared at one another. The minutes ticked off. We needed ten Jews. In fifteen minutes we were to march. We needed ten Jews. The minutes ticked off. The dim light grew stronger. A shell burst nearby. The church vibrated to the explosion. A dull crash boomed behind us. Startled we turned to look. The statue of Jesus behind the shattered altar had toppled between two near-by pillars; the arms of the cross prevented the statue from falling.

Suddenly Jacob shouted, 'Our *minyan* is complete!'

We stared at one another. Tears coursed down our cheeks to mingle with the rain as Jacob tenderly carried the statue of Jesus over to us and set it against the wall. Our *minyan* was complete. We had found the tenth Jew.

Slowly Jacob began the prayer: '*Yisgadal v'yiskadash sh'may rabo, b'olmo deevro hir'usay, v'yamleeh mal'husay.....*' (His Great name be exalted and sanctified in the world that He created, according to His will – and may His Kingship reign.....).

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Jesus is always there for the descendants of Abraham who are His family, and He expects us to be there for them too. He wants us, through His love and our ministry to the Jewish people, to lead them back to the Father so they can be re-grafted into the olive tree. Jesus said, "Go to My brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God'" (John 20:17). "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify these things to you for the assemblies. I AM the Root and the Offspring of David; the Bright and Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16).

Amen and God bless you.

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