

Why The Early Church Fell Into Decline

'When the Day of Pentecost (in Hebrew, Shavuot) had come, the apostles and disciples were all with one accord in one place. Suddenly there came from the sky a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Tongues like fire appeared and were distributed to them. One tongue sat on each of their heads. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other languages as the Holy Spirit gave them the ability to speak' (Acts 2:1 to 4). This event is where we get the phrase, 'Speaking in tongues'.

After Shavuot, committed Messianic Jews spread the Gospel throughout the known world (Romans 10:18). The early church was called, 'Assembly of God' (1 Corinthians 1:2) and the new covenant movement was called, 'The Way' (Acts 19:23) after Jesus said, "I am the Way, Truth and Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Initially, the early church was made up of Messianic Jews before Gentiles became believers in Jesus. Just as the Jewish people were persecuted for centuries because they obeyed the laws of God, so Gentile believers began to experience the same level of persecution. For over three hundred years the early church grew and thrived under the guidance of Jewish Messianic believers. After Constantine accepted Christianity and allowed paganism into the church, some Gentiles rejected Jewish believers because they continued to live as Jesus, the disciples and other Jews always had but the 'Christians' now considered Judaism to be heresy. The church declared itself the 'new Israel'. Some believed the church had overtaken Israel in God's affections, which was very wrong but some believed it and many people still believe it today. Anti-Semitism rose its ugly head and the church wanted to do away with anything and everything Jewish.

We need to remember, Christianity is the offshoot or extension of Judaism. Judaism is the Spiritual root and foundation of Christianity. Christianity is not a religion of itself, it came from our Jewish Messiah Jesus and was taken up and continued to thrive under the guidance of the Jewish people in the first and subsequent centuries. Most of the New Testament is quoted from the Old Testament, which was written by Jewish prophets as they were led by the wisdom of Holy Spirit. 'No prophecy ever came by the will of man but holy men of God spoke, being moved by the Holy Spirit' (2 Peter 1:21). The Apostles realised their writings were to be included in the Sacred Jewish Scriptures and the writings of the Apostles became the New Testament. 'Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him wrote to you. In all of his letters, speaking in them of these things (salvation through the blood of Jesus). In those letters there are some things that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unsettled twist as they do to the other Scriptures (the Old Testament) to their own destruction' (2 Peter 3:15 & 16). What Peter was saying here, if anyone ignores any of the Bible, Old or New Testaments, it would be to their own destruction.

Constantine had all copies of the Bible that had been written in the correct language of Hebrew burned and replaced with Bibles copied into Greek. To this day many Christians believe the New Testament was written in Greek. It was not. The entire New Testament was written in the Hebrew language by Jewish men. Some Bibles were copied into other languages in different areas so the new Christians could read their Bibles in their own languages but initially, the entire New Testament was written in Hebrew. Paul could not have written anything in Greek because he could not speak Greek (Acts 21:37 to 40). He wrote all of his letters in his own hand (2 Thessalonians 3:17) except for just the Book of Romans that he dictated to Tertius for the Jews who were living in Rome (Romans 16:22). Paul wrote in Hebrew and he only ever preached in Hebrew, which surprised some people (Acts 22:2). To prove the New Testament was written in Hebrew, we can look at the death and resurrection of Jesus, Who rose on the third day (Acts 10:40). That time frame only works in the Hebrew language because Jesus died on the Friday and rose on the Sunday. To the Gentile time frame, that is two days but according to the Hebrew calendar, it was three days. In the Hebrew calendar, each day begins at sundown. 'There was evening and morning, one day' (Genesis 1:5). That means Friday was the first day, then came Saturday, then came Sunday when He was resurrected. Sunday is called 'the first day of the week' (Matthew 28:1). That hidden fact proves the writers of the New Testament thought, spoke and wrote in the nuances of the Hebrew language, not Greek. Jesus confirmed that time frame when He said He would be in the tomb for three days just as Jonah had been in the stomach of the whale for three days (Matthew 12:40).

When Constantine ordered the Hebrew Scriptures to be burned, some dedicated Rabbi's hid copies of the original Hebrew scrolls to keep the Holy Scriptures pure and safe. The Hebrew language is the only pure language (Zephaniah 3:9) and the only language fit to bring the holy words of God to mankind. All other languages are corrupted by idolatry. The days, months, planets and many other things are named after false gods and idols from various languages but mainly from Latin and Greek or pagan religions. The Jewish believers could no longer see anything of their ancient holy religion Judaism, being taught in churches and many left. Other Jewish people were thrown out, persecuted, killed, martyred and very cruelly, some had

their children taken away to be raised as good 'Christians'. Anti-Semitism in the church increased. The Jewish believers were blamed for the most ridiculous things; things the Jewish people had never done nor would ever do. The idolatrous Church of Rome with its corrupt system of empty religion overcame the world and slaughtered anyone who did not adhere to its manmade traditions and often evil practices. Jewish people were and still are often cruelly murdered just for being born Jewish. Scripturally, whatever we suffer because of our steadfast faith in God, we will be richly rewarded when we get to heaven. 'Blessed are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when people reproach you, persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for Jesus' sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven, for that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you' (Matthew 5:10 to 12).

The centre of the Gentile church moved away from Jerusalem to Rome and they became proud, something the Bible strictly warned Christians against. 'Do not boast over the branches (Jewish people). If you boast, remember, it is not you who support the root (of salvation through the Jews) but the root (of Judaism) supports you' (Romans 11:18). Persecution of Jews and genuine Gentile believers began and continues to this day. Not all Christians were or are anti-Semites but the root of anti-Semitism is still prevalent in many churches. All Christians need to examine their own hearts, minds and attitudes to stamp out all wrong attitudes, beliefs and practices towards Jewish people and the deeply committed modern disciples. Anti-Semitism should not continue to exist among people who claim to love Jesus. Jesus was Jewish and anyone who loves Him must love His Jewish family, and He takes it personally when someone blesses one of His family and He takes it equally personally when someone does evil to any Jewish person. Jesus said, "Most certainly I tell you, when you did (good things) for one of the least of these My brothers (Jewish person) you did it for Me ... Most certainly I tell you, when as you did not do good for one of the least of these, you did not do good for Me" (Matthew 25:40 & 45). Jesus also told us the blessing we receive when doing good things for the Jewish people, which He regards as righteousness. 'The righteous will enter eternal life' (Matthew 25:46). Jesus also made clear the penalty of ignoring or openly doing evil to a Jewish person. Jesus will say, "Depart from Me you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his fallen angels ... These will go away into eternal punishment" (Matthew 25:41 & 46).

The church cannot replace Israel. Judaism is the foundation of Christianity and Christianity is an extension of Judaism. Nothing and no one can ever change that fact. It is God ordained. The Lord told Abraham, all families of the earth would be blessed by him (Genesis 12:3). Our salvation comes solely from the Jewish people (John 4:22). God had pre-planned the salvation of Gentiles through the Hebrews and if God said it, people have no right to argue the fact. Jesus is our Jewish Messiah, which means the anti-Semitic persecution of Jewish people is in fact anti-Messiah. So-called 'Christians' massacred thousands of Jewish people during the crusades, the Spanish inquisition and hundreds of other wicked church-based pogroms throughout Europe. If those Christians were genuine, they would have never harmed any Jewish person. The Bible makes it clear, we owe the Jewish people a huge debt. They brought us salvation and God's Word, which is the Bible so in turn we should embrace them, thank them and support them in any way we can, just like the Gentiles did in the New Testament. 'It has been the good pleasure of (the Gentiles) in Macedonia and Achaia to make some contribution for the poor among the Jewish saints of Jerusalem. They (the Gentiles) were pleased to do it for they are in debt to them (the Jewish people), for the Gentiles have come to share in the Jerusalem Jews' Spiritual blessings so they should to be of service to them in material blessings' (Romans 15:26 & 27).

Early Gentiles wanted and many still accept paganism in the church, very subtly changed to look good. The holy feast of Hanukkah was replaced by Christmas, which is very pagan and celebrates the birthday of the Roman god Zeus and the Persian god Mithra on December 25th. New Year's Day is a pagan Roman celebration carried over from the Roman Empire. The holy feast of Passover was replaced by Easter with all its pagan rituals to celebrate Ishtar the fertility goddess. The holy Sabbath Day of rest instigated by God Himself after creation, was changed to Sunday, the day pagans worship the sun god. The early church did observe both Sabbath (Saturday) and Sunday as days of rest when they broke bread together (Acts 20:7). Jesus Himself conducted the very first 'church' service on the first day of the week (Sunday) when He met up with the apostles after He was resurrected (John 20:19 to 22). The Sabbath Day of rest was given to Jewish people to celebrate creation. The 'First Day of the Week' rest was given to Gentiles to celebrate the resurrection of our risen Lord. However, the holy Sabbath (Shabbat), the seventh day of the week given to us as a rest day has been corrupted. Anti-Semitism corrupted the early church's morality and its beliefs. Paganism replaced Jewish and Scriptural practices and that paganism is still rampant in Christianised countries today. Most Christians still celebrate Easter, Christmas, Halloween and go to church on a Sunday, only to ignore God on the original Sabbath Day, Saturday.

Being in touch with our Jewish roots is a matter of accurate understanding of the Scriptures and it is prophetic destiny. Israel is not just another nation; it is God's plan for the entire sinful fallen world. God's

desire is for Jews and Gentiles as one New Body in Jesus serving God together. That is God's plan for mankind. Jesus said, "I have other sheep (Gentiles) who are not of this (Jewish) fold. I must bring them (save them) also and they will hear My voice. They (Jews and Gentiles) will become one flock with one Shepherd" (John 10:16). 'We are God's workmanship created in Jesus for good works. Remember, you were Gentiles called unclean in the flesh, separate from the (pure Jewish) Messiah, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of the promise having no hope and without God in the world. Now in Jesus, you who were once far off are made near in the blood of Jesus. He is our peace Who made both Jews and Gentiles one Body and broke down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in the flesh the hostility, the law of commandments contained in ordinances so He might create in Himself one New Man of the two (Jews and Gentiles) making peace, to reconcile them both in one Body to God through the cross having killed the hostility. Jesus came and preached peace to you Gentiles who were far off and to those Jews who were near. Through Him we both have our access in one Holy Spirit to the Father. You are no longer strangers and foreigners but you are fellow citizens with the Jewish saints and of the household of God, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Himself being the Chief Cornerstone in Whom the whole (figurative spiritual) building, fitted together grows into a holy Temple in the Lord in Whom you are built together for a habitation of God in the Holy Spirit' (Ephesians 2:10 to 22). After reading these verses, any Christian who continues to resent or ignore Jewish people does not understand the concept of salvation through the blood and cross of Jesus, to reconcile Gentiles to God via His Jewish Son.

The Kingdom of Messiah is comparable to the historical Davidic kingdom. King David ruled over Israel and Judah plus many Gentile nations in the surrounding area. Those Gentiles did not have to become Jewish nor did they observe Judaism, they did not have to eat kosher food, they did not have to participate in the Jewish feasts of the Lord but they were subject to the laws of the land and the rules of King David. When Jesus returns to earth, He will also rule all nations and people from every tribe and language (Revelation 7:9). All Jews and Gentile Christians have distinct callings within the overall plan of God and within the Kingdom of Israel's Messiah. This is a crucial Scriptural concept some churches choose to avoid. Sadly, the Catholic Church became extremely powerful and intolerant, often killing Jewish people and genuine Christians. They were zealous for their faith but misguided in their approach. They had religion but they did not have a personal relationship with God.

Jesus came to save our souls from hell; He did not come to save our mortal bodies. Many people believe they can live their lives as they want and still end up in heaven. That is wrong. Of course all children go to heaven, but the Bible makes it clear, only the adults who are walking closely with God at the time of their death will go to heaven. That is why the Lord died for us and it is why He instigated the church after His resurrection. If the early church had not fallen into decline and if they had stayed on the path laid down by Jesus, this world would be a much better place to live right now. If the early church had obeyed the words of Jesus, entire nations would be filled with disciples. We can all see the result of the world's overall disobedience to God's commands. All we can do in our time is obey the words of Jesus and do our personal best to share the truth of the Gospel to as many people as possible, hopefully leading them to full salvation and a close relationship with God through Jesus our Messiah. Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (in Hebrew, Elohim), teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you" (Matthew 28:19 & 20). Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole population. Those who believe and are baptised will be saved but those who disbelieve will be condemned. These signs will follow those who believe. In My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues, snakes will not harm them and if they accidentally drink any deadly thing it will not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick and they will recover." After He had spoken to them, the Lord Jesus was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. The disciples went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the Word by the signs that followed. Amen' (Mark 16:15 to 20).

Amen and God bless you.

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