

Before we officially get into the message, off-recording I just wanted to say thank you to everyone who helped us while we went to Israel! Obviously, Pastor Ben and the Elders you all sent us with your blessing and we could not have done it without you. A special thanks to the conglomerate of Jack and Libby, Asa and Emily, and Austin and Hannah for caring for our children. This is our family and we trust the people in this room more than anyone in our lives. I also should thank Pastor Nick for initiating the trip!

We have many stories we are excited to share over the next season, you'll hear a little bit about it in the message,

*brief testimonies??

Joy?

Asa?

Good Morning Arising Church,

Last week we heard a profound message titled: From Rome to Jerusalem. In it, you gained a new perspective on an ancient site: Galilee. Let's revisit Isaiah 9...

- **Isaiah 9:1–2 (NIV)**

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future **he will honor Galilee of the nations**, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

² The people walking in darkness

have seen a great light;

on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

Praise Adonai his plan has always included a spot for Gentiles. **We have the utmost responsibility as graft-ins.** We were once a people walking in darkness given a great light, carried to us in arms of the Jewish people.

Now we, as Gentiles, have the task as was stated Sunday and Wednesday—to carry the Jewish people back to their King. We are lowly unclean bird—even dogs, but despite our low state we have a high calling.

We are going to continue in this vein today. Something remarkable about being in Israel is being constantly surrounded by Biblical places, and a culture that's roots is just - Tanakh! Our history here is a few hundred years old. That's NOTHING. Our best stories and heroes are a little kid who commits property damage and is still somehow noble in his father's eyes, and a bloody war over whether black people were humans or not.

When you are in Israel you will driving down the road and Pastor Nik Arezina will go "hey, we're in Samsons hometown". Or, you'll be on the highway and you can pull over and suddenly you're in the valley of Elah, and standing in the stream David found his stones.

You'll be in downtown Jerusalem, and every building has the Word on it. You meet people named Mordecai and Moshe. In the hotel lobbies are wonderful men and women, devoting their lives to Torah, praying and reading. The American culture however, is capitalism, podcasts, and homosexuality. Their culture is the Word.

When you walk the streets in this culture you begin to understand a concept we discussed in our Exodus Foundations: Haggadah.

(READ SLIDE)

Haggadah

The Passover Haggadah emphasizes the importance of each generation personally experiencing the Exodus from Egypt. This concept is encapsulated in the directive that "In every generation everyone is duty bound to see himself as if he came forth out of Egypt"[1][2]. This approach creates a paradoxical dynamic where Jews recall a past event while simultaneously experiencing it as a present reality, uniting memory and hope in a continuous identity[2]. The Haggadah achieves this through storytelling (le-sapper), which requires adapting the narrative for different audiences, ensuring each retelling is unique[3]. This practice reflects a deeper spiritual attitude of remembering both oneself and God, integrating one's identity with the divine initiative of redemption[2]. The development of the Haggadah itself mirrors Jewish history, evolving as Jews moved through different diasporic centers, adapting to changing cultural contexts while maintaining the core theme of redemption[4]. This tradition serves to reinforce the psychological shift from slavery to freedom, reminding Jews of their deliverance and ongoing relationship with God[5].

[1] Thiselton, A. C. (2000). *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 877). W.B. Eerdmans.

[2] Uffenheimer, B., & Reventlow, H. G., eds. (1988). *Creative Biblical Exegesis: christian and jewish hermeneutics through the centuries* (Vol. 59, p. 208). JSOT Press.

[3] Silber, D., & Furst, R. (2011). *A Passover Haggadah: Go Forth and Learn* (p. 8). The Jewish Publication Society.

[4] Stern, D. (2008). Foreword. In *JPS Commentary on the Haggadah: Historical Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (p. xiii). The Jewish Publication Society.

[5] Cherry, S. (2007). *Torah through time: understanding Bible commentary from the rabbinic period to modern times* (p. 118). The Jewish Publication Society.

The idea behind Haggadah is that each successive generation sees itself as experiencing the same events as their ancestors. This can be hard to grasp for Americans, but this is an important Biblical theme and cultural facet in Israel you need to grasp. I'm going to take a moment and really help you understand the Haggadah. Let's start with some passages:

- **Exodus 13:8 (NIV)**

⁸ On that day tell your son, 'I do this because of **what the Lord did for me** when I came out of Egypt.'

This is instruction from Adonai himself. Once the Israelites are out of Egypt and the Exodus is in the past, they are instructed to forever tell their children "I do this because of what the Lord did for ME." This is not the last time this is commanded.

- **Deuteronomy 6:20–21 (NIV)**

²⁰ In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has

commanded you?” ²¹ tell him: “**We were slaves** of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

So even in future generations, when the people who actually were in Egypt were long gone, the Hebraic perspective was "WE WERE SLAVES". Not "*they were slaves*"—we. And the Lord brought "US" out.

If we take this perspective and blow it up, it is actually pervasive in the Bible and Jewish practices:

- Sukkot

- **Leviticus 23:41–43 (NIV)**

⁴¹ Celebrate this as a festival to the Lord for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² Live in temporary shelters for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in such shelters ⁴³ so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in temporary shelters when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.’ ”

In an effort to deeply connect with the generation in the wilderness, Israel has a yearly feast for all people where they live in tents like their fathers did. Because they ALL experienced it.

- Hanukkah

There is discrepancy concerning the menorah in the Hannukah story and it is certainly not the point of the story, but isn't it fascinating that the way they celebrate a holiday is through recreating the event by lighting the menorah?

- Sabbath

One of the most foundational elements of Jewish life is Sabbath. It is, in and of itself, a re-creation of the creation story! They structure their entire week so they experience the sabbath as God did when he created the world!

Deuteronomy 29:14 is one of the central verses that frames this principal.

- **Deuteronomy 29:14–15 (NIV)**

¹⁴ I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you ¹⁵
who are standing here with us today in the presence of the Lord
our God but also with those who are not here today.

The covenant made at Sinai was made not only with those present - but also with all their descendants not physically present. Listen to how this passage is described in Midrash:

Shemot Rabbah 28:6

Another matter: “God spoke all these matters, saying” – Rabbi Yitzḥak said: What the prophets are destined to prophesy in each and every generation, they received at Mount Sinai, as Moses says to Israel: “Rather, with him who is here with us standing today [before the Lord our God], and with him who is not here with us today” (Deuteronomy 29:14). It is not written here, “standing with us today,” but rather, “with us today.” These are the souls [of people] who are destined to be created, which lack substance, in whose regard standing is not stated. Even though they were not there at that moment, each and every one received his due.

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According to this it is as if each generation was present in some way, despite lacking physical substance. In essence, all Jews for all time were present at Sinai in spirit and through their fathers... Now, in light of that perspective, let's read Hebrews 7, because it actually makes this passage come alive...

- **Hebrews 7:7–10 (NIV)**

⁷ And without doubt the lesser is blessed by the greater. ⁸ In the one case, the tenth is collected by people who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. ⁹ One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, ¹⁰ because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

Saints, this is in incredible principal we could glean from. As you can see it is pervasive in the Bible, and thus, we should take it seriously. We are not Jews, but we have the incredible privilege of joining with the saints of old, being inspired by those moments, personally taking responsibility for what they require and live it out today!

- **Psalms 145:4 (NIV)**

⁴ One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.

Saints, we are included into something truly special! This is their history, and we have the incredible honor of being mysteriously grafted in, something we must be proud of!

- **Romans 8:14–17 (NIV)**

¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba*, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

What a contrast....dirty birds and dogs, yet somehow CO-HEIRS WITH CHRIST. What a remarkable honor. And it is built upon the history of the Nation of Israel... Also Ephesians 2:

- **Ephesians 2:19–20 (NIV)**

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and **also members of his household**, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

Fellow citizens and members of the household! This is truly remarkable. We have an incredible heritage! Our God has been leading his people

since their beginning. And we serve the Same God! Don't you love that song? What he has done for them he can do for us!

We get the chance to do what they have done! What Israel has done we are destined for! Slay giants! Form undying brotherly covenants! Go into all the world preaching! See the sick healed, the dead raised! Study the WORD!

Endure horrible suffering...

Perhaps the only thing more identifiable than their love for Torah, is the widespread scorn globally.

On the topic of suffering and on the back of the Haggadah. If we are credited with the victories and deliverances of the past. What about the horrors?



What you see here is the tomb of Zechariah. The hill on the right? The upwards slope leads to the Mount of Olives. Just up the hill to the left a little ways—the garden of gethsemane.

Let's see if Jesus ever talked about this, *reverse* Haggadah of sorts...

- **Luke 11:47–51 (NIV)**

⁴⁷ “Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it
was your ancestors who killed them. ⁴⁸ So you testify that you
approve of what your ancestors did; they killed the prophets, and
you build their tombs. ⁴⁹ Because of this, God in his wisdom said,
‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill
and others they will persecute.’ ⁵⁰ Therefore this generation will
be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been
shed since the beginning of the world, ⁵¹ from the blood of Abel to
the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the
sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible
for it all.

As if in a reverse Haggadah. Jesus holds the present generation in his day responsible for the atrocities of their fathers. Do you remember how Zechariah died? Does that sound fair?

(READ SLIDE)

2 Chronicles 24:17-22

17 After the death of Jehoiada, the officials of Judah came and paid homage to the king, and he listened to them. 18 They abandoned the temple of the Lord, the God of their fathers, and worshiped Asherah poles and idols. Because of their guilt, God's anger came upon Judah and Jerusalem. 19 Although the Lord sent prophets to the people to bring them back to him, and though they testified against them, they would not listen. 20 Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, "This is what God says: 'Why do you disobey the Lord's commands? You will not prosper. Because you have forsaken the Lord, he has forsaken you.'" 21 But they plotted against him, and by order of the king they stoned him to death in the courtyard of the Lord's temple. 22 King Joash did not remember the kindness Zechariah's father Jehoiada had shown him but killed his son, who said as he lay dying, "May the Lord see this and call you to account."

Zechariah the priest, the son of Jehoiada, was killed brutally in the very temple of God.

Think back to our recent sermons. Did you notice it said "Joash did not remember the kindness Zechariah's father Jehoida showed him?" Do you remember the kindness Jehoiada showed to Joash?

He saved his life. Jehoiada hid Joash in the temple for six years, shielding him from death, raising him in holiness, and then lifted him up before the nation at 7 years old—anointed him, blessed him, and proclaimed over him: **LONG LIVE THE KING.**

And how does Joash repay the one who rescued him? By killing his son...in the very place where Jehoiada once saved his life.

Many have seen this as a shadow of Christ's death—how Zechariah died unjustly by his own brothers, like Christ. Today...we're going to look at it a bit differentlt.

Think with me: Have you ever heard of another story like this?

A righteous priest who took someone from a doomed family, saved him when judgment was closing in, raised him in the house of God, called him to live as royalty, and poured out blessing after blessing on a life that should have been lost?

And then—after that priest dies—this “king,” the very one who would be death without the priest, turns against the priest’s own sons...lifts his hand against the very family through whom he received life?

Is there anyone out there from a doomed family saved by a benevolent priest? Is there an undeserving people who were lifted up, given a kingdom, and invited into covenant mercy?

Is there anyone in history, who received such kindness, and repaid it by scorning the sons of that priest? By forgetting the family through whom their salvation came?

The Christian Church is Joash...

Gentiles were as good as dead—but raised to life. Saved from judgment, received blessing upon blessing. Yet our response for more than a millennia has been to scorn the sons of the Great High Priest. To forget the family through whom salvation came.

If Jesus held his current generation responsible for the death of ALL the prophets?

How do you think the Christian Church stands in light of its past horrors...

Our message is titled:



This is the name of the Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem...More on that later...

Let's revisit some Christian history: starting with a German theologian.

"What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews? Since they live among us, we dare not tolerate their conduct, now that we are aware of their lying and reviling and blaspheming. If we do, we become sharers in their lies, cursing and blasphemy. Thus we cannot extinguish the unquenchable fire of divine wrath, of which the prophets speak, nor can we convert the Jews. With prayer and the fear of God we must practice a sharp mercy to see whether we might save at least a few from the glowing flames. We dare not avenge ourselves. Vengeance a thousand times worse than we could wish them already has them by the throat. I shall give you my sincere advice:

First, 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. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians, and do not condone or knowingly tolerate such public lying, cursing, and blaspheming of his Son and of his Christians"

Luther, Martin. On the Jews and Their Lies (Von den Juden und ihren Lügen). 1543. In Luther's Works, Vol. 47: The Christian in Society IV, edited by Franklin Sherman, 121–306. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.



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.

John Calvin (AD 1509–1564):

19. John Calvin, excerpt from "Ad Quaestiones et Objecta Juaei Cuiusdam Responsio," The Jew in Christian Theology (North Carolina and London: Gerhard Falk, McFarland and Company, Inc., 1931).



פיסול נוצרי הממחיש את השקפתה של הנצרות ביחס לעיוורונה והשפלתה של היהדות אל מול פיכחונה וניצחונה של הנצרות. הקתדרלה של שטרסבורג, צרפת, המאה ה-13.

Christian sculpture illustrating the attitude of Christianity towards the blindness and degradation of Judaism versus the wisdom and triumph of Christianity. From the cathedral wall in Strasbourg, France, 13th century.

Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre Dame de Strasbourg, France



בעולם הדימויים הנוצרי עתידים היהודים להישרף באש הגיהנום בשל "חטאיהם". גרמניה, 1175.

In the world of Christian imagery, Jews were portrayed as burning in the inferno of Hell because of their "sins". Germany, 1175.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, France

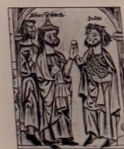


Facsimile

עיטור מתוך הברית החדשה המתאר את יהודה איש קריות, ה"יהודי הבוגד", שהסגיר לרומאים את ישו ושליחיו תמורת שלושים שקלי כסף. דמות היהודי באיור חבושה בכובע מיוחד, שבאמצעותו סומנו היהודים בימי הביניים. אוסטריה, המאה ה-14.

Illustration from the New Testament depicting Judas Iscariot as "the treacherous Jew" who handed Jesus over to the Romans for thirty pieces of silver. The Jewish figure in the illustration is wearing a distinctive hat that was used to mark Jews in the Middle Ages. Austria, 14th century.

Bildarchiv Foto Marburg, Philipps Universität, Marburg, Germany



Facsimile

בעיר טרנט שבצפון איטליה נמצאה ב-1475 גופתו של ילד נוצרי בשם סימון. עלילת הדם שנרקמה כנגד יהודי העיר הובילה להאשמתם ברצח פולחני. בעקבות משפט הועלו חלקם על המוקד. הילד הוכרז קדוש, ואת סיפור מותו הפיצה הכנסייה. חלק מצויר מזבח שהוצב בכנסייה באיטליה, 1493-1510.

In the town of Trent, northern Italy, the body of a Christian child named Simon was found in 1475. A blood libel ensued and the local Jews were accused of ritual murder. After a trial, some of them were burned at the stake. The child was canonized and the story of his death was spread by the Church.

Painting: Detail from an altar painting placed in a church in Italy, 1493-1510.

Loaned by Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Gift of Lord Jacob Rothschild, London.



I implore you brothers and sisters, do not in this moment try to alleviate yourself from the weight of responsibility. Often times when faced with a difficult reality like this one you can try in your mind to reason out of conviction by crediting yourself with actions who have never actually taken.

You may say in your heart and be comforted at the thought of: "I would have been different", "I would have stood up and done something". The truth is: probably not. Here's a litmus test, if you don't have the courage to confront your extended family on their sin—you have your answer. If you can't admit to your own sinful heart when its exposed....—you have your answer.

You cannot know if you would have done something— Until you actually do something.

I am under the personal belief the anti-Christ will be Islamic. But, if I am wrong and He is not Islamic, perhaps he will be Christian. In fact, we have already had a Christian anti-Christ figure:



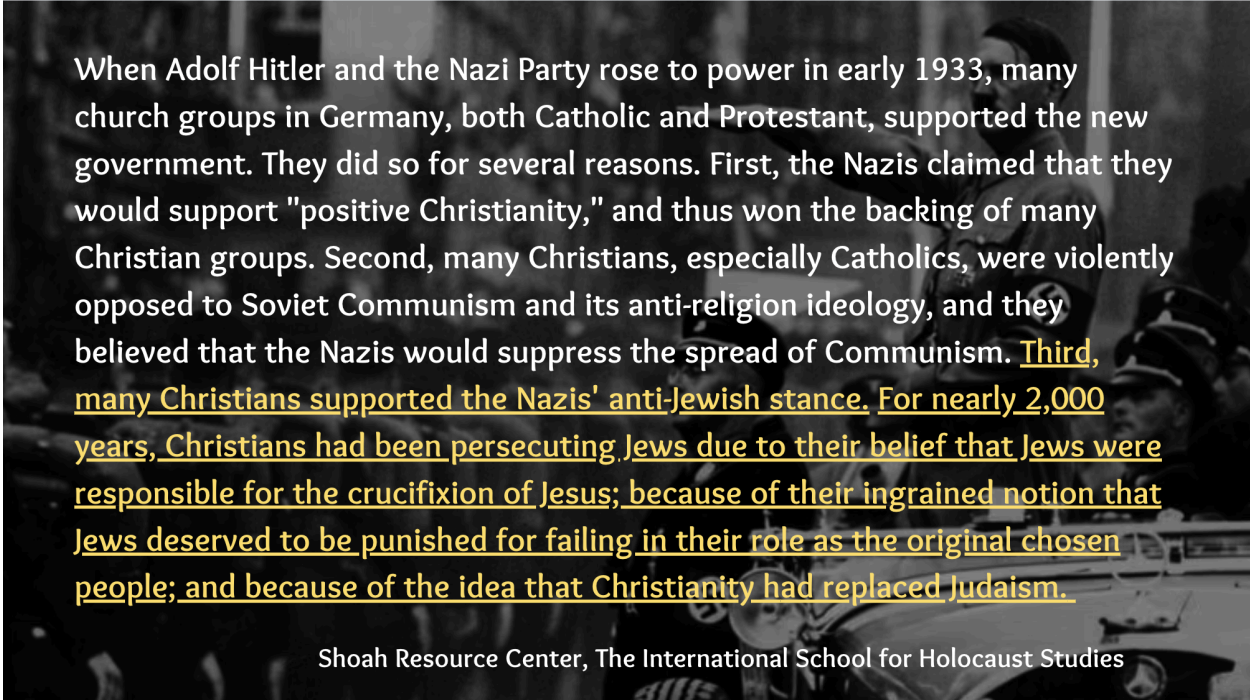
Whether it looks like the calm-mild mannered Christianity you grew up with or not—The Third Reich was built upon what they considered to be Christian values. Here is an excerpt from an early speech from Hitler.

ADOLF HITLER

I would like here to appeal to a greater than I, Count Lerchenfeld. He said in the last session of the Landtag that his feeling 'as a man and a Christian' prevented him from being an anti-Semite. I say: My feeling as a Christian points me to my Lord and Savior as a fighter. It points me to the man who once in loneliness, surrounded only by a few followers, recognized these Jews for what they were and summoned men to fight against them and who, God's truth! was greatest not as a sufferer but as a fighter. In boundless love as a Christian and as a man I read through the passage which tells us how the Lord at last rose in His might and seized the scourge to drive out of the Temple the brood of vipers and adders. How terrific was his fight against the Jewish poison.

Speech delivered at Munich 12 April 1922; from Norman H. Baynes, ed. (1942). *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler: April 1922-August 1939*. 1. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 19-20.

And it wasn't just good Christian theology according to Hitler—Christians of his day agreed.



When Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power in early 1933, many church groups in Germany, both Catholic and Protestant, supported the new government. They did so for several reasons. First, the Nazis claimed that they would support "positive Christianity," and thus won the backing of many Christian groups. Second, many Christians, especially Catholics, were violently opposed to Soviet Communism and its anti-religion ideology, and they believed that the Nazis would suppress the spread of Communism. Third, many Christians supported the Nazis' anti-Jewish stance. For nearly 2,000 years, Christians had been persecuting Jews due to their belief that Jews were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus; because of their ingrained notion that Jews deserved to be punished for failing in their role as the original chosen people; and because of the idea that Christianity had replaced Judaism.

Shoah Resource Center, The International School for Holocaust Studies

There is a reason we started with the Haggadah. It's time to throw away indifference towards Israel. Its time for to go beyond political support.

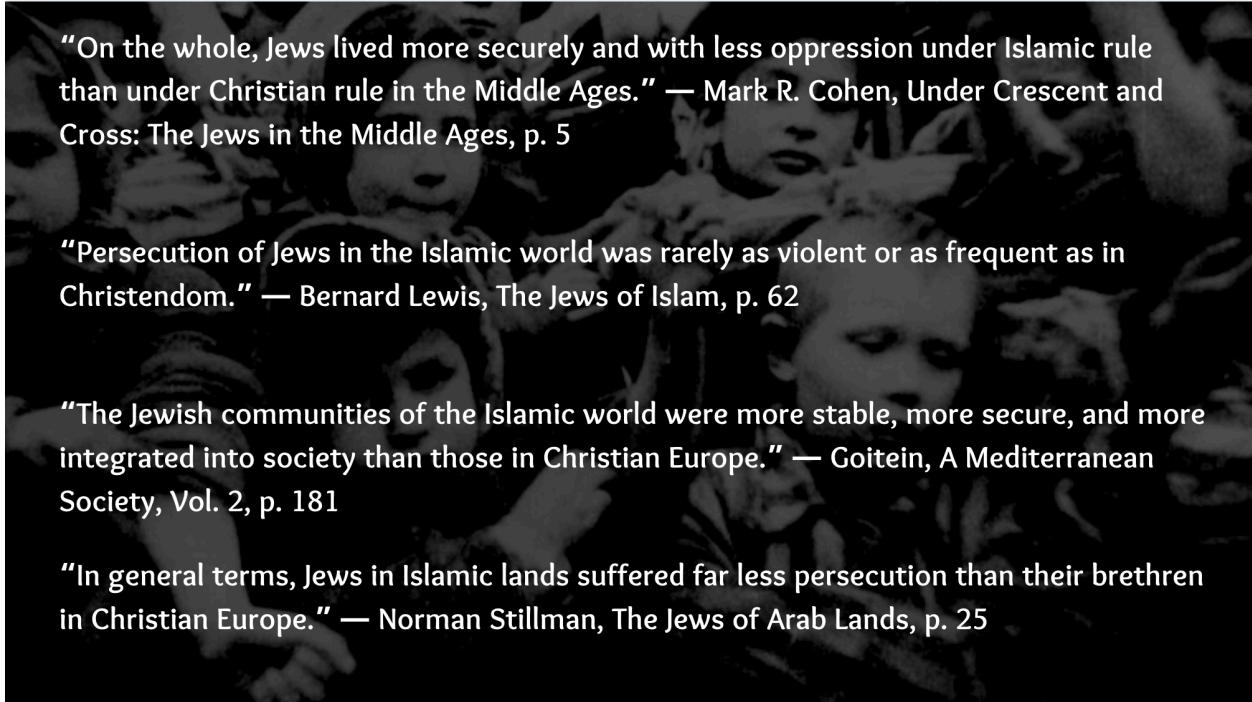
If we learned anything from the Haggadah today—You must reckon with the reality that it was men in the name of Christianity who killed the Jewish people for generations—and if they are responsible, so are we. Consider the Paul using this same idea in Romans.

- **Romans 5:12–14 (NIV)**

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—

In Paul's mind, even though all were not present physical in the garden, we are all just as guilty as He is. Why would Christians and the Church be any different? I did now know this until going to Israel, but despite being surrounded by Muslims who want them dead, it is still a pervasive thought that historically it was better to be a Jew under Islam than Christianity!

Did you know that? Of course not..



"On the whole, Jews lived more securely and with less oppression under Islamic rule than under Christian rule in the Middle Ages." — Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*, p. 5

"Persecution of Jews in the Islamic world was rarely as violent or as frequent as in Christendom." — Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, p. 62

"The Jewish communities of the Islamic world were more stable, more secure, and more integrated into society than those in Christian Europe." — Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, Vol. 2, p. 181

"In general terms, Jews in Islamic lands suffered far less persecution than their brethren in Christian Europe." — Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, p. 25

It is time to wake up to the actual reality of our current world, and the actual history of our fathers.

Hatred of the Jews is growing not slowing. Do you honestly think it is going to just go away?

Here is the hard truth we needed to get to. Ministering to Jews is not as simple as just walking up to them and reading Isaiah 53...

Do you know how many things I've heard "what do the jews do with Isaiah 53?" Let's actually take a moment and read it.

Isaiah 53 (NIV)

Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? _____

The answer: Israel
(Ex 6:6)

² He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. _____

Least among
the Nations
(Deut 7:7)

³ He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. _____
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Egypt, Babylon, Persia,
Greece, Rome,
Byzantine, Islam,
Ottoman, Britain, Nazi

⁴ Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God, _____
stricken by him, and afflicted.

Considered punished by
God: Christian
perspective

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him, _____
and by his wounds we are healed.

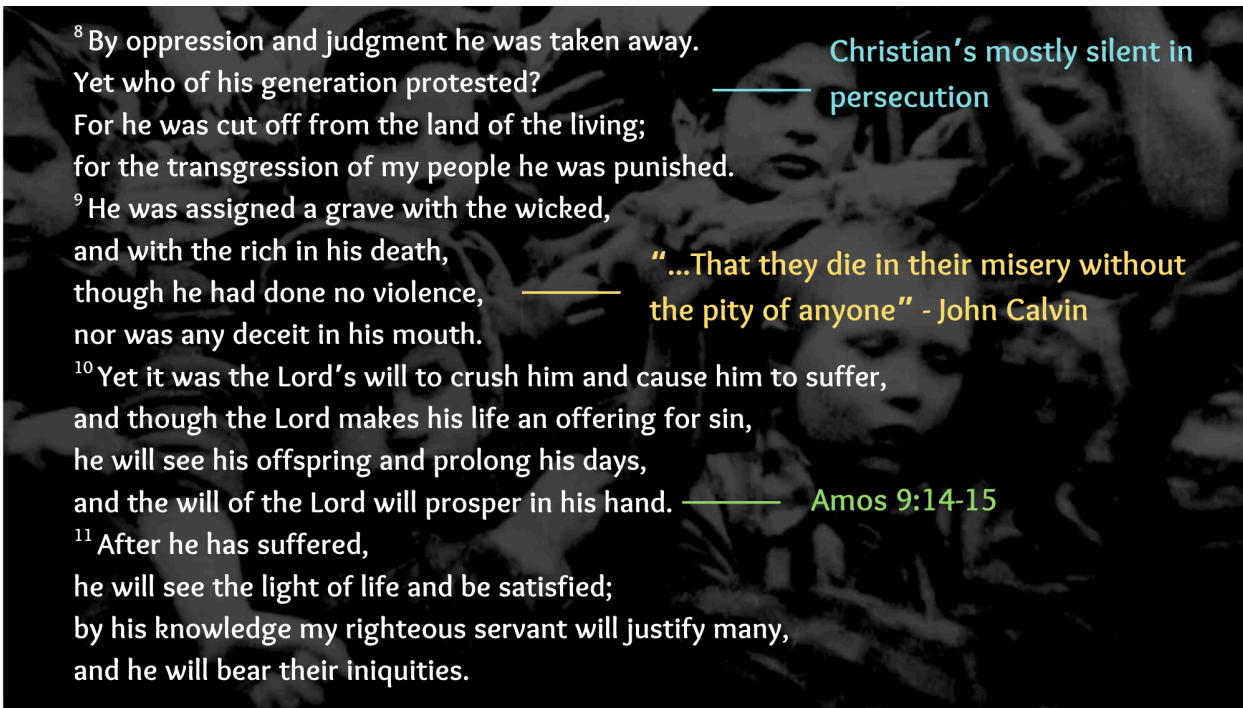
Their faith passed down to
us has only cost them pain

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, _____
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

We have gone astray from our
older brother

⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, _____
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

No one has experienced more
persecution



⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.

Christian's mostly silent in
persecution

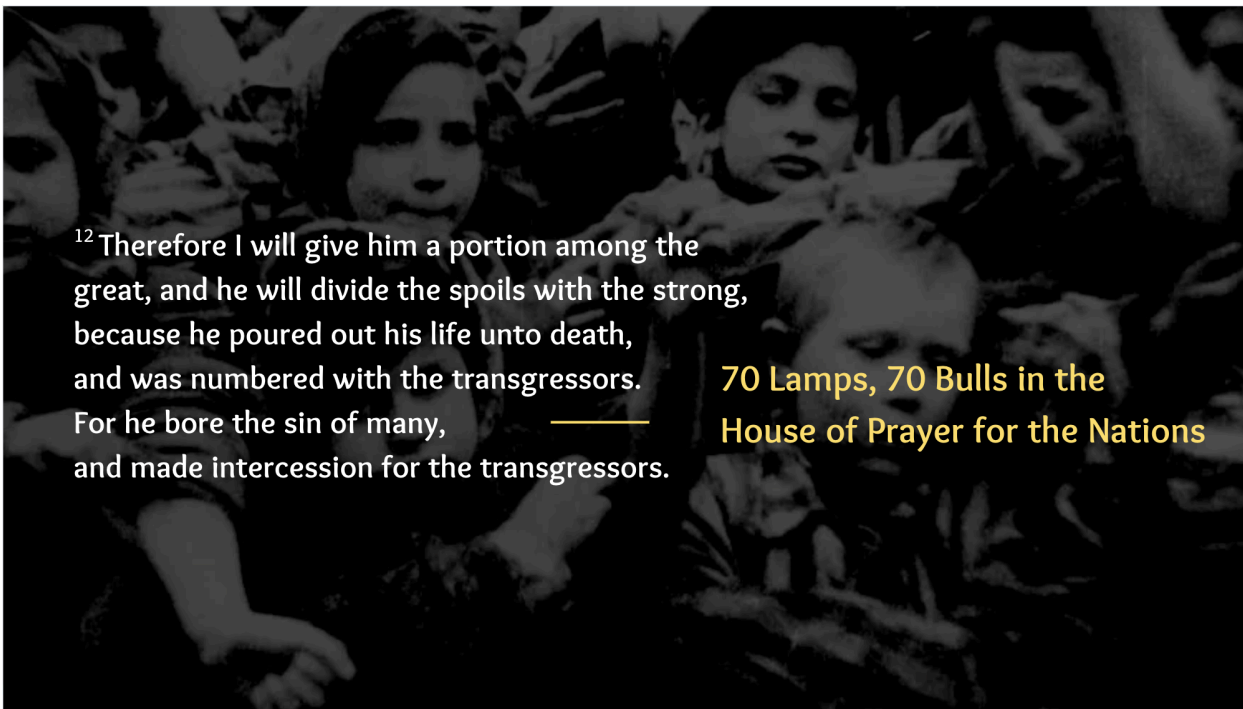
⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

“...That they die in their misery without
the pity of anyone” - John Calvin

¹⁰ Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

Amos 9:14-15

¹¹ After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.



¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the
great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

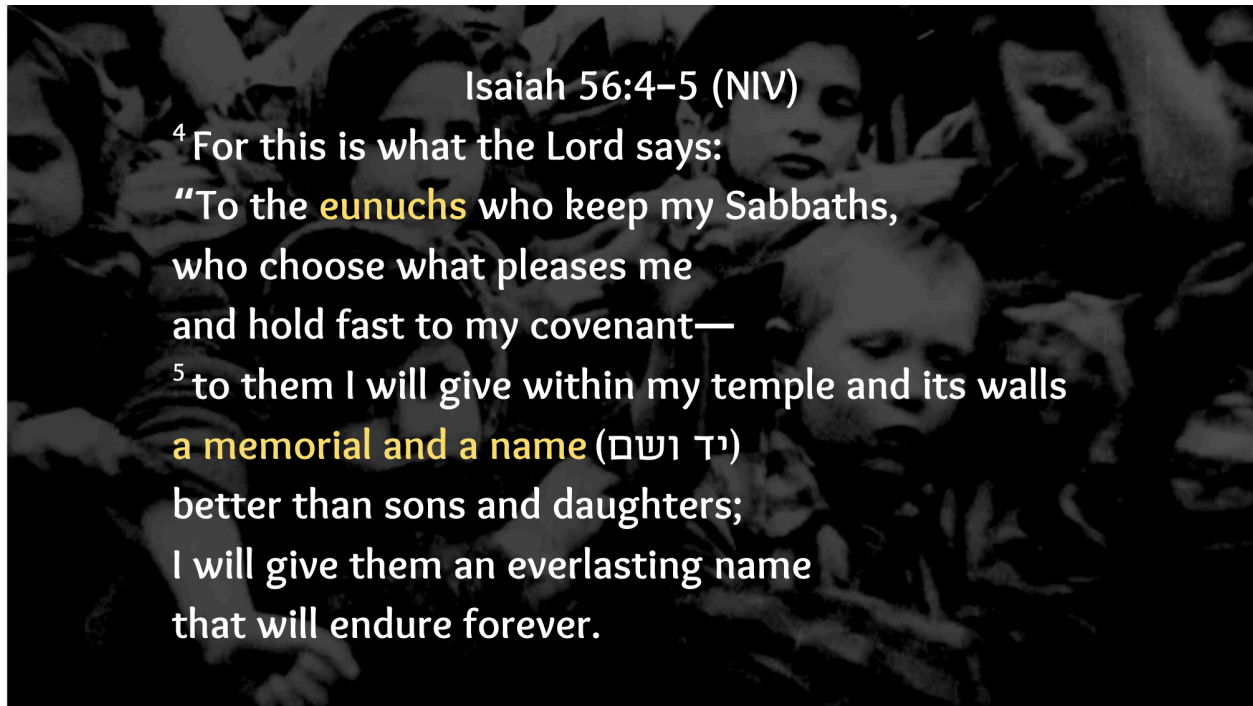
70 Lamps, 70 Bulls in the
House of Prayer for the Nations

We need renewed minds to minister to God's people.

*talk about ministering to Jews in Israel.

Our message is named after Isaiah 56:4-5, which also is the namesake for the Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem: Yad V'Shem which means: "a memorial and a name".

Let's read it.



To some it may seem like an obscure passage. What do eunuchs have to do with the victims of the Holocaust? The answer: the cutting off of the generations.

The Third Reich was built on extermination, they wanted the lineage of all Jews to end. For many of the 6 million Jews killed, many of those were complete families, whose generations were cut off completely—like a eunuch's would be.

That is the price to pay for being Adonai's beloved. That is the price for following the Word of God. This is the call Peter makes to follow and be like Christ?

- **Philippians 1:29–2:1 (NIV)**

²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

To be like Christ, Paul says, requires we suffer like him and go through the same struggle He did. There are innumerable verses on this principal. But it certainly provokes a difficult question.

Who has really lived a life that really reflects Christ's more? The average Christian....or the Jewish people who do not believe in Him yet have been treated throughout history just like he was...

- **Romans 8:14–17 (NIV)**

¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba*, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

It's certainly fascinating to consider which people group has actually reflected the sufferings of Christ more throughout History...

So what is our response?

We need be more like the Pharisees...

Yes, you heard me.

Pharisee:

- Matt 23:2-3 do everything they tell you
- 2nd Century BC movement of holiness
- Name given them by opponents b/c they were holy "Separated Ones"
- Josephus said of the Sadducees, Essenes, and Pharisees the Pharisees were the most accurate
- Hillel, Gamaliel, Paul, and many believers were Pharisees - Acts 15:5
- Taught: study of the Torah as the most important form of worship even surpassing the Temple
- *** John 3 is the beginning of a Pharisee who comes to faith, because his stoney heart was challenged

To be a Pharisee/Ruling Council:

- Bet Sefer "House of the Book" ages 6 to 10 years [5 books memorized]
- Bet Talmud "House of Learning" ages 10-14 years [39 books and oral traditions + art of questions]
- Bet Midrash "House of Study-Understanding" ages 14-30

Let's talk about two Pharisees you need to model your life after.

- **John 3:1–21 (NIV)**

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council.

Nicodemus was as accomplished, stationed in "the believing community", society, and Word as anybody, but look at how Jesus treats him:

2 He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

3 Jesus replied, “**Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.**”

4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

5 Jesus answered, “**Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.**”⁶

Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

9 “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

10 “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not

understand these things?”¹¹ Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people

do not accept our testimony.¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?¹³

No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

Jesus was not easy on Nicodemus. Did he get his feelings hurt and abandon Jesus? Let's see...

- **John 7:45–52 (NIV)**

⁴⁵ Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”

⁴⁶ “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied.

⁴⁷ “You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted.

⁴⁸ “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him?” ⁴⁹

No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.”

⁵⁰ Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, ⁵¹ “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”

⁵² They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”

So not only was Jesus hard on Nicodemus, so were the Pharisees! Everyone turned against him. His future was uncertain in John 3, But you can see a spark of courage in him...

Let's talk about another Pharisee...

- **Luke 23:50–52 (NIV)**

⁵⁰ Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, ⁵¹ who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of

Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God.⁵²
Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body.

- **John 19:38–42 (NIV)**

³⁸ Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away.³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid.⁴² Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

- **Matthew 27:57–61 (NIV)**

⁵⁷ As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus.⁵⁸ Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him.⁵⁹ Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,⁶⁰ **and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock.** He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

- **Ezek 36:26-29 (NIV)**

26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness.

- It may have been secret at first, but Joseph's faith didn't stay that way. Neither did Nicodemus' faith!
- Peter and all of the disciples had fled at this point, but these two men take care of Jesus' body, at great cost to them and their reputations
- John tells the story of Nicodemus to show us what will happen for the whole nation, and also what is possible for us