

**“SIX WORDS THAT BECAME A
SWORD OF OFFENSE”**

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INTRODUCTION

In this series of Power Books, we explore how the most important Christian terms became a sword of offense, while rulings of Church leaders during dark periods in history, fostered anti-Jewish thinking that has lingered for centuries, and into our present day. Before discussing these most caustic words from Christian history, we will begin with a brief explanation of Jewish outreach itself.

Because of tragic events that were substantially framed by anti-Semitism in early Christian history, much effort must be given to education. Many Christians do not understand even to this day, to the Jew, Christianity became a religion of prejudice and hate, rather than one of love and sacrifice. This is made clear in this brief edition from our Power Book series.

The purpose here is not rehearse, and or focus upon the historical Christian mishaps, but to learn of Christian church history and its impact on the Jewish experience. Then we will gain the sensitivities necessary to be competent in our witnesses of the Gospel to Jewish people. As we build upon this foundation, believers are empowered to fulfill the

mandate to the Jew, as stated in Romans 11:11, “for the purpose of gentile salvation is to provoke the Jewish to envy.”

But whether through individuals, nations, or religions, dark periods of persecution emerged for the Jew people throughout the centuries. We need only go back to the Holocaust, in which 6 million Jewish people lost their lives. This history requires us to be extremely sensitive, and aware that enables us to craft a loving narrative that brings healing, and fosters trust.

As anti-Semitism is increasing worldwide today, the Church is challenged to ensure that history never repeats itself. The deadly but straightforward equation of historical anti-Semitism plus anti-Israel prejudice could easily be applied to today. We work against this by bringing Jew and gentile closer to each other and exposing the walls that were erected between the Jewish and Christian worlds.

PART I

CHRISTIAN HISTORY

History quickly demonstrates that episodes of conflict and contention existed between the Jewish and early Christian world, shaping an overwhelming schism between Jewish and Christian relations. Seeds of anti-Semitism were sown into the early Church during the first three centuries that formed a pretext for the Jewish experience within Christianity. This included an anti-Jewish mindset and theologies such as Supersessionism and Replacement Theology.

These teachings assumed that the gentile Church replaced physical Israel, and a new spiritual Israel was born, the new gentile Christian Church. From this view, the gentile Christian replaced the Jew, the blessings spoken of in the Bible regarding the Jew were consigned over to the gentile, and Scriptures dealing with wrath remained squarely upon the shoulders of the Jewish people.

Soon a narrative emerged amongst theologians. Christian Church leaders came to believe that Israel and the Jewish people had lost their covenantal

inheritance—their distinction and calling were revoked—and Israel would no longer be a people and nation carried over from God’s covenant with Abraham. Though deeply flawed, it prejudiced Christianity toward Jews, and caused a deep divide between the Jew and the Gentile, Judaism, and the New Covenant Church.

As time went on, generations grew up with little understanding of God’s intended relationship between the Jew and the gentile. These historical and theological errors formed a pretext and a trajectory for the early Church away from any Jewish foundation.

Found even in our modern times, this awareness of Jewish history surfaces when Christians try to proclaim the Gospel to a Jewish individual. If the Gospel message is going to impact larger populations of Jewish people, the understanding of Jewish and Christian Church history will better equip individuals, coupled with tangible demonstrations of love.

PART II

RELIGION OF ANTI-JEWISH HATE

When sharing the Gospel with Jewish people, it may seem odd and perhaps even sacrilegious, to refrain from using such terms as **Cross, Christ, Church, Christian, Crusade,** and **Conversion**. One might compare it to giving someone a hammer to build a house, but they can't use any nails. How do we do it? How do we help Jewish people discover their Yeshua without those "nails"?

We begin by turning our attention towards history to retrieve fresh understanding. Once again, we cannot fail to grasp the severity of anti-Jewish persecutions that came in the name of Christianity—especially since many of these persecutions were launched under the banner of the Cross, as the Crusades were infamous for.

Notably, many actions of various Christian leaders caused the following terms to become a sword. So, let's take a brief survey of Jewish history for a historical understanding of these most critical Six Words; **Cross, Christ, Church, Christian, Crusade,**

and **Conversion**, as they were used as a sword against the Jewish people.

ALWAYS BEING EXILED

Jews, for the most part, have been hated, banished, and exiled from most places. Few people other than Jews have experienced this historical reality as well. Until 1948, Jews had been scattered throughout the world, called the diaspora. Their wanderings throughout the nations have characterized them as a people for thousands of years. It also explains why Jews can be found in every nation on earth.

Few nations, however, are free from the particular bloodguilt of being unwelcoming to Jewish people. Some European nations were infamous for this as, England, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Lithuania, and Hungary. These nations displaced untold thousands of Jews.

In 1492, 90,000 Jews from Turkey were forced to leave their homes. During that same period, thousands were forcibly baptized in Spain, and thousands more that refused were exiled. These combined episodes saw hundreds of thousands of Jews displaced. Thousands died seeking a new home, and thousands more underwent forced conversions and baptisms. One can

only imagine what Spanish Jewry of that era may have thought of the Jewish Psalm 60, verse 1: “O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.” (KJV)

BRANDED AS DIFFERENT

Sadly, while the term “exile” defined much of Jewish history as noted above, Jews have long been branded by society as “different,” thereby always casting shame upon them. Whether portrayed as modern-day money mongers or depicted in old fables as having horns, Jews have always been viewed as different from gentiles.

However, when Jews were forced to wear special labels to tell them apart from gentiles, it was a practice that was both notorious and demeaning. It also began to lay the groundwork for such a pattern in history. The labeling of Jewish began with Catholic Church first, and Adolph Hitler was inspired by it. Yes, Hitler mimicked many actions that were taken against the Jews from early Catholic Church history.

In 1215, the Catholic Church issued a decree at the 4th Lateran Council that required all Jews to wear a yellow badge upon their breast to distinguish them from gentile Christians. In 1317, the Catholic Church at the Ravenna Council declared the following:

“That they (Jews) ought not to be tolerated to the detriment or severe injury of the faithful, because it frequently happens that they return to Christians contumely for favors, contempt for familiarity. Therefore, the provincial of Ravenna some time since...thinking that many scandals have arisen from them commingling with Christians, it is decreed that they should wear a wheel of yellow cloth on their outer garment, so that they may be distinguished from Christians.”

Several years ago, Mel Gibson produced a movie called *The Passion of the Christ*. Although from a gentile Christian perspective it was deeply moving, for Jewish people, it was a troubling reminder of how Christianity treated them down through history. It evoked painful memories and images from the Shoah (the Holocaust.)

The Gospels tell the story of the life and ministry of Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior who suffered, died, and was risen. It is a story of sacrifice and love. But most gentile believers are unaware of how this story resonates with many Jewish people. The average Christian is not well acquainted with Jewish history or, equally, with anti-Judaism in early Christianity.

We will discover that the issues which concern the Jewish community the most often are simply not on

the radar screen for Gentile Christians. Consider the following Church leaders in history who influenced generations.

MESSENGERS OF ANTI-JEWISH HATE

One of the most villainous leaders in Church history was Martin Luther (AD 1483-1546). But wait a minute, didn't he begin the reformation and rescues the Christian Church out of a period of deep darkness? Yes!

In fact, Martin Luther wrote an article entitled, That Christ Was Born a Jew in 1523. His article harshly criticized the Catholic Church for presenting a pagan brand of Christianity to the Jews. He expressed empathy for the Jews and said, "If I had been a Jew and had seen such fools and blockheads teach the Christian faith, I should rather have turned into a pig than become a Christian." Although Luther was celebrated for birthing the Protestant Reformation, he became embittered towards the Jewish people when they consistently resisted his efforts to convert them to Christianity.

Luther began to pour out venomous sermons against them that were a pure display of anti-Jewish hate, lectures that are renowned in Judaism. Even the Encyclopedia Judaica writes of Luther, "Short of the

Auschwitz oven and extermination, and the whole Nazi Holocaust is pre-outlined here. Is it any wonder then, that Hitler and Julius Streicher quoted Martin Luther as justification for their destruction of 6 million Jews?"

MARTIN LUTHER'S SERMONS

What then shall we Christians do with this damned, rejected race of Jews? Since they live among us, and we know about their lying, blasphemy, and cursing, we cannot tolerate them if we do not wish to share in their lies, curses, and blasphemy. In this way, we cannot quench the fire of divine rage (as the prophets say) nor convert the Jews." He went on to say, "prayerfully and reverentially, we must practice a merciful severity. Perhaps we may save a few from the fire and the flames. We must not seek vengeance. They are surely being punished a thousand times more than we might wish them. Let me give you my honest advice.

"First, their synagogues or churches should be set on fire, and whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread over with dirt so that no one may ever be able to see a cinder or stone of it. This ought to be done for the honor of God and of Christianity in order that God may see that we are Christians and that we have not wittingly tolerated or approved of such public

lying, cursing, and blaspheming of His Son and His Christians.

Second, their houses should likewise be broken down and destroyed. For they perpetrate the same things there that they do in their synagogues. For this reason, they ought to be put under one roof or in a stable, like gypsies, in order that they may realize that they are not masters in our land, as they boast, but miserable captives, as they complain of us incessantly before God with their bitter wailing.

Third, they should be deprived of their prayer books and Talmud's in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught.

Fourth, their rabbis must be forbidden under threat of death to teach anymore.

Fifth, passport and traveling privileges should be absolutely forbidden to Jews, for they have no business in the rural districts since they are not nobles, nor officials, nor merchants, nor the like. Let them stay at home.

Sixth, they ought to be stopped from usury. All their cash and valuables of silver and gold ought to be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping. For this reason, everything that they possess they stole and robbed from us through their usury, for they have no

other means of support. This money should be used in the case (and in no other) where a Jew has honestly become a Christian, so that he may get for the time being one or two or three hundred florins, as the person may require. This in order that he may start a business to support his poor wife and children and the old and feeble. Such evilly acquired money is cursed, unless, with God's blessing, it is put to some good and necessary use."

PART III

VOICES OF ANTI-JEWISH HATE

We need not limit our remarks to Luther because the road is full of those who similarly cast a blight upon the Jewish people. Indeed, Hitler was unsurpassed. But some of the notorious acts that he undertook were inspired by Christian history itself. The labeling of the Jew with a yellow star, as noted earlier, is one example. Below we offer a shortlist of other voices that spoke out against the Jewish people.

John Chrysostom (AD 334–407) was a bishop of the Church at Antioch and was considered the greatest preacher of his day. He spoke violently against the Jews. He said there could never be forgiveness for the Jews, and that “God hates them, and indeed has always hated them.” Chrysostom taught that it was the Christian duty to hate Jews because the Jews assassinated Christ. He called their synagogues worse than brothels and likened Jewish people to demons devoted to idolatrous cults.

Justin Martyr (AD 100–165) claimed that God’s covenant with the Jews was no longer valid and that

gentiles had replaced the Jewish people in God's redemptive plan (Replacement Theology).

Ignatius (AD 35-108) was the bishop of the Church in Antioch in the second century; he wrote that anyone who celebrated Passover with the Jews or received emblems of the Jewish feast was a partaker with those who killed the Lord and His apostles.

Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215) emphasized Greek philosophy rather than the Tanakh (Old Testament) as the primary means God gave the gentiles to lead the Jewish people to Jesus.

Tertullian (AD 160-220) was one of the most important Christian writers of the second century; his works were highly significant in developing the basic doctrines of today's Church. In one of his writings, titled *Against the Jews*, he blamed the entire Jewish race for the death of Jesus.

Eusebius (AD 263-339) taught that the promises and blessings of the Tanakh (Old Testament) were for the Christians and that the curses were for the Jews. He declared that the Church was the "true Israel of God," which had replaced literal Israel in God's covenants.

Jerome (AD 345-420) was a great Bible scholar whose Latin translation of the Scriptures became the official Bible of the Church. Jerome claimed that the Jews

were incapable of understanding the Scriptures and that they should be severely persecuted until they confessed to the true faith.

OTHER CHRISTIAN RULINGS

Throughout Catholic Church history, numerous anti-Semitic actions and rulings such as those noted were undertaken, showing the Jewish people again that Christianity was a religion of anti-Jewish hate. Review the following list of further judgments.

AD 589: Jews were forbidden from holding public office.

AD 612–621: King Sisebut of Spain forced either baptism or exile.

AD 570–636: Saint Isadore forbade forced baptisms, but if children were baptized to save their lives, they had to be taken from their parents and reared Catholic. In some situations, Jewish people were given the choice of baptism or death.

AD 692: Christians were not permitted to patronize Jewish doctors (Trulanic Synod, 692).

AD 1078: Jews were required to pay taxes for the support of the Roman Church to the same extent as Christians.

AD 1060: The First Crusade against the Jews commenced, killing thousands who refused baptism.

AD 1146: The Second Crusade, during which the same atrocities took place. Then in 1267, Christians were not allowed to attend Jewish ceremonies. Then in 1357, during Black Death, Jews were accused of poisoning the wells, thus causing the plague. Some of this may have come from the fact that many Jewish people were observing the health laws of Tanakh and were thus not getting sick (Toledo, 681.)

PART VIII

HISTORICAL ACTS OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Generally, anti-Semitic acts in history took the form of the following: Forced Conversions, Pogroms, Blood Libels, Crusades, and Tribunals. These were infamous documented assaults on the Jew. But often they were done in the name of a Christian mission, and of course, it was blatant anti-Jewish hate. A brief explanation of some of these historical anti-Semitic acts is offered here.

POGROMS

Pogrom is a Russian word that means riot or devastation and applies to violent anti-Jewish attacks. Hundreds of Pogroms in large scale became real massacres of Jewish people. Such anti-Jewish riots took place, especially under the Czarist regime of Russia and Poland.

To Russian authorities, the Jews represented a "Jewish problem." Regularly Jews were met with forced conversions, amounting to one-third of the Jewish population, and emigration of another third. This took place in an intensified manner from 1881-1921.

BLOOD LIBEL

A Blood libel is a lie or fable that accuses Jews of taking a Christian child's blood for ritual purposes to make matzo for Passover. Of course, it is ridiculous, since the Jewish people observe Torah, and in the kosher laws of Leviticus 11, forbids Jews to ingest the blood of an animal, let alone that of a human being. It is astonishing that there were times in history that people to imagine such things.

TRIBUNALS

The most feared and hated word is Inquisition, which literally means "inquiry." Specifically, Jews were forced to convert to Christianity during the Spanish Inquisition, over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were killed in a frenzy of hateful anti-Jewish violence. Again, all this was done in the name of Christ.

CRUSADES

Some of the darkest times for the Jewish people took place during the period of the Crusades. These were undertaken as military expeditions, and under the blessing of the Church, they sought to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims and Jews. During these episodes, Jews were herded into synagogues, and

while the Crusaders sang, “Christ We Adore Thee,” they would set fire to the synagogue, burning the Jews alive. The battle cry of the Crusaders was as follows; “Before attempting to revenge ourselves upon the Muslim unbelievers, let us first revenge ourselves upon the killers of Christ in our midst!”

FORCED CONVERSIONS

Taking Jewish children at the complete disregard of their parents to convert them is reprehensible. But episodes like this took place throughout Europe, Persia, and Morocco from AD 460 to as late as 1858.

The Canonist decree during the nineteenth century by Russian authorities was the most notorious. Children were seized and forced to serve in the czar’s army. Then they were shipped off to distant locations for as much as twenty-five years. Jewish children lost all contact with their people, and they were assimilated and converted into the local religion.

PART IX

AMERICAN ANTI-SEMITISM

We now turn our attention briefly to America. As America became a haven for many people groups during pre-colonial times, Jews were also seeking a place of religious freedom. It seems though she was not quite ready for them.

During this early period of American history, settlers were rugged and hardworking, mostly farmers and ranchers. The first Jewish settlers were known more like the people of the city. Principally, Jews were business people and artisans. They worked as hard as everyone else. They just channeled their efforts differently. Still, throughout this period, Jews were viewed as reaping the fruits of others' hard labor.

More centrally, America was seen as a new Christian nation, while Jews were still viewed as Christ-killers, a label carried over from former England. During this period in the early American frontier, anti-Jewish prejudices continued throughout the colonies. According to many at the time, this Jewish problem was always remedied by conversion to Christianity. Consider the following people and groups in early

America and their attitudes towards the Jewish people.

PURITANS

In Boston, where the Puritans settled, they thought that they were the real Jews and genuine heirs of the promises that God gave to the Jews. Three generations after the beginning of the northern colonies, Samuel Willard outlined Puritan sentiments in a sermon that he preached in 1700: "The Jews were scorn and reproach to the world: the happy day of the conversion could improve their condition." The Puritans saw the "end of days" upon them, and they believed the second coming of Christ could not happen unless most Jews were converted.

HANNAH ADAMS

Hannah Adams, a descendant of Henry Adams and a distant cousin of John Adams, published a work on the history of the Jews in 1812. In her view of history, the suffering of the Jews is due to their rejection of Christ. Adams accuses the Jews of continuing to regard themselves as "the chosen people" and "superior to all others." More importantly, what Hannah Adams believed was the general view in America. American freedom became for the Jew an

opportunity to be converted to an enlightened Christianity.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

One of the founding fathers of America revealed ambivalence toward the Jews when he said, "They should labor to achieve equality in science that is in secular learning so that they will become objects of respect and favor." Later, Thomas Jefferson was more favorable toward them and their religious rights, especially after the Bill of Rights and the Constitution.

Thomas Jefferson was the one who incorporated the principle of separation of Church and state into the Constitution, "thus," he wrote, "building a wall of separation between church and state," and that "religion is a matter solely between a man and God."

HENRY FORD

Henry Ford, one of the great American industrialists and automakers, he was also a principal trumpet of anti-Semitism in his day. Henry Ford financed the production of hundreds of thousands of copies of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

Published a generation earlier, it most likely originated from the secret police of the Russian czar. It was aimed at justifying anti-Semitic policies and was published in the United States in 1919. The publication asserted

that the Jews were part of a conspiracy to dominate the world. On this basis, Ford's paper became the leading voice of anti-Semitism in America during the 1920s.

YALE AND HARVARD

Education was always paramount for Jewish people and entering prominent institutions of higher learning before the early 1920s went mostly unhindered. A problem began; however, when a growing number of universities started to feel uneasy with an increasing Jewish presence, and Jews began to out-perform many of their gentile classmates.

Quotas soon began to be instituted in places like Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. Harvard President A. Lawrence Lowell said in 1922, "If every college in the country would take a limited proportion of Jews, we should go a long way toward eliminating race feeling amongst our students." Lowell later retracted his statement, but Jewish enrollment was mysteriously and sharply curtailed after the incident.

At Yale, a decision was made that students should be admitted on the basis of character rather than just scholarship. Dean Frederick Jones at Yale University found that a Jew won almost every single award of any value. He stated, "In terms of scholarship and

intelligence, Jewish students lead the class, but their personal characteristics make them markedly inferior.” Of course, this so-called inferiority was only remedied by conversion to Christianity.

When it came to medical schools, Jewish enrollment was discouraged. Actually, Jewish quotas forced thousands to go abroad for medical training. Gentiles controlled virtually all hospitals, as well as the entire medical profession, during the turn of the century. It was almost impossible to find a Jewish doctor or hospital staff or a Jewish professor in an American medical school. Consequently, the field was virtually closed to Jewish students seeking medical degrees.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps you have seen for the first time the terrible actions that have been taken against the Jewish people throughout the centuries. I trust that you have come to realize the unique challenges facing Jewish outreach.

We should feel sadness and a righteous indignation, that the message of the gospel suffered at the hands of such misguided individuals. God's people need to understand the world's past dealings with the Jewish people so that they will develop sensitivity towards Israel and the Jewish people.

Praise God that our mission to reach the "Lost Sheep of the House of Israel" today has become empowered by a love for the Jewish people on the part of the Christian Church.

As more and more come to understand the mishaps of Christian Church history, deep healing between Jews and gentile Christians will be realized. Both are coming to a greater understanding of each other as they discover how their histories and destinies are intertwined.

In reaching the Jewish people then, particularly in the context of so much openness today, let us reach out

with actions, terminologies, temperaments, and proper training that embody the love of our Messiah.

Toward this end, we have listed alternative terms to the 6 “C” words. Individuals can easily integrate them into their vocabulary. Following much prayer and preparation, we can begin to engage Jewish people with confidence, anointing, and compassion. Indeed, “Now is the time to show favor to her. The appointed time has come.” Psalms 102:13.

REPLACEMENT TERMS

CHURCH: Congregation, or Assembly, Gathering, Service.

CHRISTIAN: Believer; a follower of Messiah; or follower of Jesus, the Jewish Messiah.

CROSS: A problematic topic to contend with at first, because it often requires explanation, and, most importantly, a relationship to bring clarity and understanding to a Jewish person. But terms to use are redemption and atonement.

CRUSADES: Never use this term, as this represents some of the most notorious and insufferable acts against the Jewish people.

CONVERSION: A better term is completion or fulfillment. The term conversion describes the supernatural work that Jesus performs in both Jew and gentile. Still, Jews are not converted to being gentile Christians, any more than gentile believers become Jewish. Jewish belief in Messiah is a work of “fulfillment” or “completion,” not conversion.

CHRIST: Messiah, Yeshua. Yeshua is Jesus’ Hebrew name, and as noted in the edition of Power Books, we are always working to restore a Jewish context to New

Covenant terms, which history has infused with prejudice and anti-Jewish hate.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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