

Jewish Root Theology – What Scripture Says

We have written on this subject many times and in several ways, seeking to refute the unbiblical claims of Jewish Root teachers. In this paper we seek to show, very simply, what Scripture states on the key issues involved. Only the minimal comment will be given for clarity. In doing so we seek to show that Jewish Root teaching is utterly unbiblical and damaging to the Lord's people. It actually teaches the very reverse of what the Lord himself, in his own words and through the apostles later, specifically taught the church.

Note that the writer of this paper is not anti-Semitic (an easy term to throw at people when you have no argument). Indeed, he admires very many Jews, has had Jewish friends, and is not hostile to any race. He applauds any attempt to witness to Christ in evangelistic efforts to a specific nation but denies that believers are specially blessed for witnessing to Jews. This paper is written to destroy a specific false theology and the points raised are answers to points developed in Jewish Root teaching. The answers to the false teaching are simply Bible verses which, surely, no one can call anti-Semitic?

The responsibility of the Jews, as a people, for the rejection and death of Jesus

Jewish Root teachers try to claim that Jews, as a nation, were not guilty of the crime of killing their own Messiah, stating that the blame lies entirely on the Roman authorities or, in some general sense, upon all mankind or upon just the religious leaders of the time.

The Bible teaches that it was actually the responsibility of that generation of Jews. Israel, as a people, rejected her Messiah and caused his death bringing on themselves terrible judgment.

That generation of Jews was faithless and perverse

Then Jesus answered and said, 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you?' Lk 9:41

He began to say, 'This is an evil generation'. Lk 11:29

This adulterous and sinful generation. Mk 8:38

That generation of Jews rejected the Messiah

Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,' and 'a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.' They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 1 Pt 2:7-8

Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes"? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.' Matt 21:42-44

For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon *is* here. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here. Lk 11:30-32

The Son of Man ... must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. Lk 17:24-25

This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'
Acts 4:11

For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation. Lk 19:43-44

This last text is speaking of the siege of Jerusalem and the awful calamities that ensued. This was within a Biblical generation of Jesus' words, less than forty years later, and that generation paid the price of God's condemnation for all Israel's apostasy. The Jewish historian, Josephus, shows us that the atrocities suffered in 70 AD were perhaps the worst in history.

He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. Jn 1:11

It was Jews that killed Christ

The people as a whole asked that the responsibility for Christ's death should be upon them and their children.

When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather *that* a tumult was rising, he took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see *to it*.' And all the people answered and said, 'His blood *be* on us and on our children.' Matt 27:24-25

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth ... being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you [the Jewish multitude listening to Peter] have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death. Acts 2:22-23

So when Peter saw *it*, he responded to the people: 'Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.' Acts 3:12-15

Note that the first messages of the apostles to Jews was not that God loved them as a people but that they were guilty of murdering God's Son and under condemnation.

Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified. Acts 4:10

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you [the council] murdered by hanging on a tree. Acts 5:30

Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you [the council] now have become the betrayers and murderers. Acts 7:52

Spoken to the Sanhedrin, the council and legal representative of all Israel.¹

Paul preaching to the rulers of the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch

For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him*. And though they found no cause for death *in Him*, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death.
Acts 13: 27-28

Peter preaching to a Gentile proselyte to Judaism

And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Acts 10:39

For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judaeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men. 1 Thess 2:14-15

That generation reaped judgment for not only killing the Messiah but also for killing the prophets in earlier generations.

The condemnation was especially towards the scribes and Pharisees but also included all Jews that did not put their faith in Christ and remove themselves from faith in Jewishness.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' *guilt*. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Matt 23:29-33

Note: it must be remembered that modern Judaism is derived from the teaching of Pharisaism. After the destruction of the temple, rabbinic Judaism developed around the Babylonian Talmud, which was the construction chiefly of the Pharisees. Modern Judaism is under the condemnation of Christ. This is why the contents of the Talmud are full of blasphemies against the Lord and hatred of Christians.

That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. Matt 23:35-36

The blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. Lk 11:50-51

¹ The Sanhedrin, meaning a 'council', originated under the domination of the Syrian kings in the time of the Maccabees. The name is first used by Josephus. It comprises of the 'chief priests and elders of the people' (Matt 26:3, 47, 57, 59 27:1, 3, 12, 20; Acts 4:1-23, 5:17-41). It consisted of seventy-one members, the high priest being president in three classes (the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders). As the highest Jewish court its decrees were binding, not only on the Jews in Palestine, but on all Jews wherever scattered.

Jews are under the condemnation of God for their rejection of Christ. This accounts for their troubles throughout history.

For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judaeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. 1 Thess 2:14-16

Jews do not please God by virtue of their nationality

Jewish Root teachers claim that God loves Israel as a nation and that he blesses Jews because they are Jews. Even in their sinful condition, Jews are supposedly favoured by God.

In fact God has rejected Israel for her rejection of the Messiah. Israel was chosen to be God's representative in the OT as a symbol of the people of God and was supposed to spread the Gospel to all nations. Instead Israel continually apostatised through spiritual adultery. The rejection of Christ was the final straw and God subsequently judged the nation. Thus Israel came under the curses of Moses.

Examples of God's anger against OT Israel

Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, *so* their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will ascend like dust; because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore the anger of the LORD is aroused against His people; He has stretched out His hand against them and stricken them. Isa 5:24-25

Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people -- The fruit of their thoughts, because they have not heeded My words, nor My law, but rejected it. Jer 6:19

Cut off your hair and cast *it* away, and take up a lamentation on the desolate heights; for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath. 'For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight,' says the LORD. Jer 7:29-30

Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. Jer 3:8-9

I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away. Hos 1:6

Do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Matt 3:9-10

The promise of restoration for Israel was only to the elect faithful remnant, not to the nation as a whole

And it shall come to pass in that day *that* the remnant of Israel, and such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, will never again depend on him who defeated them, but will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God.

For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, a remnant of them will return. Isa 10:20-22

For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and those who escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. Isa 37:32

And it shall come to pass *that* whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls. Joel 2:32

The remnant of Israel that was saved in the OT was saved through faith in God's deliverer, Christ. The remnant of Israel that was saved in the NT were those who became Christians under the ministry of Christ and the apostles. The rest of Israel was condemned. The promises of restoration and mercy were not to the whole nation.

In the same way the generation of Israel that received redemption and deliverance from Egypt, that had been under the blood of the lamb, all died in apostasy in the wilderness except for Joshua and Caleb, picturing the proportion of the remnant. This has always been the case, note, for example, that only eight people survived the flood which killed millions in God's wrath.

Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in *their* heart, and they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' ... 'Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.' For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Heb 3:10-11, 15-19

But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness. 1 Cor 10:5

... in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 1 Pt 3:20

Jews always resist the Holy Spirit by nature

You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so *do* you. Acts 7:51

The Greek word 'stiff-necked' meant, 'stubborn, headstrong, obstinate'.

And the LORD said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and indeed it *is* a stiff-necked people!' Ex 32:9

You *are* a stiff-necked people. Ex 33:3

Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you *are* a stiff-necked people. Deut 9:6

Our fathers acted proudly, hardened their necks, and did not heed your commandments. They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of your wonders that you did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage. Neh 9:16-17

The Hebrew word 'stiff-necked' meant 'hard, severe, cruel, obstinate, difficult, stubborn'.

Jews follow the devil; the devil is their father

Note that this was not said to Pharisees but to Jews who followed Jesus.

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.' ... They answered and said to Him, 'Abraham is our father.' Jesus said to them, 'If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. ... You do the deeds of your father.' Then they said to Him, 'We were not born of fornication; we have one Father -- God.' Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me ... Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. Jn 8:31-44

He who sins is of the devil. 1 Jn 3:8

I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan. Rev 2:9

Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie -- indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you [the church]. Rev 3:9

It is a blasphemy to state that an unbelieving, sinful, wicked people is specially loved by God and favoured; or worse, to state that they are the people of God in their unbelieving condition.

Jews do not please God

The Judaeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men. 1 Thess 2:14-15

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matt 5:11-12

Jesus has Jews in mind, those who killed their own prophets sent by God. In the parable of the vineyard (Matt 21:33-41; Lk 20:9-18) Jesus explains that God continually sent prophets to Israel who murdered them, and finally sent his own Son to his people, but they killed him deliberately to keep the kingdom to themselves. They rejected their own king.

You are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! Matt 23:31-37

Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they will kill and persecute,' that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation. Lk 11:47-50

Jesus is addressing that generation of Jews, not just certain parties in Israel. He lumps them with previous generations of Israel that killed God's prophets just as they would kill prophets sent by Jesus in the church. Note that the Pharisaic party did not exist prior to the Babylonian captivity;² Jesus is not just speaking to Pharisees. A people that continually kills God's servants, both in the history before Christ and the history after Christ, cannot please God. Indeed, religious Jews continue to persecute the church and the Talmud is filled with references condemning Christ and Christians. To say that God favours fleshly Jews when his word says the opposite is blasphemy.

Jews do not know God and are not submitted to him

They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. Jn 16:2-3

They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. Rm 10:2-3

Fleshly Jews are not favoured by God

God *is* good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart. Ps 73:1

Even in the Old Testament times being a Jew did not mean having unqualified favour with God. In fact, God destroyed many Jews, even priests, for their rebellion. Over and over prophets warned Jews that they faced destruction for rebelling against God. In this Psalm (and many other places) we are told that only the pure in heart amongst the Jews would know the favour of God. In other words, only the elect remnant (those with faith, those in Christ, the redeemed) were loved by God.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!' Jn 1:47

Nathanael was an example of a true Israelite; Jesus looked at most Jews and saw deceit in them thus his unusual exclamation regarding Nathanael. Most Jews were not pure in heart.

All the house of Israel *are* uncircumcised in the heart. Jer 9:26

Thus even in the OT the lack of a pure heart was condemned by the prophets.

The favour of God was always conditional on obedience

If you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow

² Pharisees (meaning 'to separate') arose from the Assidean party (the 'pious'), which developed during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. The first mention of them is by Josephus who describes three main sects into which the Jews were divided (BC 145); the other two being the Essenes and the Sadducees. Modern research shows that there were up to 13 different parties of Jews at the time of Christ.

your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you. ' And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. ... [this continues being multiplied] You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you. I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. Lev 26:14-33

The latter verses speak about the atrocities which befell the Jews in the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD. This was the wrath of God promised in Leviticus and Deuteronomy for disobeying God. The Romans were the servants of God in chastising Israel.

In the OT the height of Israel's wickedness is portrayed as sacrificing their sons in the fire to the pagan god Molech (Lev 18:21; Jer 32:35). In 70 AD the Jews went even further and ate their own children; the Jewish historian gives us one account of this.³

Jews are hated by the nations for their own doing

The Judaeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men. 1 Thess 2:14-15

'Contrary' means, 'opposed to, antagonistic to, an adversary of, hostile to'.

We could give an exposition of history here to show that Jews were hated in many nations for their practice of usury when Roman Catholic law outlawed it. The Talmudic principle of allowing lying to Gentiles, even when under oath in court, also led to recriminations. Many nations exiled them for their greed that led to social disturbances since Jews could not be trusted (such as Rome or England). They brought recriminations upon themselves.⁴ But since this paper is devoted to Scriptural proofs, we cannot delve further into that here.

And as for those of you who are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee; they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues. They shall stumble over one another, as it

³ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 3.3-4: 'Now of those that perished by famine in the city, the number was prodigious, and the miseries they underwent were unspeakable ... dearest friends fell a fighting one with another about [scraps of food]. Moreover, their hunger was so intolerable, that it obliged them to chew every thing, while they gathered such things as the most sordid animals would not touch, [including] girdles and shoes; and the very leather which belonged to their shields they pulled off and gnawed: the very wisps of old hay became food to some. ... I am going to relate a matter of fact, the like to which no history relates, either among the Greeks or Barbarians? It is horrible to speak of it, and incredible when heard. ... There was a certain woman [who] was eminent for her family and her wealth, and had fled away to Jerusalem ... She then attempted a most unnatural thing; and snatching up her son, who was a child sucking at her breast, ... she slew her son, and then roasted him, and eat the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed. ... Upon which the whole city was full of this horrid action immediately; and while every body laid this miserable case before their own eyes, they trembled, as if this unheard of action had been done by themselves.'

⁴ This has no reference to the Holocaust where Jews were used as a scapegoat by Hitler based upon hate.

were before a sword, when no one pursues; and you shall have no *power* to stand before your enemies. You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away. Lev 26:36-39

The earlier part of this prophecy [see section: 'The favour of God was always conditional on obedience'] describes the judgment of God for rebellion against his commandments which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of Jews throughout the world. After 70 AD, Jews in foreign nations were still receiving chastisement from God as a judgment, as this text makes very clear.

Jews give a bad testimony to God

Jews blaspheme God

The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. Rm 2:24

They do not have God's word

I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill me, because my word has no place in you. Jn 8:37

'The Jews' is used as a term of opposition to God in John's Gospel

For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. Jn 5:16

The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, 'I am the bread which came down from heaven.' Jn 6:41

The Jews sought to kill Him. Jn 7:1

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jn 10:31

The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.' Jn 19:7

Note that John could have said, 'leaders of the Jews' but chose to use a more general term for the nation.

Jews were the chief persecutors of the early church

They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. Jn 16:2

Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen ... disputing with Stephen. ... Then they secretly induced men to say, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.' And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him*, seized him, and brought *him* to the council. Acts 6:9-12

The Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. Acts 13:50

The unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. ... And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them. Acts 14:2, 5

Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city. Acts 14:19

But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. Acts 17:5

When the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds. Acts 17:13

When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat. Acts 18:12

The Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him [Paul]. Acts 21:27

And they listened to him until this word, and *then* they raised their voices and said, 'Away with such a *fellow* [Paul] from the earth, for he is not fit to live!' Then, as they cried out and tore off *their* clothes and threw dust into the air. Acts 22:22-23

In perhaps a period of about 30 years since the church began it was Jews who were the chief antagonists against the Gospel.

As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. Gal 6:12

When Paul castigated the Judaisers in Galatia he stated that the reason they chose to adopt Jewish religious culture, including circumcision, was to avoid being persecuted since it was the Jews who were the principal persecutors of the churches, even in foreign Galatia, the home of Celtic Christians.

What is a Jew?

The meaning of Judah is 'praised'. True Jewishness in God's eyes, is one who praises him. Thus true Jewishness is a spiritual matter not one of physical identity, of the flesh, of nationality or of national religion.

For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God. Rm 2:28-29

For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. Rm 9:6-8

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything. Gal 6:15

Note: if circumcision counts for nothing in God's eyes, then Jewishness counts for nothing.

Claiming that there is a blessing in being Jewish is wrong

Do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Matt 3:9

Thus it is wrong to teach that there is something special in being Jewish. There is no value in merely claiming Abraham as a blood ancestor.

The value (righteousness) of Abraham was in his faith not his race

The father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised. For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. Rm 4:12-16

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ. And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. Gal 3:16-17

Note that Abraham found favour with God before he was circumcised (while he was a Mesopotamian pagan) and before the law was formally given. Jews find favour with God by following the faith of Abraham (i.e. by becoming Christians). The promise is in Christ, and Abraham believed that having seen Christ (Jn 8:56). The promise is not in Jewishness, which did not exist when Abraham was called.

Only those in Christ are the true Israel in the real meaning of the word ('a prince with God')

For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God. Gal 6:13-16

Note what Paul is saying here:

- Those who push Jewish Root ideas (Judaisers) and obeying certain parts of the law (e.g. feasts) do not keep the law themselves and are thus cursed by the law.
- The cause of pushing Jewish ideas is rooted in boasting of those who push it. It is noteworthy that many Jewish Root preachers are pushy, proud, boastful men.
- The only boasting acceptable for the Christian is the cross of Christ (not Israel) – which kills us to the world. Israel and Jewishness are part of the world that is crucified to believers.
- The result of the cross is a church of equal believers where Jewishness (circumcision) counts for nothing since all are a new race of humanity; a new creation.
- Those who follow these principles have peace and mercy and they are the Israel of God (i.e. they are princes with God).
- The word 'and' is a poor translation; much better is 'even'.
- Even if 'and' meant 'and' it would refer to Israel that is of the new creation, that is under the cross; i.e. believing Jews not fleshly Jews.

Thus note:

For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel. Rm 9:6

Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. Gal 3:7

And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:29

It is wrong to celebrate national distinctions in the church

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. Rm 10:12

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:28-29

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all. Col 3:11

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Cor 5:17

For we are His workmanship. Eph 2:10

Believers are a new creation in Christ and are no longer part of the distinctions found in the world. They are a new breed of humanity and must forget fleshly nationalities.

Paul's attitude to his Jewish heritage

Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. Phil 3:4-10

'Rubbish' here means anything worthless and detestable and was the common word for animal dung. Paul considered his Jewish status as dung and loss to him. If Paul was anxious to lose his Jewish background, why are modern believers who are born non-Jews trying to become Jewish? If you have the excellence of the knowledge of Christ, why seek to have something that Paul calls dung?

The true Seed of Abraham is Christ, and those in him, and not fleshly Jews

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ. Gal 3:16

The promises made to Abraham about the Gospel and the inheritance of the world was to be fulfilled not in Jews as a nation but in Christ alone.

And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:29

They *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. Rm 9:6-8

To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. Eph 1:6

Since Christians are in Christ, they too share in inheriting the promises made to Abraham.

Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying*, 'In you all the nations shall be blessed.' So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. Gal 3:7-9

The blessing and promises given by God to Abraham are for those with faith. Faith is only given to the elect from all nations by God. Thus all fleshly Jews without faith (all unbelieving Jews) are not blessed in Abraham and will not receive the promises. They are not Abraham's children in God's eyes.

Abraham himself understood this and rejoiced.

Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw *it* and was glad. Jn 8:56

Jews today are in bondage. Judaism is bondage.

And *this occurred* because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage). Gal 2:4

But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? Gal 4:9

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Gal 5:1

Jews who sought to bring Jewish legalism into Gentile churches in Galatia (just like modern day Jewish Root teachers) were bringing them under bondage.

For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar -- for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. Gal 4:24-25

The covenant of Moses, spoken of here (the old covenant, i.e. Biblical Judaism) is in bondage. Physical Jerusalem is in bondage. The children of Jerusalem (i.e. Jews) are in bondage.

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.' Matt 23:1-4

Here Jesus is speaking of proper teaching on the law – disciples must obey such teaching. This is not a condemnation of false teaching. However, such Jewish teaching comes with bondage; the Jewish teachers bring heavy burdens of additional practices. It is 'Moses plus'. Such is the modern Talmud; the teaching of men in the Talmud is of a higher authority in Judaism than the *torah*.⁵ This is typical of Judaism; it centres on the words of men called rabbis rather than the words of God.

Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? Acts 15:10

Referring to the debate in the church as to what influence Judaising teaching ought to have. The decision was that Jewish practices were a yoke on the neck of disciples.

The law, in its Mosaic form, is cancelled

Inherent to being a Jew is obeying the Law of Moses. If a Jew cannot obey the Mosaic Law, then he is not a Jew and is under a curse. To obey the Mosaic Law requires having a sanctuary (i.e. tabernacle or temple), the Ark of the Covenant, an ordained sacrificing priesthood, a Biblical altar and the Shekinah glory of God. None of these are in existence today so modern Judaism cannot be Biblical Judaism.

Furthermore, God explains to us that he has cancelled the Mosaic Law in its entirety. Only the moral principles (which are eternal and predated the Mosaic Law) remain within the New Covenant. All in all, it is now impossible to be a Biblical Jew. Modern Judaism is man-made, following the teaching of rabbis of the school that was opposed by Jesus.

In that He says, 'A new *covenant*, 'He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Heb 8:13

⁵ *Torah* = the five books of Moses.

It did vanish away in 70 AD when the temple was destroyed and the people killed, enslaved or scattered. The book of Hebrews was written shortly before this event between 64-68 AD.

Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: 'You *are* a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.' Heb 7:11-17

The argument is that Christ is now God's High Priest according to a new dynasty, that of Melchizedek. The family of Levi is no longer a priest before God. Changing the priesthood means that the Law is changed since the Mosaic Law stipulated that only Levi could be a priest. Thus the law is cancelled along with the old priesthood.

There is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness. for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. Heb 7:18-19

The Mosaic Law (the Old Covenant) did not make anyone possess eternal life; it only condemned and was a ministry of death. For this reason the New Covenant is necessary which has power, by the Spirit, to give life.

Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing *the services*. But into the second part the high priest *went* alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and *for* the people's sins *committed* in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It *was* symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience -- *concerned* only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. Heb 9:6-15

The argument is: the rituals of the Mosaic Law involving both the Tabernacle and the Temple were only external; they did not result in anyone having eternal life or cleansing the conscience. The way into heaven in actuality was prohibited while these externals were in operation. The purpose of the rituals (feasts, offerings etc) were symbolic, pointing the

way to Christ who would actually accomplish salvation and bring eternal life. Celebrating the feasts is a testimony that Christ has not performed the work of atonement.

Christ actually entered heaven itself with his own blood in order to effect redemption. Having secured an eternal salvation, all the symbolic rituals are now pointless and cancelled. They have no value and never had any power, other than assisting faith in those who trusted God.

Those called under the Old Covenant (the elect remnant) were actually cleansed from sin by the offering of Christ and given eternal life by inclusion in the New Covenant. Only the New Covenant has any purpose; the Old has passed away. Judaism proper is part of the Old Covenant and has passed away with it. The Judaism that exists today is a man-made invention that is opposed to God.

Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. Rm 3:20

I would not have known sin except through the law. Rm 7:7

What purpose then *does* the law *serve*? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made. Gal 3:19

The purpose of the Mosaic Law was to magnify transgressions to show man that he needed a Saviour. It only lasted until the Messiah came, the Saviour, who was the recipient of the promises found in the Old Testament.

Believers are not under law but are in the New Covenant

But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *//* the oldness of the letter. Rm 7:6

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Rm 8:2

He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Col 2:13-14

Those under Mosaic Law are cursed

'Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *a//* the words of this law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!' Deut 27:26

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' Gal 3:10

Those under Mosaic Law are under God's wrath

The law brings about wrath. Rm 4:15

Thus Jews are under God's wrath, cursed, and under law.

The kingdom was taken away from the Jews at the cross

Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you [the Jewish nation] and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. Matt 21:43

This verse is unequivocal. There is no clearer statement to show that the Kingdom of God has been taken away from the Jews and is now universally available to the elect from all nations.

So Jesus said to them [the disciples], 'Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Matt 19:28

And I bestow upon you [the apostles] a kingdom, just as my Father bestowed *one* upon me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Lk 22:29-30

Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Rev 21:14

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? 1 Cor 6:2

Note that the disciples are to be kings that judge Israel after the resurrection. The Kingdom of God is now the church of Christ, founded upon the apostles. Fleshly Jews will be judged by Christians at the Last Day.

I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Matt 8:11

Speaking of the universality of the Kingdom of God; Gentiles from east and west will fellowship with the patriarchs in the kingdom of heaven.

The kingdom is now the church – the elect of all nations, Jews and Gentiles

You *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 1 Pt 2:9-10

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Rev 1:5-6

And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. Rev 5:10

Note that Revelation was written to Gentile churches, 'John, to the seven churches which are in Asia,' (Rev 1:4). God HAS made us (Gentiles) kings and priests to God. The kingdom is now in the church but its visible reign is in the future when Christ returns.

The church must not celebrate Jewish feasts and practices

Jewish Root teachers either claim that Christians (especially Jewish Christians) can keep the feasts or that they should keep them. *'We should celebrate the festivals of the Lord ... All those who partake in these festivals will be blessed.'*⁶ *'The believer in Christ ... is also free to keep parts of the Law of Moses if he so desires.'*⁷ *'There are certain advantages for a Hebrew Christian in keeping some or all of the Feasts.'*⁸

Jewish rituals have no value in sanctification, in the Christian walk

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Let no one cheat you of your reward ... why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations – 'Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,' which all concern things which perish with the using -- according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh. Col 2:16-22

But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have laboured for you in vain. Gal 4:9-11

Jewish rituals and feast days have 'no value' now that Christ has come in fulfilment of them. Paul considered it a backward step to celebrate ritual days.

Old Covenant rituals were fleshly and without power

Concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ came.... Heb 9:10-11

That is, special food and rituals (e.g. Passover) were fleshly and had no spiritual power and were only imposed under the Old Covenant until the Messiah came. After that time they were annulled.

The Old Covenant rituals were just shadows; the reality is in Christ

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Col 2:16-17

There are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. Heb 8:4-5

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. Heb 10:1

While the first tabernacle was still standing. It *was* symbolic for the present time. Heb 9:8-9

But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and

⁶ Steve Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, Saffron Planet (2009), p105.

⁷ Arnold Fruchtenbaum; *Hebrew Christianity*, Ariel Press (1983), p88.

⁸ *Hebrew Christianity*, op. cit., p107.

calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. Heb 9:11-12

Therefore *it was* necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. Heb 9:23

How foolish is it to follow the shadow, the copy, the thing with no power, when you can follow Christ? Celebrating the feasts and Jewish practices is an insult to Christ that is close to blasphemy since it implicitly denies the power of his work. If you celebrate Passover you are saying that Christ is not your Passover, that he has not redeemed you. Celebrating the feasts is a testimony that Christ has not performed the work of atonement which they pointed to.

Jewish rituals and special diets, are fleshly

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving. 1 Tim 4:1-4

I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself ... Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure. Rm 14:14, 20

Abstaining from certain foods for those in the New Covenant (kosher diet or fasting) is a doctrine of demons.

Trying to follow the Mosaic Law leads to a curse

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' Gal 3:10

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. Jm 2:10

You cannot pick and choose sections of the Mosaic Law to obey and yet ignore others. If you choose to obey the law you must keep all of it (and fail, as all men do). Thus it is wrong to keep the feasts of the law, such as Passover, if you do not keep the whole law. But God has annulled the Mosaic Law (see section on law) and established the New Covenant in its place. Celebrating the feasts is trying to perform something God has annulled.

Weaker brethren, who do not yet understand their liberty in this matter, ought not to be condemned but tolerated and encouraged to learn.

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in *our* brother's way. I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of *your* food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil. Rm 14:13-16

One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes *it* to the Lord; and he who does not

observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe *it*. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. Rm 14:5-7

All food is clean to the Christian, but if this offends a weak, immature brother, then the freedom of the believer should be put on hold until the weaker brother understands the truth. Fellowship is more important than food. The same applies to special days (whether Jewish or pagan, e.g. Christmas, Easter, Passover etc.). The truth is that we are free from all externals, but this freedom must not result in wrongly judging another brother and condemning him. Some people take time to learn.

While Paul explains that one person esteems a day above another, and that this can be tolerated for a time, he does not state that Jewish or pagan festivals should be practised in all their particulars, just esteemed as a day. Celebrating the features of the Passover, for instance, blaspheme Christ who has fulfilled what this pointed towards with a hope of fulfilment. It also denies his establishment of the Lord's Supper as a replacement, made clear by Luke and Paul.

Christians are to beware of the dangers of Jewish false teaching

Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Phil 3:2-3

Paul compares Christians as the true circumcision with Jews who are fleshly and who call themselves 'the circumcision'. He calls Jewish false teachers 'dogs', which was a term used by the rabbis for Gentiles and women. 'Mutilation' refers to the practice of legalistic Jewish teachers to demand circumcision of Gentiles.

By saying that 'we are the circumcision' he is effectively saying that 'we are the true Jews', 'the church is the true Israel'. If this is to be ridiculed as 'replacement theology' then Paul is to be condemned since he taught it in this verse and many other places. But it is not a replacement theology it is an inclusive theology. The church includes Jews as well as Gentiles in a new race of people, where the old fleshly national characteristics mean nothing at all.

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. Gal 1:6-9

The 'different gospel' was the bringing in of Jewish teaching to Gentile churches, proclaiming the need to obey the Mosaic Law. This was the first Jewish Root teaching in church history and it was cursed by Paul.

Jewish sacramentalism

Praying for Jerusalem

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces.' For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, 'Peace *be* within you.' Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek your good. Ps 122:6-9

Apostolic teaching shows that this must now be applied as praying for the blessing of the whole church, Jew and Gentile. The people of God are the church (1 Pt 2:9), the temple of God is the church (1 Cor 3:16), the house of God is the church (1 Pt 2:5). Jerusalem above is the church (Heb 12:22). The city of God is the church (Heb 12:22; Phil 3:20). Furthermore Jerusalem on earth now represents bondage and the flesh (Gal 4:25).

Furthermore, just think about this concept for a minute. If this is to be taken literally, then what about the many centuries when Jerusalem was the property of enemies of Christ; it only belonged to Jews for less than 500 years, between the reign of David (about 1,000 BC) and 587 BC? Before David it belonged to a king subject to Egypt. After the exile it belonged to the Babylonians; after that it was the property of the Persians and then the Greeks and then the Romans. After that it eventually became the property of Muslims and then the Ottoman Turks. Are we really saying that we should pray for the peace of the Ottoman Turks (or anyone else)? Yet this is required if we take this passage literally. Indeed we are to seek the good of those within Jerusalem, but even today this does not just mean Jews but also Arabs, Palestinians and Muslims.

God does not bless people just because they favour a certain people or certain city-dwellers or even a certain city. Neither is there is any blessing in praying for literal stones that make up a city. Thus it cannot be taken literally even in its OT context, where it stood figuratively for the people of God.

Furthermore, God himself cursed the city and destroyed it in 70 AD; God does not contradict himself. This is a figure of speech whereby the city represents the people of God in general.

Circumcision

Extreme Jewish Root teachers insist that circumcision is required of all males as submission to the Law of Moses. Even more moderate writers imply this, '*To some, such as the apostles Matthew, Thomas and Philip, it was clear. They [Gentiles] would need to go through adult circumcision – it was the only way.*'⁹

Peter confirmed that Gentiles (Cornelius and his household) had been born again and filled with the Spirit without circumcision and had come into better revelation (Acts 10-11). The apostles also agreed with Paul's presentation of justification by faith alone (with no need for circumcision) and all were in agreement (Gal 2:2-9).

Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God *is what matters.* 1 Cor 7:19

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. Gal 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. Gal 6:15

⁹ Steve Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p18.

... and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all. Col 3:10-11

To endure circumcision is a denial of the work of Christ in circumcising the heart, which is what the ritual symbolised. If a Christian is subsequently circumcised for religious (not medical) reasons then he greatly disobeys God.

Is the New Covenant Jewish?

Jewish Root teachers proclaim that the New Covenant is made with Jews and that all its blessings are Jewish. The Gentile church comes into this almost accidentally. '*The New Covenant made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah ... The New Covenant ... was with the whole house of Israel ... Gentiles were eventually allowed in too*'.¹⁰

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah -- not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more. Jer 31:31-34

This was initially addressed to the faithful remnant in Israel; but this remnant was the elect up to that time which was Jewish (Jer 15:1-11, 23:3, 31:7); the Gospel had not yet been sent to the nations. The original promise to Abraham was to be a father of many nations not just one and Isaiah emphasises that the covenant was to extend to the Gentile nations (Isa 60:3, 66:20). The Gospel became universal after the cross. The promise in Jeremiah is to all the elect, Jews and Gentiles.

The New Covenant is the foundation of the Gospel. It is the covenant sealed by Christ's blood (Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25) and is now celebrated in the Lord's Supper given to the church by Christ himself.

God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Cor 3:6

Paul, and his colleagues, were sent to the Gentiles and yet were ministers of the New Covenant.

In that He says, 'A new *covenant*,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Heb 8:13

Thus the New Covenant is not Jewish since the old Jewish system has passed away.

¹⁰ Steve Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p114.

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Cor 5:17

By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. Heb 7:22

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. Heb 8:6

For this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. Heb 9:15

Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. Heb 12:24

The New Covenant is in Christ's blood and Christians are a new creation in Christ; therefore all Christians are in the New Covenant and the Old Covenant has been cancelled. The New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant had no life but the New Covenant is eternal life.

The new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Cor 3:6

But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter. Rm 7:6

The Old Covenant was law, based on externals, but the New Covenant is in the Spirit.

The kingdom of God is heavenly at this time

Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Jn 18:36

The kingdom of God does not become material, physical, until after the Second Coming and the Day of Judgment when heaven is on a restored earth.

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Gal 6:14

Firstly, note that believers are to boast in the cross of Christ and not Israel. Secondly, the world as it is today is crucified (i.e. dead) to believers. Israel, as part of the fleshly world, is dead to believers.

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Col 1:13

Christians are in God's kingdom now. There is no mention anywhere in apostolic writings of a future earthly, fleshly, Jewish kingdom on earth.

Christians are God's people now

Christians are God's chosen people

You *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 1 Pt 2:9-10

Christians are kings unto God

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Rev 1:5-6

And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. Rev 5:10

Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection [conversion]. Over such the second death [hell] has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years [the Gospel age]. Rev 20:6

The church is God's temple

If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are. 1 Cor 3:17

Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 1 Cor 6:19

To Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Eph 3:21

Christians were once in darkness but are now the light of God

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned. Matt 4:16

For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. Eph 5:8

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Col 1:13

Who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 1 Pt 2:10

The focus of believers

Jewish Root teachers place the centre of God's thoughts upon Israel. Even the more moderate Steve Maltz states, '*The Jews are the key to God's heart*'.¹¹ This is idolatry pure and simple. It is replacing Christ with Israel.

Christians look to Christ and not Israel or Jewishness

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. Col 1:17-18

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Col 3:1-3

¹¹ Steve Maltz, *How the Church Lost the Way*, op. cit. p162.

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith. Heb 12:2

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Jude 1:21

Look to me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I *am* God, and *there is* no other. Isa 45:22

Therefore I will look to the LORD. Mic 7:7

We should use the name of Christ not some Jewish title

And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ. 1 Jn 3:23

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. Acts 16:31

And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. Jn 17:3

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rm 5:1

To God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen. Rm 16:27

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 2:2

We should use the word ‘God’ and not ‘G-d’, which is a mere Jewish superstition

The name of God [theos]. Rm 2:24

You were justified in the name of the Lord [kurios] Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor 6:11

Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Col 3:17

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God. 1 Jn 5:13

Jews were superstitious about writing down the name of God (Yahweh) for fear of the paper falling to the floor and treading on it; so they used abbreviations. The common Jewish Root practice of using ‘G-D’ is exactly the same. If the apostles could use the words ‘God’ and ‘Lord’, so can we.

Jews have stumbled over Christ and fallen away

He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken, be snared and taken. Isa 8:14-15

Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because *they did* not *seek it* by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. Rm 9:31-32

Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient, ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,’ and ‘a stone of stumbling and a rock of

offence.' They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 1 Pt 2:7-8

Jews fell away because they did not look unto Christ, did not trust in him, and were offended by him. The national characteristic of Jews is that they trust in themselves and are disobedient to God.

The source of truth is Christ and his delegates

Jewish Root teachers claim that there are various sources of truth: a non-existent Hebrew New Testament; midrashic interpretation; the Talmud, the Cabbalah or rabbinic comments. Even if they uphold the Bible they reverse proper interpretation by focusing upon the Old Testament to clarify the New; this leads to massive confusion.

Only Christ has, and is, the truth

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.' Jn 14:6

The truth in Christ is what sets people free (Jn 8:32). This means that Christ is the centrality of our faith and must be pre-eminent in all things (Col 1:18).

The truth of Christ was passed on primarily by the Holy Spirit to the apostles, the foundation of the church

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you. Jn 16:13-15

The mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets. Eph 3:4-5

Note this, the Spirit will lead the disciples into ALL TRUTH. There is nothing left out in the apostolic writings. The Gospels, apostolic letters and Revelation give us all that we need to understand about spiritual matters and God's decree, and it is they that form the basis for interpreting all the Old Testament. The priority in Biblical interpretation is the apostolic writings and nothing else. The OT has value in helping us see the scope of truth in the NT and illustrating its doctrines.

The foundation of the church is the apostles, not Israel as the root

God has appointed these in the church: first apostles. 1 Cor 12:8

The household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*. Eph 2:19-20

That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. 2 Pt 3:2

Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Rev 21:14

Israel is not the root of the church

The basis of this foolish idea is a very unusual and warped interpretation of Romans 11, which I have critiqued in my book, *The Veil of Moses* and papers such as: 'A simple catechism on the Jewish Root error' and 'Romans 11'; it is not appropriate to spend pages regurgitating that here. No sound commentator in history has ever advanced this idea until very recently.

What is correct is that Christianity arose from the historic background of Judaism and Jesus and the apostles were all Jews. Paul also spent his initial efforts in mission trying to win Jews by preaching in synagogues until he got thrown out, and usually beaten up. In this sense the Gospel is for the Jew first and then the Greek (Rm 1:16). This was not unusual since he was a Jew and wanted to save his brethren.

However, even in Paul's argument within Romans 9-11 he shows us that the root of the church is the faith of Abraham, based upon God election of him, not Israel as a nation. In fact these chapters are about election and not Israel and they explain how Jews like Esau could be hated by God and damned from birth. Furthermore, we are specifically told that the foundation ['root'] of the church is primarily Christ as the cornerstone, but then also the word of God through the historic prophets and the apostles.

The household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. Eph 2:19-20

That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. 2 Pt 3:2

Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Pt 2:4-5

I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Matt 16:18

This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Acts 4:11

No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 3:11

Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Rev 21:14

There is no place in Scripture which states that Israel is the root of the church that must now be re-discovered.

Conclusion

We could pursue this theme for many more pages as there are so many weird, foolish and blasphemous doctrines being propounded in Jewish Root circles. However, this is more than enough to dispel the chief teaching of this very dangerous and heretical group.

Just as Jewish legalism was one of the two biggest problems in the early church (the other being Gnostic mysticism, now paralleled in Charismania), so Jewish Root teachings are one of the chief problems of the end-time church.

One has to be either ignorant of Scripture or wilfully deceived and blind to it in order to follow the baseless doctrines of the Jewish Root Movement. Its teachings are not just errors but the very opposite of the teaching propounded by Jesus and the apostles. It is a heresy of the deepest hue.

Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version
© Thomas Nelson 1982

Paul Fahy Copyright © 2012
Understanding Ministries
<http://www.understanding-ministries.com>