

8 Reasons Why Gentiles Should Care About the Jewish Roots of Their Faith

“Why are the Jewish roots of the faith important to us as Gentiles?” I was asked this question the other day during a radio interview.

After spending nearly a year writing a book about this subject and teaching on it for over a decade, I found myself at a loss for words!

The interviewer wasn't being antagonistic—he just assumed I had the answer. I winged it and quickly threw out something I thought sounded intelligent and compelling, but I can't remember for the life of me what I said. However, once it was over, I thought to myself: *Why is this important to non-Jewish believers? If someone is born again, what does it matter if they understand the Jewish roots of their faith?*

Four points quickly came to me, and four more later on.

1. When Gentiles forget to honor the Jewish roots of their faith, it isn't long before Jews start dying. The minute the church forgot her Jewishness, she began to charge Jews with *deicide*—the killing of God. Tens of thousands of Jews have been called “Christ-killer” just before being murdered by supposed Christians and even Nazis. Hitler laughed at the church and said, “I am just finishing what you started.” History is filled with stories of persecutions, expulsions, imprisonments, confiscations, rapes and mass murders of Jews at the hands of so-called Christians who lost their way. More than 30,000 Jewish converts were burned at the stake by the Catholic church from the years 1500 to 1800 for the sin of returning to Judaism!

Furthermore, as soon as church leaders forgot their Jewish roots, they started creating theologies that teach that the church has replaced Israel, God has rejected Israel (see Jer. 31:35ff) and even that God hates the Jews (see the teachings of John Chrysostom, who lived from 347-407).

2. Jesus comes back as the King of Israel. Yeshua is returning to Jerusalem (Zech. 14:3-4), not Rome, and when He does, the nations will be required to come to the Holy City every year and worship the Lord during the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:16). A church unfamiliar with the Jewishness of the Messiah might be caught off guard to meet Jesus the Jew in the clouds. There has been so much anti-Semitism in the church for 2,000 years that it appears the church has often forgotten not only that Jesus Himself was a Jew, but that He will return as a Jew!

3. If you love someone, you should love what they love. If you love Yeshua, then you should know that He loves His natural brothers and longs to see them embrace Him. In tears, He told the orthodox Jews of Jerusalem, "You will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'" (Matt. 23:39).

In Hebrew, those words "Blessed is he who comes" are a greeting. It is how you greet someone who arrives in the country or simply comes to your home.

I arrived back in Israel this week after a ministry trip to the U.S. My dear friend and mentor Asher Intrater called me up, and his first words were: "*Baruch Haba* [Blessed is he who comes]." The words are written in Hebrew at our airport to welcome those arriving.

Yeshua was saying here, "I will not return until you welcome Me." Just as Joseph had the love of the nations, his joy was not complete until his brothers reconciled with him.

In addition, whenever a groom is invited to the altar in a

Jewish wedding, the cantor sings, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Yeshua is the bridegroom, and He will return when they call for Him.

Furthermore, in the most intense plea in Scripture, Paul reveals Yeshua's love for Israel and a desire for the Jews to be saved when he said *by the Holy Spirit* that he would be willing to go to hell if only his brothers, Israel, would be saved (Rom. 9:1-5). If you love Yeshua, then you must love who He loves, and He loves His brothers.

4. God's plan is to use the Gentiles to reach Israel. Romans 11:11 says that salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. God has put an anointing in Gentile believers to reach Jewish people. Even as Israel was called to be a light to the nations (Is. 42:6; 49:6), the nations are now called to reach Israel with the love of God. I was brought to faith by a non-Jew, and so were most of the Messianic Jews I know. God has given you an anointing to reach the Jewish people!

5. Escape judgment. Romans 11:17-23 says that if the Gentile church treats Israel poorly, it is also in danger of being cut off. I know this is difficult language, but these are not my words, but Paul's:

"Do not be arrogant, but tremble. For if God did not spare the natural branches [Israel], he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness [toward Israel]. Otherwise, you also will be cut off." (Rom. 11:20-22)

May I encourage you to take a slow read of Romans 11 and let God speak to you? Start with verse 11, and go to the end of the chapter.

6. A debt of love. God brought forth Yeshua through Israel. *No Israel equals no salvation.* It was the prayers of people like

Simeon and Anna—both Jews—that brought forth the first coming of the Messiah, prophesied by the Jewish prophets. Without Israel, you have no Old Testament and even no New Testament (as the Old Testament prophesies the New [Jer. 31:31-33], and it was Jews who wrote the New Testament). Without Abraham, there would be no Messiah! Without David, no Son of David! Without Israel, the nations would still be sacrificing their children to false gods.

It was the Jews who said, “The Lord is One”—a revolutionary concept in the pagan world. It was Jewish apostles who spread the message of salvation to the nations. The apostle to the Gentiles was a Jewish rabbi (Rom. 11:13). The Gentile church owes a debt of love to the eldest brother amongst the nations, Israel, who brought forth salvation in Yeshua the Messiah.

7. A desire for revival. Romans 11:12-15 says clearly that if Israel, by failing (rejecting the gospel) brought revival to the nations, what will happen when Israel accepts the gospel? The answer: Greater riches and life from the dead! See Paul’s words here:

“But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring! For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?”

If Israel, through her rejection of salvation, released revival on the nations, her acceptance will bring her back into right alignment with the plan of God, releasing worldwide revival—greater riches (v. 12) and life from the dead (v. 15). If the book of Acts represents *riches*, then greater riches means *greater than anything we have ever seen!*

8. Jews alienated from Yeshua. By cleansing the gospel of its Jewish roots, Jews are left to think this is a non-Jewish story—a story about people named Peter, Paul and Mary that

takes place in Rome amongst Gentiles, as opposed to a story about Simon, Shaul, Jacob (the actual name of James) and Miriam that takes place in Galilee and Jerusalem and focuses almost entirely on Jews until Acts 10.

Without the Jewish context (that Israel's Messiah comes), Jews are left to believe that Jesus and Judaism are exclusive. The Jewish world wrongly agrees with Justin Martyr, who said, "He who would be both Christian and Jew, can be neither Christian nor Jew." They mistakenly assume that the New Testament represents a new religion.

Can you think of any more reasons the Jewish roots of the faith are important to non-Jewish believers?

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