

A Jew's High Praise for Pope Francis

What a breath of fresh air this new pope has been, from the choosing of his name (Francis, after the humble Francis of Assisi) to his refusal to participate in the lavish lifestyle that has accompanied his predecessors.

This Pope even tweets daily messages of encouragement, such as:

"Christians are ready to proclaim the gospel because they can't hide the joy that comes from knowing Christ."

"Are you angry with someone? Pray for that person. That is what Christian love is."

"With the 'culture of waste', human life is no longer considered the primary value to be respected and protected."

Wow! This almost tempts me to want to become a Catholic!

But what really blew me away was a comment he made this week to representatives of the international Jewish community who were invited to the Vatican. Pope Francis used the occasion to condemn anti-Semitism, saying, "Because of our common roots, a true Christian cannot be anti-Semitic."

That is worth reading again: "A true Christian cannot be anti-Semitic"! Hallelujah!

What else can you say?

I've never understood people who call themselves followers of Yeshua who claim to hate Jews. Do they think it was an accident that when Yeshua came to earth in the form of a man, that He chose to be born from a Jewish woman, into a Jewish family, and that He lived as a practicing Jew?

Do they forget that God set apart the Jewish people for a special relationship and that He chose Yeshua as the fulfillment of the promises made to the Jewish people?

Even if you are ignorant enough to believe in replacement theology and think that Israel and the Jews no longer have a special role to play in God's plans—that still does not negate the fact that Yeshua was Jewish!

How, then, can you claim Him as your God, your deity, the One whom you worship and then decide to hate the very people group that He is a part of? It boggles the mind! It is the height of stupidity and reduces your spiritual life to meaningless, thoughtless, mindless ritual. Are people really living that unconsciously, that disconnected from their own reality?

If you don't want to believe in Yeshua or call yourself a Christian, then that's your choice. God gave us free will. But if you're going to say you're a "member of the club," then at least pay attention to the membership rules.

Yeshua said He did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it. In other words, He didn't come to destroy Judaism or to distance Himself from the Jews or to negate thousands of years of relationship between God and the nation of Israel. He came to complete it! That is cause for celebration!

How anyone gets from that Good News to devoting their lives to hatred and animosity toward Yeshua's own people is a twisted and pathetic theology. To be an anti-Semite (that is, to be a hater of the Semitic or Jewish people) is to hate Yeshua Himself, not to mention His mother, Mary, His adopted father, Joseph, all of His apostles, and all of the prophets of the Old Testament, including David and Solomon and Moses.

How can you call yourself a Christian, a believer in Yeshua, and yet hold this attitude? It's the height of hypocrisy.

We would all do well to echo Pope Francis on this topic. As he

recently wrote on Twitter:

“We are all sinners. But may the Lord not let us be hypocrites. Hypocrites don’t know the meaning of forgiveness, joy and the love of God.”

Amen to that.

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