

‘We Love the Jews—As Long as They Don’t Believe in Jesus!’

The sentiment in the headline is what is coming from HaYovel, a highly visible Christian Zionist group that serves Jewish settlers in the West Bank. Two friends of mine posted yesterday here and here some of the comments from Zac Waller, the executive director. I was speechless when I read Zac’s comments. And anyone who knows me, knows that is rare!

A Deadly Doctrine; A Fatal Theology

Now, before I share the alarming quote, let me explain for those who don’t know, what replacement theology is. It is the belief that the Bible teaches that the church has replaced Israel, that Israel is rejected by God, that all of the powerful promises of restoration to the Jewish people are now given to the church. And the best part is that all the curses remain with the Jewish people. Oh joy!

Replacement theology is a demonic doctrine that has contributed to countless Jewish deaths. We can see the beginnings of it in the early Roman church. It is one of the reasons Paul wrote so strongly to these believers about God’s heart for Israel, when he said he would exchange his own salvation for the salvation of the Jewish people (Rom. 9:1-5). He goes on to emphatically declare that God has not rejected Israel (Rom. 11:1, 11) and that the calling on the nation is irrevocable (Rom. 11:29).

A Very Sad Lie

Now for the alarming quote from Zac Waller. Regarding the fact that Shelanu TV is a local Israeli/Hebrew expression from Jewish believers, he said:

“... the new channel is supposed to be in Hebrew and run by

local Messianic believers. Unfortunately, and ironically, many of them have been influenced by replacement theology! Not all, but many, on various levels, have joined mainstream Christianity in replacing the Jewish people with Christians, Jerusalem with Rome and the Torah with Christian traditions.”

Each time I read that, it is like getting punched in the stomach. And once again, I find myself speechless. How can somebody who calls themselves Christian, who claims to love the Jewish people, spread malicious falsehoods against fellow believers?

(For the record, the overwhelming majority of Messianic Jews do not embrace the term “Christian”, continue to live as Jews, celebrate both the biblical Jewish holidays and national Israeli ones, have zero connection with Rome or the Catholic Church, are Zionists [meaning they believe that modern Israel is fulfillment of biblical prophecy] and abhor the idea that God has replaced “Jewish people with Christians.”]

I understand some of the initial outcry, when it was thought that Shelanu was an import of Western evangelical television with Hebrew subtitles, but I assumed our dear friends in the Christian Zionist movement, people we support, love and champion as they reach out with Yeshua’s love to the Jewish people, would support us or at least not attack us once they found out that this was a local Messianic ministry.

A reporter asked me the other day if I thought that Shelanu would lead to a rift between the Messianic movement and the Christian Zionist movement. I told him, “Of course not,” once they see that this is a local ministry with the participation of hundreds of Messianic Israelis, they will support us. Boy was I wrong—at least with HaYovel.

Zach Waller, writing from the HaYovel website, goes so far as to encourage Israel, a democratic country with freedom of speech and expression, to take pages from the Iranian playbook

and silence the voices of Israelis, Jews who want to tell their stories. These same Israelis serve in the Israeli Defense Forces that HaYovel supports, risking their lives, but the Wallers message to them is clear: You can die for your country, but don't you dare speak to your country! Chilling.

"We disapprove of GOD TV's damaging actions and endorse the removal of the new 'Shelanu' channel from Israeli Television networks."

I imagine that Zac appreciates his First Amendment rights in America; why does he want to remove ours in Israel? Of all people to target, he chooses his own spiritual family! Shelanu has a license from the Israeli equivalent of the FCC to broadcast in Hebrew to Israelis. Contrary to reports, it says "1.2 מיועד לציבור הישראלי," the channel is intended for the audience of Israeli viewers—not Christian viewers. No deceit, no deception! But once a nation seeks to silence a minority, it affects the grace of God on that country. It limits God blessing and favor. But I am hopeful that Israel will not follow Zac's draconian advice.

Selective Anti-Semitism

I reached out to HaYovel, but they have not responded. One of their friends, who leads a similar ministry encouraging people to purchase goods from Israel, did respond. There is no need to mention him by name, but he talked about how GOD TV's initial video was a serious offense to the Jewish people.

This reveals that they do not see us, Messianic Jews, as part of "the Jewish people." I reminded him that I am "the Jewish people" and that the entire team at Shelanu is "the Jewish people." Our board is 80% "the Jewish people." Most of our content providers are "the Jewish people." I was trying to make the point that if you love "the Jewish people," and you want to stand with "the Jewish people," you can't forget "the Jewish people" who have found the Messiah. Unless you are

saying we are no longer Jewish, in which case you are the ones embracing replacement theology!

Their love for the Jewish people has led them to become somewhat anti-Semitic. What they're saying is that they will stand with Israel as long as they don't believe in Jesus. It is an utterly warped position for Christians.

Zac, how would you handle it if one of your Orthodox Jewish friends found the Messiah and began to share that message with others in his community?

–Would you ostracize him the way you are the Messianic community?

–Would you tell him he's mistaken and should just go back to being lost?

–Would you accuse of embracing replacement theology?

–Would you seek to have Israel silence him, as you are doing with us?

Understand, this is a very real scenario that you will soon face, as God opens up the eyes of more and more of his ancient chosen people.

Zac then lectures us: "Christian's should put an end to the vicious cycle of arrogance and disrespect towards the Jews [by sharing Yeshua with them]." This coming from a man who issued one of the most arrogant, disrespectful statements, and can I add false, against Jewish people that believe in the Messiah. And secondly, we are not Christians in the traditional sense of the word; we are Messianic Jewish Hebrew-speaking citizens of the Jewish nation, whom Zac and his family are persecuting. What if one of us winds up in a hospital or worse because a young Orthodox Jew, encouraged by your words, does something reckless? Will you still call us "arrogant" and "disrespectful"?

Stockholm Syndrome

HaYovel has some sort of Stockholm Syndrome. No, they have not been kidnapped by settlers, but they have taken up their offense against Jewish believers—to the point of fighting against Yeshua's own ministry here. It happens. God gives you a love for a certain people, but you start to love them so much that you compromise the very faith that led you to love them in the first place. Zac shares why he is against Messianic Jews.

“It's important for us to understand that Orthodox Jews see this as Christianity ripping away these Jewish people's identities—the identities that protected them from assimilation and preserved them through 2000 years of exile. Because of this, they no longer see Messianics as Jews but as Christians. Again, in order to have a relationship with Orthodox Jews, we need to understand why they feel and react the way they do. We need to have a sensitive, respectful relationship with them!”

It is one thing to “understand why they feel” the way they do. It is another thing to agree with them. Instead of explaining that Messianic Jews are still Jews, he has taken up their offense against us—his brothers. Understand, we are also Jews with a history of anti-Semitism from Christians, and somehow, despite that, we found Yeshua. But you no longer see us as Jews! Do you know that it was our ancestors too, whose “Jewish ... identities—protected them from assimilation and preserved them through 2000 years of exile”?

Your ideology is messed up, my friend. You love Israel because you are a Christian but don't recognize Jews who have found the Messiah. The end result, and I have seen it before, could be a complete rejection of Jesus and conversion to Orthodox Judaism. Time will tell.