

# Sanhedrin Seduction and Third-Temple Temptations: A Warning to Christians

Recently, a pastor contacted me to see if I was interested in covering, for GOD TV, a concert in Jerusalem. The event was sponsored by a group called *The Sanhedrin*. You will recognize that name from the New Testament. The Sanhedrin was the Jewish high court and police system, overseen by 71 judges from among leading Sadducees (priests), Pharisees and scribes. The Sanhedrin survived the second temple's destruction and made it all the way to the fifth century. But, because of persecution, it was finally disbanded.

Over the past year, I have heard more than one person refer to the supposed rebirth of a modern-day Sanhedrin. Some have even confused Israel's religious court system with being a new Sanhedrin, which it is not. Instead, it is a group of Orthodox Jews who are seeking to re-establish the ancient Sanhedrin.

But do they have authority to simply decide that they are the ruling Sanhedrin? Of course not! They have no judicial authority whatsoever. By this standard, any group of 23 or 71 Jewish men could claim they are the new Sanhedrin.

So, if Israel already provides for an Orthodox religious court system, why are these men seeking to re-establish the Sanhedrin? And why would all of this be of interest for Bible-believing Christians? The answer to both these questions is that the main item on their agenda is not one of every day justice, but one which stirs great controversy among both Jews and Christians: They are preparing a renewed priesthood (including the high priest), for the rebuilding of the third temple in Jerusalem.

*The biblical Sanhedrin in Jerusalem was a gathering point for*

*universal cooperation and justice. The high point of the concert came when the foreign representatives went up to the stage to sign an agreement with the Sanhedrin.*

*By signing, the nations acknowledged that they were answering a call by the Sanhedrin of Israel to accompany the people of God, as peoples, nations, and individuals toward establishing the temple in Jerusalem as a house of prayer for all nations as prophesied in the Bible.*

*Breaking Israel News*

## **Evangelicals and the New Sanhedrin**

This new Sanhedrin, just like the [Third] Temple Institute, is looking to the evangelical world for support. They even have a Gentile Christian spokesman for the Sanhedrin. I know this man, and he is a sweet individual. But, sadly, it appears that he has greatly compromised the Great Commission in his efforts to be a blessing to Israel. And what is considerably concerning is that he believes this new Sanhedrin “will play a key role at the end of days.” (Read his interview [here](#)) Let me be clear, *there is no prophecy whatsoever that points to an end-time, God-fearing, God-appointed Sanhedrin.*

As a Jewish believer, I am deeply conflicted: On the one hand, I love that Christians are seeking friendship with Jews. On the other, I am deeply concerned that it is in an effort to affirm a Yeshua-less Judaism.

First of all, the Sanhedrin that are reaching out to evangelical believers would never reach out to a Messianic Jew, because

1. We say you can be Jewish and believe in Yeshua, just like the first believers did and
2. We, with compassion, seek to share Yeshua with other Jewish people.

They think we are a cult because we believe that Yeshua is the Messiah, and, yet, they are seeking partnership with evangelical Christians—*who believe the same thing*. If Jesus is not the Messiah, then every Christian on earth is deceived. If He is, then let them embrace Him too. But, rejecting Him, while accepting His Gentile followers—and their donations—seems hypocritical.

Not only would they not fellowship with me, they would most likely persecute me. While I love the fact that evangelicals are establishing relationships with Orthodox Jews, it seems that some of it is coming at the cost of compromising our most holy commission—to spread the message of Yeshua to all nations (Matt. 28:18-20). And, of course, that includes Israel.

## **A Mystic Fascination**

Many Christians are fascinated by their new Jewish friends. One pastor wrote of a meeting between Orthodox Jews and evangelical Christians, calling it the greatest expression of the “Ephesians 2:15/One New Man” he had ever seen. Though it is great that they were reaching out to Jewish people and expressing the love of Yeshua, the “one new man” of Ephesians 2:15 is all about the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles together *in the Messiah*, not Jewish unbelievers and Christians. The “one new man” of Ephesians 2:15 is not anti-Jesus, Orthodox Jews and pro-Jesus gentiles, but Messianic Jewish and Gentile believers coming together *in Yeshua*.

Christians, while absolutely having a calling (Rom. 11:11) to reach out with love to the Jewish people, should never assume that Judaism without Yeshua is acceptable. He is the “the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through [Yeshua].” (John 14:6) The entirety of the Old Covenant pointed to Messiah. This is why Paul, the learned Jewish rabbi/apostle could write, “Messiah is the goal of the Torah for all who believe” (Rom. 10:4, TLV)

Jesus wept over Jerusalem's rejection of Him (Matt. 23:37-39; Luke 19:41-42) and the Bible is full of prophecies of the Jewish people embracing Yeshua in the end-times (Zech. 12:10, 13:1, Hosea 3:4-5, Matt. 23:37-39; Romans 11:26, Rev. 1:7). Paul said that the gospel is to the Jew first (Rom. 1:16) and, yet, many of these well-meaning Christians will not even speak to their new Jewish friends of their need for salvation.

For us, who live here in Israel, we risk life and limb to plead with our people, as Paul did, to accept Yeshua as Messiah. It is stunning to see evangelicals compromise by giving religious legitimacy to a body that, outright, rejects Yeshua as the Messiah, and then persecutes Jews who believe in Him. They shun their Messianic bothers and embrace those who vehemently oppose the Gospel. Many Christians attended a concert, aligning themselves with a fictitious Sanhedrin.

*"Last night, nations came together in Jerusalem to praise God, aligning with the Sanhedrin."*

*Mordecai Persoff, head of the Mikdash Educational Center*

There are quotes from believers speaking of God "doing a new thing"..."an historic establishment of the Sanhedrin ... The potential is enormous." One believer said, "It is clear that we need the Sanhedrin to act as an interface between faith and politics in order to spread this blessing even further in the world." As you will see below, the New Testament Sanhedrin was anything but a blessing to the fledging Messianic community (Acts 5:40).

So that I am clear, evangelicals should absolutely continue building bridges with the Jewish people, but should never compromise the gospel. My dear friend and associate, Ward Simpson, the CEO of GOD TV, stood before group of Jewish-Israeli government officials and Christian media leaders a year ago and said that GOD TV has "a job to the proclaim the gospel of our King to the ends of the earth ... and part of that

gospel message is Israel. Without her, without the Jewish people, where would we be today?"

He went on to say that GOD TV would always stand with Israel. And the Israeli government posted His speech. Watch here! You see, you can love Israel and love the gospel. It is *both/and*, not *either/or*.

## **Remember the Sanhedrin?**

Here are a few more thoughts you should consider before aligning with or supporting the so-called Sanhedrin or third-temple builders:

1. There is no such thing as a modern Sanhedrin. They are just a group of men claiming, without any biblical authority, to be the Sanhedrin. They have no power or authority—governmental or religious. God has not reestablished the Sanhedrin. And teaching that they are end-time agents is simply deception. They need Yeshua—just like you and me.
2. The last significant thing the Sanhedrin did was to add the 19th benediction to the Jewish prayer book late in the first century, declaring all *Notzrim*—Jewish believers—to be heretics. Since no Messianic Jew could recite this, it was used as a tool to root out Jewish followers of Yeshua from the Synagogue. Before that, they oversaw the martyrdom of Stephen—a Messianic Jew. Prior to this, they persecuted the apostles by beating them with the cat of nine tails; and before that, they missed the coming of Messiah and conspired with Pilate to have Yeshua crucified.\* They were not exactly a peaceful group promoting a Messianic or Christian dialogue.
3. If this group one day becomes recognized as *the* Sanhedrin, it seems they will make a deal with the Antichrist for the rebuilding of the temple (Dan. 9:27). So, I guess in that sense, they could have an end-time

role.

## **Third-Temple Fascination**

Many Christians, with a love for Israel and biblical prophecy, seem mesmerized by this whole idea of the rebuilding of the temple, convinced by their view of prophecy that it must be rebuilt before Yeshua's Second Coming.

Christians who send money to the Temple Institute or who join in worldwide prayer meetings with a renewed "Sanhedrin," need to understand that this third temple will be defiled by the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:4). This is where he will set up his image and claim to be God. Is this something Christians should be encouraging or supporting with prayers and finances? Should believers be backing an Antichrist agenda? Brothers and sisters, this is nothing but a recipe for confusion and deception! We need to warn the Jewish people of this, not help them to align themselves with the future Antichrist.

## **A Great Deception**

I believe that one of the great deceptions of the end-times surrounds this theme of Christians naively aligning themselves with Orthodox Jews. It starts with a love for the Jewish people, but then comes a fascination with their traditions and customs (all fine and good). But then comes all kinds of reasons why we shouldn't be sharing the gospel with them, and so on. We've seen more than one case where this ends up in the denial of faith in Yeshua and a wholesale conversion to Judaism.

We have been fighting a battle against replacement theology, calling out the false teaching that the church has replaced Israel, and that God's judgment is on Jewish people for the killing of Jesus. However, we cannot go so far in the other direction that it ends with the *de facto* (or outright) denial of Jesus, in the name of preserving Jewish-Christian dialogue or relations. Remember, the last thing He told His apostles

was to “take the gospel to *Jerusalem*, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). That is our solemn commission.

Yes, the church is called to love Israel and absolutely seek peaceful dialogue. The persecution of Jews from Christians is one of the greatest and bloodiest oxymorons in history. God had called the church to “provoke the Jews to jealousy” but, instead, she attacked them, stole their promises and called them cursed. Thank God, things are changing! More and more believers are expressing affection for Israel. But part of loving them is gently, with sensitivity, and a broken heart, sharing the gospel with them. I am a believer in Yeshua because my Gentile best friend loved me enough to tell me an uncomfortable truth.

## **Willing to Go to Hell for Israel**

Rabbi Paul’s burning passion was to win the Jewish people to Yeshua, not merely to foster dialogue (by the way, a dialogue that delegitimizes their Messianic Jewish brothers). He speaks clearly about the Orthodox Jews of his day:

*Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for Israel is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have zeal for God—but not based on knowledge (Rom. 10:1-2, TLV).*

He is clear on two things:

1. He longs for the Jewish people to know Yeshua.
2. That their zeal (like the new Sanhedrin) is not based on the Word of God, but on a desire to obtain righteousness through their own actions—not by the grace of God. Honestly their hearts are so close. Please don’t think that I don’t love these Orthodox Jews—I do! They want to see the kingdom established in Jerusalem. That is prophetic. They see the temple as a house of prayer for

all nations. That is biblical. But they miss the most important part: These things will be established through Yeshua when He returns. (Zech. 14:9)

Paul did not seek humanistic dialogue. With a broken heart, he pleaded with the Jewish people of his day to receive Yeshua. And many did! He was so broken over the state of Israel that he was willing to go to hell if it meant they would be saved.

*For I would pray that I myself were cursed, banished from Messiah for the sake of my people—my own flesh and blood, who are Israelites (Rom. 9:3-4a).*

Shockingly, one of the leading pastors in the Christian Zionist movement loved the Jewish people so much that he embraced a false theology called dual covenant (which teaches that Jews do not need Jesus for salvation, but are saved through the Old Covenant). What nonsense! Jesus came to the Jewish people, and the gospel is to the Jew first (Rom. 1:16). He was crucified, buried and resurrected in Jerusalem. The apostles preached Yeshua *exclusively* to Jewish people for the first decade. And this fellow suddenly says,

“Everyone else, whether Buddhist or Baha’i, needs to believe in Jesus. But not Jews. Jews already have a covenant with God that has never been replaced.”

And, yet, God says through Jeremiah that he will make a New Covenant with Israel (see Jer. 31:31).

After being confronted by scholars, this Christian Zionist leader was forced to rewrite portions in his book on the subject, but still thinks sharing the gospel with Jews is futile. In his efforts to love Israel, he has taken the most uncaring position.

We have to discern between genuine love for Israel and a false empathy that seeks to silence believers from sharing the Good



News with Jewish people. In fact, we should love the Jewish people so much that, with tears, *we have to share Yeshua*.

God does have an awesome plan for Israel, but it does not include the glorification of a new Sanhedrin, but massive awakening to Yeshua that ends in “all Israel” being saved, as Romans 11:26 says.

\* Of course we know that Yeshua’s purpose was to die for the Jewish people and the world. He said, “No one takes [my life] away from Me, but I lay it down on My own.” (John10:18) God forbid we drudge up old blood libels against the Jewish nation!