



# GOD'S OUTSTRETCHED HAND AND THE GREAT ERROR

## A slightly different Christmas article

By Brigitte B. Nussbächer

*The New Testament teaches that with the birth of Jesus, God stretched out his hand to all of humanity. But while the world seized this opportunity, it turned against its very origin: against the people of its Redeemer, the people of the original covenant, the apple of God's eye - Israel!*

*Is Christmas celebrated without God's people in mind?*



*Gods outstretched hand. Photo Shutterstock*

## A Wonderful Chance!

The message of hope in the New Testament is, that with the birth of Jesus, God stretched out his hand to all of humanity. Almost nobody was aware than that this day marked the beginning of a new era, while a new age was actually introduced later on.

In addition to the eternal covenant that God had made with his chosen people Israel, this revolutionary message declared, that there was now a chance for all: Through Jesus, people from all nations had the opportunity to come close to God. (Luke 24:46-47 and Acts 10:15 +35)

Forgiveness of sins, access to the Creator and eternal life were the promises. The redemption of this lost world has never seemed so close at hand. Christians have been celebrating this moment of hope at Christmas for around 2000 years - today there are officially 2.5 billion of them.<sup>i</sup>

In the early days, this new faith with its central statements about one God, repentance, forgiveness and love had a difficult time because it did not fit into the polytheistic historical environment. In



addition, principles such as the equality of all people before God contradicted both the class-consciousness of the time and the understanding of the role of women.

When Emperor Constantine the Great finally introduced Christianity as a "legitimate" religion, around 300 years of persecution of Christians came to an end. A great moment for humanity?

## The Major Error...

But things turned out differently. The once persecuted Christians became persecutors themselves and turned against their own origins: the people of their Redeemer, the people of the original covenant, the apple of God's eye!

As early as 325, at the first Vatican Council at Nicea, they deliberately began to distance themselves from Judaism. Biblical principles were modified and changed. Christianity - when compared with the Acts of the Apostles - was distorted beyond recognition. It became a system that denied its roots and despised Judaism.<sup>ii</sup> (See „[A Journey to the Holocaust](#)“ by S. Kokkonen)

While the Old Testament remained part of the Bible on the one hand, it was regarded as outdated and no longer valid on the other.

Although the Gospel reports that Jesus himself had said: "**Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish but to fulfill... Until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law...**" (Matthew 5:17-19)

*[Author's note: What Jesus actually opposed according to the Bible, was the rigid, inhuman arrogance of some Pharisees, who were only concerned with the blind, external observance of regulations, without taking into account God's love and His priorities, namely that the law was created for and not against people (Matthew 23:27 and Mark 2:27)].*

Some events in the Old Testament were labeled myths, and the role and promises for God's people were ignored. "Replacement theology" states that the Jews had forfeited their role in God's plans and that Christians were now the new Israel. The promises for Israel were accordingly ignored or the church claimed them for itself instead.

In addition, the Jews were accused by the church fathers of being responsible for the death of Jesus, and regarded as "God's murderers"; unworthy of the grace of God and men, to be punished and condemned.

Yet Paul, one of the main authors of the New Testament, clearly states: **God has not rejected the people he chose from the beginning** (Romans 11:1). **God does not take back his gifts of grace, nor does he revoke a calling once it has been made** (Romans 11:29) and - **that all Israel will be saved in the end** (Romans 11:26). He even explains that this interim period is intended as an opportunity for all other nations (Romans 11:25).

However, the church fathers before and after this first council systematically denied the eternal covenant between God and the Jews and taught that God had abolished it.

One consequence of this was that, on the one hand, attempts were made to omit references to Judaism in translations and, on the other hand, the Jewish origin was not mentioned in many Christian themes. Jesus, the apostles, the prophets - all were torn from their Jewish context. As a result, many Christians are still unaware of their spiritual Jewish heritage until today.



And so it is that millions of Christians celebrate Christmas without giving a thought to the fact that Jesus was a son of the Jewish people. They are full of compassion for Mary, who could not find a home for the birth of her son - but in no way connect this with Israel, who to this day has not found an uncontested homeland and is still fighting for its place and right to exist - even after the founding of the state. Over 30,000 Israelis have lost their lives in this struggle over the last 76 years.

While they sing "Oh Merry, Oh Blessed Christmastime", they forget that since October 7<sup>th</sup> 2023, due to the massacre of the Hamas, there is a war going on in Israel. They don't think about how many families from the south and north of Israel have had to be evacuated because of the constant attacks and that these women also have to give birth to their children far from home.

For many, the Christmas story ends with the visit of the wise men from the East. Shortly after his birth, Jesus is recognized as the future King of the Jews and honored with precious gifts. A happy ending. But in the very same chapter, it is revealed that many innocent Jewish children in Bethlehem and the surrounding area were murdered by soldiers on Herod's orders. By this the reigning king tried to prevent Jesus from ever usurping his throne. Desperate mothers wept for their loss (Matthew 2:18). What a price the Jewish people had to pay for the Savior of mankind! Yet how many do not recognize this? And how many today close their eyes and ears, so as not to hear the weeping of the mothers, who mourn for their children, who were brutally slaughtered on 7.10.23 just because they were Jews.

Many Christians also ignore the fact that Jesus - if he were on earth - would live in Israel and would be affected by this war. And that the Messiah, longed for by both Jews and Christians, is also expected to arrive in Jerusalem.

How many live in this parallel world that the church has created - separated from its roots, separated from reality and without the biblical vision of Israel's future?

## Crimes in the Name of God

Through this turning away from Israel, the Church, which proclaimed its faith in the Jewish God, paradoxically and tragically became the main actor in the history of suffering of the Jewish people.

The influence of these teachings, which have been in circulation for over 1700 years, is frighteningly profound. Basically, the legitimization for Jew-hatred and persecution, for denial and ignorance was the result. (*More about current manifestations of anti-Semitism in: [Never Again - A Solid Promise? and 400 Days After](#)*). It is also the ideological origin of the Inquisition, the pogroms, the Crusades and the Holocaust.

And while the church distanced itself from the people of God, it sank more and more into crime itself. Instead of confessing that Jesus paid the price of atonement for the guilt of mankind, indulgences were sold in the name of the church, flushing riches into the church treasury for an alleged remission of sins. <sup>iii</sup>

The name of God was also misused in wars. <sup>iv</sup> Religious wars, such as the Huguenot Wars in France in the 16th and 17th centuries, the confessional wars in the Holy Roman Empire and, above all, the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), which were fought for the so-called "right faith", left a long trail of blood and guilt.

Instead of bringing the message of God's love and salvation, people, who had not recognized God and Jews, who had not recognized Jesus, were persecuted, expelled or forcibly Christianized under



(murder) threats. Instead of loving the Jews as God's chosen ones and being grateful for everything they had given to the world, they were disregarded and destroyed. The persecutions in 1096 before and during the First Crusade are referred to as the "original catastrophe of European Jewry".<sup>v</sup> But they are just one chapter among many.

Probably the most cynical and worst abuse was carried out by none other than Adolf Hitler, who wrote: "*This is how I believe I am acting today in the spirit of the Almighty Creator: By resisting the Jew, I am fighting for the Lord's work.*" (Mein Kampf/My Struggle).<sup>vi</sup> He believed that this would justify the Holocaust, the murder of 6 million Jews. And most churches remained silent or even joined in.

## The Rectification



*Change of direction after almost 1700 years. Photo Shutterstock*

In 1962, the Second Vatican Council finally took place, at which the insinuated guilt of the Jews in the crucifixion of Christ was "revoked", and in 2011 Pope Benedict XVI declared: "*A Christian cannot be anti-Semitic, we have the same roots.*" In 2019, his successor Pope Francis I said: "*Every Christian has a Jew within them, you cannot be a true Christian without acknowledging your Jewish roots*" and "*the covenant between God and the Jews continues to apply*".<sup>vii</sup> But have these words reached the 2.5 billion Christians? Insights and confessions of the last 60 years come after 1700 years of different teaching ...

Derek Prince, a Bible teacher of our time, once summarized it like this: "*We are deeply in debt to the Jewish people. Without them, the church would have no patriarchs, no prophets, no apostles, no Bible and no Savior. If we lacked all this, what else would there be that could bring us salvation? All the nations of the earth owe the most valuable part of their spiritual heritage to the Jews*".<sup>viii</sup>

Even today, there are still Christians who are convinced that the Jews are the most "godless" people because many do not recognize Jesus as the Son of God. Those, who make this fatal assertion overlook the fact that significantly more Jews than people in other nations are deeply connected to God, the Creator of the world and the Heavenly Father. And that Jesus did not say of himself: I am the goal but "**I am the way**" - to the Father. (Luke 14:6); and further that "**the Father and I are one**" (Luke 14:10) and that "**the Father is greater than me**" (Luke 14:28).

When we came to Israel and got to know this people and its history, it became very clear to us that the foundation and survival of this state, its rapid progress and achievements, the courage to face life and the strength that can be observed in so many people in Israel cannot be explained rationally and humanly, but have to be traced back to a special source of energy and strength. In Israel, God can be experienced in everyday life like nowhere else. (*More about this in the article: [How we experienced the miracle Israel](#)*). We were deeply impressed by the intense, intimate and lively relationship that many Jews have with God.



Derek Prince once described Israel as God's hand on the world clock. With the founding of Israel, God once again began a new era. It occurred to me that Jews are accused of not recognizing Jesus - even though what was happening around him was obvious and clear ... and that many Christians today do not recognize what God is doing in Israel.

## Our mission - our Future

Today we are experiencing how - according to the Bible's advance warning - the whole world is increasingly turning against Israel (Zechariah 12:3 and 14:2-3).

### And where do we stand?



*Do we carry Israel in our hearts? Photo Shutterstock*

Do we recognize our mission to pray for Israel and the Jewish people (Isaiah 62:7)?

Do we accept our task of loving God's people, standing by them, comforting them and encouraging them as Isaiah 40:1-2 says?

**Will Christians celebrate Christmas this year with God's people in mind - both their current suffering but also the salvation, the healing for all the world that came and will come again from Jerusalem?** (John 4:22; Micah 4:1-2)

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<sup>i</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity>

<sup>ii</sup> A Journey to the Holocaust by S. Kokkonen

<sup>iii</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indulgence>

<sup>iv</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_wars\\_of\\_religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_wars_of_religion)

<sup>v</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_and\\_the\\_Crusades](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_and_the_Crusades)

<sup>vi</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious\\_views\\_of\\_Adolf\\_Hitler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_views_of_Adolf_Hitler)

<sup>vii</sup> Speech of Miriam Nowak at the UN in June 2024

<sup>viii</sup> Our debt to Israel by Derek Prince



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