

The Jewish Test!

John 4:22

An evangelist in France working among the Muslim population told me an intriguing story about Muslims who receive Jesus under his ministry. When they have confessed their sins and are receiving Jesus, he leads them in a prayer that goes something like this: "I receive Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, as my Redeemer and Lord."

He says they pause as they realize what they are about to confess, they may even grimace slightly before breaking into a laugh as they repeat that portion of their salvation prayer. "Then you do not have to tell them they should love the Jews," he says, "because they realize they have become part of the family. They are grafted into the promises of given to Israel."

These new believers have understood a statement Jesus made to the Samaritan woman (John 4). "Salvation is from the Jews."

From the time God chose Abraham's family through his son Isaac and grandson Jacob (Israel) as the family that would bring redemption to the world, everyone who wants to come to the God of creation comes through a Jew. It is now evident that every culture has its own "signposts" to point to God and to the World Redeemer, but revelation of that salvation and the Door to that deliverance has come through "the Jew."

Many nations began to realize this call of God on the Jewish people long before Jesus arrived on the scene. The Syrian general Naaman had to pass this "Jewish test" before he was cleansed from his leprosy (2 Kings 5). A reluctant Jewish prophet delivered a message of salvation to Nineveh long before Jesus arrived.

During Jesus' lifetime the "royal official whose son needed healing had to get over any aversion to the Jew before his son could be healed (John 4:46-53). Likewise the Roman officer whose servant would have died if had not humbled himself to receive from a Jew. The Syrian Phoenician woman whose daughter was demonized, Matthew tells the story (15:21-28), knew that her only hope lay in the Jew. Jesus repeatedly tested her resolve, but she was determined to stay with him until He granted her request. The disciples had tried to send her away, Jesus feigned ignoring her so that even when He finally did speak to her, it did not sound very encouraging. "It is not right to take children's bread and give it to the dogs," he said, to which she responded, "Yes, but Lord, even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." She had passed the test. "You have great faith!" Jesus declared. "And her daughter was healed from that very hour." (Matthew 15:21-28) She had passed the Jewish test.

Another non-Jew opened the door for the nations to enter into the blessings for which Abraham's family had been called, blessings that would restore people to God. This man learned about the One True God, and knew that he, a Roman

army officer, had to humble himself to receive from a people who were not normally esteemed by Romans, certainly not an army officer. Cornelius called Peter, a Jewish fisherman turned itinerate preacher, to open the door for him. He had passed a test that would be required of all Gentiles—coming to God through a Jew.

The Christian Church has become so estranged from their roots that most of us no longer consider the revelation that Jesus gave to that Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. "Salvation comes from the Jew," he said. That truth still stands. There is only one Messiah, and He is Jewish. Until China, India, Russia, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia and every nation of the world is willing to come to God through a Jew, they will not know redemption.

Perhaps this explains why the demonic underworld has been engaged in "Jewish persecution" since the days of Abraham's rapidly increasing family. The visible expression of that harassment has taken many forms in many cultures, but it is set in motion by the powers of hell. Those dark powers activated the merciless Inquisitions of Spain and Portugal in the 15th century, the pogroms of Eastern Europe, the holocaust of Western Europe, the God-obliterating governments of communism in Russian and China, and today in radical Islam that is determined to destroy the Jewish race and any others who have accepted the message of the Jew as believers in the Jewish Messiah.

But God is not nervous about the future. "Through many hardships we enter the kingdom," Paul told his Syrian listeners in the first century. "There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then," Daniel prophesied in speaking of a time yet future (12:1). "Unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again," Jesus added in affirming Daniel's prediction of the end of the age (Matthew 24:21).

"Why do the nations rage?" cries the Psalmist. "The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One," then says, "The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them" and says, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill. Therefore you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth." (Psalm 2)

Not only will no nations succeed in destroying God's covenant people Israel and those of us grafted in, but during earth's approaching darkest hour, the "righteous will shine like the brightness of the heavens." and will "lead many to righteousness (Daniel 12:3; Matthew 13:43).

Pass the test! Come to the Jew! Become part of the family! Rest in His promises! Stay the course! And prepare to shine!