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Passover Controversies in Church History

Gregory Hagg

The Passover controversies form an important part of the story of church history, especially in shaping the relationship of the Church with the Jewish community. This chapter will provide an overview of only a few of the more notable controversies related to the Feast in relation to the Church's attitudes and actions. Three examples have been selected: the Quartodeciman debate, the *Novellae* of Justinian I, and the blood libels.

THE QUARTODECIMAN DEBATE (155–325 C.E.)

The Quartodeciman controversy, introduced by Scott Nassau in the previous chapter, focuses on the Early Church and the key role Messianic Jews played in the formation of the Post-Apostolic Church.¹ In this chapter we will recap some of what was

1 See chapter 7, "Passover, the Temple, and the Early Church," by Scott P.



detailed earlier and show the ongoing impact of this early controversy and how it shaped the Church's discussion and understanding of its relationship to the Jewish people.

As noted earlier, the term *Quartodecimans* comes from the Latin term *quarta decima*, which means "fourteenth," referring to the fourteenth day of Nisan in the Jewish lunar calendar. This, of course, is the biblical date of the beginning of Pesach, the Feast of Passover.

The early Jewish believers understood that the death of Yeshua, the Lamb of God, took place on the fourteenth of Nisan, so the celebration of His resurrection should occur in close proximity to the Passover. The obvious problem was that this date did not fall on the same day of the week each year, so the church leaders eventually required that a Sunday be selected for the date of Easter.

In a letter to the church at Philippi, Ignatius of Antioch (30–108 C.E.) says, "If any one celebrates the Passover along with the Jews, or receives the emblems of their feast, he is a partaker with those that killed the Lord and His apostles" (*To the Philippians* 14 [ANF 1:119]). This was a very early indication that the parting of the ways between an emerging early Christianity and post-Temple Judaism was in beginning to be established.

Hippolytus of Rome (170–236 C.E.), who attacks the Quartodecimans in a rather combative way later in the controversy, says,

There are others, fractious by nature, individualistic in their understanding, pugnacious over the point, who maintain that it is necessary to keep the Pascha on the fourteenth of the first month in accordance with the provision of the law, on whatever day it might fall. They have regard only to that which is written in the law that whosoever does not keep it as it is commanded is accursed. They do not notice that the law was laid down for the Jews, who in time would destroy the true Passover, which has come to the gentiles and is discerned by faith, and not by observation of the letter. By keeping to this one commandment they do not notice what was said by the apostle, namely "I bear

Nassau.



witness to everyone who is circumcised that they are obliged to keep the entirety of the law.” In other things they conform to everything, which has been handed down to the church by the apostles. (*Refutation of All Heresies* 8.18)²

Clearly, this is not simply a discussion of which day to observe an event. Rather, it is a polemic against the practice of Jewish believers and others who agreed with this emphasis upon the Passover.

It should be noted that before the final decision of the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E., when Easter officially replaced Passover, there were various Church Fathers and Apostles before them who could be called Quartodecimans.

Eusebius Pamphili (ca. 264–340 C.E.) was a bishop and church historian known as Eusebius of Caesarea. His *Ecclesiastical History* is the principal source for the history of Christianity (especially in the Eastern Church) from the age of the Apostles until 324. He carefully listed many names of those who “observed the day [Easter] when the people [the Jews] put away the leaven” (*Ecclesiastical History* 24.6).³ The names included those of the Apostles John and Philip along with Polycarp, all of whom “observed the fourteenth day of the Passover, according to the Gospel” (24.2–6). He also recorded pertinent communication concerning the Quartodeciman controversy between Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 120–202 C.E.) and Victor I, who had become the bishop of Rome in 189 C.E. (*Ecclesiastical History* 24.9–17). To summarize that interchange as described by Eusebius, Victor had become quite harsh in his treatment of those who continued to observe Easter on the fourteenth of Nisan. He excommunicated them! Irenaeus, even though he agreed that the resurrection should be celebrated on the Lord’s Day only, reprimanded Victor for his desire to cut off whole churches of God for observing the ancient traditions. He stated that there had always been differences in the observance

2 Translation of Hippolytus of Rome, *Refutation of All Heresies*, quoted from Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha: With the Fragments of Melito and Other Material Related to the Quartodecimans*, ed. John Behr, trans. Alistair Stewart-Sykes, Popular Patristics Series 20 (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 83.

3 For citations of Eusebius in this section, see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 22–25 (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2 1:240–44).



of days and the manner of the fast surrounding Easter. In fact, the general rule was to maintain peace between both groups. Irenaeus mentioned how Polycarp and Anicetus (in 155 C.E.) had been able to put aside their differences on the issue and commune together in peace. They evidently observed the Lord's Table together. In reflection on Irenaeus' letters, Eusebius remarked that Irenaeus was aptly named, since his name comes from the Greek word for "peace."

There is no clear evidence that the Quartodecimans were overemphasizing the death of the Lord or downplaying the resurrection. It seems rather to be a combination of both aspects in much the same way as Good Friday and Easter have come to be observed in the Church. (Many a Good Friday sermon cannot contain the truth of the Resurrection Day that follows!) However, this controversy gave rise to the complete elimination of the Judaic roots of Easter. The final decision came at the Council of Nicaea, which was called, at least in part, to resolve this issue. A synodal letter was circulated to the effect that the Church would not tolerate the position of the Quartodecimans, and the official day of observance would follow the Roman calendar, abandoning the connection with Pesach.

Emperor Constantine supported the decision and attacked the Quartodecimans. He ordered a severe persecution of those who refused to comply.⁴ Furthermore, his successor and son, Constantinius, attempted "to disrupt the order of Jewish festivals and to prevent those Christians who wished to do so from celebrating Easter on the first day of Passover."⁵ What is essential to keep in mind, however, is that Constantine, his son, and emperors to follow were further motivated by their anti-Jewish policies as expressed in the language of Constantinius: "To this legislator the Jews were nothing but a 'pernicious' or 'despicable sect' that used to meet in 'sacrilegious assemblies'." Such terminology was to become a permanent feature in the decrees of later

4 Constantine's anti-Judaic attacks against the Quartodecimans can be found in Eusebius, *On the Keeping of Easter* (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2, vol. 14).

5 H. H. Ben-Sasson, ed. *A History of the Jewish People*, coauthored by A. Malamat, H. Tadmor, M. Stern, S. Safrai, H. H. Ben-Sasson, and S. Ettinger (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 350.



Christian emperors.”⁶ He seems to speak not merely of Jews who reject the Messiah, but also of Jewishness in general.

THE *NOVELLAE* OF JUSTINIAN I (527–565 C.E.)

Although there were many other skirmishes between the growing Gentile-dominated Church and Jewish believers, one period stands out from the others. Jewish people who did not “convert” became the objects of scorn and vitriol from the Church. The persecution of non-Christian Jewish people, of course, widened the gap that began with the parting of the ways in the first century.

Justinian I (reigned 527–565 C.E.), was one of the greatest emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire, but was also “a virulent and consistent persecutor of all non-Orthodox Christians, heretics, pagans, and also of Jews and Judaism.”⁷ He added edicts called *novellae* (lit., “new laws”) to the restrictions already placed upon the Jewish people by those who preceded him (cf. Theodosius II, r. 408–450). A complete discussion of Justinian’s anti-Jewish measures is beyond the purview of this chapter, but those measures included confiscation of synagogues, prohibition of Jewish participation in local governments or even holding office in their own religious communities, and refusal to sell property to be used as places of Jewish worship.

In *Novellae* 146, Justinian countered the prevailing Jewish conviction that all readings must be done in Hebrew in the synagogue. Instead, he encouraged the additional use of the Greek Septuagint (LXX) or a Latin version. He also forbade the use of the Mishnah, as the Church generally took the position that the Jewish understanding of the Bible was woefully inferior to the Church’s interpretations and could lead people astray. His work *Corpus Juris Civilis*⁸ combined with his anti-Judaic *novellae* “virtually fixed the status of the Jews in Byzantine society for the

6 Constantinius, quoted in Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People*, 350.

7 Andrew Sharf, “Justinian I,” *EncJud*, 11:579.

8 Justinian I, *Corpus Juris Civilis* [Body of Civil Law] (529–34).



next 700 years.”⁹ His interference in the synagogue “attempted to impose a Christian interpretation of what Judaism and its holy texts should be.”¹⁰ These are important considerations as these decisions created a future anti-Jewish trajectory for the Church.

More specific to the Passover controversy was that Justinian “allegedly prohibited the celebration of Passover if its date fell before the date of Easter.”¹¹ This may have been an early expression of a more punitive replacement theology¹² based on the undercurrent of deicide.¹³ Everything in the Church was considered superior to the synagogue—the rules of Bible interpretation (hermeneutics), the rituals, the celebrations, the practices, the leadership, the sacred texts, and all that differentiated the two. Rather than building bridges, the Church under Justinian I burned the bridges of connection with its Jewish heritage. This, of course, was hardly a way of endearing the Jewish people to the Jewish Messiah and set the stage for further disputation and controversy and increased persecution of Jewish people by the medieval Church.

THE BLOOD LIBELS (12TH CENTURY–PRESENT)

The blood libels deserve a special place in the discussion of the ongoing conflict between the Jewish community and Chris-

9 Sharf, “Justinian I,” 11:579. The term “Byzantine” when used of Christianity or of society at large relates to the churches in that region using a traditional Greek rite in worship and being subject to the canon law of the Eastern Orthodox Church, the church of the Eastern Roman Empire having its center in Constantinople.

10 Sharf, “Justinian I,” 11:579.

11 Sharf, “Justinian I,” 11:579.

12 Punitive replacement theology argues that God replaced the Jewish people with the Church because of Israel’s sins, and therefore the nation of Israel had forfeited its biblical promises. Some would argue that these promises of blessing were always focused on the Church.

13 Deicide is the act of killing God. The Jewish people were accused of this because of the participation of the Jewish leaders in calling for Jesus’s death. This false charge became the basis for terrible antisemitism throughout church history.



tianity.¹⁴ The Jewish people were accused of murdering Christian children and using their blood to prepare the Passover *matzot*. Jewish historian Solomon Grayzel reflects on the irony of these tragic and resurgent accusations:

It is one of the saddest aspects of Jewish experience that on the very evening when the Jew is supposed to recall the joys of freedom, he has frequently been made to feel the bitterest sorrows of exile. It is no less strange that a people so restricted in their choice of food should have been accused of eating human flesh and drinking human blood. Yet the charge has been made hundreds of times, in lands and periods which we consider fairly civilized.¹⁵

Modern minds recoil at the possibility that such accusations could even be made, as the alleged crime is so outrageous. Yet it is even possible that the Church inherited some of its antisemitic positions from pagan, pre-Christian history.¹⁶ Alluding to ancient Alexandrian writers, historian James Parkes observes that some people thought that “[t]he Jews worshiped the head of an ass; and they ritually indulged in cannibalism.”¹⁷ In the Maccabean period as well, there was negative propaganda from Antiochus, the Syrian, which said “the Jews were accustomed to kidnap a Greek man . . . and later sacrifice him to their God and eat of his entrails.”¹⁸

Similarly, superstitious ideas about the mystical power

14 For more on the blood libels and other forms of antisemitism, see chapter 9, “Passover and Antisemitism,” by Olivier Melnick.

15 Solomon Grayzel, “Passover and the Ritual Murder Libel,” in *The Passover Anthology*, ed. Philip Goodman, JPS Holiday (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), 17–18.

16 For what is perhaps the most comprehensive study in the origins of antisemitism, see James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study of the Origins of Antisemitism* (1934; repr., New York: Atheneum, 1977).

17 Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*, 16.

18 Grayzel, “Passover and the Ritual Murder Libel,” 18. See also Yehuda Slutsky and Dina Porat, “Blood Libel,” *EncJud*, 3:774–80. In a similar way, the same antisemitic tropes were also used against the Early Church, especially in regard to the Christian practice of Communion, which some authorities interpreted not as eating bread and wine to commemorate the sacrifice of Jesus’s body and blood but as cannibalism.



of blood were also circulated during the Middle Ages. It was thought that Jews wanted to rid themselves of diseases unique to their race by comingling the “redeemed” and “innocent” blood of Christian children with the ritual elements of the Passover meal. After the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the Roman Catholic teaching of transubstantiation—that the Communion bread and wine literally become the body and blood of Jesus—fostered the notion that the blood of Jesus was flowing through the bodies of Christians. It was thought that since non-converted Jews refused baptism, an act according to medieval superstition that could heal disease, “Christianized blood” could effect the same result in place of baptism. The underlying theory leading to allegations of blood libel accused the Jewish community of “trying to . . . cure themselves by the application or the intake of the blood, the heart or the liver of a simple, sinless Christian, a male child by preference.”¹⁹

Although none of this was true, these lies were still perpetuated by superstitious medieval Christianity. It was not until the time of the Crusades, however, that this libelous accusation became a frequent form of defamation. Perhaps the first occasion was in Norwich, England, in 1144. The allegation was as follows: “It was on the second day of Passover that the boy William was said to have disappeared, and a number of Jews were soon accused of having caused his death. . . . since the Jews performed the sacrifice of a Christian every year at about the time of the original Crucifixion.”²⁰ Interestingly, it was a “converted” Jew who evidently provided the details about the supposed custom. Author and syndicated columnist Michael Freund says, “A Jewish convert to Catholicism, Theobald of Cambridge, was quick to corroborate the calumny, falsely claiming that rabbis and Jewish leaders would gather each year in Spain and draw lots to decide in which country they would kill a Christian child to use his blood in ritual practices.”²¹

19 Grayzel, “Passover and the Ritual Murder Libel,” 20.

20 Grayzel, “Passover and the Ritual Murder Libel,” 19. See also Cecil Roth, *History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), 13.

21 Michael Freund, “Passover Blood Libels, Then and Now,” *The Jerusalem Post*, April 13, 2014, <http://www.jpost.com/Jewish-World/Judaism/Passover-blood-libels-then-and-now-348382>.



In the decades that followed, other such incidents were alleged which were specifically connected with Passover. “In 1171, the Jewish community of Blois was accused of crucifying a Christian child for Passover and tossing his body into a local river. The entire community was imprisoned and then sentenced to be burned to death. When the Jews were taken to the *auto-da-fé* [ceremony for pronouncing judgment], they were told they could save themselves by converting, but nearly all of them refused to do so, preferring to die and sanctify God’s name.”²²

Most of these alleged ritual murders were crucifixions. “The motif of torture and murder of Christian children in imitation of Jesus’s Passion persisted with slight variations throughout the 12th century (Gloucester, England, 1168; Blois, France, 1171; Saragossa, Spain, 1182), and was repeated in many libels of the 13th century.”²³

Although found in its most virulent form during the Middle Ages, it should be noted that blood-libel accusations persisted through the centuries. In Spain, the Jews who had allegedly converted to Catholicism were called “Conversos”²⁴ and were said to collaborate with the chief rabbi of the Jewish community to crucify, abuse, and curse a child in the manner that Jesus was treated.²⁵

Even when it was not directly related to Passover, members of the Jewish community were frequently accused of murdering Christians, and invariably the blood-libel charge was invoked. Such was the case when in 1840 Jews were blamed for the murder of a Capuchin monk and his servant, which became known as the Damascus Affair. The church leaders brought out various points of evidence to convince the authorities of the alleged Jewish actions, including “treatises which set out to prove the truth of the libel from the records of past accusations and Jewish sources. . . . Another way of implying the truth of the blood-libel charge was

22 Freund, “Passover Blood Libels, Then and Now.”

23 Slutsky and Porat, “Blood Libel,” 3:775.

24 Conversos were Jewish people who converted to Christianity under pressure but continued to practice Jewish traditions clandestinely in their homes, and were the focus of the Inquisition.

25 Slutsky and Porat, “Blood Libel,” 3:775. See also Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jews*, 590.



to state it as a fact without denying it.”²⁶

False accusations were repeatedly made against the Jews of Russia. When there were Christian victims, there were Jewish suspects, usually linked to the libel that Jews required Christian blood for one reason or another. From 1799 to the Bolshevik Rebellion of 1917, there were numerous blood libels, but the cases were dismissed for lack of evidence. While the authorities may have declared that these were unsubstantiated charges of murder, the Russian populace engaged in an unrelenting persecution of the Jewish people. “With the growth of an antisemitic movement in Russia in the 1870s, the blood libel became a regular motif in the anti-Jewish propaganda campaign conducted in the press and literature.”²⁷

Of particular interest is the role played by the church leaders. “The chief agitators of the blood libels were monks. At the monastery of Supraśl crowds assembled to gaze on the bones of the ‘child martyr Gabriello,’ who had been allegedly murdered by Jews in 1690.”²⁸ Many of the victims were considered martyrs complete with shrines, tombs, and even subsequent canonization by the Church (declaring a deceased person an officially recognized saint), all of which served to perpetuate the lie of ritual murders by the Jewish people.

It is no surprise that the Nazi propaganda in Germany used this insidious ploy to dehumanize the Jews. Disgusting cartoons depicting Jews collecting the blood of the innocents were combined with reinvestigations of previous baseless cases in which Jews had been acquitted. This fanned the flames of German antisemitism that had been seething for centuries. Links between the antisemitism of Adolf Hitler and the writings of Martin Luther are well known and vigorously discussed. In like manner Hitler used the sad history of the blood libels to fuel his campaign against the Jews. What was a Passover controversy in church history became the grounds for slander in the political realm.

It is obvious that the blood-libel component of the Passover controversy in church history has been used by Satan to instill fear,

26 Slutsky and Porat, “Blood Libel,” 3:778.

27 Slutsky and Porat, “Blood Libel,” 3:779.

28 Slutsky and Porat, “Blood Libel,” 3:779.



suspicion, and hatred in the hearts of influential non-Jewish people throughout the ages. What else could account for the irrationality of these charges and their wholesale acceptance by huge swaths of otherwise civilized human beings? The growing distance between the Church and its Jewish roots, lack of understanding of Jewish beliefs and practices, and other related factors created the climate in which these irrational charges maintained credibility. One of the striking features of this history is the lack of evidence and the Church's repeated official denials that there were grounds for the blood-libel slanders. In an attempt to be fair and balanced, some of those declarations by church leaders should be included here.

Even though incidents of blood-libel accusations occurred repeatedly after the first one in 1144 in Norwich, there were no papal pronouncements about them until the middle of the thirteenth century. Jewish leaders sought help from ecclesiastical leaders due to the increase in the false charges and the resulting crimes against the Jewish populace. "On May 28, 1247, Pope Innocent IV wrote to the Archbishop of Vienne, in France, pointing out that various noblemen as well as the Bishop of Trois Chateaux had perpetrated against the Jews of Valrias cruelties of a most inhuman kind."²⁹ A young girl had been murdered, and the Jews were blamed. They had been arrested and tortured, and their property had been confiscated. In his letter, Pope Innocent IV said this was merely a concocted story used to steal Jewish property. He demanded the release of the prisoners and the restoration of the property.

Similar attempts to end the libels were issued by the church hierarchy in the form of papal bulls of protection, "which this and later popes used to issue to the Jews. . . . that the Christians themselves were the kidnappers and the murderers and had the sole object of robbing the Jews, or taking over the property of those killed."³⁰ This was a most unusual strategy! Did it work, we might ask, and did these edicts and pronouncements have any effect on the peasantry? Evidently, they did little to dissuade

29 Goodman, *The Passover Anthology*, 21. See also Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIII Century: A Study of Their Relations During the Years 1198–1254, Based on the Papal Letters and the Conciliar Decrees of the Period* (Philadelphia: Dropsie College, 1933), 263, 265.

30 Goodman, *The Passover Anthology*, 22.



the general populace from escalating their attacks at Passover time. Massacres and expulsions became the rule rather than the exception.

In 1422, another pope, Martin V, “accused Christian preachers of fomenting hatred of the Jews, but also spoke with horror of the libel that Jews mixed blood with the dough of the Passover *matzah*.”³¹ So on the one hand the pope wanted to protect the Jews, but on the other hand he perpetuated the blood-libel myth.

The children allegedly murdered for their blood were viewed as saints. For example, a Franciscan named Bernardino da Feltré accused the Jewish people of blood libels, which led to the Trent blood libel of 1475 in northern Italy. It seems that a two-year-old child named Simon disappeared. As expected, the Jews were accused of killing him, and the whole community was arrested and tortured until “confessions” were forthcoming. Many were executed and the rest expelled. “The pope at first refused to authorize the adoration of this ‘victim of the Jews’, but in due course he withdrew his opposition. In 1582 the infant Simon was officially proclaimed a saint of the Catholic Church.”³² In a too-little-and-too-late response centuries later, Rome attempted to make amends. In 1965, the Catholic Church withdrew its canonization and acknowledged that a judicial error had been committed against the Jews of Trent in this trial.³³

When we consider Europe in the sixteenth century, one might ask about the ways in which the Jewish people were treated during the time of the Protestant Reformation. It is well known that Martin Luther (1483–1546) engaged in horrible antisemitic rhetoric. He began by attacking the practices of the Church against the Jews in *Jesus Christ Was a Jew by Birth* (1523),³⁴ but he ended by attacking the Jews in *About the Jews and Their Lies* (1543).³⁵ What is little known, however, is that other Reformers maintained a much more positive relationship with the Jews.

31 Goodman, *The Passover Anthology*, 22.

32 Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People*, 580. See also Shlomo Simonsohn, “Trent,” *EncJud*, 20:131.

33 Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People*, 580.

34 Martin Luther, *Jesus Christ Was a Jew by Birth* (Wittenberg, 1523).

35 Martin Luther, *About the Jews and Their Lies* (1543).



Prior to Luther's publication of his diatribe against the Jews, "the Reformer Andreas Osiander issued an anonymous work that attacked the blood libels and their charges of ritual murder. In this pamphlet he disproves, item by item, the so-called 'proofs' of Jewish guilt and responsibility for slaying Christian children."³⁶ His attacks were against the Roman Church in this regard, and in spite of Luther's vicious preaching against the Jews, the anti-Jewish riots were greatly reduced in number during that time. His words may have been a glimpse of light in those dark ages due to the Reformation.

In 1540, Pope Paul III also spoke out against the rank-and-file Catholic treatment of the Jews. He believed that many Catholics were enemies of the Jews because they were blinded by avarice, which caused them to accuse the Jews of murdering children and drinking their blood. Unfortunately, even when the Roman Catholic authorities spoke against the blood libels, it had little effect on the superstitions of the people, who claimed that miracles occurred at the graves of the presumed martyrs. The Church could not afford to dispute the spurious miracles nor did it bother to refute the libels that surfaced over and over again.³⁷

Yet another apparently positive response came from Pope Clement XIII in 1759 when he investigated accusations against the Jews of Poland and declared the charges to be false. However, the process took over a decade. The wheels of progress in protecting the Jews always seemed to "grind exceedingly slowly." So even though efforts were made to thwart the antisemitism of the libels, they were slight and made little difference among the masses.³⁸

CONCLUSION

The Passover controversies have remained a blight on the Church. It has been a rather one-sided affair in which the Jewish

³⁶ Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People*, 650.

³⁷ Goodman, *The Passover Anthology*, 22.

³⁸ Goodman, *The Passover Anthology*, 22–23.



community has endured tragic mistreatment by the very people whose Savior is Jewish. In every era, the Enemy has waged war on his ancient foes, the Jewish people—from the very beginning when the importance of Passover was minimized through the changing of the calendar, to the edicts of the emperors and the popes who undermined the rightful place of Jewish tradition in the Church, to the slaughter of innocent Jewish people due to the malicious lies of the blood libels. It is incumbent therefore upon all who name the name of Yeshua to resist the temptation to turn a deaf ear to these things whenever they rear their ugly heads and spout their venomous lies. The old refrain comes to mind:

How odd
Of God
To choose
The Jews.
But not so odd
As those who choose
A Jewish God
Yet spurn the Jews.³⁹

As followers of the Jewish Messiah, we must be vigilant in safeguarding God's chosen people and constantly call upon the Church and society in general to treat the Jewish people with respect. The Church, though, has an even greater responsibility. As followers of the Messiah, we are to shine the light of the Gospel so that our Jewish friends and neighbors can both hear and see the Gospel message and believe (Matt. 5:14–16; Rom. 10:14–17; 2 Cor. 4:3–5). We have centuries of darkness to overcome and so should approach this task with prayer and with our souls filled with the love of God that enables us to impart His love to the Jewish people (Rom. 5:5; 10:1). At times this will mean apologizing on behalf of our spiritual ancestors who mistreated the Jewish people. There might simply be no other way for the Church to overcome the past and “make the Jewish people jealous” of the Jewish Savior who lives in our hearts.

³⁹ The first four lines of this poem are attributed to William Norman Ewer, whereas the remaining lines are attributed to Cecil Brown or Ogden Nash.