

# **HOW TO REACH THE JEW FOR CHRIST**

by

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## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

### **THE NIGHT OF JEWISH HISTORY**

In this lesson we shall study some gruesome details of the treatment of the Jews by nominal Christians. The author has endeavored to present historical facts candidly and simply. Lest he be accused of a biased opinion, he has quoted freely from three Gentile historians whose scholarships are beyond reproach: Milman, Hosmer and Lecky.

The lesson headings are:

- A. The Crusades
- B. Persecution in England
- C. Persecution in France
- D. The Spanish Inquisition

Christianity has persisted in spite of many of its followers. While the Jews in Mohammedan Spain enjoyed ease and freedom, their brethren in the rest of Europe suffered. These countries were nominally Christian (Christian in name only). "Bigotry" is a better name for their religion. The Jews were blamed for everything. If a plague broke out, it was because the Jews poisoned the wells. If a nation lost a war, it was because the Jews aided the enemy. The Jews were persecuted at the slightest excuse, and if there was no excuse, one was readily invented.

#### **A. THE CRUSADES**

In Western Europe, the plight of the Jews was intensified by the fanatical Crusades. We quote from Milman's History of the Jews:

When the first immense hordes of undisciplined fanatics of the lowest order, under the command of Peter the Hermit, and Peter the Penny-less, assembled near the city of Treves, a murmur spread rapidly through the camp that while they were advancing to recover the Sepulchre of the Redeemer from the infidels, they were leaving behind worse unbelievers, the murderers of the Lord. With one impulse, the Crusaders rushed to the city and began a relentless pillage, violation and massacre of every Jew they could find.

The locust band passed on; everywhere the traces of the Crusaders were deeply marked with Jewish blood.

This is the story of the First Crusade. After this came the second and then still another.

Throughout Christendom the Jews lived in fear and terror. Their only relief was study. The schools of the Gentiles were closed. Their only study was the Talmud.

### **B. PERSECUTION IN ENGLAND**

In England the spirit of persecution was keenly felt by the Jews. From the times of Richard I until Edward I, the Jews were subject to all sorts of mistreatment. Edward the First, at first tried to alleviate their condition, but he, too, caught the crusading spirit, and that meant more persecution.

The Jews were expelled from the kingdom, and were forbidden under pain of death to return. It was not until the time of Cromwell that the Jews were once more permitted to live in England.

### **C. PERSECUTION IN FRANCE**

The story of the Jews in France is similar to that of their brethren in England. Persecution raged fiercely. An order to banish the Jews was drawn up and then withdrawn on the plea that their money was necessary in order to carry on the Crusades. Hatred gave way to avarice, the Jews were convenient subjects to fleece, the money thus raised was applied to the slaughter of their brethren. Finally in 1349, the Jews were banished from France.

### **D. THE SPANISH INQUISITION**

The Jews were well treated in Mohammedan Spain. However, when the crescent was replaced by the cross, the day of toleration gave way to the day of slaughter. Once Rome obtained full sway in Spain, it set itself to wipe out what it called the "Jewish Heresy" by means of the Inquisition.

We quote from Professor Hosmer:

Men and women disappeared suddenly and completely as a breath annihilates the flame of a lamp, some gone forever without whisper as to their fate; some to reappear in after years, halt through long tortures, pale and insane through frightful incarceration. When in the cities the frequent processions wound through the streets with their long file of victims on the way to the place of burning, children bereaved of father and mother flocked to see whether among the doomed they might not catch a last look of the face of the long lost parent.

In spite of the Inquisition, the Jews refused to be extirpated. Finally, Queen Isabella issued an edict for their expulsion.

We again quote Hosmer:

They visited the graves of their ancestors, bidding them a long farewell. Sometimes they removed the tombstones to carry them in their wanderings. Along the highways proceed the long files of outcasts, sometimes to the beat of the drums, which the rabbis and elders caused to be struck, that the hearts of the people might not utterly sink, bearing with them the scrolls of their holy Law and the remnant of their possessions. Many of the wretched exiles perished by shipwreck. Those who reached Morocco and Algiers were sold into slavery and ripped open by their oppressors, who hoped to find jewels which the exiles were suspected of swallowing.

In expelling the Jews, Spain committed suicide. Lecky says:

While those around them were groveling in the deadness of superstition; while juggling miracles and lying relics were the themes in which all Europe were expatiating; while the intellect of Christendom enthralled by countless superstitions had sunk into a deadly torpor, in which all love of inquiry and all search for truth were abandoned, the Jews were still pursuing the path of knowledge, amassing learning, and stimulating progress with the same unflinching constancy that they manifested in their faith. They were the most skilful physicians, the ablest financiers, and among them the most profound philosophers.

The expulsion of these Jews deprived Spain of the cream of her population and was an important factor in reducing her greatness.

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## THIS LESSON APPLIED TO JEWISH MISSIONS

### *The Use of the Cross in Dealing with the Jews*

The American Board of Missions to the Jews in presenting the Gospel to the Jews strongly recommends that no cross be worn by the speaker or displayed in the auditorium. Instead of mentioning the word "cross," substitute "the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ for our sins," or some similar phrase in presenting the Gospel to the Jew.

The reason for this recommendation is twofold:

1. Roman Catholics bow to the cross; the Jew interprets this as idolatry. The Torah says, "**Thou shalt not make unto me any graven image . . . thou shalt not bow down to them.**"
2. The horrible persecutions which we have been studying in this lesson were done by people wearing the symbol of the cross. To the Jew the word "cross" has become a symbol of hatred. When we bring them the message of God's love, let us lift up the Lord Jesus Christ and not the symbol which has been so sadly used as a means of persecution.

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## **FOR FURTHER STUDY**

Every missionary to the Jews should read, *The Shame of Christendom*, by W. N. Carter.

## **EXAMINATION**

1. What were the Crusades? How did the Crusaders treat the Jews? Why?
2. Describe the treatment of the Jews in England.
3. Describe the treatment of the Jews in France?
4. What was the Inquisition?
5. Should a cross be displayed when you present the Gospel message to the Jews? Why or why not?

**~ end of chapter 12 ~**

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