

WEEK THREE: KEEPING OUR ROOTS

Statement...this should be obvious but it often isn't: Jesus was a Jew, born into a Jewish family, grew up in Jewish home, dressed like a Jew, and argued with other Jews on how to observe Torah. We continue to study his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talks like a Jew to other Jews.

I HAVEN'T COME TO ABOLISH LAW/PROPHETS, BUT TO FULFILL THEM. NOT A WORD WILL PASS FROM THE LAW UNTIL IT IS ACCOMPLISHED. WHOEVER BREAKS EVEN ONE COMMAND WILL BE CALLED LEAST IN GOD'S KINGDOM

SEVERING THE ROOTS OF FAITH...he upholds the Law-every last jot/tittle-and breaking one law is like breaking them all. We may object: Christians don't follow the Law. Aren't we supposed to rely on God's grace? Didn't Jesus end the Law? Actually, he returned it to its original purpose: not as a burden to keep, but as a sign of God's faithfulness. There is a stubborn side to Christianity. Christians call Jesus "The Founder of Christianity", Savior who put the Christ back in Christian. Jesus never met a Christian or even used the word. That came later. Severing the roots of faith leaves us with no faith at all. We should value our Jewish heritage, but we dismiss it. Sadly, this has led to "Anti-Semitism" that is perpetuated among Christians. Jews have been vilified; Paul has been misquoted, his words lifted out of context to support biases.

IS JESUS THE MESSIAH...Jesus didn't come to end Judaism, but to fulfill Torah, to show in his life what law only partially revealed: GOD'S LOVE. He believed himself to be their long-awaited Messiah, but not in a way that Jews had expected. He didn't lead a military revolt, banish Israel's enemies, or literally sit on David's seat. Jesus took on himself the fate of the nation. God was judging Israel for her failure to be his people. He would do/be for Israel what it had failed to do/be for herself: the light to all nations.

PAUL AND HIS ROLE...Paul, then a Pharisee known as Saul, tried to keep Judaism pure by stopping the Jesus movement. To Saul, Israel's issues were caused by cross-contamination with the non-Jewish world. Only after meeting Christ did he see HOW WRONG HE WAS. God changed him from being a bounty hunter to a missionary. Jews who refused to accept Jesus as Messiah grieved Paul and antagonized his work. Paul thought that all who belong to the Messiah are God's adopted children. God was the God of Israel; they were his people. They let the title CHOSEN PEOPLE go to their heads. They may belong to God, but he didn't belong to them.