

Creation of Jewish People as “The Other”

Adapted from Facing History and Ourselves seminar “Pedagogical Approach to Teaching Roots of Anti-Semitism,” St. Mary’s (Ontario), April 18th, 2013

This lesson is NOT meant to:

- *Attack Christianity or challenge it on a faith basis*
- *Make generalizations concerning Christians experiences or understanding of Anti-Semitism*
- *Draw a straight line, or imply that, Christianity led to the Holocaust*

The Deicide Charge (Video “Sister Roses’ Passion”)

- Comes from the belief that Jews committed the great sin of putting Jesus Christ to death
- However, from the beginning of the CE (Common Era) to 30 CE history records the life of **Jesus of Nazareth as a First Century Jewish Person** steeped in Jewish teachings
- Jesus of Nazareth begins his ministry around 13 CE and early followers saw themselves as **Jewish reformers**



The destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, Francesco Hayez

- The Jewish Temple in Jerusalem is destroyed in the Roman-Jewish War in 70 CE. Millions of Jewish People are killed and many “Jesus-followers” move away from nationalistic Jewish People (the first sign of a “family split”).



The Wailing Wall is located in the Old City of Jerusalem at the foot of the western side of the Temple Mount. It is a remnant of the ancient wall that surrounded the Jewish Temple's courtyard, and is arguably the most sacred site recognized by the Jewish faith outside of the Temple Mount itself.

- As Jesus-followers searched for a separate identity they made the following claims:
 1. Jesus fulfilled the teachings and was the promised Messiah.
 2. “Christianity” starts to supersede traditional Jewish teachings.
 3. Acts 7:51-53

Why?

- The Gospels are written (from oral stories) between 68-100 CE (around the time of the Temple's destruction)
- Christianity is trying to define itself vis a vis Judaism, vying for survival as a separate faith, and vying for survival from persecution from the Romans.

- Remember: Blaming Pontius Pilate is blaming Rome.
 - Jewish People did not have the power in the Roman Empire to order the death of Jesus.
 - Some of the Jewish leaders may have seen Jesus of Nazareth as a political threat to their power in the community.
 - “Crucifixion” was a common Roman form of execution with a historic use against Jewish rebels
- 
- Around 300 CE there were approx. 60 million people in the European world: 6 million Christians and 3 million Jewish People (the remainder were Indigenous faiths). Jewish People were tolerated as an established minority at this point while the “Jesus Movement” was highly persecuted.
 - 312 CE – Future Roman Emperor Constantine embraces Christianity.
 - Constantine paints this symbol on his armor and wins the day – his army adopts the cross as their badge. This act may have been done for political reasons rather than faith.
 - Constantine becomes emperor of Rome – Pontifex Maximus
 - Issues the Edict of Milan in 313, which proclaiming tolerance of all religions throughout the Empire
 - 354 CE – St. Augustine revisits the Deicide Charge and codifies (formalizes) the charges:
 - Jewish People are declared as:
 - Killers of Jesus of Nazareth
 - Have been superseded by Christianity
 - Have lost their land & been dispersed as a punishment
 - Witness to Judgement
 - Must be preached to in love

- BUT, Jewish People:
 - Remain the people of God
 - Are not cast off
 - Carry Christian “Books”
 - Must be converted to Christianity

“Othering”

The idea of the “wandering Jewish Person” is created

- 16th Century – the Reformation Period sees dramatic change in expressions of Christianity as Protestant Churches emerge, as well as a reformed Roman Catholic Church. Ideas of Anti-Semitism are carried into these new expressions of Christianity
- 1965, Vatican II council under Pope John XXIII reforms the modern Roman Catholic Church
 - Reformed the Catholic Church’s position on Judaism
 - Declared that Jewish People are not guilty of the Deicide Charge
 - Jewish People have not been rejected by God
 - A positive relationship is established between the Roman Catholic Church and Judaism
 - Pope John Paul II makes a formal apology to Judaism and the Jewish People on March 12th, 2000 during a public Mass of Pardons.
 - In 1998 John Paul II also apologized for the inactivity and silence of many Catholics during the Holocaust



More Information – the Temple Mount

Judaism regards the Temple Mount as the place where God chose the Divine Presence to rest (Isa 8:18); according to the rabbinic sages whose debates produced the Talmud, it was from here the world expanded into its present form and where God gathered the dust used to create the first man, Adam. The site is the location of Abraham's binding of Isaac, and of two Jewish Temples.

According to Jewish tradition and scripture (2 Chronicles 3:1-2), the first temple was built by Solomon the son of David in 957 BCE and destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. The second was constructed under the auspices of Zerubbabel in 516 BCE and destroyed by the Roman Empire in 70 CE.

Jewish tradition maintains it is here the Third and final Temple will also be built. The location is the holiest site in Judaism and is the place Jews turn towards during prayer. Due to its extreme sanctity, many Jews will not walk on the Mount itself, to avoid unintentionally entering the area where the Holy of Holies stood, since according to Rabbinical law, some aspect of the Divine Presence is still present at the site.[2] It was from the Holy of Holies that the High Priest communicated directly with God.

Among Sunni Muslims, the Mount is widely considered to be the third holiest site in Islam. Revered as the Noble Sanctuary (Bait-ul-Muqaddas) and the location of Muhammad's journey to Jerusalem and ascent to heaven, the site is also associated with Jewish biblical prophets who are also venerated in Islam.

After the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem in 637 CE, Umayyad Caliphs commissioned the construction of the al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock on the site. The Dome was completed in 692 CE, making it one of the oldest extant Islamic structures in the world, after the Kaabah. The Al Aqsa Mosque rests on the far southern side of the Mount, facing Mecca. The Dome of the Rock currently sits in the middle, occupying or close to the area where the Bible mandates the Holy Temple be rebuilt.