

The Yellow Badges

by Robert Wurtz II

The sermon highlights the history and consequences of antisemitism, calling Christians to a heart change and a desire to show mercy to the Jewish people.

Scripture: Matthew 25:40, Romans 9:3, Romans 11:28, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 2:14

Topics: "Jewish Persecution", "Christian Compassion"

Description

Robert Wurtz II delves into the history of Jewish persecution, highlighting the atrocities committed against the Jewish people over centuries, leading to the implementation of the 'badge of shame' worn by Jews in Europe. The sermon emphasizes the need for Christians to have a heart change towards the Jewish community, urging for compassion and empathy instead of insensitivity and jokes. Wurtz calls for a deep reflection on the crimes against the Jews and a genuine sorrow akin to that of Paul for the Jewish people, considering them as God's foreknown people and kindred to Christ Himself.

Transcript

The Jewish Badge of Shame

Antisemitism is alive and well in the world despite the millions of Jews who were mercilessly massacred in the last 65 years. Who will ultimately be judged for the holocaust? Who will be judged for the antisemitic laws that had been passed for centuries driving the Jews from Christ? Individuals? Nations? When I think about the horrible persecution of the Jews for over 1900 years of the common era (not to mention the centuries before that) it is difficult to comprehend how human beings with a God given conscience could treat their fellow human beings with such heartless hatred. The only thing I have even been able to figure is that they simply stopped viewing them as human beings and then the door was open to nearly anything and everything evil coming out of them. This is a great picture of Total Depravity. How could a human being look into a child's eyes and abuse and kill them? How could a person be so depraved that they no longer felt the prick of their conscience when they killed women and the elderly? The pictures will remain forever in our minds as a haunting reminder. Every one of those people had a story. They were someone's son or someone's daughter. Some mother gave birth to them and some mom and dad raised them. The black and white images of Jewish persecution somehow tends to disconnect us from the reality that they were people like you and me. They felt pain and hunger and sorrow. They felt so much torment of the mind and body.

A side note to this is how they were treated when they were allowed to live. God has always blessed the Jews. They have excessive accomplishments to be such a small nation. Albert Einstein was a Jew and so were many other accomplished people who contributed to society. They always seem to be blessed, and the bitter envy because of it has led to sore crimes against humanity. For centuries Jews were made to wear yellow badges in Europe.

Some Origins of the Marking

Pope Innocent III summoned the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Although a delegation of Jews from southern France attempted to ensure that no anti-Jewish decisions were taken, the Council focused on negative Jewish legislation which would be carried out for centuries and later reinstated by the Nazi's. The council determined that the Jews must be prevented from taking excessive interest from Christians. The Jews were not to appear in public at Easter, or on days of Christian lamentation, because they were in the habit of dressing up and railing at Christians on such occasions. Then they insisted that converts to Christianity must desist from Jewish observances. This was a common problem for many Jews as they knew that God had called them to be unique in the earth through their keeping of the Law. The early Jewish Christians were quite zealous for the Law; though they did not trust it for salvation.

This was not the first time that Jews were ordered to wear a distinguishing badge to indicate that they were Jews. During the first Muslim Conquest, Omar II ordered all Jews and Christians to wear a distinctive badge. Sultan Al-Hakim enforced the rule rigidly. For 500+ years Jews wore special badges on their chests in Christian Europe and later were forced again to wear them by the Nazi's.

In England, the badge was in the shape of two tablets. In some communities it was a yellow badge with a red bull's-eye. In Italy, Jews were forced to wear a coarse red cape. French Jews, until their expulsion, wore a red and white circle on their chests.

The most common badge was a circle of yellow cloth, at least a handsbreadth in diameter, which was called the "badge of shame."

Although the law went unenforced during the modern years of enlightenment, Hitler reinstated the order, forcing all Jews to wear a yellow Magen David (shield of David, or as it is more commonly known, the Star of David) on their clothes with the word "Jew" written on it. For that reason, many Jews remain sensitive about a yellow Magen David as decoration. Today the star of David is the emblem on the Israeli National Flag.

Some Yellow Badge Pictures:

<http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/Holocaust/badges.html>

As we continue our study it is my desire to see a heart change in Christians concerning the Jews. That the insensitive jokes about them would be utterly stopped and a grief the likes of which Paul had for the Jewish people would seize upon us. When was the last time we wept over the Jews or any lost souls for that matter? Reading over just a few of the multitude of crimes against the Jews ought to stir the fallow ground of our hearts concerning God's people that he foreknew. Perhaps this study if nothing else will leave us with a contrite heart concerning the very nation of the Jews from which Christ came. They are His kindred according to the flesh. Jesus was a Jew. Paul and Peter were Jews. When we see Jews we ought to think of Christ and desire to show mercy through the Gospel unto them.

**** Notes****

<http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/Judaism/star.html>

<http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/History/med.html>

http://www.jewishgates.com/file.asp?File_ID=95

Illustrated World Encyclopedia C. 1970

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