Journal Title: Documents from the History of Lutheranism, 1517-1750

Article Author: Martin Luther

Article Title: On the Jews and Their Lies

Volume:

Issue:

Month/Year: 2002

Pages: 76-78 (scan notes and title/copyright pages for chapter requests)

Imprint: Fortress Press

Trans. #: 891952

Call #: BX8018 .D63 2002

Location: Main Library

Item #:

CUSTOMER INFORMATION:

Stan M Landry
smlandry@email.arizona.edu

STATUS: Faculty
DEPT: History

University of Arizona Library
Document Delivery
1510 E. University Blvd.
Tucson, AZ 85721
(520) 621-6438
(520) 621-4619 (fax)
AskILL@u.library.arizona.edu

Paged by Will (Initials) 12-28, 1500
Reason Not Filled (check one):
☐ NOS ☐ LACK VOL/ISSUE
☐ PAGES MISSING FROM VOLUME
☐ NFAC (GIVE REASON):
53. Luther: On War against the Turk (April 1529)


††

... Since the Turk is the rod of the wrath of the Lord our God and the servant of the raging devil, the first thing to be done is to smite the devil, his lord, and take the rod out of God's hand, so that the Turk may be found only, in his own strength, all by himself, without the devil's help and without God's hand. If the Turk's god, the devil, is not beaten first, there is reason to fear that the Turk will not be easy to beat. ...

I have some parts of Muhammad's Koran, which in Germany might be called a book of sermons or doctrines of the kind that we call pope's decretales. When I have time I must translate it into German so that everyone may see what a foul and shameful book it is.

In the first place, he greatly praises Christ and Mary as being the only ones without sin, and yet he believes nothing more of Christ than that he is a holy prophet, like Jeremiah or Jonah, and denies that he is God's Son and true God. Furthermore, he does not believe that Christ is the Savior of the world who died for our sins, but that he preached to his own time and completed his work before his death, just like any other prophet.

On the other hand, Muhammad highly exalts and praises himself and boasts that he has talked with God and the angels, and that since Christ's office of prophet is now complete, he has been commanded to bring the world to his faith, and if the world is not willing, to compel it or punish it with the sword; there is much glorification of the sword in it. Therefore, the Turks think that their Muhammad is much higher and greater than Christ, for the office of Christ has come to an end and Muhammad's office is still in force.

From this anyone can easily see that Muhammad is a destroyer of our Lord Christ and his kingdom, and if anyone denies the articles concerning Christ, that he is God's Son, that he died for us and still lives and reigns at the right hand of God, what has he left of Christ? Father, Son, Holy Ghost, baptism, the sacrament, gospel, faith, and all Christian doctrine and life are gone, and instead of Christ only Muhammad with his doctrine of works and especially of the sword is left. That is the chief doctrine of the Turkish faith, in which all abominations, all errors, all devils are piled up in one heap. ...

†††

54. Luther: On the Jews and Their Lies (1543)

In 1523 Luther had written a treatise, "That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew," in which he said, "I hope that if one deals in a kindly way with the Jews and instructs them carefully from Holy Scripture, many of them will become genuine Christians." Twenty years later, Luther was irritated by their failure to accept his interpretation of Scripture and wrote the following treatise in a very different tone.


††

... Grace and peace in the Lord. Dear sir and good friend, I have received a treatise in which a Jew engages in dialogue with a Christian. He dares to pervert the scriptural passages that we cite in testimony to our faith, concerning our Lord Christ and Mary his mother, and to interpret them quite differently. With this argu-
ment he thinks he can destroy the basis of our faith.

This is my reply to you and to him. . . .

They have failed to learn any lesson from the terrible distress that has been theirs for over fourteen hundred years in exile. Nor can they obtain any end or definite terminus of this, as they suppose, by means of the vehement cries and laments to God. If these blows do not help, it is reasonable to assume that our talking and explaining will help even less.

Therefore, a Christian should be content and not argue with the Jews. But if you have to or want to talk with them, do not say any more than this: “Listen, Jew, are you aware that Jerusalem and your sovereignty, together with your temple and priesthood, have been destroyed for over 1,460 years?” For this year, which we Christians write as the year 1542 since the birth of Christ, is exactly 1,468 years, going on fifteen hundred years, since Vespasian and Titus destroyed Jerusalem and expelled the Jews from the city. Let the Jews bite on this nut and dispute this question as long as they wish.

For such ruthless wrath of God is sufficient evidence that they assuredly have erred and gone astray. Even a child can comprehend this. For one dare not regard God as so cruel that he would punish his own people so long, so terribly, so unmercifully, and in addition keep silent, comforting them neither with words nor with deeds, and fixing no time limit and no end of it. Who would have faith, hope, or love toward such a God? Therefore this work of wrath is proof that the Jews, surely rejected by God, are no longer his people, and neither is he any longer their God. . . .

They were never able to tolerate a prophet and always persecuted God’s word and declined to give ear to God. That is the complaint and lament of all the prophets. And as their fathers did, so they still do today, nor will they ever mend their ways. If Isaiah, Jeremiah, or other prophets went about among them today and proclaimed what they proclaimed in their day, or declared that the Jews’ present circumcision and hope for the Messiah are futile, they would again have to die at their hands as happened then. Let him who is endowed with reason, to say nothing of Christian understanding, note how arbitrarily they pervert and twist the prophets’ books with their confounded glosses, in violation of their own conscience (on which we can perhaps say more later). For now that they can no longer stone or kill the prophets physically or personally, they torment them spiritually, mutilate, strangle, and maltreat their beautiful verses so that the human heart is vexed and pained. For this forces us to see how, because of God’s wrath, they are wholly delivered into the devil’s hands. In brief, they are a prophet-murdering people; since they can no longer murder the living ones, they must murder and torment the ones that are dead. . . .

What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews? Since they live among us, we dare not tolerate their conduct, now that we are aware of their lying and reviling and blaspheming. If we do, we become sharers in their lies, cursing, and blasphemy. Thus we cannot extinguish the unquenchable fire of divine wrath, of which the prophets speak, nor can we convert the Jews. With prayer and the fear of God, we must practice a sharp mercy to see whether we might save at least a few from the glowing flames. We dare not avenge ourselves. Vengeance a thousand times worse than we could wish them already has them by the throat. I shall give you my sincere advice:

First, to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them. This is to
be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians, and do not condone or knowingly tolerate such public lying, cursing, and blasphemy of his Son and of his Christians. . . .

Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed. For they pursue in them the same aims as in their synagogues. Instead, they might be lodged under a roof or a barn, like the gypsies. . . .

Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, and cursing, and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them.

Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb. . . .

Fifth, I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews. For they have no business in the countryside, since they are not lords, officials, tradesmen, or the like. Let them stay at home. I have heard it is said that a rich Jew is now traveling across the country with twelve horses—his ambition is to become a Kohkha—devouring princes, lords, lands, and people with his usury, so that the great lords view it with jealous eyes. . . .

Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping. . . . Whenever a Jew is sincerely converted, he should be handed one hundred, two hundred, or three hundred florins, as personal circumstances may suggest. . . .

Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow, as was imposed on the children of Adam (Genesis 3:29). For it is not fitting that they should let us accused Goyim toil in the sweat of our faces, while they, the holy people, idle away their time behind the stove, feasting and farting, and on top of all, boasting blasphemously of their lordship over the Christians by means of our sweat. . . .

55. Luther's Sermon for the Feast of the Holy Angels (September 1544)
This sermon illustrates Luther's apocalyptic state of mind and the combination of discouragement and confidence that characterized his final years.
From WA 49:583:

TEXT: Revelation 12:7-12
". . . But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

. . . The devil, especially in this last time, prepares new heretics and rotten spirits in surprising ways; for he wants at all times to possess the heavenly realm and to be lord in Christendom. He does not ask much of the Turks or the papists since they are already his. However, he does struggle through them against the church, because he wants to sit and rule in the pure, holy Temple of God.

Now, how should we act toward him? We can cheerfully ponder this, especially when the Word of God guides us, even though we have no hope for peace. Imagine that we are his soldiers who must be situated in the field; yes, always standing on guard so that when one battle stops we can go quickly on to another. For we are called through Christ and already enrolled—through baptism—in the army that fights under Christ against the devil. . . .

Christ is the God who is a prince of war or a proper duke who leads his regiment in the strife, not above in heaven among the holy angels, where no struggle is needed, but here