

THE CURSE OF JAMNIA

The "Curse of Jamnia," is presented historically, as the definitive break between the Synagogue and the early Church. In other words, with the institution of this curse as a "password" for speaking in the Synagogue, one could not use the Synagogue any longer as a launching pad for Christianity.

Eerdman's "Handbook of the History of Christianity," says, "Paul almost always started by preaching at the Synagogue when he first arrived at a town. However, after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Jews took strong action against Christians in their midst, and certain anti-Christian additions were made to the Synagogue prayers. Although there were Jewish Christians throughout the second century, the Synagogues were now closed to Christian evangelism" (Dowley, Briggs, Wright, Linder, p. 85).

The "History of the Christian Church," says, "By the last decade of the first century, the rabbis who reorganized and reinvigorated Judaism after the destruction of the temple had inserted in the Synagogue prayers an anathema which made it impossible for a "Nazarite" to participate officially in the liturgy. This great crisis in the history of Judaism, then, brought about as one of its results a separation of the Church from its parent body, even for the Christians of Jewish parentage and practice" (Walker, Norris, Lotz, Handy; Scribners, 4th ed., p. 33).

"Jabneh...(was also) called Lamnia or Jamnia...After the fall of Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin was reconstituted at Jebneh, first under R. Johanan and then under the Patriarch Rabban Gamaliel II..." (Encyclopaedia Judaica, MacMillan Co, NY, Vol 9, 1971, p. 1176, article: Jabneh). "Birkat Ha-Minim...the 12th benediction of the weekday 'Amidah'...Under Rabban Gamaliel II (1st Century C.E.) (was a prayer which) invoked (an anathema) against the Judeo-Christian and Gnostic sects and other heretics who were called by the general term 'min' (plural minim). To avoid any suspicion of heresy, the hazzan had to be certain to recite this prayer in public worship. If he omitted it by error, he had to return and recite it, although such a regulation does not apply to any other benedictions (Tanh. B., Lev. 2a). The formulation of this prayer is ascribed to "Samuel ha-Katan, who revised its text after it had fallen into oblivion (Ber. 28b)" (IBID, Vol. 4, p. 1035, Article: Birkat Ha-Minim).

"Min...according to Berakhot 28b, Samuel ha Katan (fl.c. 80-110), at the invitation of Gamaliel II of Jabneh, composed the "benediction against the minim," included in the Amidah as the twelfth benediction (see E.H. Bickerman, in HTR, 455, 1962, p. 171, n. 35). This was directed primarily against Judeo-Christians (specifically mentioned in one old text...see Schechter, JQR 10, 1897/98), either to keep them out of the Synagogues or to proclaim a definite breach between the two religions." (IBID,Vol. 12, p. 3,Article: Min) (See Article Genizah Specimens/liturgy, by Solomon Schechter, in the Jewish Quarterly Review, Vol. 10, 1898, pp. 654-659). All of the above statements from the Jewish Encyclopaedia were found on the internet under "The Curse Against Christians At Jamnia About 90 AD", on 10/30/2007.

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