Definer of a New Relationship

John Paul II and the Jewish People
• October 22, 1978, Rome – Karol Wojtyla is crowned Pope John Paul II.
• June 7, 1979, Auschwitz – he declares that no one can look on the Nazi genocide of Jews with indifference.
• Nov. 17, 1980, Mainz – he delivers important address to the West German Jewish community.
• Apr. 13, 1986, Rome – at historic visit to the Great Synagogue he calls Jews “our elder brothers.”
• Dec. 30, 1993, Rome and Jerusalem – diplomatic relations established between Israel and the Holy See.
• March 12, 2000, Rome – he prays publicly to God for forgiveness of Christian sins against Jews during the past millennium.
• March 26, 2000, Jerusalem – he prays at the Western Wall, formally committing Catholic Church “to genuine fellowship with the people of the Covenant.”
1. Background: The tendrils of the ancient Christian anti-Jewish tradition
2. The turning point - *Nostra Aetate*
3. The teachings of Pope John Paul II
4. Summary: Ten Papal Teachings
5. Conclusion
**Superessionism:** The Church has replaced Israel because of the Crucifixion.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Scripture</th>
<th>Jews and Judaism</th>
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| • The Law was given for Jewish disobedience. It is not for Christians.  
• Jews fail to read the “Old Testament” spiritually. They don't see its true meaning.  
• God told the prophets that Jesus would come with a new law. They constantly chastised Jewish sinfulness. | • Judaism prepared for Christianity and is now obsolete.  
• It was corrupt, legalistic, carnal. The Pharisees embodied its worst traits.  
• The Jews killed their Messiah and so are doomed to wander the earth.  
• Jews are in league with the devil. |

Example: Augustine on the “Law”  
Example: Cyprian on the Lord’s Prayer  
Example: Augustine on Jews after Jesus

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<th>The Church</th>
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| • is the long-awaited Messiah of Israel who has fulfilled all Old Testament promises, not carnally but spiritually.  
• He condemned Judaism. His blood is upon Jews today.  
• He showed that God is a God of love, something that Judaism had forgotten. | • is the new People of God, the new Israel, completely realizing the promises of the Old Testament.  
• Israel’s blessings have been transferred to the Church. |

Example: Origen on the transfer of divine blessings to the Church |
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**SUPERSESSIONISM:** The Church has replaced Israel because of the Crucifixion.

Until repudiated in 1965 by the Second Vatican Council declaration *Nostra Aetate,* supersessionism was taken-for-granted in Christian thought. As 20th-century textbook studies make clear, the many “tendrils” of the anti-Jewish theological system long endured, despite such statements as the Council of Trent’s teaching on universal guilt for the crucifixion.

**Example:** Cyprian on the Lord’s Prayer
**Example:** Augustine on the “Law”
**Example:** Augustine on Jews after Jesus
**Example:** Origen on the transfer of divine blessings to the Church
“[N]either all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his passion. . . . Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy scripture. Consequently, all must take care, lest in catechizing or in preaching the word of God, they teach anything which is not in accord with the truth of the Gospel message or the spirit of Christ.”
“[T]he church keeps ever before its mind the words of the apostle Paul about his kin: ‘they are Israelites and it is for them to be sons and daughters, to them belong the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race according to the flesh, is the Christ’ (Rom 9:4,5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. . . .

“[T]he apostle Paul maintains that the Jews remain very dear to God, for the sake of the patriarchs, since God does not take back the gifts he bestowed or the choice he made.”
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<tr>
<td><strong>Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews</strong></td>
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<td>■ Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching &amp; Teaching in the Roman Catholic Church [1985]</td>
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<td>■ We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah [1998]</td>
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<td><strong>Pontifical Biblical Commission</strong></td>
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<td>■ The Historical Truth of the Gospels [1964]</td>
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<td>■ The Bible and Christology [1984]</td>
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<td>■ The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church [1993]</td>
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<td>■ The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible [2001]</td>
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<td><strong>Teachings of Pope John Paul II</strong> [beginning in 1978]</td>
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John Paul II’s emerging theology of the Catholic-Jewish relationship will be presented in these four categories:

**Jews and Judaism**

**Scripture**

**Jesus**

**The Church**
• “[Jews are] the people of God of the Old Covenant, never revoked by God . . . . the present-day people of the Covenant concluded with Moses” [Mainz, Nov 17, 1980]

• “[partners] in a covenant of eternal love that was never revoked” [Miami, Sep 11, 1987]

• “The [1974] Guidelines . . . whose value I wish to underline and reaffirm, indicate [that] . . . ‘Christians must . . . strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience’” [Rome, Mar 12, 1979].
Through myself, the Church, in the words of the well-known Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (no. 4), "deplores the hatred, persecutions and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone;" I repeat: "by anyone."
“The Jewish religion is not ‘extrinsic’ to us, but in a certain way is ‘intrinsic’ to our own religion. With Judaism therefore we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers”

[Rome, Apr. 13, 1986].
“I think that today the nation of Israel . . . finds itself at the center of the attention of the nations of the world, above all because of this terrible experience [the Holocaust], through which you have become a loud warning voice for all humanity, for all nations, all the powers of this world, all systems, and every person. . . . I think that in this sense you continue your particular vocation, showing yourselves to be still the heirs of that election to which God is faithful. This is your mission in the contemporary world before the peoples, the nations, all of humanity, the church. . . . [Our meeting] helps me and all the church to become even more aware of what unites us in the disposition of the divine covenant” [Warsaw, June 14, 1987].
“In the Christian world . . . erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament regarding the Jewish people and their alleged culpability [for the crucifixion of Jesus] have circulated for too long, engendering feelings of hostility towards this people.”

“[I]t will continue to be an explicit and very important part of my mission to repeat and emphasize that our attitude to the Jewish religion should be one of the greatest respect, since the Catholic faith is rooted in the eternal truths contained in the Hebrew Scriptures, and in the irrevocable covenant made with Abraham. We, too, gratefully hold these same truths of the Jewish heritage and look upon you as our brothers and sisters in the Lord. For the Jewish people themselves, Catholics should have not only respect by also great fraternal love for it is the teaching of both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures that the Jews are beloved of God, who has called them with an irrevocable calling. No valid theological justification could ever be found for acts of discrimination or persecution against Jews. In fact, such acts must be held to be sinful.”

[Sydney, Nov 26, 1986]
“The first dimension of this dialogue, that is, the meeting between the people of God of the Old Covenant, never revoked by God [cf. Rom. 11:29], and that of the New Covenant, is at the same time a dialogue within our Church, that is to say, between the first and the second part of her Bible. In this connection, the directives for the application of the conciliar declaration Nostra Aetate say: "The effort must be made to understand better everything in the Old Testament that has its own, permanent value . . . since this value is not wiped out by the later interpretation of the New Testament, which, on the contrary, gave the Old Testament its full meaning, so that it is a question rather of reciprocal enlightenment and explanation.””

[Mainz, Nov 17, 1980].
“[I]n April of this year, the bishops of the Federal Republic of Germany [stated]: ‘Whoever meets Jesus Christ, meets Judaism.’ I would like to make these words mine as well”

[Mainz, Nov 17, 1980].
“Actually, it is impossible fully to express the mystery of Christ without reference to the Old Testament. Jesus' human identity is determined on the basis of his bond with the people of Israel... And this does not mean only a physical belonging. By taking part in the synagogue celebrations where the Old Testament texts were read and commented on, Jesus also came humanly to know these texts; he nourished his mind and heart with them, using them in prayer and as an inspiration for his actions. Thus he became an authentic son of Israel, deeply rooted in his own people's long history. When he began to preach and teach, he drew abundantly from the treasure of Scripture, enriching this treasure with new inspirations and unexpected initiatives” [Rome, April 11, 1997].
“[O]ur two religious communities are connected and closely related at the very level of their respective religious identities.... [W]e recognize with utmost clarity that the path along which we should proceed with the Jewish religious community is one of fraternal dialogue and fruitful collaboration.”

[Rome, March 12, 1979]

“We share] a common commitment for Christians and Jews to get to know one another better, to engage in dialogue, to cooperate intensely in the sphere of human rights, religious education, and the fight against anti-Semitism . . . . we must teach consciences to consider anti-Semitism, and all forms of racism, as sins against God and humanity.”

[Budapest, Aug 18, 1991]
"In virtue of her divine mission, and her very nature, the Church must preach Jesus Christ to the world [Ad Gentes, 2]. Lest the witness of Catholics to Jesus Christ should give offense to Jews, they must take care to live and spread their Christian faith while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council [Dignitatis Humanae]. They will likewise strive to understand the difficulties which arise for the Jewish soul -- rightly imbued with an extremely high, pure notion of the divine transcendence -- when faced with the mystery of the incarnate Word"

[Rome, March 12, 1979].
“[T]he links between the Church and the Jewish people are founded on the design of the God of the Covenant. . . . To assess [these links] with due awareness of the faith and religious life of the Jewish people as they are professed and practiced still today can greatly help us to understand better certain aspects of the life of the Church. Such is the case of liturgy whose Jewish roots remain still to be examined in depth, and in any case should be better known and appreciated by our faithful. The same is true of the history of our institutions which, since the beginning of the Church, have been inspired by certain aspects of the synagogue community organization.” [Rome, March 6, 1982].
For Christians the heavy burden of guilt for the murder of the Jewish people must be an enduring call to repentance; thereby we can overcome every form of anti-Semitism and establish a new relationship with our kindred nation of the Old Covenant . . . .

“Guilt should not oppress and lead to self-agonizing thoughts, but must always be the point of departure for conversion”

[Rome, Nov 8, 1990].
“Our journey to the year 2000 should take the form of a genuine pursuit of conversion and reconciliation by purifying ourselves of past errors and instances of infidelity, inconsistency and slowness to act. . . . Certainly, it is not enough to make public statements of sorrow for past wrongs.

“We must remind ourselves and the faithful of the radically personal nature of the repentance and conversion required.”

[Rome, Oct 23, 1997].
Confession of Sins Against the People of Israel

March 12, 2000

Cardinal Edward Cassidy:

“Let us pray that, in recalling the sufferings endured by the people of Israel throughout history, Christians will acknowledge the sins committed by not a few of their number against the people of the Covenant and the blessings, and in this way will purify their hearts.”

Kyrie, eleison, Kyrie, eleison, Kyrie, eleison
Western Wall Prayer

God of our fathers,
you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring Your name to the nations:
we are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of Yours to suffer
and asking Your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine fellowship with the people of the Covenant


Joannnes Paulus II
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<td>1. Jews live in covenant with God.</td>
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<td>2. Anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism are sins.</td>
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<td>3. Christian teaching, including misuse of some New Testament texts, has promoted antipathy and violence toward Jews. Interpretations that promote negative attitudes toward Jews are in error.</td>
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<td>4. There exists a divinely-willed ongoing bond between Judaism and Christianity. The path for Christians to follow with Jews is dialogue and collaboration.</td>
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<td>5. Judaism has its own distinctive vocation in the divine plan.</td>
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Jesus was and always remained a Jew. His humanity cannot be understood apart from this.

Christians must affirm Jewish self-understanding of their own religious experience.

Christians deepen their own faith when they learn from the living faith of contemporary Jews.

The Scriptures of ancient Israel have revelatory value as inspired texts apart from the Church’s christological reading of them.

Jews and Christians both have the covenantal responsibility to prepare for the Age to Come.
### For further reading

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<tr>
<td>John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue</td>
<td>Byron L. Sherwin and Harold Kasimow, eds.</td>
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<td>The Hidden Pope: The Personal Journey of John Paul II and Jerzy Kluger</td>
<td>Darcy O’Brien</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Paul II – A Tribute in Words and Pictures</td>
<td>Virgilio Levi and Christine Allison</td>
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Our thanks to Michael J. Corso for narrating some quotations in this presentation.
“As Christians and Jews, following the example of the faith of Abraham, we are called to be a blessing for the world.

“This is the common task awaiting us. It is therefore necessary for us, Christians and Jews, to first be a blessing to each other.”

April 6, 1993