

## Lesson 6: The Holocaust

April 23, 2020

The Holocaust = extermination of the Jews in Nazi Germany (6 million – 3 million Ashkenazi in Poland alone)

Definition: *holocaust* – Hebrew ‘*olah* (“whole”) + Greek *kaiein* (“burn”) – a whole burnt offering to God

Genocide: the murder of a *race* – not necessarily religious-driven, although not uncommon

Examples: Turks against Armenians (1914-23)

Cambodian Khmer Rouge under dictator Pol Pot (1975-79)

Rwandan Hutu government killed perhaps 800,000 Tutsis and others in 100 days (1994)

Myanmar government (formerly Burma) against the Christian Karen and Muslim Rohingya (2016–)

German Genocide – Contributing Factors:

1. Hitler’s anti-Semitism (*Mein Kampf*)  
Technically, the term “Semitic” (from Shem) would include Arabs, but it normally refers just to Jews.
2. European anti-Semitism – for centuries (e.g. Claudius in Acts 18:2), medieval pogroms and ghettos  
In 1400s, the Inquisition may have forced Jews to “convert” to Catholicism in Portugal.
3. Martin Luther’s words – old-age, inappropriate sayings against Jews, Turks, and Catholics  
While these were *religious* statements, not *racial* statements, they were still not biblical.

### Incremental Persecution: The Frog and the Kettle

Taken from various sources and a study guide based on Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews* (1985):

1. Identity – characterizing the Jews as “other” through propaganda and the Nuremberg laws  
The Jewish badge of the star of David did not begin until 1939.
2. Isolation – loss of licenses and business, beyond economic boycotts – “Kauft nicht bei Juden!” (April 1, 1933)  
*Jewish people are encouraged to emigrate from Germany.*
3. Kristallnacht (lit. “night of broken glass”) – a pogrom destroying storefronts, burning synagogues (Nov. 1938)
4. Relocation into ghettos – confined areas in a city (e.g. Warsaw Ghetto begins October 1940)
5. Deportation – to concentration camps and death camps (e.g. the big lie “Arbeit Macht Frei” at Auschwitz)
6. Mass Murder – the so-called “final solution”

*How shocking! How barbaric!* The villagers were forced to tour these camps after the war, as a witness.

More than 250,000 Jewish displaced persons (DPs) filtered to other countries, many to a new nation in Palestine:

May 14, 1948 – the United Nations establishes the nation-state of Israel – Arabs immediately retaliate!

### *How did a civilized nation get to such a point?*

Germany has led the civilized world in music, science, mathematics, and publishing (Jacques Barzun).

But they also led the world in apostasy; therefore, would not judgment under Satan be fitting (2 Thess. 2:3-12)?

### *So how did this nation get to such inhumane barbarity?*

It may be that natural man is incapable of such unnatural cruelty apart from Satanic ideas and possession.

### *Why did the Jews experience this persecution?*

Antisemitism in the Bible: Egyptian slavery and infanticide, Haman and Day of Purim (Esther).

Causes of past antisemitism: fear (Egypt), envy (cf. Mt. 27:18), and demonic hatred of God’s plan (cf. Rev. 12).

Remember, God blesses the Jews, even when they do not deserve it (cf. Gen. 12:16; 28:13-15).

How? Financially, intellectually (one-fourth of all Nobel prizes), and militarily (e.g. Six-Day War).

*Are the Jews a race or a religion?* (One 9<sup>th</sup> grade civics teacher denied the Jews were a race.)

Both. God set up the religion (in part) to preserve the race as a distinct people (“you shall be holy”).

If a Jew converts to Christ, they marry in the Lord (1 Cor. 7:39) and bloodlines dissipate (cf. Americans).

Opposite: “We reject Jesus because he no longer wanted to be a Jew” (Louisville Jew).

Really, both *religion* and *persecution* keep them from mixing with other peoples and losing ethnic identity.

Even the devil’s efforts to exterminate the Jews help to bring about all God’s promises (cf. Ps. 7:15).

### *Is the Holocaust a judgment upon the Jews?*

Yes, as a judgment for crucifying Christ (cf. Mt. 21:33-46; 27:25), but persecution is not right (Isa. 10:15-19).

Yes, but it is a “partial” judgment, for some Jews are saved now and all will be saved someday (Romans 11).

Therefore, pray for the Jews to be saved—they are still “first” among nations in God’s eyes (Rom. 1:16; 10:1).