

Four-Lesson Special  
The Holocaust, Anti-Semitism,  
and Us—Part 1

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## The Holocaust, Anti-Semitism, and Us



**Jer. 29:11, “ ‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.’ ”**

**Why is it important for us as human beings to study the Holocaust?**

**Why is it important for *us as Christians* to study and know about the Holocaust?**

**Why is it important for me as your pastor, as a Christian leader, to take the time to go to Israel, to learn about the Holocaust and to teach about the Holocaust?**

**Isa. 56:5, “Even to them I will give in My house and within My walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.” NKJV**

**Isa. 56:5, “I will set up within my temple and my walls a monument that will be better than sons and daughters. I will set up a permanent monument for them that will remain.” NET**

**“Auschwitz, or ‘the Holocaust,’ looms as the stumbling block of contemporary Jewish theology. Whatever may be the case with Christian theologians, for whom it seems to play no significant generative or transformative role, the Jewish religious thinker is forced to confront full-face that horror, the uttermost evil in Jewish history.”**

**“Holocaust” is the term used for the systematic state-sponsored murder of millions of Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II. Some historians and writers restrict the use of the term to the murder of Jews; others use the term more widely to include those civilians victimized by Nazi Germany – trade unionists, political opponents of the regime, Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals – who were persecuted but not systematically murdered, as well as mentally retarded and physically handicapped Germans and Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), who were murdered by gassing.**

**~Encyclopedia Judaica, 2007**

Imperial War Museum, London, UK\*

“ ‘The Holocaust’ is the term used to describe the systematic and wholesale slaughter of the Jews of Europe by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Second World War. Two-thirds of European Jewry perished between 1939 and 1945.

“On coming to power in 1933, the Nazis began to actively persecute the Jews of Germany with the introduction of discriminatory legislation which was accompanied by vicious antisemitic propaganda. With the outbreak of the Second World War, the process escalated. Nazi conquests meant that every Jew in occupied Europe was under the threat of death. Other groups besides the Jews fell victim to Nazi racial policies. Poles, Slavs, Soviet prisoners of war, Roma and Sinti (gypsies), were all murdered in vast numbers. And Hitler’s political opponents, communists and trade unionists, Jehovah’s Witnesses and homosexuals were also brutally done to death in Nazi concentration camps.”

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington,  
DC, USA

“The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. ‘Holocaust’ is a word of Greek origin meaning ‘sacrifice by fire.’ The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were ‘racially superior’ and that the Jews, deemed ‘inferior,’ were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community. During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived ‘racial inferiority’: Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and homosexuals.”

Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, Israel

“The Holocaust was unprecedented genocide, total and systematic, perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, with the aim of annihilating the Jewish people. The primary motivation was the Nazis’ antisemitic racist ideology. Between 1933 and 1941, Nazi Germany pursued a policy that dispossessed the Jews of their rights and their property, followed by the branding and concentration of the Jewish population. This policy gained broad support in Germany and much of occupied Europe. In 1941, following the invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazis and their collaborators launched the systematic mass murder of the Jews. By 1945, nearly six million Jews had been murdered.”

**While there were other victims of Nazi atrocities, the term “Holocaust” is to be restricted to the unique attempt to totally eradicate all Jews worldwide.**

**1. Totality**

**2. Universality**

**3. Ideology**

**4. Racism**

**Of course Nazi anti-Semitism was not Christian in its essence; in fact it was anti-Christian. Next to the Jews, there was no one Hitler hated more than the Christians. And what resistance the Nazis did encounter was largely inspired by the church. But these palliating reminders of Christian suffering and heroism can hardly alleviate the reproaches which the Christian conscience must feel when it views Auschwitz in the light of all the centuries of Christian persecution of the Jews.**

**1. Conversion**

**2. Expulsion**

**3. Annihilation**