

There are over 170 different English translations of the Bible in print. Nearly all portray Jews as the enemy of Jesus, creating a widespread view of them as “deicide people,” the “other” in the community who were Christ killers. It is time to remove these weeds of hatred from Christianity.

The competition in the first century between the Jews who believed Jesus was their long awaited Messiah and the other Jews is now ancient history. Scholars agree that anti-Judaism is defective perception from defective substance and defective language. They agree Jesus was perceived as a threat to Roman rule and that it was the Romans who crucified him.

There were three named Jews involved in condemning Jesus: Judas, Caiphas (the high priest who brought the major charges), and his brother-in-law Annas. There were other hirelings and members of the priesthood who supported the charges, fulfilling their role as Quislings employed by the Roman invaders. Yes, there was a conflict between Jesus and this small number of his fellow Jews but they represented only an insignificant number of all the Jews of the first century.

No one denies that anti-Semitism is a Christian problem. It must be dealt with at its carelessly translated source - the New Testament. There is no longer any doubt about who condemned Jesus to death. Jesus’ crucifixion, a Roman form of execution, is an assured fact. Three conclusions can be drawn:

- a. Romans ultimately put Jesus to death;
- b. There were Roman legal proceedings beforehand; and
- c. Jesus was condemned for a political crime.

There are millions of new Christians from the former communist nations, Asia, and Africa who, upon studying the Bible will be trained to distrust and hate Jews, because Jesus is presented as a Christian who was killed by Jews. These references support the bias of millions of other Christians who are anti-Jewish. The stakes are high. Innocent people have been murdered because of these words.

Bible societies and publishers have a responsibility to produce new editions for the public similar to the Contemporary English Version, published by the American Bible Society, which contains no anti-Judaism. Sincere and meaningful dialogue between Christians and Jews will not solve anti-Semitism unless the references to Jews in the New Testament accurately reflect the historical past. Publishers readily agree that anti-Semitism is anti-Christian madness and yet consciously or subconsciously leave unchanged the anti-Judaism in Bibles and Sunday school curriculum that was written centuries ago.

It is time to clean up the garden and pull out the weeds of ignorance and error. The New Testament does not need to denigrate Jews to affirm its core message. In fact, it drastically distorts the aims of Christianity.

It is the responsibility of scholars and translators to correct the mistakes of the past. Every noble cause or achievement inherently calls for great leadership and effort. A final question, how safe would a Christian be living in a Muslim nation if Muslim prayer books contained similar passages that Christians sought to kill Mohammed?

Examples from two bibles recently published illustrates how anti-Judaism can be removed without changing the meaning of the message:

Gospel	The Catholic Bible; Personal Study Edition	The American Bible Society; Contemporary English Version
John 5:15, 16	The man went and told the Jews that Jesus was the one who had made him well. Therefore, the Jews began to persecute Jesus because he did this on a Sabbath.	The man left and told <the leaders that Jesus was the one who had healed him. They started making a lot of trouble for Jesus because he did things like this on the Sabbath.
John 5:18	For this reason the Jews tried all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but he also called God his own father, making himself equal to God.	Now the leaders wanted to kill Jesus for two reasons. First, he had broken the law of the Sabbath. But even worse, he had said that God was his Father, which made him equal with God.
John 10:31	The Jews again picked up rocks to stone him.	Once again the people picked up stones in order to kill Jesus.
John 11:8	The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?"	Teacher," they said, the people there want to stone you to death! Why do you want to go back?"
John 19:7	The Jews answered, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."	The crowd replied, "He claimed to be the Son of God! Our Law says that he must be put to death."

John 19:14, 15	It was preparation day for Passover, and it was about noon. And he said to the Jews ,“Behold, your king!” They cried out, “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!”	It was about noon on the day before Passover, and Pilate said to the crowd , “Look at your king!” “Kill him! Kill him!” they yelled. “Nail him to a cross!”
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