

Ala. governor calls Jews `brothers and sisters'

by [Roy Hoffman](#)

May 4, 2011

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (RNS) Gov. Robert Bentley, who came under fire earlier this year for telling non-Christians that "you're not my brother and you're not my sister," twice referred to Jews on Tuesday (May 3) as his "brothers and sisters" during a Holocaust remembrance event.

The Republican governor and Southern Baptist deacon set off a firestorm of controversy after his Jan. 17 inauguration by stating, in part, "anybody here today who has not accepted Jesus Christ as their savior, I'm telling you, you're not my brother and you're not my sister, and I want to be your brother."

Without making any overt reference to those remarks, Bentley stated exactly the opposite in his Holocaust address.

"You know, as a devout Christian, I bear a very close kinship to my Jewish brothers and sisters," he said. "We're all of the same background."

In his remarks, Bentley spoke of the Jews as "God's chosen," and referred to biblical history, citing Moses, and the Jewish holiday of Purim and its story of a plot to destroy the Jews by an evil figure, Haman. He likened Haman to Adolf Hitler.

"Why have the Jewish people been persecuted all these years?" he asked philosophically. "Because they're the chosen people."