

*The New  
Anti-Semitism  
and  
Jewish Evangelism*



# MISHKAN

■ A FORUM ON THE GOSPEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE ■ Issue 62/ 2010



# **MISHKAN**

**A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People**

ISSUE 62 / 2010

**Editor: Jim R. Sibley**

**Pasche Institute of Jewish Studies · A Ministry of Criswell College**

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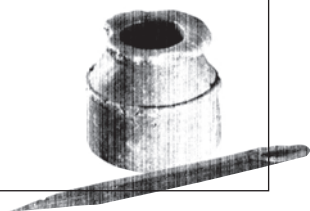
**Mishkan** is a forum for discussion, and articles included do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors, Pasche Institute of Jewish Studies, or Criswell College.

**Mishkan** is the Hebrew word for *tabernacle* or *dwelling place* (John 1:14).

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

## A Note from Your New Editor

By **Jim R. Sibley**



A search of the Internet reveals almost 600,000 entries for the term "new anti-Semitism." This phrase refers to the recent resurgence of anti-Semitism under the guise of opposition to the State of Israel. Olivier Melnick of Chosen People Ministries has provided tremendous assistance in marshaling the authors and articles for this issue. He has published a book on the subject and is considered an authority by many in the Messianic community. Each author has brought a unique perspective, which allows this issue to make a timely and incisive contribution to the literature on this subject.

In addition, Rudy Gonzalez examines the Gospel of Matthew in the first of a two-part series on the place the Jewish people occupy in relation to the missionary calling of the church. It has long been my understanding that in the New Testament there are only two kinds of missions: not domestic and foreign, but Jewish and Gentile. Gonzalez' research offers new insights that strengthen this perspective.

There is not space to express sufficiently our gratitude to Kai Kjær-Hansen and Bodil Skjøtt for their work as General Editor and Editorial Secretary, respectively. They have worked tirelessly and unselfishly to produce issue after issue of outstanding quality with a gracious and kind spirit. They are dear friends, and our prayers are with them both as they continue to support Jewish ministry in other venues.

With this issue, we also welcome a new editorial board. Each board member brings both theological erudition and spiritual depth.

Cindy Osborne of Caspari Center has served as our superb linguistic editor, and Diana Cooper of Pasche Institute of Jewish Studies has served as her assistant. Because of other commitments, Cindy has stepped down, but only slightly, as she and Diana have swapped roles. They are responsible for

the absence (or at least the rarity) of typographical or grammatical errors, and we are in their debt.

*Mishkan* is “a forum on the gospel and the Jewish people.” *Mishkan* will continue to emphasize the three commitments suggested by this phrase. We are committed to having a forum, or an exchange of viewpoints and opinion. We will always strive for civility and courtesy when disagreements arise, but we must listen to one another. We are committed to the gospel—the only hope for both Jews and Gentiles, which proclaims salvation through faith alone in Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel and the unique Son of God. We are also committed to the Jewish people. We support the right of the Jewish people to a state, and understand that they have returned largely in unbelief, in accordance with Ezekiel 37. Even so, while the State of Israel is largely secular and is subject to the injustices and mistakes of any government, we are unabashedly “lovers of Israel.”

We long for, and pray for, both the physical restoration of the Jewish people to Israel and the spiritual restoration of the Jewish people to their Messiah Yeshua. Therefore, we commit ourselves not only to evangelism, but also to prayer. In Romans 10:1, Paul tells us, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.” Commenting on this verse, Douglas Moo says Paul wants “his predominantly Gentile Christian readers to know that he takes no delight or satisfaction from Israel’s fall. Quite the contrary . . . Paul remains passionately committed to the salvation of the Jews.”<sup>1</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield adds, “In this prayer for Israel’s salvation he has set an example for the Church to follow. A church which failed to pray for Israel’s salvation would be a church which did not know what it means to be the Church of Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup> So, the focus of this issue is not accidental; use it as an aid for prayer.

1 Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. N. B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, and G. D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996), 631.  
 2 C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The International Critical Commentary, ed. J. A. Emerton and C. E. B. Cranfield (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 513.

# What Is “New” in the New Anti-Semitism?

by **Olivier J. Melnick**



## Introduction

Those of us specifically involved in Jewish outreach are faced with many challenges. We clearly understand that we cannot reach the Jewish people using the same methods that are used for Gentile evangelism. The challenges we are faced with are unique to the Jewish people. While most Jewish people can be influenced with the right balance of Bible knowledge, patience, love, and leading of the Holy Spirit, the one area that we are all aware of, but somewhat ill equipped to tackle constructively, is that of anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, it is a recurring theme in our dialogue with unsaved Jewish people because anti-Semitism has been an on-going, inescapable reality within every Jewish community worldwide.

It is a fact that many Christians over the centuries have been guilty of anti-Semitism. It is also a fact that many Scriptures from the New Covenant have been twisted and stretched out of context to make them sound anti-Jewish. As undeniable as these facts might be, they do not invalidate our faith, nor do they force us to revise our biblical mandate for Jewish evangelism. They simply challenge us to a more sensitive approach to Jewish outreach in light of a wounded community, which, forced by the events of the last two millennia, has become stubbornly and blindly “gospel-resistant.” Thus, a more sensitive yet biblical approach is crucial in our constant effort to build bridges between our community and the unbelieving Jewish community.

One simple definition for anti-Semitism could be: “The genuine hatred of Jewish people simply because they are Jewish.” It usually is disguised under different names or various agendas, but it has the same goal of complete annihilation of the Jewish people. But there is a need to subdivide anti-Semitism into two categories: old and new.

Aside from a small minority of people and groups worldwide who still claim a racial difference in their attempt to justify their hatred of Israel and the Jewish people, for the most part the “racial” agenda has been

discarded. Our focus in this paper will be on a *new* breed of anti-Semitism and what defines it as such.

Today's anti-Semitism, or the "new anti-Semitism," has new boundaries, a new source, and of course a new methodology. As we will see here, it is the new culprit and the real danger. It is different, much broader, and much more damaging than the old anti-Semitism was.

### **How New Is the New Anti-Semitism?**

The new anti-Semitism has a lot in common with the old anti-Semitism, as far as the goal is concerned. It was, is, and always will be the complete destruction of the Jewish people—and Israel by association—just because they are Jewish. The means to that end have morphed over the years from religious to racial to social, but the end has never changed. Today, as the phoenix of doom, it is reborn after seventy years, in spite of our people's creed of *never again*. It is possibly the beginning of Satan's final attack against Israel. As such, it is delivered to the world in a new package, making it more believable and easier to accept than its predecessor. Again, it has new boundaries, a new source, and a new methodology.

#### *The Boundaries Are New*

No matter how we label ourselves, as followers of the Jewish Messiah, we are part of His body, the church. And as much as we wish to, we cannot separate ourselves from the baggage that the "church" has accumulated. We carry that baggage everywhere we go in our efforts to share the good news with God's chosen people. Undoubtedly, the most nefarious memory in the Jewish psyche is that of Nazi Germany's systematic attempt to destroy all of European Jewry. As a measure of the lasting impact of this historical event, it is not uncommon today to speak of the Jewish people using pre-Holocaust and post-Holocaust historical markers. The Holocaust presented a spiritual crisis that forever changed the outlook of the Jewish people.

The boundaries of the old anti-Semitism were European, for the most part. Even though history could testify that the hatred against Jewish people had transcended borders and continents, clearly the big push came out of Germany and extended to various European countries. To be sure, the nations that were complicit along with Germany bore varying degrees of responsibility. Although it is not the purpose of this paper, let it be known that European involvement in the "final solution" went from "very willing" to "reluctant." Unfortunately, the propaganda and violence used by Hitler and his men resulted in the destruction of 6,000,000 Jews, among others.

Even though the outcome of the "final solution," brought to an end by Germany's surrender in 1945, was the tragic death of millions, its boundaries were limited to the extent of the railway system of that time. Hitler went out of his way to send cattle cars through as much of Eastern and Western Europe as he could, but his boundaries never went farther.



The cancer of Jewish hatred was a localized cancer. It was localized in Europe. World Jewry eventually recovered, and in 1948, after the miraculous and prophetic rebirth of Israel as a modern nation, it was hoped that the beast of anti-Semitism had been destroyed. The modern day survival creed of my people was found in these two powerful words: *never again*. No one would discuss, let alone entertain, the thought that anti-Semitism could again resurface on the world scene.

The unfortunate truth of the matter is that the beast never died. It was in hibernation until its new awakening, triggered by the Second Intifada that started on September 28, 2000, when Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon unexpectedly visited the Temple Mount, the site of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Rocks were thrown from above onto Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall, and the violence spread and exploded like an overheated pressure cooker.

The justification was made, the actions followed, and the new anti-Semitism was born. But it would be more accurate to say that almost overnight, anti-Semitism was re-invented and morphed into a socially acceptable ideology. The epicenter was Jerusalem, but the aftershocks were felt globally. After ten years, these waves of anti-Semitism continue relentlessly around the world with the same destructive agenda. For that reason, the new anti-Semitism is much more pernicious than its predecessor, because it no longer has boundaries. The localized cancer of yesteryear has metastasized to the whole planet.

In measuring how far the new anti-Semitism has spread, we realize that no Jewish community is currently immune from its viral grip.

That the Middle East is the hotbed of anti-Jewish sentiment is now an established expectation, so much so that much of Western society has become somewhat numb to the regular acts of hatred and violence committed against Israel.

Much of the European Union of today still operates under the unofficial regime of *la vieille Europe*, "the old Europe." Here the old anti-Semitism found fertile soil for centuries, planted by faulty, allegorical Bible teaching from the Christian church that declared the church to be the new Israel, irrigated by the ignorance of the common people, and grown from the depravity of human nature.

The European Union has been caught off guard and is being slowly devoured by the demons of political correctness, multiculturalism, and tolerance. In its postmodern desire to align itself with the rest of the world, the Europe of today has irreversibly given up her identity without a shot fired. Islam has won a cultural victory in Europe simply by virtue of demographics, bringing with it a gunnysack full of seething anti-Semitism.

One of the strengths of our enemies is the fact that they know us well. Our attempts at multiculturalism and tolerance are only seen as weakness,

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and are exploited as such. Only when we realize that Israel—the “Little Satan”—is only the appetizer on the menu of radical Islam, and that the West—the “Great Satan”—is the main course, will we take the threat of radical Islam seriously. In the meantime, Israel and the Jewish people are exposed to a new anti-Semitism no longer confined to geographical borders.

All Jewish people are targets; and, as if the new boundaries—or lack of such—were not enough, the sources have changed as well. While radical Islam is easier to discern, there are other sources that work together to fulfill the same agenda.

### *The Source Is Different*

Before exposing the sources of the new anti-Semitism and how different they are from their predecessors, we must realize that at the core, the source has not changed and never will; it is Satan himself, who hates what God loves and loves what God hates (according to Ps 83).<sup>1</sup> But even Satan has realized that new times call for new methods, so he is now subcontracting his job of opposing Israel and the Jewish people to different groups within our ever shrinking global community. The result is far more encompassing, and the scope of its damages are exponential, as we are about to see.

#### ■ A Subtle But Steady Source: Replacement Theology

While anti-Semitism is not always rooted in replacement theology, a careful study will help us realize that, at the very least, it often nourishes the soil from which anti-Semitism grows.

**While anti-Semitism is not always rooted in replacement theology . . . at the very least, it often nourishes the soil from which anti-Semitism grows.**

As a faulty non-literal approach to God’s Word, replacement theology leads to the belief by many that the Christian church today has replaced Israel in God’s program. It comes in different theological flavors, so to speak, stretching from relegating Israel and the Jewish people to a doomed future to giving them a limited

hope in God’s future program. While those holding to replacement theology may still show appreciation for Israel, they recognize neither the Land, nor the Jewish people, as still being an integral part of God’s program.

When people are being taught from the pulpit that God has replaced Israel with the church, they don’t see the Jewish people as being a vital part of God’s plan any longer. This view, while not being inherently anti-Semitic, fuels any dormant anti-Jewish fire inside the minds of many. The result of tossing the Jews aside from God’s great master plan of salvation

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed exposition of Psalm 83, see Olivier J. Melnick, *They Have Conspired Against You: Responding to the New Anti-Semitism* (Huntington Beach, CA: Purple Raiment, 2007), 81–91.

is an insidious anti-Jewish sentiment shared by many within the organized Christian church.

This subtle anti-Semitism has become an accepted and justified sentiment toward Israel and the Jewish people. In fact, it has already infiltrated many levels of our society and is becoming more and more accepted, with very little being done against it. Can history repeat itself? Could Christians and countries with a Christian heritage again be found guilty of failing to help Jewish people in a coming Holocaust of persecution? Could there be another time in history in which Christians miss their opportunity to do the right thing in God's eyes? One can only imagine how damaging that would be, especially as global anti-Semitism is emerging with new faces.

God never intended that the church should replace the Jewish people;<sup>2</sup> as a matter of fact, He has clearly spoken in His Word against anti-Semitism. A good example is found in Psalm 83:1–5:

<sup>1</sup> O God, do not remain quiet; Do not be silent and,  
O God, do not be still.

<sup>2</sup> For, behold, Thine enemies make an uproar;  
And those who hate Thee have exalted themselves.

<sup>3</sup> They make shrewd plans against Thy people,  
And conspire together against Thy treasured ones.

<sup>4</sup> They have said, "Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation,  
That the name of Israel be remembered no more."

<sup>5</sup> For they have conspired together with one mind;  
Against Thee do they make a covenant.<sup>3</sup>

Here is a clear indication that a Bible-believing follower of Yeshua the Messiah cannot possibly hate Israel or the Jewish people, because Scripture tells us that it would mean that they hate the very God they claim to have a personal relationship with, the God of Israel.

But replacement theology has become pervasive, even within the evangelical community, with the majority of Christians attending churches where replacement theology is propagated. Still, as potentially damaging as replacement theology might be, it is not the greatest danger to our people. The politics of the radical left is another force to be reckoned with.

#### ■ The Radical Left and Secular Anti-Israelism

The radical left poses a great threat, and its influence is spreading. According to these liberals, anti-Semitism is no longer an issue that needs to be addressed. In addition, some on the left find it perfectly acceptable to be anti-Israel. They claim that you can be anti-Israel in the name of world peace without being anti-Semitic, a claim that is foggy at best.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, rev. ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1994), 420–29.

<sup>3</sup> New American Standard Bible (1971) used throughout the article.



During my most recent trip to Europe in January 2009, I observed a pro-Palestinian march in the heart of Paris where people held a banner with the words: "UN in '48 you gave birth to an assassin and you called her Israel." The crowd marched along chanting the mantra "Israel Assassin" and displaying banners equating the Jewish star of David with the Nazi swastika. Nobody in the crowd, the police, or the local media seemed to be concerned about the shift in targeting. During that two-week period throughout France, several rabbis were attacked, a kosher meat factory set ablaze, a car destroyed for displaying a Hebrew book, and many Jewish teenagers severely beaten on the streets. It has now become very clear that any move that Israel makes as a nation seems to render all Jewish people globally responsible, and thus punishable, as well.

Painting with very broad strokes, many liberals are associating all Jewish people with "guilty" Israel. We need to understand that this is a double fallacy. First, it must be recognized that Israel, which has been painted as an aggressor, is *only* defending itself in the same way other nations do. The exact opposite picture is painted by these liberals through the media and politics, and this false picture is used to perpetrate an anti-Israel bias. Second, it is never wise to associate a people group with the guilt of a cross-section of that group. For example, not all Germans were Nazis, and not all Muslims are terrorists. But in the case of Israel, these liberals first claim that Israel is responsible for the problems of the Middle East, and then project that false blame onto Jewish people in general. Unfortunately, this offers a breeding ground for the most dangerous enemy of Israel: radical Islam.

#### ■ Radical Islam: A Spiritual Battle

When we talk about Islam, we must be careful. We must not succumb to the temptation of pointing the finger and categorizing all Muslims as Jew-haters. This being said, we must realize that anti-Semitism has been indoctrinated in the Muslim psyche as part of the regular upbringing of most Muslims worldwide. We must also realize that the chasm between Jews and Muslims is not historical or geographical, as many would want us to believe. It is a spiritual battle instigated by none other than the great deceiver, Satan himself. He is behind any and all attempts to destroy the Jewish people. He has used radical Islam today as he used Nazi Germany seventy years ago. Because of this, it requires effort for a Muslim not to hate a Jew. But by the same token, it requires effort for one to love one's neighbor. The ability to hate comes packaged with the depravity of the human heart.

Love requires effort and commitment, and more than anything else, it requires help from Yeshua Himself. Nothing in Islam or the teaching of the Qur'an teaches man to love his enemy. On the contrary, a careful study of Islam's holy book will show that it is all right to lie to and hate the infidels (i.e., anyone who is not a Muslim).<sup>4</sup> Muslims who claim to follow the prin-

4 In the Qu'ran, in reference to lying to unbelievers, cf. *Al-i-Imrân* 3.28, and in reference to murdering unbelievers, cf. *Sûra Tauba* 9.5.

ciples and the teachings of the Qur'an have no choice if they choose to be devout Muslims.

Today the world comprises between 1.2 and 1.5 billion Muslims (about 21–25% of the world's population),<sup>5</sup> and even though only a minority are radicals focused on holy jihad, they represent a noticeable number of people. The real danger with radical Islam is the lack of respect for human life. The sanctity of life is revered by the West while jihadists "stand in line" to blow themselves up for Allah.

The claim that Islam is a religion of peace depends on Islam's agenda of eventually being the only world religion. Fifty years ago, such a claim of religious hegemony would have sounded ludicrous, but today, even if most of the West decides to keep its head in the sand, Islam is a force to be reckoned with. Muslim demographics along with political correctness in the West are leading to the demise of our civilization.

Radical Islam's goal is nothing less than global Islam, not just as a religion, but also as an ideology dictating all aspects of daily life. From that viewpoint, Israel is seen as only part of the problem. To reach the goal of global Islam, Western civilization must be taken over by Islam and the Qur'an must rule as the supreme holy book.

**"When civilized nations fail to rise up against the Jew-haters in their midst, it is often just a matter of time before the Jew-haters in their midst rise up against them."**

For this, radical Islam needs to be established in most developed countries—and it is. It needs to be established at different levels of society and government—and it is. It needs to force Qur'anic laws or *sharia* law on the West, and that process has already begun, as we have witnessed in the establishment of a parallel legal system in England, when *sharia* law was accepted as an alternative for Muslims in September 2008.

To be sure, the United States is not immune to the viral attacks of radical Islam. The March 9, 2009, cover of *Newsweek* magazine featured the title, "Radical Islam Is a Fact of Life. How to Live with It." It shouldn't come as a surprise that the article itself was nothing but a condescending lecture on tolerance and multiculturalism.<sup>6</sup>

Columnist Jeff Jacoby warned us a few years ago:

What the world should already know but so often forgets is that Jews are the canary in the coalmine of civilization. Anti-Semitism is like cancer; unchecked, it can metastasize and sicken the entire body. When civilized nations fail to rise up against the Jew-haters in their midst, it is often just a matter of time before the Jew-haters in their midst rise up against them.<sup>7</sup>

5 "Muslim Population Statistics," The Canadian Society of Muslims; <http://muslim-canada.org/muslimstats.html> (accessed November 16, 2009).

6 Fareed Zakaria, "Learning to Live with Radical Islam," *Newsweek*; <http://www.newsweek.com/id/187093> (accessed November 16, 2009).

7 Jeff Jacoby, "The cancer of anti-Semitism in Europe," *The Boston Globe*; <http://www>



For this reason, those of us who are still able must defeat anti-Semitism before it defeats all of us. We must conquer our enemies with love before they conquer us by force.

Like the mythological beast known as the Lernaean Hydra, whose multiple venom-spitting heads grew back at the rate of two for every one decapitated, anti-Semitism continues to propagate the denigration of Israel and the Jewish people with an intensity that would deserve commendation if it were not so sordid. Jew-haters today, including liberals who verbally poison the well of humanity and radical Muslims who sacrifice themselves to kill Jews, multiply their efforts exponentially to destroy Israel's reputation with the world.

Hercules is said to have eventually killed the Hydra as one of his twelve labors. He managed many of his labors on his own, but at times he required some help, as in the case of the Lernaean Hydra, when Hercules called on his nephew, Iolaus.

If there is anything to be learned from the fanciful tales of Greek mythology, it is that some beasts are better fought corporately than alone. Anti-Semitism is such a beast; it can only be defeated if we work together. The radical left and radical Islam understand the power of corporate work, and we witness how they are globally holding hands in their goal to eradicate the Jewish people from the face of the earth.

Our tendency is, of course, to retract into our personal cocoons of family, work, or religion, and believe the opposite. We often feel helpless as individuals in a sea of antagonists. What can we do? Aren't we better off not making waves and just getting along?

A statement often attributed to eighteenth century Irish statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke (widely regarded as the father of modern conservatism) says it best: "All that is necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing."

My belief is that not only is it our duty to stand for the truth and fight every form of anti-Semitism, but additionally, that we can utilize the new anti-Semitism to build bridges between our believing community and the Jewish community plagued by this ailment.

And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. And a second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matt 22:37-39)

The Lord Himself told us that this is the greatest of all the commandments, so it would behoove us all to follow His lead on this foundational element in furthering His kingdom.

## Conclusion

The new anti-Semitism is here to stay. Its rapid global growth should concern us, but our concern must result in action, rather than merely in passive frustration. Our concern should motivate us to go further and overcome evil with love. We have the ability to use the new anti-Semitism to our advantage and show Jewish unbelievers "who we are not," and thus to build a solid bridge between their community and ours. We can model what it really means to be a believer, showing love, interest, and concern for those who have suffered, and still suffer, the ravages of anti-Semitism. This affirmation will build a bridge. This bridge will go over centuries of lies, tears, and bloodshed against the Jewish people. The Messiah in His teaching has given us all the building blocks to construct our bridge. Even the worst acts against our people can be used to direct them toward the truth.

It reminds me of the powerful story of Joseph and his brothers as retold in the final chapters of Genesis, and especially Genesis 50:20:

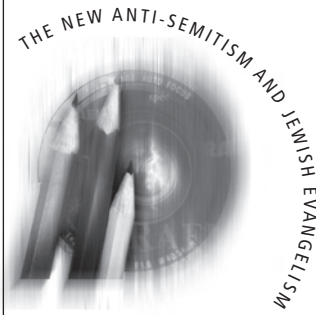
And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

In the case of the new anti-Semitism, God can use it, and use us, to turn the tables on a pervasively destructive situation and create a genuine dialogue of concern and love with our Jewish friends. If prayerfully approached, this dialogue will yield curiosity, at the very least, if not a real desire for the hope that is in us.

### Author info:

Olivier J. Melnick (B.A., Moody Bible Institute) is the Orange County Branch Director for Chosen People Ministries in Southern California.  
olivier@chosenpeople.com





# The European Re-birth of Anti-Semitism and Its Effect on Jewish Evangelism

by **Daniel Nessim**

The heritage of the Jewish community in Europe is one that extends for well over two millennia and arguably has its roots in the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great. Throughout that time, Jews in Europe have had, at best, an uneven ride. The situation is no better today, even in the dark shadow of the Holocaust. This essay will focus on the three European countries where the bulk of European Jews live: Britain, France, and Germany.

## **Britain**

The Jewish community in England is over 350 years old, dating from the days of Oliver Cromwell, whose larger-than-life-sized statue still stands outside the Houses of Parliament. Since the “readmission” of Jews in 1656, the United Kingdom has been a safe and hospitable home in which Jewish life has prospered.

Centered in London, it is a community that has had a long-term exposure to Jewish missions. This is where missions to the Jews arguably began, and certainly the country from which the largest and most dynamic missions to the Jews were based. In both England and Scotland, great societies aimed at reaching the Jewish people were founded shortly after the French Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

It is from the United Kingdom that the great evangelical impetus towards the founding of a homeland for the Jewish people found fertile soil. This significantly contributed to the Balfour Declaration in 1917, and the awarding of the Palestine Mandate to Britain following the fall of the Turkish Empire.<sup>2</sup>

In 2005, Britain’s Community Support Trust (CST) recorded 455 anti-Semitic incidents in Britain, a fall of 14% from the previous year. It was still

1 Daniel Nessim, *The History of Jewish Believers in the Canadian Protestant Church, 1759–1995* (Vancouver: Regent College, 1996), 1.

2 Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: How the British Came to Palestine* (New York: MacMillan, 1956), 80, 344–45.



the second highest annual total since the CST started recording incidents in 1984, and double that of 1997.<sup>3</sup> It is thus no surprise that on March 6, 2009, Britain's leading Jewish newspaper, the *Jewish Chronicle*, reporting on the CST's annual dinner, noted that both speeches focused on "the abuse, intimidation, and sometimes violence which is now part and parcel of life as a Jew in Britain."<sup>4</sup>

Against this background, current statistics are shocking. In the first half of 2009 alone, the CST recorded 609 anti-Semitic incidents,<sup>5</sup> of which 77 were violent and 2 extreme, meaning that they involved a threat to life or grievous bodily harm.<sup>6</sup> Granted, the Gaza operation was a "trigger" event. However, such events have occurred before without such a backlash.

#### *Where Did This Backlash Come From?*

From what soil did this backlash sprout? As catalogued by the Pew Research Center project in 2008, 9% of the British, 20% of the French, and 25% of Germans said they had unfavorable attitudes about Jews. Spain is off the charts at 46%.<sup>7</sup> It seems inappropriate then to lay this violence at the feet of the generally increasing xenophobia in Europe. As far as the statistics go, France and Spain have not been notably more dangerous for their Jewish populations.

In general, Jews feel safe in Britain, sometimes even honored. Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, knighted in 2005, was given a seat in the House of Lords as "Baron Sacks of Aldgate" in the autumn of 2009. Nevertheless there is a keen awareness of the latent anti-Semitism in society as a whole.

#### *Gaza and the British National Party*

On January 11, 2009, during the Gaza conflict, fifteen thousand protesters gathered in central London at Trafalgar Square to support Israel. The tone was set by Chief Rabbi Sacks, who movingly declared: "We say to those who criticise Israel: You want Palestinian children to grow up with hope, so do we. You want Palestinians to be able to live with dignity, so do we."<sup>8</sup> At stake however was more than political opinion or even passion, but love or hate of Israel. Inevitably, there was both legitimate and illegitimate opposition to the rally (some illegal acts occurred). In all of this, what was notable was not the difference in opinion but the venom directed against the mainly Jewish crowd by the counter-demonstrators. As an attendee, it seemed a stark contrast to the good humor and conciliatory spirit of the speakers and peaceful crowd who were praying for a peaceful end to the

3 *Antisemitic Incidents Report 2005* (London: The Community Security Trust, 2006), 2.

4 "Community Safety," *Jewish Chronicle*, March 6, 2009.

5 *Antisemitic Incidents Report January–June 2009* (London: The Community Security Trust, 2009), 2.

6 *Ibid.*, 3.

7 *Unfavorable Views of Jews and Muslims on the Increase in Europe* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2008), 1.

8 "Thousands call for Mid-East Peace," British Broadcasting Corporation, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7822656.stm> (accessed November 2, 2009).



conflict. This was a hatred that all too easily could be the conjoined twin of anti-Semitism.

There is indeed a link between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism in Britain. In effect, anti-Zionism has allowed anti-Semitism to unveil itself. Such anti-Semitism has unveiled itself in Britain in more than one arena. One of the most troublesome current issues in this regard is the recent political gains of the British National Party (BNP). This has caused grave concern in many quarters, not only among Jews. The BNP, while attempting to portray itself as progressive and nationalistic, is, in actuality, xenophobic and anti-Semitic. Unfortunately, not all evangelical groupings have adequately distanced themselves from the BNP's views despite appeals in this regard.

### *Precautions*

As elsewhere in Europe, Jewish institutions of all kinds maintain at least basic security precautions, and in some cases quite extensive precautions, with paid security officers, security gates, and barbed wire. These have long been a fact of life in a community that feels itself under siege. These precautions are less of a concern to the community than those things that bring home the immediacy of the problem: anti-Semitic graffiti, knife attacks in the heart of the Jewish community, and abuse of Jewish children going home from school. The latter has forced the community to hire its own buses for its pupils.

In the midst of all of this, the response of the British church has been tepid, at best. While British churches have a long Christian Zionist heritage, and the momentum of the past continues to be carried by an energetic minority, the tide has turned. Today, the prevailing sentiment is pro-Arab, which translates into skepticism about Israel's validity and morality. The "Palestinian" issue is polarizing the majority of Christians against Israel.

In the church, as in society, British anti-Zionism is linked to anti-Semitism. While its leading protagonists might protest, this is undeniable. In Britain's Christian community, two leading anti-Zionist voices are those of Colin Chapman<sup>9</sup> and Stephen Sizer.<sup>10</sup> Both have prominent evangelical publishers. This, in turn, results in less interest in praying for, and funding of, evangelism to Jews.

Neither would care to be characterized as anti-Semitic,<sup>11</sup> yet both are active in proposing that Israel, in effect, does not have full legitimacy as a state. This creates a climate where the Christian Zionist, generally a lover of the Jews, is put on the defensive. In an inversion of actuality, the Christian Zionist, or any lover of the Jewish people, is easily caricatured as supporting a "terrorist" state.

9 Colin Gilbert Chapman, *Whose Promised Land?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Lion Pub., 1983).

10 Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004) and *Zion's Christian Soldiers?* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007).

11 Chapman, 224; Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 261.

### *A Personal Anecdote*

I, myself, vividly recollect the look of horror and revulsion on the face of a Christian who had taken advantage of the empty seat in my ministry's booth at a British church fair. With nothing that would tie our ministry to a political stance, just the realization that she was sitting in a booth that belonged to a charity seeking to reach Jewish people with the gospel was too much for her. A few sharp words and she was on her way. No, she was not going to become a supporter of our evangelistic work! This lesson has been learned many times over in the years since. It is hard to deny that anti-Semitism exists in the United Kingdom, and just as hard to deny that it exists in the British church.

### **France**

On the continent, France, which, under Napoleon, transformed its Jewry from a nation within a nation to Frenchmen of the French Republic, continues to view its Jewish population as foreign two centuries later.

As in the United Kingdom, France saw a dramatic rise in anti-Semitic acts in the first half of 2009. During that period, 631 incidents were recorded, compared to 474 for the whole of 2008.<sup>12</sup> This is strikingly similar to Britain's report of 609 incidents during the same time period. However, while in Britain 79 incidents were violent, in France the number was 113.

It is an interesting comparison because both countries have the same number of citizens, while France's Jewish community is twice the size of Britain's. One could interpolate from these figures and say that the average French Jew is only half as likely to experience an anti-Semitic incident as the average British Jew. Nevertheless, the higher level of violence should give pause. This was terribly demonstrated when Ilan Halimi, a young Jewish man, was tortured to death in February 2006.<sup>13</sup>

How does this affect the life of the average French Jew? In 2004, half the (Jewish) adolescents surveyed "said they personally suffered from anti-Semitism during the previous five years."<sup>14</sup> Among the more mature, "21% of heads of households affirm having personally suffered from antisemitism [*sic*] during the last five years,"<sup>15</sup> and 78% are "very worried" about anti-Semitism.<sup>16</sup> That was well before the spike observed in the first half of 2009. One has to ask—is the official report of only 631 incidents accurate, or is it only the tip of the iceberg?

12 *Bilan des Actes Antisemites du 1er Semestre 2009* (Paris: Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive, 2009), 1.

13 Tim Cleary, "Racism and Islamophobia in France: The Far Right and the Grassroots," *IRR European Race Bulletin* 56 (Summer 2006): 10. The anti-Semitic nature of the crime was demonstrated when his family, who could not pay the ransom, were told to "go and ask in the synagogues."

14 Erik Cohen, *The Jews of France at the Turn of the Third Millennium* (Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan University, 2009), 68.

15 *Ibid.*, 78.

16 *Ibid.*, 79.



*Guy Athia*

In the process of gathering information for this survey, I interviewed Guy Athia, publisher of *Le Berger d'Israël* (affiliated with Chosen People Ministries). Athia is concerned with the current state of affairs in France. At the highest level, the political hierarchy, while in some ways supportive of Israel, is also very unsupportive, playing both sides of the fence.

Athia was concerned about the recent denial that anti-Semitism even exists in France by no less a name than Jacques Attali, French economist, scholar, and past advisor to President Mitterrand. It may be a matter of perspective, and he may have some valid points, but for Jews who fear to wear their kippot in public, his conclusion is not correct.<sup>17</sup>

It is not the extreme right that is Europe's primary concern in regard to anti-Semitism. The moderate socialist was at the forefront of anti-Semitism before World War II. Today, anti-Semitism often finds a home in the social-

ist camp. In short, Athia believes it is quite feasible that persecution against the Jews could arise very quickly, and from unexpected quarters. Like a disease, anti-Semitism can conceal itself in the most unlikely of places, only to exhibit itself when conditions are right.

**Like a disease, anti-Semitism can conceal itself in the most unlikely of places, only to exhibit itself when conditions are right.**

■ Israel

On the subject of Israel, Athia emphasized that Israel has few friends in Europe, and those countries that are most friendly, such as Slovakia, are small nations. In the face of this, those who should be friends are sometimes in denial about the extent of the problem. Nevertheless, the picture in Europe is not uniform. Athia points out that Prague has more museums dedicated to Jewish concerns than any other city.

These concerns influence French Jews to keep their options open. Jews do not feel completely secure in France. "Many Jewish leaders have been openly saying there is 'no more future' for the Jews in France."<sup>18</sup> Many French Jews have Israeli passports and/or property in Israel. Aliyah is ongoing, with 2,000 to 3,000 moving to Israel each year. In 2002, a large survey of Jewish attitudes in France was taken. During that survey it became clear that a full 11% of Jewish parents in France are "considering making Aliyah very soon."<sup>19</sup>

As one emigrant said in 2003, "I'm sad to say goodbye to my family and friends, but France, no. How can I be sad to leave a country which is, without exaggeration, anti-Semitic?"<sup>20</sup>

17 Attali is the author of *Les Juifs, le Monde et l'Argent, Histoire économique du peuple juif* (Paris: Fayard, 2002).

18 Guy Athia, "France and the Jewish People: A 'Love Story' Gone Wrong?" Chosen People Ministries, [http://www.chosenpeople.com/main/page/europe\\_views\\_of\\_israel\\_and\\_the\\_jewish\\_people.html](http://www.chosenpeople.com/main/page/europe_views_of_israel_and_the_jewish_people.html) (accessed November 5, 2009).

19 Cohen, 61.

20 James Coomarasamy, "French Jews leave with no regrets," BBC News, January 23, 2003,

## Germany

Germany, home of Europe's third largest Jewish community, is also infamous as the birthplace of the "final solution." It is a fact of which no Jewish resident of Germany can be unaware, and one that makes Jewish life in Germany perpetually awkward through foreigners' eyes. Nevertheless, Jewish life in Germany is thriving. To a great degree, this is due to the approximately 200,000 Jewish immigrants since the fall of the Berlin wall.<sup>21</sup> Statistically, there are only 105,000 Jews in Germany, but this is because of the fact that many of these immigrants are not Jewish according to rabbinical standards.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, they identify themselves as Jews and are part of the community as a whole.

### *A Mixed Picture*

Comprised of both German and Russian-speaking Jews, the Jewish community in Germany is in the process of adapting to the changes that its rapid growth has brought about. Unlike the situation in France, Germany has not seen an increase in anti-Semitic acts in the last decade.<sup>23</sup> A contrite nation, Germany has made reparations, both financial and political, since the Second World War. Its continued vigilance against anti-Semitic speech is sure to have played a part in this good result.

Nevertheless, all is not well. The number of anti-Semitic acts recorded in 2007 was a staggering 1,561. It is possible that the statistic is misleading. In Germany, the statistic is compiled by the police, whereas in France and Britain it is recorded by organs of the Jewish community. Whether this is the reason or not, this large number is cause for alarm. In addition, as documented above, it must be remembered that 25% of Germans have a negative attitude towards Jewish people. An alarming 53% believe German Jews to be more loyal to Israel than their country.<sup>24</sup>

### *A New Anti-Semitism*

What becomes obvious in Germany, and to some degree in Britain and France, is the new type of anti-Semitism pervading Europe. Gone is the old caricature of Shakespeare's Shylock. Today, anti-Semitism is fuelled by two relatively new factors.

The first factor, in a Europe that is seeking to make amends for its colonialist past, is political. Europe, once the home of world empires, now eschews its colonial past. Israel is often characterized as a colonial state, and Jewish residents in the disputed territories, even Greater Jerusalem itself, are considered "settlers." The Arab is no longer the tyrant, and the Jew no

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2683783.stm> (accessed November 4, 2009).

21 Jeffrey M. Peck *Being Jewish in the New Germany* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 41.

22 Ibid.

23 *Anti-Semitism—Summary Overview of the Situation in the European Union, 2001–2008* (Wien: European Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2009), 22.

24 Ibid., 20.



longer the victim. In a bizarre reversal of fortunes, now it is the Israeli—the Jew—who is caricatured as the oppressor. It is now the fundamental values of human decency and fairness that are aggravating ancient suspicions about the Jew. Such suspicions are ably championed by the mainstream media, which confirm the new stereotype, even to the extent of libel. In October 2009, a Swedish reporter made claims that Israelis were harvesting Palestinian body parts for re-sale.<sup>25</sup> As many have observed, this was nothing less than a resurrection of the old blood-libel in a new and novel context.<sup>26</sup>

The second factor is the growing Muslim minority within Europe. It is hard to document that this minority is responsible for the increase in anti-Semitic attacks. Typically, the race and/or religion of a perpetrator is not recorded. Is the white, right-wing extremist skin-head the traditional suspect? Or should it be the North African disenfranchised youth, upset about Israelis “murdering” Arab children? In public perception, it is increasingly the latter.<sup>27</sup> Vladimir Pikman, director of Beit Sar Shalom in Berlin, writes, “The most dangerous rise of antisemitism [*sic*] and anti-Israel attitudes in Germany

is found not among the Germans proper, but, rather, among Muslim immigrants and their children born in Germany.”<sup>28</sup> It is likely that there is truth in this charge. Increasingly, anti-Semitism is being justified on a new basis, brought about by allegations against a new reality—the Jewish State.

**Anti-Semitism is being justified on a new basis, brought about by allegations against a new reality—the Jewish State.**

## An Old Problem

A century ago, there was much talk of the “Jewish problem.” More and more today, the “problem” is Israel, and old stereotypes of the Jew are sometimes brought in to buttress the argument. Undeniably, as Israel grows in strength, affluence, and influence in the modern world, it will increasingly be a target. Without a doubt, the Jew in the Diaspora is more tied to Israel than ever before, and this perception will only strengthen as time goes on.

This identification is evidenced by the spikes in violence against European Jews during times of conflict between Israel and her neighbors, as

25 “Israel-Sweden row over media report,” *Al Jazeera*, August 24, 2009, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2009/08/200982434437906626.html> (accessed November 4, 2009).

26 For example, in an August 19, 2009 press release, the Anti-Defamation League published its letter to the Swedish ambassador to the United States, asserting, “This article . . . represents nothing less than a base recycling of the medieval blood libel” (“Swedish Newspaper’s Charge of Organ Harvesting by Israeli Soldiers ‘Irresponsible and Shocking,’” Anti-Defamation League, [http://www.adl.org/PresRele/IsIME\\_62/5586\\_62.htm](http://www.adl.org/PresRele/IsIME_62/5586_62.htm) [accessed February 10, 2010]).

27 *Anti-Semitism—Summary Overview*, 22.

28 Vladimir Pikman, “German Views about Israel and the Jewish People,” Chosen People Ministries, [http://www.chosenpeople.com/main/page/europe\\_views\\_of\\_israel\\_and\\_the\\_jewish\\_people.html](http://www.chosenpeople.com/main/page/europe_views_of_israel_and_the_jewish_people.html) (accessed November 5, 2009).

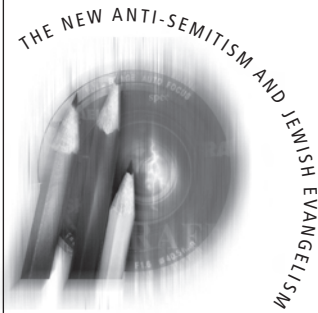
pointed out above. Maybe this is the reason (looking at the statistics over time) that anti-Semitism in Europe has not been increasing at a predictable rate. "Trigger" events, such as the start of the second intifada and the Gaza war, have caused tangible danger to Jews, particularly those who are visible targets.

Anti-Semitism, as judged both by the statistics and by surveys of people's attitudes, is clearly on the rise. It is not critical yet. Jews still feel safe, by-and-large, yet, as in France, there is a growing unease.

**Author info:**

Daniel Nessim is the Executive Director of Chosen People Ministries (UK), the leader of Congregation Beth Sar Shalom in London, and a trustee of the British Messianic Jewish Alliance. [dnessim@chosenpeople.org.uk](mailto:dnessim@chosenpeople.org.uk)





# Drifting from Jerusalem to Mecca

by **Barry E. Horner**

## Introduction

It would be true to say that Jerusalem, the home of Judeo-Christianity, has consequently become the mother of Western civilization while also influencing Eastern European nations. Though not unmindful of Christian missionary outreach to distant shores as well as the influence of the Jewish Diaspora, yet Oriental, Indosphere, Arab, and Moslem nations have other roots. The Orient, containing the nations of “the rising sun,” is religiously grounded upon Confucius, Taoism, and Buddha. In the sphere of India, Hinduism is the predominant religion, followed by Buddhism and Jainism. However, the Arab and Moslem countries, being geographically closest to the West, are rooted in two successive sources. Until the seventh century AD, the Arab people of Semitic origin were chiefly located in Arabia and its environs. This conforms to the biblical description of the Semitic descendants of Ishmael (Gen 17:20) and Esau (Gen 36:43) as being located in Arabia overall and Edom in particular. So here the seed of Abraham and Isaac, not according to promise, became the adversary of the seed of promise (Gen 25:30; 36:1–43; Num 20:21; Ps 83:1–8; 137:7).

The religious composition of the Arabian Peninsula during the first six centuries of the Christian era is not altogether clear. Predominantly Arab, it included diverse nations such as the Nabataeans in Edom, who dominated caravan routes; further there were competing Yemini tribes and nomadic desert dwellers. Overall, religion was pagan, polytheistic with some Jewish and Christian monotheism, especially in the significant cities of Mecca and Medina. However, at the beginning of the seventh century, when Muhammad claimed to be a messenger of God akin to the Jewish prophets, he was aroused to introduce religious monotheistic cleansing to Mecca, especially within his own tribe of Quraysh. He particularly desired purification from idolatry and polytheism, which included the town sanctuary or Ka’ba, said originally to have been built by Abraham and his grandson Ishmael. However, Muhammad faced considerable resistance, so that he fled in AD 622 to Medina, 210 miles to the north (establishing the historic Hijra or migra-



tion), and there he founded Islam, meaning “submission” or “surrender” to Allah.

While Medina had been under Jewish control in earlier centuries, eventual Arab dominion followed, though upon the arrival of Muhammad his prophetic claims were rejected by the Jews. Up to this point, they had been accustomed to praying toward Jerusalem without hindrance. To begin with, Muhammad was in accord with this practice for up to eighteen months after the Hijra. However, because the Jews and Christians repudiated his divine claims, the founder of Islam then required that the direction of prayer be changed “from Jerusalem to Mecca.”<sup>1</sup> Even so, Islam continues to claim that Jerusalem is its third holiest city, after Mecca and Medina.<sup>2</sup> However, an unrelenting crusade was pursued through subsequent centuries, by the Moslems, to convince those of Judeo-Christian faith to likewise turn away from Jerusalem and give primacy of worship to Allah by praying in the direction of Mecca. Today, the resurgence of Islam has sought this same revolution, especially in its courting of Christianity by means of various forms of replacement theology. It has especially pursued this goal through the intended generation of Judeo-phobia. So Bat Ye’or has succinctly written:

Christian Judeo-phobia—generating hatred of its own theological roots, bound together with Islamophilia—opens the surest way for the Islamization of the Church. Islamic supersessionism does not tolerate a Jewish-Christian history outside Islam, nor before Islam.<sup>3</sup>

## The Marcion Connection

One of the earliest forms of theological anti-Judaism in the Christian era, contemporary with the replacement theology of Justin, was that of Marcionism. Although influenced by Gnostic dualism and eventually outlawed as heretical by the early church, its basic presupposition became quite influential. The Old Testament was totally rejected; an edited form of Luke was the only acknowledged gospel, apart from which the Pauline epistles were the sole pure source of the love of God for Christianity. Although technically not supersessionist, yet Marcionism’s outright denial of Judaism as underpinning Christianity gave it a considerable degree of kinship

1 Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 2nd ed (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 18; also James Parkes, *A History of Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 202.

2 This claim for Jerusalem is made with no confirmed historic evidence. Muhammad declared: “Praise be to God who made/carried His servant by night from the sacred mosque/temple [in Mecca] to the farther/remote mosque [in Jerusalem?], whose surroundings we have blessed, that we might show him some of our signs” (Sura 17:1). No explicit mention of Jerusalem is made in all of the Koran. Yet Muhammad is said to have visited heaven from Jerusalem, to have seen paradise and hell, to have met biblical characters, and to have spoken with Allah. However he died on Monday, June 8, 632 AD, in Medina.

3 Bat Ye’or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), 223.



with the anti-Judaic tenor of replacement theology and its hermeneutic. So Walter Kaiser comments:

To extrapolate meanings back to the Old Testament from the New Testament is not the science of exegesis but rather that of eisegesis, that is, a “reading into” the text (of the Old Testament) what is not there. This assertion is heavily contested in our day, but the borrowing of freight from the New Testament and then imposing it on the Old Testament is at best reductionistic, not to mention that it tends to slip into a Marcionite view of the Old Testament, that is, that it has no relevancy for the contemporary believer.<sup>4</sup>

As we shall see, this is exactly the position within Christianity that Islam desires should eventuate since, if the Old Testament loses its relevancy, then so does Israel. As a result, there is the prospect of closer ties between the Moslem and the Christian; for as Christianity superseded Judaism, so it is the hope of Islam that it will reduce Christianity to dhimmitude,<sup>5</sup> and eventually supersede it as well.

### Replacement Theology and the Voice of Islam

While historic replacement theology was formally established by Augustine, his patristic precursors—Marcion, Justin, Irenaeus, Melito, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Ambrose—indicate a gradual, refined development. As a result, Jewish branches of the cultivated olive tree became overwhelmed, indeed maligned, by the arrogant and supposedly supplanting influence of engrafted wild olive branches (Rom 11:17-24). Not surprisingly, replacement theology became essential to Roman Catholic ecclesiology. Even today, in spite of Vatican II and specifically *Nos-*

**If the church spurns historic Judaism, whatever the language of replacement or supersession or fulfillment may be, Islam is very ready to offer a degree of friendship to those who disenfranchise its mortal enemy.**

*tra Aetate* in 1965, the claim is perpetuated by Rome that it remains the exclusive Israel of God. Yet, as we shall see, the Islam factor introduces an additional, superseding category. For if it is claimed that the church has replaced Israel, then the Moslem is emphatic in declaring that Islam has replaced both Israel and the church. For this reason, if the church spurns historic Judaism, whatever the language of replacement or supersession or fulfillment may be, Islam is very

4 Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “The Land of Israel and the Future Return (Zechariah 10:6–12),” in *Israel the Land and the People: An Evangelical Affirmation of God’s Promises*, ed. H. Wayne House (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1998), 219.

5 “Dhimmitude,” derived from Arabic, refers to the subjection of non-Moslem individuals to humiliating subordination under Islamic rule, that is, *Sharia* law, resulting in social inferiority and restrictive religious freedom. The ultimate hope is that of complete Islamization.

ready to offer a degree of friendship to those who disenfranchise its mortal enemy. But ultimately there is a price to pay. Award winning London *Daily Mail* columnist Melanie Phillips explains two fundamental problems about which the Christian church remains unclear.

The first is that the dominant contemporary political force within Islam is an ideology that seeks to destroy Christianity and its values. The second is that, because the Church [of England] has failed to resolve its deeply ambiguous and conflict-laden attitude toward the Jews, it cannot recognize the threat posed by Islamism to the Jews and beyond them to the free world. Instead, it has allowed itself to absorb much of the Islamist and Arab narrative of hostility to Israel and the Jews, thus positioning itself as an unwitting ally of those who would destroy Christianity itself.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Historic Form of Replacement Theology*

At the heart of replacement theology is its targeting of Judaism according to the terms of the Old Testament—individually, nationally, and territorially—the result being the elevation of the status of the Christian church. And of course this is notwithstanding variations in definitive terminology, some strident and others more benign. In this regard, Ronald Diprose has defined replacement theology, which he accepts as being synonymous with supersessionism, as follows: “Israel has been repudiated by God and has been replaced by the Church in the working out of His plan.”<sup>7</sup> Michael Vlach, being more precise in this regard, draws upon Richard Soulen<sup>8</sup> and describes three variations of the broad term supersessionism. These are “punitive” or “retributive” supersessionism, being punishment for Israel’s disobedience; “economic” supersessionism, which is transformation from carnal Israel as a nation into the spirituality of Christ’s church; and “structural” supersessionism, which is based upon an inadequate patristic appreciation of the biblical witness to Israel.<sup>9</sup>

However, it is the transition process from the old concept to the new that concerns us here. Generally, a condescending regard for Israel is retained, as if it were a bud left behind by the full bloom of the church. The Roman Catholic Church does this in terms of employing distinctive priesthood, sacrifice, and tabernacle terminology. However, when all has been said and done, the Old Testament historic structure of Israel—including the explicit eschatological hope of the prophets concerning the nation—has been done away with, no matter how adroit the employed language of transference may be.

6 Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan*, rev. ed. (New York: Encounter Books, 2007), 141–42.

7 Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel and the Church: The Origin and Effects of Replacement Theology* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2004), 29.

8 Richard Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996).

9 Michael J. Vlach, “The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism,” (Ph.D. diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), 14–20.



In terms of contemporary replacement theology, it is interesting to contemplate that liberal theology is generally in agreement that God has discarded the Old Testament people, nation, and land for the church. Its support, including the leftist world of the Middle East, is quite obvious, even as is the case with secular liberalism. To find someone in this camp who has a restorationist, messianic eschatology, based upon the Old Testament prophets, would be a rarity indeed. And further, it is reasonable to suggest that these same groups, the religious and the secular, would be more sympathetic in perspective with the Palestinians, whether Muslim or Christian, and, at the same time amenable to the United Nations being the best arbitrator of innumerable Middle Eastern problems. However, within conservative evangelical Christianity, a more specific biblical perspective is maintained with which the Arabs and Palestinians are not in agreement.

*The Drifting That Replacement Theology Encourages*

It is intrinsic to replacement theology that Scripture be interpreted with some degree of flexibility. This is mainly true with regard to the Old Testament, though there is the inconsistent claim that the New Testament, because of its basis in history, should be interpreted with much more literal objectivity. Hence, there is the common claim that supersessionism is rooted in a Christocentric hermeneutic. How this actually plays out is conjectural. This becomes clear when the “reinterpretation,” to use George Eldon Ladd’s term, of “Israel” and the “land” and the great Old Testament prophetic passages is considered. Generally, there is a retreat from considering a literal understanding of the details of the text. Broad christological and ecclesiastical extrapolation is much more the style, and it lacks common agreement as to the outcome. There is difference as to whether Old Testament Israel is now the church, or Christ; then, is the land of the Old Testament now the world, or heaven, or Christ?

Herein is the ground upon which Islam is able to step in and, with some sympathy, have cordial relations with those who have some common antipathy toward the illegitimate, rapacious, and unjust Jewish nation. So with this bond of good relations, there is also joint opposition to those worldly, Christian, Zionist restorationists who are misguided in taking the

**The drifting process involves not only moving away from Jerusalem, according to a literal understanding of the Old Testament, but also edging toward, at least with some sympathy, Mecca and Islam.**

Old Testament so literally. There is dismissal of any concrete, covenantal biblical interest by God in the Jew, the Jewish nation, and the Land of Israel. It regards such matters as passé, carnal, trivial, unspiritual, etc. Thus the claims of the Palestinians concerning Palestine have as much legitimacy as the claims of the Jews. There is no biblical determinant here. So the drifting process involves not only moving away from Jerusalem, according to a literal understanding of

the Old Testament, but also edging toward, at least with some sympathy, Mecca and Islam. This is not extreme speculation.

### *Christian and Islamic Replacement Theology*

A detailed and highly acclaimed resource concerning warm relations between the Arab/Islamic world and Christianity, which aligns with replacement theology, is *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*, by Bat Ye'or. Renowned historian and definitive biographer of Winston Churchill Sir Martin Gilbert comments:

This book challenges the current demonization of Israel and should be essential reading (and re-reading) for everyone interested in true peace in the Middle East. It is also a warning to Europe not to allow the anti-American and anti-Israel pressures of Islam to subvert Europe's true values: vibrant democracy, humanitarian free thinking, and social fair dealing.<sup>10</sup>

The basic thesis of Ye'or is that after the failure of the Arab nations in the 1967 and 1973 wars against Israel, their strategy became the engagement of Europe in a trade of oil for support on anti-Israel policies.

One of the Arab delegates to the EAD [Euro-Arab Dialogue], Dr. Ibrahim A. Obaid, Saudi Arabia's director general of the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, aptly expressed the spirit of the Dialogue at a 1975 meeting of the Euro-Arab Cooperation experts in Amsterdam: "Together and as equals, the Europeans and the Arabs can through 'a strategy of inter-dependence' forge ahead to remove the thorn from their sides—the Israeli problem—and attend to the Herculean task ahead of them. . . . The Arab-Israeli conflict and the oil problem are not only related but inseparable. Had it not been for the said conflict the oil weapon would not have been unleashed."<sup>11</sup>

It hardly needs explanation that, in general, the European Union has heeded this siren-like call, and Ye'or further explains how this gradual import of not only oil, but also Islamic culture, has led to the development of "Eurabia," as she coins it. Further, this subtle invasion has led to the gradual Islamization of Christianity. In other words, Muslim replacement theology has found kinship with Christian replacement theology, especially since both concepts find agreement in their theological and territorial displacement of the Jewish people and Israel. Ye'or explains:

Christian advocacy in the service of Islam has given the Arab Christian Clergy a political voice that is of strategic advantage to Arab governments. . . . [A]t the Lahore Islamic Conference in 1974, Secretary-General Hassan Al-Tohami expressed his appreciation of the efforts undertaken by Christian Churches all over the world to explain to international public opinion the Arab/Muslim rights to the Holy Land,

<sup>10</sup> Bat Ye'or, back cover.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.



particularly to Jerusalem. At the Fez Islamic Conference (1980), this praise was reiterated toward the World Council of Churches.<sup>12</sup>

Significantly, Ye'or references several Anglican supporters of replacement theology who, at the same time, evidence a tilt toward the Arab/Moslem/Palestinian agenda. They include Kenneth Cragg, Steve Motyer, and Stephen Sizer, as well as Palestinian Naim Ateek, a proponent of liberation theology. This theological stance finds substantial eschatological agreement with Gary Burge, Colin Chapman, O. Palmer Robertson, and Christian Palestinianism. Their writings tend toward indictments against the Jewish nation and only maudlin criticism, if any, against the Palestinian cause. Of course, they all follow the Augustinian theological tradition whereby the Christian church has become the new, spiritual Israel of God. Consider some examples.

- Colin Chapman, *Whose Promised Land?*<sup>13</sup>

This leader of the modern replacement theology movement in England, especially within the Church of England, reveals his biblical presupposition regarding the Land of Israel as follows:

Christians see the gift of the land to Abraham and his descendants as the preparation of the context in which God was going to reveal himself gradually to a particular group of people, but with a view to revealing himself gradually to the whole human race. The gift of the land was not an end in itself, but a means to the end of enabling the revelation of God's love to reach the ends of the earth.<sup>14</sup>

Surely the Palestinian Arabs, both Christian and Moslem, being devotees of replacement theology that nullifies any Israeli historic claim to land originally promised to Abraham and his seed, would gladly respond, "Thank you very much, Mr. Chapman!" Biblical justification here is decidedly slight. The tilt toward legitimizing Palestinian claims permeates the whole of this volume, while appreciation of the Jews' monumental plight over the centuries as a result of Augustinianism is muted indeed.

- Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism and Zion's Christian Soldiers*<sup>15</sup>

Both express vehement opposition to the modern State of Israel, Zionism, and sympathetic Christians. Perhaps the most vociferous of modern supporters of replacement theology, a disturber of so many Jewish Christians,

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>13</sup> Colin Gilbert Chapman, *Whose Promised Land? The Continuing Crisis over Israel and Palestine*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005); Stephen Sizer, *Zion's Christian Soldiers?: The Bible, Israel and the Church* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008).

his essential theology here is of God's abandonment of historic and biblical Judaism. He writes:

[With t]he end of the apostolic era, the focus of God's redemptive work in the world has shifted from Jerusalem to places like Antioch, Ephesus and Rome. There is, therefore, no evidence that the apostles believed that the Jewish people still had a divine right to the land, or that the Jewish possession of the land would be important, let alone that Jerusalem would remain a central aspect of God's purposes for the world. On the contrary, in the Christological logic of Paul, Jerusalem, as much as the land, has now been superseded. They have been made irrelevant in God's redemptive purposes.<sup>16</sup>

Again, we can readily expect Christian and Moslem Palestinians to respond to this with gratitude, while Sizer's allies agree with this ground for doctrinal camaraderie. Where the Moslem is concerned, for Ye'or this relationship becomes a one way street, whatever the claims of interest in interfaith relations may be. "Islamic supersessionism does not tolerate a Jewish-Christian history outside of Islam, nor before Islam."<sup>17</sup>

- Gary Burge, *Whose Land? Whose Promise?*<sup>18</sup>

The cover of this volume says it all. Here is a photo of a young Palestinian boy, David-like, throwing stones at a gargantuan, Goliath-like Israeli tank that is armed to the teeth. Ignoring centuries of the wandering, down-trodden, despised Jew, the pitiable Palestinians are portrayed as unjustly treated underdogs facing a rapacious, heartless, and devouring foe. A Christian scholar at Wheaton College Graduate School, the thrust of this author's sympathy for the Palestinians, driven by his replacement theology at the expense of concern for Israel, is patently obvious.

### **The Remedy for Drifting from Jerusalem to Mecca**

Surely it is evident that, by its very nature, Christian replacement theology has an inbuilt capacity for enjoying some degree of commonality with Christian and Moslem Arabs who also uphold replacement theology, though with some variation. The point of agreement here is their mutual disqualification of the Jewish people, the nation, and the Land. How then shall the consistent biblicist respond?

#### *Uphold One Hermeneutic for Both the Old and New Testaments*

The literal, grammatical, historical, contextual hermeneutic must be understood in a Jewish context. The Old Testament quotations in the New Tes-

<sup>16</sup> Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 170.

<sup>17</sup> Ye'or, 223.

<sup>18</sup> Gary Burge, *Whose Land? Whose Promise?: What Christians Are Not Being Told about Israel and the Palestinians* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2003).



tament do not justify reinterpretation of Old Testament eschatology; rather, they employ Jewish nuances of application and illustration that in no way nullify the literal meaning of the original Old Testament passage.

*Uphold Serious, Applicatory Exposition of the Old Testament, Especially the Prophets*

The replacement theologian, being used to general extrapolation that avoids particulars, fails at this point. The Old Testament will have both a contemporary and an eschatological appeal, which God, through inspiration, so designed. How could anyone seriously expound Zechariah without considering Israel today and at the end of this age?

*Uphold Historic Old Testament Roots*

If the replacement theologian can loosely extrapolate from the prophets, in particular, then what restricts him from applying his hermeneutic to the Creation and Fall accounts of Genesis? Further, we ought to distinguish between the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. This is an area where the replacement theologian evidences great confusion.

*Uphold the Distinction between Christianity and Islam*

The divide between the Bible and the Koran is vast, as is the difference between the only true gospel of the saving grace of God for sinners and the legalistic message of Islam. The Muslim knows nothing of God as Father. Further, in elevating Muhammad above Christ, the person of the Son of God is demeaned, as is done by the Jehovah's Witnesses.

*Uphold Judeo-centric Eschatology*

There must be unashamed proclamation of a Jewish gospel, concerning a Jewish Savior, from the Jewish Scriptures, like that of the Jewish apostles who established the first Jewish church in Jerusalem. While Romans 11:5 tells of "a remnant according to God's gracious choice," it must be appreciated that the Christian church was built upon that same Jewish Christian remnant, it having always been joined to the cultivated olive tree.

**Author info:**

Barry E. Horner (D.Min., Westminster Theological Seminary) is pastor of Christ's New Covenant Church in Sahuarita, Arizona.  
barryhorner@cox.net



# God and the Enemies of Israel

– An Exposition of Psalm 83

by **Barry R. Leventhal**



## Introduction

Anti-Semitism has once again charged into our day, attacking Jews on a worldwide scale, both individuals and whole communities.<sup>1</sup> Some are calling it “the new anti-Semitism.” Whatever it may be called, it is only *new* in terms of its name and its time. For anti-Semitism has played itself out in the historical past, and some believe that it will also play itself out in the prophetic future.<sup>2</sup> But God anticipated this long history of anti-Semitism in a clause of Genesis 12:3, when He proclaimed, “And I will bless those who bless you [Abraham and your descendants], and the one who curses you I will curse.”<sup>3</sup> History has proven this clause to be true for any nation or individual.<sup>4</sup> It will also prove to be true in the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

- 1 A basic definition of anti-Semitism is “the hatred or persecution of the Jew” (Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Curse of Anti-Semitism* [Altadena, CA: Emeth Publications, n.d.], 1; quoted in Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, rev. ed. [Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries Press, 1992], 836).
- 2 For a historical survey of cultural and religious anti-Semitism, see my article “Christian Anti-Semitism?” *Jews for Jesus*, entry posted January 1, 1981, [http://www.jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/1\\_5/antisemitism](http://www.jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/1_5/antisemitism). For the standard, scholarly history of Christian anti-Semitism, see A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos: A Birds-Eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1935); from a Catholic historian, see Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism*, rev. ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1985); from a Protestant historian, see William Nicholls, *Christian Antisemitism: A History of Hate* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1993); from two Jewish historians, see Paul E. Grosser and Edwin G. Halpern, *The Causes and Effects of Anti-Semitism: The Dimensions of a Prejudice, An Analysis and Chronology of 1900 Years of Anti-Semitic Attitudes and Practice* (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1978); and on a popular level, from a Messianic Jewish historian, see Michael L. Brown, *Our Hands Are Stained with Blood: The Tragic Story of the “Church” and the Jewish People* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 1992); and from an evangelical historian, see Richard E. Gade, *A Historical Survey of Anti-Semitism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).
- 3 Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural references are from the New American Standard Bible (1995).
- 4 For a summary of the biblical, as well as post-biblical, history of this clause in Genesis 12:3, see my doctoral dissertation, “Theological Perspectives on the Holocaust” (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1982). For a popular summary of the history of Genesis

Therefore, it should not be surprising that the Book of Psalms addresses itself to this kind of anti-Semitism.

Psalm 83 is one such psalm that speaks to a specific period of anti-Semitism. In order to understand how Psalm 83 speaks to the new anti-Semitism of our own day, as well as about God's and Israel's enemies—past, present, and future—the following areas will be covered: (1) an overview of Psalm 83; (2) an exposition of Psalm 83, especially vv. 6–8; and finally (3) some concluding remarks concerning Psalm 83.

## An Overview of Psalm 83

Scholars have identified Psalm 83 as a national lament. Willem VanGemeren says, "This psalm is a *national lament* in which the psalmist prays for the Lord's intervention against the many enemies."<sup>5</sup> As a national lament, the historical setting of Psalm 83 is obvious: Israel is facing insurmountable opposition, some ten enemies to be specific. The psalmist identified this opposition as a conspiracy against God and Israel (vv. 2–5). He further identified this conspiracy against God in the following terms: "Your enemies" (v. 2) and "those who hate You" (v. 2).

Old Testament scholar Allen Ross summarized the theme of Psalm 83 in the following words: "The psalmist lamented the great danger from the many enemies that hemmed in Judah to crush her. He prayed that God would muster His power to destroy them, as He had done in former victories."<sup>6</sup> Psalm 83 is divided into two major sections: (1) The psalmist laments the impending attack by Israel's insurmountable enemies (vv. 1–8); and (2) The psalmist prays for a complete destruction of Israel's insurmountable enemies (vv. 9–18). For our purposes we will briefly survey Psalm 83, focusing our attention primarily on vv. 6–8, because these verses point forward to the specific players in the final anti-Semitic attack against the nation of Israel.

## The Exposition of Psalm 83

### *Section 1: The Psalmist Laments the Impending Attack by Israel's Insurmountable Enemies (83:1–8)*

In this first major section (83:1–8), the psalmist brought his lament before God concerning Israel's insurmountable enemies in three crucial petitions: (1) his opening petition for God not to remain silent (v. 1); (2) his general

12:3; see James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms: Volume 2, Psalms 42–106* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 682–84; and Olivier J. Melnick, *They Have Conspired Against You: Responding to the New Anti-Semitism* (Huntington Beach, CA: Purple Raiment, 2007), 69–79.

5 Willem VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 5:536. Christensen calls this psalm "a war oracle" (Duane L. Christensen, *Transformations of the War Oracle in Old Testament Prophecy: Studies in the Oracles Against the Nations* [Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975], 112–27).

6 Allen P. Ross, "Psalms," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), 854.

petition explaining Israel's enemies (vv. 2–5); and finally (3) his specific petition detailing Israel's enemies (vv. 6–8).

#### ■ Introduction

After the psalmist's opening petition (v. 1) and his initial general petition (vv. 2–5), he then goes on to describe Israel's anti-Semitic enemies (vv. 6–8). These three verses form the basis for this essay. They describe this violent anti-Semitic conspiracy as being made up of ten nations, all committed enemies of Israel at one time or another. But never has this ten-nation axis of evil joined together in one all-out assault to destroy the Jewish people. So, in a real sense, this particular psalm is unique, not just in the Psalter, but also in the entire Word of God.

#### ■ The Psalmist's Specific Petition: Detailing Israel's Enemies (vv. 6–8)

<sup>6</sup>The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagrites; <sup>7</sup>Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; <sup>8</sup>Assyria also has joined with them; they have become a help to the children of Lot. Selah.

Derek Kidner summarizes the desperate situation in which Israel finds itself: "Here is an Israel ringed by an unholy alliance dedicated to her destruction."<sup>7</sup> In terms of these nations' past, various commentators have attempted to identify the individual members of this war-covenant listed in vv. 6–8.<sup>8</sup>

#### ■ Summary

In summary, it should be noted that this anti-Semitic alliance forms an attacking ring around Israel. In this regard, James Montgomery Boice says, "What is significant about the specific peoples listed in the ongoing flow of the psalm (vv. 6–11) is that they form an almost complete circle of entrapment around Israel."<sup>9</sup> In addition, Marvin E. Tate says:

Perhaps insufficient attention has been paid to the possibility that the peoples form a rough circle around Israel, beginning in the south, up to the Transjordan region, over to Tyre (and Gebal), and back down

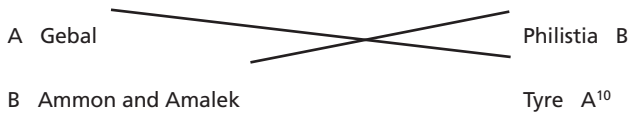
7 Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150: A Commentary on Books III–V of the Psalms* (London: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 299.

8 For the identities of these various historical nations and their animosities against the nation of Israel, see Boice, 681–84; Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 2, ed. Francis Bolton (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 408–09; Marvin E. Tate, *Word Biblical Commentary: Psalms 51–100*, vol. 20 (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1990), 346–47; Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1, Genesis—Song of Solomon (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 867; VanGemeren, 538–39; John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 543; etc.

9 Boice, 682.



the coast to Philistia. . . [in v. 7] there could be a kind of chiasmic pattern: Gebal—Ammon and Amalek—Philistia—Tyre).



Certainly the answer to Asaph's prayer (vv. 9–18) would prove to be the end of these co-conspirators (vv. 6–8). For like all pagan militarists, they believe that there is strength in numbers. But little Israel, always standing in the posture of the underdog, only needs the number of One—the one and only God of Israel: *Elohim*, the God of creation and covenant (vv. 1a, 12b, 13a); *El*, the God of power and might (v. 1b); *Yahweh*, the LORD of covenant and loyalty (vv. 16b, 18a), who is also the covenant Warrior (Exod 15:3); and *Elyon*, the Most High of sovereignty and supremacy (v. 18b). Israel's only recourse, therefore, is to take this crisis to the Lord Himself (vv. 9–18).

### *Section 2: The Psalmist Prays for a Complete Destruction of Israel's Insurmountable Enemies (83:9–18)*

Having taken his initial lament to God over Israel's insurmountable enemies in the first major section (83:1–8), the psalmist lifts up three petitions to God in light of Israel's insurmountable enemies in this second major section (83:9–18). In summary then, these petitions are: (1) for God to destroy Israel's enemies in light of *Israel's past*, especially since He is the Lord of the covenant: in the *personal* order of things (vv. 9–12); (2) for God to destroy Israel's enemies in light of *Israel's present*, especially since He is the Lord of creation: in the *natural* order of things (vv. 13–15); and (3) for God to destroy Israel's enemies in light of *Israel's future*, especially since He is the Lord of the consummation: in the *spiritual* order of things (vv. 16–18).

## Conclusion

Now that we have taken a general summarizing view of Psalm 83, two specific concluding remarks are in order, especially as they relate to Psalm 83:6–8. First, who is the *God of Israel* revealed in Psalm 83? And, second, who is the *Israel of God* revealed in Psalm 83?

### *The God of Israel*

The God of Israel is not only the Lord of history, but He is also the Lord of prophecy. Therefore, it should not be surprising if He brings Psalm 83 to its ultimate and final prophetic fulfillment.

When interpreting Psalm 83 in the light of biblical prophecy, one can see two perspectives on Israel's enemies: (1) a *general prophetic foreshadow-*

10 Tate, 347.

ing of Israel's enemies; and (2) a specific prophetic fulfillment of Israel's enemies.

■ A General Prophetic Foreshadowing of Israel's Enemies

The following two commentators are representative of many who see a *general prophetic foreshadowing*, especially in regard to this previously unknown ten nation anti-Semitic conspiracy (Ps 83:6–8).

Arno C. Gaebelain connects Psalm 83 to the future prophetic days of Israel when he notes:

The enemies of God express their hatred of God by attacking God's people. This is the case all through the history of the seed of Abraham. Because the enemy knows that they are beloved people, that God has chosen them, and is with them, the enemy takes crafty counsel against them. Behind it all stands the murderer from the beginning, that sinister being who knows that God's redemptive program is inseparably linked with Israel, that salvation is of the Jews. And therefore he tries to cut them off as a nation, so that their name be no longer remembered. That enemy also knows all about the glorious future promised to Israel. As the time approaches when that future is to be realized, the enemy will make the final assault. Then comes the supreme effort to exterminate the nation and blot out the name of Israel forever.<sup>11</sup>

W. Graham Scroggie, citing A. R. Fausset, closes his exposition of Psalm 83 with the following foreshadowing words:

The Psalm awaits a further fulfillment in the last days. The confederacy of the ten nations . . . foreshadows the final gathering of the ten kings under Antichrist to "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. xvi. 14; xvii. 3, 12, 14). *Ten* is the number of the horns of the beast, in connection with which arises "the little horn" which symbolizes "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," who will "*lift up his head*" (2) "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped" (2 Thess. ii. 4; Dan. vii. 7, 8; Rev. xiii. 1). His aim will be to "*cut off Israel from being a nation*" (4) in order to prevent the setting up of Messiah's manifested kingdom, which is associated inseparably with Israel's restoration (Ps. ii; Acts i, 6). But "he shall come to his end, and none shall help him" (Dan. xi. 45). Then, and not till then, as the result of that decisive blow to Satan's kingdom, the name of Jehovah-Messiah shall be known as "*the Most High over all the earth*" (18).<sup>12</sup>

11 Arno C. Gaebelain, *The Book of Psalms: A Devotional and Prophetic Commentary* (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1939), 319–20; cf. Zech 12:1–3, 9; 14:1–3, 12, 15, 18; etc.

12 A. R. Fausset, *Studies in the CL Psalms*, Theological Library, vol. V, quoted in W. Graham Scroggie, *The Psalms: Psalms I to CL* (London: Pickering and Inglis Ltd., 1972), 201–02. Also see Arthur G. Clark, *Analytic Studies in the Psalms* (Kilmarnock: John Ritchie Ltd., 1967), 207.

■ A Specific Prophetic Fulfillment of Israel's Enemies

The following comments are representative of the conclusions of other commentators, who also see a *specific prophetic fulfillment*, especially in regard to this previously unknown, ten nation anti-Semitic conspiracy (Ps 83:6–8):

**Human religions may indeed become very tolerant of one another, but they can never tolerate the one true faith of God.**

[T]he Old Testament prophets present the nations of the earth in deliberate *rebellion* against the true God and His appointed King. Human religions may indeed become very tolerant of one another, but they can never tolerate the one true faith of God. And thus, at the end-time, we find nations and peoples, their kings and rulers, all raging in rebellion “against the LORD, and against his anointed,” saying, “Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (Ps. 2:1–3). There seems to be a reference to this same rebellion in Psalm 83:1–2 where the writer calls upon Jehovah to break His silence: “For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult; and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.” There can never be neutrality in relation to the true God. If men do not love Him, they will hate Him. . . .<sup>13</sup>

In Psalm 83, some 3,000 years ago, God gave a warning of what would happen in the last days. . . . [I]t speaks of a time in which there is a concerted effort to wipe out Israel as a nation—wipe them out even from memory. Even then, the Psalmist—under Divine inspiration—looked to the last days before the Messiah would come to deliver Israel from the children of Ishmael. All the peoples named in those verses make up the various tribes that became known as the Arabs. When you read some of these verses it sounds like modern Radio Tehran, doesn't it? Why? Because this passage of Scripture is predicting the modern-day Middle East situation.<sup>14</sup>

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum has laid out a detailed analysis of Israel's enemies, listed in Psalm 83:6–8, along with their modern-day counterparts. In terms of their destinies, Fruchtenbaum states that the Bible offers only three possibilities in regard to their entrance into the messianic kingdom: (1) by means of occupation; (2) by means of destruction; and (3) by means of

13 Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), 189–90. Also see J. R. Church, *Hidden Prophecies in the Psalms* (Oklahoma City: Prophecy Publications, 1986), 225–26; and Herman A. Hoyt, *The End Times* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 163–64.

14 Hal Lindsey, *The Final Battle* (Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front, Ltd., 1995), 2–3. Also see Wilbur M. Smith, *Israeli-Arab Conflict . . . and the Bible* (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1967), 82, 84–85; and Unger, 866–67. For a biblical, prophetic perspective on the Arabic peoples, see Tony Maalouf, *Arabs in the Shadow of Israel: The Unfolding of God's Prophetic Plan for Ishmael's Line* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003).

conversion.<sup>15</sup> Michael Rydelnik words these three options in the following way: (1) by means of annexation; (2) by means of desolation; and (3) by means of spiritual transformation.<sup>16</sup>

The following table lays out the results of Fruchtenbaum's analysis of Israel's end-time enemies, especially as they are related, in some sense, to the messianic kingdom:<sup>17</sup>

ANCIENT NAME	MODERN NAME	FUTURE DESTINY	SCRIPTURE
Edom	Southern Jordan	Destruction and then desolation	Jer 49:7–22; Ezek 25:12–14; 35:1–9; Amos 11–12; Obad 5–9, 17–21 (cf. Num 24:18–19)
Ishmaelites	Ishmael was one of the fathers of all the Arabs (e.g., Saudi Arabia, etc.)	[Kedar and Hazor: Saudi Arabia] Destruction	Jer 49:28–33
Moab	Central Jordan	Partial destruction, then conversion	Isa 15:1–16:14; Jer 48:1–47; Amos 2:1–3 (cf. Num 24:17; 25:1–18)
Hagrites	Egypt*	Partial destruction, then conversion	Isa 19:1–25; Jer 46:1–28; Ezek 29:1–16; Dan 11:20–22, 40–43; Joel 3:19; Zech 14:16–19
Gebal	Lebanon	Occupation	Ezek 47:13–48:29
Ammon	Northern Jordan	Partial destruction, then conversion	Isa 15:1–16:14; Jer 49:1–6
Amalek	The Sinai Peninsula	Destruction	Deut 25:17–19 (cf. Exod 17:8–16; Num 24:20; 1 Sam 15:1–35; 28:18)
Philistia	The Gaza Strip	Occupation	Amos 1:6–8
Tyre	Lebanon	Occupation	Ezek 26:1–28:19; 47:13–20; Amos 1:9–10
Assyria (plus Damascus)	Primarily Northern Iraq (and parts of Syria)	Conversion	Isa 14:24–27; 17:1–14; 19:23–25; Jer 49:23–27; Ezek 47:13–20; Amos 1:3–5

15 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*, rev. ed. (Tustin: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 500–15.

16 Michael Rydelnik, *Understanding the Arab-Israeli Conflict: What the Headlines Haven't Told You* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 185–91.

17 Adapted from Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, 497–515. Along with adding other Scriptures, I have also used a different Bible version than Fruchtenbaum. Whereas Fruchtenbaum used the names listed in the American Standard Version (1901), I have used the names listed in the New American Standard Bible (1995). For others who have also used a Psalm 83 approach to these end-times enemies of Israel, see Louis Goldberg, *Turbulence Over the Middle East: Israel and the Nations in Confrontation and the Coming Kingdom of Peace on Earth* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1982), 92–215; Melnick, 12–13, 81–92; and Rydelnik, 177–91, who also sees Islam as the uniting factor in bringing all the anti-Semitic nations against Israel.

\* For a detailed study of the place of Egypt in biblical prophecy, see Wilbur M. Smith, *Egypt in Biblical Prophecy* (Boston: W. A. Wilde, 1957).

In addition, Fruchtenbaum includes three other national enemies of Israel who are also, in some sense, related to the messianic kingdom:

ANCIENT NAME	MODERN NAME	FUTURE DESTINY	SCRIPTURE
Elam	Persia or Iran	Destruction	Jer 49:34–39; Ezek 38:1–39:29
Babylon*	Southern Iraq	Desolation (during the kingdom)	Isa 13:1–14:23; Jer 50:1–51:64; Rev 18:1–2; 19:3
Edom	Southern Jordan	Desolation (during the kingdom)	Isa 34:8–15; Jer 49:17–18; Ezek 35:10–15; Joel 3:19

Having looked at the God of Israel, we now conclude where we began, with the Israel of God (those Israelites under attack in Psalm 83).

### *The Israel of God*

Psalm 83 is a corporate lament, focusing on Israel's end-time anti-Semitic enemies. As such, this psalm points to the prophetic future, when Israel's final believing remnant will stand absolutely alone before all the Israel-hating nations of the world.<sup>18</sup> When defining the concept of "the remnant of Israel," Fruchtenbaum says:

The doctrine of the remnant means that, within the Jewish nation as a whole, there are always some who believe and all those who believe among Israel comprise the Remnant of Israel. The remnant at any point of history may be large or small but there is never a time when it is non-existent. Only believers comprise the remnant, but not all believers are part of the remnant, for the remnant is a Jewish remnant and is, therefore, comprised of Jewish believers. Furthermore, the remnant is always part of the nation as a whole and not detached from the nation as a separate entity. The remnant is distinct, but distinct within the nation.<sup>19</sup>

\* For a detailed study of the history and prophecy of Babylon (as a literal rebuilt city), see Charles H. Dyer, "Babylon: Iraq and the Coming Middle East Crisis," in *The Road to Armageddon*, ed. Charles R. Swindoll et al. (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1999), 105–44; and by the same author, *The Rise of Babylon* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1991), plus "The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17–18 (Parts One and Two)," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144, 145 (1987): 305–16, 433–49. See also Goldberg, 107; Fruchtenbaum, *Footsteps of the Messiah*, 160–61; and Rydelnik, 186–88.

18 See Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology*, 771–73. Israel will not just stand against such odds as 10 to 1, for the odds will be much higher and much more dangerous! In that day Israel will stand utterly alone without *any human hope* of deliverance (cf. Ezek 38:1–16ff.; Zech 12:1–3; 14:1–2; etc.). So then Israel will have to look to *the Lord Himself* as her only Warrior, Protector, and Savior (cf. Exod 14:13–14; 15: 1–3ff.; Isa 52:13–53:12; 63:1–64:12ff.; Jer 30:1–24ff.; Ezek 38:16–23; 39:1–29; etc.).

19 *Ibid.*, 601ff., 739–42, 745–66; for Israel's future tribulational remnant, also see, 532–39. For a biblical survey of the doctrine of the remnant, see Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, 290–94, 771–800; also see my doctoral dissertation, "Theological Perspectives on the Holocaust," 199–212.



One of God's names for Israel's present believing remnant is "the Israel of God," a particular phrase used only once in the Bible, by the Apostle Paul (cf. Gal 6:16).<sup>20</sup> For our purposes, "the Israel of God" will also refer to the future, believing remnant of Israel, those who, like the believing remnant of old, will face their enemies as underdogs.

In order to fully understand how Psalm 83 will come to its final fulfillment, when Israel's believing remnant faces the onslaught of its worst anti-Semitic enemies, we will need to see the Israel of God in its two final postures: as God's "underdogs" and as God's "overcomers."

■ The Israel of God as "Underdogs"

● *Introduction*

God's call on the nation of Israel is to play the role of the underdog. In other words, whenever Israel faced an adversary she would have to look to the God of the covenant alone to give her the victory. As a result, in every battle Israel was to be outnumbered and overpowered.

● *Policy*

This underdog commitment was clearly laid out in the Mosaic law, in God's foreign policy statement for Israel (Deut 20:1–20; cf. 7:16–26; 11:18–32; etc.) as well as for all of Israel's leaders: (1) her judges (Deut 16:18–17:13; etc.); (2) her warrior-kings (Deut 17:14–20; etc.); (3) her Levites (Deut 18:1–18ff.; etc.); (4) her prophets (Deut 18:20–22; etc.); and even (5) her Messiah

20 For a detailed critique of the church's usurping the title "the Israel of God" for itself (i.e., replacement theology/supersessionism, triumphalism), see first in a general sense, Paul N. Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995); Mal Couch, ed., *An Introduction to Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics: A Guide to the History and Practice of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2000); Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966, 1995); Paul Lee Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy* (Winona Lake, IN: Assurance Publishers, 1974); Robert L. Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New Versus the Old* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic and Professional, 2002). But more specifically see S. Lewis Johnson, "Paul and 'The Israel of God': An Exegetical and Eschatological Case-Study," in *Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost*, ed. Stanley D. Toussaint and Charles H. Dyer (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 181–96; also by the same author, "Evidence from Romans 9–11," in *A Case for Premillennialism: A New Consensus*, ed. Donald K. Campbell and Jeffrey L. Townsend (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 199–223; plus Harold W. Hoehner, "Israel in Romans 9–11," in *Israel, the Land and the People: An Evangelical Affirmation of God's Promises*, ed. H. Wayne House (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1998), 145–67. In addition, see Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology*, 690–99; Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel and the Church: The Origin and Effects of Replacement Theology* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2000), 43–44; Dan Gruber, *The Church and the Jews: The Biblical Relationship* (Hagerstown, MD: Serenity Books, 1997), 83–85, 133–34; Barry E. Horner, *Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged*, NAC Studies in Bible and Theology (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2004), 263–69; David L. Larsen, *Jews, Gentiles, and the Church: A New Perspective on History and Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 1995), 48; Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church*, Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 74–84; Robert L. Saucy, "Israel and the Church: A Case for Discontinuity," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments, Essays in Honor of S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.*, ed. S. Lewis Johnson and John S. Feinberg (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), 239–59; and Stephen G. Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians, 70–170 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 110–42; etc.



(Deut 18:15–19; 34:1–12; cf. 1 Cor 15:20–28; Phil 2:5–11; Col 1:15–20; Rev 19:11–16ff.; etc.).

- *Examples*

There are numerous examples of those who personified Israel's commitment to an underdog posture: (1) Abraham (Gen 14); (2) Moses (Exod 14–15; 17); (3) Deborah and Barak (Judg 4–5); (4) Gideon (Judg 7); (5) Jonathan (1 Sam 14); (6) David (1 Sam 17; cf. 1 Chron 20:4–8); and many others.

- *Summary*

In the midst of Israel's major "underdog failures," God still kept His call to an underdog theology alive through some of His key remnant communicators: (1) The psalmists: "Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God" (Ps 20:7). "The king is not saved by a mighty army; a warrior is not delivered by great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine" (Ps 33:16, 18–19). "[The LORD] does not delight in the strength of the horse; He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness" (Ps 147:10–11); (2) The wise sages: "There is no wisdom and no understanding [Heb., discernment] and no counsel against the LORD. The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD" (Prov 21:30–31); and (3) the prophets: "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are strong, but they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!" (Isa 31:1). "But I will have compassion on the house of Judah and deliver them by the LORD their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses or horsemen" (Hos 1:7). "Then [the angel] said to [Zechariah], 'This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD of hosts'" (Zech 4:6).

So now it is clear why Asaph wrote his divinely-inspired Psalm 83. In a certain sense, Psalm 83 is a part of God's end-time training manual for war, teaching Israel's committed *underdogs* how to pray and trust God in the midst of the battle. For as God's underdogs, they would become God's *overcomers*.

- The Israel of God as "Overcomers"

- *Introduction*

Psalm 83 is God's end-times guarantee that Israel will win in the end. For Asaph was not only "a seer" (2 Chron 29:30; cf. 35:15),<sup>21</sup> but as a seer, he

21 A "seer" (Heb. *chozeh*, used seventeen times in the O.T.) was a prophet who could "see" or "behold" (Heb. *chazah*, used forty-three times in the O.T.) by means of a prophetic vision (Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972], s.v. "*chazah*" and "*chozeh*"). Mounce says, "[A] seer [is] one who receives a communication from God, with a pos-

was set apart for the ministry of prophesying (1 Chron 25:1, NIV). Therefore, Psalm 83 was also a prophetic psalm, stamped with the very character of God. And since God cannot lie (Num 23:19; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18), this prophetic psalm must be fulfilled, and that in the end-time tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer 30:7ff., 24, etc.).

- *Process*

There are two primary purposes for the tribulation: "One purpose is to bring retribution on the world to punish sin [Ps 2:6; Rev 3:20; etc.]. . . . A second purpose of the Tribulation is to refine the nation of Israel to prepare her for the Messiah [Deut 4:3–31; Jer 30:7; Zech 13:2, 8–9; etc.]"<sup>22</sup> In regard to this second purpose, Fruchtenbaum says, "[Another] purpose of the Tribulation is to break the power of the stubborn will of the Jewish nation [Ezek 20:33–38; Dan 12:1–7; etc.]"<sup>23</sup>

Psalm 83 will always be a reminder to Israel, as a covenant nation, that they can count on God, even as they move toward and pass through the time of Jacob's trouble. After all, Asaph prayed to God for Israel: "Your people . . . Your treasured ones" (v. 3). In other words, not only did Israel belong to God, but she was also valuable to God. And, even further, "the pastures of God," which Israel's land-grabbing enemies wanted for themselves, would one day be Israel's forever (cf. Gen 13:15; 17:8; Lev 26:44–45; Deut 4:40; 1 Chron 16:15–18; 2 Chron 20:7; Ps 105:8–11; Jer 7:7; 25:5; etc.).

In the eschatological battle of Psalm 83, Israel could count on God because as Israel's first and foremost paradigm of war, the Exodus proved once and for all that *Yahweh* was the only war hero in Israel: "The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is His name. . . . Your right hand, O LORD, is majestic in power, Your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy. And in the greatness of Your excellence You overthrow those who rise up against You; You send forth Your burning anger, and it consumes them as chaff" (Exod 15:3, 6–7).<sup>24</sup> This Exodus paradigm will ultimately play itself out when Israel returns to her land for the last time, never to be uprooted again (cf. Ezek 20:33–38; Amos 9:1–15; etc.).<sup>25</sup>

sible focus that the message has a visual component" (*Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, ed. William D. Mounce [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006], 931).

22 Mark Bailey, "The Tribulation," in *The Road to Armageddon*, ed. Charles R. Swindoll et al. (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1999), 69–70. See also Andy Woods, "Jeremiah 30: Birth Pangs, Tribulation, and Restoration," in *The Gathering Storm: Understanding Prophecy in Critical Times*, ed. Mal Couch (Springfield, MO: 21st Century Press, 2005), 153–69.

23 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, 180, 288; also in his *Israelology*, 542–44, 716–17, 768–69.

24 See Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995); also see Albert H. Baylis, *From Creation to the Cross: Understanding the First Half of the Bible*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 171–73.

25 For the details of this Exodus paradigm, see *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, ed. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), s.v. "Exodus, Second Exodus"; also see Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, 100–01, 181; *Israelology*, 716–17, 768–69; Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Land of Israel and the Future Return (Zechariah 10:6–12)," in *Israel, the Land and the People: An*

- *Summary*

So, in conclusion, no matter where or when the new anti-Semitism raises its ugly head, its final demise is assured. But this defeat will only come when the final eschatological day of God's end-time underdogs comes to pass. It will be a costly battle, for sure.<sup>26</sup> But God's end-time remnant will pull it off, since then, and only then, will they actually bow before the Lord's anointed Messiah (cf. Zech 12–14; Pss 2 and 110; etc.). That is when "all Israel will be saved" and God will be most glorified (Rom 11:1–36, esp. 26; cf. Luke 21:20–24; etc.). For Asaph's prayer will have been answered: ". . . that [the enemies] may seek Your name, O LORD. . . . that [the enemies] may know that You alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth" (Ps 83:16, 18). For no one gets away with violating God's eternal clause that governs anti-Semitism in Genesis 12:3!

Erich Sauer summarizes the final goal to which God is ultimately moving, especially in regard to Israel, when he says:

Conversion and reunion of Israel (Hos. 3:5; Isa. 11:9; Ezek. 37:15–23), renewal of the nations (Zeph. 3:9), peace among the peoples (Mic. 4:3, 4), blessings upon nature (Isa. 11:6–8; Hos. 2:23, 24), heightened brightness of sun and moon (Isa. 30:26)—these are some of the glories of that golden age. But finally the visible kingdom of God on the old earth will, by mighty acts of God, be brought over into the eternal and perfect condition of the new earth, in the eternal kingdom and glory of God the Father (I Cor. 15:24–28).

Thus, God reaches His goal. In reference to Israel also His grace triumphs (Rom. 11:26, 29). In spite of all detail crises, God's whole plan will be perfected. The pilgrim goal of Abraham shines undimmed. The saved descendants of the Patriarch—his bodily and spiritual seed through faith—share richly in the fulfillment of his longing. For Abraham expected the "city which has foundations, whose Creator and Builder is God" (Heb. 11:10), "Jerusalem above, of gold most precious built." Truly, "the gifts of grace and the calling of God are not repented of" by Him. "Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom as well as the knowledge of God" (Rom. 11:29, 33). To Him, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (I Kings 18:36, comp. 31), to Him, the God of the nations (Rom. 3:29), "to Him, the King of the ages, the incorruptible, invisible, only God, be honour and glory from eternity to eternity, Amen!" (I Tim. 1:17).<sup>27</sup>

*Evangelical Affirmation of God's Promises*, ed. H. Wayne House (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1998), 209–27; and Eugene H. Merrill, "Pilgrimage and Procession: Motifs of Israel's Return," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 261–72.

<sup>26</sup> God has often used "the rod of men" to discipline His people Israel, especially Israel's kings (cf. 2 Sam 7:14–15; Ps 89:30–37; Isa 10:5ff.; 24–25; Lam 3:1ff.; Ezek 20:37–38ff.; etc.).

<sup>27</sup> Erich Sauer, *From Eternity to Eternity: An Outline of the Divine Purposes* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), 31.

Yes, this is the goal to which all of prophecy is pointing and to which all of history is moving. For in the end, Israel will have learned that one great lesson of prophecy and history: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" (Gen 18:25). Israel must learn this lesson; for God's name and glory are at stake (cf. Ezek 20:33–44; 36:16–38; 37:15–28; 38:14–23; etc.). In addition, the Messiah's return is based on the end-time remnant's repentance (cf. Dan 9:24–27; Zech 12:10–13:9ff.; Matt 23:37–39ff.; etc.).

And then, Isaiah's great prophetic confession will flow joyfully from the lips of God's end-time warriors:

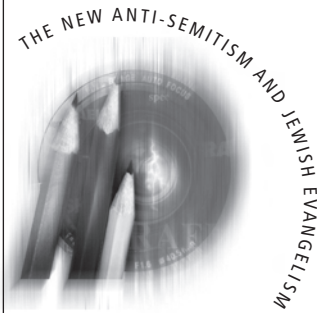
I shall make mention of the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has granted them according to His compassion and according to the abundance of His lovingkindnesses. For He said, "Surely, they are My people, sons who will not deal falsely." So He became their Savior. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. (Isa 63:7–9)<sup>28</sup>

**Author info:**

Barry R. Leventhal (Ph.D., Dallas Theological Seminary) is the Academic Dean at Southern Evangelical Seminary.  
bleventhal@earthlink.net



28 Another part of Israel's end-time confessional "report" was also predicted by Isaiah (52:13–53:12ff.).



# The Basis of the Second Coming of the Messiah

by **Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum**

## Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine the basis of the second coming of the Messiah. This study will be discussed in two main divisions: the rejection of His messiahship and the prerequisite to the second coming.

Closely connected with God's kingdom program is the first coming of the Messiah. Both John the Baptist (Matt 3:1–2) and Yeshua (Matt 4:17) came proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Neither John nor Yeshua, nor the particular Gospel writers recording these events, tried to define the nature of this kingdom, obviously expecting the audience to understand what they meant by that term—and well they might, since Jewish audiences had common knowledge of the Old Testament and understood the nature of the messianic kingdom. Theologians of all stripes admit that the common Jewish understanding of the kingdom in first century Israel was that of a literal, earthly kingdom, centered in Jerusalem and ruled by the Messiah. The obvious origin of such a view was a literal understanding of the Old Testament prophets.

However, the common Jewish understanding that “all Israel has a share in the age to come” was an incorrect one, and both John and Yeshua proclaimed that the need to believe, or repent, for righteousness was the means of entering the kingdom. Furthermore, to see the messianic kingdom established in their day required Israel's acceptance of Yeshua as the messianic king.

## The Rejection of His Messiahship (Matt 12:22–45)

To fully understand the basis of His coming, one must first understand what occurred when the messiahship of Yeshua was rejected.<sup>1</sup> In the layout of the Gospel of Matthew, He began His ministry in chapter 4. From

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed study of “The Basis of the Second Coming of the Messiah,” cf. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*,

chapter 4 until chapter 12, He is seen going around Israel proclaiming the kingdom and preaching the gospel of the kingdom proclaimed by the Jewish prophets and performing many miracles. The purpose of all His miracles between chapters 4 and 12 is to authenticate two things: first, His person, that He is the Messiah; and second, His message, He is offering to Israel the kingdom of the prophets. Then in Matthew 12, the whole purpose of His miracles and His ministry undergoes a radical change. The rejection of His messiahship occurs in Matthew 12:22–37.

Among the many miracles Yeshua performs is the casting out of demons. According to verse 27, Judaism already had exorcists. However, in the case of a dumb demon, Jewish exorcism was to no avail. The Jewish observation that dumb demons were different is validated by the Messiah in Mark 9:17–29, particularly in verses 17, 25, and 29.

The Messiah is able to exorcise that kind of demon in Matthew 12:22. This causes the people to begin asking a question in verse 23: “And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, Can this be the son of David?”<sup>2</sup> They never raised this question when He cast out other kinds of demons; but when He casts out a dumb demon, they do raise this question. The people, however, are not willing to render a judgment regarding His person by themselves. They are waiting for the Pharisees to conclude either that He was the Messiah or that He was not the Messiah. If He was not the Messiah, then the Pharisees must offer some kind of alternative explanation as to how He was able to perform these many miracles, especially the miracles that were never done before.

The Pharisees choose the latter course in verse 24. They refuse to accept Yeshua as the Messiah because He did not fit the Pharisaic mold or their idea of what the Messiah was supposed to say and do. Their alternative explanation as to how He was performing His miracles was to say that He Himself was possessed by “Beelzebub the prince of demons.” This, then, became the official basis of the rejection of the messiahship of Yeshua.

The Messiah’s response is recorded in verses 25–29. The Messiah responds to this accusation by telling them that their statement could not be true because it would mean that Satan’s kingdom was divided against itself.

Judgment is then pronounced on the generation of that day in verses 30–37; that generation has committed the unpardonable sin: blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The unpardonable sin was the national rejection of the messiahship of Yeshua while He was physically present, on the grounds that He was demon possessed. This sin was unpardonable, and judgment was set. The judgment came forty years later, in AD 70, with the destruc-

**The unpardonable sin was the national rejection of the messiahship of Yeshua while He was physically present, on the grounds that He was demon possessed.**

rev. ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 277–308; and also his *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, rev. ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1994), 781–91.

2 All Scripture references are from the American Standard Version.



tion of Jerusalem and the temple and the worldwide dispersion of the Jewish people. This does not mean that individual members of that generation could not be saved, for many were. It did mean, however, that nothing they could do would avert the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

There are four ramifications of the unpardonable sin. First, this is a national sin and not an individual one. Even for individual members of that generation, it was possible to escape the judgment for the unpardonable sin by repenting (changing their mind about Yeshua). The second ramification is that it was a sin limited to the Jewish generation of Yeshua's day and not applicable to all subsequent Jewish generations. It was to "this generation" that He physically and visibly came, and it was "this generation" that rejected Him. From this point on, there is a special emphasis in the Gospels on the guilt of "this generation." The third ramification is that this is not a sin that any nation can commit today, because the Messiah is not now physically and visibly present with any nation, offering Himself as that nation's Messiah. This was unique to His relationship to Israel. The fourth ramification is that the unpardonable sin of that generation meant two things. First, the offer of the kingdom was rescinded, and they lost out on seeing the kingdom established in that day. Instead, it will be offered once more to a later generation that will accept it, the Jewish generation of the great tribulation, as detailed in Matthew 24–25. Second, it meant that the generation of Yeshua's day was under a special divine judgment, the physical judgment of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, fulfilled in AD 70.

The Pharisees try to regain the offensive in verse 38 by demanding a "sign," as though the Messiah had done nothing so far to substantiate His messiahship! But in verses 39–40, there is a change of policy regarding His signs: from now on, there would be no more signs for the nation, except one: "the sign of Jonah," the sign of resurrection.

This passage concludes with more words of judgment for that generation from Yeshua. The phrase "this generation" appears in verses 41, 42, and 45. So, indeed, the last state of that generation became worse than the first. They went from bondage to worldwide dispersion.

Even after the events of Matthew 12, the Pharisees approach Messiah demanding a sign to authenticate His person and His message (Matt 16:1–4). But again Yeshua refuses to give them any more signs and promises them only the "sign of Jonah," which is the sign of resurrection.

#### *The Resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:1–57)*

The Messiah had raised others from the dead, yet all of the other resurrections are covered in just a few verses. But here, John the apostle uses forty-four verses to give great detail about the resurrection of Lazarus. Why? This is the sign of Jonah that Yeshua had promised.

In verse 42, He made it very clear for whom Lazarus was raised, namely, the Jewish multitudes: "And I knew that you heard me always: but because of the multitude that stands around I said it, that they may believe that you did send me." Then, there is the response of the Jews in verses 45–46.



In verse 45, some Jews responded correctly to this first sign of Jonah and believed that Yeshua was who He claimed to be. But in verse 46, others still wanted some kind of word or judgment from their leaders, and so they reported to the Pharisees what Yeshua had done. Since this was “the sign” the Messiah had promised them, they must respond in some way or another. The Pharisees responded in keeping with their original verdict of Matthew 12.

#### *The Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:41–44)*

Further light is shed on the nature of the unpardonable sin, i.e., the rejection of the messiahship of Yeshua. This passage is in the context of the triumphal entry of Yeshua into Jerusalem. In verse 38, thousands of Jews cried out, “Blessed is the King that comes in the name of the Lord,” which, in its Jewish frame of reference, is an official messianic greeting, based on the messianic context of Psalm 118:26. The Jewish masses proclaimed His messiahship as He approached Jerusalem. But this profession would prove to be superficial, and the Jewish leaders had already committed the unpardonable sin. Judgment had already been set on that generation. Since the sin was unforgivable, there was no way of alleviating that judgment. So in spite of the masses proclaiming Him to be the Messiah, Yeshua pronounced words of judgment upon the city of Jerusalem.

#### *The Pharisees Denounced (Matt 23:1–36)*

This entire chapter is devoted to a denunciation and condemnation of the scribes and the Pharisees, the leadership of Israel, for various sins. In Matthew 23:13, the Pharisees are held accountable not only for their rejection of the messiahship of Yeshua, but also for leading the nation to reject His messiahship.

In verses 29–36, Yeshua emphasizes the severity of the judgment on that generation. The judgment is primarily upon the leaders, but it is also upon the nation whom the leaders led in the rejection of His messiahship. Yeshua stated that they were not only to be held accountable for the rejection of His messiahship; they were also to be held accountable for the blood of all the Old Testament prophets. In the Jewish order of the books of the Old Testament, which Yeshua used, the first book is Genesis, where Abel is mentioned. The last book is 2 Chronicles, where Zechariah is mentioned. Yeshua declared that they were guilty of all the blood from Genesis to 2 Chronicles, much as someone today would say, “from Genesis to Revelation.” So that generation was guilty of the blood of all the prophets. This is something unique for that generation, as declared in verse 36: “Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.”

The point made in this study thus far is that the messiahship of Yeshua was rejected by the Jewish leadership, and they, in turn, led the nation to reject His messiahship on the basis of their claim that Yeshua was demon possessed.

A few days after these words were spoken, the second “sign of Jonah” was given in the resurrection of the Messiah. The second sign of Jonah is



rejected in Acts 1–7. The stoning of Stephen by the Sanhedrin in Acts 7 marks the official rejection of the second sign of Jonah. That is why only in Acts 8 does the gospel go out to the non-Jewish world for the first time.

After the rejection in Matthew 12, because of the nature of the unpardonable sin, the ministry of Yeshua changed radically in four areas. The first change was the purpose of His miracles: they were no longer for the purpose of serving as signs of His messiahship to Israel, but were for the purpose of training the apostles for their ministry in the Book of Acts.

The second change concerned the people for whom He performed these miracles. Until the events of Matthew 12, Yeshua performed miracles for the benefit of the masses without necessarily requiring them to have faith first. After Matthew 12, he performed miracles only in response to needs of individuals and began requiring them to have faith first. Furthermore, before Matthew 12, those He healed were free to proclaim what had been done for them; but after Matthew 12, Yeshua initiated a policy of silence and forbade those He healed to tell anyone about it (Mark 7:36; Luke 8:56; et al.).

The third change concerned the message that Yeshua and the apostles would now proclaim. Until Matthew 12, both He and they went throughout the Land of Israel proclaiming Yeshua to be the Messiah. After Matthew 12, the apostles were also ordered to follow the new policy of silence, and they were forbidden to tell anyone that Yeshua was the Messiah. In Matthew 16, after Peter made his famous confession, “You are the Christ (Messiah), the Son of the living God,” Yeshua ordered Peter to tell no one that He was the Messiah (Matt 16:20). They were to follow the policy of silence (Matt 17:9) until it was rescinded with the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20).

The fourth change concerned His teaching method. Until Matthew 12, whenever Yeshua taught the masses, He did so in terms that they could and did understand. One example is the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7. In Matthew 13, Yeshua began teaching with a new method, the parabolic method, the purpose of which was to hide the truth from the masses. The very act of teaching in parables was a sign of judgment against them. Later, Matthew 13:34–35 emphasizes again that Yeshua spoke to the multitudes only in parables and without a parable He said nothing to them. This was not true before the rejection of Matthew 12, but it is very true after the rejection.

### **The Prerequisite for the Second Coming**

To discover what the basis of the second coming is, it will be necessary to look at four more passages of Scripture.

#### *Leviticus 26:40–42*

In Leviticus 26, Moses predicted how the Jews would be scattered all over the world because of their disobedience to God’s revealed will. According to the New Testament, this came as a direct result of the rejection of the

messiahship of Yeshua. By verse 39, the worldwide dispersion is a fact. Up to verse 39, Leviticus 26 has been fulfilled.

In verse 42, Moses states that God has every intention to give Israel all the blessings and promises of the Abrahamic covenant, especially as the covenant pertains to the promised land. But before they can begin to enjoy these blessings during the messianic age, it is first necessary for them to fulfill the condition of verse 40: "They shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers." The word "iniquity" is singular. There is one specific "iniquity" that Israel must confess before she can begin to enjoy all the benefits of the Abrahamic covenant. This "iniquity" was committed by their "fathers," or ancestors, but now must be confessed by a subsequent generation.

**There is one specific "iniquity" that Israel must confess before she can begin to enjoy all the benefits of the Abrahamic covenant.**

#### *Jeremiah 3:11–18*

In verses 14–18, Jeremiah begins to describe the blessings that God has in store for Israel in the messianic kingdom. It will be a time of tremendous blessing and restoration for the Jewish people when the kingdom is established by their Messiah. But all these blessings are conditioned by verse 13, where they must acknowledge or confess one specific "iniquity" that they committed against Jehovah their God.

#### *Zechariah 12:10*

Zechariah 12, 13, and 14 are one prophetic revelation, a unit of thought that develops one theme. Chapter 13 speaks of the national cleansing of Israel from their sin. Chapter 14 describes the second coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the kingdom.

But the cleansing of Israel, followed by the second coming of the Messiah and the messianic kingdom, are all conditioned on Zechariah 12:10. Israel must first "look unto" the One whom they have pierced and plead for His return. Once they do this, then, and only then, will they see the Messiah's return.

#### *Matthew 23:37–39*

As was shown earlier, this chapter contains the Messiah's denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, the Jewish leadership of that day, for leading the nation to the rejection of His messiahship. Still speaking to the Jewish leadership, Yeshua reiterates in verse 37 His original desire to gather them if they would only accept Him. Because of their rejection of His messiahship, they will be scattered instead of being gathered. In verse 38, their "house," the Jewish temple, will be left desolate and will be destroyed. But then He declares that they will not see Him again until they say, "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord." This is a messianic greeting, and it will signify their acceptance of His messiahship. So Yeshua will not return to the earth until the Jews and the Jewish leaders ask Him to come back.



For just as the Jewish leaders once led the nation to the rejection of His messiahship, they must some day lead the nation to the acceptance of His messiahship. This, then, is the twofold basis of the second coming of the Messiah: first, Israel must confess her national sin; second, Israel must then plead for Messiah to return, to “mourn for him as one mourns for an only son” (Zech 12:10).

### Lessons and Applications

From this study, three things should be noted as demonstrating the relevance of this investigation to the principles of Jewish evangelism. First, it helps to understand the biblical foundations of anti-Semitism, and why Satan has waged his long, unending war against the Jews so as to destroy the Jews at every opportunity. Satan knows that once the second coming occurs his career is over, but he also knows there will be no second coming apart from the Jewish request for it to happen. So if he can succeed in destroying the Jews once and for all, before they have a chance to plead for the Messiah to return, then there will be no second coming, and Satan’s career will be safe forever. That is why things like the Crusades occurred; this is why things like the pogroms occurred; this is the reason why things like the Nazi Holocaust occurred; and this is why, even today, the massive Islamic goal of annihilating Israel is coming both from Arab and non-Arab Muslims, such as those in Iran. Anti-Semitism in any form—whether it is active or passive, whether it is racial, ethnic, political, social, economic, religious, or theological—is simply a different aspect of the Satanic war to prevent the second coming.

Second, it also explains why Satan used one name more than any other name to persecute Jews. Since about the fourth century, over ninety percent of all persecutions against the Jews have been done in the name of Jesus, the Cross, and the church. Satan knows the one name they need to call upon for national salvation and the second coming, so he mapped out a strategy to make that name odious in the Jewish community—and, indeed, it has become odious. By and large, the vast majority of the Jewish people’s reactions to Yeshua today are not based upon any knowledge of the Yeshua of the New Testament, but upon the Jesus of Jewish and church history, who is not the biblical Yeshua at all. Because of such massive persecution in that one name, Jewish reaction to a Jew who believes in Yeshua is very different from Jewish reaction to a Jew who accepts Buddhism or some other religion. For these reasons, even some evangelical groups have followed the policy of simply being nice to Jewish people, but never sharing the gospel with them, under the faulty premise that they have lost the right to do so.

This brings us to the third point: the need for Jewish evangelism today. There is obviously nothing wrong with seeking to do nice things for Jewish people, helping Jews move to Israel, or providing for specific needs, but there is everything wrong if these are done at the expense of presenting the gospel. Jewish evangelism is necessary because it helps to delineate

the Yeshua of Scripture from the Jesus of history. Furthermore, in Acts 4:12, when Peter declared there was no other name given under heaven whereby one could be saved, he was speaking to a Jewish audience and not a Gentile one. Furthermore, he was speaking to religious Jews and not secular Jews. What that means

is that even the most Orthodox Jew will not find salvation apart from conscious faith in the messiahship of Yeshua, who died for our sins and rose again. Scripture promises that there always was and still is a remnant of Israel coming to faith today, but the remnant comes to faith only when they hear and believe the gospel. So at the present time, Jewish evangelism is essential for the sake of building up the remnant of Israel. It also can lay down the seeds of Israel's future national salvation, since the seeds we plant now may begin to produce fruit only as we move into the latter days. Then God will use the seeds planted now to bring the Jewish people as a nation to Himself and, in turn, that will bring about both the second coming and the messianic kingdom. If the basis of the second coming of the Messiah teaches anything, it teaches the importance of Jewish evangelism for both the present and the future.

**Author info:**

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum (Ph.D., New York University) is Founder and Director of Ariel Ministries, USA.

[arnoldf@ariel.org](mailto:arnoldf@ariel.org)





# To the Jew First and Also the Gentile

– Capturing the Fullness of Matthew’s Commission, Part 1

by **Rudolph D. Gonzalez**

These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matt 10:5–6)

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matt 28:18–20)<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Matthew 28:16–20 is arguably the most readily identifiable missiological passage in the New Testament, largely due to its designation as the “Great Commission.” However, to label these verses in this manner is to raise their theological value above that of other passages.<sup>2</sup> Matthew’s last commission is one of several, and we would do well to follow Willie Marxen’s advice in insisting that every text be studied in its own context and for its own contribution to the church’s understanding of her mission.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, this study will lower the rhetoric on Matthew 28:18–20, and thus allow chapter 10, Jesus’ first commission statement, to assume an equal footing and hearing. By doing so, we will see that both passages are required to capture the full intent of Jesus’ mission strategy as Matthew presents it. Specifically, it will be argued that together the two texts set a sequential pattern that sends the disciples out to minister initially and con-

1 All scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted are from the New American Standard Bible (1995).

2 Other texts include Luke 4:16–20; 24:46–48; John 20:21; and Acts 1:8. Mark 16:15–18 is part of a larger unit (16:9–20), thought by some not to have adequate textual support.

3 Willie Marxen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies in the Redaction History of the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969). See chapter two.

tinually to the Jews, and later to the Gentiles. This article will argue for a sequential “Jew-first-and-also-Gentile” pattern in understanding Matthew 10 and 28:18–20. A full exegesis of these passages is beyond the extent of this project. The study will also identify Paul’s missionary strategy as seen in Acts and expressed in his Epistle to the Romans, to show the apostle’s affinity with Matthew’s two missiological texts.

### Matthew’s First Commission: Matthew 10:1–11:1

The Gospel of Matthew has two statements of missiological import of which 28:18–20 is the second, and 10:1–11:1 is the first. It is not uncommon to see Matthew 10 treated as a provincial and temporary statement, on the assumption that Matthew 28:18–20 gives a final all-inclusive commission aimed at all humanity.<sup>4</sup> However, there are indications in Matthew 10 that suggest it has a more abiding and direct relevance.

In the main, Matthew 10 describes Jesus’ formal calling and naming of His disciples (vv. 1–4), followed by missional instructions to them (vv. 5–42). We know that the passage is integral to Matthew’s broader purpose to present Jesus as a great teacher, because chapter 10 is framed with this aspect in mind. If Matthew 10:5a opens up the reader to Jesus’ instruction, 11:1 brings it to closure. The verses that comprise this frame combine to make an important point. While Matthew 10:5a has the aorist adverbial (i.e., circumstantial) participle *parangeilas* (“charging”), following the main verb, *apesteilen* (“sent out”), it clearly stresses that Jesus first instructed His disciples before sending them out.<sup>5</sup> Then again at the close of this instructional passage, Matthew 11:1 reiterates: “When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities.”

The present participle, *diatasson* (“giving instructions”), complements the verb, *etelesen* (“finished”), and brings with it a consummative force; i.e., it was only after Jesus completed teaching the Twelve that He departed to continue in His mission.<sup>6</sup> The syntax of the two framing texts stresses the chronological primacy of instruction before sending the disciples out. While this draws our attention to the instruction (vv. 5–42), to which we

4 E.g. Hal Freeman, “The Great Commission and the New Testament: An Exegesis of Matthew 28:16–20,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 18; Paul Hertig, “The Great Commission Revisited: The Role of God’s Reign in Disciple Making,” *Missiology* 29, no. 3 (2003): 347.

5 Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 1996), 624–25. Wallace notes that when an aorist participle is related to an aorist main verb (as in Matt 10:5a) the participle can be contemporaneous, or simultaneous, thus *when or while*. But context and Matthew 11:1 strongly suggest antecedent action is the appropriate interpretation.

6 This evidence of prior instruction is significant for it suggests that learning by observation and example is important, but not of itself sufficient. What the disciples had observed and deduced over the early period of Jesus’ ministry (Matt 8–9) needed to be formally articulated into a model of personal ministry. In this connection, A. T. Robertson (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 1 [Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930], 86) sees a distributive force at work; Jesus gives each disciple his personal detailed instructions.



will shortly turn, the lack of a similar instructional preamble immediately before the world mission is begun in 28:18–20 is only remarkable if Matthew 28 is the all-inclusive commission as it is often understood. If, however, this Matthew 10 instructional moment serves both passages, as will be argued here, then the absence of specific Gentile-directed instruction at the second commission is understandable.

First, however, we should note the identification of the Twelve as *apostelōn* (“apostles”) in Matthew 10:2a. While the verb *apostelo* is found in Matthew (e.g. 10:5; 20:2; 21:1, 34, 36, 37; et al.) and generally means “to send out,” as an appellation it is only used once, but in a way that is quite significant. It is compelling, as Karl H. Rengstorf demonstrates, that *apostelōn* picks up on the Jewish concept of a *shaliach*, as an authorized representative functioning with full authority.<sup>7</sup> In Matthew, to be an apostle is to be an extension of Jesus’ ministry. The fact that Matthew uses the apostolic title at the beginning should not be overlooked.<sup>8</sup> Matthew 10 marks the time and place where apostolic formation begins. But let’s be clear, the use of the term at the beginning makes this chapter a defining statement, for it provides the substantive content apostles are obliged to deliver. Viewed as such, this first commission provides a block of instruction meant to serve the entire mission—for there is no other missional instruction overriding this passage in Matthew. Matthew 10 and the ministry of apostleship are intricately connected, encompassing all ministry in Judea and the Gentile regions beyond.<sup>9</sup>

Jesus’ initial instruction to His disciples (Matt 10:5–6) immediately brings us to what some have labeled “a hard saying of Jesus.” After listing each of the disciples by name and identifying them as apostles, Jesus instructs them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (v. 5b).

Three words require our attention. To begin, Jesus uses two aorist subjunctive prohibitions, *me apēlthete* (“go not”)<sup>10</sup> and *me eisēlthete* (“enter not”),<sup>11</sup> to limit the scope of His apostles’ mission. The two prohibitions are ingressive and communicate a consistent message: Do not “start going” in the way of the Gentiles; do not “begin entering” any city of the Samari-

7 K. H. Rengstorf, “*Apostleo, (pempo), exapostelo, apostolos, pseudoapostolos, apostole,*” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishers, 1964), 1:414–24.

8 Unlike Matthew, Mark does not have the title in its parallel statement (Mark 3:13–19), though it is found in Luke 6:13. Unlike Mark’s, which calls the disciples as apostles upon their return (6:30), Matthew’s use of *apostelōn* is more etymologically sensitive and theologically focused, placing added strength to the initial sending of the Twelve.

9 It is no coincidence that Matthew 11:1, the second framing text, echoes Matthew 28:18–20; it was only when “Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples” that “He departed” (Matt 11:1). Matthew 10:1–11:1 is suggestive of Jesus’ ascension and departure at the end of the gospel.

10 Aorist, active, subjunctive, 2nd person plural of *aperchomai* (“go away,” “go”).

11 Aorist, active, subjunctive, 2nd person plural, *eiserchomai* (“come in to,” “go into,” “enter”).



tans.<sup>12</sup> Thus, while the disciples are first told where they cannot go, they also understand that it is not a permanent exclusion. The ingressive force of the prohibitions implies their interim status. An amplified translation might read: "Do not begin *at this time* to go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter *at this time* any city of the Samaritans." But if these two prohibitions keep the disciples from reaching out indiscriminately, the command *poreuesthe* ("go")<sup>13</sup> expects the Twelve to be engaged in ministry. Also ingressive (or inceptive) in its force, this imperative suggests the disciples are to initiate an action they had never before performed; they were to go specifically to their Jewish kinsmen. However, the syntactical force of this imperative suggests something more. The palpable intent of Jesus' command is to mold in His disciples an enduring commitment to reach out to the people of Israel.<sup>14</sup>

**The palpable intent of Jesus' command is to mold in His disciples an enduring commitment to reach out to the people of Israel.**

The continuing details of Jesus' instruction echo His own ministry experiences in the early chapters of Matthew. The disciples are to mimic His ministry and thus spread the news of the kingdom to all who will listen (vv. 6–8). Since their services are to be freely offered (v. 8e), the austere provisions they are to carry with them seem astonishing (vv. 9–10). But this minimal self-support is integral to the very character of the mission the disciples are to embrace. Such ascetic resources make the disciples dependent on Jewish homes to supply their material needs. Clearly there is the hope that Israel will receive the apostolic messengers along with their message. Viewed in this light, the phrase *axios gar o ergates tes trophes autou estin* ("for the worker is worthy of his support," v. 10b) makes perfect sense. If the disciples have brought peace to a home (vv. 12–13a), they are more than *axios* ("deserving") of *trophes* ("physical nourishment or sustenance").

Thus, Jesus stresses the seriousness of their work; to the extent that they carried the message of their Master, their witness could bring tranquility or judgment upon a home (vv. 11–15). Anticipating the hostility which surely developed in time, Jesus warns His disciples of the antagonism they would face in the execution of their mission (vv. 16–18).<sup>15</sup> The disciples could expect the leadership of Israel to treat them no better than they were treating their Master (vv. 24–25).

12 Wallace, 723.

13 Present, middle, imperative, 2nd person plural from *poreuomai* ("go," "proceed," or "travel").

14 The present imperative allows for either a progressive, customary, or iterative stress, and in this context all three categories are plausible. As the disciples begin outreach to fellow Jews the force of the present tense suggests they are to do it progressively, that is, continually or perhaps customarily—as a matter of habit, or perhaps iteratively—they are to do it again and again. In my estimation, the overlap of syntactical meaning stresses the permanence of the mission.

15 The element of hostility against the disciples is underscored throughout Jesus' instruction; including the straining of family ties (vv. 21, 35–37), persecution, and martyrdom (vv. 22–28).



Unexpectedly, verse 18 mentions Gentile collaboration with Jews against the disciples' mission, giving an early indication of future developments. The mention of the Gentiles suggests Matthew is doing more than describing the character of the Jewish mission alone. Matthew's Jesus co-mingles elements natural to the Jewish-only mission with actual situations the post-Pentecost mission would experience—experiences and scenarios described in Acts.<sup>16</sup> This unmistakable connection is crucial, for it tacitly admits an expansion of mission beyond the stated "Israel-only" boundaries of the Matthew 10 commission, confirming our earlier assessment. Matthew 10 reaches ahead to the global mission announced in 28:18–20. There is more to be said about this prolepsis, but it must wait until other elements of the pattern have been considered.

Overall, the larger context shows that the first commission is exclusive to Jews. Matthew 8–9 depicts Jesus' ministry to cities and villages in and around Galilee. It is within this context that Jesus asks His disciples to look out to the human harvest before them, characterized as people "being distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36). The Matthew 10 commission follows immediately on the heels of that empathetic description, and Jesus reinforces the characterization by describing the objects of the disciples' ministry as "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:6). The sheep metaphor used here echoes Matthew 9:36 and leaves little doubt that the harvest consists exclusively of Jews who live distressed and downcast lives.

Whether or not they are to be identified with the ceremonially outcast Jews, as recent studies suppose,<sup>17</sup> there is no doubt they are ethnically and religiously Jewish. The New Testament casts a broader net with respect to identifying those for whom Jesus initially came. It was the nation that had rejected Him (Matt 23:37; John 1:11). If Israel was without a shepherd, it was a problem of her own making. Nevertheless, the Shepherd had not abandoned them; Jesus was sending apostles to His distressed flock.

16 Matthew 10 lists a number of conditions and scenarios that are seen in Jewish and Gentile contexts in Acts as follows: v. 7, preaching the kingdom (to Jews, Acts 2; 3:11–26; 13:16–41; to Samaritans, 8:4; to Gentiles, 10; 14:15–18; 17:22–31; et al.); v. 8a, healings (Jews, Acts 3:1–10; 5:12–16; Gentiles, 19:11–12; 28:8; et al.); v. 8b, raising of the dead (Jews, Acts 9:32–42; Gentiles, 20:7–12; et al.); v. 8d, interaction with the demonic (Jews, Acts 5:3; Gentiles, 13:9–11); vv. 11–13a, abiding in receptive homes (Jewish, Acts 2:46; 4:23–35; 5:40; 18:1–4; Gentile, 16:14–15, 31–34; 18:7; et al.); v. 13b, withdrawing from unreceptive circumstances (among Jews, Acts 8:4; 11:19; 17:10; among Gentiles, 19:23–20:2; et al.); v. 14b, shaking dust off their feet (against Diaspora Jews, Acts 13:51; shaking of "clothing" as a modification, 18:6); vv. 16–17, Jewish hostility (Acts 4; 5:21–32; 7:54–60; 8:3; 13:50; et al.); v. 18, Gentile legal proceedings (Acts 14:5; 16:35–40; 18:12–17; 24–25; et al.); vv. 21–22, family ruptures (Acts 5:1–11; 6:1–2; 8:3; 9:1–2, 10; 15:36–40; et al.); v. 23, itinerant ministry from city to city (note Peter's itinerant travels, 9:32; Philipp's travels through Samaria, 8:4–40; Hellenist's travels, 11:19–21; Paul's three missionary journeys, Acts 13:1–21:14); vv. 26–33, courageous confession (before Jews, Acts 4:5–12; 5:29–32; 6:8–7:60; 18:9–10; 24–25; before Gentiles, 19:29–31; 23:11–25:22; et al.), et al.

17 E.g. Arland J. Hultgren ("Mission and Ministry in Matthew," *Word & World* 18 [1998]: 343) identifies them as the *'am ha'arets* ("the people of the land") as depicted in Ezra 9:1–2; 10:2; Neh 10:23–31; et al.

The substance of this first commission thus works in several ways. First, it initiates apostolic ministry. In Matthew, apostles reach out to Jews first, mimicking their Master's own ministry and God's desire to reconcile with His rebellious people.<sup>18</sup> Second, it serves to stamp the disciples with a model of service like that of Jesus. The disciples are charged with more than an interim strategy until the Gentile prohibitions are lifted. Their ministry to Israel is to be intentional, ongoing, and enduring. Finally, the Matthew 10 commission anticipates the eventual ministry to the Gentiles, asserting its relevance to both phases of ministry.

### Matthew's Second Commission: Matthew 28:18–20

Matthew's gospel has been described as the most Jewish of the four, and yet it contains ample indications that the Gentiles would embrace Jesus as their Savior. The inclusion of three Gentile women in Jesus' genealogical record provides the first indication.<sup>19</sup> In the second chapter, it is Gentile wise men that come from afar to worship the new-born Messiah. And then, there are Gentiles interspersed throughout who exhibit extraordinary insight and faith.<sup>20</sup> Finally, Matthew concludes with 28:18–20, which anticipates a great effort to reach all the nations with the gospel.<sup>21</sup>

Even Matthew 10, which is aimed primarily at the Jewish nation, has the seeds of Gentile outreach sown within it. The prohibitions against outreach to Samaritans and Gentiles were ingressive. There would come a time when Gentile outreach would begin. Subtly, verses 17–18 look forward to Jewish and Gentile interaction and the specter of hostility against the mission, conjoining the narrative of Matthew 10 with that of the Book of Acts through prolepsis, as the following demonstrates.

Matthew 10 describes some scenarios that are only truly realized as the church begins to minister beyond Judea proper. While it is true that Jesus' passion took place within the confines of Jerusalem, the same cannot be said of the ministry of His followers. The expectation that disciples would flee from city to city (v. 23) anticipates historical developments depicted only in Acts. And as we have shown earlier, the chapter hints at many scenarios that followers of Jesus would encounter both in Jewish and later in Gentile contexts (see n. 18). Matthew 10 is genuinely contextualized for

18 God's outreach to Israel is an OT theme in the prophetic books; e.g. Isa 31:6; 55:7; 61:2; Jer 3:10–22; Hosea 11, 14; Joel 2:12–13; Zech 1:4; Mal 3:7; et al.

19 Matthew 1:1–17 identifies specifically Tamar (v. 3), Rehab (v. 5a), and Ruth (v. 5b), all Gentiles.

20 Matthew 8:1–13 and 15:22–28 have been noted. See also 27:54, where the Roman centurion at the foot of the cross acknowledges Jesus as the Son of God.

21 See Brendan Byrne, "The Messiah in Whose Name 'The Gentiles Will Hope' (Matt. 12:21): Gentile Inclusion as an Essential Element of Matthean Christology," *Australian Biblical Review* 50 (2002): 55–73. Anthony J. Saldarini (*Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994], 75) sees the Gentile presence in Matthew as fringe and peripheral. As Saldarini says, "Israel remains the context and concern of Matthew."



the disciples' initial service to Israel, and yet it is relevant enough to serve as a manual of ministry for Gentile outreach later on.

This is undoubtedly the reason Matthew 28:18–20 has no immediate instruction before sending the disciples out on their world mission. Matthew 10 is more instructionally extensive than Matthew 28:18–20 (in Matt 10, there are thirty-seven verses; in Matt 28, there are only two verses), because it continues to be in force. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus tells the disciples to remember all that had been *eneteilamen* (“commanded”) them. The aorist verb is constative; Jesus sends His disciples back in time asking them to remember all His earlier instruction.<sup>22</sup> While it is probable that Matthew 28:20 points back to 26:1, which signals the conclusion of Jesus' overall teaching program, only chapter 10 provides a uniquely missiological unit of instruction. They were to take in the whole of Jesus' instruction, and especially Matthew 10, and make it their manual for ministry to Jews first, and now to Gentiles as well.<sup>23</sup>

Accordingly, Matthew employs a complex syntactical structure in 28:19–20 that captures the gist of the first “Jewish” commission for its expanded Gentile use. The attendant, circumstantial participle *poreuthentes* (“going”) linked with the constative, aorist imperative *matheteusate* (“disciple”), translated “go therefore and make disciples,” brings together two aspects that were prominent in the first commission. First, the instructional framing of Matthew 10 is implicit in the expanded assignment. As the disciples went, they were to make disciples among the Gentiles remembering the whole of Jesus' instruction.<sup>24</sup> Second, while the construct places the greater stress on making disciples, the participle “going” adds lexical urgency to this new initiative. Jesus was commanding His disciples to “really get going” with the business of discipling all the nations.<sup>25</sup>

These foregoing considerations support an interpretation that, from that moment forward, the disciples were to initiate a new outreach effort to Gentiles, but to do it as they maintained the existing Jewish effort thoroughly elaborated in chapter 10. To say Matthew 28:18–20 eliminates Matthew 10 is based more on longstanding, but in my estimation, untenable presuppositions. Rather, the disciples were to employ a principle clearly

22 Matthew 26:1 notes, *ote etelesen o Iesus pantas tous logous toutous* (“when Jesus had finished all these words”), alerting the reader that Jesus had completed “all” His instruction (Matt 26:1; cf. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1).

23 Concerning the theme teaching/instruction in Matthew's gospel, see Mortimer Arias, *The Great Commission* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 18–20; T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, 1st paperback ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); Robert H. Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978).

24 In the first commission, Jesus was “making disciples” by way of *parangeilas* (“commanding” or “instructing”) the Twelve (Matt 10:5), and by *diatasson* (“ordering” or “arranging”) their learning (Matt 11:1).

25 David Bosch makes an important observation: a misplaced stress on the “going” rather than the called-for stress on “making disciples” leads to a distorted sense of mission. See his “The Structure of Mission: An Exposition of Matthew 28:16–20,” in *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*, ed. Paul W. Chilcote and Lacey C. Warner (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing House, 2008), 78.

stated in Matthew 23:23; they were to initiate Gentile outreach, but without neglecting the (“weightier”) constant call to Jewish evangelism initially set in place. It is crucial to remember that the naming of the disciples as *apostelōn* (“apostles”) in Matthew 10:2 is significant in this regard. The disciples are named apostles prior to them going forth to fulfill this first commission. To cancel out the contemporary relevance of Matthew 10 because Jesus’ last commission is seen as all-inclusive inadvertently negates the lexical force supporting the outreach pattern of Matthew 10. For this reason also, Matthew 28 completes the pattern; it does not replace it.

**The disciples . . . were to initiate Gentile outreach, but without neglecting the (“weightier”) constant call to Jewish evangelism initially set in place.**

### Identifying “All the Nations” in Matthew 28:19

It should be evident at this point that the “Jew-first-and-also-Gentile” argument developed here stands or falls on the proper identification of *panta ta ethne* (“all the nations”). If *ethne* (“nations”) in verse 19 envisions the inclusion of the Jewish people, then it would mean the mission is being reconfigured radically, not only removing the prohibitions of Matthew 10 but challenging the centuries-long distinction between Jews and Gentiles and making Israel just another nation receiving the gospel message. Therefore, against the preponderance of scholarship, which supports the phrase as inclusive of Jews, I will argue that *panta ta ethne* (“all the nations”) refers specifically to Gentiles, exclusive of the Jews. In support I will interact with recent “inclusive-of-Israel” scholarship that has shaped the discussion.

To begin, however, it is necessary to understand the biblical usage of the Hebrew terms *goy/goyim* and *‘am/‘amim* (“nation”/“nations” and “people”/“peoples”).<sup>26</sup> Scholarship shows that these terms are synonymous and can have a host of meanings in context, including the following: a member of the populace, citizen, kinsman, relative, people, pagan(s), nation(s), tribe, and territory. Research further shows that the terms are often used to identify individuals or collective groups according to geographic, political, ethnic, religious, social, and linguistic factors. Often, when speaking of a *goy* (“nation”) and/or an *‘am* (“people”), multiple factors are at work, showing the complexity of the Hebrew mind in the context of their political milieu.

More to our purposes, while *goy* (“nation”) and *‘am* (“people”) are used to speak of Gentile nations or peoples (e.g. *goy*, Exod 9:24; *‘am*, Deut 4:6),

26 This section is indebted to the following sources: Ronald E. Clements and G. Johannes Botterweck, “Goy,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 2:426–33; Robert H. O’Connell, “‘am,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 3:429–32; R. L. Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament [TWOT]* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), s.v. “Goy.”



both terms can also refer to Israel (e.g., *goy*, Gen 12:2; *'am*, Deut 4:6).<sup>27</sup> However, such convertible usage is governed by strict circumstances.<sup>28</sup> In fact, Israel came to imbue *goy* with negative overtones, based on the religious practices of surrounding nations which proved ruinous to her. This tendency brought about the motivation to identify Israel as the *'am* ("people"), rather than the *goy* ("nation").<sup>29</sup>

Turning to the Septuagint (LXX), when it comes to the translation of both *goy* and *'am*, the Greek *ethnos* ("nation") and *laos* ("people") are both possible translations. The translation of Exodus 33:13 illustrates the trend to render *goy* as *ethnos*—"a nation," with no particular ethnic or religious overtones, while *'am* is translated as *laos*, and refers specifically to God's chosen people. Overwhelmingly, however, as G. Bertram and Hans Bietenhard have observed, *laos* is an established translation when both *goy* and *'am* refer to the chosen people. On the other hand, *ethnos* is the preferred translation when speaking of the Gentile nations.<sup>30</sup>

From this evidence we can see that, though there are exceptions (e.g. Deut 7:7; Zeph 2:9), the LXX solidifies the tendency to use different terms to distinguish the Jews from the Gentiles. While the Hebrew terms are often nuanced by social, political, and religious considerations, the Greek translation shows little of such parsing. The terms take on a static meaning, due undoubtedly to the continual tendency within Israel in the intertestamental era to accentuate the adverse religious impact of the *goyim*, the nations.<sup>31</sup>

Further study along these lines would doubtless prove fruitful, but unnecessary for our purpose. Suffice it to cite John P. Meier, who admits that the traditional LXX use of *ethnos* generally refers to Gentiles as opposed to Jews.<sup>32</sup> Meier's is an important concession, for he challenges the view that *ethne* in Matthew always means Gentiles. This being the case, it is his burden along with like-minded others to prove that Matthew goes against the trend to see the *ethne* as referring to anything other than Gentile nations.

In 1975, Douglas R. A. Hare and Daniel J. Harrington co-authored an article proposing that *ethnos* and *ethne* always refer to Gentile nations in Matthew.<sup>33</sup> Meier subsequently rebutted Hare and Harrington, arguing that Matthew 21:43; 24:7; 24:14; and especially 25:32, use the term *eth-*

27 Deuteronomy 4:6 uses *'am* for both the nations, in general, and for Israel, specifically.

28 Clemens and Botterweck (2:429) "claim that Israel, conceived of as a *goy*, is tied to her quest for territorial integrity and political structure, thus a later development and anachronistic in Gen 12:2; 17:5; 18:18."

29 Ibid., 432. See also *TWOT*, s.v. "*Goy*": "The Old Testament refers to 'gentiles,' or 'heathen,' that is Gentiles in the singular and to non-Jewish nations in the plural."

30 Georg Bertram and Karl Ludwig Schmidt, "*Ethnos, Ethnikos*," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:366; Hans Bietenhard, "*Ethnos*," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology [NIDNTT]*, 2:790.

31 Clemens and Botterweck, 432.

32 John P. Meier, "Nations or Gentiles in Matthew 28:19," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1977): 98.

33 Douglas R. A. Hare and Daniel J. Harrington, "Make Disciples of All the Gentiles (Matt. 28:19)," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (1975): 359-60.

*nos* in such a way that they cannot mean strictly Gentiles alone.<sup>34</sup> Meier labored to show that in those texts, Israel was probably being thought of as an *ethne*, leading him to suggest that *panta ta ethne* (“all nations”) in Matthew 28:19 could include the Jewish people as a nation. Although Meier never says so unequivocally, his rebuttal is considered a most forceful argument for including the Jews in Matthew 28:19. Nevertheless, there are significant hermeneutical reasons for not rushing to such a conclusion.

First, Meier’s interpretations of Matthew 24:7 and 14 are essentially preterist, employing a hermeneutical approach to apocalyptic materials, which, while having its adherents, is not without its own challenges.<sup>35</sup> Dispensational premillennialism generally sees Jesus’ Olivet Discourse (Matt 24–25) as explicating the events of the seventieth week of Daniel (e.g., Dan 9:27), which is yet future.<sup>36</sup> Under this view, national Israel is the flash point against which the nations take their aim. Some dispensationalists interpret Matthew 24:14 as a reference to Israel (understanding the 144,000 of Rev 7:4 and 14:1 as literal Jews, or symbolic of Jews) fulfilling her purpose to proclaim the gospel to the nations at the end time. Thus, for some dispensationalists, the nations identified in Matthew 24:14 are actually Gentile and separate from redeemed Israel.<sup>37</sup>

I am aware that there is no unanimity of opinion on the interpretation of apocalyptic texts in the New Testament, which should avert the biblical student from dogmatism. The fact that Matthew 24–25 is essentially apocalyptic alerts us to the many challenges associated with interpreting this genre. Even if Meier should not find dispensationalism convincing, his interpretation of these three texts should reflect the eschatological issues in play. He certainly notes them in connection with Matthew 25:32, but he fails to take them into account with his analysis of 24:7 and 14, rendering his assessment of these texts of limited value.

Matthew 21:43 is not within the Olivet discourse, but it has an apocalyptic overtone nevertheless. The text reads as follows: “Therefore I say to

34 Meier’s work is an expansion of the earlier work of Wolfgang Trilling, *Das wahre Israel, Studien zur einer Theologie des Matthäusevangeliums*, 3rd ed. (Munich: Kösel, 1964), 26–28.

35 For an overview of the preterist approach for prophetic interpretation see C. Marvin Pate, ed., *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*, “A Survey of Leading Interpretations of Revelation,” 17–23.

36 Paul Feinberg sees Matthew 24–25, along with Revelation 6–18, as describing the seventieth week of Daniel 9:24–27, an essentially Jewish experience; see “The Case for the Pretribulation Rapture Disposition,” in *Three Views on the Rapture*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 1996), 45–86. See also J. Lanier Burns, “The Future of Ethnic Israel in Romans 11,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, ed. Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers, 1992).

37 Meier’s analysis of Matthew 24:7 is strictly preterist, limiting its interpretation to events associated with the Jewish revolt against Rome (AD 66–70). Dispensationalism would see this text as pointing to general strife among the Gentile nations during the tribulation period. There is no biblical support for the view that Israel becomes an aggressor nation on the basis of this text. At some time it is the Gentile nations that come against national Israel, fulfilling Psalm 2:1–3.



you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.”

Here Meier’s argument is twofold. Meier first shows that *ethnos* (“nation”) is being used creatively to refer to the church made up of Jews and Gentiles, showing that Matthew is not slavishly committed to the LXX’s usage of the term. Meier then notes: “The fact that the kingdom is taken away from the Jewish people and given to an *ethnos* that will bear its fruits can only be taken to imply that the Jews are in some sense an *ethnos*.”<sup>38</sup> Meier’s point is that because there is parallelism implied, *ethnos* can also be applied to the Jews for they represent a nation. While I am willing to concede that Matthew can depict Israel as an *ethnos* (e.g. Matt 25:32), the parallelism Meier detects does not necessarily follow. In fact, national Israel may be nowhere in mind, as David L. Turner argues in his “Matthew 21:43 and the Future of Israel.”<sup>39</sup> Turner pulls together an impressive body of textual evidence to show that those from whom the kingdom of God is being “taken away” are specifically recalcitrant Jewish religious leaders and not the nation of Israel as a whole.<sup>40</sup> In Turner’s view, it is the leaders of Israel that are losing their kingdom authority to lead and guide Israel.

To further support this view, Anthony J. Saldarini shows that during Hellenistic and Roman times, the terms *ethnos* (“nation”) and *ethnikos* (“national”) could have a wide range of meanings besides referring strictly to coherent ethnic groups with fixed cultural and geographic identities.<sup>41</sup> Saldarini shows that *ethnos* could also refer to guilds, priestly orders, trade associations, and social classes, among other groupings. The use of *ethnos* with reference to the church is clearly not meant to be taken in any conventional sense, and so we must agree with Saldarini that here it designates a voluntary social group.<sup>42</sup> It is this more relaxed usage of the term that is evidenced here. The “nation producing the fruit of it” certainly began as a believing remnant of Israel (echoing Num 14:11–12) and has a definite ethnic makeup, but this was something temporary as Acts 11:19ff. shows. Ultimately, this “nation” is made up of all peoples, and issues of boundary and ethnic nationalism give way to oneness in Christ.<sup>43</sup> With Turner, I assert that the term *ethnos* is not to be interpreted literally.<sup>44</sup> Matthew 21:43

38 Meier, 98.

39 David L. Turner, “Matthew 21:43 and the Future of Israel,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159, no. 633 (Jan–Mar 2002): 46–61.

40 *Ibid.*, 53–56. Others holding similar positions include D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank A. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 8:454; Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 119; and David D. Kupp, *Matthew’s Emmanuel: Divine Presence and God’s People in the First Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 95.

41 Saldarini, 60–61.

42 *Ibid.*, 60.

43 Note Revelation 7:9, where the glorified church is described as follows: “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation (*ethnous*) and all tribes and peoples (*laon*) and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.” It is important to note that both *ethnos* and *laos* are used to exhaust the new and unique character of this eschatological collective. Cf. also Rev 5:9.

44 Turner, 58–59.



does not support the possibility that *ethne* (“nations,” Matt 28:19) would include the Jews because they are a nation, in some sense, here.

Meier’s analysis of Matthew 25:32 is one with which I generally agree. Indeed, all nations, including Israel, are being seen collectively, however, the time frame of the text renders it unusable to support the view that Matthew 28:19 could include Jews among the nations. The text reads: “And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”

Here, Meier fails to take into account the radically different time frame when the events of 25:32 occur. We are in agreement that at the end of history all nations, Israel included, will have to stand in judgment, and whether Israel stands together with Gentiles or they are judged separately is beside the point.<sup>45</sup> At that time, history as we experience it on this earth is terminated. The events of 25:32 are not just later in time; their context is dissimilar to that of Matthew 28:19. Matthew 25:32 depicts a future judgment before the presence of the Lord. On the other hand, Matthew 28:19 records the words of Jesus at the beginning of the church age and is still very much a part of the human historical continuum.<sup>46</sup> The supra-historical context of Matthew 25:32 eliminates its relevance for how the nations are seen in chronological time.

To summarize, Meier argues that because Israel can be identified as a nation in the texts he analyzes, it logically follows that Israel could be included in a generalized statement about all nations, as in Matthew 28:19. In my estimation, the overwhelming eschatological and apocalyptic nature of the texts he analyzes derails his arguments. A preterist interpretation is one way of looking at these passages, but it is awfully limiting to the full apocalyptic vision. Moreover, it is arguable that national Israel is not even implied in 21:43, and the church is a “nation” in a more creative way than even Meier realizes.

Furthermore, Matthew’s use of *laos* (“people”) to refer specifically to Jews as a separate people ought to be given more weight than highly nuanced interpretations from eschatological texts.<sup>47</sup> Apart from Matthew 25:32, there are no incontestable occurrences of *ethne* (“nation”) which include reference to Jewish people and support the position that *panta ta ethne* (“all nations”) in 28:19 could refer to both Jews and Gentiles in Matthew’s gospel.<sup>48</sup>

45 While Hare and Harrington put forth, in my opinion, a strong case for seeing Israel as judged separately from the Gentile nations, Meier also marshals some support for his all inclusive judgment, leaving the issue far from settled. See Hare and Harrington, 364–65; Meier, 99–100.

46 In Matthew 22:23–29, Jesus pointed out the fallacy of transposing human experiences into the hereafter.

47 Examples: Matt 4:23; 15:8; 26:5; 27:25, 64.

48 Schmidt lists the usages of *ethnos* and *ethne* that refer to the Jewish people in the NT as follows: Luke 7:5; 23:2; John 11:48, 50, 51, 52; 18:35; Acts 10:22; 24:2, 10, 17; 26:4; 28:19; 1 Pet 2:9. Cf. Bertram and Schmidt, 369. It is telling that Schmidt identifies no such usage in Matthew. Turner (57) identifies Matthew 12:18, 21; 20:25; 24:9, 14; 25:32; and 28:19 as “probable” examples, signaling a less than conclusive assessment.



Moving ahead, I turn to another line of argumentation to strengthen the view that *panta ta ethne* ("all nations") in Matthew 28:19 must be a reference to Gentiles, and does not include Jewish people. The phrase is found repeatedly in the LXX, Matthew's source for most of his quotations and allusions.<sup>49</sup> And it is because of this that several LXX texts become specifically pertinent to our thesis. As the following two texts show, *panta ta ethne* is a phrase specifically used to describe Gentile nations, going back to the birth of the Jewish people as a nation. It is also striking to see *laos* used to designate Israel in those same texts. A third text takes us back to Abraham and God's promise to him, which finds the presence of *panta ta ethne* related to the fulfillment of the covenant.

The context for our first passage is immediately following the golden calf fiasco (Exod 32). God was severely irritated with the people He had just liberated and did all He could to keep from striking out in righteous indignation (33:3). While He would make good on His promises to Abraham, God threatened to remove His presence from among them (vv. 1–3; 33:1–15). And to keep from destroying them, God turns them over to Moses who would take them to the threshold of the Land. The narrative continues by reminding the reader of Moses' ministry as an intermediary on behalf of Israel (33:4–11), which leads to verse 16 and Moses' intercession at this critical moment. Knowing that God threatened withdrawal from their midst, Moses dares to ask God: "For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Thy sight, I and Thy people?<sup>50</sup> Is it not by Thy going with us, so that we, I and Thy people, may be distinguished from all the *other* people<sup>51</sup> who are upon the face of the earth?" (Exod 33:16).

Moses knows that the Lord's presence in their midst is the one thing that would show Israel's distinction from the nations (not merely possessing the Land). This singling out of Israel from "all the other peoples who are upon the face of the earth" based on the divine presence does in fact become codified as a real manifestation of their holiness, as a characteristic of their separateness.

Thus, our second text is Deuteronomy 7:6, within the second giving of the law, forty years later. Those who sinned at Kadesh lie buried in the wilderness (Num 13–14). This is another day, and Moses is pleased to remind this new generation of Israelites: "For you are a holy people<sup>52</sup> to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples [or, "nations"]<sup>53</sup> who are on the face of the earth" (Deut 7:6).

One might assume Moses was simply voicing his earlier language, but in fact he was echoing the Lord's oath made to Abraham upon his obedience

49 For a discussion of Matthew's familiarity with and use of the LXX see Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Howard Clark Kee (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 110–11.

50 LXX, *laos* from 'am.

51 LXX, *panta ta ethne* from *mikol ha'am*.

52 LXX, *laos* from 'am.

53 LXX, *panta ta ethne* from *mikol ha'amim*.

in offering Isaac (Gen 22:16–17; cf. Deut 7:8). At that pivotal point in the patriarch's life, God blessed Abraham with a promise that set his "seed" apart from all other peoples. God told Abraham: "In your seed all the nations of the earth<sup>54</sup> shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (Gen 22:18).

God's promise to Abraham made it specific that his seed would be the conduit through which He would bless the nations. This distinction had to remain in place, if for no other reason than to show that God had kept His promise.<sup>55</sup>

With respect to the texts considered, several aspects deserve our attention. First, we note the use of *laos* to refer to Israel, and the phrase *panta ta ethne* is used routinely to refer to the surrounding nations. Conceivably, the translators could have distinguished between Israel and the other nations using either *laos* or *ethnos*. But in Exodus 33:16 and Deuteronomy 7:6, the LXX shows a lexical distinction where the Masoretic Text (MT) does not (see notes 49–50). Interestingly, when speaking of "all the people" (i.e., Israelites), the LXX uses *laos* (e.g., Exod 34:10, Lev 9:23, etc.).<sup>56</sup> Thus, what is worthy of note in these texts and their immediate contexts is that the distinctiveness of Israel, as separate from the Gentile nations, is a theological theme that is strengthened lexically in the LXX. Moreover, the concept of Israel's distinction from all other nations is presented as a matter of divine revelation. It is God who first characterizes all people, other than those ensuing from Abraham and Israel's patriarchs, as *panta ta ethne*. And it is because of Abraham's obedience that God reveals this separateness as integral to His plan to bless the nations. From a biblical point of view, this is not an ethnocentric perspective that Israel promotes or develops over the course of her history, but "the sovereign initiative of God."<sup>57</sup>

Accordingly, the trend to single out Israel from the nations continues beyond the Pentateuch through Israel's history to the first century AD.<sup>58</sup> In this regard, Hare and Harrington have done an excellent job of collecting the post-exilic and intertestamental

**From a biblical point of view, this is not an ethnocentric perspective that Israel promotes or develops over the course of her history, but "the sovereign initiative of God."**

54 LXX, *panta ta ethne tes ges from kol goei ha'arets*.

55 Matthew's genealogy (Matt 1:1–17) shows a direct link between Abraham and Christ through whom the promise to bless the nations is realized (Acts 3:24–26; Gal 3:16). See Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 34.

56 The phrase *pas o laos* ("all the people") in the LXX is used overwhelmingly to designate Israel as a cohesive and identifiable people group. The phrase is not used to identify a plurality of separate nations. Only rarely is it used to characterize cohesive Gentile groups (e.g., Gen 19:4; Num 13:32). See Hans Bietenhard, "Laos," *NIDNTT*, 2:795–801.

57 Jim R. Sibley, "The Proliferation of Jewish Missions through the Southern Baptist Convention" (paper presented to Keith Eitel, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, April 25, 2008), 21.

58 There are over eighty references in the LXX distinguishing Gentile nations as separate from the Jews.



evidence. Their work shows conclusively that in the time of Matthew's writing, "These terms (*goyim* and *ethne*) would convey the notion of that whole collective of nations (the Gentile nations) other than Israel."<sup>59</sup>

Such dogged consistency cannot be easily dismissed on some mere assumption that New Testament writers would ignore such language from their inspired texts. There can be no doubt but that *panta ta ethne* ("all nations") would have brought about an immediate mental association with the Gentile nations. Karl Ludwig Schmidt is one who senses the continuation of this distinctiveness in the New Testament. He ponders:

We sometimes have the feeling – it is hardly more – that the reference is not to all nations including Israel, but to the nations or all the nations in distinction from Israel as the *goyim*. Thus R. 15:11 on the basis of Ps. 117:1 summons all nations to praise God. But this can hardly include Israel, since it is self-evident that Israel should praise God.<sup>60</sup>

Schmidt continues with further examples drawn from across the New Testament and concludes, "There is, of course, no proof that in these passages we have a technical use of *ethne* in the sense of the Gentiles even though the context, often based on the Old Testament, indicates that the Gentiles are meant."<sup>61</sup> Could this also not be the case in Matthew 28:19? It seems that any interpretation that seeks to identify Israel as a nation, included in the phrase *panta ta ethne*, has to scale the monumental obstacle of Yahweh's expressed separation of His *laos*, His people, from among the *ethne*, the nations.

In this respect, David Bosch's treatment of *panta ta ethne* in Matthew 28:19 is rather mystifying.<sup>62</sup> While Bosch also recognizes that *ethne* became, for all practical purposes, a technical term for Gentiles in contrast to Jews, nevertheless, he sees the phrase as including Jewish people on the basis of the supposed addition of *panta* ("all"). Citing Ferdinand Hahn for support, Bosch notes: "When *panta* (all) is added to *ethne*, as in Matthew 28:19, yet another nuance is created [. . .] Within the context the emphasis is clearly on the entire world of humanity; the expression is used 'in view of the world wide mission.'"<sup>63</sup>

Bosch's opinion that *panta* is somehow an addition is baffling and flies in the face of usage in the LXX and Apocrypha. There are almost eighty instances of the exact phrase scattered throughout these two collections. Seriously, *panta ta ethne* is hardly a novel phrase. And, as I have shown, the

59 Hare and Harrington, 361. For Meier's agreement with Hare and Harrington's assessment of *goyim* and *ethne*, cf. Meier, 94.

60 Bertram and Schmidt, 369–70.

61 Ibid.

62 Bosch (85) rightly notes that *panta ta ethne* is a LXX designation for Gentiles, or pagans, in contrast to Jews. Nevertheless, Bosch sides with scholars who say that the phrase "is to be interpreted without any restrictions whatsoever."

63 Ibid. Bietenhard ("*Ethnos*," 2:793) sees *panta* as an epithet which makes it clear the reference is to all peoples. He appeals to fourteen NT usages of *ethnos* that refer to Jews. Of the fourteen, only 28:19 is in Matthew and his decision is challenged in this study.

phrase has a well-defined theological content for the Jews from the beginning. Bosch would have done well to remember that because the phrase in question is so prolific in the LXX, its theological meaning in the New Testament can reflect it.<sup>64</sup> Bosch has, in my opinion, built his case on the atomistic and lexical meaning of *ethne* while failing to take into account Matthew's actual literary milieu.

Bosch further develops his interpretation of Matthew 28:19 as including Jews on the basis that Jew-Gentile differences were essentially theological, not cultural, and he appeals to Paul's theology for support. The crucified and risen Messiah, as Bosch understands, "had superseded the law." The substantial theological barriers had been removed; cultural issues were negligible by comparison. In light of his conclusion that the historical-salvation difference had been abrogated, Bosch considers Paul's acceptance of the division of labor, as far as the mission to Jews and Gentiles was concerned, to have been motivated by purely cultural factors.

I accept fully Bosch's assessment of the gospel's power to overcome the barriers the law had set in place. And there is no doubt Paul's gospel is essentially egalitarian with respect to salvation, for as he declares, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female . . . in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28; cf. Rom 10:11–13). But, in terms of a missionary strategy, outreach to the Jews had to be a priority whenever possible. The Jew-Gentile strategy to evangelize was not merely a "division of labor" that could develop horizontally in either direction.<sup>65</sup>

This being the case, I conclude that Matthew 10 and 28:18–20 should be seen as a complete and comprehensive commission that sets the pattern the disciples were to follow. We have no problem admitting that 28:18–20 is binding upon the church. What we have attempted to show is that Matthew 10 is equally binding. Neither commission is greater than the other; they both stand together as one indissoluble unit. Thus, while I appreciate Hare and Harrington's research which shows that *ethne* in Matthew always means Gentiles, I reject their speculative reconstruction of a Matthean community that sees the Matthew 28 commission as somehow implying that this community had given up on Israel and was now moving on to predominantly Gentile outreach.<sup>66</sup> If it can be shown that the Jew-first strategy of Matthew 10 remains in force, Matthew 28:18–20 becomes an

64 Bertram and Schmidt, 369.

65 Kenton L. Sparks ("Gospel as Conquest: Mosaic Typology in Matthew 28:16–20," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 68, no. 4 [2006]: 655) accepts the position that *panta ta ethne* ("all nations") refers to Gentiles, but offers a variation on Bosch's "division of labor." Sparks notes: "Matthew's salvation history included two phases: first for the Jews (but also for the Gentiles), and then for the Gentiles (but also for the Jews)."

66 Hare and Harrington (367) conclude: "For Matthew the twofold mission agreed upon by Paul and the 'pillar' apostles at Jerusalem some three decades earlier (cf. Gal 2:7–9) has now been replaced by a single one. Henceforth, the mission is to the Gentiles." A similar view was earlier proposed by R. Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967). My rejection of a supposed "Matthean community" is supported by Richard Bauckham, "For Whom Were the Gospels Written?" in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 9–48.



extension of the earlier command, not its “great” replacement.

Still, some might be reticent to say definitively that Jesus’ command to go to “all the nations” in Matthew 28:19 is directed exclusively at Gentiles. After all, Diaspora Judaism proliferated throughout the Mediterranean rim and going to the Gentile nations would lead to inevitable encounters with Jewish communities. First, I hope to have

shown that even proponents of the inclusion of Jews in Matthew 28:19 are tentative in their findings. Meier only argues for the possibility of it, not its certainty. Second, the case for *panta ta ethne* referring to Gentile nations is defensible. But finally, the Jewish people are not excluded in any sense, because outreach to Jewish people remains a high priority, even as Gentiles are also brought into missiological focus. We should not let ideas which are certainly biblical (e.g. God surely wants to reach out to all people, both Jews and Gentiles) actually obfuscate this important distinction in Matthew’s Gospel.

If the argument holds, then we have perhaps an important reason for rethinking our understanding of Matthew 28:16–20. In my estimation, there is reason for retiring the “Great Commission” label, for it may be detrimental to our understanding of Matthew’s two-stage evangelistic and missionary commission.

The second part of this study is scheduled for publication in the next issue of *Mishkan*. It will cover the evidence for this Matthean, “Jew-first-and-also-Gentile” strategy in the Book of Acts. It will also provide an exegetical analysis of Paul’s articulation of this two-fold approach in his Epistle to the Romans. It will conclude with a call to re-evaluate the use of the phrase the “Great Commission” with reference to Matthew 28:18-20, and to think in terms of a comprehensive Matthean commission that maintains the distinctive character of outreach—both to Jews first and also Gentiles.

**Author info:**

Rudolph D. Gonzalez (Ph.D., Baylor University) is the Dean of the William R. Marshall Center for Theological Studies and Professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.  
rgonzalez@swbts.edu

## Response to Kai Kjær-Hansen's Articles on Operation Mercy

Editor's note: Gershon Nerel has been given the opportunity to respond to Kai Kjær-Hansen's articles concerning Operation Mercy in the previous issue. Here we present Nerel's response with comments by Kjær-Hansen (KKH).

I am pleased that my initial research on the evacuation/exodus/flight of Jewish Yeshua believers (JYB) from Eretz Israel in 1948, known as "Operation Mercy" (OM),<sup>1</sup> has been stimulating supplementary readings with fresh analysis and interactions as expressed, for example, in issue 61 of *Mishkan*.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, each and every historical investigation develops through ongoing scrutiny, gradually exposing fresh data. Normally, mutual scholarly fertilization clarifies historical issues. Thus, the process of revisiting an issue from different angles always helps to illuminate a variety of perspectives.

Presently, I do not wish to repeat what I have already written, mainly in Hebrew, on the theme of OM in other publications. Readers may find ample material in my prior essays and quotations dealing with OM. Here I just wish to underline that within my

studies on this subject I have basically attempted to offer a panoramic view of the happenings—trying to avoid a narrow reportage of isolated facts as they often appear in journalistic coverage. Rather, my aim was, and still remains, to examine the broader context, formal and informal, of this occurrence as a case study of Gentile-Jewish relationships within the universal body of believers in Yeshua. In other words, my desire is to better understand the background that shaped the attitudes of Gentile ecclesiastical personalities toward the theological position of JYB. Basically, therefore, my historical research does not refer only to the short scope of time in which OM, *per se*, took place, but also to ideas that have prevailed over decades and even centuries. My research aims to reveal patterns of Gentile Christian conduct not just toward individuals, but also groupings of JYB.

Initially, I wish to comment on the critical points raised by Kai Kjær-Hansen concerning my writings on OM as follows: it appears that Kjær-Hansen wrote his review under heavy time pressure as he became aware of my latest *Iggud* article (Hebrew) long after the special issue of *Mishkan* on OM was planned and most of the material was already finalized. Therefore, then, my impression is that Kjær-Hansen was unable to carefully read my Hebrew papers and did not fully grasp my line of reasoning. It is no secret that Kjær-Hansen does not have adequate knowledge of Hebrew to distinguish or to evaluate the nuances of the Hebraic expressions.

*KKH: I would have preferred an academic interaction concerning the themes I have treated in Mishkan 61, instead of having to deal with the question of whether or not I was "under heavy time pressure"—which, by the way, I often am when I write articles,*

1 "Operation Mercy" was already discussed in my doctoral thesis: Gershon Nerel, "'Messianic Jews' in Eretz-Israel (1917–1967): Trends and Changes in Shaping Self Identity" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1996). Cf. also: Gershon Nerel, "'Operation Mercy': The Evacuation of Messianic Jews from Eretz Israel in 1948," in *Iggud – Selected Essays in Jewish Studies*, vol. 2, History of the Jewish People and Contemporary Jewish Society, ed. Gershon Bacon, Albert Baumgarten, Jacob Barnai, Chaim Waxman, and Israel J. Yuval (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2009), 83–109; and "'Operation Grace' in 1948: The Theological Status of Messianic Jews vs. the Historical Churches," *Zot Habrit* (Organ of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of Israel), vol. 23 (Jan 2009): 11–12.

2 Kai Kjær-Hansen, "Numbers Connected with Operation Mercy," *Mishkan*, no. 61 (2009): 33–43; and "The Organizers behind Operation Mercy," *Mishkan*, no. 61 (2009): 44–60.

*but then, I suppose I am not the only one in that situation. Nerel is quite right when he says that I “[do] not have adequate knowledge of Hebrew to distinguish or to evaluate the nuances of the Hebraic expressions.” However, the dispute between Nerel and myself cannot be reduced to a question of “nuances of the Hebraic expressions.” It is a question of two very different ways of reading sources. On page 33, note 1, I write: “In my interaction with him [Nerel], I have made sure that practically all my critical points are directed toward opinions, which also appear in his article in Iggud.”*

Another “linguistic” issue: Kjær-Hansen fails to distinguish between two loaded appellations—firstly, the “Messianic movement today,”<sup>3</sup> and secondly, what he calls the “Messianic movement in 1948.”<sup>4</sup> I have no doubt that it is a misleading anachronism to apply the contemporary designation “Messianic movement,” as it is commonly used nowadays,<sup>5</sup> to the elapsed reality of 1948.

*KKH: I recognize that Nerel is quite right in pointing out the importance of “linguistic” issues in his criticism of my use of the designation “Messianic movement” with reference to circumstances in Palestine/Israel in the 1940s. It might have been interesting to deal with this question in a different context. I leave it to others to judge whether my terminology in the places mentioned has any significant influence on my treatment of Operation Mercy.*

Actually, in the 1940s, just as it was several decades earlier, people normally made use

of the name “Hebrew Christians.” Back in the year 1948, people hardly, if at all, employed the term “Messianic movement.” Furthermore, it should be remembered that particularly English speakers made use of the labels “Hebrew Christians” or “Jewish Christians” in their ordinary parlance.<sup>6</sup> Hence nowadays, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, one must carefully comprehend which exact terminology to employ, since terms are loaded with different meanings and relevance should be attributed only to the right discernment of the different nomenclatures.

### **Inaccuracies and Exaggerations**

Kjær-Hansen cynically criticizes Moshe Immanuel Ben-Meir by writing: “But there seems to be little existential consistence in Ben Meir concerning marriage, for although he was strongly against a Jewish believer marrying a non-Jewish believer, he himself married a Finnish Christian woman in 1977.”<sup>7</sup> Yet Kjær-Hansen fails to also mention the very simple fact that Ben-Meir was a Gentile believer who adopted Judaism. His Finnish Christian wife, born as *Lempi Virtanen*, had willingly and formally converted to Orthodox Judaism and embraced *Ahuva* (“Beloved,” in Hebrew) as her first name.<sup>8</sup>

*KKH: Regardless of one’s stance on my remarks about Ben Meir’s last marriage, the matter seems relevant to me. That my critical remarks should be made “cynically” must be Nerel’s own opinion.*

3 Kjær-Hansen, “Numbers,” 33.

4 *Ibid.*, 34, 36, 38.

5 Keri Zelson Warshawsky, “Returning to Their Own Borders: A Social Anthropological Messianic Jewish Identity in Israel” (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2007); Richard Harvey, *Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology: A Constructive Approach* (London: Paternoster, 2009).

6 Moses Klerekoper, “A Timely Duty of Hebrew Christianity,” *The Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly*, vol. 19 (Oct 1934): 13–15; *The Jewish Christian Movement*, Collection of Articles, Reports, and Addresses of the Jewish Christian Community (London: Patmos Publishers, 1954); Hugh J. Schonfield, *The History of Jewish Christianity* (London: Duckworth, 1936).

7 Kjær-Hansen, “Numbers,” 35, n. 10.

8 Rittie Katz and Elizabeth Wakefield, “Pillars of Zion: The Life of Ahuva Ben-Meir,” *Teaching from Zion*, vol. 22 (Oct. 2007): 19.



Kjær-Hansen also mentions that I claim to have found “the exact numbers connected to OM,”<sup>9</sup> yet he does not provide the explicit “source” to support his alleged argument. Sadly, Kjær-Hansen uses quotation marks to show what I supposedly have written, as if he brings an accurate excerpt, but has no documentation at all to verify that “fact”! Thus, one should ask if this is a proper historical debate.

*KKH: It goes without saying that I want “a proper historical debate,” and I endeavour to quote correctly, although I sometimes fail. But I cannot help being surprised that Nerel cannot find the source of the quotation I attribute to him. On page 26 of his article in Mishkan 61, Nerel speaks about “the total number of evacuated Hebrew Christians,” which totals “ninety-four.” Nerel continues: “However, it is also significant to say that beyond the precise facts and the exact numbers connected to Operation Mercy. . . .” I have trouble seeing where I have erred, for I quote Nerel verbatim.*

Anyhow, I should underline that as far as I can recall, I have nowhere claimed to refer to any precise *comprehensive and final* figures connected to OM, except in reference to certain specific (even sporadic) papers which were documented and mentioned in my footnotes. Hence, this proves that Kjær-Hansen was too hasty and inexpert in his conclusions. It is obvious today, as well as before, that historians dealing with OM have at their disposal mere preliminary data, and, therefore, it is still impossible to talk about final figures and judgments. Clearly, researchers do need much more time, materials, and perspective to further study the whole issue in order to draw ultimate conclusions.

Additionally, while referring to believers who left Palestine/Eretz Israel for the UK

in the spring of 1948, Kjær-Hansen counts people who were then linked to the British Church Missions to the Jews (CMJ), yet did not travel on visas issued in connection with OM.<sup>10</sup> The question remains whether to include such travelers in the general calculation of those who were directly involved with OM. It is not unknown that indeed many of those who were connected with Christ Church in Jerusalem, for example, left the land during the evacuation process of the Mandatory period. Kjær-Hansen himself admits that there were those who left before “‘Operation Mercy visas’ were given to people in Jerusalem.”<sup>11</sup> Why should such “external travelers” be considered as relevant to OM?

*KKH: There may be different answers to this question. I have tried to present a survey of the number of Hebrew Christians who left Palestine/Israel in 1948, which I do not think is without interest.*

In my opinion, however, within the scope of researching OM *per se*, it is only appropriate to refer to those who were unequivocally involved with OM, and not to the many others who were en route to flee the dangers and difficulties at the end of the Mandate epoch. One may find many lists of passengers via air, sea, and land, but I have no doubt that it is relevant to focus on JYB who were straightforwardly associated with the organized OM and not to broaden the scope regarding the general evacuation of the British.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Yona Bandmann, *When Will Britain Withdraw from Jerusalem: The Confrontation between the Military Commanders in the Middle East and the High Commissioner for Palestine* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Kjær-Hansen, “Numbers,” 38, 41.

## What Is the Real Argument About?

My own research raised the thesis that apart from the plain humanitarian and civic aspects of OM, as it was presented *de facto* and dealt with, there have also prevailed other ideas and beliefs among the evacuees. Namely, my argument highlights the following conclusion: One should consider OM *not* merely as a graceful, charitable event, which would be correct from a certain aspect and, therefore, considered a legitimate action of benevolence. Basically, I am not arguing about the philanthropic dimension. I do, however, insist that OM was not just an action of brotherly love, but also that, to a great extent, it did *not* take place within a theological/ecclesiastical vacuum.

## Opposing the Formation of a Hebrew Christian Church

According to Dr. Macdonald Webster, Secretary of the Church of Scotland Overseas Department in Edinburgh, it was mainly those connected with the CMJ, also known as the London Jews Society (LJS), who strongly opposed the idea of forming an independent Hebrew Christian church, namely a "church/synagogue" that would observe Jewish customs like circumcision and keep the Jewish Shabbat and festivals according to the biblical calendar. Only very few Gentile missionaries, like Webster, were willing to admit that their colleagues in the leading missionary societies to the Jews had opposed *de facto* the idea of creating a national Hebrew Christian church. Thus, for example, already in 1932, Webster wrote to Rev. E. M. Bickersteth of the Jerusalem and East Mission in London as follows: "The only Zionist or Jewish Nationalist argument against Jewish Missions to which I find no answer is the contention, or rather the

truth, that by our present methods we denationalize the Jewish people."<sup>13</sup>

Also in the early 1930s, in a confidential letter to Bickersteth, Canon Dr. H. Danby, of St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, wrote about the "real" missionary view *vis-à-vis* the feasibility of establishing an autonomous Hebrew Christian church as follows:

The missionary organizations at work among Jews are not now sympathetic to the idea, for two reasons (at least): they are familiar with the Jewish convert and are distrustful of his powers of leadership, of his team-spirit, and above all of his spiritual and mental stability; and, secondly, they are vividly alive to the danger of a Hebrew-Christian Church battenning on a missionary-minded Gentile public and depending on such support for its maintenance . . . (and) the vexed point of the danger of Judaising, and so forth.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, by the end of 1934, the Archbishop of Canterbury had decided to reject the official proposal of Sir Leon Levison, President of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, to establish a Hebrew Christian church.<sup>15</sup> However, the aspirations for and attempts toward a sovereign, Hebrew Christian church still survived among JYB, especially in Eretz Israel.<sup>16</sup>

In another letter, dated December 1937, Danby wrote to the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, Graham Brown, as follows: "And already I find myself getting too old to believe that the 'professional' Hebrew

13 Macdonald Webster to E. M. Bickersteth, November 7, 1932, The Jerusalem and the East Mission Archives 18/5, Middle East Centre, Oxford. Hereafter abbreviated as MEC J&EM.

14 H. Danby to E. M. Bickersteth, December 4, 1932, MEC J&EM 18/5.

15 "Hebrew Christians," The Bishop's Note, September 11, 1934, MEC J&EM 18/5.

16 Abram Poljak, *The Cross in the Star of David* ([London]: The Jewish Christian Community Press, 1938), 59–87; Moshe Imanuel Ben-Meir, *From Jerusalem to Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Netivyah, 2006), 108–23.

Christian will ever be anything but a pliant reed and a faulty tool.”<sup>17</sup> Then, three years later, the same bishop wrote to the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, as follows: “As I see the situation, the true policy for the Hebrew Christian is absorption into the local Christian Churches, and not by establishing a Hebrew Christian Church as a separate entity.”<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, it seems that such few, yet very clear, examples speak for themselves, and OM should be viewed with the existence of such conceptions in the background.

### Church and Missionary Conception—Not “Conspiracy”

In general, I should emphasize that I never defined OM as a “conspiracy” of the ecclesiastical institutions “against” JYB, as Kjær-Hansen has interpreted my position.<sup>19</sup>

*KKH: Nerel points out that he “never defined OM as a ‘conspiracy.’” To my mind, it is not a matter of definition. I maintain my opinion of Nerel’s handling of the sources and, therefore, stand behind what I wrote on page 60 in Mishkan 61: “In any case, Gershon Nerel’s theory—that the Hebrew Christians in Palestine were the object of a conspiracy from the church’s side—is to my mind, and with reference to the ‘authentic documents’ that I have presented, a construction which lacks historical foundations.” I will leave it to others to judge whether it is a fair representation of Nerel’s main thesis.*

I did, however, argue that the overall process of OM had once again revealed the long-lasting theological and sociological

conception of the Gentile church, mainly through missionary leaders, toward JYB. Methodologically, my research attempts to focus on history of mentality, especially through examinations of mutual perceptions, the outcome of conceptions and images, and reciprocal consciousness.<sup>20</sup>

### Messianic Jewish Sovereignty

In my opinion, the evacuation of JYB from Eretz Israel in 1948 (also referred to by other terms such as *exodus*, *flight*, or *migration*) should be evaluated in connection with the wider issue of *corporate* Messianic Jewish self-identity and Messianic Jewish *collective* sovereignty. By sovereignty, I mean both theological and organizational self-authority. This matter is closely linked to the issue of legitimization or delegitimization of a Messianic Jewish entity within the universal body of the *ecclesia* or *kehilah*. Indeed, again, one cannot ignore the benevolent and/or rescue aspects of OM, yet my point is that throughout all the stages of this eventful operation, JYB were treated in a “paternalistic” way, as being guests within the churches and not as a free national grouping and institution. In other words, JYB were not really considered by their ecclesiastical hosts as an autonomous, self-determining body. Normally, JYB were treated as “mere converts” that should sooner than later assimilate within the hosting denominations. Because of the general circumstances, JYB did not have a sovereign status that would allow them to shape their own vision and policies.<sup>21</sup> This long-lasting situation changed dramatically only after

17 H. Danby to the Bishop in Jerusalem, December 3, 1937, MEC J&EM 18/5.

18 Bishop in Jerusalem (Graham Brown) to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, December 16, 1940, MEC J&EM 18/5.

19 Kjær-Hansen, “Organizers,” 60.

20 Cf. Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2000).

21 Cf. Daniel Juster, “What Is Messianic Judaism?” *Kesher*, vol. 14 (2002): 40–49; Mark Kinzer, *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism: Redefining Christian Engagement with the Jewish People* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005).

the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948.

### Space to Respond

I need to stress the fact that following Kjær-Hansen's critique of my articles on OM in *Mishkan* 61, I was personally assured by the outgoing editors that I would be given a reasonably proportional space to respond, but eventually this did not happen. Regrettably, the place for my feedback was strictly limited to an unequal number of words, and, therefore, I was not able to adequately explain and document my arguments. I really wish that I had been given the full opportunity to share my position and allowed to fairly express my own analysis—at least with the same generous number of pages provided to Kjær-Hansen.

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[Ed. note: All future copyright will remain with *Mishkan*. Furthermore, the decision to limit the length of this response was that of the present editor alone.]

#### Author info:

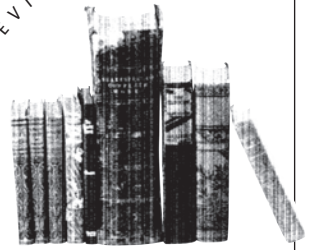
Gershon Nerel (Ph.D., Hebrew University), along with his wife, Sara, revised the Delitzsch Hebrew translation of the New Testament (Negev Version, Beer Sheva, 2003).

# Sacred Times for Chosen People

– *Development, Analysis and Missiological Significance of Messianic Jewish Holiday Practice*

reviewed by **Seth N. Klayman**

BOOK REVIEW



Scholars in a variety of disciplines and in many lands continue to evince lively interest in various aspects of the modern-day Messianic Jewish community. A recent addition to this growing corpus of academic literature is Evert W. Van de Poll's thoughtful and detailed study of Messianic Jewish holiday practice. Van de Poll endeavors to offer the first analysis of Messianic Jewish holiday practice "in a comprehensive way, as a singular subject of research" (p. 9). The *vatikim* (veterans) of today's Messianic Jewish movement and interested Jewish and Christian observers of Messianic Judaism will take particular interest in this new book.

In chapter 1, after identifying the biblical and Jewish holidays as a "major element" of the Messianic Jewish lifestyle, an important marker of cultural identity, and a significant tool for expressing theological convictions, Van de Poll poses the question

that drives his study: "How and why did this particular holiday practice develop and what is its significance?" (p. 4). In order to answer this question, he relies primarily upon studies of Messianic Judaism by external observers; Hebrew Christian and Messianic Jewish books, manuals, and articles; personal interviews with Messianic leaders; and first-hand experience of holiday observance in Messianic contexts. He conducts his evaluation from a missiological perspective (pp. 6–7).

Chapter 2, entitled "Hebrew Christians and the Feasts of Israel," contains a lengthy treatment of the historical development of Hebrew Christianity (nineteenth century–1967), which the author deems relevant because he identifies Hebrew Christianity as the historical and spiritual antecedent of Messianic Judaism. The "feasts of Israel" were a prominent subject of interest for



*Sacred Times for Chosen People:  
Development, Analysis and  
Missiological Significance of  
Messianic Jewish Holiday Practice*

**EVERT W. VAN DE POLL**

ZOETERMEER: BOEKENCENTRUM

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Hebrew Christians. In fact, Van de Poll identifies this as among the most important ways that Hebrew Christians expressed their identity. Instead of adopting rabbinic interpretations of the feasts, Hebrew Christians “reinterpreted [the feasts] in the light of the person and work of the Messiah” and “saw them as a programmatic pre-figuration of God’s salvation plan for Israel and the nations” (p. 89). Interestingly, although lively discussion of holiday observance characterized the movement, only a minority took part in actual observance. Thus, Sunday remained the day of weekly worship and fellowship for most Hebrew Christians. An exception to this general rule was observance of the Passover Seder. The development of a Jewish-Christian Seder is an innovation of the Hebrew Christian movement.

Chapter 3 is entitled “The Messianic Movement and Biblical/Jewish Holidays.” Before discussing the holidays, Van de Poll offers a detailed treatment of the emergence, development, and characteristics of Messianic Judaism (1967–present). Keeping the Jewish holidays is perhaps the most important cultural affinity marker of the Messianic movement. Whereas only a minority of Hebrew Christians celebrated the Jewish holidays, Van de Poll observes a decisive shift has taken place in that Messianic Jews do celebrate them. Van de Poll finds this phenomenon so important that he writes, “On a practical level, it is this [holiday observance], more than anything else, that makes them ‘Messianic Jewish’” (pp. 176–77).

In chapter 4, called “Analysis of Messianic Jewish Holiday Practice,” the author asks, and seeks to answer, four questions. First, “When do Messianic Jews celebrate?” Van de Poll finds that Messianic Jews do not observe the holidays in a consistent way; however, they generally observe the feasts of Leviticus 23, many celebrate minor feasts and fasts, some celebrate Israeli holidays, and the few that celebrate Christian holidays

find in them Jewish meaning and combine the two. The second question is “What do Messianic Jews celebrate?” Although Van de Poll does not find unanimity with respect to the meanings assigned to the various holidays, he concludes that Messianic Jewish redefinitions of the holidays strive to correspond to biblical teaching, and, in doing so, tell several stories—historical, typological, spiritual, and eschatological.

The author’s third question is “How do Messianic Jews celebrate?” His answer is that the “ingredients” of Messianic holiday observance are taken from four traditions: the Tanakh, New Testament, Judaism, and evangelicalism. As a result, Van de Poll concludes that “Messianic Jews are in the process of creating a new holiday tradition, a hybrid of Judaic and Evangelical Christian holiday traditions” (p. 265). At present, “the Messianic movement has not yet arrived at a unified theology, let alone a coherent praxis” (p. 265). Van de Poll’s fourth query is “Why do Messianic Jews celebrate?” He finds evidence for seven different motivations. The commonly shared motivations are: (1) to serve Messiah and express belonging to his body; and (2) to express Jewish identity. Widely held motives are to: (3) identify with the Jewish community; (4) learn and transmit essential values; (5) communicate the gospel in a Jewish context; and (6) connect churches with their Jewish roots. A minority of Messianic Jews have as a motive: (7) the desire to fulfill the covenant obligation of Israel.

The finale of the book is found in chapter 5, Van de Poll’s “Missiological Assessment.” Here, the author sets out to show whether Messianic Jewish holiday practice is a “contextualization” of the gospel and, if so, what type. He lists six degrees of contextualization: (1) acculturation (assimilation); (2) adaptation (allows for some cultural expression); (3) indigenization (indigenous congregations); (4) inculturation (faith becomes “native” to the culture); (5) cor-

relation (hidden presence of Christ in other religions); and (6) transformation (endeavor to change areas of culture incongruent with the gospel) (p. 307). Van de Poll contends that Hebrew Christians were generally characterized by adaptation, though a minority advocated inculturation. He finds inconsistency in that Hebrew Christians communicated in terms of correlation, finding Jesus present in Jewish/Torah based customs, but they did not advocate the actual lifestyle of the believer being situated in that religious context.

As for present-day Messianic Judaism, Van de Poll views the trend to be moving from indigenization to inculturation, with some evidence of correlation. A present minority view, advocated by Mark S. Kinzer, is that the correlation applies not just to biblical elements of Judaism, but also to "the prayers, rites and customs of current Judaism as a 'living religion'" (p. 318). It is too early at this moment in history for Messianic Jews to define their mission in terms of transformation, although the author notes Daniel C. Juster's concern for social justice as evidence that some are moving in that direction. The keeping of the holidays Van de Poll finds to be "the most obvious and most widely practiced form of inculturation" (p. 321). In making this claim, the author rejects the assertion, propounded most forcefully by David H. Stern, that Messianic Jewish holiday practice should be considered "restoration" as opposed to "contextualization." Van de Poll writes that such a distinction between the two is "a false one." Thus, according to Van de Poll, as inculturation takes place, "a whole new holiday tradition is in the making" (p. 321).

The study has a number of commendable features. The author is generally well-informed on the wide range of ideas and practices among Messianic Jews with respect to holiday observance, and he does not minimize the disparities. He is probably correct about the great import of holiday

observance for expressing identity, although one cannot be fully convinced that this is the most important marker given the absence of comparison with other cultural affinity markers such as lifecycle events. Van de Poll has a good feel for current discussions within the movement.

Another commendable feature of the book, especially to English-only readers, is the author's frequent allusions to, and interaction with, books and articles written in French, Dutch, and German. When relevant, Van de Poll translates quotations from these studies into English, and gives summaries of the findings. He thus provides the English reader with exposure to the ideas of Messianic leaders in European countries, and access to the findings of external observers who have published their findings in languages other than English.

Although the vast majority of the subject matter in chapters 2 (Hebrew Christianity) and 3 (Messianic Judaism) does not focus specifically on the holidays, those chapters are arguably the most informative and enlightening parts of the entire study. For example, Van de Poll sets the rise of Hebrew Christianity in the context of Jewish emancipation. After listing five generally-acknowledged Jewish responses to the challenge of emancipation, he adds a sixth response that has by-and-large escaped the attention of Jewish historiographers: Jewish people accepting Jesus as the Messiah of Israel (p. 38). This response was a result of growing interest in the personality of Jesus, a shift in anti-Semitism as it became independent of Christianity, and the rise of evangelical missions to Jews. Van de Poll's biographical summaries of a number of Hebrew Christian figures serve to inform readers of the deep historical connections between various denominations and Jewish outreach, and help Messianic Jews foster greater respect for their Hebrew Christian predecessors.

Many Messianic Jews will heartily affirm Van de Poll's admonitions to the church. He



calls Gentile Christians to “recognize the need for a Jewish expression of the Gospel,” writing that the church must become aware “of the pain she has caused her Jewish members in the past, by forcing them into a ‘Christian’ mould that was alien to their national and cultural heritage” (p. 358). He suggests that those called to outreach in Muslim contexts have much to gain from the Messianic community. Van de Poll also distinguishes between the holiday practices of the Messianic movement on the one hand, and Christians with a “reformist motive” who are highly critical of the church calendar on the other (p. 360). He asks the church to recognize that a reformist motive is not the principal intention of Messianic holiday practice.

The book does have some drawbacks. It would have benefitted from a more thorough edit; there are numerous typographical, spelling, transliteration, grammatical, and syntactical mistakes. It is very curious that in a number of places, editorial comments were not deleted from the manuscript and so the reader encounters what appear to be an editor’s questions to the author.

There are a few substantive errors and areas in need of clarification. For example, Van de Poll calls the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA) “a denomination” (p. 111), a title that the leadership of that organization would undoubtedly eschew. He portrays the Fellowship of Messianic Congregations (FMC) as currently active (p. 127), although that organization has not existed for some time (and he does not mention the Association of Messianic Congregations, which was birthed in 2003). These substantive errors are likely attributable to Van de Poll’s distance from Messianic Judaism in North America; the reader should keep in mind that it is precisely this distance that gives the book some of the commendable features highlighted above. His occasional use of non-technical language, such

as “very Jewish” (p. 231) or “very ‘rabbinic’” (p. 167) leaves the reader questioning what exactly he intends to communicate by these phrases.

There are a few areas that could have been treated with greater depth, as well as some omissions. In his otherwise superb background on Hebrew Christianity and Messianic Judaism, Van de Poll greatly minimizes the tumultuous transition from the former to the latter. One might have expected Van de Poll to evaluate, compare, or at least interact more with Messianic Jewish *siddurim*, *machzorim*, and *haggadot*. Although he refers to a few, he does not reference a recently published *siddur* and a recently published *machzor* that some Messianic congregations in North America have adopted.<sup>1</sup> Although interacting extensively with studies of Messianic Judaism by external observers, the author does not cite a study by Yaakov Ariel, which does contain some relevant material on the holidays.<sup>2</sup> Van de Poll ignores the present difference of opinion within the Messianic Jewish community concerning when to celebrate Shavuot.

There are some conclusions drawn by Van de Poll with which many Messianic Jews will disagree. One noteworthy example is the author’s assertion that Messianic Jewish holiday practice should not be viewed as “restoration” of the Jewishness of the *besorah* (gospel), but rather as a form of contextualization. It is no surprise to find that a missiologist places Messianic Jewish holiday practice squarely in the context of missions. However, had Van de Poll included

1 Barry Budoff, trans., and Kirk Gliebe, ed., *A Messianic Jewish Siddur for Shabbat* (Skokie, IL: Devar Emet Messianic Publications, 2006); Barry Budoff, trans., and Kirk Gliebe, ed., *A Messianic Jewish Machzor for the Holy Days* (Skokie, IL: Devar Emet Messianic Publications, 2007).

2 Yaakov Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America 1880–2000* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).





a survey of Jewish holiday observance in and around the New Testament era, he would have been in a better position to evaluate whether Messianic Jewish holiday practice is restoration or contextualization. Just as “contextualization” carries many different nuances of meaning within it, so too does the concept of restoration. Hence, “restoration” need not mean, as Van de Poll assumes, an exact copy of a synagogue service in the first-century CE. Restoration can also mean, in the words of missiologist Stuart Dauermann, a restoration of “the kind of intentionality shown by Jesus and the Apostles, but for a new day and context.”<sup>3</sup> Finally, the presence of a missional motivation does not necessarily preclude the possibility that a type of restoration is taking place simultaneously. After all, for those who reject supersessionism, as Van de Poll clearly does, might there be something uniquely restorative about Messianic Jewish holiday practice that does not fit neatly into a standard scale of missiological models?

Discussion of this book will help Messianic Jews develop more consistency in their holiday practice, while still allowing for healthy diversity—a change that will be a blessing to the Messianic Jewish community, our Jewish people as a whole, the body of Messiah, and all the nations of the earth.

#### **Author info:**

Seth N. Klayman (Ph.D., Duke University) is the spiritual leader of Congregation Sha'arei Shalom, a Messianic synagogue located in the Research Triangle area (Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill) of North Carolina.  
seth.klayman@shaareishalom.com

<sup>3</sup> Stuart Dauermann, *Christians and Jews Together*, Messiah and Christians Series 1 (Los Angeles: MJTI, 2009), 19.



by **Richard A. Robinson**

The reader will kindly note that it was not intended for this review to feature only books by those associated with, or published by, Jews for Jesus. But that seems to be what came across this reviewer's desk this time around; suggestions are most welcome for other titles.

Richard A. Robinson, ed., *God, Torah, Messiah: The Messianic Jewish Theology of Dr. Louis Goldberg*. San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 2009, 751 pp., \$60.00, cloth.



A few short mentions first. The late, and beloved, Dr. Louis Goldberg left at the time of his death an incomplete systematic theology text now published as *God, Torah, Messiah: The Messianic Jewish Theology of Dr. Louis Goldberg*. Covering most areas of systematic theology except—perhaps wisely!—eschatology, Dr. Goldberg focuses on the Jewish backgrounds, particularly of the doctrines of the Word of God, God, Messiah, and Atonement. But he not only gives “background”; he also constructively tries to enunciate a distinctive Messianic Jewish viewpoint that remains evangelical in faith convictions. The format, in which most Scriptures cited are reproduced in full,

should make the book accessible to many. Because it was left incomplete and does not treat in depth every topic that a full systematic theology might, the reader could also profit by having another standard theology text in hand, such as the ones by Millard Erickson or Wayne Grudem.

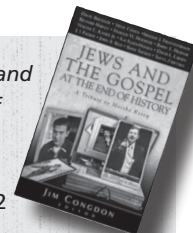
Richard A. Harvey, *Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology: A Constructive Approach*.

Carlisle: Paternoster, 2009, 352 pp., \$22.99, paper.



Richard Harvey's dissertation, previously reviewed in *Mishkan*, is now published under the title *Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology: A Constructive Approach*. This is also the first volume in a projected series, “Studies in Messianic Jewish Theology,” which Richard Harvey is also editing.

Jim Congdon, ed., *Jews and the Gospel at the End of History: A Tribute to Moishe Rosen*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009, 272 pp., \$18.99, paper.



A *festschrift* for Moishe Rosen—a *festschrift*, or “festival of writing,” being a volume of essays written in someone's honor—has been released as *Jews and the Gospel at the End of History: A Tribute to Moishe Rosen*. Divided into three sections on evangelism, ethics, and eschatology, the essays are as follows:

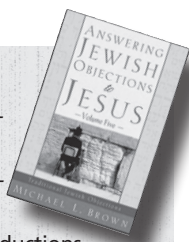
Part 1: Evangelism. “Jew and Gentile in Paul's Letter to the Romans,” J. I. Packer. “Paul's Pastoral Concern for the Jewish People,” Harold W. Hoehner. “Lonely Prophets: Eccentricity and the Call of God Through the Ages,” Ruth Tucker. “Opportunity, Opposition, and Obedience: Observations on Jewish Evangelism,” Steve Cohen.

Part 2: Ethics. "Melchior Tschoudy: Failure—Crook—or Missionary Ordinary? A Study of the London Jews Society's First Emissary to the Levant in the Nineteenth Century," Kai Kjær-Hansen. "Ethics and Morality in Mission Work," John Reid. "Jewish-Gentile Couples: Some Ethical Questions Toward a New Approach in Jewish Evangelism," Tuvya Zaretsky. "The Mosaic Law and Christian Ethics: Obligation or Fulfillment?" Jim Congdon. "The Current State of Messianic Jewish Thought," Richard Harvey.

Part 3: Eschatology. "Ezekiel 37 and the Promise-plan of God: The Divine Restoration of Israel," Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. "The Basis of the Second Coming of the Messiah," Arnold Fruchtenbaum. "Evangelism and the Future of Israel," Barry Horner. "The Evangelization and Conversion of the Jews in the Tribulation: An Inquiry and a Proposal," David Larsen. "Jesus' Return, Our Blessed Hope," David Brickner.

Among the more delightful essays is Ruth Tucker's, on God's use of "eccentrics" in the Bible and in history, including—in addition to Moïse—Moses, Paul, St. Francis, Martin Luther, Dwight Moody, and a Baptist pastor who shot and killed a man in, it was ruled, self-defense! According to the back cover, "the trajectory of this book moves from instruction to hope," and readers should be able to take away encouragement and inspiration from the fourteen essays, all of which are preceded by photographs from Moïse's life.

Michael L. Brown,  
*Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus*, vol. 5,  
*Traditional Jewish Objections*. San Francisco, CA:  
Purple Pomegranate Productions,  
2010, 341 pp., \$22.00, paper.



The long-awaited fifth volume of Michael Brown's apologetics series is finally com-

pleted. Probably because of its niche market, sales of the previous four volumes were apparently not deemed sufficient for Baker Books, which published volumes 1–4, to also pick up this fifth volume. For those in Jewish missions and witnessing to Jewish friends, however, this book is indispensable.

Those acquainted with the other four volumes will know that nothing in Jewish apologetics has been done on this scale before in modern times, and the last substantial work of this nature was A. Lukyn-Williams' *A Manual of Christian Evidences for Jewish People* from the early twentieth century, now outdated though still valuable.

The present volume deals largely with the matters of the Oral Law and tradition. Some of this will be especially relevant to Orthodox and Conservative Jews who believe the Oral Law was given at Sinai, or who at least place a high value on tradition. But even secular Jews will fall back on some of the eighteen objections presented here.

Some think that "narrative" and "story" have replaced argumentation in the post-modern age. That has been the subject of some debate, though, and certainly in Jewish circles—particularly in the Orthodox world—argumentation and logic continue to hold their place. The entire set of *Answering Jewish Objections* is recommended for becoming acquainted with the objections Jewish people raise, for being equipped to respond, and for commending the good news to Jewish friends.

Full indexes are included. The eighteen objections are as follows:

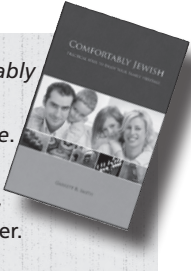
- 6.1. We have an unbroken, authoritative chain of oral tradition going back to Moses. Who are you to teach us what our Bible says?
- 6.2. On several occasions, the Written Torah makes reference to "Torahs" in the plural, meaning two Torahs. This obviously refers to the Written and Oral Torahs.

- 6.3. The Torah (along with the rest of the Hebrew Bible) is unintelligible without the rabbinic traditions.
- 6.4. According to Deuteronomy 17:8–13, the rabbis have the sole authority to interpret the Law and to tell us how to live. Whoever refuses to listen to them is guilty of a serious sin in the sight of God.
- 6.5. We have an eternal covenant that was given at Mount Sinai, and anyone who tells us to deviate from that covenant is either a false prophet, a false teacher, or both.
- 6.6. Various passages in the Tanakh demonstrate that biblical figures such as Daniel followed the rabbinic traditions.
- 6.7. Modern computer studies have demonstrated that the Torah and the Oral Law are divinely inspired.
- 6.8. Our tradition is totally self-sufficient—our prayer books, our commentaries, our law codes, our customs. We don't need your Jesus.
- 6.9. Judaism is anything but a dead religion. It has inspired and preserved millions of our people for thousands of years.
- 6.10. According to Deuteronomy 30:11–14, it is not difficult to keep the Torah, which is God's special gift to Israel. This is completely contrary to the Christian view that sees the Law as an impossible-to-observe burden and as a curse.
- 6.11. The only identifiable Jews today are those whose parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents rejected Christianity (or secularism). Only those who were traditional Jews have survived as a people.
- 6.12. Judaism is a unique religion. Of all the religions of the world, only Judaism began with a public revelation witnessed by the entire nation. No one and nothing can alter that fact or change the substance of that revelation.
- 6.13. Judaism is a rational, reasonable religion. It says, "Use your mind," not, "Shut off your mind."
- 6.14. Anything good in the New Testament can already be found in Rabbinic Judaism;

anything new in the New Testament is not good.

- 6.15. Jesus himself taught in Matthew 23 that his Jewish followers were to submit to the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees—in other words, to follow the Oral Law.
- 6.16. Traditional Jews are the people of the Book. Read the Hebrew Scriptures and ask yourself, "Who follows these laws and commandments?" Traditional Jews.
- 6.17. According to Psalm 19, the Torah is able to save and convert the soul.
- 6.18. You can have your Jesus. I'll keep my Judaism. You have nothing I need or want.

Michael Brown's Web sites include [realmesiah.askdrbrown.org](http://realmesiah.askdrbrown.org) and [www.askdrbrown.org](http://www.askdrbrown.org).



Garrett R. Smith. *Comfortably Jewish: Practical Ways to Enjoy Your Family Heritage*. San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 2010, 134 pp., \$13.00, paper.

Garrett Smith, a Jewish believer in Jesus formerly on staff with Jews for Jesus, is currently Director of Outreach and Spiritual Formation at Newton Presbyterian Church in the Boston area as well as heading the Celebrate Life ministry which focuses on ministry to "Jewish intercultural couples." His first book emerges from his and his wife's experiences as children of Jewish intermarried couples who have found meaning in their Jewishness and find it important to pass it on to their children as well. The audience is broadly all those who have in common that "even though you are not strongly involved with the Jewish community, you still care about being Jewish. You may not be sure what that means, but it is who you are" (p. 3). The goal is to help such people be "comfortable" with their Jewish

heritage, defined here in cultural rather than religious terms.

While I may not be a professional guitarist or even anything close to it, I feel comfortable picking up a guitar. This is a book about learning to feel comfortable with your Jewishness and how to help your kids feel comfortable with theirs. When I walk into a music store, I don't understand most of what is going on, but I understand a little. I can pick up a guitar and strum a few chords. It is enough to make me like walking into music stores rather than feel intimidated by them. I hope this book will help you and your children feel good about being connected to, rather than intimidated by, the Jewish world. My goal is to help you understand a bit of what is going on, enough that you and your kids could "pick up a guitar" if you wanted to. (p. 1)

After the introduction, chapters explore the nature of Jewish identity, Jewishness in the home, the larger Jewish world, holidays and life cycle events, ending with Garrett's story of his own journey. Recipes, notes, and an index round out the book. Each section also includes family activities, such as these in the section on visiting Israel:

- TAKE A FAMILY TRIP!!! But do some thinking before about what kind of experiences you want your child to have beyond simple tourist destinations. For instance, do you want to spend a Shabbat evening with an Orthodox Jewish family? Are there some lectures you want your children to hear? Try to make time for real interactions with the people, rather than rushing around in a tourist bus.
- Have your teenager or college-age child take an extended trip to:
  - live on a kibbutz or moshav
  - go to a Hebrew language *ulpan* (school)
  - take a semester abroad in Israel

- Get *The Case for Israel* by Alan Dershowitz and discuss some of his ideas with your kids. (p. 53)

Throughout the book, the author encourages families to "have fun" as they explore Jewishness. Written in a casual and engaging style, the book interacts also with feelings of ambivalence towards one's Jewishness and with the need to consider the culture of the non-Jewish spouse and relatives. It is enjoyable, practical, and comes from real-world experience. The laid back and non-threatening tone commends it for those in ministry, as well as for intermarried couples and those raised in an intermarried home, especially those who may be ambivalent towards exploring their Jewishness.

Garrett Smith's Web sites are [www.celibratelife.us](http://www.celibratelife.us) and [www.comfortablyjewish.com](http://www.comfortablyjewish.com).

#### Author info:

Richard A. Robinson (Ph.D., Westminster Theological Seminary) is Senior Researcher with Jews for Jesus. [rich.robinson@jewsforjesus.org](mailto:rich.robinson@jewsforjesus.org)



by **Knut Høyland**

*This issue of "News from the Israeli Scene" will consist of a presentation of one of the new ministries offering theological training for local Messianic believers in Israel—the Haifa Theological Institute.*

Haifa Theological Institute (HTI) was founded in 2008 at a symbolic meeting in historic Zichron Yaakov in order to meet the current needs of the Russian-speaking Israeli believing community. Such action was taken at the initiative of four assemblies in the Haifa area: Even Ezer Congregation, pastored by Gennady Shykhovtsov; Shavei Tsion Congregation, pastored by Leon Mazin; Israel Hai Congregation, pastored by Gleb Samburski; Mayim Zormim Congregation, pastored by Rostislav Kuharovsky; with the administrative assistance of Dr. Ilya Lizorkin.

HTI primarily exists to assist Russian-speaking congregations and believers in the north of Israel. It does this by encouraging their ongoing grounding in the Word of God so that their service may increase to the glory of Israel's God, as well as for the good of all of Israeli society and the world at large.

The HTI board of directors is encouraged by the progress of this experimental program. The board celebrates the progress of the program as ancient Israelites did when they set up stones of remembrance—the Lord has led us thus far. This means that the

board is determined to take this program one step at a time, slowly and cautiously determining God's leading for its future steps and direction. This may be a temporary program, meeting a short-term need, or it may be something that will continue for the long term. Only time will tell.

HTI is set up to be an independent school (it draws no direct funding from overseas) that seeks to incorporate the best that Jewish and Christian theologies have to offer. While HTI is fully led and governed by the board of directors, most of whom are leaders in Haifa's thriving congregations, HTI occasionally seeks out wisdom from other respected leaders in the believing community in the Land. Currently, the advisory board includes such leaders as Lisa Loden, Beit Asaph Messianic Congregation and Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary; Eitan Shishkoff, Tents of Mercy Network; Haavard Kleppe, Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel; and Azar Ajaj, Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary.

HTI currently does not offer degrees, and it has no intention of offering them. However, it concentrates on providing excellent education at accessible locations and with very affordable tuition. This program (Certificate in Biblical Studies) is a two-year evening modular program and is led by local and international teachers. The program is designed to equip, mature, and sharpen the hearts and minds of ministry leaders for a deeper, more informed, and fruitful service in the Lord. It is our hope that some of our students will continue to study in accredited institutions towards a degree at either Israel College of the Bible or Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary, here in the Land, or abroad.

Teachers are selected on the basis of their broad theological affiliations, among other things, in order to provide a true educational atmosphere for growing and building one's individual theology. Responsibility for working out controversial issues of doctrine is left to the teaching elders in local congregations (all students must receive the unconditional

blessing of their local pastor(s) to take part in the entire program).

Currently, local and visiting lecturers include:

#### *Bible*

Akiva Cohen, Ph.D. (Tel Aviv University, Israel)  
 Noel Rabinowitz, Ph.D. (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, USA)  
 Robert Vasholz, Th.D. (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)  
 Darrell Bock, Ph.D (University of Aberdeen, Scotland)  
 Vladimir Pikman, Th.M. (Dallas Theological Seminary, USA)

#### *History*

Ronald Weinbaum, M.A. (Drew University, USA)  
 Ilya Lizorkin, Ph.D. (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)  
 David Friedman, Ph.D. (The California Graduate School of Theology, USA)

#### *Theology*

Daniel Juster, Th.D. (New Covenant International Seminary, USA)  
 Douglas Kittredge, D.Min. (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, USA)

#### *Practical Theology*

Eitan Shishkoff, Director of Tents of Mercy Network, Israel  
 Greg Zhelezny, M.A.R. (Westminster Theological Seminary, USA)  
 Peter Alwinson, D.Min. (Reformed Theological Seminary, USA)  
 Shmuel Aweida, Th.M. (Free Church Theological Seminary, Norway)

#### *Linguistics*

Inna Pikman, M.A.B.E.L. (Dallas Theological Seminary, USA)

Some core courses include:

- Introduction to the New Testament
- Introduction to the Hebrew Bible
- Apologetics
- Biblical Hebrew
- Jewish History
- Biblical Greek
- Leadership Development
- Church History
- Counseling
- Introduction to Theological Studies
- Biblical Hermeneutics
- Introduction to Second Temple Jewish Literature
- Preaching and Communication

**Cost:** A total of ten courses are required to complete the Certificate in Biblical Studies program (students can choose which ten they want to take). The cost of each course is only New Israeli Shekel (NIS) 100 per person or NIS 150 per family. The cost is designed to make this program available to almost everyone.

**Language of Instruction:** Depending on the instructor, courses are offered in Russian when the instructor is able to give his or her lectures in the Russian language, or in Hebrew or English with Russian translation. HTI also offers these courses by extension (on the internet and on DVD) in other countries.

**Lecture Series:** Additionally, HTI hosts the John Lightfoot<sup>1</sup> (1602–1675) Lecture Series in historical theology and the Henry Dunster<sup>2</sup> (1609–1659) Lecture Series in community development. These series host distinguished lecturers such as Prof. James Charlesworth, Dr. David Stern, Dr. Michael Brown, and others, as they come to Israel for personal or professional reasons unrelated to HTI.

**Contact:** For more information, visit [www.htiinstitute.co.il](http://www.htiinstitute.co.il) or write to Dr. Ilya Lizorkin at [Ilya.Lizorkin@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:Ilya.Lizorkin@mail.huji.ac.il).

- 1 A Christian rabbinical scholar, vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge, and an original member of the Westminster Assembly.
- 2 A Christian Hebraist and the first President of Harvard College (now Harvard University).

#### **Author info:**

Knut Høyland is International Director of Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies, Jerusalem.  
[knut@caspari.com](mailto:knut@caspari.com)

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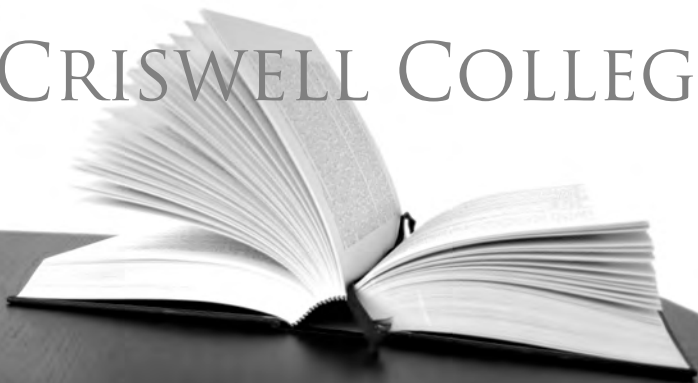
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