

The Antidote to Anti-Semitism

by Dr. J. Vernon McGee



Published and distributed by
Thru the Bible Radio Network
P.O. Box 7100
Pasadena, California 91109-7100
(800) 65-BIBLE
www.ttb.org

Unless noted otherwise, all Scripture references are from the *New Scofield Reference Bible*.

After the experience of the Holocaust under the Hitler regime, you would think that the world would have moved away from anti-Semitism. But fresh outbreaks are appearing in many countries. With Nazi atrocities so fresh in our minds, we are shocked and startled by this. The concentration camps and ovens of Dachau are still grim reminders of the awful thing known as anti-Semitism.

There was the wholesale slaughter of a race and of a people who numbered about seventeen million at the beginning of the Hitler regime. By the end of World War II they were reduced to eleven million. Not all of them were slain in Germany but in other countries of Europe, also. It was unparalleled in the history of the world – with two possible exceptions, as we shall see.

The leaders of the world are puzzled by the manifestation of anti-Semitism. They do not know how to explain it. It has been interesting to read the reactions and attitudes toward it. Some dismiss it with a wave of a hand as the work of cranks, that it is sort of like a bad dream that will go away in the morning. Others attribute it to Communism or to some other ideology that foments strife between races and among different classes of this earth. Others consider it as one of the first signs of a diabolical organization with a sinister plot, global in extent, and working under cover. Some of us have reason to believe that there is such an organization.

Regardless of the cause of the recent outbreak, no responsible leader today thinks that it should be ignored. All agree that it should be stamped out as you would stamp out a forest fire. They are afraid it might spread, that it might become very serious, which it could. Because of world reaction to it and the fact that so many leaders were firm in their statements after World War II, it disappeared almost as suddenly as it appeared. And it went under cover, of course.

No real Christian today who knows his Bible can have any part in anti-Semitism, nor can condone it on any basis whatsoever. Not only do we deplore it, but we are to speak out against it. The Christian's attitude can be expressed in Clara Bernhardt's lovely little poem:

For Israel's Peace

Not just today, but every day
For the peace of Israel we must pray.
Driven and homeless, lonely, too,
Their only crime to be born a Jew.
Across our world resounds the cry
Of a stricken race which cannot die.
Through centuries the nations fall,
But Jews still weep at the Wailing Wall.
O Father above, the debt we owe
To this race should cause our prayers to flow
In a daily stream of faith that they
Shall find release from hatred's flay.
Give us the vision, Lord, to see
That love for Jews is love for Thee.

It is said of Dr. J. Hudson Taylor – and it is one of the many lovely stories that have gathered around this person – that he, as founder of the China Inland Mission, would send an offering on the first of every year to John Wilkinson, the founder of Midway Mission to the Jews in London. With it would be a note reading, “This is the first gift that's come in for the new year, and since the Scripture says ‘to the Jew first,’ I'm sending it to you.”

Then Mr. Wilkinson would always write out a personal check and send it back to Mr. Taylor with just the words, “Also to the Gentiles.”

Certainly that *is* the Christian attitude and *should be* the Christian’s attitude in our day.

What should Christians do relative to anti-Semitism? It is hopeless to take any overt action, but I believe the primary step that every believer in Christ should take today is to understand the biblical background for anti-Semitism and to understand what is the underlying cause of it.

As you know, if you go to a doctor, he will make a diagnosis of your case before he writes a prescription. Right now the doctors are a little puzzled by new viruses that are appearing in our midst, and they are not sure just how to treat them because they do not know the ideology of the diseases. Anti-Semitism is somewhat like a virus. We need to know its history, its background.

Let us go back over four thousand years to the twelfth chapter of the Book of Genesis and read one of the most remarkable statements that has ever been given. It could be found only in the inspired Word of God.

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. (Genesis 12:1, 2)

Note particularly the next verse:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 12:3)

Four thousand years ago, God called a man by the name of Abram (known to us as Abraham) who was not actually a Jew but belonged to the Shemites that were living in a place called Ur of the Chaldees, down in the Euphrates valley. Evidently he had been brought up in a home of idolatry and had become a successful and prosperous businessman.

When God called him, He made to that man a threefold promise: 1) I am going to make your name great. And more people today have heard of Abraham than of any man that has ever lived on top-side of this earth, including the Lord Jesus Christ. 2) I am going to give you a land. I am going to bring from you a unique nation. And 3) I am going to make you a blessing to all the nations of the world. Now in the twentieth century we can see that through Jesus Christ this promised blessing has come to all the nations of the earth.

Then God, evidently anticipating anti-Semitism, said to this man Abraham, “I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse him that curseth thee.”

Anti-Semitism, from Haman down to Hitler, demonstrates the accuracy of the statement that God curses those who curse the Jew. Haman bore testimony to it! And Hitler bore testimony to the truth of that statement, you may be sure. History, for four thousand years, has proven the accuracy of it. And by this principle for four thousand years God has been judging the nations. Nations have risen and fallen on this principle.

Mark Twain, speaking of the Jew, put it in a very accurate and very lovely way:

He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to

dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his Immortality? (From "Concerning the Jews," *Harper's Magazine*, March, 1898)

Mark Twain, as an agnostic, never had the answer to that. However, the Word of God has the answer to the question that he raised. But certainly his statement concerning them is accurate. In our day there are many nations that lie in rubble and ruin, and there are other nations that have fallen to the status of third-rate nations, and one valid explanation of their plight can be explained in anti-Semitism. Most nations have indulged in it to a degree. Some have become actually addicted to it. And you find many of them have declined, and they have gone down primarily because of this awful thing.

The king of Egypt could not diminish him.
The waters of the Red Sea could not drown him.
Balaam could not curse him.
The great fish could not digest him.
The fiery furnace could not devour him.
The gallows of Haman could not hang him.
The nations of the world could not assimilate him.
The dictators cannot annihilate him.

It is interesting that a minority group like this retained its identity for 2,500 years without a flag and without a government. No other ethnic group has remained intact that long. Israelites stand as a miracle people throughout the world today.

God had made it very clear that they would survive:

For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee; though I make a full end of all nations to which I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.
(Jeremiah 30:11)

God has punished them severely on several occasions, but He will not allow anyone to destroy them.

Their story begins when Jacob was forced by famine to take his family down into the land of Egypt. He went against his own will and actually against his better judgment, but God sent him down there. And then began that long story, known as the story of the wandering Jew. Down in the land of Egypt he was soon put into slavery, relegated to the brickyards of Egypt. In spite of all of that, while only seventy souls went down into the land of Egypt, about seven million came out of the land of Egypt!

To limit their rapid growth, Pharaoh put into practice an ancient form of birth control; it was known then as murder. He ordered that the male children be killed at birth. It did not work. In fact, God used it to bring to the fore the very deliverer himself, Moses!

Then they entered the Promised Land. After they had been in the Land of Promise for about five hundred years, they became a world power. Under David they became the greatest power in western Asia.

As they grew secure and prosperous, God began to warn them that if they continued in idolatry, out of which He had delivered them when they had left the land of Egypt, if they continued to go on in their rebellious way against Him, He would send them into captivity. Again and again He called them to turn to Him. But they did not!

Then the last warning was given. The ten northern tribes went into Assyrian captivity; the two tribes in the south went into Babylonian captivity. After seventy years and more, only a remnant of them returned. And when they returned to their land, they began to feel the hatred and bitterness of their enemies; even their neighbors became their greatest enemies again.

Then they entered the period that we know as the intertestamental period. There is no record of it in either the Old or the New Testament. The New Testament opens without any reference to it at all. It was a period of approximately four hundred years in which heaven was silent. There was no revelation from God to His people. During those terrible years people were put between the upper and nether millstones – in the south Egypt under Ptolemy and in the north Syria under the Seleucidae dynasty began to push in upon these people, and their persecution climaxed during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes of the Seleucidae dynasty in Syria. The atrocities that he performed when he took Jerusalem are absolutely unspeakable. Daniel had prophesied of him in the eighth chapter of the Old Testament Book of Daniel. During this period the Maccabee family arose to attempt to defend their own people. The intertestamental years were the time of Israel's greatest anguish.

When the New Testament opens, you find them under the iron heel of Rome, helpless and hopeless. This is revealed in the very fact that the virgin Mary, "great with child," had to go with the other descendants of David down to Bethlehem to be enrolled because a brutal Caesar did not care whether a Jewish maiden lived or died. But God was accomplishing His purpose. God had said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), and God uses even the wrath of a king to accomplish His purpose. Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

My friend, this was Israel's golden hour. This was the great moment towards which the Old Testament had been moving. Their Messiah had come! The hope of the Old Testament rested in *Him*.

He offered Himself to His nation as the Deliverer, as the King, and as the Savior. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, He said, "I have come only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. I have come as their Messiah. I have come to present Myself to them" (see Matthew 15:24). Then He made a public offer of Himself when He rode into Jerusalem, and the crowds shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (Matthew 21:9, 15). But He was officially rejected by the religious rulers.

Nevertheless, the greatest friend that the Jew has ever had was Jesus. He stood, looking over the city of Jerusalem and wept, saying:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! (Luke 13:34)

When we see what happened to Jerusalem after that, we understand why He wept.

Let me pause to inject another thought. A great many Christians get the wrong impression, thinking that because the nation officially rejected Jesus that the Jews rejected Him. May I say to you that when the nation rejected Him officially, He turned and dealt personally with the individual. No longer did He preach “the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” the Messianic Kingdom which had been prophesied in the Old Testament and which He came to fulfill. Having been officially rejected, He turned to His own people and said literally, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28), for He was a Savior, and He was the Savior for them.

Many Jews turned to Him. After His death upon the cross and His resurrection from the dead and His ascension back into heaven, *multitudes* of Jews believed in Christ. In the Book of Acts we are told that even a multitude of *priests* turned to Christ! Sometimes we forget that the early church was one hundred percent Jewish! And in Jerusalem, until about A.D. 100, no one but Jews were in the church. My friend, had you and I as Gentiles been in Jerusalem in the days of the Apostle Paul, I don’t think that either of us could have joined that church. We never would have gotten in because we were Gentiles. The early church was one hundred percent Jewish. All the apostles were Jews. The New Testament, as well as the Old Testament, was written by Jewish writers.

Through the centuries there has been a remnant of Jewish believers “according to grace” (see Romans 11:5). God said that never, never in the history of the Hebrew race would there come a time when there would not be a remnant of them that were obedient to Him. And there is a remnant today. Always there has been a believing remnant of these people.

The greatest Jew of them all was Paul, the apostle to the *Gentiles*. If you have never thanked God for him, you ought to. The day he crossed from Asia Minor to bring the gospel into Europe, my ancestors were still naked, filthy savages! And yours were probably in the cave next to mine! What a debt we owe to that man. Listen to him in Romans 11:1 –

I say, then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Paul never disowned the fact that he was an Israelite. He said, “I am a Jew. Not only am I a Jew, but I can also trace my ancestry back to Abraham. And I know what tribe I belong to – it is the tribe of Benjamin.” That is Paul the apostle.

In A.D. 70, Titus the Roman leveled a siege against Jerusalem. Josephus tells us that at that time there were twelve million Jews in Palestine. Two million lived around the Sea of Galilee. This helps us understand why our Lord spent so much time around the Sea of Galilee. In His day there must have been two and one half million Jews living in that area. He was ministering to them. You remember what He had to say concerning the city of Capernaum:

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hades; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.
(Matthew 11:23, 24)

And that city was held responsible and was judged. No wonder He wept over Jerusalem, for inside the city walls there were a million and a half Jews. It is estimated that one million of them starved to death! The dead bodies were thrown outside the city walls. And inside even human flesh was eaten in a desperate effort to stay alive. It was a time of great terror and a time that they have never forgotten.

In the economy of God, Rome's hatred of the Jew marked the downfall of that nation. Soon the Roman Empire fell apart, and the barbarians poured in.

However, anti-Semitism did not cease. The Inquisition in Spain was not leveled primarily against Protestants but against Jews. And Spain, which had been a first-rate power in Europe (remember that under the Spanish flag the western hemisphere was discovered), Spain became a third-rate power, and it is that today.

We felt so sorry for little Belgium during World War I. Go back and look at little Belgium's history and note the wave of anti-Semitism that had swept through that nation. God says, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee" (Genesis 12:3).

Keep your hand off them as a nation. Keep your hand off them as a people. England even had a touch of anti-Semitism. It is revealed in Shakespeare's play, *The Merchant of Venice*, for there are two characters that depict the Jew – one is the wandering Jew and the other is Shylock. And England is no longer a first-rate power.

In our day there are at least twelve million Jews in the world. Five million of them are in the United States; two million of them are in Russia. And if you do not believe that Communism practices anti-Semitism, several years ago the *U.S. News & World Report* carried the following item:

Inside the Soviet world anti-Semitism is an old story. Moscow turns it on and off whenever it suits its purpose. Right now Communist Romania is about to try twenty-five Jews for Zionist espionage. Other Jews are being rounded up. This fits in with Moscow's plan to woo Arabs and muscle into the Middle East....

Through personal reports we get from individuals, we know that the two million Jews inside Russia today are experiencing anti-Semitic persecution.

And we are alarmed to see anti-Semitism rearing its ugly head in our own American culture.

One and a half million Jews are in Palestine, hated by their neighbors. The Arab world is united in only one purpose, and that is to push the little nation of Israel into the sea.

Maybe today anti-Semitism is just a rash. But if it is, it is symptomatic of a deadly virus. And that's not the end, by any means. Our Lord said in the Olivet Discourse that the things which would characterize this age and would finally head it up will come to full fruition in the Great Tribulation Period which will come upon the world after the true church is removed from this earth. The Lord Jesus warned, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake" (Matthew 24:9).

When the church is removed from this earth – and the church today, the true church, is a friend of the Jew – there will break out worldwide anti-Semitism, a hatred the like of which has never been exhibited before! Finally God will intervene. The Lord Jesus, coming personally to this earth, will be the only one who will be able to deliver Israel at that time. Zechariah in his prophecy (chapters 12 and 13) speaks of that day when there shall be opened in the house of David a fountain for cleansing and for sin, and they will look upon Him – Jesus Christ – whom they have pierced.

The enmity today against Jews is supernatural. All anti-Semitism has a supernatural basis. You say to me, “What is in back of it?” I say to you that it is *satanic*. And I would like to confirm that statement with one Scripture:

And when the dragon [Satan] saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman [Israel] who brought forth the male child [Christ]. (Revelation 12:13)

That is carrying out the words of our Lord, “Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake” (Matthew 24:9).

My beloved, that speaks of the day when worldwide anti-Semitism shall sweep over the earth. It is a supernatural, satanic, diabolical, awful thing today. No Christian, I repeat, should have any part in it.

Now I know that there are folk who are saying that the Jews are in a minority group with very well-defined aggressive and materialistic characteristics. Probably that is true. But did you know that there are other minority groups that have equally well-defined characteristics which are equally as unlovely? I am part Scottish, and I suppose that some of the most unlovely people who have ever been in this world have been Scots, although some of them are very lovely, indeed. But, my beloved, you don’t hate a race because of a racial characteristic.

You and I are living in a day when God has put all mankind on one basis, one basis alone. Listen to Paul, who claimed Abraham as his father and Benjamin as his tribe:

What then? Are we [Jews] better than they [Gentiles]? No, in no way; for we have before proved both Jews and Greeks [Gentiles], that they are all under sin. (Romans 3:9)

He goes on to say that you and I are living in a day when there is *no* difference in mankind before God. And when you look at a person and you see something in him that is unlovely, remember that when God sees *you*, He sees you ten thousand times more unlovely than you see that individual. He sees you and me as lost sinners, repulsive and repugnant and not *fit* for heaven. “So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy” (Romans 9:16). That is, neither your *effort* nor *who you are* constitutes the basis of your salvation. The basis of your salvation is in a God who is showing mercy to sinners – and He says, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). *All* have sinned. There is a universal brotherhood of man – a brotherhood of *sinners*! All are unlovely to God. All are absolutely deserving of a lost eternity. And God says,

As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. (Romans 9:13-16)

God is not unrighteous in His dealings, my beloved. I do not know why God is charged with unfairness. For example, when the President of the United States makes a trip and visits certain countries, no one says that he is doing wrong by not visiting *all* countries. But when God in His infinite mercy reaches down and saves somebody, there are those who say, “God is unrighteous.” My friend, it is blasphemy to say that God is unrighteous! Regardless of what you

and I think, God is *right* in what He is doing. And you and I are *wrong* if we think otherwise. God says, “I don’t accept anything from you – whether you are a Jew or Gentile – you are a lost sinner in My sight. I save you on one basis alone, and that is by your *faith* in Jesus Christ.” God is righteous in doing that.

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, and he went out preaching the gospel to them. Somewhere in Asia Minor he met a young man by the name of Titus. Paul, no longer a proud, bigoted Pharisee, faithfully preached the gospel, and Titus, a young Gentile, turned to Christ. Later Paul wrote to him a letter. Note his salutation: “To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior” (Titus 1:4). Paul, a Jew, said to Titus, a young Gentile, “You are my *son* in the faith.” Isn’t that lovely?

In Christ the “middle wall of partition” (Ephesians 2:14), the dividing wall, is broken down so that there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one in *Christ*. The Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest friend either Jew or Gentile has ever had. He is our Savior from sin.