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The Chosen People

SERVING THE JEWISH PEOPLE SINCE 1894



INSIDE:

ANTI-ZIONISM AND ANTISEMITISM

SIMON, FIONA & EMILY REPORTS

ISRAEL TOUR!

COMPASSION &
THE IMAGE OF ISRAEL



ANTISEMITISM TODAY

Dr. Mitch Glaser
International
Director
Chosen People
Ministries



Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism

Shalom. I pray the Lord is blessing your life, family, and ministry so far in 2019! We are already enjoying the celebration of our 125th year of faithful ministry for the Lord among the Jewish people. I hope you will join our celebration by joining us for the Shalom New York outreach or the tour to Israel (see page 6).

Antisemitism: The Oldest Hatred

Allow me to open my heart to you. Like many others, I was badly shaken when, on the Sabbath day of October 27, 2018, the horrible murders of eleven Jewish people in Pittsburgh grabbed our attention and directed it to the growing problem of modern and murderous antisemitism. Antisemitism, called “the oldest hatred,” has been around for thousands of years. And today it seems to be intensifying.

Social commentators, both within and outside of the Jewish community, have many theories about this, but they leave out what I believe is the most critical reason of all. **Antisemitism is the devil’s invention!** When God called Abram to be the father of His chosen people (Genesis 12:1–3), Satan made the Jewish people the target of his fury. The evil one has tried to annihilate the Jewish people in every age and in endless ways to prevent God from using us as His instruments of redemption through the Jewish Messiah. We know the devil will not prevail, although that does not prevent him from continuing to try.

Sadly, one of his ugliest tactics has been to use the Church to promote the hatred of Jewish people.

Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism

Of course, the picture is not entirely dark. We rejoice in the establishment of modern Israel as a sovereign nation and home for the Jewish people. The State of Israel rose out of the ashes of the Holocaust to provide the Jewish people with a safe haven and a bastion of protection against antisemitism.

Although God’s choice of the promised land is ancient and rooted in the Scriptures (Genesis 15:18–21), the vision for the modern State of Israel is the fruit of the Zionist movement founded in the late 19th century and led by the great Viennese journalist Theodor Herzl. Yet, this love for Zion is not new. It

has been the cherished hope of both Jews and Christians for centuries because of the prophetic biblical teaching describing the return of the Jewish people to the land of promise found throughout the Old Testament (Ezekiel 36:22–34).

In fact, some of the earliest and greatest supporters of the Zionist movement were *Christian Zionists* who took the Bible literally. They fervently believed the Jewish people would return to the land of Israel.

Yet, today we see a rising tide of Christians who do not believe that the foundations of Zionism and the modern State of Israel established in 1948 are biblical. In light of the growing criticism of Israel among some Christians and the hierarchies of their churches, the question I want us to consider briefly is whether we believe anti-Zionism and, in particular, Christian anti-Zionism, is antisemitic in nature.

Can we equate anti-Zionism with antisemitism?

I would suggest the answer is *sometimes* yes, especially when those opposed to the State of Israel support the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement and groups like Students for Justice in Palestine, which harass and persecute Israeli speakers on university campuses across America and around the globe.

The answer is also sometimes no!

Some Christians simply do not interpret the Bible as teaching that the land of Israel ultimately belongs to the Jewish people. This is unfortunate, but should not necessarily be equated with antisemitism. However, when criticism of Israel specifically leads to hateful language and actions directed toward Israelis, and Jewish people in general, then I believe the line is crossed.

This is when anti-Zionism becomes antisemitism!

Our Response to Anti-Zionism

Again, we ask the question, Is anti-Zionism antisemitic (especially the Christian version of anti-Zionism)? In order to answer this question, we must begin with a clear definition of biblical Zionism, which is sometimes misunderstood, especially by the Christian anti-Zionists who might be more influenced by culture than by what they read in the Bible.

Biblical Zionism holds that God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people through an unconditional, irrevocable covenant made between Himself and our forefather, Abraham, as found in many chapters of Genesis (12, 15, 17, 22, 35).



September 2018: Campaign in London on the day on which the Labor party NEC was expected to adopt the IHRA definition and examples of antisemitism.

Mark Kerrison/Alamy Live News

The belief that God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people is still well-accepted by the majority of Christians in the United States, as shown by a recent survey of evangelicals (sponsored by Chosen People Ministries and Joel Rosenberg and implemented by LifeWay Research,) entitled *Evangelical Attitudes Toward Israel and the Peace Process*.

The Survey reports that over 80 percent believe the Abrahamic Covenant continues, and over 80 percent also see the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948 as the fulfillment of prophecy.

Yet, according to Bob Smietana, who reported on the data discovered by this survey, negativity toward Israel and the hope of Zion seems to be influencing the younger generation of Christians.

Older American evangelicals love Israel—but many younger evangelicals simply don't care, according to a new survey from Nashville-based LifeWay Research. Three-quarters (77 percent) of evangelicals 65 and older say they support the existence, security and prosperity of Israel. That drops to 58 percent among younger evangelicals, those 18 to 34.

Our younger generation was born years after the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel, and they do not have the same theological or emotional sympathies as those who were born closer to this time period. They did not grow up during the days when a much larger coalition of Arab nations tried to destroy Israel or when groups like the Palestinian Liberation Organization murdered Israeli athletes and began terrorist attacks within Israel. It is hard for some to understand why Israel has been so careful to protect the Jewish people within her borders.

This has been difficult for Israeli leaders. There is a mistaken understanding that followers of Jesus who believe God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people also support every decision that Israeli politicians make. This is false. All leaders are human and capable of mistakes. Israel is not a perfect country! They have made mistakes.

I am hoping that Bible believers will carefully study the Scriptures and conclude that at the heart of *biblical Zionism* is the understanding that God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people. It is a land to be shared among all her inhabitants since Israel was chosen to bless the nations of the world (Genesis 12:3, Isaiah 44:8). And it is a land and a people to be loved, prayed for (Psalm 122:6), and reached with the gospel message.

The negative spillover of anti-Zionism is impacting the view of many toward the Jewish people within and outside of Israel. When embraced, this critical attitude toward Israel can easily, and unfortunately, lead to antisemitism.

If Anyone Should Oppose All Forms of Antisemitism, It Should Be US!

Recently, Jeremy Sharon and Sara Rubenstein, writing for the *Jerusalem Post*, reported on the **European Jewish Congress** held in November 2018. It was sponsored by the Austrian Chancellor, Sebastian Kurz, who initiated the development of a **Catalogue of Policies to Combat Antisemitism**. The 32-year-old chancellor was quoted as saying,

"Antisemitism and anti-Zionism are getting blurred, but they are two sides of the same coin."

He recommended the following actions,

The recommendations, which it is hoped will be adopted by the EU and by national governments, include adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition of Antisemitism; the appointment by EU countries of a special commissioner for combating antisemitism; a commitment of a percentage of GDP annually to fighting antisemitism; barring antisemites from political parties and public office; committing financial and other resources to guaranteeing security for Jewish communities in Europe; making Internet companies liable for antisemitic content on their platforms; and advising companies not to do business with countries or organizations that support antisemitism in any way.

Kurz added,

Fighting antisemitism deserves much more than simple statements of good will—we need concrete policies and reinforced legislation.

Oh, how I hope the Church will take the lead on encouraging the above!

How can we possibly reach Jewish people for Jesus without cultivating a love for all Jewish people, including Israelis, and to have a tender heart toward Zion? This is my prayer for you in this New Year, that God would give you the same heart as the Apostle Paul, who wrote in Romans 10:1, *"Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation."*

Opposing antisemitism may be a crucial first step in leading Jewish people to open their hearts to Jesus, the Messiah. I pray my people will see that true Christians love the Jewish people (Romans 11:11).

Praying for God's best for you and your family in 2019,


Mitch Glaser
International Director



Miami Beach Holocaust Memorial Israel Solidarity Rally.

- 1 <https://www.influencewatch.org/movement/boycott-divestment-and-sanctions/>.
- 2 <https://allianceforthepeaceofjerusalem.com/lifeway-survey-full/>.
- 3 "Support of Israel Wanes Among Younger Evangelicals," *LifeWay Research* (blog), December 4, 2017, <https://lifewayresearch.com/2017/12/04/support-of-israel-among-younger-evangelicals/>.
- 4 <https://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Antisemitism/Austrian-Kurz-We-cant-undo-history-but-we-can-do-justice-to-our-history-572444> noted on 12.30.18.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.

EMILY EMANUEL SHARES



Over the last couple of months I have had the opportunity to spend a lot of time with my Jewish friends in London and attend the Jewish community Shabbat meals. I have had some open doors to share my faith, and even took one of my friends to church with me as a Jewish believer was speaking that evening, which was amazing! To be very honest, at the start of the year I was feeling like I had lost my boldness to share about Jesus in these settings. However, the Holy Spirit has filled me with boldness again, and I now have a strong desire to be unashamed about who I am and who Jesus is to me.

One thing my Jewish friends love is that I am taking Christians to Israel every year. They think it's great that I am helping Christians learn more about Israel and the Jewish roots of their faith. One of my Jewish friends mentioned that a Christian colleague in her workplace didn't even know Jerusalem was a real place and so it is good that I am helping people become less ignorant. I am so passionate about helping my Christian brothers and sisters understand more about Israel, as I truly believe that the key to revival within the Jewish world is for the church to understand more of its Hebraic/Jewish roots. It's the only way we will provoke Israel to jealousy! (Romans 11:11)

In today's world of screens and social media, I believe that film has such a huge impact on shaping and informing the next generation. I will be working on a very short media clip aimed at millennials on why Christians should stand up against anti-Semitism and also why Christians should go to Israel along with reaching out to their Jewish friends with the Gospel. Please pray for the right script and people to come together to make this a powerful resource for the Kingdom.

Finally, I am helping to organise two Israel trips this year - one young adult trip and the other the Chosen People 125th Anniversary tour. Please do keep these trips in your prayers, particularly for the logistics and for the people coming. I would also love to see some of you on the Chosen People trip, so do pray about that! Thank you and hopefully see you in Israel!

Emily

FIONA SORBALA REPORTS

Looking forward, this year is shaping up to be full of ministry and opportunities to share the Gospel. As this goes out I will be attending some events at Jewish Book Week which will give me the opportunity to meet new Jewish people, hopefully allowing me to share my faith in the Jewish Messiah. Your partnership with us means so much to the staff at Chosen People Ministries. We are deeply aware that we need your prayerful support so that we can continue to share the Gospel with Jewish people.

In the last year, we wondered if we should continue the ministry trips to Latvia. Then the Lord showed us that the efforts we were making were not in vain, and we saw a total of four Jewish ladies pray and put their faith in the Messiah of Israel. Even though there is no one to disciple them, we have given them Bibles and trust them to the work of the Holy Spirit.

I will also be preparing for another trip to Latvia during Passover week, when I will be speaking at Riga Bible School on Jewish evangelism. Our prayer is that we will influence the next generation of church leaders and pastors. Our desire is that they would understand God's heart for the salvation of the Jewish people. It may also be possible to visit our new believers.

In the congregation here, we are looking for ways to reach out into the Jewish community on our doorstep. We believe that we are a living testimony that you can be Jewish and believe in Jesus, but we are looking for ways to make our testimony more obvious.

Last month I was in Berlin at a conference for ministries involved in reaching Jewish people with the Gospel across Europe. It was encouraging to meet with other workers to see how we can encourage and resource one another. We are hoping to meet again in the summer.

May the Lord bless you,



Fiona

SIMON LISSAK WRITES



The next few months will be exciting. The High Holiday period is always busy, but this year there's more:

Some of you already know that one of the regulars at my men's Bible study group died in December. We had just got over the shock of Gerry's death when Bruce died very suddenly on Holocaust Memorial Day.

The week before we had been studying Matthew chapter 3 together. We followed Matthew to Isaiah 40:3, then onwards to Isaiah 53 and upwards to delight in the New Creation of 61:1 and 65:17-19, and finally to Revelation 21-22. Afterwards Bruce thanked me for the study. I did not know that these would be the last words we would speak to each other.

Bruce was Jewish and loved Jesus. He had been a real encouragement to me. Not because he always agreed with me or liked what I said or even how I taught sometimes! But because, like me, he was Jewish and wanted other Jewish people to respond to the Gospel. That was our bond. As we mourn his loss we can rejoice that he is now with his Saviour, enjoying the new creation that we had described together. It reminds me why I do this work. I might never see a huge harvest of Jewish souls, but I know the LORD loved Bruce and chose him before creation and I am honoured to be part of the community we call The Tree of Life even as we mourn.

Then on Valentine's Day another Jewish friend sent me a picture of the mug his wife bought him. It read "Mazel Tov on your Bar Mitzvah". I sent him back a picture of a cup that says "Only a mug would dismiss Jesus!" Not a conventional evangelistic method but I hope it is within the limits of 1 Corinthians 9:22 and right for the context of our relationship. We first met nearly 10 years ago in Golders Green. I gave him a Gospel tract that asked "When did you stop believing in God?" and one of the options was "Immediately after my Bar Mitzvah!"

Leo came back to talk to me because that was his genuine experience! What followed was a café church that he attended with others each week! We argued, laughed and joked for several years, until he left London and we lost touch. Now we are talking again. Can you join me in praying that Leo will soon make a profession of faith like Bruce? He would make a spectacular evangelist!

Thank you again for your partnership with us in the Gospel.

Simon Lissak

The Importance of Compassion and the Image of Israel



Operation Good Neighbor. Israeli Commander comforts a Syrian baby. Photo, IDF

Christians are commanded to reach the world for Jesus according to passages such as Matthew 28:19–20 and Acts 1:8. Yet, the motivation for missions—especially to resistant groups, such as the Jewish people and Muslims—often requires an even greater dedication and a broken heart to fuel the passion needed to sustain what can seem like an unsuccessful ministry. Loss of motivation is perfectly understandable, as we are all human.

Jesus' example shows He was motivated by compassion. As Matthew records,

Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:36–38)

What is compassion? It is the feeling you have when you see a baby suffering or a person you love in intolerable pain. It is the sense we have when we see pictures of poor children or we walk into a poverty-stricken area and see children in rags and eating from garbage pits. It is the unutterable moan that bursts forth from the depth of our soul because of the human condition that leads to tears and sacrificial action.

In Matthew 23:37–39, we read of the Savior's compassion and broken heart for His own people, and for all people when He says,

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

The Apostle Paul also understood the compassion of the Savior and felt the same toward his people. He writes in Romans 9:

"I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (Romans 9:1–2)

This is the kind of compassion that drove the Savior and should move us, as well. Christians throughout the ages have been capable of great compassion. God has used this desire to accomplish great things, including church planting, serving the poor, building hospitals, providing clean water, and generally improving the lives of the people reached with the message of the gospel.

Today, ministries promote themselves not only through stirring messages during missions conferences or compelling

arguments distributed through blogs and social media but also through images that elicit compassion. Mission promoters have always understood the power of graphics and images as one of the chief motivational tools to compel Christians to serve the Lord in difficult places. We understand that people serve when their hearts are broken and feel compassion for those in need.

For example, think about the emotion in an appeal to reach Jewish Israelis with the gospel with images of soldiers in the Israeli Defense Forces standing guard at a Gaza checkpoint. Or consider the effect of videos of missiles coming from Gaza and landing in towns like Sderot, perched on the border of Gaza. And imagine the feelings that flood your soul when you are shown images of small children in Gaza after an Israeli bombing of terrorist tunnels. Who would not be moved by these images?

It is very difficult to think analytically when your heart is broken by the visual stimulation of suffering children. It would be inhuman to think in other terms. In these moments, it is unlikely that anyone would think of fact-checking or of trying to discover the circumstances around the bombing. The images override the facts, even when they might reveal that the bombed buildings were hiding missiles that would cause death to innocent elderly Russian Jews living in Sderot.

Unfortunately, the above illustration is the reality in Israel today. This unbalanced portrayal of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has done much to paint an insidious view of Israelis. Israelis are portrayed as a colonial power that has no regard for human life.

Unfortunately, this negative image of Jewish Israelis has spilled over to the Jewish people in general, especially in the eyes of next-generation evangelical Christians in the United States, triggering a negative view of Israelis and of the Jewish people. Intrinsically, this is a human and moral problem, but it has also made it more difficult to motivate average Christians to love the Jewish people and Israel and to share the gospel with them.

By God's grace we need to pray for this to change. And we need to take action to make sure that our fellow believers have a more balanced view of the conflict in Israel. Portraying Israelis as aggressors is unfair and untrue. This type of thinking only intensifies the conflict and pours cold water on the work of Jewish evangelism in Israel and around the globe.

⁷ Jesus is driven by "compassion," the Greek word, "σπλάγχνον" *splanchnon*, which refers to an ache in the deepest part of one's soul. It is used at least ten times in the Gospels to describe the emotion that erupts from inside a person's soul, causing them to want to care for another person.

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- **Day 3:** Start the day where Jesus proclaimed 'On this rock I will build my Church' then enjoy wine tasting on the **Golan** before celebrating **Shabbat in the Galilee**
- **Day 4:** Visit the **Mount of Beatitudes** then head to the site of the feeding of the 5000; see **Capernaum** where Jesus did many miracles; and finish with lunch and worship on the **Sea of Galilee** boat ride
- **Day 5:** Have a chance to be baptised in the Jordan river; head to **Jerusalem**, 'The City of the Great King' where we will visit the **Mount of Olives** and head down to the **Garden of Gethsemane**
- **Day 6:** See the **City of David**; then will walk the southern steps, pray at the **Western Wall** and go through the underground tunnels; and after lunch we will visit **Yad Vashem**, the Holocaust museum
- **Day 7:** Begin with **Masada**, Herod's fortress in the desert, and see spectacular views of the Dead Sea; then head to **Ein Gedi** where David ran away from Saul; the next stop is floating in the **Dead Sea** and visit the location where the Dead Sea scrolls were found; and finally back to Jerusalem and visit the CPM **Jerusalem Centre**.
- **Day 8:** Start on **Temple Mount**; then walk down the **Via Delarosa** (The way of the cross) and see the **Holy Sepulchre**; worship in a communion service at the **Garden tomb**; and finally head to **Bethlehem** and visit the Church of the Nativity
- **Day 9:** Time to explore **Jerusalem** and visit the **Friends of Zion Museum**; then afternoon transfer to airport for departure

BOOKING INFORMATION

- Dates: 26th June - 4th July 2019
- Cost: £1298* (Including flights from Luton) Includes all breakfast, dinners, two lunches and wine tasting, hotels, ground transport, entrance fees, tour guides, and ministry costs. Price is per person sharing twin room. Single occupancy is £1683.
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A Dark History but a Bright Future



Our recent Muchan conference brought together young believers who are the future.

There is a dark side to church history—a past that is not often revisited. Believers are generally shocked to hear that their theological heroes supported violence against the Jewish people. Consider the following quotations from significant church leaders:

Jerome, Letter 84, 400 AD: “If it is expedient to hate any men and to loath any race, I have a strange dislike to those of the circumcision. For up to the present day they persecute our Lord Jesus Christ in the synagogues of Satan.”

Ambrose of Milan, writing to Emperor Theodosius I, 388 AD: “A report was made by the military Count of the East that a synagogue had been burnt, and that this was done at the instigation of the bishop. You [Theodosius] gave command that the others should be punished, and the synagogue be rebuilt by the bishop himself.... Shall, then, a place be made for the unbelief of the Jews out of the spoils of the Church, and shall the patrimony, which by the favour of Christ has been gained for Christians, be transferred to the treasuries of unbelievers?... Shall the Jews write this inscription on the front of their synagogue: ‘The temple of impiety, erected from the plunder of Christians?’”

We are often unaware that church leaders advocated hatred of Jews, the destruction of synagogues, and the violent expulsion of the chosen people from “Christian” society. However, in Jewish circles these stories are well known. In fact, most Jewish people see Christianity through a lens of antisemitism, and they characterize Christianity based on an anti-Jewish medieval expression that emerged after centuries in Europe. Jewish people today look back and view those who persecuted their ancestors as representatives of the Christian faith. A recent podcast by Orthodox Rabbi Yaakov Wolbe shared this sentiment: “Jew-hatred is a fundamental, theological principle of the Christian faith.”

This is why your Jewish friend might have a negative response when you share your faith with them!

Fortunately, Rabbi Wolbe is wrong about the true heart of the Christian faith. Still, centuries of anti-Jewish actions by Christians have cast a long shadow and hurt the cause of Jewish evangelism today.

Jewish people generally believe the connection between Christianity and antisemitism is unbreakable. They see this trend continuing, especially among those who are anti-Israel. For the Jewish person today, an anti-Israel perspective merges with the long history of Christian antisemitism and only further supports the negative way most Jewish people view Christianity.

A major debate among modern evangelicals today is whether or not those who held these views of the Jewish people were “real Christians.” Yet, deciding if they were “real” believers is God’s job, and His alone.



The only antidotes to centuries of bad behavior by Christians are love and authenticity of faith. When Jewish people meet Christians who express their love of Israel and the Jewish people because of their love for the Jewish Messiah, then the gospel is elevated, and Jewish people are introduced to the truth about Jesus. Hopefully, they will see there is a big difference between historical Christianity and the true nature of His grace and love toward all people—especially to the Jew first (Romans 1:16)!

We pray and hope Jewish people will meet followers of the Jewish Messiah who love Him, behave as true believers, and love the Jewish people. This is the light that will dispel centuries of darkness.

8 Jerome, “The Letters of St. Jerome,” in St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. W. H. Fremantle, G. Lewis, and W. G. Martley, vol. 6, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1893), 176.

9 James Stevenson and B. J. Kidd, eds., *Creeds, Councils, and Controversies: Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church A.D. 337-461* (New York: Seabury Press, 1966), 135.

10 The Jewish History Podcast by Rabbi Yaakov Wolbe, Episode 25: A History of Christian Anti-Semitism Part 1. Starting circa 11:20. <https://rabbiwolbe.com/history-christian-antisemitism-part-one/>.

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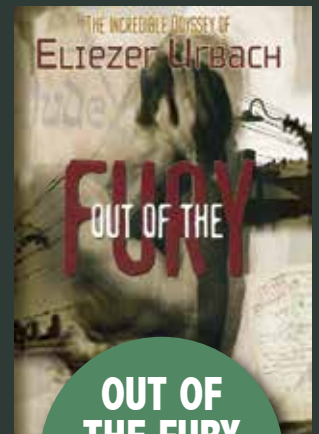
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