THE ROOTS & PERVASIVENESS OF ANTISEMITISM

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THE INTRODUCTION

Antisemitism has become a major problem, not just in Islamic hotspots, but around the world. The issue was made very evident to this writer when I was given a tour of Kfar Aza in Israel, in August 2026. This kibbutz, located about 1.2 miles from the Gaza border, was one of first villages hit in the October 7 massacre by Hamas. I was privileged to be escorted through areas not yet restored by a survivor of the invasion, a secular Jew. He lost 65 fellow villagers and would have been murdered himself if his bunker had not been secured enough. The antisemitic cruelty explained and observed first hand was evident and will never be forgotten.

We see and hear other evidence of the antisemitic pervasiveness, even its normalization, everywhere, even in the United States. Before we can do anything to combat it, we need to understand its origin and the source of its spread. Scripture clearly establishes those roots.

First, a short discussion of terms. What is antisemitism? A widely accepted definition comes from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

> "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."[1]

The Anti-Defamation League, a Jewish organization, says, "Antisemitism refers to prejudice, discrimination or hostility directed at Jewish people."[2]

Alan Dershowitz, a well-known Jewish lawyer, gave an interesting description, one that encapsulates the current sentiment against Jews. Antisemitism is "taking a trait or an action that is widespread, if not universal, and blaming only the Jews for it."[3]

Antisemitism takes many forms, from an attitude not visibly expressed to overt and severe persecution. Most of the examples given in this paper describe overt persecution of the Jews. We will examine the central biblical passage on the roots of antisemitism and then attempt to trace briefly the progress of the concept throughout world history and into the future.

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[1] https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
[2] https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/understanding-antisemitism-and-anti-zionism?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
[3] *The Case for Israel*, Alan Dershowitz, (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2003), Introduction, p. 2.

THE PLAN OF GOD

To understand the pervasiveness of antisemitism, we must first understand God's broad plan and its outworking in the history of the world. God's plan involves revealing His glory and using all to bring glory to Himself. To summarize, God's primary purpose for creation is to reveal His glory to His creatures (Psalm 19:1-6). Angels fulfill their purpose by continually praising and glorifying God (Revelation 4:8-1, 5:12-13). God created Israel for His glory (Isaiah 43:7, 49:3). Even unbelieving nations will eventually see and declare His glory (Isaiah 66:18-19, Psalm 86:9). Certainly, a major purpose of the church is to glorify God (1Peter 2:9; Ephesians 3:10, 21). God uses even His enemies, like the antisemitic Pharoah of Exodus fame, to glorify Himself (Exodus 14:4, 17-18). All of God's dealings with mankind pertain to Him bringing glory to Himself, including and even through antisemitism.

As part of this great plan, God created creatures He knew would reject Him and oppose His plan. History proves the accuracy of His evaluation. In the beginning, the perfect relationship that existed between God and his creatures was broken by the rebellion of angels first and then of the first humans, Adam and Eve. These rejections of the Creator by His creatures obscured the revelation of God's glory to them, leading to problems throughout world history, including those that torment us today.

God's plan included His use of evil, which was begun by those original rebellions, ultimately for His glory (Proverbs 16:4). God is not the author of evil being holy (Isaiah 6:3, 47:4, Psalm 89:18) but permits it and will ultimately be glorified by it.

After those initial rebellions, God used Scripture to reveal His restoration plan. He promised to restore mankind to a right relationship with Him and to deal with the problem of evil. World history is the story of this restoration process and His dealings with evil, including with antisemitism.

Genesis 3:15 began this process with God's judgment of Satan and with His promise to ultimately deal with evil through a descendant of the woman, Eve. This descendant is a prediction of the Messiah who will resolve the problem of evil. This process would continue throughout man's existence and throughout God's dealings with sinful man.

We find ourselves in the midst of this process of dealing with evil and are unable to sort out the details of the big picture. The process involves a spiritual war between God and His enemies. But Scripture does reveal the process, including how things will ultimately be resolved. This big picture solution of the broader problem of evil includes antisemitism as a smaller part of it.

THE CENTRAL BIBLICAL PASSAGE
Genesis 3:15

The outworking of God's dealing with evil began with His judgment of it on the occasion of the first man and woman's rejection of Him through their first sin. Genesis 3:15 reveals the beginning of this process with His major judgment of Satan and His promise to comprehensively

deal with evil through a descendant of the woman, Eve. The completion of the process will require all of world history, including all of the future. This verse is not only one of the most important prophetic passages in Scripture but also reveals an important aspect of the overall plan of God. It particularly reveals the roots of antisemitism.

Genesis 3:15 comes within the narrative of mankind's fall into sin. After the temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-5) and the rebellious partaking of the fruit by both Adam and Eve (3:6-7), the Lord God interrogated them both (3:8-13). He then pronounced His first judgment on the serpent, the agent of Satan (Revelation 12:9).

> "The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;"[4]

After cursing of the serpent, the Lord God made the huge prediction of 3:15.

> "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Genesis 3:15 is presented in synonymous poetic form with two pairs of synonymous lines that can be divided into two major parts: first, the ongoing conflict between the spiritual realm and the natural realm of mankind and, second, the ultimate resolution of evil by a descendant of the woman.

The first pair of synonymous lines predicts that the future will be dominated by war from the spiritual realm on mankind. The Lord God Himself brought this judgment maintaining His holiness. This enmity between the physical and the spiritual began with direct antagonism between the serpent and Eve, implying that the serpent was simply the agent of Satan himself (Revelation 12:9)[1] and that the judgment extends beyond the physical creature, the serpent, to include Satan, its ventriloquist.

The term enmity is related to the verb that means to be hostile to or to treat as an enemy. The noun occurs only five times in the Hebrew text, simply meaning a hostility or a state of ill will.[2] The other four occurrences include enmity between men (Numbers 35:21, 22) or nations (Ezekial 25:15, 35:5). Genesis 3:15 reveals enmity between Satan's realm and the realm of mankind and indicates the universality of the problem of evil.

The second line expands the prophecy, stating that this enmity will be between the seeds of Satan and the seeds of the woman. The seeds of Satan are those spirits that will descend from him, the fallen demonic spirits who followed him in His fall. They have existed throughout human

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[4] *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), Gen. 3:14–15. All quotations will be from the NASB.

[1] The text in Genesis does not explain the fall of Satan but many accept such a description with Satan behind the king of Babylon from Isaiah 14:22 or behind the king of Tyre in Ezekiel 28:11-19.

[2] *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1974, p. 33.

history. Though they are not explicitly revealed here, they can be understood from other passages in Scripture that describe the fall of angels.[1]

The seed of the woman refers specifically to the Messiah but also includes all her descendants throughout world history.[2] Messiah is explicitly noted in the second part of 3:15 though, obviously, all of mankind descended from the first couple. The spiritual conflict between satanic entities and mankind will not end until the Lord God's final resolution of this problem of evil. Antisemitism is one aspect of demonic activity during this angelic conflict with mankind.

The second pair of synonymous lines uses vivid imagery to predict Satan's ultimate destruction. The bruising of the head of the serpent pictures a future fatal wound that will not come until the end of world history when Messiah will cast Satan into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10). His permanent incarceration will end the enmity between Satan and the seed of the woman and will institute part of the ultimate resolution of the problem of evil.

Theologians have described Genesis 3:15 as the proto-evangelium or the first announcement of the good news. The final and complete end of this enmity, this spiritual battle, is, indeed, good news.

The second line vaguely foreshadows the Lord God's resolution of the problem of evil. The word "He" (3rd person, masculine, singular) specifies that a particular descendant of the woman will be the one Who will accomplish the resolution of evil and effect the destruction of Satan. The particular descendant is best interpreted as the Messiah.

The imagery of the *bruising* of the *heel* foreshadows the cost of accomplishing the resolution of evil through an injury that will not be fatal. The best interpretation of this imagery indicates a foreshadowing of the death of the promised Messianic personage as well as His resurrection from the dead to live forever. He Himself put in place this resolution of the problem of evil from even before the sin of mankind, even before the fall of Satan Himself, back to forever in the past.

Because of the Messiah's importance, God's enemies have continually attempted to destroy Him. At the same time, they have tried to preserve themselves from their prophesied destruction by the Messiah in the Lake of Fire. Antisemitism has always been a major weapon in this attempt to destroy Messiah and save themselves.

As the most important and profound prophecy of all Scripture, Genesis 3:15 is the foundation for all eschatology as well as for all world history. It gives insights into mankind's ultimate need for salvation and a restoration to the Creator and Lord of all things.

Of course, it also gives certainty to and reveals the mechanics that will ultimately resolve all evil. Of course, the forces of evil have and will continue to battle against God's plan to obliterate them.

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[1] Revelation 12:4, 9.

[2] The term seed is used in a collective sense of all creatures descended or related to Satan and then collectively of all the descendants of the woman. Both are in the singular masculine.

This outworking of enmity has been seen throughout history in the many attacks on the line of Messiah up to His resurrection and ultimate victory over evil and also, since then, on all those who have aligned themselves to Him through faith in Him. Those attacked have been on those descendants of the woman who believed in the Messiah as well as on Abraham and all his descendants.

We call all such attacks against the Jews, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, antisemitism. This enmity, this antisemitism, will continue until the problem of evil is resolved at Messiah's second coming.

ATTACKS ON THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

Historically, Satan has attacked God's plan primarily through trying to destroy the promised Messianic Seed of the woman who would resolve the problem of evil. Even though the term antisemitism was not coined until a more recent time[1] and is commonly used to describe antagonism toward Jewish people, the same evil attitudes and actions have been pervasive since the beginning of time. Because Yeshua is Jewish, every attack on Him and His lineage has been and will continue to be, in essence, antisemitic.

The following is a brief outline of the major attacks on the line of Messiah as revealed in Scripture.

Antisemitic Attack #1. Cain's Murder of Abel - Genesis 4:8

The first descendant of the woman was afflicted with the sin nature passed on from the first parents. On the occasion of Cain's birth and naming, Eve possibly thought that he was the promised Seed (4:1). Instead, Cain was the first murder. Not knowing the details of God's plan, Satan probably assumed Abel was the promised one and used Cain to murder him. Since God's plan cannot be thwarted, soon, Seth, the one whom God had chosen to continue the line of Messiah, was born right on time (4:25).

Antisemitic Attack #2. Sons of God & Daughters of Men - Genesis 6

Since the early chapters of Genesis give only the bare essentials of both history and divine doctrines, Genesis 6, like the previous chapters, is not clear or easy to understand, especially relating to the identity of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men." The focus of the passage is the union or marriage of these two groups. If these "sons of God" were evil angelic creatures, then Genesis 6 describes a perverted uniting of humans with demons, producing the descendants described as the Nephilim. A common and perhaps the best interpretation describes this union as an evil corruption of the descendants of the woman, Satan's attempt to pollute the human line leading to the Messiah. Again, God's plan could not be thwarted. He protected the purity of the Messianic line through preserving eight righteous ones from the Flood that cleansed the earth of all evil men but also of the Nephilim's evil.

[1] The term was coined in 1879 in Germany by Wilhelm Marr. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/antisemitism?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

Antisemitic Attack #3. Ishmael instead of Isaac - Genesis 16

God revealed to Abraham that his descendants would become His own great nation among all other nations. God not only promised (Genesis 12:1-3) but also entered into a legally binding covenant (Genesis 15 and 17) to create His own people, further promising they would bless all the nations. The apostle Paul understood that a major aspect of that blessing would come through the already-promised, particular Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16). Thus, the Seed of the woman would continue through the Seed of Abraham and would fulfill the promised blessings on the entire world through the salvation bought and brought by the Messiah (Galatians 3:8-9).

God used many challenges to develop Abraham's faith. One test Abraham failed threatened the line of the Messiah. Genesis 16 records his failure to trust God for a supernatural conception of the promised Seed, instead following the counsel of his wife to produce a son through her handmaid, Hagar (16:1-2). This attack on the line of Messiah focused on producing a son of the flesh rather than on trusting God for a miraculous work. But God's plan cannot be thwarted. God clearly prophesied that the intended line would progress through Isaac, the son of promise, with a supernatural birth, not through Ishmael, the human solution, and so it happened (Genesis 17:21, 22:15-19).

Antisemitic Attack #4. Esau Instead of Jacob - Genesis 27

The story of Jacob and Esau is similar to that of Isaac and Ishmael, one of conflict in the line of promise. By right of birth, Esau should have been the one to carry forward the legacy of Isaac, but the story is one of deception and trickery, resulting in Jacob obtaining the birth right (Genesis 27). Is this another example of Satan attempting to divert the continuation of the line of Messiah? God had predicted and intended that the line would proceed through Jacob (Genesis 25:23) regardless of the schemes of men or the natural rights of birth, and so it did.

Antisemitic Attack #5. Pharaoh's Murder of Jewish Babies - Exodus 1

The story of Moses' birth provides another example of Satan trying to end the line of Messiah. A Satan-worshipping Pharaoh who was fearful of the increasing numbers and power of the children of Israel (Exodus 1:8-10) decreed that every son of the Israelites would be killed the moment he was born (1:15-16). Even though Moses was a Levite, other murdered babies would include descendants of Judah, the lineage of Messiah (Genesis 49:10). God used brave Jewish midwives to save many of the babies, not only including Moses but others from the tribe of Judah. Again, God's plan continued undeterred by satanic schemes enabled by human treachery.

Antisemitic Attack #6. Attempted Murders of David - 1Samuel 18-24

David is one of the most important progenitors in the line of Messiah. He was not only Israel's greatest king but also a type of the Messiah with God initiating a legally binding covenant (2Samuel 7) guaranteeing the line of Messiah. Therefore, he became Satan's prime target in his war against God. The giant Goliath as well as bears and lions failed to kill him when he was a shepherd boy.

Shortly after God rejected Saul as king (1Samuel 15:10-29) and appointed David in his place (16:1-13), Saul tried to assassinate David at least ten very definite and specific different times, either personally or through others (1Samuel 18-24). There were other times than the ten but not as clear. He failed every time. Even David's several sins related to his adultery with Bathsheba, which could have been coordinated by Satan or at least been taken advantage of by him, could have disqualified David as king, except for God's forgiving grace. Each attack against David could be considered a satanic attempt to destroy the line of Messiah. In spite of these attempted thwartings of the divine plan, God remained victorious over Satan.

Antisemitic Attack #7. Athaliah's Killing of Royal Seed - 2Chronicles 22:10

After Jehu killed King Ahaziah, his mother Athaliah usurped the kingship. She then attempted to destroy all the royal offspring of the house of Judah (2Chronicles 22:10), a treachery that would have destroyed the line of David. Through divine providence, one son, Joash, was hidden away and escaped the slaughter. Again, God thwarted Satan's attack on the line of Messiah.

Antisemitic Attack #8. Herod's Killing of Babies - Mattthew 2:16

This attack was on the Messiah Himself at the beginning of His earthly life. The Gospel of Matthew records that King Herod the Great felt threatened by the news of a coming King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1-3). After gathering scriptural information about the birthplace of this king, Herod ordered the murder of every male child in Bethlehem under the calculated age of the supposed usurping king (2:16). Satan again used a king to try to kill the Messiah! The plot was thwarted by an angelic warning to Joseph to take the Christ child to Egypt (2:13-15) until the danger had passed (2:19-23).

Antisemitic Attack #9. Crucifixion of Christ - John 19:17-30

The ultimate attempt to destroy the Messiah was His crucifixion, the most significant event in world history. With Jesus' death, Satan assumed he'd succeeded in destroying the promised Seed of the woman. Instead, God used Satan's evil plan to bring about the atoning work of the Lamb of God as the ultimate Passover Lamb. He fulfilled the promise of Genesis 3:15 by expiating the problem of evil. The resurrection proved God the Father was satisfied with His Son's atonement for sin.

Now, we await the final resolution of sin and evil with the destruction of Satan in the Lake of Fire. Until then, antisemitism will remain one of Satan's most potent and effective weapons against God's people. Knowing he has failed to destroy the Messianic line so often in the past makes his modern attacks, both the attitudinal and the murderous, all the more virulent and ferocious.

ATTACKS ON THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Since God promised the Messiah would come through the descendants of the woman Eve, Satan specifically attacked that line, up to the death of the Messiah. Not only was that specific line under attack but the people of God associated with that line suffered the effects of those attacks. Since then, every believer in the promised Messiah has been subjected to the enmity between Satan's seeds and the seed of the woman.

That enmity intensified when God raised up Abraham to be the father of a great nation, Israel, from whom would come the Messiah (Genesis 12:1-3). Immediately, Abraham and his descendants became Satan's special targets. Thus, technically, antisemitism began with Abram's decision to follow God to a land he did not yet know.

History records innumerable satanic attacks on the children of Israel including the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Here is another brief outline of the sources of major attacks on the children of Israel as revealed in Scripture and beyond. Much more detail could be supplied for each, but brief descriptions are sufficient. Nation after nation and individual after individual joined in this violent and unremitting antisemitism. These are the major historical examples of the more technical definition of antisemitism.

1. Egypt - Exodus 1-14

The Egyptian Empire with its many false gods opposed the Lord God. Before the children of Israel established their own nation, they rebelled against God. The result was that God put them in bondage to Egypt for around four hundred years. God used the satanic evil of the Egyptians as His instrument of discipline against His chosen people. The Book of Exodus records their severe servitude (Exodus 1:8-14). At one moment in history, the Egyptians determined to kill every Israelite male at its birth (1:15-22). They tried to kill Moses himself (2:15). Their mistreatment of the Jews as well as their blatant disregard for life illustrate the depravity of Egyptian antisemitism.

2. Assyria - 2Kings 17:3-23

The decline of the nation Israel is recorded mainly in the two books of Kings. First, those in rebellion against God's plan divided the nation into Israel in the north and Judah in the south (1Kings 11:9-13). Eventually, after idolatry corrupted the entire northern kingdom (2Kings 17:7-23), waves of Assyrian soldiers invaded them (17:3-6, 18:9-10), eventuating in their captivity to Assyria (18:11-12). Assyria also eventually invaded the kingdom of Judah (18:13-37). The cruelty the Jews endured during the invasions and the eventual captivity were God's discipline because of Israel's idolatry. He used the satanic evil of the Assyrians as His instrument, yet remaining holy Himself. The Assyrian antisemitism was both severe and obvious.

3. Babylon - 2Kings 24-25

The kingdom of Judah to the south survived Assyria's invasions even as they continued to decline into idolatry. After many prophetic warnings and failures to repent, Judah reached its

final corruption (2Chronicles 36:12-16), and God allowed the kingdom of Judah to be taken captive to Babylon (2Kings 24-25). This time, God used the satanic evil of the Babylonians as His instrument to bring judgment on the Jews, as another example of severe antisemitism.

4. Persia - Esther 3-9

After Israel's exile from the land, Persia allowed a remnant of Jews to return to the land of Israel. The majority of Jews, however, remained in Persia. The story of Esther records one attempt to annihilate all the Jew living there. An evil leader named Haman convinced Ahasuerus, the King of Persia, to issue a decree for the genocide of every Jew in the Persian Empire (Esther 3:7-15). God used one family and specifically a young girl named Esther to save the Jews from annihilation (8:4-17). The attacks against her specifically and her people generally is one of the clearest examples in all Scripture of blatant antisemitism and God's judgment of those behind it. Hint: Haman hung on the scaffolding he'd erected to hang Esther's uncle, a Jew. God will not be mocked.

5. Rome - AD 70

Near the end of the inter-testament period, Rome became the dominant empire for several hundred years. Jews living both in the land of Israel and in the diaspora were under Roman rule for all the years of Roman domination.

During the time of Yeshua, the Roman Empire was corrupt and oppressive to the Jewish people. They endured many religious, political, and social clashes with the Romans, all shrieking of antisemitism (Luke 13:1, Acts 18:12-17, 21:27-36). The New Testament gives hints of heavy taxation (Matthew 11:17-22) among other discriminations against the Jews. Throughout that time, the zealots, one of whom, Simon, was a disciple of Yeshua (Luke 6:15), worked to throw off Roman oppression and attain Jewish national independence.

The most significant antisemitic event of the first century happened in 70 AD but was not recorded explicitly in Scripture. Even so, the destruction of at least Jerusalem was predicted by Yeshua in His Olivet Discourse:

> "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. 21 "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; 22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled (Luke 21:20-22).

Conflicts with the Romans climaxed with a Jewish rebellion in Jerusalem. Jews attacked the Roman garrison and forced Roman officials to flee the city. The Romans reacted to crush the rebellion, eventually leading to the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem and the conquering of the rest of Israel in AD 70. Josephus gave many details of the Jerusalem destruction and the resulting huge casualties and tens of thousands enslaved.[1] The destruction of the nation in AD 70 along with the later Bar Kokhba Revolt, which occurred from 132 to 136

[1] *The Jewish War*, Flavius Josephus, Books 5–6.

AD was comparable to the Babylonian conquest in 586 BC in that Jews were displaced from the land virtually entirely.

6. Islam - AD 627 until today

Followers of Islam have attacked the Jewish people too many times to detail here. Since the origin of Islam from Mohamid in the seventh century,[1] Islamists have worked to wipe the Jews out of history. The policy of the most radical Islamic nations is the total elimination of the state of Israel. What else needs to be explained on the issue of antisemitism?

7. The Church - 2nd century until today

Sadly, the history of the church contains too many examples of antisemitism to even begin to cover here. The beginnings of antisemitism in the church emanated from a faulty theological perspective called replacement theology or the view that God has rejected and abandoned Israel and replaced it with the church, making, in their unbiblical opinion, the church into the new Israel. This theological view is based on a non-literal interpretation of Scripture that began early in church history.[2] If this view were correct, all the promises and covenants relating to Israel would be fulfilled in the church. This unbiblical view by certain churches and theologians has led to the persecuting of Jewish people and then has led to overt antisemitism against individual Jews as well as against the nation of Israel itself.

It is important that Christians understand the dangers of replacement theology. It can be traced all the way back to the second century and Clement of Alexandria (153-217). In the context of discussing crowns as rewards, he made the following comment:

> "For being hard of heart, they (Israel) understood not that this very thing, which they called the disgrace of the Lord, was a prophecy wisely uttered: 'The Lord was not known by the people' which erred, which was not circumcised in understanding, whose darkness was not enlightened, which knew not God, denied the Lord, **forfeited the place of the true Israel**, persecuted God, hoped to reduce the Word to disgrace; and Him whom they crucified as a malefactor they crowned as a king" (emphasis added).[3]

A clearer description of early replacement theology was articulated by Melito of Sardis in the context of blaming the Jews for Jesus' death.

> "In the same way that the **type (Israel) is depleted**, conceding the image to what is intrinsically real (church), and the analogy is brought to completion through the elucidation of interpretation, so the law is fulfilled by the elucidation of the gospel, and the **people (Israel) is depleted by the arising of the Church**, and the model is dissolved by the

[1] https://www.britannica.com/topic/How-Was-Islam-Founded.
[2] The literal method of interpretation is more technically designated as the Grammatical-Historical-Contextual approach. A departure from this approach has resulted in many unbiblical views.
[3] https://logoslibrary.org/clement/instructor/208.html.

> appearance of the Lord. And today those things of value **are worthless**, since the things of true worth have been revealed." (emphasis added).[1]

Sadly, this perverted view continues even today. A popular evangelical preacher of a modern mega-church recently wrote:

> "This [Israel] was his nation. The nation God had raised up from one man for one purpose — to bless the world. But **that chapter was drawing to a close** [in Jesus' day]. God's covenant with the nation had served its purpose. **It was no longer needed** … Ancient Israel was a means to an end. The end had come. The new was just beginning." (emphasis added).[2]

Not all proponents of replacement theology are antisemitic, but that distorted viewpoint opens the door for it.

Historically, the three most egregious and famous examples of church antisemitism are the First Crusade, the Spanish Inquisition, and the persecutions influenced by the later writings of Martin Luther. The First Crusade, launched in 1095, was intended to regain control of the Holy Land from the Islamists. It was not directed toward Jewish people initially. On the way to the Holy Land however, one group of Crusaders massacred thousands of Jews in Europe, often giving their victims the choice of baptism or death.[3]

The Spanish Inquisition (1478–1834) is probably the most famous post-crucifixion example of antisemitism. In March 31, 1492, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile issued the Alhambra that decreed Jews either be baptized or leave Spain. Some Jews "converted" under the pressure, more than 160,000 Jews were expelled, and thousands were imprisoned, tortured, or executed.[4]

Martin Luther is credited with sparking the Protestant Reformation, but not many are aware that he also had a darker side in his later years. He taught a full blown, thoroughly anti-biblical replacement theology that resulted in antisemitism. In Luther's early years he made efforts to bring Jews to Christ, but when Jews remained mostly resistant to the gospel, Luther progressively became more and more antisemitic. His later writings promoted overt persecution of Jews as noted by an article by the Christian History Institute:

> Luther now proposed seven measures of "sharp mercy" that German princes could take against Jews: (1) burn their schools and synagogues; (2) transfer Jews to community settlements; (3) confiscate all Jewish literature, which was blasphemous; (4) prohibit rabbis to teach, on pain of death; (5) deny Jews safe-conduct, so as to prevent the spread of Judaism; (6) appropriate their wealth and use it to support converts and to prevent the lewd practice of usury; (7) assign Jews to manual labor as a form of penance.[5]

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[1] Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha: With the Fragments of Melito and Other Material Related to the Quartodecimans*, Alistair C. Stewart, trans. (Yonkers, NY: Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2017), §43.
[2] *Irresistible*, Andy Stanley, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), p. 65.
[3] https://www.britannica.com/topic/First-Crusade.
[4] https://www.britannica.com/topic/Spanish-Inquisition.
[5] https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/was-luther-anti-semitic/.

The long-range result of Luther's influence was that for the next several hundred years, the European church expressed extensive antisemitism in the form of discrimination, expulsions, and overt persecutions of Jews. Unfortunately, the church has a dreadful history of antisemitism, that in some measure persists into our day.

8. Germany - The Holocaust

Since this outline of antisemitism is brief, mention of the well-known Holocaust will also be brief. It is common knowledge that Nazi Germany exterminated approximately six million Jews during the years of World War II. We could legitimately argue that the Holocaust was the most grotesque and loathsome example of antisemitism ever.

9. The Future - The 7-Year Tribulation

The study of eschatology teaches that, as bad as the Spanish Inquisition and Holocaust were, the greatest expressions of antisemitism will be in the future. Both the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament describe a seven-year period of great tribulation upon the entire world. The Book of Daniel specifies that these years will mark the end of Israel's history in the present age. This particular time period (Daniel 9:27) will culminate Israel's history with seventy weeks of years (9:24-26). Several Scriptures describe it as a time of God's great judgments on the entire world.[1] Yeshua said of it, "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will" (Matthew 24:21).

God has designed this time of tribulation especially for Israel. During it, He will deal with Israel in both judgment and salvation. The tribulation will bring down on Israel the severest antisemitism it has ever experienced. The catastrophe of these seven years, described as Jacob's distress (Jeremiah 30:7), will be exponentially worse than that of the Holocaust in that two thirds of all Israelites will perish (Zechariah 13:8).

God's purpose in these judgments will be to bring the nation Israel to the realization that it has no hope of survival, either physically and spiritually, apart from salvation through their Messiah. It will be a time where God uses a variety of instruments of judgments like the discipline of the Babylonian (586 BC) and Roman (AD 70) destructions. God will use this time to restore Israel back into a relationship with Him. In the end, all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:25-26) both spiritually and physically.

In essence, the greatest antisemitism ever endured on this earth will be the instrument God uses to bring the final restoration of the nation Israel. He will fulfill in the future all that He has promised the nation Israel and all He has covenanted with them. Antisemitism will be brought to an end when all of God's enemies are judged and confined to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20, 20:10-15).

[1] Isaiah 24, 34, Joel 2:1-3, Amos 5:18-20, Zephaniah 1:14-18, Malachi 4:1, Matthew 24:4-28, Revelation 6-18.

THE IMPLICATIONS

The most important implications we can draw from our discussion on antisemitism come from those Scriptures that teach that the issue of Jew hatred is a spiritual one. The spiritual war that has waged since the beginning of time has impacted, either specifically or tangentially, all those who live on this earth and will continue until God resolves the problem of evil at the end of time.

We are too fallible and mortal to change the course of this spiritual battle. Its timing and means of resolution are in our Lord's hands. We can and should trust Him to deal with His enemies. The issue of antisemitism is real and beyond our ability to stop or even lessen except in our own attitude toward Israel and individual Jews.

Second, that does not mean we should simply ignore the issue and do nothing. Like the issue of evil in general, we should do all that we can with the resources our Lord has granted us, entering the spiritual battle boldly and holding back evil using His armor. Our place as members of God's army in the spiritual war and our general calling to resist evil in general would include the resistance of antisemitism. How this battle manifests itself will be different with virtually every believer. How God will use us to resist antisemitism will depend on our specific calling and ministry our Lord has given us. What should be true for every one of us, though, is that we choose to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. In spite of our efforts to curb antisemitism, Scripture declares it will like evil in general continue, climaxing in the future until Messiah finally obliterates it at His second coming and final judgment.

Third, we should educate as many as will listen to the biblical perspective on the nation of Israel, including teaching against the anti-God practice of antisemitism.[1] The church today is in great need to be aware of the dangers of replacement theology and its relationship to antisemitism. We are called to teach the whole council of God but in this time including issues relating to false doctrines. We should therefore confront and refute the false doctrine of replacement theology as we encounter it.

Fourth, we should be especially sensitive to the victims of antisemitism, ministering to them as they have needs and as we have resources. We should be especially sensitive to the needs of all Jewish people whether they are experiencing antisemitism or not.

Lastly, we should encourage Jews to trust in their Messiah. Evangelism of the Jewish people should be a church priority because belief in Christ as Savior is the only temporal and individual solution to every problem, including antisemitism.

[1] I have a talk on a biblical perspective on Israel entitled "World History Is Jewish – From Eternity to Eternity." It can be accessed from my website at https://www.forhisglorynm.com/index.php/bible-exposition/world-history-is-jewish/message/01-world-history-is-jewish-from-eternity-to-eternity-part-1/watch.

THE CONCLUSION

Beginning in Genesis 3:15, God revealed His overall plan for history, which includes His permitting evil generally and antisemitism specifically. Scripture's revelation of unremitting attacks on Messiah and His line emphasizes the history-long prevalence of antisemitism. Every bit of that scriptural truth should inform our attitude toward Jews as individuals and Israel as God's chosen nation.

Scripture shows that evil is bounded, in that it had a beginning and will have an end. At the right time, God will reign victorious over Satan and his followers. He will ultimately and completely resolve the problem of evil, including the evil of antisemitism. The Lake of Fire will confine them all for all eternity.

History proves God always accomplishes His purposes. Nothing can thwart His will. His great plan, His permissive will, includes even evil, even the antisemitism that has plagued His people almost since the beginning. He will ultimately use all things, including antisemitism, to bring Him glory.

Even as we see and grieve over ever-increasing antisemitism, we should be reminded that our Lord is sovereign over all. We can trust that He will use even this evil for His purposes. We can and should praise Him for every component of His amazing and wonderful plan, even that which our finite minds are incapable of comprehending or appreciating. His purposes absolutely will be accomplished. Come soon, Lord Jesus!