

Why the World Hates the Jews
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The human race will continue to live in the shadow of the Holocaust until Jesus returns to make all things right. The Holocaust, however, was neither an ending point nor beginning launch for the persecution and oppression of the Jewish people in all of history. Hitler's Reich did not invent anti-Semitism although it honed the science of killing. The tragic trajectory of hatred of the Jews carries back into Old Testament times (Esther).¹ Its hateful path was followed by many Church Fathers in the early Church Age.² Replacement theology began to dominate so strongly that a vast majority of professing Christians had no place in their thoughts for the Jews in God's positive plan for history.³ Even the biblical turn of the Reformers could not eliminate anti-Semitism's ugly presence in the renewed Church as Luther's unfortunate teachings demonstrate.⁴ Then, the Enlightenment with its so-called advancement beyond the legalistic superstition of the Christian faith provided no protection whatsoever from the ravages of genocide exemplified in part by the eruption of anti-Semitism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Over the years, culture, whether Christian, pagan, or secular, has proven the biblical doctrine of depravity. Man is capable of the most heinous treatment of his fellow man. Unfortunately, the Jews continually seem to be a primary target. As Theodore Herzl notes, "The human pack nourishes itself on prejudices from the cradle to the grave."⁵

In light of such a state of affairs, one is confronted immediately by the "why" question. Why are the Jewish people the target of such deep-seated animosity? Why, after all the lessons we could learn from the days of the Holocaust, does anti-Semitism seem to be on the rise? Simply put, why does the world hate the Jewish people so much? The following presentation, while not necessarily an exhaustive exposition of the topic, will attempt to review some of the major justifications given, especially by Christendom, and provide some helpful responses that Bible-believing Christians should embrace. The conclusion should not be surprising to those who love God and His Word. There is absolutely no place for racist, anti-Semitic attitudes or actions

¹ What escalates the tragedy is that Haman does not just hate Mordecai for his refusal to bow to him but hates all Jews and plans to exterminate them all (Esther 3:1-11).

² One unfortunate example is the major Church leader John Chrysostom (c. 349-407), Archbishop of Constantinople. In his homilies against the Jews, he comments: "The Jewish people were driven by their drunkenness and plumpness to the ultimate evil; they kicked about, they failed to accept the yoke of Christ, nor did they pull the plow of his teaching. Another prophet hinted at this when he said, 'Israel is as obstinate as a stubborn heifer' ... Although such beasts are unfit for work, they are fit for killing" (*Against the Jews*, Homily I, II. 5-6).

³ Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel in the Development of Christian Thought* (Rome, Italy: Istituto Biblico Evangelico Italiano, 2000); *Israel and the Church: The Origins and Effects of Replacement Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004); Michael J. Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?: A Theological Evaluation* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010).

⁴ Martin Luther's hateful statements toward the Jews are primarily found in his 1543 book *On the Jews and Their Lies*. However, I have found some disturbing statements by Luther in his commentary on Isaiah 63 where he makes disparaging remarks about Jews in relation to the image of Edom in the passage. His lectures which became his commentary on Isaiah were completed in 1530, much earlier than his infamous book of 1543.

⁵ Theodore Herzl, *The Old-New Land* translated by David S. Blondheim (reprint ed., Sakuramachi Shoin Publishers, 2017), 26. This utopian work was originally published in German in 1902 and has been retranslated more than once.

among Bible-believing Christians. Even if we treat Jewish people as our enemies, Jesus taught us to love them (Matt. 5:44). This command is not optional.

False Views about Jewish Control of World Finances

I once heard Jerry Falwell tell an audience that the reason that they did not like Jews was that Jewish people can make more money by accident than they can on purpose. I am not sure he believed that Jews are naturally rich, but he used the well-worn caricature to make a point about the sinfulness of Christian opposition to God's earthly chosen people. Even Jewish people today in the United States cite the oft-quoted statement by Milton Himmelfarb: "Jews earn like Episcopalians and vote like Puerto Ricans."⁶ The truth of the matter, however, is that the Jewish branch of the family tree has had its share of the poor – especially if one looks outside the United States. Persecution and oppression has led to many Jews losing all they own, some more than once.⁷ In addition, and perhaps partly because of such confiscation down through the years, "wealth among Jews was but very seldom retained for several successive generations."⁸ For one example of the poor among the Jews, Dubnow comments on the economic plight of the Jews in Czarist Russia under Nicholas II. The Jews had been forced into the liquor trade to survive: "Known as the most sober people on earth, the Jews had been placed in the tragic position that thousands of them, in their search for a piece of bread, were forced to serve as a medium for promoting the pernicious Russian drunkenness."⁹ Indeed, throughout Church history it was just as common for Christendom to take land away from Jewish people¹⁰ as it has been for twentieth-century Muslims to do so.¹¹ Therefore, Christians should not overstate the affluence of the Jewish people. The modern Israel that Theodore Herzl envisioned recognized the presence of both wealthy and poor Jewish people.¹² This mixture is what we find in Israel today and in most Western nations. Most of the Jews try to make ends meet just like everyone else.

However, the view that the Jewish people are the masters of money has had a long life in the history of the Western world up to this present time. It is tempting to exaggerate on the basis of observations that the Jews have been and continue to be an industrious people. Beginning in the days of the Patriarchs, God granted a certain prosperity as the nation of Israel launches out in history: Abraham was obviously a wealthy man at the start of the story which was passed on to his son Isaac (Gen. 13:2); Jacob's success at multiplying the flocks caused him to become

⁶ James Q. Wilson, "Why Don't Jews Like the Christians Who Like Them?" *City Journal*, Winter 2008, Online, <https://www.city-journal.org/html/why-don%E2%80%99t-jews-christians-who-them-13068.html>; Accessed 21 November 2018.

⁷ Lyn Julius, *Uprooted: How 3000 Years of Jewish Civilization in the Arab World Vanished Overnight* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2018).

⁸ S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, From the Earliest Times until the Present Day* translated by I. Frieilaender (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1920), loc 4629. This book was reprinted in 2012 by Forgotten Books. I possess volumes 1 & 2 in Kindle format and will use location rather than page numbers for most sections throughout the presentation.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3:23.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, loc 514. In what is considered by Dubnow to be the first pogrom, Jews in Kiev in A.D. 1113 had their property destroyed in ways that anticipated Kristallnacht in 1938 Germany. The property of Jews was a frequent target in the Christian West. However, it has also been a target in Muslim lands as well. See Julius, *Uprooted*, 125-26.

¹¹ Julius, 117-47.

¹² Theodore Herzl, 180-81.

“exceedingly prosperous” (Gen. 30:43); and Joseph’s wisdom in managing the food of Egypt with God’s help saved a nation as well as his own family (Gen. 41-50).¹³

Fast-forwarding to the Middle Ages, there is major evidence for Jewish involvement in commerce in Poland as early as the ninth century.¹⁴ In the late twelfth century, “the Jews farmed and administered the mint of Great and of Little Poland. On the coins struck by these Jews, many of which have come down to us, the names of ruling princes are marked in Hebrew characters.”¹⁵ In the early thirteenth century, Jews are known to have owned land and estates in Polish Silesia, and commercial interchange is taking place with Western Europe.¹⁶ Jews were often viewed as the people who lent money on interest and were criticized for their practice of usury.¹⁷ Yet, at times, the Jewish people were protected, especially in Poland, by the authorities who needed the additional tax revenues brought by their industrious labors.¹⁸ Even in the early days of the Reformation, Christian merchants often viewed Jewish business concerns as rivals that must be stopped. This sometimes led authorities to place restrictions on Jewish economic efforts. Such Christian businessmen often welcomed the intrusion of the Catholic clergy in various areas to help them stave off Jewish financial success and thereby pad their own.¹⁹ The hatred for Jewish people based upon their alleged greed beyond what other people groups possess was enshrined in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. In this work, Shakespeare’s words echo the popular complaint against the greed of the Jewish moneylender.²⁰

In modern times, one factor used to associate Jews and money in a negative way is the riches of the Jewish Rothschild family beginning in the middle eighteenth century until the present time. Starting in Frankfurt, Germany, they developed an international banking and business empire that continues to this very day. In spite of great philanthropy on the part of the family, conspiracy theories about their control of world finances have abounded. The Rothschilds have been associated with the making of money off of Wellington’s victory at Waterloo, the supposed group of billionaires called the Illuminati, the assassination of U. S. presidents and European leaders, the manufacture of 9/11, and the holding of \$500 trillion in assets.²¹ Similar contentions as these are expressed in the so-called *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* in a different way. These writings are a fictitious and forged account of the conspiracy of leading European Jews to use their controlling finances to direct the world in ways favoring them.²² The Protocols as alleged Jewish documents state that the Jews have the power of gold (1.7) and that the power of monopoly of the world through capital or money is “entirely

¹³ The riches of the Patriarchs should never be used to support prosperity theology. Narratives can never be applied without thought of context and purpose. The reason for the riches was probably to launch the nation. In general, the book of Job and the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke remove prosperity theology as an option for Bible-believing Christians.

¹⁴ Dubnow, loc. 684.

¹⁵ Ibid., loc. 714.

¹⁶ Ibid., loc. 720-21.

¹⁷ Ibid., loc. 971, 1168.

¹⁸ Ibid., 4486.

¹⁹ Ibid., loc. 1205.

²⁰ William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (reprint ed., Digireads.com Publishing, 2016), loc. 226.

²¹ *The Rothschild Family: The History and Legacy of the International Banking Dynasty* (Charles River Editors), loc. 600-700. One of the respected works on the Rothschilds is the two-volume set by Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: Money’s Prophets 1798-1848* and *The House of Rothschild: The World’s Banker 1849-1999* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998). Unfortunately, these resources were not available for this presentation.

²² The first publication of the *Protocols* appears to be in 1903 in Russian.

in our hands” (1.8). There is virtually no justification for any of these connections.²³ The Protocols are simply anti-Semitic propaganda.

The information cited here reviewed briefly why Jews have been falsely accused of wanting to control world finances. While it is true that on the whole the Jews have been and continue to be an industrious and creative people, Christians should not level any complaint against God’s Chosen People concerning an attempt to control all of the world’s finances.

False Views about the Desire of Jews to Take Over the World

A corollary to the previous point is the perception that Jews plan to take over the world. To be sure, as Bible-believing Christians, we must be honest about strongly worded biblical passages teaching that Israel will control many other nations and their wealth. Of course, such control is only after Messiah Jesus returns and His earthly kingdom has begun. It is something that Christians or Jews, unlike Muslims, should wait for God to do in the future. A small sampling would include the following (context needs to be taken into consideration):

- Isaiah 11:14 – “And they will swoop down on the slopes of the Philistines in the west; Together they will plunder the sons of the east; they will possess Edom and Moab; and the sons of Ammon will be subject to them.”
- Amos 9:12 – “That they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by My name,” declares the LORD who does this.”
- Isaiah 54:3 – “And your descendants will inherit the nations.”

In past history, God did tell the Israelites to conquer the Canaanites, but not the rest of the world. There was a special land that was granted by right to Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob. In the times of David and Solomon there was extension and rule over others according to the providential blessing of God. Israel, however, was to be a light to the world not a conqueror of the nations (Isa. 49:6). This is even true for Israel in the eschaton: “And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising” (Isa. 60:3).

Nevertheless, this supposed evil desire of Jews to take over the world finds expression once again in the *Protocols* mentioned earlier. These deposits of fake news highlight the efforts of a rich cabal of Jewish men to take over the world (remember the date of publication is the first decade of the twentieth century). Their means of doing so are outlined: destructive education (3.10), support of communism (3.7), creation of universal economic crises (3.11), elimination of the God-idea from culture (4.3), resistance by universal war (7.3), incremental dismantling of constitutional structure (10.17-18), and others. After the onset of World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and the Great Depression, one can understand why many thinkers, including evangelical Christians, succumbed to the siren call of the Protocols for a time.²⁴ Many

²³ Another dilemma for Jewish people is that they are vilified at both ends of the economic spectrum – capitalism and communism. The Nazis apparently believed the Jews played both sides in their desire for control. Hitler could speak of the end of Judeo-Bolshevism and hate capitalism because of its “alleged connections to Jewish international finance.” See R. Mark Musser, *Nazi Oaks: The Green Sacrifice of the Judeo-Christian Worldview in the Holocaust* (Trust House Publishers, 2017), vi, 21.

²⁴ See Michael D. Stallard, *The Early Twentieth-Century Dispensationalism of Arno C. Gaebelein* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 44-54.

changed their minds as the details of the forgery were revealed. The alleged goal of the Jews according to the Protocols was world power (10.3-7), a Jewish super-government or state (9.3), and the removal of all Gentiles from power and control of industry (6.6-8). Time has proven that the Marxist dream represented here, even when tried in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, has been a failed project. Furthermore, it has been shown that it has not been a Jewish-led enterprise. The Jewish people are not attempting to take over the world. Instead, they are trying to survive and endure and offer a better future to their children just like the rest of us.

Refusal of Some Jews to Assimilate to the Cultures in which They Live

Another reason that emerges as to why the world hates the Jews is the refusal of many Jewish people down through the centuries to assimilate to the cultures around them, these cultures mostly being the various Christian cultures of Europe.²⁵ It is widely known that Jews assimilated more in Western Europe than in Eastern Europe, but throughout the continent there was often an attempt to preserve what they perceived as a precious heritage – their Bible, synagogue system, training schools for children, distinctive dress, personal features such as beards, etc. While there is much disagreement among themselves about many things, a large number of Jewish people have wanted to maintain some semblance of their Jewish identity and not lose it within the societies around them.

The reaction of European Christendom to Jewish distinctiveness was often to see communities of the “chosen people” as a “state in a state.”²⁶ Consequently, the general culture treated the Jews with suspicion, wondering about their exclusiveness and separation. In early nineteenth-century Russia, conventional attitudes about the Jewish question possess a measure of clarity:

The “Russian Truth” by Pestel contains a chapter entitled “On the Tribes Populating Russia,” in which the Jewish problem is described as an almost indissoluble political tangle. Pestel enumerates the peculiar Jewish characteristics which, in his opinion, render the Jews entirely unfit for membership in a social order. The Jews “foster among themselves incredibly close ties”; they have “a religion of their own, which instils [sic] into them the belief that they are predestined to conquer all nations,” and “makes it impossible for them to mix with any other nation.”²⁷

This Russian work also mentioned that the Jews were waiting for Messiah to come and set up his kingdom. As a result, they viewed themselves as “temporary residents in the land in which they live.”²⁸ The Christian culture wanted something more attached to usefulness for the present age.²⁹ Some Jews of this period in France, Germany, and Poland were trying to become “advanced Jews” taking into account the Enlightenment and becoming more like the culture

²⁵ Jews in countries where Islam dominated probably had less pressure to assimilate culturally although a study of that facet of Jewish experience would be fruitful.

²⁶ Dubnow, loc 6881.

²⁷ Ibid., loc 6886. Pavel Pestel was a Russian revolutionary who was a leader in the so-called Decembrist revolt against Nicholas I in 1825.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ The dominance of amillennialism may have something to do with this attitude by Christians. This view has the least interest in eschatology of all the various millennial views.

around them. This included the use of more modern dress. Yet authorities were reluctant to count the Jews as really part of regular society.³⁰ So concerns existed on both sides. Government leaders especially in Poland began to urge strong reforms to change the Jews, usually beginning with the Jewish religion. Recommendations were made to force Jews “to send their children to the Government schools, to conduct all their business in Polish, to wear the customary non-Jewish form of dress, and not to marry before the age of twenty.”³¹ Most Jews did not welcome such attempts to make them conform to their surroundings.

Minority groups often feel disassociated from the culture in which they find themselves. The Anabaptists of the 1520s suffered terribly at the hands of both Catholics and Protestants. Their refusal to practice infant baptism and their usual pacifistic tendencies caused their culture to view them with disdain.³² Because of the union of Church and State, refusal to baptize your newborn child meant you were keeping them from officially joining the state, that is, the culture as well as keeping them out of the Church. Pacifism meant you were not willing to defend Europe from the Muslim hordes if needed to do so. As a result, Anabaptists often paid with their lives by their refusal to assimilate to those around them.³³

The fate of the Jews throughout history, however, has a different tone, a deeper tone, a more sinister quality. Most minority groups have not experienced genocide on the scale of the Holocaust.³⁴ Most peoples have not been forced to endure forced conversions, had their property confiscated over and over and being forced to move and start over several times in their lives, and killed just because they were different. No people groups taken on the whole have suffered like the Jews have suffered. In our secular times, many Jewish people have embraced the secularistic spirit of the day and, in that sense, have assimilated to their culture. Other Jews have done more to maintain their religious and ethnic heritage. No matter where Jewish people live on the spectrum, Christians should never generate hatred toward Jews because they choose to be different from my culture. After all, within a growing secularist (and sometimes pagan) America, evangelicals are themselves hated more and more by culture. The Golden Rule applies.

False Claim of Blood Libel

One of the most pernicious ways that professing Christians and Muslims have incited bodily harm of Jews, destruction of their property, judicial condemnation, and outright murder has been the false and hateful charge known as “blood libel.” The general charge is that Jewish people kidnapped Christian children or Christian monks to use their blood in Jewish rituals. Although there are variations of similar false claims, one usual presentation is that the Jews use

³⁰ Ibid., loc 5143-49.

³¹ Ibid., loc 5575.

³² For perhaps the best treatment of Anabaptist views on Church and State, see William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 237-66.

³³ Although I have never felt threatened with my life because of my evangelical beliefs, I have experienced the “feel” of being viewed as odd where I ministered in an area over three quarters Roman Catholic. Many experience this level of antagonism in the United States without experiencing outright persecution.

³⁴ My statement should not be taken to denigrate other accounts of genocide in history such as the Armenian Genocide executed by the Ottoman Empire beginning in 1915. Estimates are that 1.5 million Armenians were killed.

the blood to bake matzah. The origins of the charge appear to be from late Medieval Europe.³⁵ Often the claim includes the indictment that the Jews have killed those from whom they have taken blood.

While the origins of the false accusation can be found in Christendom,³⁶ the Muslims in more modern times have seemingly relished the idea of propagating the claim. Outbreaks of blood libel charges occurred in Lebanon in 1824 & 1834.³⁷ There was mob violence in Hebron in 1775.³⁸ The most heinous and consequential accusation of this kind, however, was the Damascus blood libel of 1840: “In Syria, the infamous blood libel of 1840 brought about the death, torture, and pillage of countless Jews falsely accused of murdering a priest and his servant to collect the blood for Passover matzoth! Before the Jews were finally vindicated of this slander, word of the charges had spread far from Damascus, causing terror in numerous Jewish communities.”³⁹ In retaliation to the believed libel, dozens of Jewish children were kidnapped and tortured.⁴⁰ The tragedy has been compounded by the ongoing official support for the false accusations by leaders in Arab lands. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia in 1973 spoke of the importance of understanding the Damascus case to deal with Jewish wrongdoing. Government and university officials in Syria and Egypt have ratified the “truth” of the Damascus blood libel charge.⁴¹ Such hate built upon superstition and unsupported claims is bewildering to any serious thinker. The individual evangelical must defend Jewish people from such scurrilous ideas. There is nothing in Jewish heritage or biblical teaching that would require the Jews to engage in such behavior.

Jews as the Christ Killers

Perhaps the greatest reason advanced in Christendom for hating the Jews is the charge that the Jewish people are the “Christ-killers.” The term *Jewish deicide* is sometimes used as the label for the belief that the Jewish people as a group throughout history have been responsible for the death of Christ.⁴² Allusions are made to passages where the crowd, incited by Jewish leaders, chose for Barabbas to be released by Pilate instead of Jesus. The crowd responds to Pilate by saying, “His [Christ’s] blood be on us and on our children” (Matt. 27:25). The pathway is then laid down to make every Jewish person of every generation guilty of the death of Jesus. This is enshrined in what many Christians around the world believe to be the holiest place on planet earth – the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where Jesus allegedly died on the cross, was buried not far away, and was raised from the dead. Those who have been to Israel and Jerusalem have seen the famous mural at the Roman Catholic controlled part of the crucifixion site. The picture

³⁵ Julius, 80. Dubnow refers to the libels as “medieval libels” (loc 1462).

³⁶ A couple of examples would be a Jew executed in 1564 in Bielsk, Poland on the “charge of having killed a Christian girl” (Dubnow, loc 1462) and a group of four Jewish men imprisoned in Posen from 1736-40, who were nearly executed but survived torture and a four-year murder ritual trial. Their crime was allegedly killing a small Christian child (Dubnow, loc 3048-3077).

³⁷ Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial* (reprint ed., Chicago: JKAP, 2000), 65-66.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁰ Julius, xi.

⁴¹ Peters, 36.

⁴² William Nicholls, *Christian Antisemitism: A History of Hate* (Jason Aronson, Inc., 2013), Kindle loc 394.

of it below shows the grim truth. Jesus has been nailed to the Cross and is apparently dead. The Virgin Mary is standing over him praying. Mary Magdalen is at his feet weeping. But in the background is a Jewish person holding a mallet. It is a Jewish person – in fact, it is the Jews -- who put the nails in the hands and feet of Jesus. This is the declaration of a Christian shrine in Jerusalem.



Those of us who are born-again believers, pro-Israel, and pro-Jewish need to respond to this. But how? When we talk to both our Gentile and Jewish friends about our faith, what we say here is crucial. In addition, the tone with which we say it has an impact. The solution is to present the entire theology of “who killed Christ?” This means that our conversations many times must be more than an elevator exercise.

The Romans Killed Christ

First, we must note the biblical teaching that the Romans killed Christ. It was on Pilate’s authority that Jesus was crucified despite the Roman governor’s attempt to wash his hands of the guilt (Matt. 27:24). The text says that Pilate had Jesus scourged and delivered over to be crucified (v. 26). Then the “soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole Roman cohort around Him” (v. 27). It was the Roman soldiers who put a scarlet robe on him and placed the painful crown of thorns on Christ’s head (vv. 28-29). The Roman soldiers under the authority of the Roman governor “led Him away to crucify Him” (v. 31). When they arrived at Golgotha, Matthew’s Gospel tells us “when they [the Roman soldiers] had crucified

Him, they divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots” (v. 35). We know that at the time Jesus dies and the veil was torn, the text reveals that there were a Roman centurion and other Roman soldiers standing guard over Jesus (v. 54). The evidence is clear. The Romans killed Christ, not in the sense of all Romans in history, but as those Roman soldiers who were under the authority to execute an alleged criminal named Jesus.

The Jews Killed Christ

During a time for questions after a recent presentation I made in a church, a man apparently did not like how I handled the whole issue of identifying who killed Jesus. He believed that I was too soft on the Jews and that I should have been harsher. Yet, I mentioned what I do now – the fact that the Jews do have a place among those who killed Christ. Evangelicals who accept the authority of the New Testament must also accept this truth. It was the Jewish leaders of the first century who led the mobs which convinced Pilate to kill Jesus. Peter, himself a Jew, spoke to the men of Israel on the day of Pentecost ten days after the Ascension with these words: “this Man [Jesus], delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death” (Acts 2:23). The “you” in the verse refers to the men of Israel, i.e., the Jews. They were the ones who in one sense “nailed to a cross” the Savior. Notice, however, that they did so by “the hands of godless men.” The term “godless men” is a translation of a plural form of *anomos* which means without law, lawless one, or one outside the law. So according to the Jewish Apostle Peter, the Jews killed Christ by the hands of heathen, that is, the Roman soldiers. However, the Jews bear their part of the responsibility for the death of Christ. This truth, of course, does not justify the wholesale blaming of all Jews in history for Jesus’ death. Beyond that, it does not give Christians permission to confiscate property, kill, humiliate, socially transgress, and commit genocide against Jews in the name of the doctrine of Jewish deicide. The fantastic and tragic excesses in Church history concerning this matter must be fully rejected. Christians must simply acknowledge the truth that first century Jews were part of the narrative involving the death of Jesus as he came to His own people who, for the most part, did not receive Him at that time (John 1:11). But love for God’s Chosen People should govern how evangelicals treat them.

God Killed Christ

At first glance, the heading here may seem like a contradiction, but it is not. If the Jewish people of the first century are said to have killed Christ by means of the Roman authorities, God can certainly be an ultimate cause that uses both. It is not illogical to walk around a diamond and observe the many complementary perspectives. In the same verse cited above in Peter’s sermon (Acts 2:23), the text teaches that Jesus was “delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.” Behind all human instrumentality in the death of Christ lies the hand of God. Numerous times the Bible says that Jesus came into the world to do his Father’s bidding (John 10:36, 16:28, 17:18, Heb. 1:6, 1 John 4:9). In the Garden of Gethsemane, the clarity of the Father’s mission for Jesus to die for the sins of the world is on display. Jesus came to do the will of God the Father even to the point of death (Matt. 26:38-39).

The death of the Jewish Messiah is not just a New Testament teaching. It is an Old Testament prediction (Isa. 53, Dan. 9). Furthermore, Christ’s death has tremendous theological

significance. He was “crushed for our iniquities” (Isa. 53:5). He bore our sins in our place as our substitute. Jesus was punished for us. In what seems to be the central feature of the atonement, His death was the *propitiation* for the sins of the world (Rom. 3:25, I John 2:2, 4:10). This means that Jesus *satisfied the wrath of God* while He was on the cross. God poured out judgment upon your sin and mine in the person of Christ. His death was truly a penal substitutionary one.⁴³ This is the main reason that Jesus came into the world so that we could be made right with God when we are unable to do so on our own. This divine directive in the Atonement should prevent anti-Semitism on the part of Christians. Why should we produce hateful blame for what is in fact the work of God? While the Jews have their part in the death of Christ, they by no means stand alone as the “Christ-killers.” God was at work in the world to bring Christ to this needed point in history.

No One Killed Christ

The idea that the death of Christ was an act of propitiation where the wrath of God was satisfied is viewed by some liberal theologians as the teaching of divine child abuse. Our point here destroys such a viewpoint.⁴⁴ As we walk around the diamond that is the cross of Christ, we see something else in its complementary messages. In spite of the fact that God killed Christ as part of His preordained plan, the Romans killed Christ as the constituted human authorities in Israel at that time, and the Jews killed Christ through the influence of Jewish leaders on the Roman governor Pilate, there is another sense in which *no one killed Jesus*. This is a fine point, but Jesus was extremely clear on this point. He told the crowd, “For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father” (John 10:17-18). Jesus, who is the God-man, obeyed the Father willingly in going to the cross to die.

Such voluntary and momentous work by Jesus on our behalf should overshadow any need to lay human blame for his death. The death of Christ was an act of gracious love. *From his perspective it was something that no one did to Him*. He gave His life freely and He offers individual redemption to all those who will trust in Him as payment for their sins (John 3:16, Eph. 2:8-9). This is His doing. If this is so, why would anyone lay the blame of “Christ-killers” at the feet of the Jews?

⁴³ For an excellent technical defense of the doctrine of propitiation, see the classic work Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956), 125-85. A later and more popular treatment by Morris on the same general themes is *The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1983).

⁴⁴ For an example of the harsh rejection of the penal substitutionary viewpoint, see Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) and Steve Chalke, “The Redemption of the Cross” in *The Atonement Debate* edited by Steve Chalke, Chris Wright, I. Howard Marshall, and Joel Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 34-45. For an excellent rebuttal, see Garry Williams, “Penal Substitution: A Response to Recent Criticisms” in *The Atonement Debate* edited by Steve Chalke, Chris Wright, I. Howard Marshall, and Joel Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 172-91.

We All Killed Christ

Continuing around the diamond, we arrive at the universal truth that all men are sinners. As a result of the curse on the world, Jesus came to die to pay the penalty for man's sin. So there is a sense in which, our sins led to the death of Jesus on the cross. Our predicament required God's solution through Christ. As the Bible says in 2 Cor. 5:21, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus himself told us that he came into the world for the purpose of saving sinners: "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Chafer eloquently comments:

It was this divine estimate of humanity, described by the words "lost," "perish," "condemned," "under the wrath of God," "blind," "in the powers of darkness," "dead in trespasses and sins," which brought the Saviour from heaven to earth. It was this dark picture that impelled Him to give His life a ransom for many. His saving work was a practical accomplishment. It has provided every needed cure that could be demanded by the infinite purity and holiness of God.⁴⁵

God's gracious provision of the death of Christ was invoked because of your sin and mine. So, it is in this sense, that we all killed Christ. We all are to blame for the fact that He had to die to provide a way of salvation.

The Atonement, centered on the death of Christ, is a robust doctrine. There are many facets to biblical teaching relative to this marvelous work. Among those facets are the roles in history that the Romans, Jews, God the Father, Christ, and all sinners play in bringing about the death of the Jewish Messiah. Consequently, believers should never use the theologically incorrect slur "Christ-killers" as a label for all Jewish people. While they have their part in the grand narrative, they do not stand alone. We all have red blood on our hands as we stand with them.

Satanic Opposition

When reading the historical record of hateful persecution of the Jews, whether from Christian, Muslim, pagan, or secular sources, its stunning volume and depth makes one ponder the notion that there is something beyond human action at work. The transfer of Haman's hatred of the Jewish Mordecai to the entire race of the Jewish people (Esther 3:5-6) raises the suspicion that there is a power beyond human sin that is driving the historical oppression of the Jews. Although the wickedness of man can do terrible acts of cruelty without external help, Bible-believing evangelicals believe that there is a cosmic unseen world where Satan and his minions can influence mankind toward horrendous behavior. This is what is taught in the book of Daniel. The prince of Persia (Dan. 10:13, 20) and the prince of Greece (Dan. 10:20) appear to be evil spirits who represent in some way the nations of Persia and Greece, respectively. The key idea is that these evil spirits are swaying leaders in those nations to perform evil actions. Michael (the Archangel) is the prince of Israel (Dan. 10:21, 12:1) who stands guard over Israel.

⁴⁵ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Salvation* (reprint ed., Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1940), 14.

The book of Revelation envisions such a battle of unseen spiritual forces during the last half of the tribulation period as portrayed in chapter 12. Several aspects of this battle are highlighted in the text. First, a great sign appears in the form of a “woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” (v. 1). This woman is described as giving birth to a male child who is obviously the Christ who will rule the nations (v. 2, 4-5). The interpreter should quickly dismiss any Roman Catholic interpretation that the woman is the Virgin Mary.⁴⁶ Many non-dispensationalist Protestants identify the woman as the church.⁴⁷ However, as Patterson notes, “The idea that the radiant woman is the church must be dismissed as even less plausible. Christ gives birth to the church; the church does not give birth to the Lord.”⁴⁸ The best interpretation is that the woman is the nation of Israel. In Joseph’s dream in Genesis 37:9-10, the image has already been defined. Jacob is the sun; Rachel is the moon; the sons of Israel besides Joseph are the eleven stars. Presumably, Joseph would be the twelfth star. The context in Revelation 12 also supports the idea of Israel in the image. The previous chapter 11 is filled with mention of Jewish things: a temple with courtyard, the holy city Jerusalem, and two witnesses whose ministries mirror the work of Moses and Elijah (11:6). Furthermore, the two witnesses are described as two olive trees and two lampstands (although the latter is also used to speak of the seven churches earlier in the book of Revelation) which are common Jewish symbols.

Second, another sign in the passage is that of a red dragon who is called the serpent of old, the devil, and Satan (12:9). In the text, Satan wants to destroy the Christ-child (v. 4). However, being cast down from heaven for a last time after a struggle with Michael and the unfallen angels, he is enraged at the woman, that is, Israel (v. 7-13). Satan’s attempt to destroy Israel fails because God supernaturally protects her for 3 ½ years (v. 14-16). This attempt to destroy Israel is specifically about the last half of the coming tribulation period. It is a time of horrific distress unlike anything before or after (Dan. 12:1; Joel 2:2; Matt. 24:21). As terrifying as the thought may be, this time appears to be worse than the Holocaust. But Revelation 12 tells us that Satan is at the center of it. The devil hates what God loves. God loves the Jewish people who are the apple of his eye (Zech 2:8). Therefore, Satan rejects, despises, and abhors the Jews.

⁴⁶ The identification of the woman as Mary is widespread in the history of the Roman Catholic Church including the recent reaffirmation given by Pope John Paul II (1978-2005): “she who was the one ‘full of grace’ was brought into the mystery of Christ in order to be his Mother and thus the Holy Mother of God, through the Church remains the mystery as ‘the woman’ spoken of by the Book of Genesis (3:15) at the beginning and by the Apocalypse (12:1) at the end of the history of salvation” (Redemptoris Mater: On the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Life of the Pilgrim Church, 3.24; 25 March 1987, *The Holy See*; Online; http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater.html; Access 11/25/18. In the New American Bible, a Bible translation for American Catholics, a note on Revelation 12:1 says things differently: “The woman adorned with the sun, the moon, and the stars symbolizes God’s people in the Old and the New Testament; cf Gn 37, 9f. The Israel of old gave birth to the Messiah (5) and then became the new Israel, the church, which suffers persecution by the dragon...” (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983). Adherents of the Reformed view sometimes hold a similar view to the NAB. For example, Phillips states: “The woman... is the covenant community of God’s faithful people, through whom God brought his Son, the long-promised Savior, into the world. She includes both Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church...” (Richard D. Phillips, *Revelation: Reformed Expository Commentary* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017], 343.

⁴⁷ For a small sampling note, J. Ramsey Michaels, *Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 154; George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 166-67; and Jürgen Roloff, *Revelation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 145.

⁴⁸ Paige Patterson, *The New American Commentary: Revelation* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 261.

It is certain that this attitude of Satan is not a change from how he is in the present age. Today, Satan hates the Jewish people. Consequently, it is quite easy to suggest that one reason the world hates the Jews, perhaps the major reason, is Satanic influence on hearts and minds. Christians should carefully consider this in light of the fact that Satan also hates us since God loves us as well. The devil wants to kill us and destroy us (1 Peter 5:8). We share this in common with the Jewish people. In light of this common foe, how could we ever participate in the devil's obsessive hatred for the physical sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

Conclusion

Genesis 12:3 is still in the Bible. It has not been abrogated by later revelation. God will bless those who bless Abraham and his physical descendants through Isaac and Jacob. Such a truth should be enough by itself to motivate a true Christian believer into loving the Jewish people and seeking their welfare. To be sure, all evangelical Christians should want to share their faith in Jesus with all Gentiles and Jewish people. It is what we are supposed to do based upon the requirements Jesus has given us. We should certainly consider it a great tragedy when any Gentile or Jew rejects our Jesus. But when our message is rejected, we should not respond with hateful vengeance, but loving patience. Only God can convince a soul. All we do is plant seeds of truth. While we go about our seed-planting, let us refuse to go the way of the world. Let us live differently. Let us love the Jewish people.