

## WHY DOES THE JEW SUFFER?

A STUDY WITH A RABBI

-by A. Ralph Johnson

Some years ago<sup>1</sup> I received a phone call from a lady asking if I knew what Jews believe. I said that I knew very little, other than what I read. Someday I would like to talk with a Rabbi personally and find out.

After hanging up I thought to myself, “Someday” – will never come, until I make it *today*. So, I picked up the phone book and began calling synagogues, asking if I could talk with someone and learn about their beliefs. I was directed to an Orthodox Rabbi Arthur Jacobovitz, who taught classes at the University of Washington.

The Rabbi was straightforward. He was a busy man. However, he would give me some time if I would read some books and come with questions for discussion. One of the first was, “*Thy Brother’s Blood, The Roots of Christian Anti-Semitism*” by Malcom Hay.<sup>2</sup> That set the tone for our discussions, which continued thereafter for several months.

The first day we met, the Rabbi laid down the ground rules. I should not call him on Fridays. Friday, even before it began to get dusk, he must cease all work, as called for in the Sabbath Commandment (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15). Talking with me on the telephone would fall under that prohibition.

As an Orthodox Rabbi, he could not come to my house or eat food that was not prepared according to their dietary requirements. I could eat with him but his food must be “kosher” – approved.

He could not eat pork, rabbit, clams, crabs and other foods that did not fit the requirements in Deuteronomy, chapter 14. Only animals that chew the cud and have cloven hooves are acceptable. Birds of prey are excluded. Fish must have scales.

However, Orthodox requirements extend far beyond that. He explained that these require four kitchens. One set of cooking utensils is exclusively for use with dairy products. No meat can be used in them. A second set is exclusively for meat products. No dairy products can be used in them. This is based on the Old Testament teaching that a kid is not to be cooked in its mother’s milk (Ex. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21). Separate kitchens are required lest in washing dishes something of milk or meat might remain that would intermingle the two. Indeed, there must be six hours between eating any meat and dairy products to keep them separate in the body.

The two other kitchens are for Passover. In addition to having one for meat and one for milk, these must never be used for anything with yeast. This is based on the teaching that at Passover, no yeast is to be in the house (Ex. 12:15). The strictness and extent of minute detail to which this is carried seems strange in view of the generally liberal attitudes in some other moral areas.

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<sup>1</sup> 1976

<sup>2</sup> *Thy Brother’s Blood*, Malcom Hay, 1975, Hart Publishing Company, Inc. First published under the name, *The Foot of Pride*, 1950, in 1960 published in paperback as *Europe and the Jews*.

Our discussion began with the Rabbi speaking of the intense anger the Jews hold towards Christians for the way they have been treated through the centuries. He spoke of their suffering and struggle to return to their homeland expressed in their parting -- "Next Year, Jerusalem."

On the first day I was particularly intrigued by his exclamation -- "How can I believe in the god of Auschwitz?" It stopped me for a moment. It was the first of many cryptic statements he would make throughout our discussions, left for me to ponder and decipher. He was expressing, the Jewish frustration at God's failure to intervene in their slaughter by the Germans.

This became the thread that wove its way inexorably through our discussions, popping up here and there in various ways. From the Rabbi's perspective the responsibility lay in the teachings of Christians. We had fostered a climate of hate that ultimately culminated in the Holocaust in which millions of Jews perished.

Based on my experience with anti-Jewish attitudes, the readiness to believe any calumny and to place blame on all for any perceived wrongs, I shudder at the thought of how much truth may be in the accusation. I am ashamed to say that I have things in my files given me by our own brethren, vilifying Jews and accusing them of a grand plot to take over the world.

One of these is "*The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*" purportedly a secret plan for Zionist world conquest through Jewish world government. It was brought to our church many years ago by a preacher friend and put into our tract rack for dissemination to the congregation. The document is entirely fraudulent, having originally been created during the French Revolution, blaming the Freemasons for such a plot, with no reference to the Jews, later revised to implicate them. It gained credibility in America by Henry Ford's endorsement during the Jewish vilification fostered by the Germans prior to World War II, being Hitler's primary source to justify his purges.

The conspiratorial view ties together anything supposedly secret or mysterious with all of the problems and fears people hold. It is manifested in references to the "Rothschilds" (Jewish bankers), the "Illuminati," the "Bilderberg Group," the Trilateral Commission," and many others all tied up together and dumped on the doorstep of the Jews.

The afore-mentioned preacher insisted that Communism was a Jewish plot. Karl Marx, who fathered Communism was Jewish. Leon Trotsky, a collaborator with Lenin who came to power in the overthrow of the Russian Czarist regime, was Jewish.

However, Marx's family converted to Christianity, and Marx became an atheist. Stalin who purged many Jews, including his own son-in-law assassinated Trotsky. Stalin was not a Jew, having studied for the priesthood, and become an atheist. The Soviet Union has always sided with the Arab states against Israel.

When I pointed this out to my preacher friend, he gave me a weird look, lowered his voice and said, "You don't understand how these Jews work. They persecute their own people so that no one will realize they are the real ones in control."

The Rabbi and I discussed this and many other things over those months. He made a point of the ignorance of Christians, not only towards Jews, but in general. He noted how we speak of “Jewish Rabbis,” when in fact there are no other types of Rabbis.

He was quite knowledgeable of how we teach in our Sunday Schools. He said that in Sabbath Schools they pay their teachers. He was contemptuous of our religious educational level, perhaps generally justifiably so.

Naturally, one of the main areas of discussion focused on the importance of Scripture, versus tradition. Jews have several sacred writings upon which they rely. The primary source, of course, is the Old Testament, chief among these is the *Torah*, or five books of Law, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

However, they also have other writings, containing the *Traditions*. This is called the *Talmud*, a body of Jewish civil and religious law, including commentaries on the Torah. The *Talmud* consists of the *Mishnah* (a codification of laws) and the *Gemara* (a commentary on the Mishnah).

The Rabbi contended that *tradition* is more important than the *Torah*. *Tradition* is the interpretation of the Law by the Rabbis. Without *tradition* the *Torah* cannot be understood. Only the Rabbis have the education to understand the *Torah*.

This seems somewhat circular. The Rabbis are trained in the traditions, interpreted by the Rabbis, so that they can know what the Law means as interpreted by the Rabbis.

In contrast, it seemed to me that God has the ability to say what He means better than fallible men. Why not go directly to the Law and accept what God said?

I questioned how one could know which Rabbi is right? Like Christians, Jews are divided. There are basically three major movements in the U.S. today: Reform, Conservative and Orthodox, with a number of minor sects.

The Rabbis have had great disputations between themselves. At the time of Jesus there were several different Jewish sects. The Pharisees and Sadducees’ differences are well known (Acts 23:8). In addition there were the Essenes, a generally reclusive sect. Two great Rabbinic schools were those of Hillel and Shammai who differed on the interpretation of the basis for divorce (Matt. 19).

So, which interpretation is right? Rabbi Jacobovitz responded that “the *senior* Rabbi is always right. -- If the senior Rabbi says it is night, and you can go outside and see the sun shining – it is night.”

I raised a question as to how that fit with a clash he had spoken of with a Rabbi back East to whom he said, “My sheepskin is just as good as your sheepskin.” He responded that whether the Rabbi is right, is not your business. That is between him and God.

To him, tradition, was of utmost importance. For example, he was scrupulously careful to not use the name of God. Instead, he used words that suggested the idea but pronounced it differently. This grows out of the warning not to use the name of God in vain (Ex. 20:7). The Rabbis considered substitution of another word was protection against any accidental oversight in reverence.

Of course, we discussed Jewish Messianic concepts. His response was that Jews hold varying views. Some think the Messiah is the establishment of the Nation of Israel. Others believe he is a man who is yet to come and sit on the throne of David. I asked why Jesus could not have been the Messiah. He responded, "Because he didn't establish his kingdom."

That was tantalizingly reminiscent of futurist views among Christians who, because Jesus did not set up a materialistic kingdom, discount the accomplishment of his mission and keep pushing it ahead into the future.

However, Jesus said that his kingdom was NOT of this world (John 18:36).

*"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." --Luke 17:20-21.*

Jesus established the kingdom on Pentecost (Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:6-8; 2:30-36) and rules in the hearts of His people (Col. 1:13; Eph 2:19). In their super-literalistic views, both Jews and futurists have missed the grand spiritual fulfillment. (Compare the Old Testament typology picturing the fulfillments, as in Hebrews 9; Gal 4:22-26; Hebrews 12:18-28)

We discussed the sign of the virgin in Isaiah 7:14 which in Matthew 1:23 is cited as a prophecy of the virgin birth of Jesus. The Hebrew word is "*almah*" (#5959), which the Rabbi held only means a young unmarried woman. He maintained that the word for "virgin" is "*bethulah*" (see Gen. 24:16).

However, this raises the question of why Jewish scholars, over 200 years before Christ, translated this into the Greek Septuagint (LXX) with the word, "*parthenos*" which indisputably means "virgin." This certainly was not influenced by Christians, though it was hotly debated between the Jews<sup>3</sup> and early Christians.

I questioned whether there was any place in the Bible where *Almah* was ever used of a woman who was not a virgin. The Rabbi said he thought so but could not say where.

*Almah* is used seven times in the Old Testament (Gen 24:43; Ex 2:8; Ps 68:25; Song of Solomon 1:3; 6:8 and Isa. 7:14). Only Song of Solomon 6:8 has seriously been pressed as evidence indicating a non-virgin. Speaking of the women in Solomon's harem it says, "*There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins [almah] without number.*" However, this distinguishes "virgins" from both queens and concubines. In ancient harems, virgins were taken in (as the woman described in the Song) and kept there for a period of time until they were

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<sup>3</sup> Justin Martyr, Debate with Trypho, the Jew, Chapter 66 and following. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1.

trained and prepared for acceptance by the king. That these were still virgins can be seen in the Song, in which the young woman is released and returns to her lover. This would never have taken place if the king had any sexual contact with her.

In fact, the word, “*bethulah*” is also applied to a young woman betrothed to a man.

Joel 1:8. *Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.*

Since there are no cases where *almah* was used of a woman that was not a virgin, I questioned why it could not mean “*virgin*”? He simply pointed at the right side of his head and drew his finger around the back to the front – it would be taking the long way around.

I questioned about the “*seed*” of the woman in Gen. 3:15 that would bruise the head of the serpent. He did not believe it was a historical event and viewed it as far too vague to have any connection to Jesus.

The passage about the “*prophet like Moses*” who was to come (Deut 18:15, 18-19), was dealt with similarly, as also Isaiah 53, and Psalms 22. Concerning Isaiah 9:6-7 he said that it was past tense, “*a child has been born.*”

I questioned about how Jews dealt with the problem of the loss of the temple and the sacrificial system God established for dealing with sin. He responded that apart from the temple each person still has personal access to God. That seems reasonable but then, why, if not needed, was the temple built and the sacrifices established? I recall no clear answer.

I asked how, since the family records were all destroyed, would the priesthood be reestablished? Did not the priests have to be from the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron? He indicated that this could be accomplished based on their names. Anyone with “Levi” in his name was a Levite. Those with “Cohn” (meaning “priest”) or other such words, were priests. He explained that when someone with those names was present in the Synagogue, they had the right to preside.

One thing that was especially interesting was his concept of man’s relationship with God. Christians rely on the sacrifice of Christ for forgiveness, and Christ as mediator. The Rabbi seemed to discount the idea of grace based on a substitutionary sacrifice. Man was directly responsible. No mediator was necessary. We are not saved by faith but by how we obey. Our good works are simply weighed against the bad.

Likewise he did not accept the concept of a personal devil who opposes God and tempts men. He maintained: “The devil is unacceptable because this is an escape from responsibility and is an acceptance of dualism.” I noted that “if there is no Devil then is not God responsible for evil?” and, “Is not our acceptance of a personal God then also an escape from responsibility?”

We discussed many things. However, the key issue that kept coming up was the problem of Jewish suffering. A most interesting occasion was a dialogue between Jews and Christians, sponsored by the Church Council of Greater Seattle at Temple Beth Am on May 24, 1976. At one point we were broken into small groups to discuss the questions of “Why should Israel have

the Holy Land?” and “What should a solution to the Middle East look like.” However, in fact, discussion ranged widely to other things.

One of these was where blame should be placed for the Holocaust. One liberal “Christian” made a point that this was caused by the views of conservatives. I responded pointedly that Germany, where the Holocaust was masterminded, was the very center of liberal rationalism. That ended that.

The most memorable occasion in the discussion was when a Rabbi asked whether we really believed in the resurrection of Jesus. Knowing that I was the only conservative there, one of the leading liberals (Pastor of the University Christian Church, I believe) suggested that I first give my view. I looked the Rabbi directly in the eyes and stated, “Rabbi, I believe that Jesus really lived, that he was crucified, and raised physically and appeared to people on the third day.” The liberal preacher dryly responded, “You can’t prove that.”

Then the liberal gave his philosophical view of Jesus, killed by the Romans and raised in a symbolical sense. When he finished, I commented, “That doesn’t sound much like a faith to die for.”

One significant statement by the Rabbi was, “How can a Jew believe in God? If I am a Jew, I cannot believe in God. If I believe in God, I cannot be a Jew!”

Again, the old problem of suffering was cryptically expressed. How can a Jew believe in a god who would permit them to suffer so? If he believes in God how could he be a Jew since god evidently cares nothing about them?

The question was stunning. The Jew’s soul was bared in all its agony. Why does the Jew suffer?

I pondered this throughout our discussions and on the last day posed it directly as my last question. “Rabbi, there is something I have been thinking about from our first day together. You said, ‘How can I believe in the God of Auschwitz?’ And later, in a discussion group between Christians and Jews, another Rabbi said, ‘How can a Jew believe in God? If I am a Jew, I cannot believe in God. If I believe in God, I cannot be a Jew!’ **Why does the Jew suffer?**”

There was a long pause, as the Rabbi contemplated an answer. Then he rose from his chair and said, “Come with me.” At his secretary’s desk he said to hold his calls. He was going for a walk with the pastor. I inwardly smiled as I recalled that when a Rabbi wants to impress an important concept, he takes the student for a walk. This was significant.

We left the building and walked south along the busy street towards the University of Washington. I thought how much this differed from a quiet walk along a shady lane which would have been the favored choice. We walked for some distance before he spoke. Then he said, “When God wishes to break up the fallow ground he needs a sharp point on his plow. The Jew is the point of God’s plow.”

Like the Rabbi, I left a long pause before answering. Then I responded, “But Rabbi, Does not the Torah teach that when you do good, God will bless you, and when you do evil, He will curse you? -- Why does the Jew suffer?”

Again, there was a long silence as we walked. Finally he said, “You are right. It was the Sadducees – they abandoned the traditions.”

Again, I walked quietly along before responding. “But Rabbi, that was two thousand years ago. The Sadducees are long gone. Why does the Jew still suffer?”

There was no answer. We turned around and walked back to the office in silence, exchanged pleasantries and parted.

I have always wondered just what went through the Rabbi’s mind in the days following as he struggled with that question. He could not have escaped the weight of timing that shortly after Jesus was crucified, Jerusalem was destroyed and the calamities of the Jews began that have continued to our day.

Throughout our study the matter of responsibility for Jewish suffering kept surfacing. My response was, why are all Christians necessarily responsible? Most of us had no part in the decisions to persecute. We were not there, and in fact, many of us have resisted anti-Semitism.

However, New Testament teaching blaming Jews for their role in the Crucifixion (Acts 2:36; 3:13-16; 4:10) are held responsible as a major source of the problem, and by our acceptance of those Scriptures we are regarded as sharing the guilt. The concept of “collective responsibility” was cited as indicated by the prayers of the prophets such as in Jer. 3:25.

*25 We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.*

However, this is a two-edged sword that cuts both ways. The Jews crucified Christ, and Jews have collectively endured the consequences. Of course, Jewish and liberal theologians have tried to shift responsibility by claiming the early Christian writers falsely blamed the Jews for Jesus’ death.

Yes, terrible wrongs have been perpetuated in the name of Christ, and before God, all those responsible will be held accountable. The New Testament clearly warned against such conduct (Mat 13:28-30; Rom 11:18-29).

However, the beginning of the calamities of the Jews long predated the power of Christianity. Because of their sins, Jerusalem was first destroyed by the Babylonians almost 600 years before Christ.

Again in, A.D. 70, it was the Romans, not Christians, who destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews. So, is not the calamities of the Jews something far deeper than a matter of Christian responsibility?

As Claire Huchet-Bishop stated in the forward of “Thy Brother’s Blood,”

“Today, we are facing a situation which at first seems not to relate to Malcom Hay’s concern regarding Christian responsibility for anti-Semitism. For instance, could we possibly claim that China’s stance against Israel today is a product of perverse Christian conditioning? Of course, we cannot. However, there is this fact: the hostility of non-Jews toward Jews goes far beyond the usual antipathy toward any minority. Moreover, it manifests itself regardless of the physical absence or presence of Jews. Therefore, are we not let to wonder whether this antagonism, nearly universal today, is not the expression of a deeper malaise than the usual xenophobic reaction to “difference”?”<sup>4</sup>

The calamities of the Jews, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, were set forth by Josephus about 75 AD in his extensive writings, long before Christians rose to power. (See: *The Wars of the Jews*)

Indeed, the seeds of the curse go back into the Torah itself. Moses said:

*Deut 18:15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.*

And again,

*Deut 28:15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. 16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. 17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough. 18 Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. 19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.*

*37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples whither Jehovah shall lead thee away.*

*47 Because thou servedst not Jehovah thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things; 48 therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies that Jehovah shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. 49 Jehovah will bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; 50 a nation of fierce countenance, that shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young, 51 and shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy ground, until thou be*

*52 And they shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fortified walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land; and they shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which Jehovah thy God hath given thee. 53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, whom Jehovah thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee.*

*64 And Jehovah will scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, even wood and stone. 65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot: but Jehovah will give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul; 66 and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have no assurance of thy life. 67 In*

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid* p.xv

*the morning thou shalt say, Would it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would it were morning! for the fear of thy heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.*

Thus, the wheels of destiny seem to have been set in motion, first in the warnings of God, and then by their repeated offenses eventually culminating in rejection of the “Prophet like Moses” – the very Messiah himself.

When Jesus came, they renounced him and declared allegiance to Caesar. (Deut. 18:18; cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37).

*John 19:12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend: whosoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar. 13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! 15 But they cried out, **Away with him, away with him, crucify him.** Pilate saith unto them, **Shall I crucify your King?** The chief priests answered, **We have no king but Caesar.***

*Matt 27: 25 Then answered all the people, and said, **His blood be on us, and on our children.***

Accordingly, they were delivered into the merciless hands of Caesar and those awful words have echoed in their ears down through the halls of history as the epitaph of their own judgment, stalking their every move.

Denial of this simply brings us back to the question, “Why does the Jew suffer?” and points back to the warnings of the Torah. The Jew has suffered and according to the Torah, if they did right they would be blessed, and if they did evil they would be cursed.

Jesus warned,

***Matt. 23:32** Fill up then the measure of your fathers. 33 You serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell? 34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall you scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon **you** may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, **All these things shall come upon this generation.** 37 O **Jerusalem, Jerusalem,** you who kill the prophets, and stone them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not! 38 Behold, **your house is left unto you desolate.***

*Luke 21:20 And when you shall see **Jerusalem compassed with armies,** then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For **these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.***

Hitler’s “Final Solution to the Jewish problem” --to entirely exterminate them, might well have succeeded, had he been victorious in his conquests, as may be suggested in the prediction of Jesus:

*Mat. 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

Indeed, it seems quite possible that the “tribulation” here may have not only been the destruction of Jerusalem but the whole period of affliction upon the Jews until they again took control of Jerusalem. The Holocaust itself was named after the morning burnt offering in the temple to purge the people’s sin.

*Luke 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

Since the Torah, given by the God of the Jews himself, sets this forth then the source of the Jews’ suffering cannot be simply laid at the door of Christians. The truth of this may be painful but solutions are not found in denial but in coming to grips with reality.

“Ezekiel speaks of Israel’s history as one long chain of ingratitude and sin...It is only when Israel sees that its sufferings are the just chastisement of God that its redemption and resurrection can begin.”<sup>5</sup>

Historically, God has repeatedly used persecution by their enemies to force them to return when they fell away. How much more the rejection of their own Messiah, sent by Him? What then is the alternative? Those who will not hear force their own Judgment. Blaming their national enemies, Christians, and even God, will not solve the problem.

*Deut. 9:6 Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a **stiffnecked** people. 7 Remember, and forget not, how you provoked the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD.*

*Isaiah 65:1 I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. 2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walk in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; 3 A people that provokes me to anger continually to my face;...*

Recognizing what God Himself said as to why the Jew suffers is not anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is a deplorable attitude of arrogance and hatred. God still loves the Jew and seeks their restoration. Instead of abuse, Christians should pray for them (Rom 10:1).

Even when God used others to punish Israel, He also punished those who punished them.

*Rom 11:18 **Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, you bear not the root, but the root you. 19 You will say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. **Be not high-minded, but fear:** 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not***

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<sup>5</sup> Pentateuch and Haftorahs by J. H. Hertz **The Haftorah p. 494 Haftorah Zek 22: ¶5**

you. 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

25 For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, **until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.** 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. 28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: **but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.** 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.