

ISRAEL: THE NATION WITHOUT AN OPTION

There are many religious “holy books” and many “gods”. Is the Bible merely another of the many? Or is it uniquely the Word of the one true and living God? Jews and Israel give the non believer a terrible headache. That’s because the God of the Scriptures declares them His signpost of blessing to the world—and declares that they will survive against all opposition and outlive all their tormentors. Well, they have—and they do! The indestructible Jew. And Israel: the nation without an option. There is nothing in history that compares. I’m Frank Eiklor and I invite you to stay with me for this next half hour for More Than Talk.

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Chapter 1 The Uninvented Go)

Nations come and go. So do their invented gods. Secular humanists recognize the problem of man and his gods. Today, secularists attempt to bring all people under one roof, with economies, weapons and energies controlled by a single power (“global village”, “new world order”, “one-world government” and other terms are used to describe the fancied future). Since “religion” can’t be eradicated, it must be controlled, even harnessed, to insure “the good” and weed out “the bad.” Any religion is tolerated as long as it recognizes of equal value all religions and all of man’s gods. Those who insist that their way is the only way—that their God is the only God—must be attacked, killed or rendered powerless—like germs that otherwise would affect the masses (today it’s evangelical Christians being slandered where there is yet “freedom” and slaughtered where they are a minority).

Certain facts stand out. One book—the Bible—is mocked like no other. One God is attacked like no other as a monstrous tribal invention—the God of the Bible—of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—of the Jews and Israel. One historic figure is reviled—even the name used in profanity—like no other—Jesus Christ. One people—one nation—is hated, demonized and attacked through millennia—the Jews and Israel. That’s because the Bible makes claims like no other book, such as foretelling the future in minute detail including the rise and fall of empires, the coming of a future Kingdom ruled by a Messiah chosen by God, and a people whom the nations would never be able to destroy and whose existence (both blessings and punishments) could be charted by their obedience or rebellion toward God.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". (No apologies or credits to other "gods.") And concerning all of man's religions and gods: "Let them come and show what they can do! says God, the King of Israel. Let them try to tell us what occurred in years gone by, or what the future holds. Yes, that's it! If you are gods, tell us what will happen in the days ahead! Or do some mighty miracle that makes us stare, amazed. But no! You are less than nothing, and can do nothing at all. Anyone who chooses you needs to have his head examined!" (Isaiah 41:21-24 Living Bible). And Israel? She would be God's signpost to the world for good or evil—but no power would ever bring about the devil's "final solution to the Jewish problem". " I would no more reject my people than I would change my laws of night and day, of earth and sky. I will never abandon the Jews..." (Jeremiah 33:25,26 Living Bible). So Israel was, and is, God's signpost to the world that no one invented Him—that all must answer to Him. Nations may reject God and disappear. Israel will have no such option. But how does God speak to and through the Jews? When will Israel listen? When will the world listen?

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Chapter 2 A World Without Jews

It occurred during my early fight against antisemitism and related hate aimed at Jews and other innocents. "We want all Jews to leave America and go to Israel", demanded the bigots. They also wished other countries would do the same—send Jews packing to Israel. I pressed the issue: "What are your feelings about Israel?" "Israel is a racist state and must cease to exist!" was the retort. There you have it—not even subtle—a world without Jews.

But just point out to the devil's disciples that there already was a world without Jews and watch them blink. That's what the first eleven chapters in Genesis are all about. And the stench of this "non-Jewish" world was so bad that God chose to introduce His Jewish plan in order to offer any hope that humans could be detoured from their highway to hell.

Take a quick look at Genesis chapters 1:11— the pre-Hebraic world (a "world without Jews"). God was awesome as usual in His creation of cosmos, earth and all non-human life. (1:1-25) Then came His masterpiece—man—whom God crowned with His image, spiritual authority, full material provision, perfect surroundings, partnership with God Himself, a gorgeous wife, massive intellectual capacity, innocence of sinlessness and the freedom to make choices.(1:26—3:12)

And what did those early “non-Jews” do? They blew it all! Adam and Eve rebelled against God and then passed the buck. They became a tool of Satan, introduced death to the human race, were the forerunners of a guilt complex and were unceremoniously booted out of their garden luxury. Their son murdered his own brother and then tried to hide his crime with the cop-out that has been repeated to this day by those who choose not to alleviate the sufferings of others: “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Only two men—Enoch and Noah—chose to walk with God, while “the crime rate was rising rapidly across the earth, and, as seen by God, the world was rotten to the core.” (6:11 Living Bible) Since our non-Jewish world didn’t mind drowning in its own filth, God decided to do just that—drown them and preserve only Noah and his family. He had already given His verdict: “When the Lord saw the extent of human wickedness, and that the trend and direction of men’s lives were only towards evil, he was sorry he had made them. It broke his heart.” (6:5 Living)

Without change, there would be no hope for our “world without Jews”. But God had another move. He who had made that first man would now choose another man and turn Abram and sons into...you guessed it—Jews. There was yet hope for the world!

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Chapter 3 The World’s First Hebrew

The first eleven chapters of Genesis are clear. A world without Jews—only “people”—proved hopeless. God could give up on the problem or raise up the solution. God chose a man named Abram, gave him a new tag called “Hebrew” and used him to start a special people that would break away from the world’s nations and their idols. The voice of the unseen God told Abram to leave familiar country, lovable kin and comfortable home to walk an unknown path.

There was no doubting that certain voice—any more than you would doubt a thunder clap and lightning strike that tore off your roof. To Abram’s obedience God gave seven promises: I will make of you a great nation, bless you, make your name great, make you a blessing, bless those who bless you, curse those who curse you and, through you, bless the whole world. (Gen.12:1-3)

That’s a lot of hope to put in one frail human—the father of a people who would be called Hebrews—Jews—Israelites. Abram passed the test with flying colors. First, he dared to believe God rather than argue with Him. Second, when he and nephew Lot could have started a land war, Abram put out the fire by offering Lot first choice and he

would take what was left. After Lot left smiling at his good deal, God told unselfish Abram to look in all directions "For all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed forever."

The third test Abraham passed was in unconditional love. When Lot was kidnapped, Abraham might have said: "Good riddance to the covetous cheapskate." Instead, he rescued him. Then came the excruciating test of unqualified obedience. Abraham was to sacrifice his son. It appears neither he nor Isaac ever flinched. When God saw Abraham's trust, He called him back from the brink and provided an animal for sacrifice. Then the Creator waxed almost euphoric over this man who loved Him so much: "Because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son...blessing I will bless you...and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:16-18).

Abraham the Hebrew and the progenitor of Israel. A chosen man—a chosen people. Now God's plan became clear. Israel would be His light to all nations and bring forth a Redeemer—the Messiah—who would more than repair the damage caused by Adam. But first God would make a covenant with Israel that would leave the Jews no option. They were to be His forever. No longer would God allow a world to be without Jews.

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Chapter 4 The Covenant and the Curse

Israel is alone. Too alone to really believe it. And so many Jews—within and outside Israel—conduct their lives like children who close their eyes and the monsters disappear. It's called "Pretend," but after a while it becomes reality, and anyone pointing out its unreality is rejected or not taken seriously. Jews, like non-Jews, like to be liked. But many Jews won't admit that a tremendous number of Gentiles don't like them—in fact, fear and hate them.

Many Israeli leaders cling to the delusion that the world is really glad that there is one place Jews can truly call home. They refuse to believe that much of the world wants them dead—now—and that their few "friends" would offer brief and pretentious tears at Israel's funeral—even while conducting petroleum business as usual.

Why this tragic Jewish denial of facts? Because most Jews, like most Christians, pay only lip service to God and the Bible. Jews know their very existence is based on the Bible, but that is "too embarrassing" to accept. The Hebrew prophets called the human heart deceitful and desperately wicked, but that is "too negative." God labeled the Jews

a “chosen people” and a light to the nations, but that is “too separatist.” And the biblical reason for antisemitism—doing away with the Jews in order to do away with the God of the Jews (Psalm 83:3-5)—is “too sensational and simplistic.” So constant Jewish queries, “Why do people hate us?” go unanswered, even while many pretend that peripheral responses like “lack of education,” “social inequality,” and “ignorance” constitute the core. After all, who wants to say out loud that the world hates God?

But is there a substitute for God and His guarantee that Israel will survive because He wills it? And is there a substitute for the hope of

Messiah, who is to issue in a true reign of peace? Christians and Jews may argue over Messiah’s identity and whether His will be a “first or second visit.” But while Christians need to get truly “converted” to the one we claim to be the Messiah—repenting for centuries of silence and complicity in the sufferings of the Jewish people—Jews need to get serious about seeking the God of their fathers. Christians have sex scandals, money-changers and personality cults to contend with, but Jews have rabbis who reject the Hebrew Scriptures as authentic, and congregants for whom temple or synagogue is a fun club rather than a faith challenge.

So American Jewish parents bemoan Christian attempts to witness to their children, but fail to “missionize” their own kids with a love for God, His Word, and a miracle called Israel. Yet the “everlasting covenant” (Gen. 17:7,8) God made with Abraham and confirmed again and again to Isaac and Jacob—the Jews—stands the test of time. So does the curse God guaranteed would fall on nations and individuals who chose (and choose) to curse the Jews and Israel. (Gen.12:3) Nations—including the USA—can opt to disbelieve and simply disappear from history. Israel has no such option. God has reserved for the Jews a destiny that must be fulfilled.

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Chapter 5 Guaranteed blessings...if

How is the word “Israel” associated today? To some, the word signifies “gutsy”; “Mideast democracy”; “friend of America”. To others, “oppressor”; “little satan” (USA is “big satan”); “Mideast cancer”. And the word “Jew” stirs equal passion in friend and foe alike. Amazing, isn’t it. Jews—a tiny minority in a world of gentiles. Israel—a sliver in a Middle East wood pile. Yet the world takes notice for good or ill.

It’s been that way from Israel’s existence. Neighbors noticed when 90 year old Sarah had a baby. A world superpower tried to make permanent slaves of the Jews. Ten

plagues later, including the death of every Egyptian first-born and the destruction of an army, the Jewish freedom march began. Seven powerful nations couldn't stop them. Walls at Jericho fell, untouched by human hands or weapons. Pagan kingdoms fell. A whole nation of Hebrews actually heard God speak audibly—and were too frightened to hear Him again. A moral code was given that still keeps today's world from totally returning to the jungle. An incomparable temple was raised—and the true and living God—the God of the Jews—was sought after and found by pagans who saw the difference between genuine and false, lies and truth, good and evil.

As author C.S. Lewis said, "He selected one particular people and spent several centuries hammering into their heads the sort of God He was – that there was only one of Him and that He cared about right conduct. Those people were the Jews, and the Old Testament gives an account of the hammering process."

Everything Israel's incredible Creator predicted came true. Uttered twice (see Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28), God had guaranteed blessings that would be Israel's if only they returned His love with their obedience. Happy and protected families. Fruitful, drought-free seasons. Smitten enemies. A reputation for holiness. A light that would shine throughout a darkened world. The head and not the tail. The selected nation through which God Himself would come to planet earth in the person of the Messiah.

There has never been another nation like Israel. There never will be. God proved through Israel His own unique reality by the reality of promises made and promises fulfilled. The whole world paid notice. But He didn't stop there. He also told Israel what would happen if they pushed God away. The whole world would pay notice. Either way, receiving God's blessings or cursings, the Jews would be His witnesses to the world that every god other than the God of Israel was invented, useless and worthless. And if their short-lived times of blessing were noticed by the nations, the promised punishments for disobedience would speak louder as a warning to the world that God plays no games, is not "the man upstairs, says what He means and means what He says."

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Chapter 6 The Problem With Choosing The Wrong Friends

There are many religious "holy books" and many "gods". Is the Bible merely another of the many? Or is it uniquely the Word of the one true and living God? Take the Jews and nation of Israel. God calls them a chosen people through whom He would offer to the nations His light, Word and Messiah. To that special privilege would be added awesome

responsibility to be holy and obedient only to God. If so, guaranteed blessings would follow as promised in Deuteronomy 28:1-14. But the rest of the chapter—54 more scriptures—speak of terrible curses that would haunt the children of Israel if they dared abandon total allegiance to God by choosing the wrong friends. Chased from the Promised Land. No rest among the nations. Victims of hideous antisemitism. Reduced to the habits of their heathen “friends”—offering their own children to the gentiles’ “fire god” Moloch (to God’s horror!) and eating their own off-spring “secretly in the siege”.

Yet God staked His reputation that the Jews would never disappear. Nations would be used to chastise Israel. God would then destroy those nations (like Babylon) and reduce others (like Egypt) to little status, while preserving the Jews. Those Gentiles who showed mercy and aided the Jews were blessed. There was always God’s promise to restore the Jews to the land of Israel. After 70 years in Babylon, cured of idolatry, a remnant returned. Messianic pretenders would come and go. But one Jew would come who would never disappear. His life was one of love and His power unmatched. Sick healed! Demons sent shrieking! Blind and deaf restored! Dead raised! Elements tamed! Jesus was heralded by Jewish masses as Messiah. The worst envious leaders could say in trying to butter Him up for a trap was, “Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth...for thou regardest not the person of men.”

Jesus called Himself Israel’s hope and that rejecting His love would bring a destroyed temple, terrible suffering and heathen domination. Yet His love would be unconditional and they would see Him again as their deliverer. Before that time, a remnant of Jews would trust Him as Messiah, a remnant of Gentiles would come to true faith in Him, while the majority of Gentiles would make a mockery of His name through lives of hypocrisy and even hatred of the Jews through whom Christ came.

Today God’s mercy has Israel again on the map. Much of the world wants Israel dead. The tiny nation is surrounded by hostility and infested with the sins of America and the West. Her reliance on the UN has been shattered—her hope in the USA is shaky. Israel’s truest friends are evangelical Christians—whom most Jewish leaders are loathe to trust because of our insistence that while our love for them is unconditional, so is our conviction that Jesus the Messiah will prove to be the hope of Israel. We put no price tag on such friendship. It is as unconditional as is God’s covenant with the Jews. The reason we stand at the side of persecuted Jews or a suffering Israel is because we have no option—our love and orders come from Jesus Himself!