

PROGRAM 106 TEASER

Israel remains God's chosen people. The Church remains the body of Messiah Jesus. God has given promises—and warnings—to both. Jews will one day recognize Yeshua—Jesus—as the Messiah, though most of them still reject Him today. But now is the time for the Church to recognize a people—the Jews—whom we have often rejected through our neglect to love them unconditionally as family. “Jews, Israel and the Church—the God Connection--Part 2.” That's where Tom Hughes and I go today—now—on More Than Talk.

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JEWS, ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH: THE GOD CONNECTION (PART 2)

PAGE 1 Boomerang

God did not first "choose the Jews". There were no Jews—only people. He chose a faithful man—Abraham—and created a people (Jews) and a nation (Israel) to receive and live out His light, law and love before a world in rebellion. Since the evil in puny man could not destroy the Creator, the created and chosen people became the target for Satan's contempt for God. Eliminate the Jews—which God promised will never happen—and make God a liar—unworthy of trust. Simple strategy. A 4,000 year conflict. Yet the Jews survive—because of the Father's heart for Israel. The connection with the Church is obvious. Jesus Christ declares that no power in hell or on earth can eliminate His Church. Let's look at the Jewish Christian connection.

7) To those who curse the Jews, God brings the boomerang. It should make the skin crawl just to contemplate what has happened (and happens) to individuals or nations that set out to curse and destroy the Jews. Yet the Hamans and Hitlers arise in every generation to continue the age-old assault to separate, subjugate and eliminate the Jews. Today's bulls-eye for would-be executioners is Israel. The Arab call for Israel to compromise is bogus. It's not compromise—but Israel's demise—that the agents of evil crave.

While Scripture is clear that God chastises His people for their sin, it is equally clear that He then destroys those whom He allows to cause that pain even while He preserves the Jews. Weapons of destruction hurled at Israel become boomerangs

that lop off the heads of those who send them. It's been the case over millennia. It still is today. Take the case of the Assyrians. God used them as His rod to humble hypocritical Israel: **“Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My indignation. I will send him against an ungodly nation, and against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, to seize the spoil, to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.”** (Isaiah 10:5,6). **But when this world power chose to gloat over Jewish suffering and defeat, the boomerang effect took over: "It shall come to pass that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem (chastising His Jewish people) I will punish the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (v 12).** (What about the Church? Suffering often comes at the hand of the world. God uses that suffering to purify His children—and then it is payback time for Christ's enemies. 2 Thessalonians 1:4-9)

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PAGE 2 A Call For Friends

8) For His friendless ones, God called for friends. He still does. Just as cursing the Jewish people results in trouble with the Almighty, so comforting them in their sufferings results in His blessing. I was in the forefront of combating antisemitism for nearly 25 years. When neo-nazis denied the Holocaust, we debated them. And we did not lose one debate. When Jews were singled out for hate—when Jewish institutions were desecrated—we ran to their side in verbal and action support. When Israel fought war, missile attack and suicide bombers, we were there to bring the warmth of comfort and the hope that comes when others care.

And so it is to this day. When will the Church ever get it—God's plaintive cry for Christians to be the Jews most reliable friends? **“Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” Says your God.”** (Isaiah 40:1) If the Church obeys this command, blessing will follow. If we use excuses—mostly based on fear of militant Islamists or even old roots of antisemitism in our hearts—the God who can't be bought will surely extract a fearful price—from the Church!

The Church's friend (Jesus) and our call to befriend those from whom He came—the Jews and Israel. (John 15:13-15; Luke 10:30-37.)

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PAGE 3 No Place Like Home

The secular world laughed out loud. Even many theologians who “believed the Bible” had little faith that there would again be another Israel. After all, 70 AD into the 20th century? Some 1900 years of a world map minus Israel? You think that’s going to change? Get real! Those Bible promises of restored Israel? They can’t be literal—just a good chuckle for the skeptic and, to a believer, perhaps symbolic of a deeper mystery. Then...

9) In their wanderings God called the Jews home. He wiped the smiles from the faces of the mockers and put cheers on the lips of those who still believed that with God a promise made is a promise kept. Along with hundreds of other scriptures speaking of a restored Israel, God had said **“Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west; I will say to the north, give them up! And to the south, do not keep them back! Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth.”**(Isaiah 43:5,6)

A remnant of Jews had clung to the land from time immemorial. Then in the late 19th and early 20th centuries the trickle became a stream. By the time independence was proclaimed in 1948, the stream had become rivers of Jews coming home from around the world. When the Soviet Union said, “No Jews will leave here!” God said “No more Soviet Union!” (“the north”). Israel’s rescue of some 15,000 emaciated black Jews from Ethiopia (“the south”) proved a modern miracle of compassion. Now Israel is home, though far from safe. And the God who keeps promises prepares new moves for future days that will render the world’s wise men mute.

(The Church will also be gathered “home”—from all directions. John 14:1-6; Revelation 7:9,10)

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PAGE 4 Promise Made—Promise Kept

10) In Israel's helplessness, God proves His nearness. Suicide bombers with hate in their hearts and a phony promise of "martyrs' heaven" in their minds strike terror across Israel. Arguments rage on how to stop the carnage. "Land for peace" remains the central theme. But how much land? And what kind of peace? Anti-Israel forces have consistently pushed one ABC plan: **A**nesthetize world opinion by repeating lies and distortions, **B**ite off Israel in chunks, **C**onsume the whole. Islamic warriors want it all.

Will they get their wish? Many Jews are not optimistic. Most Christians are ignorant of the battle being played out. Much of the world wants Israel dead. But then there is the only opinion that counts—that of God. And this is what He says: **"But Zion said, the Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me. Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me."** (Isaiah 49:14-16)

Some women do indeed forget, abuse and even kill their children, just as God said was possible. But His promise to Israel? "Yet will I not forget you." A promise made—a promise kept.

(Now look at God's promise to the Church Ephesians 2:11-14,18,19)

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PAGE 5 Visible Proof There Is A God

If I was fool enough to be an atheist, there could be one issue that might cause me sleepless nights—Israel. If the Bible isn't true, why is there an Israel? Why are there Jews? Super powers tried to erase them from history. People still try. All fail.

Jews are back in Israel. Surviving precariously. Victims of unending attacks. Looking for friends. Finding few. Scolded by fellow Jews. Ignored by most Christians. And yet actual proof that God is God and the Bible isn't bluffing.

11) In His termination of all the nations, God guarantees Israel will not disappear. What a crazy guarantee to give—unless you can back it up! Read the following scriptures thoughtfully. **“For I am with you, says the LORD, to save you; though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished. Therefore all those who devour you shall be devoured; and all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; those who plunder you shall become plunder, and all who prey upon you I will make a prey. For I will restore health to you and heal you of your wounds, says the LORD, because they called you an outcast saying: this is Zion; no one seeks her.” (Jeremiah 30:11,16,17)**

So the Jews are back. Israel is on the map. If God did not utter the above words, Israel's perverted foes and pretentious friends will soon weaken the nation sufficiently for the kill. Iran promises Israel's destruction. Israel's outlook is scary. Settlement uprootings? Jerusalem divided is the future. Even the Temple Mount handed over permanently to the Arabs? Who knows? All may come to pass. If so, that's part of God's punishment. All of Israel's hoped-for solutions will explode and evaporate. Israeli reliance on the USA. Their hope that the UN might one day like them. Even the “peace agreement” spoken by Daniel their ignored prophet and the prophesied big man himself—anti-Christ—coming with all his charisma and phony promises.

But if God means what He says, nations like the USA will probably disappear—drowned in our own immoral filth and material lust. The Jews and Israel, however, have a date with destiny, promised by God to Abraham and reconfirmed to Isaac and Jacob. Fact is, God is so certain of His guarantee that Israel will one day seek only Him, that He goes a step further in challenging the world as to what it must accomplish if it wishes to witness the final disappearance of Israel. But this must wait until our next program.

(It's the same with the Church Matthew 13:31,32—mustard seed Church and yet Christians overcome the world! 1 John 4:4 and 5:4)