

PROGRAM 107 TEASER

For 4,000 years, the world has often tried to pound a people—the Jews—into oblivion. Today the hammers pound away at Israel. To no effect! Men and their hammers disappear and break. Jews and Israel—like an anvil—stand. For 2,000 years, evil and powerful minds have determined to obliterate the Christian Church. The powerful die, decay and disappear. The Church lives on. Jews, Israel and the Church. The Bible says they have a divine connection. I call it the God Connection. And it offers further proof that the Bible stands alone as the authentic Word of the living God. So here we go—Tom Hughes and I—Frank Eiklor—with part 3 of “Jews, Israel and the Church—the God Connection”—on More Than Talk.

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JEWS, ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH: THE GOD CONNECTION (PART 3)

PAGE 1 The Challenge

After 4,000 years, Jews and Israel are still here. After 2,000 years, the Christian Church is still here. Enemies of both have taken their best shots. The enemies come and go. The Jews and the Church remain. Here’s why.

12) To Israel’s enemies, God offers a challenge. What could be more precarious than a peanut-sized nation of six million souls surviving in an Islamic world of over a hundred million sworn to swallow the peanut? And who could be more vulnerable than a 4,000 year old people called Jews trying to survive and maintain their identity in a world where they are outnumbered 99 to 1?

Israel and Jews remain a puzzle to those with ample brainpower but insufficient Bible knowledge. Take Mark Twain in 1899: “If statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly be heard of; but he is heard of, has always been heard of...the Egyptian, the Babylonian and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed...they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished...All things are mortal

but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?”

The answer to Mark Twain’s question is uncomplicated—emblazoned across the pages of Scripture. How God Himself must marvel at us stupid—yes, stupid—mortals trying to figure out what a child of faith grasps in a moment. Jeremiah, a holy man, wrote down exactly what God told him—he dared write nothing else but truth.

“Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The Lord of hosts is His name). If those ordinances depart From before Me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus says the Lord: if heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the Lord. (Jeremiah 31:35-37)

What a God. Prophecy after prophecy fulfilled so that men would stand in awe, eyes wide, mouths muzzled and hearts pounding in the presence of the invisible God. Why do Jews thrive—why does Israel survive—though attacked like no other? Because God said that they would in order to prove His faithfulness, certainly not theirs. And He challenges anyone to prove Him wrong!

(Why does the Church survive and thrive? Matthew 16:18, 1 Timothy 3:15,16)

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PAGE 2 The Defender

13) In their being mocked, God becomes their defender. Remember Nazi depictions of Jews—hooked noses, evil eyes, puffed and dripping mouths—the personification of evil? To teach a nation to hate and murder, it is first necessary to reduce the adversary to less than human. That tactic has been practiced against Jews from time immemorial. The Nazis merely perfected what political, civil and religious authorities had pulled off through centuries of human madness.

It is still happening. Old images of Jews as evil monsters are again appearing in Europe and the Mideast—even in the USA and Canada. Israel, of course, is at the top of the mockery list. The Arab world openly hates Israel. The United Nations barely tolerates the Jewish state. The USA scolds and spanks Israel as we would not dare do any other sovereign nation.

Why should Christians be different and insist on fairness and justice toward today's Israelites? Because we ought to value the opinion of the only one whose word will outlast all others—God. In Jeremiah's day, Jewish religious and royal leaders broke the heart of God. Powerful enemies pounced on the Jews. Just imagine—pagans who worshiped devils claiming Jewish suffering was justified by Israel's sin against the true God!

God told Jeremiah, “My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray; they have turned them away on the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill; they have forgotten their resting place. All who found them have devoured them; and their adversaries said, we have not offended, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, the LORD, the hope of their fathers.” (Jeremiah 50:6,7)

So Assyria and Babylon made Israel their whipping boy—and so it is today with the Arabs acting as modern Assyria and the USA, Canada and Europe taking Babylon's place. But at what price?

“Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. Thus says the LORD of hosts: the children of Israel were oppressed, along with the children of Judah; all who took them captive have held them fast; they have refused to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is His name. He will thoroughly plead their case, that He may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon. (Jeremiah 50:18,33,34)

God is bending—even breaking—Israel's spirit of rebellion against Him. Repentance and faith are in the Jewish future. That spells rest. But unrest—judgment—awaits the modern Babylon of those today who crave the humiliation and disappearance of Israel. As Scripture says, “Let God be true and every man a liar.” So it was. So it shall be!

(And God defends His church the same way. Acts 4:29-31)

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PAGE 3 Israel And The Church

14) In Israel's foolish choices, God insists that He is their only choice! God called Israel to demonstrate to all nations His reality. They were to be different from all peoples. Instead, from the very beginning the Jews chose the opposite—take us back to Egypt—give us a king like other nations (God wasn't enough!)—and let us worship the world's idols and demon gods (even sacrificing their children like the heathen did.

Nothing has changed. To most Jews, “God” is only a noun. Most are ignorant of their Scriptures and are reluctant, embarrassed and even loathe to discuss the things of God. And Israelis look in all directions except up for their help—though disappointed times without number.

Yet there is no getting off the hook. In all the Jewish and Israeli foolish choices, God insists He is their only choice. Here is what He says to the Jewish nation: **“What you have in your mind shall never be, when you say, we will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone. As I live, says the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. (Ezekiel 20:32,33,37)**

Suffering, chastening and discipline followed Israel in biblical days. They are now part of modern Israel's days. And one day, no matter what they say, God will finally have His way. He insists on it!

(The Church? God will also cure our spiritual adultery with the world. 1 Peter 4:17; James 4:4)

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PAGE 4 The God Who Never Gives Up

15) In their spiritual whoredoms, God remains Israel's suitor. It would be easy for some students of Scripture to think of God more as a vengeful tyrant determined to force His way and will on the Jews and Israel. Of course, the opposite is true, as God showed the prophet Hosea.

I shall put my thoughts into the following verses as God the faithful Husband cries after His unfaithful wife or a broken hearted Father calls out to a prodigal son:

“When Israel was a child I loved him as a son and brought him out of Egypt...my people are determined to desert me...Oh, how can I give you up, my Ephraim (another name for Israel and the Jews)? How can I let you go? How can I forsake you like Admah and Zeboiim (cities that perished with Sodom and Gomorrah)? My heart cries out within me; how I long to help you!...I will cure you of idolatry and faithlessness (today Israel seeks out fickle friends, international sympathy and a restraint from their enemies—all in vain), and my love will know no bounds, for my anger will be forever gone! I will refresh Israel like the dew from heaven; she will blossom as the lily...Her branches will spread out as beautiful as olive trees...Her people will return from exile far away and rest beneath my shadow (though there is a restored Israel today, there is no rest—only turmoil, fear and grasping for an elusive peace). O Ephraim (the Jews)! Stay away from idols (anything or anything that takes the place of God)! I am living and strong! I look after you and care for you...My mercies never fail. Whoever is wise, let him understand these things. Whoever is intelligent, let him listen. For the paths of the Lord are true and right, and good men walk along them.” (Hosea 11:1,7,8; 14:4-9 Living Bible)

The straight paths of God—not the twisted paths of the world—will be Israel's future. Their faithful lover—God Almighty—won't let up until His wayward wife comes home.

(The Church? The Lord knows how to purify His oft-times wayward bride. 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1; Ephesians 5:27)

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PAGE 5 Israel And The Church—Two Davids In A Goliath World

16) In Israel's weakness, God becomes their champion! Israel has always been a David in a world of Goliaths. Gentiles outnumber Jews ninety-nine to one. In a world of six billion people, Israel numbers some eight million souls and is surrounded by more than one hundred million Muslims who would gladly swallow the Jewish nation. Still, Jews have survived for four thousand years and modern Israel for over six violent decades.

Why? Jewish will to survive? Superior brain power? Don't believe it. It is simply God's will that Israel shall not perish from the earth and His superior power that carries out that will.

“True, many nations have gathered together against you, calling for your blood, eager to destroy you. But they do not know my thoughts nor understand my plan, for the time will come when the Lord will gather together the enemies of his people like sheaves upon the threshing floor, helpless before Israel.” (Micah 4:11-13, Living Bible)

(The Church? Luke 21:12-19)

17) In their sense of insignificance, God proves to the Jews their worth! If a Pharaoh tried to drown you, and if a Haman received permission from the world's most powerful king to hang you, and if a Hitler who appeared to be the new ruler of all of Europe swore he would annihilate you, wouldn't you feel unimportant and alone?

The Jewish trail of tears has been long. Yet there is something obvious though mysterious in their sufferings: the Jews live on and their tormentors disappear. Why? Corrie ten Boom's father saw it clearly. When Hitler declared himself the enemy of the Jews, ten Boom said the fuhrer was finished—history. When the incredulous told Mr. ten Boom that Hitler was unstoppable, he replied with a scripture that cannot be broken: **“he that touches you (the Jews) touches the apple of his (God's) eye.” Or as the Living Bible says: “he who harms you sticks his finger in Jehovah's eye.” (Zechariah 2:8)**

The self-appointed “significant” Nazi regime perished. The “insignificant” Jews and Israel prosper. Incredible, no?

(And the Church? Christians are mocked. Martyrs die. The promise stands. Luke 12:32)