

The Root of Anti-Semitism

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- I. A Woman in Labor
 - A. Read Revelation 12:1-6
 - B. The Context: following upon Revelation 11
 - 1. Revelation 11 – Indications of a Jewish Context
 - a) Temple (Rev. 11:1)
 - b) A distinction is made between Gentiles and Jews (Rev. 11:2)
 - c) Ministry Style of the Two Witnesses, similar to the Jewish prophets Moses and Elijah (Rev. 11:5)
 - d) Jerusalem is mentioned (Rev. 11:8)
 - 2. Chapter 12 as an interlude, providing historical backdrop from the Fall through the coming of Messiah Jesus.
 - a) Purpose: to provide the *spiritual perspective* on visible events of history, some of which await future fulfillment.
- II. Revelation 12:1
 - A. Sign – *semeion*, translated “signified” in Revelation 1:1
 - 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must shortly take place. And He sent and **signified** [it] by His angel to His servant John, (Re 1:1)
 - 2. How to understand signs/symbols?
 - a) Pagan extra-biblical symbolism?
 - b) Spiritualize – no literal reality, just spiritual concepts?
 - c) The major “fork in the road” in interpretation of Revelation.
 - d) Scripture interprets Scripture – the symbols are representative of a literal reality which Scripture elsewhere explains.
 - B. A woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.
 - 1. Common identification – the Church (most commentaries)
 - a) The woman predates the Church and gives birth to the Messiah.
 - b) Christ predates the church - “on this rock I will build my church” (Mtt. 16:18)
 - c) In 2 Corinthians 11:2, believers are represented as a virgin betrothed to Christ Here, the woman is pregnant!

2. Sun, moon, twelve stars
 - a) Let Scripture interpret Scripture.
 - b) One of Joseph's dreams:
Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." So he told [it] to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What [is] this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your **mother** and **I** and your **brothers** indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" (Ge 37:9-10)
 - c) Sun and moon – Jacob and *Leah* (Rachel already being dead by the time of the dream and *Leah* being present at the fulfillment).
 - d) 12 stars – Joseph and his eleven brothers, the twelve tribes of Israel.

3. Clothed
 - a) *Clothed* is a perfect tense, passive participle meaning:
 - (1) She was clothed sometime in the *past*.
 - (2) Someone *else* provided her clothing.
 - b) Clothing provides *protection* (“cast around, wrapped in”)
 - (1) Concerning Jerusalem:
"I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. [Your] breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you [were] **naked** and bare. When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time [was] the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and **covered your nakedness**. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a **covenant** with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD. "Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. **I clothed you** in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk." (Eze 16:7-10)
 - (2) Clothing associated with His covenant with her. His protection.

4. Clothed with the **sun**, with the **moon** under her feet
 - a) Sun – in some way, the Sun is related to her protection.
 - b) Moon – under her feet, she is *supported by* the moon.
 - c) How do the sun and moon provide protection and support for her?

- d) Sun and moon as *signs*
 Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for **signs** and seasons, and for days and years; "and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. (Ge 1:14-15)
- (1) Lights, for days and years, seasons, and for **signs**
- (a) *Signs* is Hebrew word *ot*, something designated as a memorial, "to bring to remembrance."
- (b) also used of:
- i) Cain's mark – that no man would kill him
- ii) Rainbow – sign of covenant of Noah
- iii) Sabbath – sign of covenant of Moses
- iv) Circumcision – sign of covenant of Abraham
- (c) *A visible manifestation* of a divine promise or action.
- i) Sign in sun at the crucifixion.
- ii) Signs in sun and moon attend the future time of God's wrath.
- (2) Sun and moon are witnesses of God's eternal promise of protection for Israel:
 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. (Jer 31:35-37)
- e) To destroy Israel, missiles must reprogrammed from Tel Aviv to aim at the sun and moon instead!

III. Revelation 12:2

- A. Being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.
1. "cried out" is present tense, she was in the midst of her birth pangs while John saw her.

2. Revelation and Genesis are “bookends” : where do we find *labor, pain,* and the *promise of a child*?
 - a) God to Satan:
And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; **He shall bruise your head,** And you shall bruise His heel." To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; **In pain you shall bring forth children;** Your desire [shall be] for your husband, And he shall rule over you." (Ge 3:15-16)
 - b) Enmity [“deep-seated hatred”] between
 - (1) The serpent and the woman (Revelation 12!)
 - (2) The seed of Satan and the woman's seed.
3. She is in labor to produce the child of promise, the Messiah.
 - a) The labor pains reflect *opposition* to her role by the dragon, as indicated by his attempts to devour the child (Rev. 12:4).

B. Eve - In some sense, the woman represents *Eve* and the promise to redeem mankind through mankind – through the woman.

1. *Through the same vessel by which mankind fell would the redeemer of mankind come forth!* Such is the grace and genius of our God!

C. Israel – Messiah Jesus came through the line of the Jews

1. Jesus to the Samaritan woman at the well:
"You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. (Joh 4:22)
2. Paul remarks concerning the Jews, his countrymen according to the flesh: “of whom [are] the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ [came], who is over all, [the] eternally blessed God.” (Ro 9:5a)

D. Mary – No mention is made of a father, allusions to the virgin birth (e.g., Isa. 7:14).

E. Duration of labor: from the promise to Eve until the birth of Christ.

IV. Revelation 12:3

- A.** Fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems on his head
 1. Red dragon
 - a) Red is *pyrros*, the same color as the horse ridden by the second horseman of the apocalypse. A color which speaks of blood and destruction.
 - b) Identified below: “that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan” (Rev. 12:9)

[for] Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'" (Ps 2:7-9)

- b) His ruler's rod goes forth at His Second Coming in chapter 19: Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (Re 19:15)

C. Caught up to God

- 1. *Caught up* is a form of *harpazo*, "snatched," "caught away," the same word used of the rapture of those who later follow Him to His Father's house (1Th. 4:17)
- 2. passive voice, He is caught away by an outside agent
 - a) This speaks of the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:9)
 - (1) As here, He was *taken up* (passive voice, by an outside force).
 - b) Taken up by the Father as a declaration of His identity and His acceptability as the perfect sacrifice
 - (1) Paul informs us concerning Christ, He: was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, [and] declared [to be] the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. (Ro 1:3-4)

D. And His Throne

- 1. Jesus is caught up to the *Father's* throne where he will remain until it is time to take His throne, the throne of David, upon His return.

VII. Revelation 12:6

A. *Then*, the woman fled into the wilderness

- 1. After the ascension of the child.

B. A place prepared by God

- 1. A specific place
- 2. Sustained by God – she will be fed

C. One thousand two hundred and sixty days

- 1. Although the Woman has struggled ever since the ascension of Christ and even struggles in our own day, these struggles are but a precursor of what is described here.
- 2. The duration of her flight here indicates it takes place during a specific period in the future corresponding to the last half of the tribulation

- a) The final half of Daniel's 70th week (Dan. 9:27)
 - b) The forty-two months during which the holy city will be tread underfoot by the Gentiles and the beast will be given authority to continue (Rev. 11:2; 13:5).
 - c) The "time and times and half a time" or 3.5 years during which the woman is protected from the presence of the serpent (Rev. 12:14).
3. It is my belief that the signal for her flight is given by Jesus in Matthew 24
- a) "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the **holy place**" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in **Judea** flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the **housetop** not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the **Sabbath**. (Mt 24:15-20)
- D. This verse spans over 1900 years so far: from the ascension of Jesus through the time of Jacob's Trouble yet future.
- 1. The First and Second Coming of Christ are juxtaposed in numerous passages (Isa. 61:1-2; Zec. 9:9-10; Mal. 3:1-2; 4:5-6; Luke 4:17-19). Yet history has shown these events to be separated by at least 1900 years.
 - 2. The first and second resurrections are juxtaposed (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29), yet they are separated by no less than 1,000 years (Rev. 20:4-6).
- E. The woman will flee in a time yet future to our day.
- 1. Additional details concerning her flight and refuge are given in the last part of the chapter (Rev. 12:13-17)
 - 2. Why does the serpent still hate her? Why does he continue his effort against her when she has *already* delivered the savior? Isn't her job done? After all, isn't the modern nation of Israel irrelevant to God, as many Christians teach in our own day?
 - 3. Although her job is complete in bringing forth Messiah, evidently she yet serves an important role in God's plan *future to the cross!*
 - c) Paul, the apostle to the *Gentiles*, was careful to guard against the misunderstanding that God was through with Israel:
 - (1) For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy [those who are] my flesh and save some of them. For *if their being cast away [is] the reconciling of the world, what [will] their acceptance [be] but life from the dead?* (Ro 11:13-15)

- (2) If their rejection of Messiah Jesus was used of God to bless the world, an even greater blessing awaits upon their acceptance and restoration!
- d) The Word of God indicates that God will gather His chosen nation prior to her regeneration in preparation for her recognition of Messiah Jesus at His return.
 - (1) When Paul compared the acceptance of salvation by the Jews as “life from the dead,” he undoubtedly had Ezekiel 37 – the valley of the dry bones — in mind.
 - (a) Ezekiel is shown a valley full of dry bones, which God assembles and brings to life before Ezekiel’s eyes.
 - (b) Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' (Eze. 37:11)
 - (c) We note the *order* of the events:
The bones are reassembled and clothed with sinews and flesh *before* God blows His Spirit into them.
They are assembled while yet spiritually dead.
- e) Thereafter, God will fulfill the many promises made to His chosen nation in the 1,000 year kingdom of Christ on earth, reigning from Jerusalem. This is why we pray: “Your kingdom come Your will be done **on earth** as it is in heaven . . .”

VIII. A Woman in Flight Throughout History

- A. Although this passage emphasizes the persecution of the woman leading up to the birth of Christ and climaxing in the Tribulation, ever since the cross, the Jewish nation has been “a woman in flight.” So long as Satan remains loose, anti-Semitism remains as an ugly undercurrent in world history.
- B. Anti-Semitism is *Satanic in Origin*
 - 1. This passage reveals that the root of anti-Semitism is *spiritual*– it knows neither logic nor limits.
 - 2. It will not be eradicated through education or empowerment.
- C. Anti-Semitism is *pervasive in History*.
 - 1. We have time only to mention some of the most well-known examples, although there are many.
 - 2. The Crusades
 - f) “Of all the hardships and tragedies that befell European Jewry during the Middle Ages, the worst occurred as the result of the

Crusades. All over Europe, the armies ostensibly on their way to recapture the Holy Land from the infidel first turned on the infidels in their midst: the Jews. In this, they were inspired by clerics such as Peter of Cluny who wrote: ‘Why should we seek the enemies of Christ in distant lands when the blasphemous Jews live among us?’ The bishops of Regensburg, Mainz, Worms, and other cities sheltered Jews in an attempt to maintain law and order and out of common humanity, but their efforts were sometimes in vain, for the mobs would occasionally storm the episcopal palaces. The flourishing Jewish communities of Mainz and Worms were destroyed, as were those of Trier, Cologne, and Strasbourg. Jews who did not submit to forced baptism were murdered, many others committed suicide. . . . The pretext of these attacks was the Jews’ alleged desecration of the Host (the blessed bread distributed during the Eucharist). In 1243, this had been used for the first time as an excuse for an anti-Semitic massacre — all the Jews of Belitz near Berlin were burned to death.”¹

g) Often under the banner of Christ.

(1) Satan’s twofold strategy: (1) keep Christians ignorant of their Old Testament Jewish roots; (2) keep the Jews away from the New Testament else they discover it to be a Jewish book of their Messiah

3. Blamed for the Black Death of the mid-14th century — although Jews were also dying in large numbers.
4. The Spanish Inquisition – when Jews were subjected to forced conversion into the “Christianity” or face expulsion, torture, and death.
5. The Pogroms of Russia – which gathered the Jews into restricted areas where they lived in abject poverty. Later, many were murdered by bands of roving Cossacks.
6. The Holocaust – considered by many to be “the final solution to the Jewish question.” When approximately 6 million people were exterminated within a five-year period—more than 1/3 of the Jews worldwide—simply for being the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
7. But, you say, these are all in our *past*. Man and society are improving. Education and civil rights have made important advances since then!

D. Yet . . . Anti-Semitism is growing today

¹ Martin Gilbert, *The Illustrated Atlas Of Jewish Civilization: 4,000 Years Of Jewish History* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990), 128.

1. How could it be that within 60 years of the Holocaust, when the witness of living survivors is still with us, when piles of shoes and hair from the dead may still be viewed, that anti-Semitism is on the rise again?.
2. Europe
 - h) “Across Europe, the result has been not just verbal violence but physical. A report issued last year by the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, titled "Fire and Broken Glass," describes the assaults on Jews and people presumed to be Jewish across Europe. Attackers, shouting racist slogans, throw stones at schoolchildren, at worshipers attending religious services, at rabbis. Jewish homes, schools, and synagogues are firebombed. Windows are smashed, Jewish cemeteries desecrated with anti-Jewish slogans. In just a few weeks in the spring of last year, French synagogues and Jewish schools, students, and homes were attacked and firebombed. A synagogue in Marseilles was burned to the ground. In Paris, Jews were attacked by groups of hooded men. According to police, metropolitan Paris saw something like a dozen anti-Jewish incidents a day in the first several months after Easter. An[d] the violence continues. In Ukraine, skinheads attacked Jewish workers and assaulted the director of a Jewish school. In Holland, demonstrators carrying swastikas and photos of Israel chanted "Sieg heil!" and "Jews into the sea!" In Salonika, the Holocaust Memorial was defaced with pro-Palestinian graffiti. In Slovakia, Jewish cemeteries were firebombed. In Berlin, Jews were assaulted, swastikas daubed on Jewish memorials, and a synagogue spray-painted with the words "six million is not enough."²
3. United States
 - i) The FBI's Hate Crimes Statistics 2003 report . . . documents 927 anti-Jewish crimes last year - more than 12% of the total hate crimes reported in the United States that year. The Anti-Defamation League, in a statement, emphasized that though there is a perception that Muslims have been overwhelmingly victimized since the 9/11 attacks, Jews have in fact borne the brunt of religious violence. “There’s a feeling that there’s a lot of Islamophobia out there,” said Abe Foxman, Director of the ADL. “While [this is true], anti-Jewish hate crimes predominate.” The report outlined more than 1,300 anti-Jewish incidents in 2003, making Jews the most frequently targeted group in America. Comparably, there were only 149 anti-Muslim incidents. “In the total number of crimes under the religion category, the anti-Jewish

² Mortimer B. Zuckerman, “Graffiti On History's Walls,” *U.S. News* October 28, 2003, 10:50.

crimes are higher than all the others - and have been each year,”
FBI spokesman Paul Bresson told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

4. Continued opposition to God's Land given to Israel – even within the “church”
 - j) Presbyterian Church
“the Presbyterians, at their annual general assembly this summer [2004], voted 431-62 in favor of joining the divestment campaign against Israel. They are the first Christian denomination to do so. Leaders of this liberal mainline church also approved several other anti-Israel resolutions at their gathering in Richmond, Virginia.”³
 - k) Anglican Church
“The Anglican Peace and Justice Network announced their intention to recommend that their church—with an estimated worldwide membership of 75 million Anglicans and Episcopalians—follow in the American Presbyterian church’s footsteps and consider divesting itself from Israel.”⁴
 - l) Opposition to Zionism – Israel’s right to her homeland
 - (1) Martin Luther King
You declare, my friend, that you do not hate the Jews, you are merely 'anti-Zionist.' And I say, let the truth ring forth from the high mountain-tops, let it echo through the valleys of God's green earth: When people criticize Zionism, they mean Jews--this is God's own truth. . . And what is anti-Zionist? It is the denial to the Jewish people of a fundamental right that we justly claim for the people of Africa and freely accord all other nations of the Globe. It is discrimination against Jews, my friend, because they are Jews. In short, it is anti-Semitism. . . Let my words echo in the depths of your soul: When people criticize Zionism, they mean Jews--make no mistake about it.

E. The only Antidote: the Word of God.

1. Dr. Ergun Caner
 - m) Raised a Muslim, now a believer in Christ
 - n) Raised to hate the Jews
 - o) Dr. Caner describes his initial encounter with God’s Word regarding God’s promises to the chosen nation:

³ Zola Levitt, "A Note From Zola", Zola Levitt, Levitt Letter (Dallas, TX: Zola Levitt Ministries, Inc.), August, 2004, p. 9.

⁴ Sarah Honig, “And the Beating Goes On,” *Jerusalem Post*, cited by Levitt Letter (Dallas, TX: Zola Levitt Ministries, Inc.), December 2004, p. 1.

(1) In the early 1980s, after our conversion, my brothers and I began new lives as believers in Jesus as the Christ. . . . I hungered to know the Lord and His Book, and I read the Word passionately, sometimes for three and four hours a day. I wore out highlighters as I made my way through the Old Testament. When I got to the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12, I stumbled. “Old Testament,” I muttered. “Jesus got rid of that.” Soon I became disgusted with the constant reiteration of the refrain, “Abraham, Issac, Jacob, Joseph.” . . . Quickly I flipped to the New Testament. Surely I would find that Jesus, my Savior, repudiated the Old Testament; that way my bias could remain unaffected. Then I got to Romans 9-11. Game, set, match for the Jewish people as the priest-nation of God. I began to ask questions. I began to read books. I even attended Messianic Jewish services. And slowly, ever so slowly, I began to love the Jewish people, as does our Father. **They are God’s chosen. And the land of Israel belongs to them** . . . We shall continue to stand with Israel as God’s chosen nation because He calls us to do so in the Old and New Testaments. The Jewish people need to accept Jesus as the Messiah, to be sure. But they also need the Christian community — the church — to stand alongside them in a world bent on their destruction.⁵

II. We demonstrate our love for God by our obedience to His Word

- A. Concerning the gospel [they are] enemies for your sake, but concerning the election [they are] beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God [are] irrevocable. (Ro 11:28-29)
- B. I believe a time is coming where our understanding of Scripture will be *measured* in a very practical way:
 - 2. Will we join the ranks of those under the sway of the “god of this world” who is implacably opposed to God’s hand in history? Will we be among those who restrict Israel’s significance before God to the pages of the Old Testament?
 - 3. Or will we support the Jewish people in their claim to the land given them by God? Will we risk alienation and grave danger in support of the God’s chosen nation?
 - 4. Expect it: our faith in God’s promises to Israel *will* be tested!

⁵ Ergun Canar, “The MBBs’ ‘Dirty Little Secret,’” *Israel My Glory*, November/December 2004, pp. 9-10.