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Messianic Perspectives®

God has not forgotten the Jewish people, and neither have we.

THE TOP 15 LIES ABOUT THE JEWISH PEOPLE

ANTI-SEMITIC MYTHS DEBUNKED PART 1

BY DR. GARY HEDRICK WITH JOHN W. TURNER

It's been around almost since the dawn of civilization—and sadly, it's on the rise again in the 21st century. On most days, we can't watch the evening news or read the daily newspaper without encountering this phenomenon in one form or another.

Like a cancer, it eats away at the heart and soul of any society where it takes root. The consequences can be unimaginably tragic. The annals of history are littered with tragic tales about multiplied millions of people—men, women, boys, and girls—who have lost their lives because of this bane of human existence.

It's gruesome. It's heartbreaking. Sometimes we wonder if it will ever stop.

We're talking, of course, about anti-Semitism.

A Drop-Dead Serious Issue

Consider this alarming headline from Forbes.com (Dec. 21, 2010): **"WORLD TO JEWS: DROP DEAD."** Unfortunately, it's not just hyperbole. The headline reflects the attitude of much of our world today toward Israel and the Jewish people.

In this Forbes article, Abigail Esman writes that "... attacks on Jews are on the rise in America ... where (despite wails of 'Islamophobia'), of the 1575 victims of anti-religious crime recorded by the FBI in 2009, 1,132 were Jews. (Of the rest, 132 were Muslim, 131 "other religion," 59 Catholic, and 42 were Protestant. To get a sense of proportion here, consider that 2008 census figures show the number of Jews at twice the number of Muslims—yet nearly ten times as many Jews as Muslims were attacked.)"¹

Ms. Esman's point is well taken. We hardly ever hear weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth over Judeophobia, do we? It seems like the popular outcry is always against Islamophobia. The world is quick to empathize with Muslim people who have been demonized in the West due to the horrible crimes of a terrorist minority. Consequently, it has become politically correct to welcome Muslim immigrants with open arms in Europe and North America. They receive government-funded financial assistance in many countries—even if they have been identified, in some cases, as potential Islamist terrorists.²

The Jewish people, on the other hand, are pretty much backed into a corner on their tiny, isolated sliver of land in the Middle East while the surrounding Islamic countries outnumber them (population-wise) by a factor of 50 to one. And Jewish people who live in other areas of the world are finding themselves increasingly unwelcome in those places.

So if we condemn unjust, broad-brush Islamophobia, why not also condemn Judeophobia? Why decry one and not the other? It's a legitimate question, but don't look to the United Nations for an answer because that august world body consistently and predictably comes down on the side of Israel's enemies. Whatever the issue is in the Middle East, the UN Security Council and General Assembly almost always vote overwhelmingly against Israel.

Hate Speech? Let's Get Real

When we say these things, we're not speaking out of hate. We have very little patience with Nazi-like xenophobes and others who preach a gospel of hatred and intolerance.

I'm afraid many people don't really understand what "hate speech" is. To them, it's a popular (and politically correct) catchphrase to throw around without really thinking about what it means. A few years ago, for example, the Canadian postal service confiscated some of our publications (which we had mailed to Canadian friends who had ordered them) and claimed that these materials contained hate speech against Palestinians or Arabs.³



For the record, we do not hate Palestinians or Arabs. In fact, some of our most precious Israeli brothers and sisters in Yeshua are Palestinians and Arabs! The leaders of our Messianic congregations in Israel (especially in the north) routinely meet for prayer and fellowship with the pastors of Arab congregations. One of our Israeli staff members has been working for years with a Palestinian preacher to provide aid to needy believers in the West Bank. Much to the chagrin of other Jewish family members, this woman trudges fearlessly into areas that are downright dangerous. We don't publicize it because she wants to keep a low profile for security reasons. If her work became widely known, the Palestinians she helps might be accused of collaborating with the "enemy"—and they could suffer reprisals or even death at the hands of the Islamist extremists.

So this is not hate speech. We don't even hate the anti-Semites who despise and malign the Jewish people. In fact, we pray that they'll repent and get their hearts right with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!

What we hate is not the people, but their actions. We re-sent and deplore their lies and slander against Israel—and their willful and deliberate distortions of the truth.

Messianic Perspectives®

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The Specter of Evangelical Anti-Zionism

In more recent times, there's been yet another development in the ongoing struggle against anti-Semitism. A threat has arisen from an unexpected source—that is, from within the evangelical community.

For well over a hundred years, since long before the modern State of Israel was born, evangelical, Bible-believing Christianity has provided a solid bloc of support for Restorationism, or Zionism (i.e., a movement committed to the right of the Jewish people to reestablish a modern State of Israel in their ancient, ancestral homeland in the Middle East—a Land from which they were forcibly ejected some 2,000 years ago).

Up until the early 2000s, most “Christian” anti-Israel sentiment came from liberal pulpits associated with mainline, ecumenical denominations. Pro-Palestinian organizations like the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem have carried this banner for years with the help of high profile clerics like Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu (who became a patron of the group in 2003) and others.⁴



Desmond Tutu, Archbishop of South Africa

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So the battle lines were clearly drawn between liberals and evangelicals back in the old days. Liberals were overwhelmingly pro-Palestinian and the vast majority of evangelicals were pro-Israel.⁵

In recent years, however, this distinction has become blurred. There's been a noticeable erosion of pro-Israel support in mainstream evangelicalism. Numerous high profile evangelicals have been lured into participating in the controversial “Christ at the Checkpoint” conferences in Bethlehem—including leaders from some of the largest Christian churches and colleges in North America.⁶ The participation of widely recognized evangelicals in these conferences (and other similar efforts) has served to legitimize anti-Israel polemics among evangelicals.⁷

People have told us, “See? It can't be all that bad if Dr. So-and-So attends the conference.” And so it goes. Because of the compromise, dangerous and misleading (not to mention unbiblical) ideas gain even more traction in the evangelical community and in broader Christendom.

Time to Get Involved

For many of us, this decline in evangelical support for the modern State of Israel has been a wake-up call. We've had to face the unpleasant fact that we haven't been articulating our position effectively enough. We've been too wishy-washy—and some of us have just been downright lackadaisical about it. So it's no wonder we're in this situation now! Like the Bible says, “*For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?*” (1 Cor. 14:8).

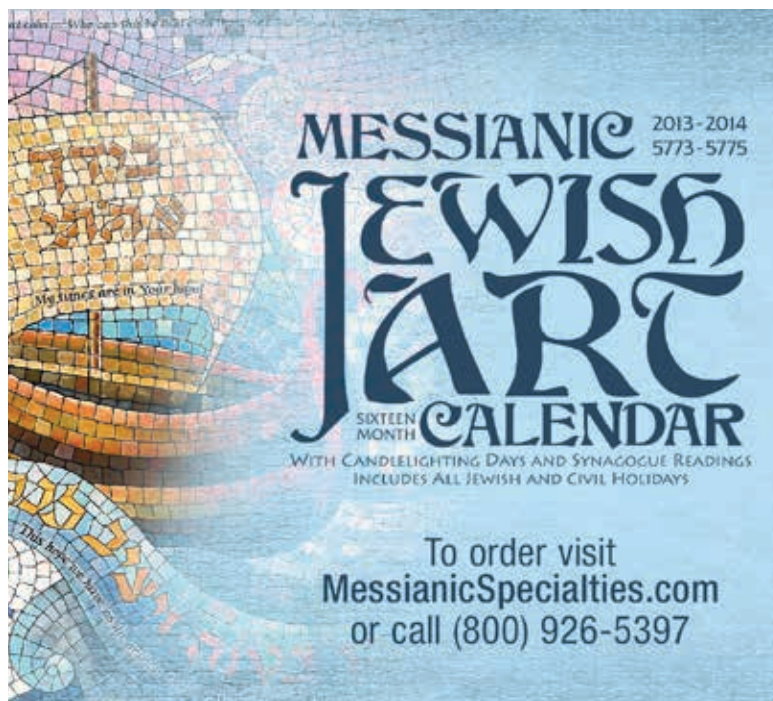
We have taken too much for granted. It's time to shake off our indifference and get involved. If the truth is really on our side (and we believe it is), it behooves us to stand up and let our voices be heard more loudly and clearly than ever before.

Toward that end, these articles will seek to set the record straight about some of the most widespread lies that have been (and continue to be) circulated about the Jewish people.

In case you're wondering, we are fully aware that we cannot change minds that are already made up. Some people, because of their warped worldview (which says the Jewish people are the cause of most of humanity's ills), *need* these lies to be true. And when someone really *needs* something to be true, they're not going to be easily shaken back to reality. That's why nothing we can say will ever convince them that these perverse fantasies aren't true. When we confront them, their attitude will continue to be, “Don't confuse me with the facts.”

We also know that even if we could wave a magic wand and make all fifteen of these lies instantly vanish from the world, leaving no trace, it wouldn't be long before fifteen new ones would rise up to take their place. Why? Because anti-Semitism isn't so much a function of the mind as it is one of the heart. That is, it's more spiritual than it is intellectual. Some people, whether they realize it or not, have ceded control of their minds to unseen spiritual forces.⁸ Ultimately, the impetus behind the ongoing war against Israel and the Jewish people is the devil and his minions of darkness.

Destroying the arguments themselves doesn't destroy their *source*. As long as the source exists, there will always be more anti-Semitic ideas and claims.



The Dragon vs. the Woman

The spiritual dimension of Israel's war with her enemies is vividly depicted in the New Testament by the imagery of the "dragon" (Satan) and the "woman" (Israel) in Revelation 12. In John's prophetic narrative, the Dragon attacks viciously and relentlessly, but God protects the Woman supernaturally (vv. 6-12). The late Adrian Rogers, longtime pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, comments, "Until Jesus returns, Satan will continue to hate Israel. I love Jesus and I love the Jews if for no other reason than the fact that Satan hates them."⁹

As our longtime friend Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum points out, there are biblical and practical reasons (some of which are unrelated to anti-Semitism) for the ways in which Israel has suffered historically—and will suffer in the future:

While it is true that all will suffer during [the coming Tribulation], Israel will suffer more so. The basic reason for this lies in Israel's relationship to God as God's firstborn (Ex. 4:22) and, therefore, Israel receives double, both in blessing and cursing.

The principle that Israel receives double for all her sins is stated in Isaiah 40:1-2:

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, says your God.
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her,
that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is
pardoned, that she has received of Jehovah's hand double
for all her sins.¹⁰

The sins of the modern State of Israel are many. We all know that—and the Israelis themselves know it! Their society suffers from many of the same problems we have here in North America—prostitution and sex trafficking, drug abuse, abortion, sexual perversion, secularism, unbelief, and the list goes on. Each of these sins represents a specific area of rebellion against God—and He will judge them (and us) for those sins.

Also, the leaders of the nation rejected Yeshua as the Messiah in the first century (Matt. 26:63-68)—and they have paid dearly for that denial ever since.¹¹

Nonetheless, as a believer in the LORD God of Israel (Ex. 5:1), I will not stand idly by while Israel and the Jewish people are maligned and attacked—even if those attacks are a consequence of divine judgment. And you shouldn't either! After all, when the nations of the world stand before God at the end of this age, they will be judged upon the basis of how they treated the Jewish people during the Tribulation Period (Matt. 25:31-46).¹²

On that future Day of Judgment, God won't say to Israel's persecutors, "My people were rebellious and unbelieving, so they had it coming to them. They deserved all the pain and misery you inflicted on them." On the contrary, the Bible declares, "*Then He (the King, Yeshua) will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'*" (v. 41). You see, it's the difference between heaven and hell. That's how important this is to God!¹³

Reduced to simple terms, anti-Semitism is the global "bullying" of the Jewish people and the nation of Israel. As deserving of judgment as they may be (and the same could be said of us here in America), we will not keep silent while their enemies attack and malign them. In spite of their sins, they are still the apple of God's eye (Zech. 2:8)!

So let's take a look at 15 of the most common lies that anti-Semites tell about the Jewish people.



The dragon pursuing the woman in the wilderness, Bamberg Apocalypse

Anti-Semitic Lies, Exaggerations, and Misrepresentations

1. The Jewish Talmud is full of dangerous lies and evil teachings.

This is first on the list because it's the one we run across the most. Anti-Semites love to troll the Talmud¹⁴ looking for statements they can spin, or otherwise take out of context, in an attempt to portray all Jewish people as liars, immoral, or essentially evil.

Sometimes the "quotes" are completely fabricated. In other instances, they take a passage from some other ancient source and mistakenly attribute it to the Talmud. But most often, anti-Semites take actual Talmudic passages and either mistranslate them or otherwise twist them out of context in order to "prove" a point.

It might be excusable if they did this merely out of ignorance or because they don't know better. But in most instances, that's not the case. They *do* know better. They are fully aware that the passages in question do not say what they claim they say. To them, the end (discrediting and slandering Judaism) justifies the means (lies and deception).

We have several editions of the Talmud in our library and we refer to them when we need to; but (and I mean no offense here) I find much of the material to be tedious as it recounts endless supposed debates and discussions among the ancient rabbis. It goes on and on in this same repetitive format: "Rabbi so-and-so says this, but Rabbi such-and-such says that . . . and then yet another rabbi elucidates and says something else." That's the general approach.

The Talmud also includes some antiquated medical advice—like its mention of the "causes" of dropsy and jaundice in Tractate Tamid (1:1, XI.1.F).



The Talmud Hour by Signiert J. Scheich

It may include mind-numbing details, and some of the information may be out of date—but at the same time, the Talmud provides an interesting glimpse into the ancient, biblical world and into a culture that was much different from our own.

Nonetheless, anti-Semites are relentless in their attempts to use (or misuse) the Talmud to portray the Jewish people in a bad light.¹⁵ They go to great lengths to make it sound like the Talmud contains deep, dark, forbidden secrets about Judaism.

What's worse, some of these anti-Semites claim to be Christians! They traffic in conspiracy theories and anti-Semitic, anti-Israel propaganda, preying on fearful, gullible people who trust them while they market their newsletters, books, CDs, and DVDs. There are dozens of such "ministries." Most of them are small, but collectively they do considerable damage with their propagandizing.

These religious buffoons sit at their computers and churn out an endless cesspool of digital, anti-Jewish garbage. They blame most of the world's ills on the Jewish people (a practice known as scapegoating). And in doing so, they're quite adept at twisting (and sometimes fabricating) passages from the Talmud. They claim it contains the following teachings (among many others):

- It's okay for a Jewish person to "do evil," as long as he does it in a place where he is not known
- Gentiles are a subhuman species
- All Jews are blessed and all non-Jews are cursed
- Gentile children are animals
- Cheating Gentiles is not a sin
- Pedophilia is permitted in Judaism
- Yeshua's mother was promiscuous¹⁶

Now let's take the first of these items above as an example—the one about doing evil in secret. Holocaust denier and revisionist historian Michael A. Hoffman II has a quote on his website¹⁷ from Tractate *Mo'ed Qatan* in the Talmud allegedly proving that Judaism condones secret sins.

On Texe Marrs' radio program, Hoffman has claimed that this is a "direct quote": "If a Jew is tempted to do evil, he should go to a city where he is not known and do the evil there."¹⁸

There are several problems here. First, the quotation is incomplete. Let's take a look at the Hebrew version followed by two translations into English. The first English translation is from Marrs and Hoffman; the second one is from an actual English version of the Talmud:

רי אילעי אומר אם רואה אדם שיצרו מתגבר עליו ילך למקום שאין מיכירין אותו וילבש שחורים ויתעטף שחורים ויעשה מה שלבו חפץ ואל יתחלל שם שמים בפרהסיא

1. Marrs-Hoffman Translation (repeated from above): "If a Jew is tempted to do evil he should go to a city where he is not known and do the evil there."
2. Neusner's Translation: "R. Ilai says, 'If someone sees that his impulse to sin is overpowering him, he should go somewhere where nobody knows him and put on ordinary clothing and cloak himself in ordinary clothing and do what he wants, but let him not profane the Name of Heaven by a public scandal.'"¹⁹

As you can see, the actual translation (#2) differs considerably from the Marrs/Hoffman version (#1). The anti-Semites have omitted big chunks of the text. In doing so, they have left out an important tidbit of information—namely, that this was the view of one rabbi, not a dictum that's taught widely in Judaism.

Most of the people who read this anti-Semitic rubbish don't know Hebrew, and may never have even seen a copy of the Talmud, so the propagandists can get away with this sort of misrepresentation without most readers questioning it.

Second, the passage is taken out of context. You can lift sentences here and there and twist them to prove almost anything you want!

In this instance, *Mo'ed Qatan* addresses a myriad of issues concerning the intermediate period between Pesach and Sukkot (Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles). In the section in question, the rabbis have gone off on a rabbit trail (not unusual in the Talmud) and they're talking about situations where excommunication from the house of prayer might be necessary. They hear a story about an excommunicated man who dies and his body is refused for burial in "the cave of the pious." However, it's accepted in "the cave of the judges"—and the rabbis want to know why. The answer is that the man who died, even though he was of dubious character, had acted in accordance with the ruling of Rabbi Ilai the Elder, whose opinion was that if a man cannot keep his sinful nature under control, he should at the very least go somewhere else (where no one knows him) to engage in his sinful behavior rather than disgracing the Lord's Name publicly. That is why the body was ultimately accepted for burial. This is what the passage means in its context.

And third, the anti-Semites deliberately misapply the passage. Someone knowingly lifted it out of its context. Whoever did this would have known that this was an argument among the rabbis about excommunication—and that Rabbi Ilai's opinion didn't represent any sort of consensus in Judaism. On the contrary, the Talmud repeatedly and consistently condemns secretive sins.²⁰ Yet the anti-Semites focus on one rabbi's opinion while ignoring the others.

THE ISSUE OF YESHUA'S ILLEGITIMACY AND OTHER CONTROVERSIES IN JEWISH TRADITIONAL SOURCES

Some ancient, traditional rabbinic sources, including the Talmud, may present Jesus of Nazareth in an unfavorable light—including the rather bold claim that He was the illegitimate son of a Roman soldier named Pandera. Although some scholars question whether the oft-cited passages actually refer to Jesus, it's very possible that at least some of them do. This accusation about Jesus being of illegitimate birth was hardly groundbreaking, however. It actually originated in the New Testament (cp. John 8:41)!

Think about it: Yeshua's enemies had to come up with some way of explaining who He was, where He came from, and how He was able to do the things He did. The unusual circumstances of His birth must have been common knowledge because even in the NT, He's referred to as the Son of Mary—not the Son of Joseph (Mark 6:3), which would have been the more customary expression in ancient Israel. So if someone admittedly has no earthly father, there are two possibilities: either (1) the family is trying to cover up a scandal, or (2) the birth was supernatural (parthenogenesis).

And what about the many miracles the Lord performed during the course of his three-year earthly ministry? This wasn't phony, sleight-of-hand trickery or mass hypnosis by some silver-tongued evangelist huffing and puffing under a tent at night. On the contrary, Yeshua healed people in broad daylight, out in the open—no tricks, no fancy oratory, no theatrics, and no one was turned away.

So how did the religious establishment explain the miracles? *Notice: no one denied that they happened.* Instead, the Talmud says that when Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Egypt, He learned magic while He was there and wrote secret "formulas on his skin" (possibly tattoos) so He could remember them (b. Shabbat 12:4, III.1; cp. Matt. 2:13-15).

It's telling, then, that even Yeshua's enemies didn't deny that He performed miracles. (That would have been a difficult denial to maintain, especially in the first century while people were still living who had seen what the Lord did.) Rather than denying that they happened, the Talmud seeks to explain the Messianic miracles by saying that Yeshua used magical spells and incantations that He learned in His childhood.

This isn't hard to figure out. The first century Sanhedrin was between a rock and a hard place. Once they rejected the Lord's Messianic claims (Matt. 26:57-68), they had no choice but to take a hard line. There was no middle ground—and they knew it. That is, Yeshua couldn't have been "a good man and a popular preacher, but not the Messiah." Either He was the Messiah, the virgin-born Son of the Living God, as He claimed, or He was a liar or some sort of crazy person. John Duncan, professor of Hebrew at New College in Edinburgh for 27 years, summed it up like this in the 19th century: "Christ either deceived mankind by conscious fraud, or He was Himself deluded and self-deceived, or He was Divine. There is no getting out of this trilemma. It is inexorable" (William Knight, *Colloquia Peripatetica* [Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1871], 109).

This begs the question: why? Why would someone deliberately twist this passage to imply that Jewish people, as a group, condone secretive sin and hypocrisy? Why wouldn't they point out that the quoted viewpoint was only one rabbi's minority opinion? Is it merely an accident that they drop Rabbi Ilai's name from their "word for word" translation of the passage? And why would they ignore the fact that other rabbis throughout the Talmud disagreed in no uncertain terms?

All of these questions share a common, simple answer: *the anti-Semites have an ulterior motive.* They don't care about the truth. We can provide documentation 'til the cows come home that proves they're wrong—and we've done precisely that over many years—but they don't care. All they want to do is slander and lie about the Jewish people. Ironically, they often make claims about "the Jews" that in reality apply more accurately to themselves—especially when they say the Jews are demonically motivated and have their own secret agenda!

What about all of those other alleged "quotations" from the Talmud? They're an assortment of twisted truth and outright fabrications with conclusions that are crafted to suit the purposes of the author—much like the one we just dissected here.²¹

It's true that some scholars believe there are references in the Talmud (and other traditional rabbinic sources like *Toledot Yeshu*)²² to Yeshua being the illegitimate son of a Roman named Pandera (or Panthera).²³ But this is hardly a deep, dark secret. We read these same allegations in the New Testament. In the Gospels, the Jewish leadership openly claimed (to His face) that Yeshua was born illegitimately (John 8:41). The Lord always took such accusations in stride. I'm sure He considered the source!

And what about other claims (mentioned earlier) about certain Jewish teachings, even some that aren't found in the Talmud? For instance, is there a lunatic fringe in Judaism that believes in Jewish predominance? Yes, of course, there is.²⁴ There is a mindless minority within every racial group who are convinced of their own innate superiority—like the Nation of Islam which believes in black superiority or the Aryan Nation which preaches white superiority. But we surely don't demonize all black or white people because of what the fringe groups say, do we?

No wonder many of us have concluded that anti-Semites aren't really interested in the truth. Their overriding agenda is to convince anyone who will listen that Jewish people are essentially evil—and that they're responsible for most of the world's ills. The purveyors of hate scour the Talmud for passages that they can twist or spin in a way that they think bolsters their claims.

Yes, there are statements in the Talmud with which we would strongly disagree. But on those points where there are genuine differences, we should encourage honest and productive dialogue rather than resorting to juvenile name-calling, lying, distortion, and misrepresentation. 🕊

To be continued.

In the next installment: Are today's Jews imposters who are descended from the ancient Khazars? And is there a diabolical Jewish conspiracy to control the world?



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ENDNOTES

¹Accessed at forbes.com/sites/abigailsman/2010/12/21/world-to-jews-drop-dead.

²The Boston Marathon bombers (the Tsarnaev brothers, Tamerlan and Dzhokhar, who allegedly murdered three people while maiming or wounding 260 others in a devastating April 15 attack at the finish line of the famous race) reportedly received, at various times during a stretch of time from 2002 to 2012, welfare benefits—including Section 8 rental assistance, free government-provided cell phones, and unemployment compensation, even though at least one of their names had appeared on an FBI watch list of potential terrorists. In the aftermath of the original report by Chris Cassidy and other reporters in the April 25 issue of *The Boston Herald*, authorities in Massachusetts quickly “clamped down the lid” on the story and refused to release any further information. Citing the right to privacy, officials have since then declined to either confirm or deny the story's accuracy (see “Welfare State” at snopes.com). One might argue, however, that the public has a reasonable right to know who is receiving public funds.

³To their credit, the authorities in Canada later rescinded that decision and went ahead and delivered the materials, albeit a few weeks late.

⁴See www.fosna.org/content/tutu-honors-palestinian-christian-group-sabeel-lending-his-name-its-international-patron.

⁵This was also true in the late 1800s and early 1900s before the modern State of Israel existed. The more liberal and mainstream wing of Christendom was largely indifferent to Jewish issues and concerns while conservative Bible-believers were sympathetic.

⁶See www.christatthecheckpoint.com.

⁷Dr. Ray Gannon has done an outstanding job of articulating many of our concerns in his book *The Shifting Romance with Israel* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2012). He writes primarily to a Pentecostal audience, but non-Pentecostals will also benefit from his research and insights.

⁸See 2 Corinthians 4:4.

⁹“Why Should We Love Israel?” study sheet by Adrian Rogers (Memphis, TN: Love Worth Finding, 2010), downloaded from www.lwf.org. For information, call 1-800-274-5683.

¹⁰*The Footsteps of the Messiah* by Arnold Fruchtenbaum (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 1982), 278.

¹¹One of the devil's key objectives (and one he has done all too well for the past 2,000 years) is to keep the Jewish people separated from their Messiah. He knows that the Jewish people coming to faith in *haAdon Yeshua haMashiach* (the Lord Jesus the Messiah) is the main component of God's future plan for the world—so he wants to keep Israel and her Messiah apart at all costs. Before He left earth, Yeshua himself told the representative first century remnant of Israel (His disciples) that He wouldn't return until the Jewish nation confessed Him as Savior and Messiah: “For I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’” (Matt. 23:39). So everything hinges on Israel finding her Messiah.

¹²Our view that the “brethren” in this Sheep and Goats passage (Matt. 25:31-46) represent the Jewish people (*Am Yisra'el*) is somewhat controversial. John MacArthur and numerous other very capable, evangelical expositors take another approach and say the “brethren” here are Yeshua's disciples (see *The MacArthur Study Bible* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997], 1442).

¹³Even when the Jewish people are out of fellowship with God, they are still His earthly people and He loves them. “For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His

eye’” (Zech. 2:8). Note that in the context of this passage, Babylon and her allies are the plunderers of Israel (King Nebuchadnezzar not only destroyed Jerusalem, but he took most of the Judahites captive back to Babylon in 586 BC). God even referred to Nebuchadnezzar as His “servant” because He used the king to bring judgment on His disobedient people (Jer. 43:10). Nonetheless, a few chapters later, God said that He would repay those same Babylonians for what they did to Israel (Jer. 51:24). So why would God bring retribution on His “servant,” the King of Babylon, if he was only doing what God wanted him to do? Is there a contradiction or inconsistency here? Not really. Very simply, payback is unavoidable because (as Zechariah said) anyone who touches Israel—even when she's under judgment—touches the apple of God's eye.

¹⁴The Talmud is the written codification of thousands of years' worth of Jewish tradition and rabbinic interpretation. There are two versions (Babylonian and Jerusalem editions) but they share many similarities, both in content and also in the way the information is organized. The material was passed down from various oral traditions over many generations until it was committed to writing from the third to the sixth centuries AD.

¹⁵In Texe Marrs' interviews with anti-Zionist/revisionist historian Michael Hoffman II, for example, they agree among themselves that the NT references to “the synagogue of Satan” (Rev. 2:9, 3:9) prove that Judaism is “a counterfeit race” and “the most horrible religion and group of the last days.” These are verbatim quotes from audio files of “Dark Secrets of the Talmud, Vol. 1” by Texe Marrs (an interview with Mr. Hoffman), accessed at archive.org/details/JudaismDiscoveredAndDarkSecretsOfTheTalmud.

¹⁶This list is adapted, in part, from *Conspiracy of the Six-Pointed Star: Eye-Opening Revelations and Forbidden Knowledge About Israel, the Jews, Zionism, and the Rothschilds* by Texe Marrs (Austin, TX: RiverCrest Publishing, 2011), 415-416.

¹⁷Hoffman's online article is at www.revisionisthistory.org/talmudtruth.html.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 5. See also Marrs' radio interview with Hoffman archived online at ia700209.us.archive.org/9/items/JudaismDiscoveredAndDarkSecretsOfTheTalmud/4.texemarrs-0410-DarkSecretsOfTheTalmudvolume2.mp3. The statement in question occurs at around 23:40.

¹⁹Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, vol. 7c (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011), 99.

²⁰Sota 1:1 (V.19.B), 1:7 (I.2.U), Arak. 3:4 (II.4.D), *Abod. Zar.* 4:4c, I.1.C.

²¹For a more comprehensive summary of supposed passages from the Talmud that are twisted by anti-Semites, see “The Real Truth about the Talmud: Refuting Various Claims about the Talmud” by Gil Student (<http://www.angelfire.com/mt/talmud/short.html>).

²²It's by no means certain that *Toledot Yeshu* is an ancient rabbinic source. There is no scholarly consensus on this, and it's further complicated by the fact that numerous versions have come down to us in different languages and from various periods of history; so for now, its true origins remain shrouded in mystery.

²³*Shabbat* 104b, *Sanhedrin* 67a.

²⁴One such movement in Israel was founded by the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, an extremist Jewish supremacist. Anti-Semites sometimes quote Kahane and make it sound like his advocacy of violence against non-Jews was a view shared by most Jewish people in the world. In reality, a strong Jewish majority considered Kahane's rantings an embarrassment. Yeshua the Messiah warned, “... All who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matt. 26:52)—and Kahane was assassinated in 1990 after giving a speech in New York. The organization he founded is today officially classified as a terrorist group by the governments of Canada, the US, Israel, and the European Union.

HOW EVIL AND WICKED IS THE TALMUD—REALLY?

BY DR. GARY HEDRICK

Just Google the search term “Talmud evil” (like we did recently) and you’ll be swamped with roughly 1,550,000 results in some 32 languages from all over the world.

Most of these web pages are from anti-Semitic websites where they promote fear, suspicion, and hatred of Jewish people. They cite mostly bogus, twisted, or misquoted passages from the Talmud to give the impression that it’s an evil book that holds deep, dark secrets about the true nature of Judaism.

These purveyors of paranoia know very well that people have an innate curiosity about any sort of “forbidden” knowledge. Adam and Eve succumbed to that same curiosity long ago in the Garden of Eden. The devil knew (and he still knows) that people are drawn to this sort of illicit sensationalism.

But in the 21st century, there’s no longer anything secretive or forbidden about the Talmud. Most public libraries have multiple editions of the Babylonian Talmud (*Bavli*) on their shelves—and many of them have the Jerusalem Talmud (*Yerushalmi*), as well. Virtually all synagogues have copies in their congregational libraries and most of them are happy to let visitors use them for reference and research. All you have to do is call ahead of time and ask for the library’s hours.

Many Christians these days are using computerized Bible study programs that include any one of numerous available editions of the Talmud. The popular Logos Bible Software, for instance, offers Jacob Neusner’s translations of the Talmudim. Since these resources are digital, they’re searchable. That means it only takes seconds to search out words and phrases throughout the entire collection.

Armed with a variety of these digital resources, we sat down recently and put a sampling of alleged Talmudic “quotes” to the test. Here are the results.

Does the Talmud say that God himself stands while studying it?

Claimed quote: “Jehovah himself in heaven studies the Talmud, standing: he has such respect for that book” (*Tractate Mechilla*).

Analysis: Any anti-Semite who claims the Talmud uses the name Jehovah is shooting himself in the foot. No traditional Jewish source other than the Bible itself will ever use the ineffable name of God (YHVH, or the Anglicized “Jehovah”). Even in Bible reading, Jewish people substitute “Adonai” whenever YHVH (יהוה) appears. This particular “quote” and citation comes from page 93 of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* (Victor Marsden’s translation [Escondido, CA: the Book Tree, 1999]), an old and outdated forgery that claims to blow the lid off a Jewish conspiracy to take over the world. And finally, there is no Tractate Mechilla in the Talmud. The closest match would be Mishnah Tractate Meilah and it contains no such passage.

Does the Talmud teach that non-Jews are not human?

Claimed quote: “The Jews are called human beings, but the non-Jews are not humans. They are beasts” (*Talmud: Baba mezia*, 114b).

Analysis: We searched the entire section from folio Baba Mesi’a 114b to 118b and there is no such quote—and nothing that’s even close to it. This section of the Babylonian Talmud deals with Levirate marriage, divorce, inheritance rights, and other family legal matters. The quote is bogus.

Claimed quote: “The Akum (non-Jew) is like a dog. Yes, the scripture teaches to honor the dog more than the non-Jew” (*Ereget Raschi Erod*. 22 30).

Analysis: The term “Akum” does not appear in the English text of the Talmud. Even if it did, it means “idolater,” which isn’t necessarily a “non-Jew” (a Jewish person can also be an idolater). Furthermore, the cited passage (*Ereget Raschi Erod*.) does not exist in the Talmud.

Claimed quote: “Even though God created the non-Jew they are still animals in human form. It is not becoming for a Jew to be served by an animal. Therefore he will be served by animals in human form” (*Midrasch Talpioth*, p. 255, Warsaw 1855).

Analysis: There is no such passage anywhere in the Talmud. Like many alleged “quotes” from the Talmud, it’s a fabrication.

Claimed quote: “A pregnant non-Jew is no better than a pregnant animal” (*Coschen hamischpat* 405).

Analysis: There is no such passage in the Talmud.

Claimed quote: “The souls of non-Jews come from impure spirits and are called pigs” (*Jalkut Rubeni gadol* 12b).

Analysis: The Talmud says nothing of the kind. There is an obscure work known as *Yalkut Reuveini*, but it is not part of the Talmud, includes no such quotation, and has no section “12b.” This, too, is a fabrication.

Does the Talmud Say Jews Can (or Should) Kill Gentiles?

Claimed quote: “It is permitted to take the body and the life of a Gentile” (*Sepher Ikkarim III c 25*).

Analysis: There is no such passage in the Talmud. However, we found a largely anti-Christian polemic entitled *Sepher Halkkarim Lebar Joseph Albo* (“*The Book of the Fundamental Articles of the Rabbi Joseph Albo*”) that was published in 1493—a thousand years or so after the Talmud appeared in written form (so there is no link between the two). This book was evidently written in retaliation against Catholic attacks on Jewish people (like the ones that took place during the Crusades, Inquisitions, and the Expulsions from Spain and Portugal, when Jews suffered horribly and many lost their lives). Even so, the quoted passage is taken out of context—and again, it has no connection to the Talmud.

Claimed quote: “Those who do not own Torah and the prophets must all be killed. Who has power to kill them, let him kill them openly with the sword, if not, let him use artifices till they are done away with” (*Schulchan Aruch: Choszen Hamiszpat*, 425, 50).

Analysis: Here’s yet another example of a quote being twisted and misattributed to the Talmud. This one was evidently lifted from page 92 of *The Protocols* [Ibid.] where it quotes Schulchan Aruch, also known as the Code of Jewish Law, a traditional work that is not part of the Talmud. In fact, Rabbi Joseph Karo composed it in Safed, Israel, sometime around 1563—a thousand years or more after the Talmud (see *Torah and Commentary: the Five Books of Moses* by Sol Scharfstein [Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing, 2008], 547-549). In the cited passage, “those who do not own Torah and the prophets” is a reference to Jewish heretics. It has nothing to do with Gentiles. Judaism has always recognized that Gentiles are not subject to Mosaic Law, so the Code of Jewish Law has no applicability to non-Jews. (According to traditional rabbinic teaching, non-Jews are subject to the seven laws of Noah, not the Mosaic code.) The claims of the anti-Semites notwithstanding, there’s nothing here that gives Jews permission to kill Gentiles. Rabbi Karo employed hyperbole (that is, exaggeration for emphasis)—and his comments should be understood in the context of the medieval setting in which he lived. There was a lot of religious, scorched-earth rhetoric circulating back in those days (Luther wrote his caustic *On the Jews and Their Lies* in 1543). Furthermore, the bark of the medieval rabbis was worse than their bite; there is no known record of the death penalty ever actually being imposed on Jewish heretics. Sadly, Catholicism cannot make the same claim.

Does the Talmud Approve of Perversion and Immorality?

Claim: “*Sanhedrin 55b [states that] a Jew may marry a three year old girl (specifically, three years ‘and a day’ old).*”

Analysis: There is no such statement in Sanhedrin 55b. It appears to be lifted, loosely, from Niddah 4:1 (1.3.F), a discussion of rare instances where “menstrual uncleanness” (vaginal blood flow) begins in infancy. There is no mention of anyone marrying a three year old and it surely does not advocate pedophilia or any other form of child abuse. Passages of this kind (another one is found in Ketubot 11b) are typically in the context of discussions about virginity, dowries, and the legal status of women and little girls. A girl who was sexually assaulted before the age of three was still considered a virgin (see Rambam in *Hilkhot Na’arah Betulah*) for purposes of Jewish law (making her eligible for a higher dowry than a non-virgin). But the Talmud nowhere approves of Jewish men having sex with three-year-old girls. Some of the passages the anti-Semites cite are actually talking about what should happen when this sort of child abuse occurs (to protect the legal rights of little girls). They’re not condoning it.

Claim: “*Sanhedrin 54b [states that] a Jew may have sex with a child as long as the child is less than nine years old.*”

Analysis: There is no such statement in Sanhedrin 54b. However, there is a discussion in Tractate Niddah (5:5, I.1.B) about a legal situation where an adult woman might have sexual relations with a nine-year-old (or younger) boy. It’s in the context of Levirate marriage. (Levirate marriage is a provision in the Mosaic Law [Deut. 25:5-6] that says the brother of a man who dies childless should marry the widow so she can have children by him and carry on the paternal line.) Since the Torah doesn’t provide much in the way of detail, the ancient sages took up the slack and provided guidelines for the implementation of Levirate marriage. The passage in question discusses potential situations where the brother of the deceased man may be under nine years of age when he is called upon to marry and cohabit with the elder brother’s widow. It explains how the boy can extract himself from this obligation with the consent of the other parties by invoking “the rite of removing the shoe” (see Deut. 25:10).

Claim: “*Kethuboth 11b [states that] when a grown-up man has intercourse with a little girl it is nothing.*”

Analysis: See our discussion of Ketubot 11b above. The Talmud never says it’s okay for an adult man to have sex with a little girl. But when such a heinous act is committed, the ancient sages said it is “nothing” in the sense that the sexual assault does not invalidate the little girl’s legal rights as a virgin. Dowries, estates, and inheritance rights (especially for women) were very important in the ancient Middle Eastern culture—so the Talmud deals with these matters in some detail, particularly in Tractate Ketubot. It’s protecting the victim and her rights, not excusing sexual abuse. When anti-Semites put an illicit spin on these discussions (in this instance, to try to make it sound like the Talmud encourages pedophilia), it only shows how desperate and dishonest they are.

Claim: “*Abodah Zarah 17a states that there is not a whore in the world that the Talmudic sage Rabbi Eleazar has not had sex with.*”

Analysis: This claim is merely a cheap shot because the man in the story, Eleazar, after having lived a very sinful life, wanted to make his peace with God. His confession that he had patronized every prostitute in the world was an exaggeration, of course, but it reflected the burden of guilt that weighed heavily upon him. The passage in Avodah Zarah talks about

the struggle this man experienced in his soul to find forgiveness. He finally confessed that his sins were his own fault and no one else’s. He was a humble, broken man. The last paragraph reads: “[Eleazar] said: This matter depends solely on me. He put his head between his knees and began to tremble from crying until he died. A heavenly voice declared: R. Eleazar ben Duria is ready for the world-to-come.” Once again, we see how the anti-Semites twist and distort Talmudic passages in ways that are, at times, downright diabolical.

Does the Talmud Give Jews Permission to Cheat Non-Jews?

Claim: “*Sanhedrin 57a [states that] a Jew need not pay a gentile (‘Cuthean’) the wages owed him for work.*”

Analysis: The written Torah includes guidelines about when a hired hand should be paid. Leviticus 19:13, for instance, lays down the principle that a worker should be paid once the work is complete—that is, at the end of the day. The employer can’t even keep the money overnight and pay the worker the following day! The issue here in Sanhedrin 57a, then, is not whether a worker should be paid, but when he should be paid. The actual passage in Sanhedrin 57a (I.5, Paragraph L) says, “But R. Aha the son of R. Iqa says, ‘It covers the case of one who withholds the wages of a hired man. A gentile who does so to a gentile, or a gentile who does so to an Israelite, are liable. But an Israelite who does so to a gentile is exempt.’” According to one rabbi, then, Israelite farmers could enter into contracts with non-Jewish sharecroppers, for instance, for deferred compensation. (In fact, sharecropping by its very nature requires deferred compensation.) Non-Jewish employers, on the other hand, were not allowed to enter into agreements that could be interpreted as a violation of Leviticus 19:13. Did the fact that an Israelite could use a contract to circumvent Leviticus 19:13 give him an advantage over his non-Jewish neighbor? Yes, it did; however, Israelites had other obligations that weren’t shared by non-Jews (e.g., pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times a year and the payment of numerous tithes), so this exemption had the effect of leveling the playing field. In any case, the same discussion makes it clear that failure to pay a hired hand—no matter who the employer is—is “robbery” (see Paragraph G).

Claim: “*Sanhedrin 57a [states that] when a Jew murders a gentile (‘Cuthean’), there will be no death penalty. What a Jew steals from a gentile he may keep.*”

Analysis: This section of Tractate Sanhedrin has to do with the religious obligations of the B’nai Noach (“Sons of Noah,” non-Jewish followers of the God of Israel) in their interactions with idolaters and slaves. What it says is that non-Jews may not be subject to capital punishment in certain instances where an Israelite would be: “And has it not been taught with reference to idolatry: Because of matters on account of which an Israelite court inflicts the death penalty, the children of Noah are subject to warning [Tractate Abodah Zarah 8:4G]. They are subject to warning, but they are not put to death.” So here, the anti-Semites are quoting from a passage that actually says Jews are more likely to receive capital punishment than non-Jews (which is the opposite of what they’re trying to prove!). The statement about an Israelite having the right in some circumstances to confiscate the property of a non-Israelite is part of an extended discussion (I.5, Paragraphs A-Q) about theft, bloodshed, and legal culpability. What we have here, once again, is a deliberate distortion of a Talmudic legal discussion.

—Gary Hedrick



Several of the claims above were taken verbatim from “The Truth About Talmud” page on the Mission Islam website (www.missionislam.com/nwo/talmud.htm). Other helpful information was gleaned from Gil Student’s “The Real Truth About the Talmud” page at <http://talmud.faithweb.com>, Don Talbot’s “Quotes with Attitude from the Jewish Talmud” at <http://rense.com/general21/tal.htm>, as well as Victor Marsden’s translation of **The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion** at books.google.com. Our quotations from the Talmud itself come from *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary* by Jacob Neusner (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011).

Many Jewish scholars spend a lifetime studying the Talmud. By its sheer volume and complexity, the Talmud can be difficult to interpret and understand—especially for a novice. And everyone knows that it contains some teachings that Christians do not accept. Nonetheless, the fact remains that most of the Talmudic passages cited by anti-Semites in their rants against the Jewish people are either completely bogus or are taken out of context, as we have shown here.

Fruit from the Harvest

by Violette Berger



Unexpected Blessings

Richard Hill, CJFM representative and pastor of Beth Yeshua (Las Vegas) reports about his family's experience at camp this year. Every year, Rich's wife, Oanh, and their children attend 4-H camp. Oanh is a volunteer and looks forward to the camp, as she has led many children to the Lord in previous years. However, due to restructuring of the camp's activities every year, it has been more difficult for Oanh to find free time to share the Gospel message with the children. This year, Oanh served exclusively in the kitchen. As she was busily preparing lunch for the camp, and at the same time supervising three children who were helping her, she had a small window of opportunity to share the Gospel with them. When she finished sharing, each of them expressed a desire to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior—and they did so—praying with Oanh right there in the kitchen. Oanh and Rich praise the Lord for *three* unexpected blessings! ***“Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God”*** (Matt 5:8).

Checkmate

CJFM Area Director Michael Campo (Chicago) recently wrote a message titled, “Hell,” and preached it at a church in Indiana. One of the biblical references that motivated Mike's teaching was Mark 9:43-44: ***“It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched—where Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.”*** Mike taught that the “worm” represents man's conscience, which will never die for those in Hell, even if they never experienced a conscience while on earth. They will have a conscience in Hell. Mike spoke about the two greatest lies on earth: (1) that there is no God, therefore no judgment, and (2) there is no Satan. Mike used an analogy, which he attributes to pastor Tony Evans. It is based on a painting by Goethe titled “Checkmate,” depicting a chess game with Satan. Mike explained, “It is the man's last move. He is anguishing over making it, knowing that he will lose. Satan is waiting. But no one can beat Satan at chess. Satan plays chess with every one of us—vying for the soul of mankind. The only way *not* to lose is to not make *that* last move—to, instead, respond to the Gospel of Jesus. All of us have the same decision to make—we do have one more move. Will it be Heaven or Hell? May we choose Heaven!” When Mike gave the altar call at the end of the service, two people came forward and four people raised their hands. All six prayed with Mike to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. ***“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”*** (1 Cor. 15:57).


On the Right Road

Eric Chabot, CJFM representative (Columbus, OH) considers street evangelism an important aspect of his ministry. Recently, he was handing out the tract called, “Do All Roads Lead to God?” in downtown Columbus. A young man accepted a tract and asked, “What is this about?” During their conversation, Eric had the opportunity to share the Gospel message with him. Realizing that he was not on the “right road,” the young man prayed with Eric to receive Jesus as his Lord and Savior. A short time later, a second young man accepted a tract and asked the same question, “What is this about?” Eric, again, had the opportunity to share the Gospel. This young man also responded with a desire to have a personal relationship with Jesus and prayed with Eric to receive Him. Eric praises the Lord that these two young men chose the “right road” to God. ***“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’”*** (John 14:6).



L' Chaim! (To Life!)

CJFM representative, Michelle Beadle (New Orleans) shares a blessing during her Messiah in the Passover tour that brought her to the Baptist College Ministry in Lafayette. Michelle writes: “At this meeting, the young daughter of the pastor prayed to receive Jesus. Her parents had been spending a lot of time over the past year talking to her about the Lord and hoping she would make a decision. Her mom was so excited that she took a picture of the two of us together so her daughter will always remember the day she received the Lord. What a thrill it is to know this girl's name is now written in the Lamb's Book of Life.” Speaking about the New Jerusalem, John writes: ***“But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life”*** (Rev. 21:27).



Bible Questions AND Answers

by DR. GARY HEDRICK

Have a Bible question?

Submit it to Dr. Hedrick at garyh@cjfm.org, or mail it to 611 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78215.

You may see your question addressed in a future issue of *Messianic Perspectives*.

QUESTION: *The raven is an unclean bird, but according to 1 Kings 17:4, God used ravens to feed the prophet Elijah. How could this be? Didn't Elijah keep kosher?*

ANSWER: The Bible doesn't say that Elijah ate the ravens. It says the ravens brought him his food during a drought in the land: *"The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook"* (1 Kings 17:6).

The Hebrew words here mean just what the English says: the ravens brought him "bread" (Heb., *lechem*) and "meat" (*basar*, or "flesh"). While the rest of the country was enduring a devastating famine, Elijah was dining contentedly on bread and (maybe) steak!

Where did the birds find this cuisine twice every day? The Bible doesn't tell us, but we can easily imagine that a flock of ravens—a species of bird that's a notorious scavenger—could have found food for the prophet almost anywhere. A freshly-baked loaf of bread might have been cooling on a window sill somewhere outside the famine zone when a raven swooped down and tore off a piece. Tasty chunks of beef, mutton, or chicken could have been spirited away from a farm where preparations were being made for a family barbecue. Who knows? There are many possibilities.

It's quite a remarkable story, wouldn't you agree? And it conveys a very practical lesson: namely, that God delights in using unlikely means to accomplish His purposes. Here in 1 Kings 17, He uses unclean, unruly ravens to feed His servant Elijah. The raven is famously hungry (hence the adjective "ravenous," which describes an insatiable appetite)—so much so, in fact, that they are one of the few species that will neglect their young and feed themselves first when food is scarce. Yet here, God commands the ravens to forget their own needs and fly (with the food dangling temptingly from their beaks) to the prophet and feed him—and that's exactly what they did!


Later in the same chapter, after his source of water dries up (the "brook" in v. 7), God tells Elijah to travel to the town of Zarephath, where a widow will take care of him. Can you imagine what Elijah must have thought when he heard what God said? "A widow will take care of me? How can that be?" In ancient times, most widows were destitute because in a patriarchal society, a husband was the family's chief provider and means of support. So when a man died, his widow was often dependent on her grown children (if she had any) and on the community for her sustenance. Remember, Yeshua the

Messiah talked about the widow's mite in Mark 12:42-43. In that story, a widow came to the Temple and presented her offering of two mites. It was a very small amount of money, but He knew that she was a widow and those two mites represented almost everything she possessed. He was touched by her great generosity and her heart for God.

Back here in 1 Kings 17, the widow at Zarephath evidently had come to the end of her rope. Times were hard and food was scarce. God was withholding rain (v. 1) and crops were drying up. She told Elijah that she and her young son were getting ready to starve to death (v. 12). We don't know if she was employing hyperbole (i.e., exaggeration to make a point) or if that was literally the situation she and her little boy were facing. Whatever the case, God provided their needs miraculously because the woman had the faith to obey Him and use her few remaining resources to prepare a meal for the prophet.

There's a certain extravagance in the way God responds to our faith and cares for our needs. That woman from Zarephath experienced something that God's people would learn later, in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul said, *"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him [be] glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen"* (Eph. 3:20-21). Hallelujah!

So again, God used an unlikely means—a desperate, destitute, and possibly dying widow—to do His work. And because of her faith and obedience, she not only fed the prophet, but as a byproduct she also fed herself and her son "for many days" (v. 15). Notice the irony: *she got her own needs met by first attending to the needs of someone else (the prophet)*. Most of us would reverse that order. We would take care of ourselves first. But not this lady! She took what few groceries she had left in the house and she fed the prophet before she did anything else. And God saw what she did—and He blessed her accordingly. Later, she received yet another unexpected benefit when her little boy suddenly fell ill and died—and Elijah miraculously raised the boy from the dead (vv. 17-24). How would she have helped her dead boy if she had sent the prophet away when he first knocked on her door?

Bottom line: Elijah wasn't violating any kosher laws by allowing God's army of ravens to bring him his daily food. In doing so, in fact, the prophet was teaching us some valuable lessons about how the Lord works in the lives of His children! 

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