

The Other Gospel of John Hagee

CHRISTIAN ZIONISM AND ETHNIC SALVATION

by G. Richard Fisher

“An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; And my people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?” (Jeremiah 5:30-31).

“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for *everyone* who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

Most people who see and hear the Rev. John C. Hagee are impressed. He is rotund, strident, authoritative (and could well pass for Rush Limbaugh’s older and more serious brother). His delivery alone gives the impression of one who really knows what he is talking about. However, careful evaluation of the teachings of Hagee, pastor at the San Antonio-based Cornerstone Church, reveals false teaching and a defective view of a basic and essential issue regarding salvation and the Gospel. Hagee preaches another way of salvation for the Jew, which is in direct violation of Paul’s warnings in Galatians 1:6-9.

This theological concept, which has many forms, is primarily referred to as the “Two Covenant” or “Dual

Covenant” theory.

Hagee’s web site tells us that his “vision is for world evangelism. The burning passion of his heart is to win the lost to Jesus Christ in America and around the world.” That statement is not altogether true since he will not evangelize Jews and teaches salvation on another basis than the Gospel for the Jewish people.

Hagee has become extremely popular since the 1987 dedication of his Cornerstone Church (an event that featured an appearance and a blessing from W.A. Criswell, then pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas) and because of the daily programs from Global Evangelism Television of which he is president. His best-selling books have also made him a celebrity. He associates with the likes of Benny Hinn and appears with him from time to time at crusades and other Charismatic congresses.

The Christian Research Institute panned Hagee’s 1996 book, *Beginning of the End*, not only for its premise that Yitzhak Rabin’s assassination triggered prophetic events and set the prophetic clock ticking somehow but because he falsely predicted that Shi-

mon Peres would succeed Rabin. The later elections brought Benyamin Netanyahu to power.

CRI introduced Hagee this way:

“Well-known to millions of Christians because of his television ministry, Rev. Hagee (the book lists him as Dr., but he does not have an earned doctorate) is the pastor of one of America’s largest Word-Faith churches. He has been granted several awards from Jewish organizations for his outspoken advocacy for the nation of Israel and Jewish rights.”¹

There is no denying that Hagee sells books and lots of them. Should we be impressed that he has generated a number of best-sellers? Maybe not, because as Robert Boston reminds us:

“How a book sells is not an indication of its merit. The American public has a seemingly bottomless appetite for nonsense, as evidenced by the countless tomes about astrology, aliens from outer space, quack diets, and UFOs that have regularly graced best-seller lists over the years. Some books that sold millions have later been exposed as hoaxes. A slot on the best-seller list tells you exactly one thing

about a book: that a lot of people bought it."²

That there are moral and ethical concerns with Hagee and a serious question as to his being biblically qualified as a pastor and teacher are not the main issues of this article. However, one very important factor should be noted. *The Liberty Flame* reported in May 1994 that during the time when Hagee was serving the Charismatic congregation at Trinity Church (1976) in San Antonio, he divorced his wife, resigned and married a young woman in the congregation, Diana Castro. Custody of Hagee's two children by his ex-wife, Martha, went to her.

In a letter to the church, Hagee admitted immorality, which later became part of the court records in the custody battle. Martha later also remarried and started another family. Not surprisingly, there is a hiatus from 1976 to 1987 left out of Hagee's web site biography.

WHO'LL GIVE ME ONE DOLLAR? WHO'LL GIVE ME TWO?

More recently, in March 1996, Hagee caused a furor when he created an uproar in the black community of Texas. Major newspapers of the area reported on his plan to conduct a "slave sale." The auction was an attempt to raise money for a seniors' class trip from his private Cornerstone High School. He announced to the congregation that "slavery in America was returning to Cornerstone"³ and that each senior "would be auctioned off." The highest bidder could have a "slave" work at their house, so the congregation should make plans to "go home with a slave."

The fund-raising project was seen as insensitivity and a massive error in judgment. Reaction to the plan was fast and furious. Area newspapers further reported that after a weekend of criticism, Hagee issued an apology. He renamed the enterprise "a student auction."⁴

PUTDOWN IN THE MARKETPLACE

While most of Hagee's prophetic

books become instant best-sellers, they do not always receive the best of reviews. As noted above, CRI faulted his *Beginning of the End* and the normally courteous *CBA Marketplace Magazine* gave a "thumbs down" to his book, *Final Dawn Over Jerusalem*, saying:

"In his long list of Jewish people who have blessed the world, Hagee makes no distinction between individuals who simply have a Jewish background and those who truly fear and seek God. He lists Goldie Hawn, Dustin Hoffman, and Barbara Streisand, among others, as Jews who have proven the Scripture 'in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' The contributions of these entertainers can hardly be seen as a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis. Hagee also goes as far as branding anti-Semitic those who don't agree with his enthusiastic support of Israel."⁵

Despite its criticisms, *CBA Marketplace Magazine* in June 1998 listed *Final Dawn Over Jerusalem* as the No. 1 clothbound nonfiction book.

Christian author and conspiracy debunker Gregory Camp also is critical of Hagee's writings:

"The Texas-based minister has recently published a book dealing with the end times in which he predicts the end of Israeli independence as a result of giving up the Golan Heights and then signing a treaty with the Antichrist. Titled *Beginning of the End*, this Thomas Nelson publication will doubtless sell by the hundreds of thousands. It rehashes old premillennial prophecy themes and like an increasing number of such ministries, throws conspiracy theory into the mix. The book unfortunately is just one more of a series of tired conspiracy-tainted prophecy monographs so common these days; there is scarcely an original idea to be found between its covers. The reader is 'treated' to sensationalistic pre-

dictions about the Israeli State and the nearness of Christ's return based on conspiracy and closet date-setting."⁶

RUSHIN' WITH THE MONEY

Hagee is very liberal with his ministry's money when it comes to Israel. A Religious News Service report stated that Hagee raised over \$1 million to help Soviet Jews resettle in Israel.⁷ The money was presented to the United Jewish Appeal in February 1998. Upon receiving the money, Irving Pozmantier talked of global peace. Most dispensationalists would be negatively impressed by such utopian talk.

Hagee believes that the resettlement of Soviet Jewry is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. It must be pretty heady to think and project that you are one of the major instruments for the fulfillment of the prophetic Word. No wonder his followers are impressed and even mesmerized.

Hagee also seems to lurch from one newsworthy event to another. Recently he filed a suit against the U.S. Postal Service, "claiming it has 'delayed, held, and even censored' his ministry's mailings" and as well "denied use of the nonprofit standard mail rate and charged higher rates."⁸ The Postal Service has countered by saying that with so much for sale via the mail, Hagee is hardly non-profit. After Israel, Hagee's attorneys probably got a goodly portion of the ministry's income.

BORN WITH A YARMULKE OR BORN AGAIN?

If just the above were all that could be reported on John Hagee, some might say there should not be major concern and there probably would not be. So what that he is divorced, a promoter of word-faith teaching and its proponents, and a slick marketeer for religious goods and products? So what that he showed insensitivity to African-Americans? It can all be overlooked since he helps so many and sends so much money to Israel, not to mention his contesting the service and fees of the U.S. Postal Service.

Yet, of additional and more serious concern is that Hagee reported to the *Houston Chronicle* that he believes that Jews already have a covenant with God and a relationship to God and do not need to come to the cross. Hearing this is startling. Hagee told the newspaper:

“I believe that every Jewish person who lives in the light of the Torah, which is the word of God, has a relationship with God and will come to redemption.”⁹

This certainly is a shocking statement in the light of Jesus’ words that “no man comes to the Father but through me” (John 14:6). John further writes, in his first Epistle: “He who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:12).

The Apostle Paul, as well, would say the opposite of Hagee: “I do not set aside the grace of God: for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain” (Galatians 2:21). Paul is affirming that nothing that the Old Testament offered could avail apart from the death of Jesus.

The *Houston Chronicle* article further reported:

“John Hagee, fundamentalist pastor from San Antonio and friend of Israel, is truly a strange fish. ... The man has a mission. He’s out to attack anti-Semitism. He also believes that Jews can come to God without going through Jesus Christ.”¹⁰

The *Houston* newspaper then quoted Hagee’s own shocking words: “I’m not trying to convert the Jewish people to the Christian faith.”

And further revealed:

“In fact, trying to convert Jews is a ‘waste of time,’ he said. ‘The Jewish person who has his roots in Judaism is not going to convert to Christianity. There is no form of Christian evangelism that has failed so miserably as evangelizing the Jewish people. They (already) have a faith structure.’ Everyone else, whether Buddhist or Baha’i, needs to believe in

Jesus, he says. But not Jews. Jews already have a covenant with God that has never been replaced by Christianity, he says.”¹¹

Hagee went on to tell the *Houston* reporter that Paul abandoned the idea of Jews knowing Christ when he went to the Gentiles. Jewish evangelism, both presently and in antiquity, is not a failure as Hagee stated but a huge success as many missions and missionaries can report.

Christian Research Institute has also reported on this highly unorthodox view held by Hagee:

“Information about Hagee from other sources reveals he seriously differs with the vast majority of dispensational teachers because he believes that Jewish people do not need to be saved, since they are under a different covenant.”¹²

THE MYSTERY DEEPENS AND THE PLOT THICKENS

In response to a direct inquiry by PFO director M. Kurt Goedelman to Hagee, Goedelman received a puzzling response. Hagee claimed in a carefully nuanced letter dated June 18, 1998, that the *Houston Chronicle* had distorted what he said and went on further to assert, “I have not or never have been dual covenant in my preaching.”

In this, Hagee is being less than honest and playing word games. As this article will demonstrate, Hagee’s true view is a muddled form of the “Two Covenant” or “Dual Covenant” theory, even though he would deny the label.

It should be noted that Hagee said in his reply only that he has not been dual covenant “in my preaching.” His statement did not address whether he believed or taught it, but only that it was not in his preaching. Perhaps in saying he never preached dual covenant he is right, and adds to the subterfuge by not labeling the belief with that exact title. In fact, though, his is a nuanced “Two Covenant” view as his own words will confirm. His response to Goedelman, therefore,

closely resembles that of a seasoned politician.

But Hagee has, in his own words, affirmed and elucidated his view of some Jews having salvation without Christ and, in fact, the *Houston Chronicle* presented a nearly correct version of his position. In a six-page letter to former CRI researcher Erwin M. de Castro, dated Oct. 18, 1994, Hagee elaborated on his view that chapters 9 through 11 of Romans applies exclusively to Jews and no one else. In the letter, Hagee said unabashedly:

“Here is my position on the Jewish people... Fact One: God has not cast away the Jewish people. Fact Two: According to Romans 11:5 there are Jewish people (‘a remnant’) who have a spiritual relationship with God ‘at this present time... according to ‘the election of grace.’”¹³

Hagee went on to explain that the blindness of Jews in Romans 11:7-8 is only a blindness to the identity of the Messiah, to which he adds, “Paul calls the Jewish people chosen by the election of grace and not broken off in judgment (Romans 11:17) holy.”¹⁴

Hagee then, once again, nuances his position:

“If some of the branches are broken off, that clearly means there are some of the branches not broken off. If they are not broken off, they remain yet on the tree which means they have relationship to God by the election of grace.”¹⁵

Here, no matter what he labels it, Hagee commits to a modified “Dual Covenant” view.

On page five of his letter, Hagee repeats his assertion that the blindness of Israel is only as to the identity of the Messiah, not spiritual blindness associated with lack of salvation. However, Paul confirms that the veil of blindness on Jewish eyes can only be taken away in Christ when regenerated by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:14-18).

In his summation Hagee leaves no question at all as he states:

“There are Jewish people who have relationship with God right now according to the election of grace. (Romans 11:5) ... The Jewish people are judicially blinded to the identity of Messiah... **Question:** If God blinded the Jewish people to the identity of Jesus as Messiah, how could He send them to hell for not seeing what he had forbidden them to see? ... Inasmuch as God has blinded them to the identity of Messiah, *targeting the Jewish people for mass evangelism is fruitless.*”¹⁶

Hagee then concluded his response to de Castro and CRI with intimidation. If they did not represent his position properly, he threatened “an immediate lawsuit against CRI and all its principals.”¹⁷ It is shocking and sad that the high-profile Christian celebrities project not the power of the Lord but the power of their lawyers! Why would Hagee threaten to sue Christian brothers when he did not sue the secular *Houston Chronicle* that he says misrepresented him? Perhaps it is because the newspaper had the essence of Hagee’s belief right and in his own words.

Even more recent are the remarks Hagee made during an interview at the Christian Booksellers Association convention in July 1998. David Becker of the *Religion & Politics Digest* asked Hagee to comment as to his position that Jews do not need to be converted to Christianity. Hagee responded that:

“In Romans 10, Romans 11, Paul opens with a question, Has God forsaken Israel? And emphatically he says, ‘No!’ He asks the same question again in 11:11, Has God forsaken Israel? He says, ‘No!’ But the fact is he says that God has a remnant chosen by the election of grace, meaning that there are a group of Jewish people that have a relationship with God because of sovereign election. And he explains sovereign election in Romans 11. Many people understand sovereign election. Many people do not understand sovereign election. ... So he said, I have chosen

some of the remnant of Abraham who have, quote, a relationship with God by the election of grace. Some of them have stumbled over Jesus Christ because I have, Romans 11, judicially blinded them to the identity of Jesus Christ. Here’s the Christian dilemma. That if God has judicially blinded the Jews to whom Jesus Christ is, why are Christians berating them for not seeing it?”¹⁸

In short, Hagee believes that some Jews are not saved by the cross of Christ but by prior election and their pedigree in Abraham. There is a way of salvation in Christ and an election of grace for the Jew apart from Christ. No matter how you nuance it or define it, this is “Two Covenant” theology. This can be classified technically as a modified “Dual Covenant” idea regardless of what Hagee wants to call it or not call it. Hagee believes that two covenants are in force: A covenant of election for the Jew and a covenant of grace for the Gentile. This is an attack on the very Gospel as presented by Jesus and Paul, as we’ll see. And then what about half Jews or Jewish converts? Where do they stand?

CAN ZIONISM BE CHRISTIAN?

The idea that Jews do not need the Gospel or conversion is sometimes subsumed under the title, “Christian Zionism,” although the designation can simply mean Christians who support Israel. The term “Christian Zionism” ends up being like Silly Putty®. Each person makes what they wish out of it.

One must realize that the term Christian Zionist can cover a wide range of beliefs. Elwood McQuaid articulates the most benign and simplistic view this way:

“At its root, Zionism simply means a commitment to the inherent right of the Jewish people to have an internationally recognized homeland in the Middle East — the place referred to by Jews today as ‘Eretz Israel.’ Whether or not

people consciously utter the word about themselves, if they accept the concept of a biblically endorsed Jewish right to the land, they are Zionists.”¹⁹

But there was a so-called Christian Zionism (which said Jews do not need Jesus or the New Covenant), championed in the 1970s by Franklin Littell in his book, *The Crucifixion of the Jews*. Littell went so far as to classify any who do not see Israel as the suffering servant redeemed under the Old Covenant alone, guilty of “theological Antisemitism”²⁰ and “major sin.”²¹ And he labels dissenters of his view as nothing more than “heretics and apostates” and “illegitimate rather than authentic expressions of Christian preaching and teaching.”²² It is unfortunate that Littell was able to argue from the anti-semitic statements and ideas of Reformer Martin Luther.

Littell also summarized succinctly the core of this strain of Christian Zionism, reprinting the statement released by an ecumenical council in 1973. The pertinent sentences include:

“The singular grace of Jesus Christ does not abrogate the covenantal relationship of God with Israel (Romans 11:1-2). In Christ the Church shares in Israel’s election without superseding it.”²³

In a very strange twist, the man most responsible for popularizing the “Two Covenant” view (in the 1920s and 1930s) was a Jewish thinker and author named Franz Rosenzweig. Much like Hagee does today, Rosenzweig attempted to create a rationale for not evangelizing Jews while leaving intact the viability, authenticity and acceptability of both Judaism and Christianity. Predating postmodernism but in postmodern fashion, Rosenzweig argued that Jews had their own subjective truth inside Judaism and Christians had their own subjective truth in Christ. Both were right, according to Rosenzweig.

As well, Rosenzweig taught that Jewish blood inherently gave all Jews shelter under the Old Covenant (the New Covenant being only for Gen-

tiles), but John 1:12-13 asserts that only receiving Christ gives salvation and linkage to the family of God and that the salvation given is given to those "who were not born of blood. ... but of God."

Rosenzweig's ideas were a master stroke of accommodation, tolerance and ecumenicity but simply are not true to the New Testament. Arguments like Rosenzweig's, we must remember, appeared at least in germ form in the second century with Trypho and were soundly refuted by Justin Martyr.²⁴ Church history shows that even the first inklings of a double way of salvation were never tolerated by the Church. Early Christians only affirmed what they knew the Bible taught.

Nearly everyone who champions this "Two Covenant" idea since Rosenzweig, knowingly or unknowingly, repeats his arguments. In 1949, Rosenzweig's "Two Covenant" view was seriously demolished by Jakob Jocz in his book, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ*.²⁵

Jocz was astute in pointing out that election under the Old Covenant was national, whereas under the New Covenant in the age of grace election is *individual*. This is the key to understanding the "Two Covenant" error. Individual Jews and individual Gentiles must accept God's offer of salvation in Christ.

Jocz further explains:

"The profound difference between Paul and the Synagogue ultimately turned round the question of the meaning of 'Jew'. To Paul, a Jew is not defined by race or tradition, but by the moral qualities which link him spiritually to Abraham ... Israel to Paul is not defined in terms of race or colour, but faith."²⁶

George Foot Moore rightly observes, "For this national election Paul and the church substituted an individual election to eternal life, without regard to race or station."²⁷

This idea of not evangelizing Jews may be gaining some popularity

lately in the American Church. More recently, an organization calling itself Bridges for Peace, led the way drafting a pledge to not proselytize Jews and got 50 local Christian churches and groups ranging from Catholic to various mainstream Protestant denominations to sign on. The document was given to Israeli legislators.²⁸

YAHWEH'S DIVORCE

Conservative Bible scholars would agree that the Prophets of the Old Testament prophesied that there would be a rupture of the bond and a suspension of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel which would be *restored* in the "latter days." A careful and serious reading of the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Hosea (taking special note of Hosea 3:4-5, Isaiah 62:1-7, 65:16-25, 66:7-24 and Jeremiah 3:8-25, 30:8-24) shows this to be true.²⁹

Hagee grossly misinterprets Romans 11:25-26 (i.e., that all Israel *will* be saved) to mean, it seems, that *most* Jews are automatically saved. Historically (and most major commentaries will affirm this) these verses have been seen as a promise for a *future national restoration of the nation*. The words "will be" indicate future activity. The verse does not say "are saved" but "will be." This agrees with and is in keeping with the OT Prophets' visions and messages of a national interruption in the Covenant until the end times. When Jesus spoke of Israel's House being left desolate (Luke 13:35), He was addressing the period of interruption when Israel would be without a temple, without a sacrifice, without a priesthood and without a Covenant (Hosea 3:4-5).

Hagee has the Jewish people turning to the Messiah in a future day on pages 158-159 of his book, *Beginning of the End*. Given his views of an automatic salvation for some Jews under a Covenant of election, it is easy to see how he can teach that Jews come to an awareness of the Messiah rather than an acceptance, since they already have salvation. Hagee's view renders all evangelistic efforts to Jews as foolish and unnecessary.

Hagee must have missed the Book of Hebrews, which shows that all

Israel is to come under the New Covenant (Heb. 8:6-12) because the Old Covenant was obsolete and ready to vanish (Heb. 8:13). A reading of Paul's letter to the Galatians will quickly silence any ideas that salvation can be obtained by anyone on the basis of links to Law or Abraham. The first eleven chapters of Romans also establishes the same truth.

To further scripturally offset any idea that association or connection to Abraham automatically saves, Paul addresses his Jewish audience completely from that perspective and demolishes any thought that an Abrahamic link is all that is needed. In Acts 13:26 he rips the Abrahamic ground out from under them: "Men and brethren, *sons of the family of Abraham*, and those among you who fear God, to you the Word of this salvation has been sent." The "sons of Abraham" then reared up with anger and persecution, rejecting salvation (Acts 13:50-51).

The Puritans, taught on the basis of Romans 11, that the real *conversion* and *salvation* of the Jews (*en masse* as a nation) was prophesied and to be expected in relationship to the return of Jesus. They were clear and unequivocal in their teachings.³⁰

Professor of biblical theology, Manfred Brauch, explains the prevailing view of Romans 11:25:

"Within this overarching content of the mystery which Paul proclaims is a more specific component. Namely, that the 'hardening which has come upon part of Israel' (Romans 11:25) is limited not only in extent, but also with regard to time: its rejection will last only 'until the fullness of the Gentiles comes.' This completion of God's purpose among the Gentiles leads then to the contemplation of that same redemptive purpose for Israel (Romans 11:12), in that 'all Israel will be saved' (Romans 11:26). Commentators are agreed that 'all Israel' means Israel 'as a whole,' as a historical people who have a unique and particular identity,

not necessarily including every individual Israelite. Support for this way of understanding the phrase 'all Israel' comes from a rabbinic tract (Sanhedrin X, 1), where the statement 'all Israelites have a share in the world to come' is immediately qualified by a list of exceptions, such as the Sadducees, heretics, magicians, and so on. The salvation of Israel is comprehensive, but not all-inclusive. In our text, just as 'the fullness of the Gentiles' does not mean that each individual Gentile will 'believe in his heart and confess with his lips' (Romans 10:10), so the 'fullness of Israel' cannot mean every individual Jew."³¹

Brauch continues:

"While in 11:25-26 the present 'part of Israel' which is hardened is contrasted with 'all Israel' which will be saved in the future, it is clear that 'all Israel' denotes both the already-saved remnant and yet-to-be-saved 'rest' (Romans 11:7). What is also clear from the whole thrust of the discussion in Romans 9-11 is that God's purposes for the salvation of Israel will be realized *in no other way and by no other means than through the preaching of the gospel and the response of faith. It is that preaching and that response which will lead to 'life from the dead'* (Romans 11:15), *clearly a reference to the eschatological event of the resurrection which will be preceded by the 'completion of Israel'* (Romans 11:26) as the last stage in the process initiated by the death and resurrection of Jesus."³²

Others, like Dwight Pentecost, spell out this eschatological expectation:

"God is then dealing with the nation with whom He has not dealt since their rejection of their Messiah. It should be further noted that the final removal of blindness, that is the spiritual blindness to which they are yet heir, will not be accomplished

until the second advent of Christ (Romans 11:26-27). The removal of the judicial blindness permits Israel to hear the good news of the kingdom (Matt. 24:14) that is proclaimed in that day in order that they might be saved, both individually and nationally."³³

John Phillips affirms:

"'All Israel,' of course, does not refer to all the Jews who have ever lived, but to all those alive at the end of the great tribulation. Paul sees in the return of Christ a Christological guarantee that God will restore Israel."³⁴

The great Lutheran theologian, Anders Nygren, upheld this same view:

"God's promises to the fathers always stand fast. They will have a glorious fulfillment, when all Israel is again accepted."³⁵

This future salvation and hope for the Jewish nation is expressed in Norman Harrison's, *His Salvation As Set Forth In The Book Of Romans*:

"It waits upon Israel's blindness being brought to an end. How is it to be? It ends with the coming of Israel's 'Deliverer'. His coming will mean 'all Israel saved' — the nation collectively, rather than the individual Jew as is now the case under the Gospel."³⁶

The great English divine, W.H. Griffith Thomas, spoke of the restoration of Israel and Romans 11:25-26 this way:

"'All Israel' does not necessarily mean every individual Israelite, but the whole nation, a future national conversion, as distinct from the present conversion of individuals."³⁷

Writing on Romans 11:25-26, F.F. Bruce offers this:

"When the full tale of believing Gentiles was achieved — a consummation which Paul's own apostleship was bringing nearer — then *all* Israel, not a faithful remnant but the nation as a

whole, would see the salvation of God. ... The new covenant will not be complete until it embraces the people of the old covenant. Temporarily alienated for the advantage of the Gentiles, they are eternally the objects of God's electing love because His promises, once made to the patriarchs, can never be revoked."³⁸

GOD — A RESPECTER OF PERSONS

Hagee's erroneous view — that Jews are saved just because they are connected to Abraham — is not new with him as has been clearly shown.

We must be careful to remember that even the Old Testament Jew was not saved on the basis of pedigree or keeping the Law (which he could not do fully anyway), or connection to Abraham but on the basis of the lamb, the sacrificial system, atonement, the mediating priesthood and faith. Jesus affirmed that it was not Abrahamic pedigree alone but faith in God's Messiah (John 8:39-59) that would bring salvation. Israel does not have a priesthood or even a sacrificial system to point to today but the Christian has all those things fully wrapped up in Christ as his Prophet, Priest and King, as the Book of Hebrews emphasizes.

Hagee in a sense separates Abrahamic pedigree and election from the Law, which he cannot do. All of Abraham's descendants were inextricably bound up in the Law. Being a descendant of Abraham and having a connection to the Law and the Old Covenant were all of one piece. Even an elementary student of the Bible would know that pedigree and the Law cannot save.

Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, in their work, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, state:

"If one therefore were to set out to keep the spirit of the Old Testament law, he or she would surely fail eventually. No human being can please God consistently in light of such high, comprehensive standards (cf. Ro-

mans 8:1-11). ... *The Law shows us how impossible it is to please God on our own.* ... In terms of its ability to provide eternal life and true righteousness before God, the Law was quite inadequate. It was not designed for such purposes. Anyone who tried to gain salvation and acceptance by God exclusively through the Law was bound to fail, since the Law was ultimately unkeepable — at least one of its rules was bound to be broken sometime during one's life (Romans 2:17-27; 3:20). And breaking even one law makes one, by definition, a 'lawbreaker' (cf. James 2:10)."³⁹

The belief that some can be saved without an acceptance of and relationship with Christ comes in various forms. The particular slant of Hagee is not only unfaithful to the New Testament but heretical. It abandons the Jew to never hearing the Gospel. It is a subtle but real form of anti-Semitism because it puts a gag order on any evangelist and robs the Jew of the Good News. It is Hagee who is in fact a closet anti-Semite.

MIDNIGHT CALL WON'T CALL ISRAELIS

Hagee's view, with a slight twist, was promoted during the 1980s by Wim Malgo, editor of the magazine *The Midnight Call*. In a letter to *The Jerusalem Post*, Malgo assured the newspaper's readers:

"...we strongly reject any missionary work in Israel itself, since it is our belief that Israel is God's chosen people, and therefore in the hands of God. Our rejection of missionary work in Israel stems also from our belief that Israel is a nation which has had to endure so much, and should be shown love and understanding."⁴⁰

It seems that Malgo's brand of the "Two Covenant" idea saw Jews in Israel as automatically saved.

This was confirmed in a Sept. 20, 1983, letter to this writer by *Midnight*

Call spokesman Arno Froese, which suggested that missionary activity to Jews ended with Paul and that the Great Commission was only for Gentiles. Froese then emphatically added: "To summarize, we, as Gentile Christians, have no Biblical basis to go to Israel and preach the Gospel there." We will see Froese's statement to be false.

Others confirmed that missionary work in Israel was out. The International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, followed suit. It must be asked whether a group can really call itself Christian when it abandons the Gospel and refuses to preach it to any people for any reason.

THE CHURCH THAT NEVER WAS

If the early Church had taken this view that Jews are saved just by being Jews there would have been no Christians in Jerusalem, Judea or Samaria. When Paul was converted, God would have violated His own plan. Under this view Jesus would not have had Apostles and there would not be a Church today. These logical results seem to escape the purveyors of this form of Christian Zionism, which is neither Christian or Zionist.

The term Zionism was coined by Nathan Birnbaum on April 1, 1890, and denoted the movement whose goal was the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel. With the establishment of the national-political Zionist party the term was extended to express a political orientation toward Israel rather than the prevailing 19th century philanthropic approach.⁴¹

In 1911, David Baron noted:

"Zionism is strictly national, but, for the greater part, holds itself just as aloof from the religious ceremonies of Judaism as do the liberal-thinking Jews."⁴²

Early on, Zionism was not connected to orthodox Judaism or religion at all but to the secular politicking of Theodore Herzl. So-called religious Zionism exists in Israel today and is promoted by groups like Ateret

Cohanim, Hai Vekayam, the National Religious Party and other ultra orthodox societies.⁴³ It can really be asked whether anything Christian could or should be called Zionist in any sense.

Because the term Christian Zionism is so confusing and can mean anything from supporting tourism to Israel or general support for the State of Israel to the extremes of Hagee, those sympathetic to Israel should coin another term so as to not get linked with the quasi-universalistic views of Malgo, Hagee and others. So-called Christian Zionism represents a wide spectrum of divergent views and ideas as we have seen.

CORRUPT ROOTS AND STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

Both Hagee and Malgo might be shocked to know the company they are keeping. "An early American Christian Zionist" was none other than Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society!⁴⁴

Russell may have very well gotten some of his ideas from the anti-Trinitarian founder of the Christadelphian cult, John Thomas, as well as the Adventists and Mormons.

John Thomas originally from England settled in Brooklyn, N.Y., (1830) and published a colossal tome in 1849 titled, *Elpis Israel*, advocating ideas similar to those of Russell.⁴⁵

Those familiar with the seeds of Russell's cultic beliefs know that he taught that 1874 marked the return or "Second Presence" of Jesus Christ. However, he also argued that 1878 was "a decisive year in Jewish history"⁴⁶ and that a period of automatic mercy and a return of grace began for the orthodox Jews. He maintained that the Abrahamic Covenant automatically provided redemption for them. The orthodox Jews would enjoy millennial favors before all others.⁴⁷

Amazingly Russell addressed Jewish gatherings in the United States and abroad to tell his audiences of the prophecies of the Jewish return to

Palestine and of the future Jewish government and State.⁴⁸ His strong and oft-repeated anti-missionary stance opened the doors to Jewish audiences in other countries as well.

Russell was simply an astute observer of the trends of the time. There were strong outpourings of favor out of Britain during this period, both from the government and in popular writings vigorously advocating Jewish return to Palestine and even Jewish statehood.

Many premillennial Christian writers, such as Chicago businessman W.E. Blackstone, author of the 1878 best-seller, *Jesus Is Coming*, were conveying the same theme of Christ's return though never suggesting Jews should not be evangelized. Surely Russell knew of Oliphant, Hechler and Herzl, who were at center stage of his world. Russell, as evident from his Adventist roots, was a borrower of current ideas, not a prophet.

The Adventists in the 1800s were supporting Zionist ideas as well as Jewish immigration and settlements, coupled with evangelism. Adventist Clorinda Minor developed a settlement outside of Jaffa in 1849, calling it Mount Hope and detailed the events in her book, *Meshullam*.⁴⁹ Mormons as well were supporting these ideas as early as 1841.⁵⁰

The basic idea of Jewish return and statehood was not new when Russell began promoting it, just the twist on the 1878 "redemption" date. So, in fact, Hagee's ideas in various forms, have been floating around for over a century and have been attached to major heretical cults. There really is nothing new under the sun.

Russell's views of automatic Jewish redemption and a Jewish homeland were abandoned by his successor, Joseph Rutherford, in 1932 and the present day Jehovah's Witnesses are in effect anti-Israel, seeing themselves as a replacement and the real heirs to Israel's promises.⁵¹ The replacement idea prevailed in the Middle Ages and was a seedbed for Jewish antag-

onism and persecution by the Roman Catholic Church.

It is extremely interesting that Malgo's group, as well as the International Christian Embassy, refers to Isaiah 40:1-2, ("Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people; speak comfortably to Jerusalem") and use it to say that we are to only speak a message of comfort to Israel. These are the very verses and the very rationale of Russell.⁵² Russell's own writings affirm the words of David Horowitz and show Russell's usage of Isaiah 40:1-2.⁵³

All in all, Russell's ideas would become somewhat dormant until re-fashioned and presented from a slightly different perspective and with a different twist by Franz Rosenzweig.

THE MESSAGE OF ROMANS

In Romans 10:1 Paul could not have been more clear or more emphatic when he stated: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel, is that they might be saved." Paul was consistent with the Great Commission, knowing that *every creature* needed to hear the preaching of the Gospel *until the end of the age* (Matthew 28:18-20). There is no hint in the Bible that we would only need to preach to some until 1878 as Russell alleged. Gospel preaching is to *all, until the end of the age*.

Paul established that everyone universally was under the condemnation of sin and in need of a Savior. Listen to Paul's clear words: "For there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:22-23).

Paul affirmed that everyone needed salvation through faith in Jesus Christ simply because everyone was guilty and lost in sin: "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and the world may become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19).

Paul affirms that both Jew and Gentile equally need faith in Christ to

be saved: "Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. Since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith" (Romans 3:29-30).

To create one way of salvation for Gentiles and another way for others is a gross distortion and misunderstanding of the Gospel and a terrible ignorance of the teachings of Romans on salvation.

Again Paul's teaching is clear: "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they (Jew and Greek) call on Him whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:12-14).

How can Hagee state and justify that Romans 9, 10 and 11, "exclusively concerns the Jews"?⁵⁴

Commenting on the universal need for mercy (and Romans 11:32), Dr. Harry Ironside says: "Israel will obtain mercy when they turn back in faith to God. Whether Jew or Gentile, all alike are saved on the same principle."⁵⁵

Harold Sevens, in his article titled, "Christian Zionism's Candy-Coated Gospel," reminds us:

"We as believers are not called to wait for God to fulfill His great eschatological program of redemption. We are called to be participants in that program. We are called to be actively involved in evangelism, in bringing the Gospel, the Good News of salvation, to Jew and Gentile alike. We are commissioned and empowered by a risen Lord to speak the truth in love."⁵⁶

Christian organizations and ministries like Friends of Israel, Chosen People, Jews for Jesus and others show us that we can love Jews, love

Israel and be sympathetic to the Jewish State and still bring the Good News of Christ to the Jewish people. Sharing the Gospel after all is the greatest way to love anyone.

The Christian Zionism and ethnic salvation of Hagee and others must be soundly refuted and rejected. It is an old heresy, a kind of select quasi-universalism. It is a insidious form of anti-Semitism which refuses to offer others, God's best in Christ, and leaves them to a futile and vain effort to establish their own righteousness and thus miss the righteousness of Jesus Christ offered to them in the Gospel (Romans 10:1-3). It is a denial of Christ's last and Great Commission to take the Gospel to *everyone* until the end of the age. It is a blatantly false gospel of salvation by race, not by grace; salvation by blood not by belief; salvation by the fortune of birth, not faith in the only Redeemer.

Jacob Jocz offers this fitting conclusion:

"God is no respecter of persons. Before Him, the Holy One, men stand not as *Jews* and Gentiles but as sinners who are in need of grace. Jesus the prophet may be speaking to the Gentiles; but Jesus the Son of God speaks to mankind. Jesus the martyr may be *appealing* to some and not to others; but Jesus the Lamb of God challenges the whole human race. God's word is *one* word, and God's way is *one* if it is *the* way of God."⁵⁷

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