

Roots in Ripon

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Chuck Roots

27 February 2017

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The Apple of God's Eye

The despicableness of anti-Semitism raises its ugly head today in the news just as it has in days gone by. The fearfulness of this hatred is creeping back into societies around the world. Yes, even right here in America.

In the nightly news, we are being shown pictures of Jewish cemeteries around America being vandalized. Tombstones are toppled over by the score. Row upon row of granite markers lie in broken pieces where a loved one was laid to rest.

Add to this a rash of more than 30 bomb threats on Jewish Community Centers across our nation, and you have a real problem with anti-Semitism. Such hatred for Jews has occurred far too often throughout history. We, as Americans, would be foolish to believe that the Holocaust couldn't happen again; and certainly not in America!

Have we forgotten about the death camps of 75 years ago in Auschwitz (Poland), Belzec (Poland), Bergen-Belsen (Germany), Buchenwald (Germany), Chelmno (Poland), Dachau (Germany), Dora-Mittelbau (Germany), Flossenburg (Germany), Gross-Rosen (Poland), Janowska (Ukraine), Kaiserwald (Latvia), Majdanek (Poland), Mauthausen (Austria), Natzweiler-Struthof (France), Neuengamme (Germany), Oranienburg (Germany), Plaszow (Poland), Ravensbruck (Germany), Sachsenhausen (Germany), Sobibor (Poland), Stutthof (Poland), Terezin (Czech Republic), Treblinka (Poland), and Westerbork (Netherlands)? And these are only the major camps where Jews were herded to their deaths like cattle in ovens, gas chambers, "scientific experimentations", firing squads, and so forth. Whatever heinous ways the mind of depraved men could conger up was used against the Jews. And just for good measure, other societal misfits were thrown in, such as those with Downs Syndrome, the mentally retarded, Gypsies, and anyone else who did not fit the Nazi model of the Aryan Race.

Let's be clear about some things if we're going to understand the terms. The Aryan Race, as touted by Hitler's Third Reich (a.k.a., Nazis), believed the Aryan Race was a pure race of Nordic people with predominantly blue eyes and blonde hair. In this, Hitler was mistaken, as in reality, the peoples who made up the Aryan Race lived in the region of India through Iran. To explain the distortion of meaning for Aryan would take too much time in this article. Suffice it to say, Hitler envisioned a "noble" race that would conquer and subdue (eliminate) all others.

What, then, does anti-Semitism mean? *"Anti-Semitism is hostility, prejudice, or discrimination against Jews. A person who holds such positions is called an anti-Semite. Anti-Semitism is generally considered to be a form of racism."*

A Semite is someone from the people group or culture of Semitic peoples who speak or spoke Semitic languages (predominantly Jews and Arabs). The name Semite is derived from Shem, one of the three sons of Noah.

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Here's where things get dicey. If the God of the Bible is indeed the true God of the universe as we are assured in Scripture, then we clearly understand that God has had a very significant relationship with the Jews. There is great controversy as to whether that relationship is still in effect. I, for one, believe that it is. And as Corrie ten Boom's father said in the movie, *The Hiding Place*, "*They (the Nazis) have touched the apple of God's eye (the Jews).*" If the Jews are still a prime focus for God, and Christians are enfolded into God's eternal family through the blood of Jesus Christ, then it is truly unwise for anyone to strike a blow against the Jewish people (Zechariah 2:8 says: "*For whoever touches you touches the apple of God's eye.*").

Now, for those of you who may think I'm theologically granting a free pass into heaven for the Jews, rest assured, Jews, too, must recognize Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be willing to bow the knee to him. Jesus' words are as true today as when he spoke them 2000 years ago, "*No one comes to God the Father except through me.*"

In my study of Scripture over the last 40 or more years I have yet to see where God has withdrawn his hand from the Jews in rejection. In fact, I believe the Bible tells us that in the period called the End Times, many Jews will have their spiritual eyes opened and see that God intended for them to embrace Jesus as their Savior along with the rest of the world.

President George Washington, in office little over a year, in August of 1790, visited the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, the oldest synagogue in America (It was my pleasure to have visited this place of worship in 1984). In returning to Philadelphia, Washington penned a letter of thanks. The letter "is small in size, but its impact on American life is immense. In 340 well-chosen words, the letter reassures those who had fled religious tyranny that life in their new nation would be different, that religious "toleration" would give way to religious liberty, and that the government would not interfere with individuals in matters of conscience and belief." Quoting the Bible's Old Testament, Washington writes, "*Everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid.*" He continues, "*For happily the Government of the United States gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.*" (tourosynagogue.org)

In recent days, I have been greatly encouraged with the news from the Trump administration that the United States Embassy in Israel is to be relocated from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. This is a profound statement to the rest of the world that the United States is taking its partnership with Israel seriously again.

America! We must offer every protection for all Americans, and at this time in particular, the Jews. If we stand with them, I believe God will be pleased, and will continue to bless America.