

## Comments on John Hagee's "In Defence of Israel"

by Pastor Carl Wood

When visiting the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, he sees an orthodox Jewish man praying and thinks, "Here we are at the same holy place, praying to the same God, believing the same Scriptures. And yet I know nothing about this man or his faith." {13} Hagee tells his wife, "I believe the Lord wants me to do everything in my power to bring Christians and Jews together." {14} These statements reveal a syncretism methodology rather than salvation methodology that is at the heart of Hagee's efforts. The only true God-honoring unity will be in Christ (Rom 12:5). Diminishing the differences will only delay this fusion.

The establishing of Night to Honor Israel events was done on a nonconversionary basis. {46} While it is true that every encounter we have a lost person does not have to contain a formal presentation of the Gospel, it is misdirected methodology to approach ministry to the lost with restraint towards regeneration.

Hagee reveals a significant flaw in his theology by explaining how he interprets Romans 9-11. He believes that "the message of Romans 9-11 is God's position regarding national Israel and is intended **exclusively for the Jewish people.**" {56 emphasis mine} This is simply incorrect. These three chapters have relevance to all the redeemed (9:24; 10:12; 11:11). There is definitely significant portions of this text that have primary reference to the Jewish people, but it is a fallacy to assert a Jewish exclusiveness. Rom. 11:19 does not support a permanent replacement theology (God is done with the Jews and the church has replaced them). God will graft them in again when they come to personal faith in Jesus Christ (23, 24). Jesus was talking to a Jewish audience when he referred to Himself as the Vine and believers as the branches. (John 15:4-8)

"Judaism does not need Christianity to explain its existence while Christianity cannot define its existence without Judaism." {62} This

statement is true in what it states but not in what it implies. A dichotomy between the two religions is being raised that distorts both. The word ‘existence’ is the problem. In reality, Judaism has no end apart from Christianity. God’s intention from the beginning for the Jews was redemption through Christ. This is why Paul always began his mission work in a new town by going to the synagogue. The Judaism that God intended to be flourishing following the resurrection of Christ does need Christianity to explain its existence.

Hagee says, “One of those deadly New Testament myths is that the Jews killed Jesus, yet no justification can be found in the New Testament to support this lie.” {125} Peter was quite direct in Acts 2:22-23 “Ye men of Israel (Jews)...Jesus of Nazareth...ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” This is not to suggest that the Jews should therefore be exterminated. This was an argument used by the Nazis. It was the strong preaching of Peter against their sin that led to conversion of thousands that day. If we gloss over the truth, we stymie conviction. If we stymie conviction, we render repentance impotent.

Hagee argues that Caiaphas the chief priest was the driving force in the crucifixion of Jesus. That is true. However, Hagee declares that he was appointed by Rome and therefore did not represent the Jewish people. However, it was the Jewish populous that cried for His crucifixion and the Roman official, Pilate, who sought to release Jesus. {127}

There is no biblical evidence that the catalyst to stir the crowd was Jesus’ refusal to endorse the teaching of “divorce for every cause.” {129}

In a video promoting his new book, Hagee makes the following claims: “In Defense of Israel will shake Christian theology. It scripturally proves that the Jewish people as a whole did not reject Jesus as Messiah. It will also prove that Jesus did not come to earth to be the Messiah. It will prove that there was a Calvary conspiracy between Rome, the high priest, and Herod to execute Jesus as an insurrectionist too dangerous to live. Since Jesus refused by word and deed to claim to be the Messiah,

how can the Jews be blamed for rejecting what was never offered? Read this shocking exposè, In Defense of Israel.”

“Jesus refused to drink the Messiah’s cup... In refusing to drink the cup, Jesus rejected to the last detail the role of Messiah in word or deed. The Jews did not reject Jesus as Messiah; it was Jesus who rejected the Jewish desire for him to be their Messiah” {144, 145, emphasis his}

Hagee earlier states, “He refused to be their Messiah, choosing instead to be the Savior of the world.” {143} This is not a true statement. Jesus was and is the Jewish Messiah which is tantamount to being the Savior of the world. The problem was with the presumption of the Jews in how the Messiah would come. To be fair, we must acknowledge the first and second comings of Christ are often taught in the Old Testament in such a way that makes it difficult to distinguish the nature of the two advents.

Whether intentional or not, by asking “how can the Jews be blamed for rejecting what was never offered?”, Hagee is implying that the Jews are not accountable for a conscience toward Christ. What then is meant by (John 1:11) “He came unto his own, and his own received him not”? Was he not ministering in their midst with signs and wonders for several years? There were those who believed (Jn 7:31), but there were always those who chose not to believe (Jn 9:18). It is true that the Jews did not fully comprehend the magnitude of their deed, but why would Jesus pray for their forgiveness if they were not still accountable for their actions? (Lk 23:34).

---

Below we have John Hagee from his own JHM Magazine Summer 2002 edition, which is still available at his John Hagee Ministries website. What he will say below is completely unacceptable for a Christian pastor because Hagee is literally denying Jewish people an opportunity to hear the genuine Gospel of Jesus Christ:

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. You [of Jewish decent] do not. Let’s accept that difference and go forward. I say to my Orthodox

Jewish friends, when we're standing on the streets of Jerusalem and the Messiah is coming down the road, one of us has a big theological adjustment to make. Until then, let's work in common cause for the State of Israel to help them secure their freedom, self-determination, and hope that Zion shall live forever.

BBC REPORTER 1: And conversion before the coming of the Messiah is not on your agenda?

PASTOR HAGEE: If a Jewish person asks me about what it requires to be a Christian, I'm delighted to tell them. But I do not target Jewish people for salvation.

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."