



BROADCAST TALKS

A Christian Response to Anti-Semitism

by Darrell Bock, Randy Newman, and Tom Tarrants



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The following is adapted from *A Christian Response to Anti-Semitism: A Panel Discussion with Darrell Bock, Randy Newman, and Tom Tarrants*, hosted by Joel Woodruff, President of the C.S. Lewis Institute. The discussion was prerecorded on December 15, 2023, and broadcast as a virtual event on January 19, 2024.

BROADCAST TALKS presents ideas to cultivate Christ-like thinking and living. Each issue features a transcription of a talk presented at an event of the C.S. Lewis Institute.



Joel Woodruff: The topic for our panel discussion, “A Christian Response to Anti-Semitism,” is one I had hoped we’d never need to address. It’s a challenging and difficult topic to discuss, especially given the current world in which we live. Today the media can take anything and everything and make it a political issue and use it to divide us rather than unify us. As well, the virtue of civility and the ability to agree to disagree seems almost nonexistent in a cancel culture. Words are taken out of context and often given new definitions to undermine or exaggerate the other side’s position. All that being said, we believe it is our Christian duty to do our best to provide a thoughtful, biblical, and Christian response to the sin of anti-Semitism, which has reared its ugly head again in our world. Although people may try to interpret our words politically, we’re not here to discuss politics or even public policy. We’ll not be getting into the current situation regarding Israel and Hamas, controversies on university campuses, or other contemporary issues. We will, however, regardless of your political leanings, encourage you to pray for all parties involved in conflicts around the world. And that is a command given to us by our Lord.

The Panel Discussion

Joel Woodruff: To address this topic, it would be good to know what we mean by the term: How would you define anti-Semitism?

Darrell Bock: I'll reference the definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Anti-Semitism is hostility, prejudice, or discrimination against Jewish people; it's a form of racism. It is usually directed against individuals, property, Jewish communities, and/or religious facilities. It involves a certain perception of Jewish people leading to the hatred of the Jewish people, and it tends to accuse Jewish people of devious means to achieve malevolent ends, so it's a combination of religious hatred and cultural disdain.

Randy Newman: I would like to add, since we're saying this is a Christian response, that I see a supernatural element to anti-Semitism. It's like other racisms and prejudices, and yet there's an extremity to it that comes across as irrational and almost crazy. As Christians, we recognize there is a devil, and he injects his unique form of insanity into this. So there's an intensity to it. There seems to be a spiritual component. We'll explore that more later on, but at this early stage, we want to acknowledge there's a flavor to it that has demonic overtones.

Joel Woodruff: You talked, Randy, about this element of intensity. Currently, the Jewish people represent only 0.2 percent of all the world's population, a relatively small group when you compare it to other people groups. That's quite interesting when talking about the intensity of it, coming against such a small group of people. As well, there are more than fifty-one Muslim majority nations, ninety-six secular nations that have a wide variety of religions represented, and only one Jewish nation, the State of Israel. So for such a small people group, yes, they do receive a disproportionate amount of focus in the news. One might ask, why is this, and what makes a person Jewish? Maybe that's a good place to start. Who is Jewish? How do you become a Jewish person?

Randy Newman: I want to begin by saying I'm one of those Jewish people. Coming out of a Jewish background, raised in a Jewish family, attending synagogue, I came to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Who is a Jewish person, who is a Jew? – it's rather complex and debated. But I think it's fair to say that a person is Jewish if they are a physical

descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Darrell Bock: I'm also of Jewish background. Both of my parents were Jewish, but I didn't know I was Jewish until I was thirteen. Our family was isolated when my parents decided they were no longer going to be practicing Jews. Then one day my uncle showed up with these three kids, and they talked about going to synagogue. I didn't know much theology, but I knew a synagogue wasn't a church. I asked my family, "What's going on here?" And they told me our family background. A Jewish person, as Randy says, is someone who is descended from what we might affectionately call in biblical terms the patriarchs. There are a lot of what are called secular Jews. So they're descended from Abraham, but they aren't necessarily going to synagogue on a regular basis. But even some secular Jews engage in some practices that are particularly Jewish, related to the background of their faith. So it's kind of a mixture of both descent and, in some cases, I'll say ethical and/or religious orientation that is rooted in Jewish practice.

Joel Woodruff: That's helpful. So this particular discussion is looking at a Christian response to anti-Semitism. What ties does the Christian faith have to the Jewish people?

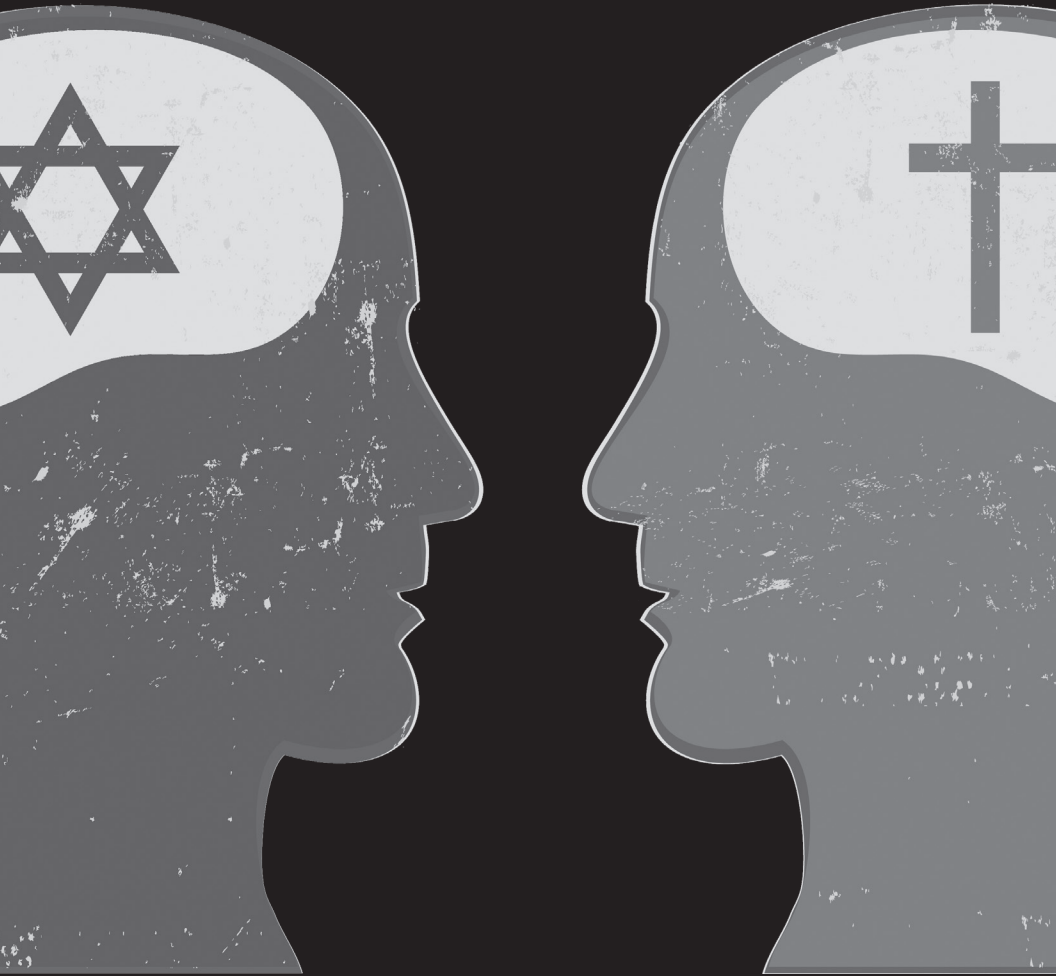
Darrell Bock: The simplest answer to that question is to just think through what we call the Old Testament. But of course, it wasn't called an Old Testament until there was a New Testament and you put Jesus in that mix. There was no New Testament when Jesus came. There was only what we call the Old Testament, which is actually the Hebrew Scripture. I made that more complicated than it's supposed to be, but basically, Jesus came to the people of Israel; He came to offer Himself as their Messiah. The roots, the ethics, the wisdom that comes out of the Hebrew Scriptures fed into and really forms a base. The promises made to the patriarchs, etc., are the base of what led into and became a part of the Christian faith. So we have much, maybe almost everything, to owe to the background of Judaism. Jesus Himself grew up in a Jewish context as

a child of Jews. His genealogies go back to Abraham, whether you read Matthew or Luke. So you can't understand most of the New Testament if you don't understand a little bit about Judaism of the first century. It's kind of everywhere in terms of background and influence.

Tom Tarrants: A lot of times people think of Jesus as being the first Christian. But Jesus wasn't a Christian. He was a Jew, as were all the apostles. And the Scriptures they read, the early church read, was the Hebrew Bible. We have so much legacy from the Hebrew Bible and the Jewish people. We're grafted on. Gentiles are grafted on. We need to bear that in mind, but most of us don't think of it that way. It's helpful to get our minds oriented around biblical perspective instead of cultural ideas.

Randy Newman: So how is the Christian faith tied to the Jewish people? I just want to point out that God chose the nation of Israel to be the object of His plan—that they would be a light to the Gentiles. So there's God's choosing, not because they were worthy of it, not because they were sinless or perfect or even better. God chose them because God chose them. And then they are a light to the Gentiles of a message that none of us is worthy to be chosen or called by God. Yet that's the connection we have to this God. It's by grace. So a Christian response to anti-Semitism is: We're not saying Jewish people are better than others or more important. But they do have a distinct and unique role in God's plan. We may differ about how that plays out in the future, but I think all Christians have to look to the Scriptures and say God chose the Jewish people, He has a unique plan for them, and there will be a role they play in the future also, in God's plan. All that to say, we shouldn't be surprised if the devil wants to attack that. If they have a unique place in God's plan, they have a unique place in the devil's plan as well.

Darrell Bock: So let me flip this a bit and say it this way: Imagine what our world would be like if we didn't have the Psalms, Proverbs, the teaching of the prophets. You start to pull out what's in the Hebrew Scripture and say, if that wasn't part of our world, what would fill that



vacuum? Or say it the other way around. Because we have those things, our world has had certain perspectives that have driven much of the world's thinking and have set the ethical and relational boundaries for people over the centuries. And that wisdom, that worship, that focus on the fact that there is one God—it was unique at the time of Judaism. All these features that have flooded the thinking of the world—and the world is better off for it.

Joel Woodruff: That's a powerful reminder: ten commandments in law, basic law, and all the things that many people take for granted coming out of the Jews and their story in Scripture. Since we're talking about Scripture, it's my understanding that the history of anti-Semitism actually can be found first in the Bible. Can you share your understanding of how anti-Semitism began, looking at the Hebrew Scriptures? What can we learn from those particular examples and passages?

Randy Newman: Although it's not the first place it shows up, the book of Esther relates this remarkable display of hatred, I mean to the point of Haman wanting to annihilate all the Jewish people and making a pretty elaborate plan to do so.

Darrell Bock: I'll start in the Exodus, with Egypt making Israel nothing but a group of slaves. That's a good starting point. You move outside the Scripture, you've got the period of the Maccabees and the Maccabean War, which was Antiochus Epiphanes's attempt to, I would say, placate Judaism and remove her religious distinctives. They tried to outlaw the Torah. They wanted to confiscate the Hebrew Scripture of the time. That kind of thing. In fact, had Judaism not survived the Maccabean War, Judaism might not exist today. That's why they celebrate Hanukkah. Then, of course, most people are familiar with the Holocaust, the most recent grand example of anti-Semitism. And then there have been times in between, particularly in Spain and in other parts of the world, where the Jews were persecuted for being the murderers of Christ . . . So it's literally run through history. It's centuries old.

Joel Woodruff: What would you say, looking at the biblical history, from the Exodus all the way through early New Testament period, what would be the traits— what did anti-Semitism look like?

Darrell Bock: I think the starting point for it was that Israel had the only monotheistic religion in the world. With it came a series of distinctive practices. They had a different diet. They only worshipped at one temple. They had laws of purity, etc. There was just a whole cultural conglomeration of things that made them different, that made them “other.” That distinctiveness—“This is a part of who we are. This is our identity. This is how we worship our God”—marked them out as separate from everybody else, and that produced a reaction, to try to remove those distinctions. There’s a really interesting sociological principle at work here: how a controlling government deals with a culture that’s different from its own. There were two policies in the ancient world. The Babylonians tried to assimilate everyone and make everyone as Babylonian as they could possibly be. The Persians said, “You can have your religion, your practices, and be distinctive, as long as you don’t infringe on the rights of the state.” So those two forms of dealing with Judaism exist in the Old Testament. This is why, generally speaking, a ruler like Cyrus comes off much more positively than the rulers of Babylon, because Cyrus gave Judaism and Jews the room to be Jewish. The Persians didn’t try to impose an assimilation that would wipe out a people’s distinctives.

Randy Newman: I’d like to add: The Jewish people had monotheism and with that came these entailments of morality. So adultery is wrong, and all sorts of things are wrong, and in a culture that doesn’t want to have an authority telling them what’s right and what’s wrong, there’s a lot of rebellion against it. In John 3, Jesus talks about light coming in, but darkness rejected it, because people love the darkness. And that’s an important piece for us to remember, that there’s this fallen human nature that loves darkness, that loves rebellion, that loves sin, and so any people that say “no, this is right, and this is wrong” are going to be persecuted.

That is why Jews and Christians today are persecuted.

Darrell Bock: To piggyback on that, the idea of holiness and the morality that comes with it is extremely important. Contrast that with the religious environment of Israel's neighbors, who had gods, but the gods were a lot like humans. They behaved like humans. They made, if I can say this, good and bad choices as humans do. There wasn't this standard of holiness that came with the faith that was guiding and directing people. The gods were as capricious as the worshipers were. So that sets a tone for the way society lives and responds. We have a variation of that today. We don't necessarily have a lot of gods and thinking about the way gods act, but we have a lot of independence from God that allows us to go in whatever direction we want. The core sin is this belief that we're independent from the Creator God and don't have a need for a relationship with Him. So as different as our times are from ancient times, they're not that different.

Joel Woodruff: Throughout the church history, many people have looked at the New Testament and it led to anti-Semitic ideas within the church. For instance, there's the accusation that the Jews killed Jesus. Could you address this idea that the New Testament is anti-Semitic? Where does that come from?

Darrell Bock: Again, the interesting observation here is, except for perhaps Luke, every writer in the New Testament is Jewish. And so this is Jews talking about themselves, about their own promises, their own commitments. We don't accuse Isaiah or Jeremiah of being anti-Semitic because they're critical of Israel. No. They're engaged in a prophetic critique of the nation. Now, there is a specific passage that often comes up in this conversation. It's in Matthew 27:25, when Jesus is being crucified and the crowd that chooses Jesus over Barabbas to be crucified says, "Let His blood be upon us and upon our children." That is seen as a curse that Jewish people who rejected Jesus put on themselves as a result of their choice of sending Jesus to the cross. Then that text was used for a long time in inappropriate ways to blame the Jewish people

as a whole for the crucifixion of Jesus and then to respond to Jewish people sometimes in hostility and violence. That's part of the history of anti-Semitism, particularly in European history. My response to that is that it's not so much a curse as it is a recognition of responsibility. We have made this choice. It's an expression of at least a group of people, not all Jews, but a group of Jews, who have rejected the idea that Jesus is the Messiah, and who say, "We will take the responsibility for ourselves for having made this decision." Sometimes that passage is very much misread. Then another group of texts that often come up out of John's Gospel refer generically to the Jews almost consistently as opponents to Jesus. That's sometimes said to be anti-Semitic. John's really talking about the Jewish leadership. Those are the people making the decisions all the way through. And so even though he uses a generic term, he's using it very specifically about a certain group. And we need to just remind ourselves, as has already been noted, that the early Christians of the first generation, almost without exception, were Jewish. We didn't get to the Gentile expansion and involvement in Christianity till the missions that went out, outside of Israel, into Gentile territory. So the very first generation of Christians was Jewish. Christianity didn't intentionally become a separate religion. It was forced to become separate because our apostles went into the synagogues and said, "Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises made to the patriarchs." And the bulk of Jewish people said, "No, that's not true," and so the apostles were forced to become separate. And the book of Acts tells the story of how that happened. The argument in Acts is, "We may look like the new boy on the block, but we're actually quite old. We're rooted in promises made to the patriarchs centuries ago." And in the ancient world, a religion had its value from its legacy and from its link and its history and its experience. It isn't like our world where the new thing is the best. So all those things go into this kind of conversation. The New Testament is not anti-Semitic. It is prophetic. It is self-critical. It's absolutely self-critical. But it's not anti-Semitic.

Randy Newman: Let me give a backdrop of friends of mine in high

school who gave me a copy of the New Testament to read. I did not want to touch that thing. My rabbi at my synagogue had made the case many, many times that the New Testament is an anti-Semitic book. And, tragically, some Christians have viewed it that way; Martin Luther said some really terrible things. I mean, there's a long history of really disgusting things, where people have used the New Testament to back up or give validity to anti-Semitism. There's a very, very painful book by Michael Brown called *Our Hands Are Stained with Blood*. It's difficult to read, but it's difficult to deny. So I was warned against reading the New Testament, but when I did finally read it, I thought, "This doesn't sound anti-Semitic. It sounds a lot like the Tanakh, the Hebrew Scriptures. It sounds very similar." And then I remember hearing someone say once, "Well, if the New Testament is anti-Semitic, the Old Testament is far worse." Like Darrell pointed out, the prophets! I mean, my goodness! They didn't mince words. They said some really, really terrible things about Jewish people who were not living the way God called them to live. I don't think it's fair to say that either one of them is anti-Semitic, but if the New Testament is, the Old Testament seems even worse.

Tom, I'm wondering if you can tell just a little bit of your story. You tell it beautifully and powerfully and painfully in your book [*Consumed by Hate, Redeemed by Love*]. There were things that were very appealing to you in your life before becoming a Christian that led you to embrace anti-Semitism. There was a kind of logic to it that's bad logic.

Tom Tarrants: Yes, well it's a sad, sad chapter in my life to be sure. I was, like a lot of people coming into this anti-Semitism today, young, not developed in critical thinking, and immersed in a culture that was hospitable to this type of thinking. Speaking of the demonic, I think that was part of what was involved with me going down that rabbit hole, as they say. I think it started with a neighbor of my grandmother's. I spent a fair amount of time at her house when I was growing up. He was a little older than I, and he did not like Jews. He had some records, 78, LP, or whatever. They were the recorded speeches of Hitler. I didn't speak

German, but he wanted to sit down and listen. And those speeches had an effect on me that I can't really account for. Something happened in listening to that. It just had a captivating influence. This would be strange for me because, when I was a kid, maybe in second grade, there were a couple of Jewish girls in the class. I thought they were cool and liked them. I had nothing against Jewish people, but these records brought a turn in my thinking. Then as I grew older, the whole Civil Rights Movement came to the forefront of attention in the South, where I was raised, in Mobile, Alabama. There was a populist kind of revolt in some ways, smaller scale, led by Governor George Wallace and others like him. Wallace didn't push anti-Semitism, but a lot of people who liked Wallace did. The idea was, "Okay. We're, as southerners, being forced to desegregate our public schools. We think that's a terrible idea, and we think it's really terrible that the federal government wants to step in and violate our state's rights. What is behind this whole Civil Rights Movement, anyway?" And of course the answer was, "The Communists. This is one of their projects. They are inspiring and stirring up all this trouble." In the sixties, Communism was a great fear and a big issue. Then the conversation went further back, and if you wanted to get the real insight, the Jews were ultimately behind the Communists. These Jews, they are the ultimate culprits, and the attitude toward Jews was not positive in Mobile. Jews couldn't join the Mobile Country Club, where the elites, the white Gentiles, went. They had to start their own country club. That kind of anti-Semitism was baked into the culture. And the attitudes toward Jewish people were: They're clannish. They're greedy, deceitful, manipulative. They're power hungry...

And as I began to read some of this anti-Semitic literature, I saw, "Oh, yeah! They're conspiring to control the world through the United Nations and various other means. They're in charge and controlling, behind the scenes, the media and banking and finance and politics. They're behind all of these things, but they keep their hands hidden. They are the arch conspirators." Then I came into possession of a book called *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Boy, that was supposed to put you in touch with



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the heart and soul of this great conspiracy—allegedly the minutes of meetings of great Jewish leaders back a century earlier and their plots and plans and schemes to take over the world. So that did a real number on me. It brought a change of worldview. I didn't start off in life hating Jews, but as I absorbed this kind of thinking uncritically, fear grew up, and then fear produced anger. On and on, I could go, but I became very anti-Semitic and thought it was perfectly right to hate Jews and want to see them driven out. It's just so crazy, though, because there's no truth to it. That's the problem. The way I got out of this was through searching for truth. It wasn't that somebody came to me and said, "Well, let me explain the facts." People tried that, but it had no effect whatsoever. I was totally immune to any kind of logical or rational analysis because, of course, the Jews controlled the publishing houses. So you can't believe what you read in the books. It's just like a schizophrenic kind of delusional world. Paranoid schizophrenia, self-induced. That may sound like a bizarre story, but it's happening all over the place.

In my youth, it started off with some flyers distributed around my high school. Now these anti-Semitic and far-right groups have coalesced internationally, and this stuff is all over the internet. And it's using music. It's using all kinds of means of drawing in younger people just like I was—not critical thinkers yet—and indoctrinating them and then radicalizing them. And it's all built on lies. But people don't seek truth.

Darrell Bock: Just to confirm this, when I was dating my wife, and then after we got married, I had an "uncle-in-law" who was a member of the John Birch Society. At one of our holiday family gatherings, I'm in the corner of a room, and he's telling me all these conspiracies and how he sees the world. And you're right, Tom, the things that I was hearing in the 1970s and early 1980s are not very different from what I hear about showing up on the internet today. It's the same stories. There's just a little longer history, or alleged history, that's attached to it. The whole thing is designed to have people view Jewish people askance. That's the core definition of what anti-Semitism is, to create a prejudice against a

certain people just because they come from a certain background. And then this is designed to reinforce that perception and to justify it, which is the sad part of it.

Joel Woodruff: You mentioned some of the accusations against Jews, related, for instance, to supposedly controlling the banking world. Can you speak to some of those myths or legends and maybe even why the Jews were even handling the banks in the Middle Ages?

Randy Newman: I haven't done enough research on this to give a lot of facts and figures. But yes, Jewish people have had tremendous influence, and I think it's because God has chosen to bless the Jewish people. But I quickly add that we haven't been as influential as people think we are. I mean, yeah, I guess Jewish people are involved in banking. They're not the only ones. Nor in Hollywood. We don't quite have this dominance that people think we do. I think that's part of the lie, of "they control this, and they control that." I just don't think there are facts and numbers to back that up.

Darrell Bock: One other element might be that the Jewish people historically have been a highly literate. They are people of the Book, in one sense. They're trained with a community that had rabbis alongside of them to instruct the people in the Book. So their value on education and on understanding what's going on around them, the fact that they were a minority and had to cope with that as well—all those things contributed to their I'll say cultural alacrity as a minority people. And they had to be effective. You'll hear this from a variety of minorities, not just Jewish people but others who say, "To survive, we have to be better than the average person." The pursuit of that meant a pursuit of a standard that, in the end, I guess, paid off. It made them effective in the communities in which they functioned and made them effective as citizens. So they came to have prominence in a lot of ways because they came out of a culture that valued literacy.

Joel Woodruff: I think that's a good point—that striving when you are



a minority, to overcome and continue to push ahead. As for the Middle Ages, it's my understanding that the medieval church interpreted the idea of charging interest as something Christians shouldn't do, so they handed the banking industry over to the Jews, thinking, "Well, the Jews can charge interest. We'll invest in those banks." So some Jews did get involved in banking. Also, I understand that during the black plague, when millions of people were dying due to this disease, which it turns out was spread by rats. Well, Jews kept kosher homes. They kept things clean. More Christians died, because they were not as fastidious. As a result, they blamed black plague on the Jews. Those are some examples that historically have been myths that spread, but it was just because of the way they lived their lives. It wasn't due to any conspiracy theory. But unfortunately the Christian institutional church has been guilty of anti-Semitism throughout history. Randy, you mentioned Martin Luther, who unfortunately wrote a terrible tract against the Jews and others. What can we learn from the history of the church, from the bad examples, and what can we learn from many good examples in the church over the years in the ways in which Christians related to the Jewish people?

Tom Tarrants: Joel, before we talk about that, it might be helpful to name some names. We talked about Luther. But what about Augustine and Chrysostom and some of our greatest heroes, being drawn into some of these ideas? There's a long history of this.

Darrell Bock: The more the church became isolated from its Jewish roots, the more likely this was to pop up and manifest itself. And that's something also that history very definitely shows.

Randy Newman: I want to go to a more theological place: It's easy to miss the gospel or it's easy to lose the gospel. It's easy to forget it's all by grace. It's God's mercy. He sent His Son to die for sinful people who didn't deserve it. And we lose sight of that. We have the whole book of Galatians in the New Testament, which says, "Wait a minute! You've lost the gospel. You're preaching another gospel, which is no gospel at all." And so in the New Testament itself, in the book of Acts, and then

in history, we have numerous places where we lost sight of the gospel. We lost sight of the grace of the gospel. And when you do that, you start seeing yourself as, “Well, I’m worthy of God’s love, and other people are not.” When you get into that mode, there’s all sorts of horrible things that flow out of it, and anti-Semitism is one of them, but, I mean, it’s a million varieties of self-righteousness. I realize there’s irony even in my saying this, because I could be accused of saying, “Well, thank God, I’m not self-righteous like all those self-righteous people who lost the gospel.” I understand that. So I think it’s losing sight of the gospel. Isn’t that astonishing? Paul retells it in Galatians 2, where he confronts Peter, Peter of all people, and says, “You’re not living in line with the gospel.” Peter lost the gospel. So I want to shine that theological light on it. It’s just very easy, and it has happened millions of times, and it still happens within our own lives. That’s an important piece to remember in all of this.

Darrell Bock: Yeah, Randy. As I think about what you’re saying, I’m reminded of a point I alluded to earlier that connects with this: People are either connected to the living God, or they operate as independents. And when they operate as independents, they are saying, “I don’t need God. I don’t recognize God.” There are a lot of ways that we say it, “I don’t believe there’s a God,” whatever it is. But when you have a world in which everyone is operating as a great independent, you have a lot of conflict. Everyone’s looking after their own identity, after their own rights. They tend to care less about the person next to them unless it serves their interests...so it’s the seed for a whole lot of problems. I mean, the Bible calls it. At the end, the idea that I’m a great independent is a form of idolatry. We turn ourselves into gods at the expense of the Creator God and, in the process, wreak a lot of collateral damage. The Bible calls it all sin. That’s what it is. It’s a messy collateral damage project that emerges as a result of our being independent or declaring ourselves as being the reality of the world, however it manifests itself. And it is very damaging to lose the gospel.

Tom Tarrants: I can imagine somebody saying, “Well, this is shocking, to hear about these Christian leaders who have even become anti-Semitic at points or done this kind of thing or the church persecuting the Jews in Spain . . . How do you even take the gospel seriously when you look at this mess? The more you look at church history?” I think it’s a reasonable question. We need to shift the meta narrative, look at a bigger picture, put it all in a different framework—that the world that we are living in is a world of cosmic conflict. It started in the Garden of Eden. There is an actual war going on between God and His angels and the devil and his minions. When you become a believer, a true believer in Jesus, you leave that kingdom of rebellion, and you come under the lordship of Jesus. You enter a battle, warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil, the world being the fallen world, not the beautiful earth we know. We are in this kind of a struggle, and there are a lot of casualties, and it is a challenging situation to be in. So what we see in the broad sweep of biblical history. . . . There are demonic kinds of activities going on in the Old Testament. Paul talks about it in the New Testament. We see it through church history. It’s kind of like a sine wave. God comes and brings renewal, revival. The devil launches a counterattack. So you have these periods where things surge forward with great strength and wonderful happenings through the power of the gospel, and then the counter attack comes, and then things go down beneath the baseline. That has been going on. People look at it. They don’t know how to make sense of it, but it makes perfect sense if you start at the beginning of the Bible and realize what we’re in, and we’re headed toward a conclusion for all of this. But we need to become more aware. I find that evangelicals are just not that clued in about what we’re talking about. We’re so influenced by the secularism that has seeped into American culture and thinking and by our materialism, by being wrapped up in the American dream and other distractions. So there’s a blindness to what’s going on, and we need to be awakened. Thank God for the kind of work that Darrell’s been doing in the Scriptures that help awaken us to the reality of discipleship. That

is part of the solution here, that we get better grounded in the Scriptures and in the larger picture of what's going on. Anti-Semitism is one part of that, and a significant part of it. But there's a lot more, too, that we need to wake up to and become part of the solution instead of part of the problem.

Joel Woodruff: How can we respond as followers of Jesus Christ personally, first of all, to stand against anti-Semitism? And are there things that the church could do to better fight against this injustice of anti-Semitism? Randy?

Randy Newman: On a very interpersonal level, one on one, this is a great opportunity for Christians to reach out to Jewish friends they know and say, "I just want you to know I'm really concerned. I'm really very disturbed about what's going on in the world. And I just want you to know that I'm not turning away from it. I'm looking at it. I'm very, very concerned. I want you to know I'm praying for the peace of Jerusalem, the way the Scriptures tell us. I'm praying for people, Jewish people, Palestinian people, I'm praying that God does a miraculous work. How can I pray for you? I'm praying for your family." Many of us know Jewish people who have relatives in Israel. So I want to reach out to them and say, "I'm not ignoring this. I'm very, very concerned." And then follow it up with indeed praying for these situations. Also, Tom raised the issue of people saying, "Look at how Christians have done so terribly in the history of the church. Why should I take this message seriously?" In response, we don't want to deny or minimize their concern. But then we can say, "But despite all the horrible failures, I still think it's worth following Jesus. I still think He's beautiful. Amazing. I think He is who He said He was, who He is." The message of the New Testament, when it doesn't get distorted and manipulated, is a beautiful message. I think it's still worth following, even in the midst of all the difficulties. I'll just say one more thing—about the church. I do hope that more and more churches are praying about this, I mean, as part of the Sunday morning gathering of worship. In pretty much every church, there's a time

of prayer. I fear that some churches will feel, “We shouldn’t mention this, because people think we’re making a pro-Israeli stand or a pro-Palestinian stand or we’re trying to get involved in politics.” We need to avoid those problems, for sure, but it would be great if people heard pastors and church leaders and elders say, “Lord, please work and bring about peace in the Middle East. Bring about a revival. Draw people to Yourself. May it be that Israelis and Palestinians and people all around the world will be drawn to You.” Pray those kinds of prayers. Those are not insignificant.

Darrell Bock: My take is the opposite of the Nike commercial. I say, “Just don’t do it.” Don’t do anything that reflects anti-Semitism. Don’t do anything that promotes anti-Semitism. Speak out when you see it and address it. Just don’t go there. And try your best to not allow anything to go there in the organizations that you’re a part of. Because it’s subtle. It can be subtle. And it needs to not be done. And that’s actually a good general rule for all our relationships with the various groups that we come across. There’s so much hostility in our society today drawn around various groups and the conflicts we face. We need a class of people that Jesus referred to in the Sermon on the Mount. “Blessed are the peacemakers.” We need more of those. So I don’t know if it’s a campaign slogan: Don’t be an anti-Semite. Be a peacemaker. And go in that direction.

Tom Tarrants: I like what Darrell said. We’ve got enough troublemakers. We need some peacemakers. But getting to the text of Scripture for all this: Jesus told us, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” We need to seek truth. We need to pray, “God show me the truth. Open my eyes to see.” And we need to be agents of truth, to speak truth, and we need to do what Jesus said and what Moses recorded for us: Love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus illustrated it in Luke 10, the parable of the Good Samaritan. What can we do that is concrete, practical? Love is not some emotional kind of buzz or something in the Bible. It’s practical, serving and helping people that

are in need, doing for them what you'd want them to do for you if you were in their shoes. That's very simple. There's nothing complicated at all about that. And so pray. "God help me to love You with all my heart and help me to love my neighbor." And to remember, too, that there's not a back door that says, "Okay, I'll love my neighbor, but I'm going to hate my enemies. I'm going to hate whoever our enemy happens to be." Jesus said, love your enemies, too. We're kind of boxed in with Jesus. And become people of love. That's what we're called to be if we truly know Jesus.

[Video of the complete version of this talk, which includes additional content, is available [here](#).



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