**When You're Ready to Listen**

**Kick Butt Answers to Listener's Questions**

**What's the Fuss About Israel and the Curse**

We recently finished our in-depth study on the book of ***Jude*** and ***Revelation***, which really was an expose on the entirety of scripture, for practically every line in the book of ***Revelation*** comes from some other book in the Bible. If you have not yet gone through this study, and whether or not you agree with the conclusions, I can guarantee that you will learn more about the Bible (especially the Old Testament) than you could ever imagine. ***Revelation*** pulls from practically every single book of the Old Testament

But as we transition to our next in-depth study, which will be in the book of ***Job***, which just so happens to be essential to understanding many parts of the book of ***Revelation***, I wanted to address some listener questions.

And for the first time ever, I am using video not just audio. So, if you are listening to this and want to see who it is that you have been listening to you all these years, or if you just want to meet my dog, Neo, or get a glimpse of my chickens hanging out staring at me, the video will be on my You Tube channel: **When You're Ready to Listen - Thresher Media Group.**

While I finish the preparations for Job, I will be doing a series of interim podcast to address listener questions and provide Kick-A answers.

**So, when you're ready to listen, please tune-in.**

This first question, or better said, this first issue, comes from the great state of Colorado and it deals with the modern Israeli state asking me to address how, as believers we are to view the nation of Israel and the Jewish people.

This listener asked me, "Why is there such a fuss within Christianity, especially by the Evangelicals, about the need for believers to support, back, and stand with Israel at all costs, seemingly with no questions asked, because, they say, the Bible says so"? She went on to comment that the hype seems out of balance and potentially dangerous.

She said she did not feel right about the fact that there seems to be more patriotism amongst Christians to the Israeli political machine and its leaders than there is patriotism for America and its leaders.

She specifically asked, as believers, are we really to support Netanyahu, no matter what kind of man and leader he is?

Then she expressed concern that Israel seems to be all up in our internal politics believing that those promoting Israel have a dangerous strong hold in our legislative and security branches.

She echoed a "conspiracy" that many pundits have spoken about, which is a subversive takeover of our political system, where it seems that the Israeli's move our political leaders, like puppets, according to their (the Israeli's will), and that most Americans have no idea the extent to which our government has been captured by these promotors of the Israeli agenda.

How much of this is real? How much of this is conspiracy? Does the Bible really tell us to do this?

How much of our support for Israel is simply blind allegiance, some expression of "Christianity," driven by the preaching of the evangelicals who are constantly quoting that famous promise between God and Abraham: "*And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse...*"

This begs the question, if that was a promise to Abraham, how then can it be a promise to the modern state of Israel? How does that promise reach across centuries into our American politics? Does the promise to Abraham demand that we align our politics with the nation of Israel?

To address these concerns, let's first examine that famous promise which God made to Abraham and see if it says what we have been told it says.

The use of the Hebrew language is a bit nuanced, and it does not come across well in our English Translations largely because the translators merge concepts instead of accurately identifying the nuance and intentionality with which the Spirit of God constructed the sentence.

Yes, I believe that the Spirit of God was the author of every word, every sentence, and every little jot and tittle of the original Hebrew and Greek recorded by the human authors. That will be for another podcast, but that is how I approach not just this promise, but all the Word of God – the Spirit of God expressing Himself through human vessels.

Being God, the Holy Spirit used the words that He intentionally wanted to use to express to us the understanding He wanted us to possess; regardless of the vessel through which He spoke.

With that in mind, let's first look at the traditional English translation and then we will break it apart by the key Hebrew words to get a better feel for the meaning.

**Genesis 12:3**

And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse..."

Now let's overlay the key words using the original Hebrew:

And I will "barak" those who "barak" you, And the one who "qalal" you I will "arar…"

The word "barak" means "kneel" or to "bless." The word is based on the picture of a person kneeling before a superior to receive a blessing.

The word "qalal" is often translated as "curse," but "qalal" does not have the direct meaning of a spoken curse. "Qalal" is broader and fits the context of the internal condition of our heart, addressing our tendency to slight another or treat another in a belittling or contemptuous way.

"Qalal" first shows up in ***Genesis 8:8*** to speak of the waters of the flood abating or subsiding, being lesser than they were. Then in ***Exodus 21:17***, the Spirit uses it to address one who belittles or treats their parents poorly, "*He who curses* ("qalal") his father or his mother shall surely be put to death."

In a relational context, belittling, demeaning, making contemptable, or a lessening of what is, all seem to be a negation of "blessing." That is how we are to understand the use of "qalal."

In contrast, the word "arar" literally means "to curse," and is often associated with an expression of divine judgment. This word first shows up in ***Genesis 3:14***, when God says to the serpent, "***Cursed*** *are you more than all cattle,*" and again in ***Genesis 3:17***, "*Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; **cursed** is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life*."

Understanding these 3-key Hebrew words, this passage should be read as follows:

*And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who despises you, demeans and belittles you, treats you contemptuously or treats you as less than you are, I will place a divine curse*.

Later, in ***Genesis 27:29***, this promise is repeated to Isaac, Abraham's son, but it gets even a little more intense, for the Spirit left out the word "qalal" and the notion of belittlement, and just used "arar,"

"*Cursed ("arar") be everyone who curses you ("arar") and blessed ("barak") be everyone who blesses you ("barak")*."

And then again, this concept comes out a third time in ***Numbers 24:9-10*** when King Balak, the ruler over Moab (which is modern day Jordan), hired Balaam' the famous Oracle or old, to curse Israel. Because of what happened to the Egyptians, Balak was terrified of this throng of Jews, so instead of attacking them, he tried to have them cursed.

So, Balaam looked out over the nation, the collective of Israeli people who had left Egypt, and prophesied,

"*Blessed* ("barak") *are those who bless you* ("barak")*, and cursed ("arar") are those who curse you ("arar")*."

This was a prophecy that made King Balak furious, and we must not miss out on the irony. The name "Balak" means "devastator." King Devastator hired Balaam (whose name means, "not of the people") to utter a curse against Israel, he longed for just one little, tiny ugly word.

In ***Numbers 24:10***, the Hebrew word translated as "curse" in this part of the passage is "qabab," which means to literally speak a curse, to malign, or to speak out against. But God would not let the Oracle say anything that would have the effect of putting down, demeaning, belittling, or lessening who the Jews are to God.

Let's read ***Numbers 24:10***,

"*Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to ("qabab") curse my enemies, but behold, you have persisted in blessing them these three times!*"

Again, the irony is dripping. Big bad King Devastator wants a curse, but all he gets is a three-fold blessing, a perfect blessing. It's an in-your-face mockery to his name. Blessing and blessing and blessing, but no devastation. God has an amazing sense of humor.

So, what do we take from all this and our responsibility as believers to the Jews and to the nation of Israel.

In the original promise, God makes it clear that if you mistreat the line of Abraham, the Jews, and belittle or think of them less than they are and treat them contemptuously, God will curse you.

And we know this is a promise to the Jews and not to the non-Jewish decedents of Abraham because God repeated and then intensified the promise when He delivered it to Issac, from whom all the Jews come. Then He repeated it again, a third time, when addressing the entire nation or collective of people who had come out of Egypt.

The original promise, with its use of "barak," "qalal," and "arar," goes to the heart of the matter and it serves as God's divine declaration against antisemitism.

In the heart of the antisemite, they belittle, demean, or treat the Jew lesser than they are and they curse or deride the nation, the collective of Jewish people. This is a bad place to find oneself, for the result will be divine cursing.

What does God's divine curse look like? Let's just say that God is very creative. To the snake in the garden, He made him grovel through the dust of the earth. To Adam, he made the earth difficult when it came to planting and harvesting; it would be a life-long struggle for mankind to

work the earth to get it to produce substance. To Egypt, He devastated their entire economy and livelihood.

It is probably safe to say that none of us wants to be on God's list of those to be cursed.

As believer's we are to understand that this promise was not temporary, and it was not conditional on the part of Abraham; it was a one way promise that **Yahweh** made to Abraham and then to Isaac, and then to the collective of the Israeli people, the nation, if you may.

As such, this is a promise that still exits **all** these thousands of years later.

In the Bible, the number three is a prophetic number that speaks of perfection, for instance, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, three in one. Three speaks of perfection and the number one which speaks of unity. Three in one, perfect unity!

Three times God made this promise and then within the third expression, He repeated it three times. Perfection upon perfection upon perfection, just in case we missed His meaning.

Therefore, we need to be very careful to not harbor in our heart any antisemitism or disregard for the Jewish people, or the collective nation, or we risk being cursed by God.

Does the promise then equate the ancient Jewish people with the modern Israeli political state?

Well, the story about King Devastator (King Balak) has overtones to our need to be careful about cursing the collective. At first Balak wanted the entire nation that left Egypt, to be cursed. But when God did not let Balaam curse them, Balak took Balaam to a high mountain where he could only see a small segment of the people though a crack in the rocks, and he asked Balaam to curse just a small segment of the people, but still God would not allow His Oracle to utter a contemptuous word against the people He brought forth out of Egypt, not even a small segment.

So, there is an imbedded warning for us and our attitudes and actions toward the Jewish people and the Jewish nation at large.

But does that mean we have to agree with everything the modern Israeli state does, and that we must support everything they support? Are we to sit back and allow our own nation's leaders to be captive to the Israeli's political machine that functions only to protect Israel.

Absolutely not, that would be silly. God never said anything like that, for He was not addressing our politics. With the promise, God addressed outright antisemitism as well as the antisemitic thoughts and attitudes hidden within the heart.

With that said, from a purely practical standpoint, with an American worldview, not even addressing the Biblical worldview, Israel is in the center of, or better yet engulfed by, a collection of 44 (and soon to be 45) countries that are not democratic, they do not believe in freedom, they restrict free speech, they oppress women, they promote violence as a rule of life, and they do not value the lives of anyone who believes contrary to their beliefs.

And these countries, some worse than others, persecute the Jews, many of which want the Jews to be annihilated, wiped off the face of the earth and their land given to others.

So, from a geo-political perspective, and not even a Biblical perspective, it is within our best interests, America's best interest, as well as the interest of all other democratic, freedom loving people, to stand behind and support Israel. These people stand as a light in the midst of 44, soon to be 45, nations that are hostile to our way of life.

The sick irony of those in America, and around the world in other so-called free nations, who feel the need to express their antisemitism through demonstrations, violence, and hateful speech, screaming that the land should be given to others, and so on, if they tried to behave like that on any other topic in any of those 44 (soon to be 45 countries), they would be imprisoned, beaten, tortured, and eventually killed and not just them, their families as well.

Those countries do not share our values, in fact they are a direct threat to our values of life, liberty, freedom, and peace. In practicality, we have so many practical reasons to stand behind and support the state of Israel.

Now back to a Biblical worldview, God promised that He would draw His people out from the nations to which they had been exiled and return them to the land, return them **to their own land**.

**Ezekiel 37:21–22**

I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into **their own land**. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel.

**Jeremiah 30:3**

The days are coming," declares **Yahweh**, "when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their ancestors to possess," says **Yahweh**.

And He gave them more than the promise that they would return to their own land, He also promised them that they would never again be forced out of the land.

**Amos 9:14–15**

I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them… I will plant Israel **in their own land**, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says

**Yahweh** your God.

Those who oppose Israel in the land and want the land to be given to others are treading on dangerous ground, for they are fighting against the express will of **Yahweh**. Those who deride Israel, belittle them as a people, demean them, and consider them less than they are, which is the possessors of some crazy and fantastical promises from **Yahweh** God, the **Most High**, will likely find themselves on that "cursed" list. And as God has demonstrated, He can be very creative in his divine cursing.

Let me be clear, God never tells us to support the politics of Israel or any specific leader, though He does say that all leaders of the nations are appointed by Him, yes, even Netanyahu. For example, Jesus told Pilot that the only reason he had power was because it came from above, it came from God. Then the Spirit through the Apostle Paul told us that there is no governmental authority except that which has been established by God. Like it or not, these truths are intended to curb our tendency to militarize our political positions to hurt others.

As believers, we have a unique responsibility to let God cause us to think like He thinks and let Him cause us to do as He does. All He asks for is our *willingness*, and if we invite Him to help us think as He thinks, and do as He does, in other words, if we ask Him to live in-and-though us, then we can be assured that when it is all said and done, we will not harbor antisemitic thoughts or ideas.

How that plays into our personal politics, and what we do or do not support in the practical matters of life, well that will be formed by God in you. You must, however, be *willing* and if you are, He will be the one to do the work to conform you to His views, as He has expressed throughout the Word of God. And with Jesus being a Jew, you can bet that **Yahweh** does not harbor antisemitic thoughts or notions.

I encourage you to let God form in you His thoughts and His views, it is the best way to avoid being cursed.

I am glad you "tuned in" and have been "ready to listen."