

THE HOLOCAUST

PART I

Past and Future

By Arlen L. Chitwood

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows.

And I am come down to deliver them... (Ex. 3:1-8a).

“The Holocaust,” in modern vernacular, has come to be used as a *somewhat synonymous reference to that which happened to the Jewish people in a German Third-Reich-controlled Europe preceding and during WWII* (though many Jews prefer to use the Hebrew word, *Shoah* [meaning, a “Storm,” “Desolation,” or “Destruction”] to reference the Holocaust). This word is derived from the Greek word, *holokaustos*, referring to “a burnt offering,” with the thought of the offering being completely consumed by fire (the first part of the word, from *holos*, means “whole,” “complete”).

The Final Solution

In view of that which occurred through the Third Reich’s anti-Semitic aim to produce a *Jew-free Europe (which they termed, the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question”)*, a name derived from the Greek word *holokaustos* has, in one respect, been aptly chosen. The Holocaust was a *systematic effort to completely destroy an entire race of people living throughout Europe—along with other means, to consume this race of people by fire through the use of the crematoriums in the death camps.*

However, in another respect, *viewing the nation as a whole*, the name has not been aptly chosen at all. In fact, going by the exact meaning of the word — “a burnt offering,” with a view to the entire offering being completely consumed by fire — *the word cannot describe the Jewish people at all. The nation cannot be consumed by fire; not a hair on the head of a single Jew can be singed in this respect. That is clearly spelled out in numerous places in Scripture (e.g., Ex. 3:1ff; Dan. 3:19ff).*

Those having a part in that which was done in Europe during the reign of the Third Reich *should have read the Book.* They should have looked to see *Who* and *What* they were dealing with before attempting the destruction of this particular race of people, for not only did *they attempt the impossible but they brought about their*

own destruction in the process.

Had they bothered to read the Book, among other things,

They would have found that *they were dealing with God Himself, in the midst of the Jewish people* (Ex. 3:2-7).

They would have found that *they were trying to destroy a people who couldn’t be destroyed* (Ex. 3:1ff; Jer. 31:35-37; 33:20-26; Dan. 3:19ff; 6:16ff), *for God Himself would have had to be destroyed.*

And they would have found that *they were trying to destroy a people whom God had called into existence for particular and specific purposes, with any seeking to destroy these people destined for destruction themselves* (Gen. 12:3; Ex. 1:8ff; 14:18-31).

And the matter becomes even more incredulous when the lives of many of the German people who attempted that which was done during the Holocaust are viewed. Though that perpetrated against the Jewish people during the Holocaust was a *monstrous endeavor*, many of the German people having a connection with the death camps were quite *ordinary people, not monsters per se* (though there would have been *monsters* among them and *monsters* in places of command [e.g., Hitler, Himmler, Eichmann, Mengele, et al]).

From available records of those days, many of the individuals caught up in the death camp work carried on some semblance of ordinary life when away from their work, which, in many cases, would have involved attending Church on Sunday before going to work in the camps on Monday.

(The Catholic and Lutheran Churches were the two predominate Christian Churches, so called, in Nazi Germany in 1933 [the year Hitler rose to power in Germany] and throughout the continuing twelve years. And, insofar as any proper or correct

outlook on the Jews was concerned, the Catholic Church was actually the sounder of the two.

The German Lutheran Seminaries and Churches were filled with Nazis, Nazi sympathizers, and anti-Semites — from the seminary professors, to the pastors of Churches, to those in the pew. In short, the German Lutheran Church of that day was shot through and through with false ideologies and corruption.

Then there was the matter of Martin Luther [the one to whom the Lutheran Church looked back upon] having had an incorrect view of the Jews in his day, warning the German people about what he termed, “The Jews and Their Lies.” And Hitler, with his anti-Semitism, was looked upon in some circles as an individual carrying on a modern-day work of Luther in Germany — in one respect, setting the stage for the Nazi party and the German Lutheran Church to find *very common grounds to work together*.

The Nazis were, for the most part, looked upon as Christians [mainly members of either Catholic or Lutheran Churches], and many probably were “Christian” in more than name only. Even Hermann Goering was a faithful Lutheran and would remain that way until the day of his death [though that’s not to say that Goering was really a Christian; nor is it to say that he wasn’t, when he took his own life in 1946].

There was, of course, dissention among many Catholics and Lutherans relative to the policies of the Third Reich concerning the Jews [e.g., that of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran minister; this though was centrally for humanitarian reasons or seeking the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, not for reasons involving the true identity of the Jew and how the nation of Israel fit into God’s plans and purposes as a separate and distinct people].)

Nazi military personnel assigned to one of the camps and following the preceding type lifestyle in connection with one of Germany’s Churches (and, from existing records, it is evident

that many of them did) would find themselves doing *two completely incompatible things*:

- 1) Listening to or reading material from a Jewish Book on Sunday, and, at least after some semblance, looking to a Jewish Saviour.
- 2) Then, the next day, on Monday, beginning a work consisting principally of attempting to slay the very people who had given them this Book and Saviour.

And the preceding could only have been a correct scenario in many instances of life in Nazi Germany and German occupied parts of Europe, particularly Poland (where most of Europe’s Jews resided), during those years — again, in the light of available records — showing how little the German people in general evidently knew about the true identity of the Jewish people in those days.

Why didn’t those filling the Churches on Sunday morning in Germany know that which Scripture clearly reveals about the Jewish people? And that question can be easily addressed and answered by asking the same thing concerning Christians in our own country today.

Little to No Different Today

How many Christians in the Churches of the our land today can carry on some semblance of an intelligent conversation about the place which the Jews occupy in God’s economy — past, present, and/or future?

Any Christian that has been saved for any length of time at all should be able to easily handle the matter. But how many can do this? And if they can’t do this, why can’t they do it?

The answer, *solely from a Biblical standpoint*, can only be singular:

There has been (over years of time) and continues to be *a failure of those whom God has placed in charge of the flock to properly feed the flock, to*

proclaim the Word (cf. II Tim. 4:2ff; I Peter 5:2ff).

But, correspondingly, as well, there has been *a failure behind the failure, resulting in the situation which presently exists*.

It is true that numerous men leading the flock have been trained in the theology schools of the land — something particularly true in Germany at the time that the Nazi party came to power in 1933 — but *how* have they been trained?

The matter as it existed in Nazi Germany in 1933 would have been very similar to, if not the same, as it exists over eighty years later in our own country today.

In Germany, at that time, *the correct place which the Jewish people occupied in God’s economy* was not something taught in the theology schools or the Churches — something which should have been uppermost in that taught by professors or pastors in any theology school or Church, for *this is crucial relative to any correct understanding of the Scriptures*. And, as a result, the Churches in Germany found themselves, generally, *as not only weekend havens but sympathizers for numerous Nazi party members and their anti-Semitic practices in 1933*.

Thus, preceding and during the war years in Germany, note what could only have been a connective, indirect role that pastors of Churches throughout the land would have played in the Holocaust by not doing as commanded by the Lord in II Timothy and I Peter.

But, could the pastors in Germany have really done this? Because of their incorrect training, except possibly in isolated instances, such evidently would not have been possible.

And it is little to no different over eighty years later in American theology schools and Churches. *The lesson from history has gone unheeded*.

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