

From Luther's Hostility to Graham's Dualism: Theological and Geopolitical Views of Judaism

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The relationship between Christianity and Judaism has been marked by theological tensions and shifting interpretations throughout history. From Martin Luther's vehement hostility, rooted in supersessionist theology, to Billy Graham's dualistic view, shaped by dispensationalist eschatology, the role of Jews in Christian thought has oscillated between rejection and prophetic significance. Luther's writings, particularly *On the Jews and Their Lies*, fueled centuries of anti-Semitism in Europe, providing theological justification for societal and political actions against Jews. In contrast, Graham's theology, influenced by John Nelson Darby and Cyrus Scofield, embraced a dual role for Jews: critiquing their perceived cultural influence while revering their eschatological importance in end-times prophecy. This paper explores these perspectives, compares them to Darby and Scofield's dispensationalist framework, and examines how these theological views intersect with modern geopolitical issues, including the Gaza conflict and the biblical concept of Amalek. By contextualizing these theological interpretations, this study aims to shed light on their historical legacies and ongoing implications for Jewish-Christian relations and global events.

Keywords: Martin Luther, Billy Graham, dispensationalism, supersessionism, John Nelson Darby, Cyrus Scofield, Judaism in Christianity, Church of Satan, End Times prophecy, Amalek, Gaza conflict, Christian eschatology, anti-Semitism, Israel, prophetic roles in theology. 37 pages.

Nixon recording: "Billy Graham to Richard Nixon: Hitler went about it wrong but this stranglehold has got to be broken."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6a94ED-eOyk>

I. Introduction

Throughout history, Christian leaders have grappled with their faith's relationship to Judaism, the religion from which Christianity emerged. Among these figures, Billy Graham, a 20th-century evangelical leader, and Martin Luther, the 16th-century Protestant Reformer, stand out for their profound influence on Christian theology and society. Both figures addressed Jewish identity and its perceived impact on society, but their perspectives and theological frameworks reveal significant contrasts shaped by their historical and cultural contexts.

Purpose:

This paper aims to compare and contextualize the views of Billy Graham and Martin Luther on Judaism, with a focus on Graham's recorded remarks about "two types of Jews"—those belonging to the "Church of Satan" and those playing pivotal roles in Christian eschatology—and Luther's dramatic shift from early optimism to vehement hostility. By examining these views in light of their respective historical and theological settings, we can better understand how Christian attitudes toward Judaism have evolved and been influenced by societal and doctrinal pressures.

Thesis Statement:

Both Billy Graham and Martin Luther expressed concerns about Judaism and Jewish influence within the framework of their times. However, their interpretations and theological applications diverged significantly: Graham's remarks, rooted in mid-20th-century evangelical eschatology, reflected a dualistic perspective that allowed for both criticism and redemptive roles for Jews, while Luther's writings evolved into a singularly hostile rejection of Jewish identity, marked by theological and societal animosity.

This comparison will explore how these views were shaped by the distinct challenges of their eras. Graham's remarks came during the Cold War and a time of growing evangelical focus on eschatology, whereas Luther's views emerged during the Reformation, when he was entrenched in conflict with both Catholicism and societal structures he deemed corrupt. By situating their perspectives within their historical contexts, this paper seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of their attitudes toward Judaism and how those attitudes influenced their legacies.

II. Historical Context of Billy Graham's Remarks

A. Post-War Evangelical America

The mid-20th century marked the ascendance of evangelical Christianity in the United States, with Billy Graham emerging as one of its most prominent figures. This period was defined by the aftermath of World War II, the early years of the Cold War, and a growing concern about moral decay in American society. Evangelical leaders, including Graham, sought to reinvigorate Christian values in a rapidly changing cultural landscape.

One of the most significant theological developments during this era was the rise of dispensationalist theology, which profoundly influenced Christian views of Jews and Judaism. Dispensationalism, popularized by theologians like John Nelson Darby and Cyrus Scofield, emphasized a literal interpretation of biblical prophecy. It posited that Jews held a unique and central role in God's redemptive plan, particularly in the events leading up to the Second Coming of Christ. This framework deeply shaped evangelical attitudes, creating a dualistic view of Jews as both critical to the fulfillment of prophecy and potentially adversarial to Christian goals in contemporary society.

Evangelicals placed an increasing focus on eschatology, or the study of the end times, during this period. This focus heightened their interest in Israel, the Jewish people, and their roles in biblical prophecy. The founding of the State of Israel in 1948 was seen by many evangelicals as a direct fulfillment of prophecy, further solidifying the belief that Jews were key players in the divine plan. However, this eschatological lens often came with an implicit critique of Jews who did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, creating a tension between admiration for their prophetic role and frustration with their theological divergence from Christianity.

B. The 1972 Nixon Recording

In 1972, a private conversation between Billy Graham and President Richard Nixon was recorded in the Oval Office, revealing a candid discussion about Jewish influence in American society. The content of Graham's remarks provides a rare glimpse into his unguarded thoughts on Judaism, contrasting sharply with his public persona of inclusivity and interfaith cooperation.

1. Content of Graham's Remarks:

- Graham expressed concern about what he perceived as Jewish dominance in American media, characterizing it as part of a "Church of Satan." This language, while harsh, aligns with a broader evangelical use of apocalyptic imagery to describe cultural and moral challenges.
- At the same time, Graham acknowledged the importance of Jews in fulfilling biblical prophecy. He seemed to distinguish between two types of Jews:
 - Those associated with worldly power and influence, which he linked to the "Church of Satan."
 - Those who would play a pivotal role in eschatological events, particularly in the lead-up to Christ's Second Coming.

2. Biblical Basis for Graham's Dualistic Framework:

- Graham's remarks drew on passages from the Book of Revelation, particularly **Revelation 2:9** and **3:9**, which refer to the "synagogue of Satan." These verses have historically been interpreted in various ways, often controversially, to critique groups perceived as opposing Christian teachings.
- The dispensationalist view of Jews emphasized their central role in eschatology, including the prophesied rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and their eventual recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. This framework allowed for both criticism of contemporary Jewish actions and reverence for their future prophetic role.

C. Contextual Reactions

The views expressed by Graham in the Nixon recording must be understood within the broader evangelical discourse of the time. While they reflect private concerns, they also align with prevailing eschatological interpretations among evangelicals.

1. How These Views Fit Within Evangelical Circles:

- The dualistic view of Jews as both adversaries and agents of prophecy was not uncommon in evangelical thought. Graham's remarks, though privately expressed, echoed themes present in dispensationalist theology and the broader evangelical community.
- Evangelicals frequently grappled with the tension between supporting Israel as part of God's plan and critiquing Jewish individuals or institutions seen as morally or culturally opposed to Christian values.

2. Public and Scholarly Reactions to the Recording's Release:

- When the tapes were made public in 2002, they sparked widespread outrage and disappointment, particularly among Jewish communities and Graham's supporters. The remarks were seen as inconsistent with Graham's public image as a bridge-builder between faiths.
- Scholars and commentators debated the significance of the remarks, with some arguing they reflected the cultural biases of the time and others pointing to the dangers of unexamined theological assumptions about Jews.
- Graham's subsequent apology, in which he expressed regret and claimed to have no memory of the conversation, did little to quell the controversy, as many viewed the recording as a window into his sincere beliefs.

This historical context situates Billy Graham's remarks within the cultural and theological currents of post-war evangelicalism. While his comments reflect private concerns, they also reveal the dualistic nature of evangelical attitudes toward Jews during this era—rooted in both eschatological admiration and cultural critique. These dynamics set the stage for broader discussions of Christian-Jewish relations and the role of theology in shaping societal attitudes.

III. Historical Context of Martin Luther's Views

A. Luther's Early Optimism

Martin Luther, the central figure of the Protestant Reformation, initially approached Jewish-Christian relations with a degree of optimism. His early writings reflected a hope that the Reformation would encourage Jews to embrace Christianity, particularly once the gospel was freed from what Luther saw as the corrupt practices of the Catholic Church.

1. "That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew" (1523):

- In this treatise, Luther argued for kindness and fairness toward Jews, believing that harsh treatment by Christians had hindered their conversion to Christianity.
- He wrote, "If I had been a Jew and had seen such dolts and blockheads govern and teach the Christian faith, I would sooner have become a hog than a Christian." This critique of Catholic authorities was intended to appeal to Jews who might have been alienated by the Church's history of anti-Semitism.
- Luther expressed confidence that his reforms would pave the way for Jews to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, emphasizing shared aspects of Jewish and Christian theology.

2. Advocacy for Kindness:

- Luther rejected the harsh persecution of Jews practiced by many in medieval Europe, advocating instead for respectful dialogue and education. He believed that Jews, as God's chosen people in the Old Testament, deserved a special place in Christian history and theology.

3. Optimism Rooted in Theology:

- This early optimism was based on Luther's belief that removing what he viewed as the false teachings of the Catholic Church (e.g., the sale of indulgences) would make Christianity more appealing to Jews. He saw the Reformation as an opportunity to reunite Jews with their biblical heritage through Christ.

B. Luther's Later Hostility

By the 1540s, Luther's attitude toward Jews had shifted dramatically. His frustration over their continued refusal to convert to Christianity, combined with the challenges of his reform movement, led him to adopt a hostile and inflammatory stance.

1. "On the Jews and Their Lies" (1543):

- In this treatise, Luther described Jews as enemies of Christianity, accusing them of stubbornly rejecting Jesus as the Messiah and actively working against the Christian faith.
- He wrote, "We are at fault in not slaying them." Such rhetoric marked a stark departure from his earlier calls for kindness and dialogue.

2. Advocacy for Extreme Punitive Measures:

- Luther called for specific actions against Jews, including:
 - The destruction of synagogues and Jewish schools.
 - Confiscation of Jewish religious texts, including the Talmud.
 - Banning rabbis from teaching under threat of death.
 - Expulsion of Jews from Christian lands.
 - Seizing Jewish property and wealth.
- These recommendations reflected not only theological frustration but also broader anti-Semitic attitudes prevalent in 16th-century Europe.

3. Factors Behind the Shift:

- Luther's theological disappointment: He believed Jews were willfully rejecting clear evidence of Christ's divinity, which he found intolerable.

- Broader societal pressures: Anti-Semitic sentiments were widespread in medieval and early modern Europe, and Luther's later writings reflected and amplified these prejudices.
 - Personal disillusionment: Facing opposition to his reforms and feeling embattled in his later years, Luther's rhetoric grew more combative across many fronts, including his treatment of Jews.
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C. Absence of an Eschatological Lens

Unlike Billy Graham and many evangelical Christians of the 20th century, Martin Luther did not view Jews through an eschatological framework. His theology lacked the dispensationalist perspective that grants Jews a redemptive role in end-times prophecy.

1. Focus on Doctrinal Rejection:

- Luther's engagement with Jewish theology centered entirely on their rejection of Christ as the Messiah. For Luther, this rejection was not only a theological error but also a betrayal of God's covenant with His people.
- His writings dismissed any notion of a future role for Jews in God's plan, viewing their continued existence as a persistent challenge to Christian truth.

2. No Prophetic Role for Jews:

- In contrast to evangelical eschatology, which often sees Jews as central to the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, Luther saw no such purpose. He believed that the Church had fully superseded Israel as God's chosen people.
- This "replacement theology" (supersessionism) was common in medieval and Reformation-era Christianity, framing Jews as a people whose significance had ended with the advent of Christ.

3. Reformation Context:

- Luther's lack of eschatological focus on Jews can be attributed to the priorities of the Reformation. His primary goal was to reform the Church and challenge Catholicism, leaving little room for speculation about end-times prophecy or the potential future role of Jews.
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Conclusion

Martin Luther's views on Jews evolved from hopeful engagement to vehement hostility, reflecting both his personal theological frustrations and the broader anti-Semitic attitudes of his time. His early optimism, as expressed in *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew*, gave way to the vitriolic rhetoric of *On the Jews and Their Lies*, culminating in a legacy that would have profound consequences for Jewish-Christian relations in Europe. Unlike Billy Graham, who framed Jewish identity within an eschatological narrative, Luther's focus remained on doctrinal rejection, emphasizing punitive measures rather than prophetic roles. This shift underscores the complexities of Luther's theology and the enduring impact of his writings.

IV. Theological Frameworks and Interpretations

A. Graham's Dualistic View

Billy Graham's recorded remarks reveal a dualistic perspective on Jews, shaped by evangelical theology and mid-20th-century eschatological concerns. This framework distinguished between Jews associated with opposition to Christian values (the "Church of Satan") and those destined to play a critical role in biblical prophecy (End Times Jews).

1. Theological Roots of the "Church of Satan" vs. End Times Jews:

- "Church of Satan":
 - Graham's reference to the "Church of Satan" likely draws from Revelation 2:9 and Revelation 3:9, where the term "synagogue of Satan" is used to describe groups opposing the early Christian Church.

- In evangelical interpretations, the "Church of Satan" is not necessarily tied to literal Satan worship but symbolizes forces perceived as working against God's will, such as materialism, secularism, or media influence. In the recording, Graham connects this concept to Jewish dominance in media, framing it as a cultural threat to Christian values.
- **End Times Jews:**
 - Graham's remarks also reflect dispensationalist theology, which views Jews as pivotal to the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Key eschatological events include:
 - The regathering of Jews in Israel (seen as fulfilled by the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948).
 - The rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.
 - The eventual conversion of Jews to Christianity during the Second Coming of Christ.
 - This perspective sees Jews as both significant in their current unbelief (as actors in prophetic events) and ultimately redeemable within God's plan.

2. How These Views Reflect Broader Evangelical Eschatology:

- **Dispensationalism:**
 - Graham's dualistic view aligns with the dispensationalist framework, which divides history into distinct periods or "dispensations" of God's interaction with humanity. The current dispensation, according to this view, anticipates the fulfillment of Jewish prophecy as a precursor to Christ's return.
- **Support for Israel:**
 - Evangelicals often support the State of Israel politically and theologically because of its perceived role in prophecy. This support coexists with criticism of Jewish unbelief, creating a

tension between admiration for Jews' prophetic significance and frustration with their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah.

- **Cultural Concerns:**

- The "Church of Satan" concept also reflects broader evangelical concerns about secularism, moral decline, and perceived Jewish influence in media and culture. These concerns, though shaped by eschatology, also mirror Cold War-era anxieties about the erosion of traditional Christian values.

B. Luther's Singular Focus

Martin Luther's theological framework, particularly in his later years, centered on a singular focus: Jewish rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. Unlike Graham's dualistic view, Luther saw no redemptive role for Jews in God's plan and framed them entirely as adversaries to Christianity.

1. Theological Roots of Luther's Hostility:

- **Rejection of Christ:**

- Luther's writings reflect a deep frustration with Jews' refusal to accept Jesus as the Messiah. This rejection was not merely a theological disagreement for Luther but a personal affront to the truth of Christianity and the Reformation.
- He interpreted Jewish rejection of Christ as a deliberate and persistent denial of God's revelation, which he saw as evidence of their estrangement from God's covenant.

- **Supersessionism:**

- Luther's theology was rooted in replacement theology (supersessionism), which holds that the Church has supplanted Israel as God's chosen people. In this framework, Jews no longer held a unique role in salvation history, and their

continued existence as a distinct religious group was seen as a challenge to Christian claims of fulfillment in Christ.

2. No Significant Role for Jews in Luther's Eschatological Framework:

- **Absence of Future Redemption:**

- Unlike evangelical theology, which grants Jews a role in the end times, Luther saw no future redemption for the Jewish people as a collective. For Luther, salvation was available only through individual conversion to Christianity, and he had little interest in broader eschatological speculation about their role.

- **Focus on Immediate Rejection:**

- Luther's writings on Jews, especially in *On the Jews and Their Lies*, focus exclusively on their perceived obstinacy and opposition to Christianity. He saw no prophetic purpose in their existence, framing them instead as relics of an obsolete covenant.

3. The Dichotomy of "Unrepentant Jews" vs. "Potential Converts":

- **Unrepentant Jews:**

- Luther characterized Jews who rejected Christianity as enemies of God and the Church, deserving of harsh punishment. His recommendations included expulsion, confiscation of property, and destruction of synagogues, reflecting the hostile anti-Semitic attitudes of his time.

- **Potential Converts:**

- Despite his hostility, Luther maintained that individual Jews could find salvation through conversion. However, his later writings suggest that he had largely given up hope for widespread Jewish conversion, focusing instead on punitive measures to diminish their influence.

Comparison of Their Frameworks

- **Dualism vs. Singular Focus:**
 - Graham's theology accommodated a dual role for Jews, simultaneously critical of their perceived cultural influence and reverent of their prophetic importance. Luther, by contrast, viewed Jews only through the lens of rejection and saw no redemptive purpose in their continued existence as a religious group.
 - **Eschatology vs. Supersessionism:**
 - Graham's views were shaped by an eschatological narrative that granted Jews an integral role in end-times prophecy. Luther's supersessionist theology excluded Jews from any future role in God's plan, emphasizing their replacement by the Christian Church.
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Conclusion

Billy Graham's dualistic view and Martin Luther's singular focus illustrate the diversity of Christian theological perspectives on Judaism. Graham's framework, shaped by dispensationalist eschatology, allowed for both critique and admiration of Jewish identity, whereas Luther's supersessionism framed Jews solely as adversaries to Christianity. These theological distinctions highlight how historical and cultural contexts shape religious interpretations and their implications for Jewish-Christian relations.

V. Comparison of Views

A. Similarities

Both Billy Graham and Martin Luther, despite their vastly different historical contexts, expressed concerns about Jewish influence in societal structures. Their critiques were framed using biblical language, reflecting theological perspectives shaped by their respective religious and cultural environments.

1. Concerns About Jewish Influence:

○ Billy Graham:

- In the 1972 Nixon recording, Graham voiced concerns about Jewish influence in the media, which he saw as promoting values contrary to Christianity. This criticism aligned with broader evangelical anxieties about secularism and moral decline during the Cold War era.
- Graham's remarks suggested that he viewed Jewish dominance in media as a source of cultural opposition to Christian values, which he linked to the "Church of Satan." His perspective, though troubling, was framed within a dualistic view that balanced critique with acknowledgment of Jews' prophetic importance.

○ Martin Luther:

- Luther's criticisms focused on Jewish influence in religion and commerce. He accused Jews of using their religious and economic practices to undermine Christian society, framing them as enemies of the faith.
- In *On the Jews and Their Lies*, Luther wrote that Jews exploited Christians financially and misled them spiritually by rejecting Christ. His critique reflected medieval anti-Semitic stereotypes that portrayed Jews as dishonest and manipulative.

2. Biblical Language to Frame Critiques:

○ Billy Graham:

- Graham's use of the term "Church of Satan" can be traced to Revelation 2:9 and 3:9, where the phrase "synagogue of Satan" refers to groups opposing early Christians. This apocalyptic language resonated with evangelical theology, which often views societal challenges as manifestations of spiritual warfare.

- **Martin Luther:**

- Luther's critiques were heavily influenced by Pauline epistles, particularly passages in Romans, Galatians, and Corinthians, where Paul wrestles with the relationship between Jewish law and Christian grace. Luther interpreted these texts as evidence of Jewish obstinacy and their failure to accept Christ.
- His rhetoric often drew on Old Testament imagery, contrasting the covenant with Israel to the new covenant through Christ, which Luther argued had been fulfilled and superseded.

B. Differences

While both figures expressed concerns about Jews and their roles in society, their theological frameworks and interpretations diverged significantly, leading to stark contrasts in their views and implications.

1. Graham's Dualistic Framework:

- **Redemptive Role in Christian Eschatology:**

- Graham's theology, influenced by dispensationalism, granted Jews a dual role. While he critiqued their perceived cultural influence (the "Church of Satan"), he also acknowledged their central place in end-times prophecy.
- Jews were seen as God's chosen people, whose return to Israel and eventual recognition of Jesus as the Messiah were essential steps in the fulfillment of prophecy. This perspective allowed for a redemptive narrative in which Jews would ultimately align with God's plan.

- **Eschatological Optimism:**

- Graham's framework reflected a hopeful view of the future, where Jews would play a pivotal role in the culmination of God's divine plan. This dualism balanced critique with admiration, making his remarks both critical and supportive.

2. Luther's Singular Focus:

- **Absolute Hostility:**

- Luther's hostility toward Jews was singular and absolute, focusing entirely on their rejection of Christ. He saw this rejection as a deliberate and unforgivable act that disqualified Jews from any future role in God's plan.
- Unlike Graham, Luther did not distinguish between different types of Jews or grant them any redemptive role. His later writings advocated for punitive measures to diminish Jewish influence, reflecting deep-seated animosity.

- **No Eschatological Optimism:**

- Luther's theology lacked any eschatological vision for Jews. He adhered to a **supersessionist** framework, which held that the Christian Church had fully replaced Israel as God's chosen people. For Luther, Jews' continued existence as a religious group was a testament to their defiance and spiritual failure, with no prophetic significance.

- **Call to Action:**

- Luther's writings went beyond theological critique to advocate for concrete actions against Jews, including the destruction of synagogues, confiscation of property, and expulsion from Christian lands. These recommendations reflect the intensity of his hostility and the societal norms of his time.

Conclusion

The similarities between Billy Graham and Martin Luther lie in their shared concerns about Jewish influence and their use of biblical language to frame critiques. However, their differences highlight the profound impact of historical context and theological priorities on their perspectives. Graham's dualistic framework, shaped by 20th-century evangelical eschatology, allowed for a

redemptive view of Jews within God's plan. In contrast, Luther's singular focus on Jewish rejection of Christ, rooted in 16th-century supersessionism, led to an unrelenting hostility that left no room for eschatological optimism or redemption. These contrasts underscore the diversity of Christian attitudes toward Judaism and the enduring influence of historical and theological contexts on religious thought.

VI. Societal and Historical Impacts

A. Graham's Remarks

Billy Graham's private remarks, recorded during his 1972 conversation with President Nixon, had limited immediate impact on society but gained significance when made public decades later. Their revelation influenced perceptions of Graham's legacy, evangelical eschatology, and Jewish-Christian relations in the modern era.

1. Limited Immediate Impact:

- The remarks remained unknown to the public for thirty years, recorded as part of Nixon's private conversations. As a result, they had no direct influence on Graham's contemporaneous work or reputation.
- During his lifetime, Graham was widely regarded as a bridge-builder between faiths and cultures. His public ministry emphasized inclusivity and respect, particularly in the context of post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian relations.
- Because the remarks were private, they did not shape his ministry's message or evangelical discourse during the 1970s.

2. Impact Following Public Revelation:

- In 2002, the release of the Nixon tapes containing Graham's comments sparked widespread controversy, particularly among Jewish leaders and interfaith communities.

- The revelation contrasted sharply with Graham's public image, leading to disappointment and criticism from some quarters. His apology, in which he expressed regret and claimed to have no memory of the conversation, helped mitigate but did not erase the damage.
- Critics argued that the remarks reflected underlying biases within evangelicalism, raising questions about the movement's views on Jews and Judaism.

3. Influence on Evangelical Eschatology and Jewish-Christian Relations:

- The remarks highlighted tensions within evangelical eschatology, which simultaneously reveres Jews for their prophetic role in end-times theology and critiques perceived Jewish cultural influence.
- They underscored the complexity of Jewish-Christian relations in evangelical circles, where support for Israel and acknowledgment of Jews' biblical significance coexist with lingering stereotypes and suspicions.
- In the modern era, Graham's comments became a touchpoint for broader discussions about the intersection of theology, culture, and interfaith dialogue within evangelicalism.

B. Luther's Writings

In stark contrast to Graham's limited immediate impact, Martin Luther's writings, particularly *On the Jews and Their Lies*, had profound and far-reaching consequences. His work shaped European anti-Semitic policies and provided theological justification for centuries of persecution, with effects that reverberated into the modern era.

1. Immediate and Long-Lasting Impact:

- Luther's writings on Jews, published in the 16th century, quickly became influential in shaping societal attitudes. His recommendations for punitive measures—such as destroying

synagogues, confiscating property, and expelling Jews—were adopted by some Protestant rulers and communities.

- In Germany and other parts of Europe, Luther's rhetoric reinforced existing anti-Semitic sentiments, giving them a theological foundation that justified discrimination and violence against Jews.

2. Shaping European Anti-Semitic Policies:

- During the Reformation and beyond, Luther's views on Jews were cited by leaders seeking to justify restrictive policies. His influence extended to both Protestant and secular authorities, shaping laws that marginalized Jewish communities.
- In some cases, Luther's recommendations were enacted directly, such as the closure of synagogues or the exclusion of Jews from certain cities and regions.

3. Use by Nazi Propaganda:

- In the 20th century, Luther's writings were co-opted by Nazi propagandists to justify anti-Jewish actions. The Nazis, seeking to align their ideology with German history and culture, highlighted Luther's vehement denunciations of Jews to lend legitimacy to their policies.
- Luther was frequently quoted in Nazi publications, and his birthday was celebrated as a national holiday in Nazi Germany. His influence was particularly evident in the rhetoric surrounding the Nuremberg Laws and other anti-Semitic legislation.

4. Enduring Theological and Societal Consequences:

- Luther's writings have had a lasting impact on Christian theology and societal attitudes. While modern Lutheran churches have repudiated his anti-Semitic views, the legacy of his rhetoric continues to shape discussions about the role of theology in fostering or combating prejudice.

- In the broader Christian context, Luther's work remains a cautionary example of how theological disputes can escalate into societal harm, illustrating the dangers of conflating religious doctrine with political and cultural hostility.
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Comparison of Impacts

- **Scope and Visibility:**

- Graham's remarks, though significant, were private and only gained public attention decades later, limiting their immediate societal impact. Luther's writings, by contrast, were widely disseminated during his lifetime and had direct consequences for Jewish communities in Europe.

- **Theological and Societal Legacy:**

- Graham's comments primarily influenced perceptions of evangelicalism and its eschatological views in the modern era. Luther's writings shaped anti-Semitic policies and ideologies for centuries, leaving a legacy that culminated in their misuse by Nazi Germany.
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Conclusion

The societal and historical impacts of Billy Graham's and Martin Luther's views on Jews reflect the vastly different contexts and scopes of their influence. Graham's remarks, while troubling, were confined to a private conversation and had limited direct consequences. Luther's writings, however, became a cornerstone of European anti-Semitism, profoundly influencing policies and ideologies for generations. Together, these cases illustrate the enduring power of theological rhetoric to shape societal attitudes and underscore the importance of responsible leadership in religious discourse.

VII. Contextual Analysis

Understanding the remarks of Billy Graham and Martin Luther requires an analysis of the historical, cultural, and theological frameworks that shaped their perspectives. Each figure operated within distinct contexts that influenced their attitudes toward Judaism and their respective critiques.

A. Graham's Framework

Billy Graham's private remarks about Jews, captured in his 1972 conversation with President Nixon, reflect the influence of Cold War anxieties, evangelical theology, and apocalyptic interpretations of scripture prevalent in mid-20th-century America.

1. Cold War Anxieties and Evangelical Theology:

- **Post-War America:**
 - The Cold War era was marked by a pervasive sense of existential threat, with fears of communist influence and moral decay dominating public discourse. For evangelicals like Graham, this period heightened concerns about preserving Christian values and combating perceived cultural and ideological threats.
- **Perceptions of Media Influence:**
 - During this time, American evangelicals increasingly viewed mass media as a battleground for cultural values. Graham's remarks about Jewish influence in the media may have been shaped by this broader evangelical concern that secularism, materialism, and liberal ideologies were eroding Christian moral authority.
- **Dualism in Evangelical Thought:**
 - The evangelical worldview often framed societal struggles in dualistic terms, portraying the forces of good (Christianity) against the forces of evil (secularism or non-Christian

ideologies). Graham's reference to the "Church of Satan" aligns with this perspective, symbolizing opposition to Christian values rather than literal devil worship.

2. The Role of Revelation and Apocalyptic Literature:

○ Biblical Foundations:

- Evangelical theology of the mid-20th century placed significant emphasis on apocalyptic literature, particularly the Book of Revelation. Passages such as Revelation 2:9 and 3:9, which refer to the "synagogue of Satan," were interpreted as symbolic critiques of those opposing Christian truth.

○ Dispensationalist Eschatology:

- Graham's theology was deeply influenced by dispensationalism, a framework that views history as divided into distinct periods or "dispensations" of God's interaction with humanity. In this framework, Jews held a dual role:
 - As opponents of Christian truth (linked to the "Church of Satan" in Revelation).
 - As central players in the fulfillment of end-times prophecy, including the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and their eventual recognition of Jesus as the Messiah.

○ Tension Between Critique and Redemption:

- This eschatological framework created a tension in evangelical thought: Jews were both criticized for their current unbelief and revered for their prophetic role in God's ultimate plan. Graham's remarks reflect this dualistic view, balancing cultural critique with theological significance.
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B. Luther's Framework

Martin Luther's views on Jews, particularly his dramatic shift from early optimism to later hostility, were shaped by the theological and societal pressures of the Reformation era. His critique of Judaism must be understood in the context of his broader conflicts with the Catholic Church and the societal structures of 16th-century Europe.

1. Theological and Societal Pressures of the Reformation Era:

- **Reformation Challenges:**

- The Reformation was a time of profound religious upheaval, as Luther challenged the authority of the Catholic Church and sought to reform Christian doctrine. His critiques of Judaism were intertwined with his broader theological battles, as he sought to redefine Christianity in opposition to perceived corruptions of Catholicism.

- **Cultural Anti-Semitism:**

- Anti-Semitism was deeply embedded in medieval European society, with Jews often scapegoated for societal ills and marginalized through restrictive laws. Luther's later writings amplified these prejudices, embedding them within a theological framework that resonated with his audience.

- **Frustration Over Conversion:**

- Initially, Luther hoped that the Reformation would inspire Jews to convert to Christianity, believing that his reforms had restored the purity of the gospel. When this hope was not realized, he interpreted their continued rejection of Christ as willful defiance, which fueled his hostility.

2. Focus on Doctrinal Conflicts and Societal Structures:

- **Supersessionism:**

- Luther's theology was rooted in supersessionism, the belief that the Christian Church had replaced Israel as God's chosen

people. This framework left no room for Jews to play a redemptive role in history, framing them instead as relics of a superseded covenant.

- **Doctrinal Conflict with Catholicism:**

- Luther's polemics against Judaism were closely tied to his disputes with the Catholic Church. He accused Jews and Catholics alike of distorting God's word and resisting the truth of the gospel. This alignment of Jewish and Catholic opposition in his rhetoric served to strengthen his theological arguments against both groups.

- **Call to Action:**

- Unlike Graham, whose critiques were confined to private remarks, Luther's hostility found public expression in works like *On the Jews and Their Lies*. These writings not only framed Jews as enemies of Christianity but also called for concrete measures to suppress their influence, reflecting the societal norms and power dynamics of the Reformation era.

Conclusion

Billy Graham's remarks and Martin Luther's writings must be understood within the distinct frameworks that shaped their perspectives. Graham's dualistic view was rooted in Cold War anxieties and evangelical eschatology, which balanced critiques of Jewish influence with acknowledgment of their prophetic role. In contrast, Luther's singular focus on Jewish rejection of Christ, shaped by the theological and societal pressures of the Reformation, left no room for redemption or eschatological significance. These contextual analyses highlight how historical and cultural forces shape theological interpretations and their societal implications.

VIII. Comparison and Contrast: Luther, Graham, Darby, and Scofield

Adding John Nelson Darby and Cyrus Scofield to the discussion brings an essential dimension to the comparison, as these figures were pivotal in shaping dispensationalist theology—the framework that significantly influenced Billy Graham’s views. This section will explore the similarities and differences between Martin Luther, Billy Graham, and the theological contributions of Darby and Scofield, focusing on their attitudes toward Judaism and eschatology.

A. Shared Theological Concerns

1. Role of Judaism in God’s Plan:

- **Luther:**
 - Luther rejected any ongoing role for Jews in God’s salvific plan. Rooted in supersessionism, he believed that the Church had entirely replaced Israel, leaving no future redemptive purpose for the Jewish people.
- **Graham:**
 - Influenced by dispensationalism, Graham acknowledged the Jewish people’s significant role in God’s end-times plan. This included their return to the Land of Israel and their pivotal role in events leading to Christ’s Second Coming.
- **Darby and Scofield:**
 - Darby and Scofield radically redefined Christian attitudes toward Judaism by framing the Jewish people as integral to God’s prophetic timetable. Unlike Luther, who saw the Old Testament covenant as fulfilled and obsolete, they viewed the Jewish covenant as ongoing and integral to the end times.

2. Biblical Interpretation and Use of Prophecy:

- **Luther:**
 - Luther focused on Pauline theology and Old Testament critiques of Israel's faithlessness, using these texts to argue for the rejection of Judaism.
 - **Graham:**
 - Graham relied heavily on the apocalyptic imagery of **Revelation**, interpreting it through the dispensationalist framework established by Darby and Scofield.
 - **Darby and Scofield:**
 - Darby emphasized a literal interpretation of prophecy, while Scofield's *Reference Bible* organized the Bible into dispensational periods, elevating the role of prophecy and reestablishing Israel as central to God's plan.
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B. Contrasting Attitudes Toward Jews

1. Supersessionism vs. Dispensationalism:

- **Luther:**
 - As a supersessionist, Luther viewed the Jewish people as spiritually obsolete. Their rejection of Christ invalidated their covenant, and he saw no future role for them in God's redemptive plan.
- **Graham:**
 - Graham's views, shaped by dispensationalist theology, stood in stark contrast. While critical of Jewish unbelief, he acknowledged their prophetic importance and anticipated their ultimate redemption in God's eschatological timeline.

- **Darby and Scofield:**

- Darby and Scofield were at the forefront of rejecting supersessionism. They redefined the Church and Israel as distinct entities, with Israel retaining its covenantal role through the end times.

2. Treatment of Jews in Theological Discourse:

- **Luther:**

- Luther's later writings were marked by hostility, portraying Jews as adversaries to Christianity and advocating for punitive measures against them.

- **Graham:**

- While Graham's recorded remarks contained critiques of Jewish cultural influence, they did not advocate for punitive actions or systemic discrimination. His views were framed by theological curiosity and eschatological interpretation.

- **Darby and Scofield:**

- Darby and Scofield viewed Jews positively within their theological framework. Their work contributed to a resurgence of Christian support for the Jewish people, particularly in the context of Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel.

C. Views on Eschatology

1. End-Times Role of Jews:

- **Luther:**

- Eschatology was not central to Luther's theology. He focused on salvation through faith and the present struggle against perceived religious corruption, with no significant role for Jews in future events.

- **Graham:**
 - Graham's eschatology, influenced by dispensationalism, placed Jews at the heart of end-times prophecy. Their return to the Land of Israel and eventual recognition of Jesus as the Messiah were viewed as essential to the Second Coming.
- **Darby and Scofield:**
 - Darby was a key architect of the eschatological framework that Graham inherited. He emphasized the **Rapture**, the return of the Jewish people to Israel, and the eventual fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.
 - Scofield further popularized this view through his *Reference Bible*, which provided detailed annotations linking biblical prophecy to contemporary and future events.

2. Interaction Between Church and Israel:

- **Luther:**
 - For Luther, the Church had fully replaced Israel as God's chosen people. Jews' continued existence as a separate group was viewed as defiance of divine truth.
- **Graham:**
 - Dispensationalism, as adopted by Graham, maintained a separation between the Church and Israel. This allowed for Jews to retain their covenantal identity while the Church fulfilled its distinct role in God's plan.
- **Darby and Scofield:**
 - Darby's theology introduced the idea of the Church as a "parenthesis" in God's dealings with Israel, emphasizing that the Jewish people remained central to God's ultimate purposes. Scofield's writings expanded on this, offering a detailed timeline for the restoration of Israel and its prophetic significance.

D. Legacy and Influence

1. Luther:

- Luther's supersessionist views contributed to centuries of Christian anti-Semitism in Europe, influencing policies and societal attitudes that marginalized and persecuted Jewish communities.
- His writings were later co-opted by anti-Semitic movements, including the Nazis, as theological justification for discrimination and violence.

2. Graham:

- Graham's adoption of dispensationalist ideas contributed to modern evangelical support for Israel and Zionism. However, his recorded remarks about Jewish influence revealed lingering tensions within evangelical theology and its cultural implications.
- His eschatological emphasis on the Jewish role in prophecy helped reinforce evangelical fascination with Israel's geopolitical significance.

3. Darby and Scofield:

- Darby and Scofield revolutionized Protestant theology, creating a framework that elevated Jews' prophetic role and redefined Christian attitudes toward Judaism.
- Their influence extended beyond theology to geopolitics, shaping Christian Zionism and fostering widespread evangelical support for the modern State of Israel.

Conclusion

The comparison between Luther, Graham, Darby, and Scofield highlights the diversity of Christian theological perspectives on Judaism. Luther's supersessionism contrasted sharply with the dispensationalist framework of

Darby and Scofield, which granted Jews a redemptive role in God's eschatological plan. Graham, influenced by this dispensationalist tradition, balanced critique with acknowledgment of Jewish prophetic significance, standing in stark contrast to Luther's absolute hostility. Together, these figures illustrate the evolving and often contradictory ways in which Christian theology has engaged with Jewish identity and its place in salvation history.

IX. Gaza, Amalek, and the Church of Satan: Connecting Graham's View to Current Events

The modern conflict in Gaza, often described by some observers as genocidal in its scale and impact, and the biblical concept of **Amalek**, offer a profound lens through which to examine Billy Graham's dualistic view of Jews as belonging to either the "Church of Satan" or the redemptive narrative of End Times prophecy. This chapter explores how Graham's theological framework might be applied to contemporary events, particularly the Gaza conflict, and how these events resonate with ancient biblical themes.

A. Biblical Context: Amalek and the Eternal Struggle

1. Who Was Amalek?:

- In the Hebrew Bible, Amalek represents a perennial enemy of Israel, first appearing in Exodus 17 as a tribe that attacked the Israelites during their exodus from Egypt.
- Amalek is portrayed not only as a physical enemy but as a symbol of evil and opposition to God's will. In Deuteronomy 25:17–19, Israel is commanded to "blot out the memory of Amalek" as a divine mandate.

2. Amalek as a Symbol of Opposition:

- The Amalekites became an archetype for forces opposing God's chosen people and divine justice. In Jewish and Christian traditions,

Amalek is often interpreted metaphorically as any force that seeks to destroy God's covenant people or derail His plans.

3. Modern Interpretations:

- The concept of Amalek has been invoked in modern times to describe ideological or existential threats. In some interpretations, it represents evil forces in a broader spiritual battle, echoing the dualistic themes found in Graham's view of the "Church of Satan."
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B. Graham's View: The Church of Satan vs. End Times Jews

1. Church of Satan:

- For Graham, the "Church of Satan" represented forces actively opposing Christian and biblical values. In the context of modern geopolitics, this could be extended to those perceived as obstructing God's redemptive plan, whether through secularism, violence, or systemic oppression.
- If applied to the Gaza conflict, proponents of Graham's view might interpret certain actors or systems as embodying this opposition—whether through the dehumanization of the "other" or the perpetuation of cycles of violence.

2. End Times Jews:

- Graham's eschatology emphasized the Jewish people's redemptive role in end-times prophecy, particularly their return to Israel and eventual recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. This view inherently prioritizes the land of Israel and the Jewish people's place within it as central to God's plan.
- The tension in Gaza, which pits the sovereignty of the State of Israel against the rights of Palestinians, reflects a profound challenge to the dispensationalist framework. For those who align with Graham's views, the violence in Gaza could be seen as part of the broader spiritual struggle leading up to the fulfillment of prophecy.

C. The Gaza Conflict and Theological Dualism

1. Gaza as a Battleground:

- The Gaza conflict, marked by stark asymmetries of power, civilian suffering, and contested narratives, resonates with biblical themes of struggle between good and evil.
- In Graham's dualistic view, the suffering of innocents and the perpetuation of violence might reflect the influence of the "Church of Satan," symbolizing opposition to God's will and human flourishing.

2. Eschatological Implications:

- For dispensationalists, events in Israel and surrounding territories are often interpreted as harbingers of end-times prophecy. The conflict in Gaza could be seen as a prelude to the broader fulfillment of biblical predictions, including the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and the eventual reconciliation of Jews and Christians.

3. Parallels with Amalek:

- In the context of Graham's theology, Amalek might symbolize both the physical and spiritual opposition faced by God's people. The dehumanization and destruction in Gaza could be interpreted as a modern manifestation of Amalek, perpetuating cycles of hatred and defiance against divine justice.

D. Ethical and Theological Challenges

1. Tensions in Evangelical Theology:

- Graham's dualistic view creates ethical tensions when applied to real-world conflicts like Gaza. While his eschatology grants Jews a central role in God's plan, it leaves little room for the rights and humanity of those outside this framework, such as Palestinians.

- The invocation of "Amalek" or "Church of Satan" language risks dehumanizing one side of the conflict, perpetuating a simplistic narrative of good versus evil.

2. Broader Implications for Peace:

- Graham's eschatology emphasizes the ultimate redemption of the Jewish people but does not directly address the complexities of modern geopolitics. This gap highlights the challenge of applying theological frameworks to contemporary events, where human suffering and moral ambiguity often defy simplistic interpretations.

3. Reconciling Theology with Compassion:

- The Gaza conflict raises difficult questions about the application of biblical themes in a world where the stakes are human lives. For Christians influenced by Graham's views, balancing theological commitments with the imperative to seek justice and compassion for all parties remains a profound challenge.

E. Concluding Thoughts

The Gaza conflict and the biblical concept of Amalek resonate deeply with Billy Graham's dualistic view of the "Church of Satan" versus End Times Jews. While Graham's eschatology provides a framework for understanding the spiritual dimensions of such struggles, it also raises critical questions about the ethical implications of these interpretations. As modern conflicts increasingly intersect with ancient theological themes, the challenge lies in applying these frameworks in ways that promote justice, compassion, and a deeper understanding of God's purposes.

X. Conclusion

The exploration of Billy Graham's and Martin Luther's views on Judaism, expanded through comparisons with John Nelson Darby, Cyrus Scofield, and the modern context of the Gaza conflict, reveals the profound influence of theology

on societal attitudes, geopolitical actions, and historical legacies. Each figure brought their unique theological framework to bear on the question of Judaism's role in God's plan, shaping both religious discourse and real-world outcomes in their respective contexts.

Martin Luther's theology, grounded in supersessionism, framed Jews solely as adversaries of Christianity, with no redemptive role in history. His writings fueled centuries of Christian anti-Semitism in Europe, culminating in their use as justification for policies of persecution and even genocide. By contrast, Billy Graham, influenced by dispensationalist theology as shaped by Darby and Scofield, adopted a dualistic view. He acknowledged Jews' critical role in end-times prophecy while critiquing their perceived cultural influence through concepts like the "Church of Satan."

The dispensationalist framework offered by Darby and Scofield stood as a turning point, emphasizing the distinct and ongoing covenant between God and Israel. This theology shaped not only Graham's eschatological views but also the broader evangelical movement's unwavering support for Israel, despite its inherent tensions with the realities of modern conflicts like Gaza.

The inclusion of the Gaza conflict and the biblical concept of Amalek in this analysis underscores the enduring relevance of these theological frameworks in interpreting contemporary events. Graham's dualism resonates with the dual role assigned to Jews in dispensationalist eschatology, but it also reveals the ethical challenges of applying ancient narratives to modern conflicts. Amalek, as a symbol of opposition to God's will, serves as a powerful metaphor, yet its invocation risks perpetuating cycles of dehumanization and violence, especially in geopolitically charged contexts like Gaza.

Ultimately, this study demonstrates how theology, shaped by historical and cultural pressures, can profoundly influence perceptions, actions, and legacies. It also highlights the responsibility of religious leaders and theologians to engage these frameworks with care, ensuring they are used to promote understanding, compassion, and justice rather than division and harm. As modern events continue to intersect with ancient theological themes, the challenge remains to reconcile these frameworks with the complexities of the contemporary world while seeking to align them with the ethical imperatives of faith.

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And then there's the synagogue of
Satan.