

## *Embracing God's Heart for Israel and Standing Against Anti-Semitism*

### I. THE TRAGIC HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN ANTI-SEMITISM

- A. Historically, the Jewish people were most concerned about harm coming to them from “Christians.” Their inability to embrace Jesus as Messiah has been hindered greatly by people who have caused great destruction to the Jewish people in the name of Christ. We recommend an excellent book on anti-Semitism throughout Church history: *Our Hands Are Stained With Blood* by Michael Brown.
- B. *Early Church Fathers*: Sadly, many of the most influential Church fathers were anti-Semitic.
1. *John Chrysostom* (patriarch of Constantinople 398-407): “The Jews are most miserable of all men...lustful, rapacious, greedy...They know only one thing...to get drunk, to kill and maim one another...Indeed Jews worship the devil...their religion is a disease.”
  2. *Augustine* (bishop of Hippo in N. Africa): The Jewish people’s sufferings are God-ordained. The Jews are cursed...the Christians are blessed...this proves that Christianity is right.
- C. *Martin Luther*: “What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews? Since they live among us, we dare not tolerate their conduct, now that we are aware of their lying, and reviling, and blaspheming. If we do, we become sharers in their lies, cursing, and blasphemy...I shall give you my sincere advice: First to set fire to their schools and synagogues...Second, I advise that their houses also be destroyed...Third, that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them...Fourth, that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life.” (from *On The Jews and Their Lies*)
- D. *Black Death* (1347-1350): This plague killed about one-third of the population of Europe. The Jews were blamed for “causing God’s judgment,” and so hundreds of Jewish communities were destroyed and tens of thousands Jewish people murdered by the Christian population of Europe.
- E. *Russian Pogroms* (1881-1921): These, carried out by Christians against the Jews, killed thousands.
- F. *Holocaust*: 6,000,000 Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. Hitler wrote: “I am today acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator...I am fighting for the work of the Lord.” Hitler easily spread his hatred among a highly educated, yet deeply anti-Semitic, Christian nation.

### II. PRESENT DAY ANTI-SEMITISM

- A. *United Nations*: The U.N. General Assembly’s 2015 session adopted 20 resolutions singling out Israel for criticism, but only 3 resolutions that criticized the rest of the world combined.

B. **BDS Movement:** The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction movement has momentum on many college campuses in the USA and Europe. Many Christian denominations have joined the BDS Movement—Presbyterian Church USA; United Church of Christ; United Methodist Church; US Mennonite Church; World Council of Churches, etc..

C. **Fundamental Islam:** is raging throughout the earth against the Jewish people and their homeland.

### III. GOD’S COMMITMENT, LOVE, AND ZEAL FOR ISRAEL

A. Paul felt urgency about the Church understanding God’s plan for Israel’s salvation (Rom. 11:25).

<sup>25</sup>*I do not desire...that you should be ignorant of this mystery...that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup>And so all Israel will be saved. (Rom. 11:25-26)*

B. God is a covenant-keeping God—We apply this truth to our lives and the Church, and thus we must also apply this to Israel and the Jewish people as well.

<sup>8</sup>*...the Lord loves you [Israel], and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers...<sup>9</sup>know that...He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy...(Deut. 7:8–9)*

C. Scripture calls the Church to stand with God’s purposes for Israel (Isa. 40:1-2; 62:11; Jer. 31:7-10; Joel 3:14; Zech. 12:3; 14:2; Mt. 25:31-46; Rom. 11:11, 20-22; Rev. 12:13-17). I believe this will be a **litmus test** of obedience. The highest issue in serving God’s purpose for Israel is **obeying Jesus’ sovereign leadership**. We love Him; thus, we want to do what He does and love what He loves.

D. God will force all to decide to stand for or against Israel. He calls the Church to stand with Israel (Isa. 40:1-2; 62:11; Jer. 31:7-10; Joel 3:14; Zech. 12:3; 14:2; Mt. 25:31-46; Rom. 11:11, 20-22)

<sup>3</sup>*In that day...I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples... (Zech. 12:3)*

<sup>2</sup>*I will gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat [Jerusalem]; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people...Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land...<sup>14</sup>Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. (Joel 3:2, 11-14)*

E. The Church must take a stand to boldly pray, declare, and sing the message of God’s purposes for Israel so that all the nations hear it clearly (Jer. 31:7-10). We continue to work with many ministries as we ask the Lord to raise up 100 million intercessors in the nations for God’s plan for Israel.

<sup>7</sup>*Thus says the Lord: “Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O Lord, save Your people, the remnant of Israel!’...” (Jer. 31:7)*

<sup>1</sup>*“Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” says your God. <sup>2</sup>“Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned...” (Isa. 40:1-2)*

F. Jesus wept over Jerusalem when considering her coming difficulty. We embrace God's heart for His people Israel and ask the Holy Spirit to let us see what He sees and feel what He feels about Israel.

***<sup>1</sup>For Zion's sake I [the Lord] will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness...<sup>4</sup>you will be called, "My delight is in her"<sup>5</sup>... as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you. <sup>6</sup> On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen [intercessors]; all day and all night they will never keep silent...<sup>7</sup>until He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. (Isa. 62:1-7, NAS)***

G. ***March of Remembrance*** (Sunday, May 1): Together we are stating to the Jewish community: "You are not forgotten. You are not alone. We will remember, and we will not be silent for Zion's sake."