

Embracing God’s Heart for Israel and Standing against Anti-Semitism

I. THE TRAGIC HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN ANTI-SEMITISM

A. Historically, one of the Jewish people’s greatest concerns was about being harmed by “Christians.” Their ability 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 395-430): “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): Pogroms carried out by Christians killed thousands of Jews.

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 spread his hatred with ease among a highly educated, deeply anti-Semitic, Christian Germany.

II. PRESENT-DAY ANTI-SEMITISM

A. ***United Nations***: The UN Human Rights Council in 2015 adopted 20 resolutions condemning various nations for violations, 17 of which condemned Israel alone.

B. **BDS Movement:** The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions 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. **Islamic fundamentalism:** is raging around the world 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).

²⁵I 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. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved. (Rom. 11:25-26)

B. God is a covenant-keeping God. We apply this truth to our own lives and to the Church, and thus we must also apply it to Israel and the Jewish people. God will keep His covenant with Israel.

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

C. God will force all to decide to stand *for* or *against* Israel.

³“In that day...I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples.” (Zech. 12:3)

²“I will gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat [in 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...¹⁴Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.” (Joel 3:2, 11-14)

D. 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, and so we want to do what He does, and love what He loves.

E. Jesus wept over Jerusalem as He considered her coming difficulty (Lk. 19:41). We embrace God’s heart for Israel and ask the Spirit to let us see what He sees and feel what He feels about Israel.

¹For 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...⁴you will be called, “My delight is in her” ⁵... as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you. ⁶ On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen [intercessors]; all day and all night they will never keep silent...⁷until He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. (Isa. 62:1-7, NASB)

F. 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 to pray for God's plan for Israel.

⁷Thus 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)

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

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."