

I. Story of the Seeds

- A. After the Fall, God gave a prophetic promise of a coming Deliverer who would destroy the serpent once and for all. That prophecy foreshadowed the entire Gospel storyline:

*<sup>14</sup>“The LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; <sup>15</sup>And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise [crush] you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”* (Gen. 3:14-15, NASB)

- B. We see hints or examples of these two competing seeds over the next several chapters: Cain & Abel (Gen. 4; 1 Jn. 3:7-12), or Ham and Shem & Japheth (Gen. 9:22-27).
- C. The seed of the woman is clarified to be coming through Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:4-6).

*<sup>19</sup>“But God said, ‘No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him...<sup>21</sup>But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.”* (Gen. 17:19,21; NASB)

1. God insisted that this covenant extended down Abraham’s lineage through Isaac, Jacob (who was later re-named *Israel*), through Israel’s twelve sons (Gen. 21:12; 22:16-18; 25:23; 26:3-5,24; 27:27-29; 28:3-4,13-15; 35:9-12; 48), and even more specifically, through Judah (Gen. 49:10).
  2. As the seed line of the woman is being clarified, we see enmity with the other seed line: Ishmael persecuted Isaac (Gen. 21:9), and Esau hated Jacob (Gen. 27:41).
- D. Skip ahead to Revelation 12: in a vision, John sees this struggle playing out in the heavenlies (behind the scenes). One of its clearest messages is that the serpent has been raging against the woman all along and will continue to do so until the end.

II. Antisemitism in the Bible Era

- A. Egypt – oppressed and enslaved Israel; God sovereignly delivered them (Ex. 1-12).
- B. Assyria – exile of the Northern Kingdom (721 BC); forced them to intermarry with other conquered peoples, in part to reduce their nationalistic identity and reduce risk of future rebellions (“the 10 Lost Tribes of Israel”).
1. God miraculously saved Judah from this same Empire (see Is. 36-37; 2 Kgs. 18-19).

- C. Persia (480-460 BC) – in the book of Esther, Haman deceives King Ahasuerus to declare a date on which every Jew throughout the Empire was to be destroyed (Est. 3). Again, God delivered His people through prayer & fasting and the intercession of Esther.
- D. Greeks (Antiochus Epiphanes – 168 BC) – massacred Jewish people in Jerusalem, shut down their religious practices, and desecrated the Temple; attempted to Hellenize them, which would have erased their culture.
- E. Rome (70 AD) – siege of Jerusalem, destruction of the Temple and city. According to Josephus, over 1 million were slaughtered and 97k enslaved.
  - 1. Bar Kokhba revolt 60+ years later, which Rome put down by killing 580k Jews and expelling the rest from Judea (though many remained in Samaria and Galilee). This marks the beginning of the Jewish diaspora.

### III. Antisemitism in the Church Era

- A. Doctrines of the Church Fathers – antisemitism leached into many of their opinions and teachings concerning the people of Israel. They blamed all Jews for Jesus' crucifixion (deicide), and pointed to the diaspora as evidence that God had forsaken Israel. We can find antisemitic writings and teachings from Church Fathers like Justin Martyr, Melito of Sardis, Tertullian, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine.
  - 1. As the Church became the official state religion and entwined with politics, these ideas shaped official state policies against the Jewish people (rights, privileges, etc.). Examples: Christians forbidden from eating with or marrying (punishable by death) Jews, conversion to Judaism outlawed, Jews banned from Jerusalem, etc.
    - a. First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea – separated celebration of Easter from Passover; “in order that we may no more have any thing in common with those parricides and the murderers of our Lord”.
  - 2. Note – the rage in the antisemitic writings from these Church Fathers is inconsistent with the tone of the teachings of the New Testament, or even their own writings. *Their thoughts on the Jewish people were disconnected from the Gospel and marked with different (bad) fruit.*
- B. Middle Ages – much of the antisemitic angst in replacement theology boiled over into outright violence and murder.
  - 1. Rumours – “blood libel”, myth that Jewish people abducted and killed Christian children for ritual purposes (clearly illegal according to Mosaic Law).

2. Pogroms – “an organized massacre of helpless people; specifically, such a massacre of Jews” (Miriam-Webster). Term not used until 19<sup>th</sup> century, but applies to many occurrences through the centuries.
  3. Scapegoating – Jews blamed for catastrophes, including the Black Death.
  4. Crusades – we understand the Crusades to be campaigns by European Christians to take control of the Holy Land from the Muslims. But these crusading armies consistently massacred and destroyed Jewish communities along the way.
    - a. “It is even reported that, when the Crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099, the Jews fled to the Great Synagogue, which the Crusaders then set on fire, burning the Jews alive...singing “Christ We Adore Thee!” with their Crusader crosses held high” (Dr. Brown).
  5. Spanish Inquisition – in pogroms, Jews were forced to decide between baptism or death. Many who did convert did so only in appearance but continued practicing Judaism in secret. The inquisition used torture and executions to root out these “heretics”, in the name of Christianity. Some 2,000 were executed (mostly Jews), and hundreds of thousands were deported.
- C. Nazi Germany – added racial eugenics to the mix of scapegoating, stereotyping. Blamed the Jews for every German national issue.
1. Germany was one of the most advanced and cultured nations in Europe and were about as “Christian” a nation as can be. Yet they became the nation that embraced and undertook the systematic murder of the Jewish people.
  2. In the aftermath of WWII, as Israel was granted state status, the Arab nations in the region vowed and fought to “exterminate” them immediately, but failed.
- D. Present
1. Hamas – “Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it” “There is no solution for the Palestinian problem except by Jihad.”
    - a. One infamous hadith (saying of Muhammad; Muslim version of our gospels) – “The Day of Judgment will not come about until Moslems fight Jews and kill them. Then, the Jews will hide behind rocks and trees, and the rocks and trees will cry out: ‘O Moslem, there is a Jew hiding behind me, come and kill him.’”
  2. Iran – “the perpetual subject of Iran is the elimination of Israel from the region”; called their leaders “untouchable rabid dogs” who “cannot be called human beings”; “Israel must be wiped off the map” (Khamenei, Supreme Leader of Iran).

- a. “The Zionist regime will be wiped out, and humanity will be liberated”  
(Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, former President).
  - b. Continually deny the holocaust, while simultaneously calling for a holocaust
3. United Nations – 28 member states do not recognize the State of Israel, some going so far as to reject passports from Israel or any other passport that contains Israeli stamps or visas.
4. Social Media – “Jews Killed Jesus” was trending after Oct. 7
- a. Nov. 13 – 3.6 billion global social media posts w/ #standwithpalestine compared to 255 million #standwithisrael (approx. 14:1 ratio).
  - b. Recent survey (Harvard CAPS/Harris): every US age demographic supports Israel (81%) except 18–24-year-olds. In that group, 51% believe “Israel should be ended and given to Hamas and the Palestinians”.
    - i. 66% of these young people believe Hamas’ attack constituted genocide, but 60% believe it was justified (Palestinian grievances). Of the rest of respondents, 73% called it unjustified genocide.
    - ii. 53% believe students should be free to call for Jewish genocide on campus.

#### IV. Why Pray for Israel?

- A. Satan is bent on their destruction, dating back to Gen. 3:14-15. Everything he does is antithetical to the Lord’s purposes, which is why we are to resist him and his ways. We pray for Israel because we see that Satan is committed to destroying them.
- B. The Church is guilty of many atrocities against the Jewish people. If we are to be made into one new man (Eph. 2:11-22), there is much humility, repentance, prayer, and demonstrated love required on our part. The Gentile Church must begin intentionally moving towards the Jewish people in love and humility. Praying for Israel is the first step in this process, as it’s where we start to receive more of His heart for His people.