

PROGRAM 105 TEASER

Imagine a mother and daughter who can not stand each other. They even try to disown each other. "I'm not your mother!" "And I'm not your daughter!" Sad, no? And tragic ! Because there is no way they can break that inextricable link of blood and birth—even though they fail to see value in each other. That's a biological fact. I use this to illustrate a theological fact—concerning the Jews and the Church. Let's call Israel the mother and the Church the daughter. Often each tries to disown the other. God says that won't happen. You are about to find out why. "Jews, Israel and the Church—the God Connection." It's More Than Talk.

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JEWS, ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH: THE GOD CONNECTION (PART 1)

PAGE 1 Punishment With A Purpose

Israel front page. It's hard to believe, isn't it. Unless you believe the Bible. A land so miniscule—a people whose numbers are so insignificant. One would think that after the Holocaust the world's heart would be so broken that the word "antisemitism" would disappear and Israel would be accepted and cheered as the ultimate survivor. Not so. Jews are still despised and Israel is the nation the world loves to hate. But what about God? How do His thoughts differ from those of the world? The pages of Scripture contrast the vast difference. We begin the first of twenty four points. And you will see how the Church—the body of Christ—is inextricably linked to the Jews and Israel. God's promises and preservation—and yes, punishment that purifies both Israel and the Church—are seen throughout Scripture. Its time the Church wakes up to that unbreakable connection.

1) In Israel's groaning, God brought compassion "So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them. (Exodus 2:24,25) Israel is groaning again. Enemies grow stronger. Hope placed in "friends" is dashed again and again. The double- standard is used shamelessly ("Other nations can—Israel cannot"). No one can guess where the next suicide bomber will strike. Yet God's intervention—in His time—shall come.

(And the Church? Ephesians 2:1-4—we were groaning in our paganism)

2) In His punishment of Israel, God promised their preservation. Even in the midst of all the curses promised a rebellious and arrogant Jewish people, the Father's love for His wayward son stands out: "Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God." (Leviticus 26:44)

Jews have tried to cooperate in their own demise by melting in with Gentiles. Still there are Jews. Israel has embraced the West's sins, trusted man's promises and not God's, and opted to be "like the other nations". Still there is an Israel. To most Jews, God doesn't really exist. To others, He is silent and aloof. But Scripture decrees the opposite—a sovereign, living God involved in His world and bringing it—and Israel—to His predetermined will and plan.

(And the Church? Hebrews 12:5-11—chastisement with a purpose)

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PAGE 2 The Cost Of Running In The Wrong Direction

3) In Israel's tribulation, God offers mercy. Jewish pain has not come about solely through Gentiles. Today, most Jews are ignorant of their own Scriptures. Prior to the Holocaust, a broken hearted Jabotinsky traveled across Europe begging his Jewish people to get out and return to Palestine (Israel) before it was too late. They laughed him to scorn. When Israel gained Judea and Samaria (in 1967), one million Jews (of the ten million living outside of Israel) returning to the land would have ended all of Arafat's and the PLO's quest today to steal it. Most Jews opted for the juicy West—and still do—even while arguing Israel's case with many words but few deeds. Still God follows them with this loving promise not to abandon them: "When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice (for the Lord your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor

forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.” (Deuteronomy 4:30,31)

(And the Church—Revelation 3:16-20; Matthew 11:28-30—rebuke for sin and rest for the obedient)

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PAGE 3 A Light In Lonely Darkness

I know what it is like to have a rock crush a car window in Jerusalem and miss my head by some twelve inches. I have observed the Israeli army in battle outside of Beirut, spent five days in Lebanon when terrorists ruled that land, hunkered down in a gas mask with Israelis as SCUD missiles landed around us and even served with the Israel Defense Forces for some three weeks along with my Christian team as we packed medicines and freed up soldiers for what looked like an impending war. Yet none of this is comparable to what Israelis face today—everyday—the suicide bomber who can appear on a bus, in a store or even at a wedding—and blow himself and innocent people to bits of flesh and bone. And Iran with a future nuclear bomb? Yet somehow Jews press on and Israel survives. Their very existence over the past four millennia, including today, should make honest hearts tremble in awe at the faithfulness of God to fulfill His Word concerning Israel and the Jews. We continue our series.

4) In Jewish aloneness, God used a Gentile to guarantee His presence. Many Christians today are speaking and living the words of Ruth as they combat antisemitism and prove to be Israel's staunchest allies. “But Ruth said: Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me.” (Ruth 1:16,17)

(Hebrews 13:5,6 The same holds true for the Church. Christ guarantees His presence.)

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PAGE 4 Guarantees Only God Could Make

5) In Israel's vulnerability, God guaranteed their deliverance. The Herods, Hamans and Hitlers of this world arise to obliterate the Jewish people—only to meet their own demise. Mordechai was well aware of God's promise to preserve the Jews. Before Queen Esther rose to the occasion, Mordechai told her that if she missed her golden moment of destiny, God would find someone else whom He would use to deliver His suffering people. One thing was certain—the Jewish people would not disappear. Now this scripture has challenged Tom and me—and many others to confront today's Hamans of history.

“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”
(Esther 4:14)

(Matthew 16:15-18 is the same guarantee. Christ’s Church will stand when all else has fallen.)

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PAGE 5 The World’s Outcasts And Misfits

6) In Israel's brokenness, God brings healing. From the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 AD until the founding of the Jewish state in 1948, the whole world—potentates, politicians, priests and preachers—could declare open season on Jews. The only places of refuge would be in other lands—run by other Gentiles—who could also target Jews at a whim. They were the world’s fool—weak—despised. Then came Israel, the one place on earth where Jews are in authority and not under Gentile lords and laws. Jews continue to return "home" from the four corners of the earth. It is more than a human-inspired desire to make aliyah (a going back to Israel). It is a God-inspired move that is directing a people

and nation to His predetermined destiny. His love for Israel is more certain than tomorrow's sunrise.

“The Lord builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” (Psalms 147:2,3)

(And the Church? We are also the world's fools—weak—despised. But look who is on our side! Corinthians 1:26-29)