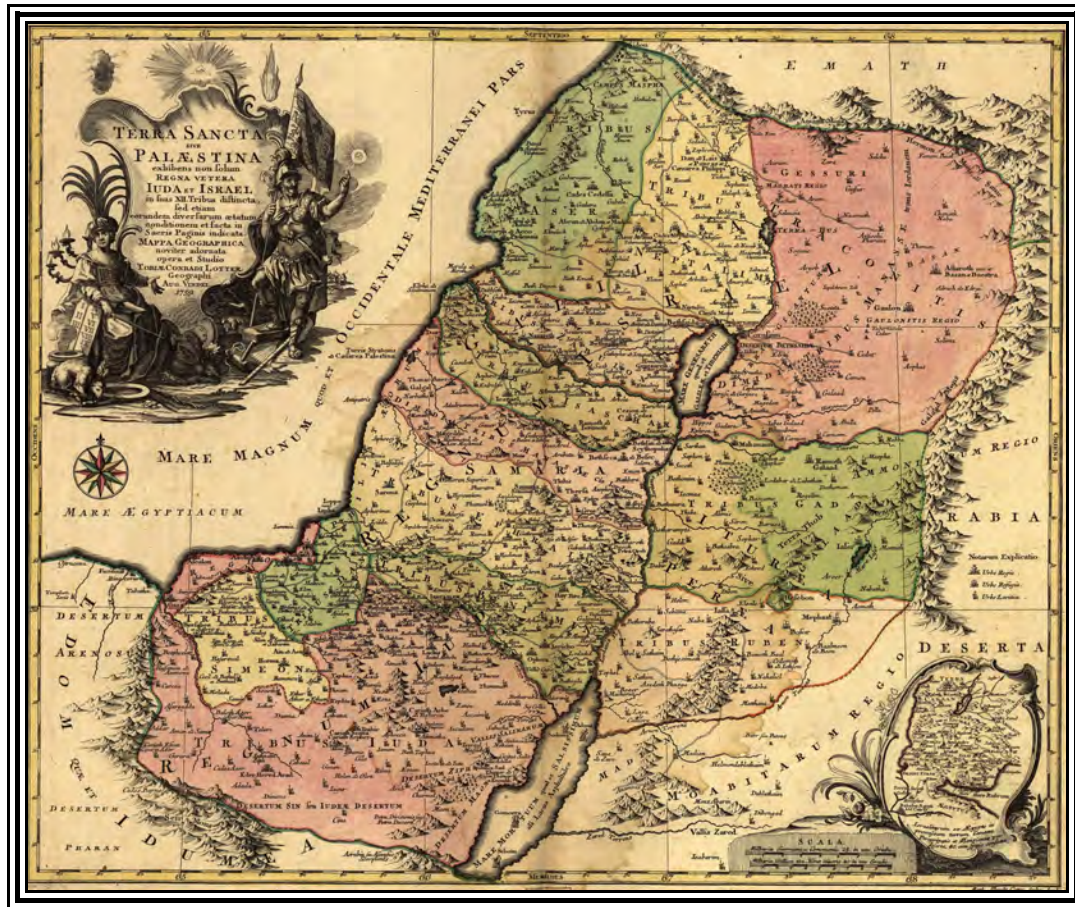


***THE ISRAEL OF
GOD***

A Biblical And Historical Study



17th Century Map of “The Holy Land - Palestine”

1. Background and Boundaries

Throughout history, the narrow strip of land on the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea has been subject to the ever changing fortunes of the kingdoms which surround it. The land is too small - 250 miles long and 100 miles wide - to have established and maintained its own sovereignty and with only a few notable brief exceptions it has spent its entire history under the domination of others. Its location - unfortunately for those who have inhabited the place across the centuries - has always been strategic. Because of the impassable desolation of the deserts of the Sinai and Arabian peninsulas to the south, Palestine - to use the Roman designation - has been always been needed by its neighbors as a transportation corridor between the ancient realm of Egypt - to the southwest - and the various kingdoms of Mesopotamia to the northeast. Those needs were both economic and military placing Palestine in the uncomfortable cross hairs of history. Later empire builders, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantines, and Islam, all deemed this territory to be essential to the realization of their imperial ambitions.

The earliest historical reference to Palestine are found in the archives of Old Kingdom Egypt (2,600 B.C.) which identify the region as “*the land of the sand dwellers*” no doubt an allusion to the nomadic bedouin tribes of the deserts east of the Jordan Valley. Early 3rd millennia Mesopotamian records speak of “*the land of the West*” which borders on “*the*

Western Sea.” Other names also occur based on the current inhabitants of the region like the Amorites and the Hurrians. What all of these references have in common is a perception of Canaan as including all of contemporary Palestine and Syria. The northern boundary is typically the Euphrates River while the southern boundary is the River of Egypt in the northeastern corner of the Sinai. This perspective of the area is also consistently reflected in the Biblical terminology, beginning with God’s promise of the land to Abram in Genesis 15:18-19 -

“On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, ‘To your offspring I give this land, from the River of Egypt, to the Great River, the River Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perrizites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girschites, and the Jebusites.’” (cf. Exodus 23:31; Deuteronomy 1:7; 11:24; Joshua 1:4)

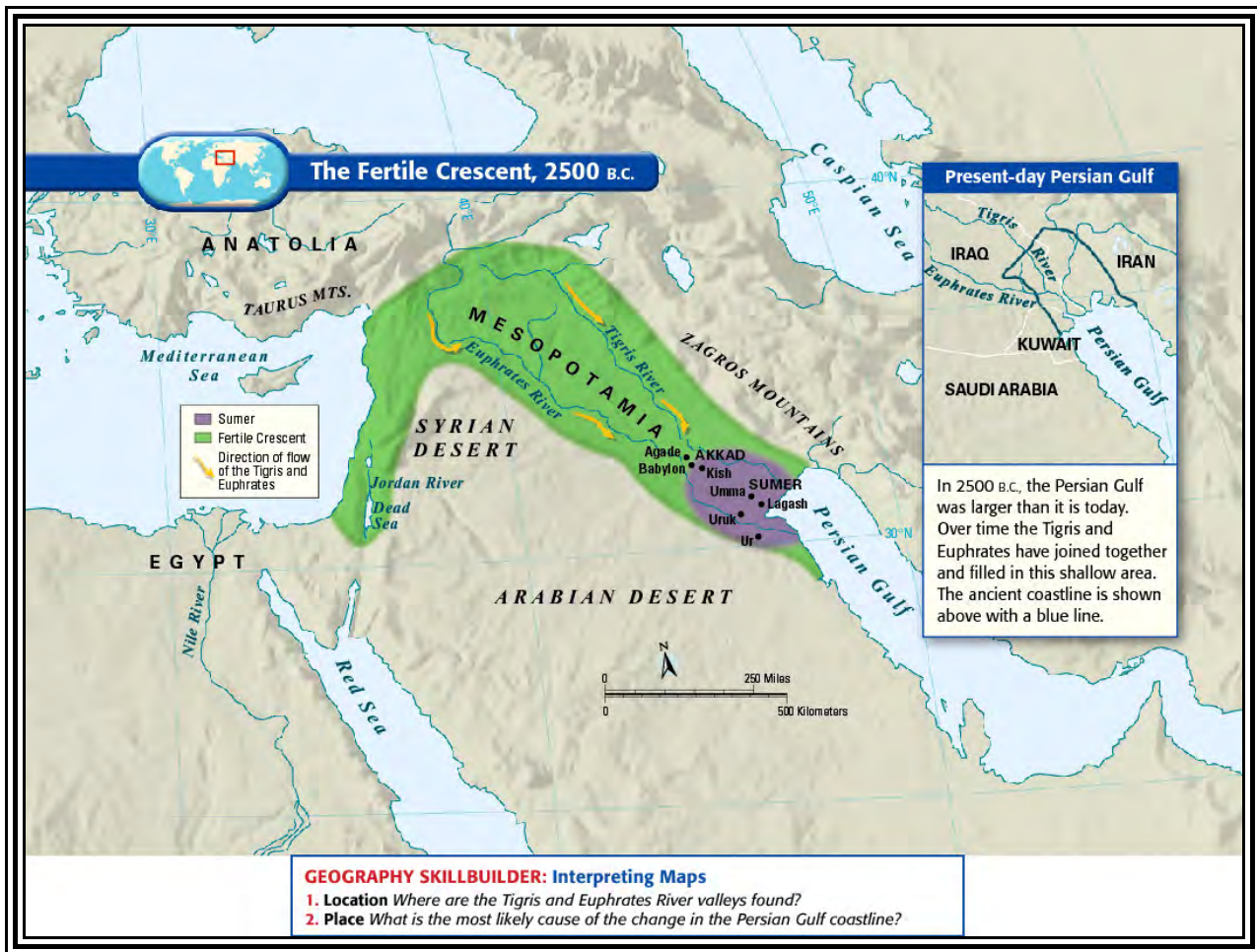
The most common name of the region prior to the Israelite conquest was the *“land of Canaan.”* This designation occurs in both Egyptian and Mesopotamian archives. Its etymology appears to be ultimately derived from the Hurrian word *“purple”* and the precious purple dye which was extracted from the shell of the Murex, a species of sea snails. The traders of Phoenicia, and the sea ports of Tyre and Sidon, amassed great wealth from the manufacture and sale of this highly prized commodity. Purple robes were associated with royalty and wealth throughout the ancient world because of the high cost of this rare dye. The coastal regions of the eastern Mediterranean came to be known as *“the land of the purple”* and the title was eventually applied to the entire Egyptian Province of Palestine/Syria. The original usage of *“Canaan”* in reference to merchants in general and the coastal sea traders in particular is reflected frequently in the Old Testament. Joshua 5:1 identifies the strongholds of the Canaanites with the coast: ***“As soon as all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel...”*** Isaiah used the term to describe the merchant princes of Tyre:

“Who has purposed this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants (“Canaanites”) were princes, whose traders were the honored of the earth. ...Cross over your land like the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish, there is no restraint anymore. He has stretched out His hand over the sea; He has shaken the kingdoms; the Lord has given command concerning Canaan, to destroy its strongholds.” (Isaiah 23:8,11)

Thus the designation of the land of Canaan or its population as Canaanite is used both in reference to the land and people of the coastal plain and more broadly in reference to the entire area between the Jordan Valley and the coast. By the time of the Israelite arrival these peoples were divided into a variety of different kingdoms throughout the region.



“The Land Of Canaan Before the Israelite Conquest”



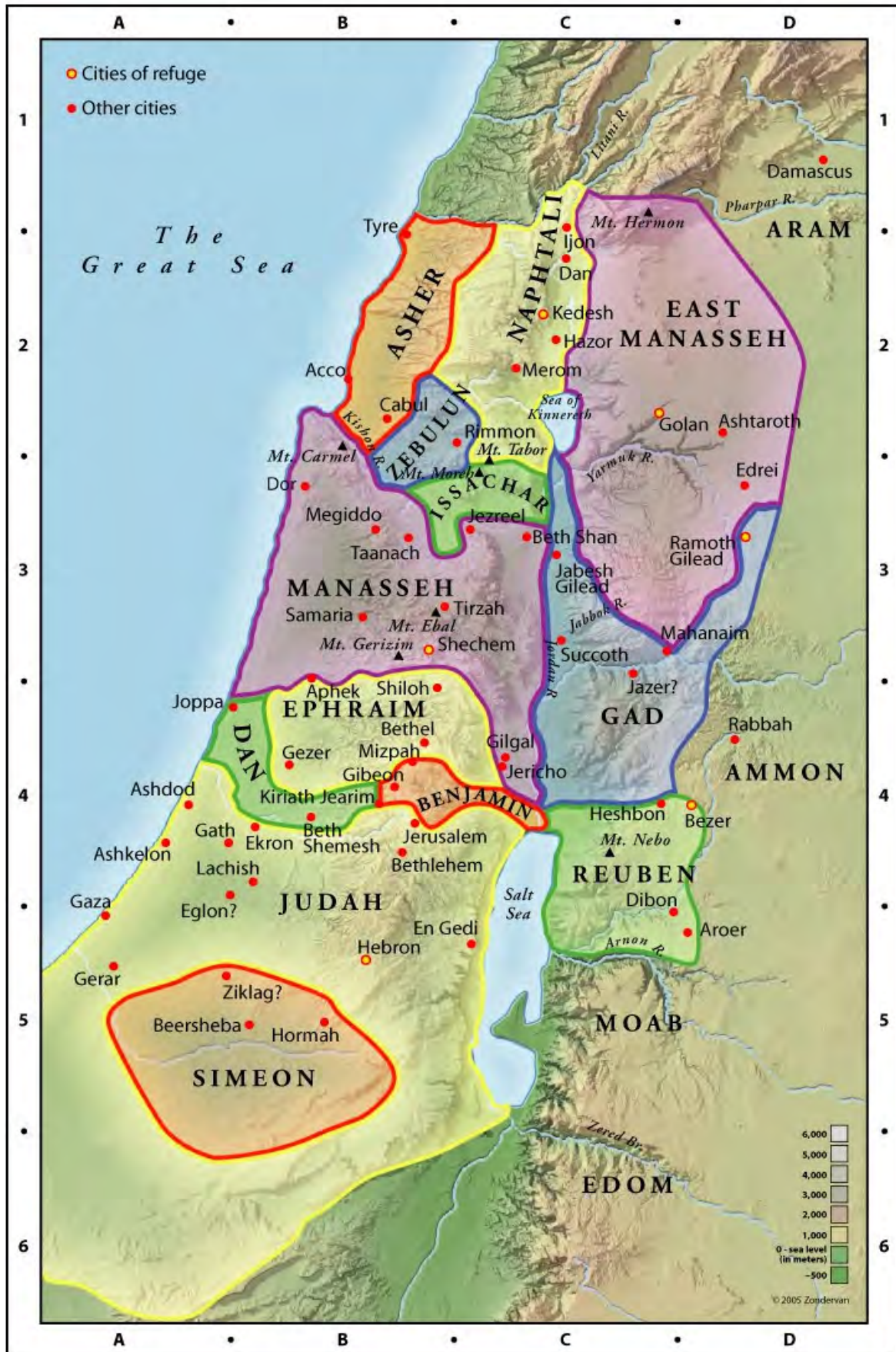
The same historical background is reflected in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 which summarizes the dispersal of the descendants of the sons of Noah in the aftermath of the flood. Canaan was one of the sons of Noah’s son Ham. His descendants included many of the Canaanite tribes and are directly associated with the coastal regions from Sidon to Gaza which includes virtually the entire coastline of Palestine.

“Canaan fathered Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth, and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites, Afterwards, the clans of the Canaanites dispersed. And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza; and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. These are the sons of Ham by their clans, their languages, their lands and their nations.” (Genesis 10:18-20)

Contemporary Lutheran commentator Dr. Carl Lawrenz, summed up the significance of this unusually detailed listing and located the various Canaanite tribes and clans throughout the land as follows:

“The third primary group of Hamites were the Canaanites. Moses treats this

branch of the Hamite family in considerable detail because he knew that Israel's association with the Canaanites would be extensive. Furthermore, God would later command His people to exterminate the Canaanites because of their vile worship (Deuteronomy 7:1-5; 20:16-18). Sidon, Canaan's firstborn gave his name to a famous and prosperous city on the northwest coast of Canaan. Already in the days of Joshua it was a famous and powerful city and is twice referred to as 'great Sidon.' (Joshua 11:8; 19:28) Heth was the father of the Hittites, a Hamite clan that was firmly established in Canaan when Abraham arrived there. It was from Ephron, a Hittite, that Abraham bought a burial plot for Sarah. Centered in the heart of Asia Minor, the Hittites dominated much of Canaan from perhaps 1800 B.C. to their sudden downfall in 1200 B.C.. Their real estate holdings in Canaan must have been extensive, if we are to judge from God's Word to Joshua. **"Your territory will extend from the desert and from Lebanon to the great river, the Euphrates, all the Hittite country, and to the Great Sea on the west."** (Joshua 1:4) The Hittites were probably the most formidable of the Canaanite nations. The Hittite royal archives, ten thousand clay tablets, discovered in the ancient capital of Hattusa, in what is today central Turkey, testify to the power of this empire. Hittites developed the use of iron, and for centuries had a monopoly on its manufacture. During part of its history, Jerusalem was known as Jebus (Judges 19:10f.); at the time of Israel's conquest the inhabitants of Jerusalem were known as Jebusites. Until the time of David, their city was a Canaanite stronghold. The Amorites were known as Amurri in ancient Mesopotamian records. Their name comes from a Babylonian word roughly equivalent to 'westerner.' At the time of the Israelite conquest the Amorites lived in the central hill country of Canaan (Joshua 10:6) as well as in the territory east of the Jordan (Joshua 2:10). They were so prominent that at the time the Israelites entered the land the Canaanites were sometimes simply referred to as 'Amorites.' (Deuteronomy 1:20,27; Joshua 7:7 10:5f.). The Girgishites, as well as the other Hamite descendants listed in verses 17 & 18 seem, for the most part, to have lived in small city states scattered throughout Canaan. As branches from the same tribe, the Canaanites were dispersed from the same starting point and spread over the entire country from north to south and west to east/ Along the Mediterranean coast, the borders they occupied extended from Sidon in the north to Gaza and Gerar in the far south. Moving eastward from there, the Canaanites spread as far as the vicinity of the Dead Sea. Most of the descendants of Canaan would be dispossessed by Israel and, even before that, the cities named in verse 19b would be divinely destroyed. Because the Lord destroyed Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim so completely (Genesis 19:24ff.) The precise locations of these cities have never been determined. The directions here point to an area now covered by the waters of the Dead Sea or immediately to the south/southeast of it." (Lawrenz, I, pp.



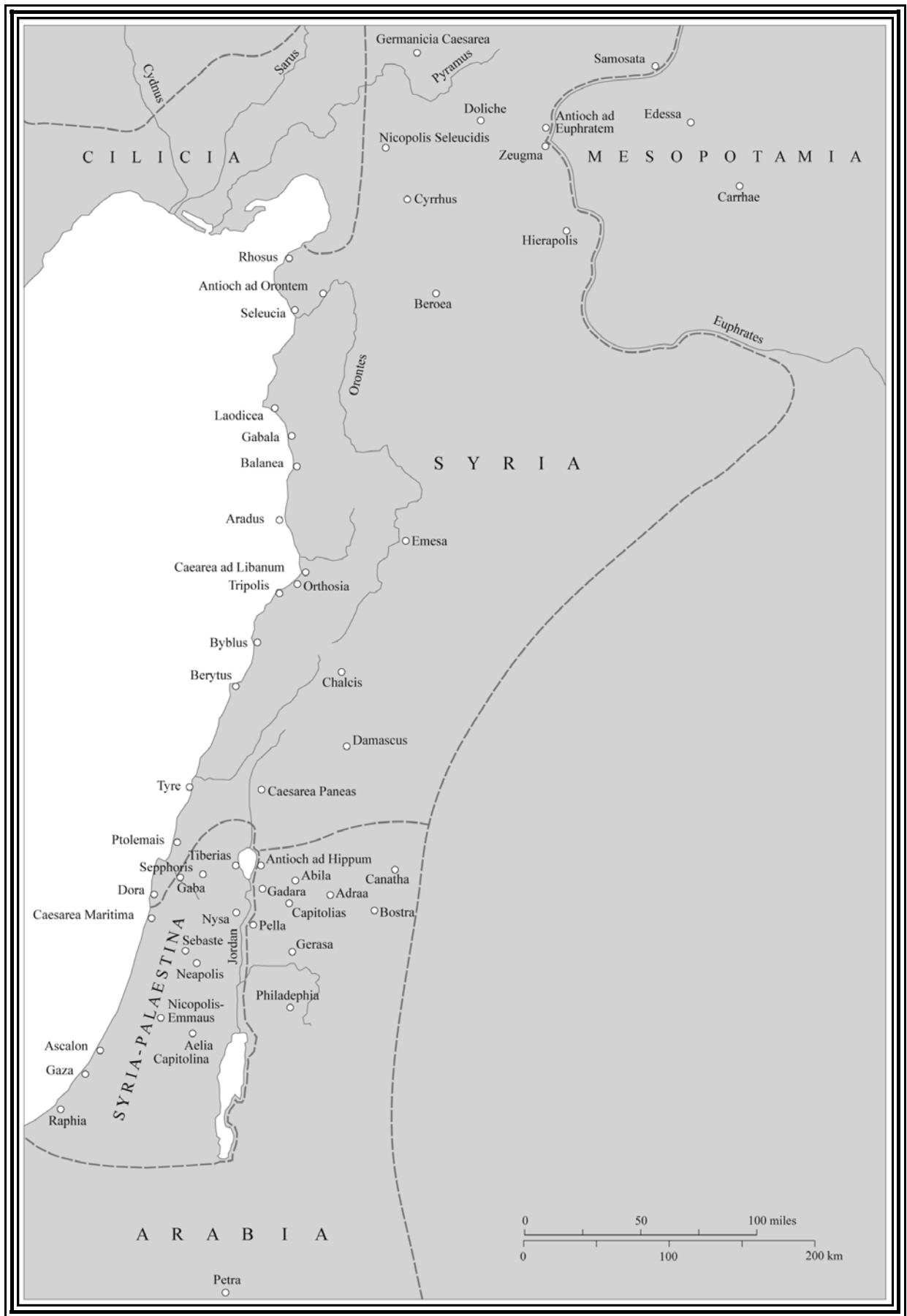
In the aftermath of the conquest of the land by Joshua the area is typically designated as “*the Land of Israel*” but the significance of this designation varies depending on the historical situation. Given the haphazard and incomplete nature of the Israelite occupation and their failure to exterminate the Canaanite population as the Lord had commanded, a significant amount of territory, often including crucial military and economic centers, remained under Canaanite control. During this period, the term “*land of Israel*” was typically used to refer to those portions of the land controlled by the Israelites in contrast to the Canaanite territories. “*But there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, ‘Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears.’ But every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe or his sickle.*” (1 Samuel 13:19) In the days of the monarchy the title identifies all of the tribal lands and the major expansions of territory which had been acquired reaching all the way to the Euphrates River in Syria. 1 Kings 4:7 sums up the extent of the kingdom



at the height of its glory under Solomon: *“Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea. They ate and drank and were happy. Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.”*



“The Divided Kingdoms of Judah and Israel”



"The Roman Province Of Syria-Palestine" - A.D.150

With the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon, the designation of “*Israel*” came to apply to the 10 northern tribes which broke away from the House of David to follow Jeroboam while the two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were identified as “*the Kingdom of Judah*.” The trans-Jordan kingdoms of Edom, Moab, and Ammon which had been conquered by David and incorporated into his realm quickly reasserted their independence along with the large territories both to the north and the south. As a result, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were reduced to the status of insignificant mini-states which would quickly fall prey to their more powerful neighbors. The Persian conquerors maintained the traditional identification of the region as the province of Judah. The Romans followed the same tradition labeling their province as “*Provincia Judaea*.” However, in the aftermath of the two 1st Century Jewish revolts, the Roman Emperor Hadrian decided to downplay the connection between these recalcitrant rebels and the land. He renamed the province “*Provincia Syria Palestina*.” “*Syria*” is derived from the Assyrians whose kingdom was based in the north western portion of Mesopotamia. The word means “*beyond the river*” alluding to the fact that the bulk of Assyria’s original homeland was south of the Euphrates River. “*Palestina*” is simply the ancient title of the Philistines, evolved through Greek into Latin. The more recent Latin terminology, ironically designed to obscure the connection between the Jews and this land, has come to predominate in modern usage.

A 2007 article in “*Vanity Fair*” on the dilemma in the Middle East lamented: “*The political boundaries of the Middle East do not always conform to the region’s underlying social, religious, and demographic contours.*” The article contended that this discrepancy was a significant factor in the endemic conflicts of the region. They assembled a panel of experts to redraw the map in a way which reflected the identity of the populace. The result was an assembly of seventeen different nations. The groups were defined as follows:

“***Kurdistan***” - *The mountainous Kurdish speaking region that occupies portions of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Even the Romans, according to Gibbon, recognized the Kurds as fiercely independent.*

“***Northern Tribal Area***” - *Largely a Sunni Arab domain, encompassing the towns, small cities, and deserts of western Iraq, Eastern Syria, and Jordan.*

“***Southern Tribal Area***” - *Also largely a Sunni Arab domain, encompassing the Saudi heartland. Its brand of Islam is the fundamentalist Wahhabi strain.*

The Crescent” - *On the one hand ethnically Arab, like the people to the west, on the other hand, religiously Shia, like the people to the east. This arc of territory straddles portions of Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, and contains at least 20% of the world’s known oil reserves.*

“***Emirates***” - *The existing small oil rich Sunni Sheikdoms. These Persian Gulf enclaves,*



*“The Seventeen Nations Of The Middle East Based On Ethnicity And Religion”
 “Vanity Fair Magazine” 2007*

which unlike Saudi Arabia have a long mercantile tradition, form a natural collective - more like one another than like anyone else.

“Persia” - Occupying the Iranian heartland, the Persians have constituted a coherent and powerful cultural block since antiquity. The predominant religious tradition is Shia Islam.

“Azerbaijan” - A Turkic region to the east of Kurdistan, including a mountainous chunk of northwestern Iran. Ethnically and linguistically distinct from Persia, though with longstanding cultural ties, and sharing an adherence to Shia Islam.

“Baluchistan” - *The non-Farsi speaking and largely Sunni Balucis occupy an impoverished and increasingly restive region that sprawls across eastern Iran and western Pakistan.*

“Arabia Felix” - *A name from ancient times for Arabia’s southwestern corner. A mixed Sunni and Shia population, highly independent, defined primarily by the mountain environment in which most people live.*

“Oman” - *This sultanate has been autonomous and distinct for 250 years. The people are mainly Arab, but their Ibadhi form of Islam distinguishes them from mainstream Shias and Sunnis.*

“Hejaz” - *The urbanized and mercantile Arabian coastal strip along the Red Sea. For a decade during the early 20th Century it was an independent kingdom.*

“Lower Egypt” - *The Nile Delta region to the north, with its cities and commerce - Egypt’s center of gravity.*

“Upper Egypt” - *Village oriented and rural, but also clinging to the Nile’s thin ribbon.*

“Western Tribal Areas” - *The desert to the east and west of the Nile Valley is an Arab domain, closer in character to the tribal societies across the Red Sea than to the civilization of the Nile Valley.*

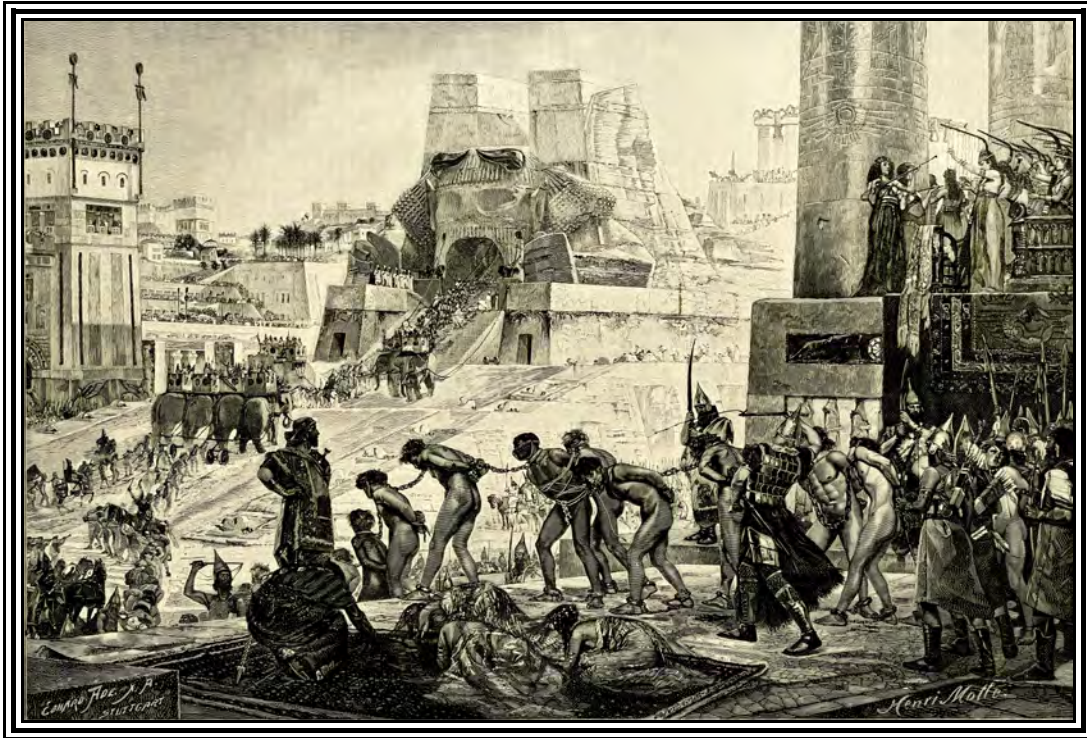
“Israel” - *The Jewish homeland, with an Arab minority of 20%.*

“The Levant” - *Encompassing parts of northern Israel, all of Lebanon, and portions of coastal Syria, this is the most cosmopolitan terrain in the Middle East, comprising Maronite Christians, Roman Catholics, Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, and Druze, as well as a host of other small communities.*

“Tetrapolis” - *This heavily urbanized Arab strip takes in four cities, Aleppo, in the north; Damascus and Amman; and Gaza, in the south. The mental orientation is less to the east than to the Mediterranean world, as it has been since ancient times. Gaza was the terminus of the Spice Route.*

“Contested Areas” - *Places that must be considered independently include Baghdad, Kirkuk, and Jerusalem. A complex mixture of ethnic and religious factors prevent these places from fitting conceptually into any neighboring entity.*

“Uncontested Areas” - *The Empty Quarter, uninhabited.*



“Israelite Captives Being Sacrificed to Asshur in Nineveh After the Assyrian Conquest” - 19th Century Engraving

2. Jews And Muslims In Palestine - A Review of Demography And History

Historians of ancient Palestine generally agree that the peak population of the area would have been around 1,000,000 people. This figure would have applied only during the relatively rare periods of peace and prosperity.

Traditional chronology, based upon a belief in the historicity of the Old Testament, places the exodus from Egypt around 1446 B.C. Accordingly, the Israelite conquest of Canaanite and settlement of the land through the time of Joshua and the Judges would span the period from around 1406 -1050 B.C. Although a significant Canaanite presence remained, particularly along the coastal plain and the trans-Jordan to the east, from this time forward, the various Israelite tribes would constitute the majority of the population. The zenith of Israelite power and presence was achieved during the early monarchy during the united Kingdom under David and Solomon - c. 1003-930 B.C. Israelite population throughout the land was significantly diminished by the conquests and deportations of the Assyrians and the Babylonians. The Northern Kingdom of Israel fell to the hordes of Assyria in 723 B.C. The great majority of its Israelite population was either exterminated or deported. Jerusalem, the capital of the Kingdom of Judah, fell to the armies of the Babylonian monarch Nebuchadnezzar 64 years later in 586 B.C. This disaster was also followed by massive casualties and exile, reducing the survivors to the status of a minority in the territory of the



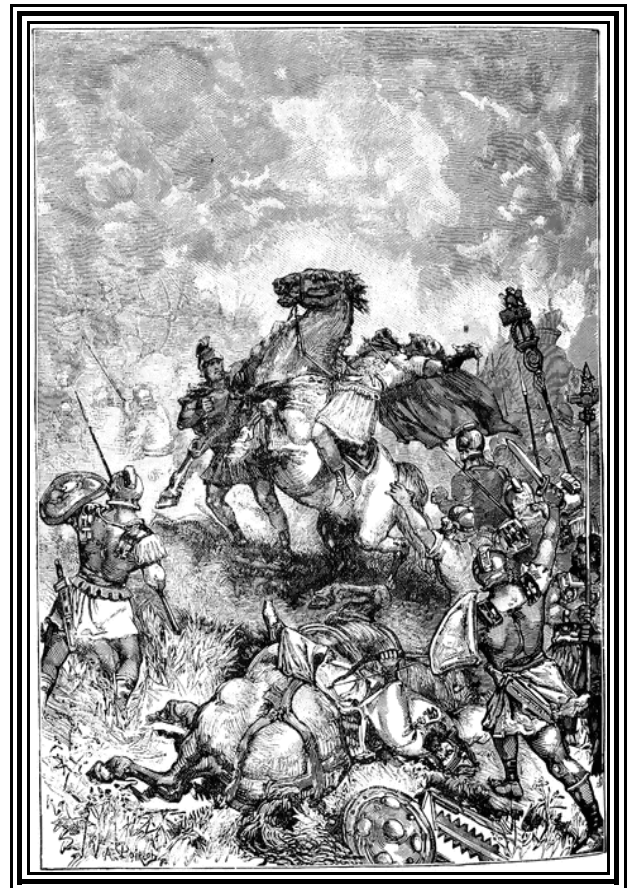
“The Roman Legions of Titus Besieging Jerusalem” - 18th Century Dutch Engraving

former kingdom of Judah. Successive returns of Judean exiles under the Persian Empire in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah significantly restored Jewish population in the region. A large Samaritan enclave - the result of intermarriage between surviving Jews and remnants of Canaanite groups - had also taken up residence in the central highlands. By the time of the Greek conquests of Alexander and his heirs, the Jews once again constituted the majority of the population. Under Roman rule, Palestine remained a largely Jewish country. The Samaritans, fiercely resented by the Jews were still present in the central highlands. The Greek and Roman populations were concentrated exclusively in the cities and larger towns pursuing the economic advantages which their power provided.

The 1st Century AD saw a drastic reduction in the Jewish population of the region as the consequence of two Jewish rebellions against the empire. The first of those revolts broke out in the mid 60's. It was brutally crushed by Vespasian and his son Titus, both of whom would subsequently become Roman emperors. The end result of this one-sided conflict was the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. Jewish casualties were massive and large numbers of Jews who survived the carnage left the country and settled elsewhere in the empire or emigrated to Persia in the East. With the destruction of the Temple, Palestine ceased to be the focal point of Judaism for the Jews of the Diaspora. The pitiful remains of the Jewish presence in Palestine rose up again in A.D. 133, during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian. The rebellion itself was indicative of the despair which had gripped the Jewish people who desperately longed for their Messiah who would punish the hated Romans and

restore the nation to its former glory. This uprising was triggered by a warrior who called himself “*Bar Kochba*” - the Son of the Star. He claimed to be the messianic champion promised by God and was, in fact, endorsed as such by the leading rabbis of Judaism. Evidently he was not what he claimed to be, for his cause was crushed and his followers slaughtered. Jews were banned from the place that had once been Jerusalem and a Roman colony, Aelia Capitolina, dedicated to Jupiter, the father of the Roman gods, was constructed where the temple of Jehovah once had been. The Jews of Palestine were now a distinct minority of the population. Their center shifted to the small villages of Galilee and their numbers continued to dwindle. Large numbers of the survivors again emigrated to the scattered communities of their compatriots in more peaceful parts of the empire.

The second major factor in the ongoing decline of a Jewish presence in Palestine was the rise of Christianity throughout the region. Christianity was growing throughout the empire with the consequent result that ever larger numbers of Gentile Christians sought to immigrate to the homeland of Jesus. As this trend continued significant numbers of both Samaritans and Jews converted. These patterns dramatically increased with the conversion of Constantine and his elevation to emperor (A.D. 314). The subsequent establishment of a new eastern capital of the empire at Constantinople further encouraged these trends as imperial attention shifted further away from Western Europe and the constant barbarian incursions which plagued it. Constantine chose the Greek city of Byzantium on the narrow isthmus between Europe and Asia as the new political and economic center of his empire. Constantine’s mother, St. Helena, who had converted long before her son, made a pilgrimage to the holy sites of Jerusalem and became the royal patroness of numerous churches, monasteries, and nunneries which commemorated the events of Jesus’ passion and resurrection. The Byzantine Empire divided Palestine into three administrative districts - *Palestina Prima*, *Secunda*, and *Salutis*. The three provinces extended from Syria to the southern tip of Arabia. There was still a significant Jewish presence in Palestine at this time. A brief, bizarre interruption to this trend in the short reign of Emperor Julian the Apostate. (AD 361-363) Julian rejected Christianity and attempted to return the empire to the paganism that was its heritage. As part of the anti-Christian program of the Emperor, Julian ordered the reconstruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem on a massive scale. He died in



“*The Death of Julian the Apostate In Battle*”

battle before the project could be implemented. Christianity became the official state religion of the empire in A.D. 391. By the beginning of the 5th Century Christians had become the majority of the population of Palestine while the Jews had declined to between 10-15% of the total. Under Byzantine rule, the total population of Palestine expanded and flourished. The arable land significantly increased and the standard of living rose. Ancient cities which had fallen to ruin were rebuilt. The land became a place of pilgrimage for Christians from around the world and great churches were built from Galilee to Jerusalem. It was a rare period of peace and prosperity for Palestine.

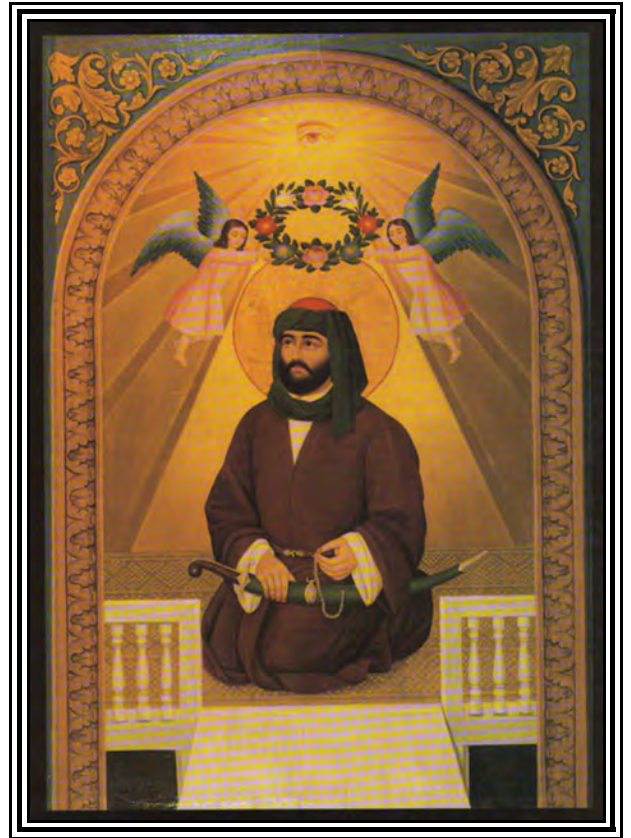


“Buraq - The Prophet’s Magical Steed For The Night Journey”

According to Islamic tradition on a single night in the year 621 AD, the Prophet Mohammed was carried by his magical steed “*al-Buraq*” (Arabic - *‘the Lightning’*) from his home in Mecca to “*al-Quds*” (“*The House of the Holy*” - Jerusalem). He tied his magical steed at the base of the Rock which is presently identified as the Wailing Wall of the Hebrew Temple. At the top of the plateau, Mohammad led all the Muslim prophets of the past (including Abraham and Jesus) in prayers to Allah. The “*Al-Aqsa*” Mosque now stands upon this site. The Arch-Angel Gabriel awaited him upon the Rock which was the ancient crest of Mount Moriah, the place where centuries earlier the Muslim Prophet Abraham had built an altar to sacrifice his son Isaac to Allah. From there Gabriel guided Mohammed through the seven heavens to meet with Allah and receive the truths of Islam which were to be recorded in the Koran. These beliefs are fundamental to the significance of Jerusalem in particular and Palestine in general in Islam.

After the death of the Prophet in 632 AD, the leadership of the Islamic world fell to a series of four “*Caliphs.*” “*Caliph*” is an Arabic word which designates the leader chosen by

Allah to be a successor of Mohammed, the religious and political leader of the realm of Islam. His responsibility was to guide the faithful in the teachings of the Quran and be the military commander who would conquer the world to bring mankind into subjection to Allah. The first four Caliphs are called the “*Rashidun*” - “*the Rightly Chosen*” - by Sunni Moslems. Shia Moslems dispute the succession of the Caliphs and claim that Ali, the son-in-law and nephew of the Prophet, was wrongfully deprived of his reign as the direct successor of Mohammad. This is the origin of the rift between Sunni and Shia which persists within Islam to this day. The Caliphs lead their armies out of the deserts of Arabia in a series of lightning campaigns which quickly conquered vast areas of Asia and Africa. Their conquests included portions of both of the major powers in the region, the Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire, including Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa, and Spain. By 644 AD the empire of the Caliphs had become one of the largest in the history of mankind in a matter of decades.



“*Caliph Ali - Nephew Of The Prophet*”

By 644 AD the empire of the Caliphs had become one of the largest in the history of mankind in a matter of decades.

These unprecedented conquests were specifically religious in nature, the direct application of the Islamic doctrine of “*Jihad*.” The Prophet had taught that every true Muslim must be willing to give his life as a holy warrior for Allah and that it was the destiny of Islam to conquer the entire world to the glory of the one God. The application of this doctrine in the regions conquered during the 7th Century resulted in a total transformation of the culture of the subjugated lands. Unlike any of the numerous conquests which had taken place in the past, these were wars of conquest driven by religious conviction. Their primary goal went far beyond the acquisition of territory or the extension of political power.

“The Muslim conquests of the seventh century began a long and gradual process of the Islamization of the many nations of the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa. This gradual process, began immediately upon the completion of military conquest as the defeated adversaries of Islam were either converted or exterminated. The small minorities which were permitted retain their religions - typically Christians and Jews - were reduced to “dimmitude” a second class status which involved political repression and severe economic and social penalties. In addition, in the Middle East, and in the land of Palestine in particular, a pattern of totalitarian assimilation began,



which lasted several centuries. The indigenous peoples in various regions who, until then, had spoken many languages - Greek, Aramaic-Syriac, Coptic and Berber - and practiced widely diverse cultures and religions, adopted the Arabic language and the Islamic culture associated with it. As a result, through time, the indigenous peoples of the vast regions of the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, which included the historic land of Palestine, were melded together into “dar al-Islam” (the House of Islam) whose defining reality was allegiance to Allah and His Prophet Mohammad.”

The armies of Islam had begun probing the southeastern borders of the Byzantine Roman Empire before the death of the Prophet. These efforts did not, however, become serious and systematic until the Caliphs began to expand their empire early in the 7th Century. Palestine was the southern portion of the historic Roman province of Syria. This region had been under the control of the Empire for nearly eight hundred years when the Byzantines were first confronted by a new threat from Islamic Arabs. They had previously established a powerful client kingdom of Christian Arabs of the Ghassan Tribe on their frontier to serve as a buffer against the sporadic but chronic raids of Arab nomads from the southern deserts. The capital city of this Kingdom was Bosra in southern Syria to the east of the Sea of Tiberius. In the decades prior to the Muslim incursions the Byzantines had been engaged in a protracted series of wars with the Sassaniad dynasty of Persia for control of the region. Persia had actually occupied Palestine for a ten year period at the beginning of the 7th Century and the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius was still in the process of reconstructing the province when the Islamic threat arose. The lengthy conflict had left both Persia and Byzantium exhausted, a factor which facilitated the easy Islamic defeat of both historic

empires. Bosra fell to the Caliph in July of 634. Two months later, the Roman garrison at Damascus also surrendered to the advancing Arab armies. The decisive battle took place in the following year on the plain of the Yarmouk River just to east of the Sea of Tiberius in the modern nation of Jordan. The Byzantine force is said to have numbered in excess of 100,000 men. The battle continued for six days by the end of which the legions of Byzantium had been annihilated. The Roman Province of Syria and control of Palestine had ended permanently. Jerusalem surrendered nine months later in April, 636, to become the third of Islam's holy cities. Roman Emperor Heraclius barely escaped with his life from the besieged city of Antioch, the last Byzantine stronghold in the region. He is said to have lamented: *"Farewell, a long farewell to Syria, my most fair province. Thou art an enemy's now. Peace be with you, O Syria! What a beautiful land you will be for the enemy's hands."* In the months which followed, the western provinces of Persia also fell to the victorious hosts of Islam. A new power had risen in the world and all men trembled before it.



***Byzantine Emperor Heraclius
The Last Christian Ruler of Palestine***

One of the most effective ways in which the Caliphate sought to foster the Islamization of Palestine was to foster the identification and development of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem as a Muslim holy site. The Arabic designation for the Temple Mount became *"Al-Haram ash-Sharif"* (*"the Noble Sanctuary"*) and was recognized as the site of Mohammad's miraculous *"Night Journey"* astride the noble steed *"Barak"*. These events are crucial to Islam as they serve to authenticate Mohammad as the ultimate prophet of Allah and appropriate all of the prophets of Judaism and Christianity into Islam as subsidiary to Mohammad. Tradition indicates that for seventeen months after the Night Journey the Prophet and his followers prayed facing Jerusalem to affirm Mohammad's personal link to Allah. After that period, Allah commanded that the prayers be directed toward the shrine of the Kaaba in Mecca. No doubt the Prophet had perceived this clever maneuver as the way to facilitate the absorption of the region's two historic faiths into his own amalgamation of their teachings with Arab myths with himself in charge. Caliph Omar, the second Caliph to succeed Mohammad, visited newly conquered Jerusalem in AD 637. He ordered the



The Al-Aqsa Mosque Upon The Temple Mount In Jerusalem

construction of a mosque upon the Temple Mount at the site where Mohammad had been greeted and endorsed by all of the prophets of Judaism and Christianity. It was called “*al-Aqsa*” which means “*the farthest mosque*” to emphasize its uniqueness as the only Islamic holy place outside of Mecca and Medina in Arabia. That relatively simple structure was enlarged and embellished in AD 705 by Caliph Abd al-Malik. Ironically, the building stands upon braces built by the engineers of Herod the Great



“The Dome of the Rock Dominating The Skyline Of Modern Jerusalem”

to support his massive enlargement of the Jewish Temple courts. This building is the oldest continuously used Moslem worship center in the world. It has been damaged repeatedly by earthquakes across the centuries but always rebuilt and enhanced as a crucial expression of the triumphant faith of Islam. Its counterpart, the Dome of the Rock was built in AD 691 by Caliph Abd al-Malik as a shrine to cover the precise location from which the Prophet began his night journey. The magnificent golden dome is recognized as Jerusalem's foremost landmark. Its design is unusual for Islamic architecture. Historians surmise that its intent was to reflect and surpass the impressive Christian churches of the Holy City.

Attempts by the Byzantine Empire to retake Palestine and Jerusalem continued across the centuries which followed. While unsuccessful, the sympathy for Byzantium among the remaining Christian population served to heighten tensions between Christians and Muslims. These difficulties reached a climax in AD 1009 with the execution of the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by Caliph al Hakim of the Fatimid dynasty. This catastrophe for Christendom helped to provoke the crusades of the 11th and 12th centuries. As previously noted, a series of crusades from AD 1099 - 1291 were unsuccessful in permanently expelling Islam from the Holy Land. A Crusader Kingdom was briefly established from AD 1099 - 1187. However, a Muslim resurgence under the leadership of Saladin recaptured Jerusalem and by AD 1291, the fall of the coastal city of Acre, the last crusader stronghold, ended any Christian presence in the region.



The Battle of Liegnitz

The rise of the Mongol Empire in the 13th Century could have changed the entire history of Islam and the Middle East. The Mongol hordes raided Palestine in the final decades of that period. At that point the descendants of Ghengis Khan had established the largest land empire in history, stretching from Japan to Eastern Europe, and from India to Siberia. The Mongols controlled all of the major trade routes between Asia, Africa, and Europe. The

irresistible advance of the Mongol light cavalry invaded Austria and Hungary in 1241. There a desperate alliance of Austrian, Hungarian, and Polish forces arrayed to meet the invaders. They were joined by the military/religious orders of the Teutonic Knights, the Hospitallers, and the Templars, warrior monks which had been commissioned by the pope during the crusades. The battles occurred at Liegnitz in Poland and Mohacs in Hungary. The Europeans were defeated and massacred by the Mongols. The knights on their massive stallions and heavy iron armor were no match for the swirling Mongol horsemen, firing clouds of arrows. Poised to attack Vienna and advance into central Europe, the Mongol horde suddenly halted its irresistible advance. Word had come from the East that the Great Khan Ogedai had died at the Mongol capital in far distant Asia. Batu Khan, the commander of the horde, had been summoned to the royal assembly in Mongolia which would select a new monarch. Were it not for this providential intervention, all of Europe and the Middle East might very well have fallen before the Mongol advance. The expansion of Islam would have been checked and the armies of the Prophet destroyed. The apex of Mongol conquest was achieved a generation later around 1270 under the leadership of Kublai Khan. It is estimated that over fifty million people died during the Mongol conquests. The population of China decreased by over 50 % and the population of Persia was virtually exterminated.



Constantine III - Last Emperor of Byzantium

Contemporary sources indicate that Mongol armies raided throughout Palestine around 1300, reaching as far south as Gaza on the borders of Egypt. The churches of Jerusalem were plundered and the massive golden doors of the Dome of the Rock were removed and hauled back to Baghdad by the raiders. Fortunately, the Mongols showed no interest in occupying Palestine or advancing into Egypt. They were content to merely raid and plunder.

By the 15th Century the Ottoman Turks had become the predominant power throughout the Middle East. Based in Asia Minor, the contemporary nation of Turkey, the Ottomans steadily reduced the Asian lands still controlled by the Byzantine Empire. In 1453, after a seven week siege, the impregnable fortress of Constantinople fell to the massive armies of the Turks led by Sultan Mehmed II. The last emperor died defending his beleaguered city.

The Roman/Byzantine Empire, which had endured for over 1,500 years had been permanently brought to an end. The Emperor's grand cathedral, the Church of the Holy Wisdom, "*Hagia Sophia*," the great church in all Christendom, was desecrated by the slaughter of the thousands of defenseless women and children who had sought refuge there. The church was subsequently transformed into a mosque to demonstrate the triumph of Islam over Christianity. The gateway to Europe was now open. The extensive Byzantine territories on the Balkan Peninsula quickly submitted to the advancing Turks and converted to Islam. For centuries thereafter, the Turks threatened to continue their advance into the heart of Christendom. Vienna was besieged twice by the armies of the Sultan in 1529 and 1623.



Sultan Mehmed II Conqueror of Constantinople

In the 16th Century, the Ottoman Turks became the prevailing power throughout Dar al-Islam under Sultan Selim I. In 1538 Ottoman Sultan Suliman the Magnificent rebuilt the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, making it the finest Shrine in the Muslim world, excelling the traditional sanctuaries of both Mecca and Medina in Arabia. The sultan also constructed large defensive walls to surround the old city of Jerusalem which remain as the boundaries of the old city to this day. Hebrew tradition has always asserted that the Messiah of Israel would enter Jerusalem through the Golden Gate on the east side of the city toward the rising sun. Suliman had the Golden Gate sealed off by massive blocks of stone to demonstrate his contempt for such expectations. Thereafter, the Turks showed little interest in Palestine, which they divided into four administrative districts.

“The region of Palestine was divided into four districts, attached administratively to the Province of Damascus, and ruled from distant Istanbul...With a gradual decline in the quality of Ottoman rule, the country suffered widespread neglect. By the end of the 18th Century, much of the region of Palestine was owned by absentee Turkish landlords and leased to impoverished tenants, and taxation was as crippling as it was capricious. The great forests of Galilee and the Carmel mountain range were denuded of trees; swamp and desert steadily encroached upon what had been productive agricultural land. In 1894, a popular uprising of the peasantry, resisting being drafted into the Egyptian army was brutally crushed by Ibrahim Pasha. The vacuum left by this radical decline in what had been a mixed Muslim and

Christian population, resulted in a significant influx of Arabs from the south and the east causing a major demographic shift in the region.”

Based on Turkish records, historians estimate that of a total population of 300,000, less than 5,000 - or under 2% - were Jews. By the beginning of the 19th Century, (c.1800) Ottoman census numbers (used for taxation) indicate a total population of 275,000, 24,000 of which or only 8% , were Jews.

The Arab population of Palestine increased dramatically over the next century. This rapid growth was the both the result of natural increases within the native Ottoman citizenry and immigration by Arabs drawn to the improving economy and opportunity for jobs. By the time of the demise of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 the population of Palestine had nearly tripled to a total of over 600,000. The Jewish presence in the land increased commensurately to around 60,000, although that meant that the percentage of Jews in the land remained just over 8% .



“Polish Eagle Cavalry Breaking the Turkish Siege of Vienna - 1623”

In the context of the contemporary bitter enmity between Islam and the Jews, it is generally forgotten that large Jewish communities flourished throughout the Islamic world across the centuries which followed the Muslim conquest of the Middle East beginning in the 6th Century A.D. This reality continued until the events which led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. It is estimated that over one million Jews lived in Muslim countries at the beginning of the 20th Century. Those numbers rapidly decreased as the rise of Zionism in Europe resulted in increased Jewish immigration to Palestine as part of the ongoing effort to establish a Jewish homeland in the region.

The situation in Europe had grown increasingly unstable in the closing decades of the 19th Century. As will be detailed in our review of Zionism, the concept of the nation state with its emphasis upon an ethnically homogeneous population, was becoming a predominant social concept across the continent. Persecution of Jews was becoming more frequent in Tsarist Russia and the nations of Eastern Europe, with large numbers of Orthodox Jews who had strongly resisted assimilation into the general population. These devout Jews remained isolated in their own “ghettos” within the cities, and separate - distinctly Jewish villages - in the rural countryside. Anti-Semitic rioting - “pogroms” - as they were called - were becoming more widespread and violent than ever before in the east. Europe was increasingly unstable with the approach of World War I. At the same time, Zionism was working hard to establish a sense of national identity among all Jews and actively lobbying for support of a Jewish homeland from the governments of Western Europe. A 1920 League of Nations report, published just after the war, summarized conditions in Palestine in this way:



“Orthodox Synagogue In Tsarist Russia”

“There are now in the whole of Palestine hardly 700,000 people, a population much less than that of the Province of Galilee alone in the time of Christ. Of these, 235,000 live in the larger towns, 465,000 in the smaller towns and villages. Four fifths of the whole population are Moslems. A smaller proportion of these are Bedouin Arabs, the remainder, although they speak Arabic and are termed Arabs, are largely of mixed race. Some 77,000 of the population are Christians, in large majority belonging to the Orthodox Church, and speaking Arabic. The minority are members of the Latin or Uniate Greek Catholic Church, or, a small number are Protestants. The Jewish element of the population numbers 76,000. Almost all have entered Palestine during the last forty years. Prior to 1850, there were in the country, only a handful of Jews. In the following thirty years, a few hundreds came to Palestine. Most of them were animated by religious motives, they came to pray and to die in the Holy Land, and to be buried in its soil. After the persecutions in Russia forty years ago, the movement of the Jews to Palestine assumed larger proportions. Jewish agricultural colonies were founded. They developed the culture of oranges, and gave importance to the Jaffa orange trade. They cultivated the

vine, and manufactured and exported wine. They drained swamps. They planted eucalyptus trees. They practiced with modern methods, all the processes of agriculture. There are at the present time 64 of these settlements, large and small, with a population of some 15,000.”

As the clouds of war began to darken the horizon in Europe and the rise of viciously antisemitic Nazism and Fascism made it clear that the future of Jews in Europe was rapidly growing more precarious than it had been in centuries, the rate of Jewish immigration to Palestine accelerated. Under these circumstances the Zionist argument was becoming much more compelling. By 1931, Jewish population in the land had tripled to 180,000 out of a total of 1,035,821. This represented an increase in the proportion of Jews from 8% a decade earlier to 16%. This was the largest percentage of Jews among the people of the Holy Land since the 1st Century A.D.! The final pre-World War II census in 1937 showed a similarly dramatic surge in Jewish population. The total population of Palestine was 1,400,000.



“Buchenwald Survivors Arriving In Palestine”

Muslims were 883,446 of that total - just over 63%. There were 110,000 Christian Palestinians - 8% of the total. The numbers of Jews had more than doubled again since 1931 to 396,000 - 28%. Virtually all of the host of newcomers were immigrants from Europe, fleeing the impending conflict and responding to the frantic efforts by Zionists to increase the proportion of Jews in the land to bolster their bargaining position with Britain and France. The Arabs, both in Palestine itself, and the surrounding country, were increasingly concerned about and hostile to the demographic transformation of the country. In response to Arab concerns and rising violence, the British government placed limits upon the number of Jews

allowed to enter Palestine after 1939. These new regulations proved to be little more than symbolic since illegal immigration was carried out on a massive scale. With the end of hostilities in Europe in 1945 the stage was set for the battle over the establishment of the state of Israel, a battle in which demographics would play the crucial role.

Jewish historians identify five major waves of immigration from the diaspora to Palestine between the beginning the 20th Century and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. They identify these movements with the Hebrew word *“aliyah”* which means *“to go up”*

historically applied to the ascent of pilgrims climbing the ridges around Jerusalem to enter the holy city and worship at the temple. Thus, for example Psalm 24 declares: *“Who shall ascend to the House of the Lord, and who shall ascend to His Holy Place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart; and who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.”* (Psalm 24:3-4) The first took place between 1882 and 1903. It involved nearly 30,000 people, most of whom came from Eastern Europe and Yemen. These pioneers, often financed by wealthy Jews from America and Western Europe bought up over 90,000 acres of land and founded 21 new Jewish settlements in Palestine. The second Aliyah, from 1904-1914, preceded WWI and saw the arrival of 40,000 more Jews from Eastern Europe and Yemen.

Deliberate, co-ordinated efforts were now under way to bring about the rebirth of a Jewish nation. The first exclusively Jewish city in Palestine since Bible times, Tel-Aviv, was founded. The revival of Hebrew as a living, spoken language, were begun to unite the new Jewish immigrants from their diverse homelands. Jewish para-military organizations and financial institutions were put in place anticipating the formation of a government in the future. After the war, from 1919 to 1923, another 35,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine, the great majority of them from Russia, which had fallen to Communism in 1918. As previously noted, the largest group of immigrants came in the fourth Aliyah, from 1924 to 1928 as upheaval in Europe exacerbated anti-semitism and virulently anti-Jewish fascist movements gained power in Italy and Germany. 80,000 Jews are estimated to have fled Europe, the largest single group from Poland which was caught between Nazi Germany and Communist Russia. Poland was also under the rule of an anti-Semitic dictator, Marshal Pilsudski. The fifth Aliyah, 1932-1939, far exceeded anything that had preceded it. 200,000 new Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine, as the large Jewish community in Germany began to recognize its peril and flee the deadly grasp of Adolf Hitler. As noted above, by the beginning of WWII in 1939, nearly 400,000 Jews had come to Palestine. They were still a minority, to be sure, but with strong backing from Great Britain and the United States, they were a minority which had become large enough to credibly claim the land as their own.



“The Faithful Studying the Torah”

3. Time Line of the Jews In Palestine

- 1400 B.C. The Israelite Conquest of Canaan Under Joshua - The Haphazard Nature of the Conquest Allows a Significant Canaanite Minority to Remain Throughout the Land
- 1375-1050 B.C. - Era of the Judges - Israel a Loose Tribal Confederation With No Central Authority
- 1050-931 B.C. - The United Monarchy Under Kings Saul, David & Solomon Consolidates the Land Under Central Government and Extends the Borders of the Kingdom
- 931 B.C. - The Divided Kingdom - The Ten Northern Tribes Break Away To Form the Kingdom of Israel While Judah & Benjamin Remain Loyal to the House of David to Form the Kingdom of Judah
- 722 B.C. Fall of Samaria - Destruction of Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians - Population Exiled and Dispersed Throughout the Assyrian Empire
- 586 B.C. Fall of Jerusalem - Destruction of Kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians - Population Exiled and Dispersed Throughout the Babylonian Empire
- 538 B.C. First Return of Judean Exiles Under Persian Emperor Cyrus (50,000 people)
- 458 B.C. Second Return Under Persian Emperor Artaxerxes (Ezra - 2,000)
- 444 B.C. Third Return Under Persian Emperor Artaxerxes (Nehemiah)
- 110-63 B.C. Greek Seleucid Rulers Expelled - Jewish Kingdom of the Maccabees Established After Protracted War of Rebellion
- 37 B.C.- A.D. 6 Reign of King Herod as Roman Client King
- 19 B.C - Herod Completes Massive Reconstruction of the Temple
- A.D. 6 - 324 Israel Under Direct Roman Jurisdiction as a Province of the Empire
- A.D. 66-73 First Jewish Revolt
- A.D. 70 Jerusalem and the Temple Destroyed by the Legions of Vespasian
- A.D. 73 Fall of Zealot Fortress at Masada Ends the Last Jewish Resistance
- A.D. 115-117 Second Jewish Revolt In Egypt, Cyprus, and Judea
- A.D. 131-136 Third Jewish Revolt - Simon Bar Kochba - Emperor Hadrian Renamed Jerusalem Aelia Capitolina and Erecting a Temple to Jupiter Upon the Ruins of the Temple; He Eliminated the Roman Province of Judea, Renaming it Syria Palestina; All Jews Banished From the Province
- A.D. 312 The Conversion of Emperor Constantine to Christianity
- A.D. 324 Division of the Roman Empire - Palestine Under Byzantine Rule - Jerusalem Re-established as a Christian City from Which Jews Remained Banished
- A.D. 361-363 Byzantine Emperor Julian the Apostate Removed the Ban on Jews Living in Palestine and Jerusalem; He Began the Reconstruction of the Jewish Temple Upon Mount Zion; Julian's Death in Battle Brought These Effort to an Abrupt and Total End
- A.D. 476 The Collapse of the Western Roman Empire and the Fall of Rome to the Barbarian Tribes Results in a Significant Christian Migration to Palestine, Reducing the Jews to 10-15% of the total population

- A.D. 614-617 Jewish Control of Jerusalem Briefly Restored Thru an Alliance with Persian Invaders
- A.D. 628 Byzantine Emperor Heraclius Banned the Practice of Judaism Throughout His Empire and Thousands of Jews Were Slaughtered in Riots Throughout the Kingdom
- A.D. 628 Islam Seized Control of the Region from Byzantium - A Significant Proportion of the Jewish Population Converted to Islam
- A.D. 691 The Dome of the Rock Constructed on the Temple Mount and Jews Banned from the Area
- A.D. 1099-1291 The Crusades Significantly Reduced the Jewish Presence In Palestine as the Armies of Both Sides Persecuted Jews
- A.D. 1516-1517 - The Ottoman Turks Take Control of Palestine and Jerusalem
- A.D. 1917 After the Defeat of Turkey in WWI - Great Britain is Granted a Mandate by the League of Nations to Govern the Turkish Province of Palestine, Including What is now Israel and Jordan
- A.D. 1917 - Great Britain Adopts the Balfour Declaration Supporting the Creation of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine
- A.D. 1947 - The United Approved a Plan for the Partition of Palestine Between the Jewish and Arab Populations - the Plan Was Accepted by the Jews and Rejected by the Arabs
- A.D. 1948 - Prime Minister David Ben Gurion Announced the Creation of the State of Israel.
- A.D. 1948 - 1st Arab Israeli War: Israel Was Immediately Invaded by the Arab League - the Armies of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq; Israeli Defense Forces Repelled the Invaders and Actually Ended Up in Control of More Territory than had been Included in the Original UN Mandate
- A.D. 1948-1950 - Massive Influx of Jewish Refugees from the Holocaust in Europe and the Expulsion of Jews from Arab Countries Throughout the Middle East Swell the Jewish Population of Palestine While Large Numbers of Arab Palestinians Fled Into Neighboring Arab Countries
- A.D. 1948-2014 - Seven Major Wars and the Ongoing Terrorist Campaigns of the Palestinians have Kept Israel in an Almost Constant State of Conflict Since Its Creation



Orthodox Israeli Soldier In Prayer



Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion

4. The Establishment Of The Modern State Of Israel

Frustrated by the British failure to limit the drastic increases in Jewish immigration into Palestine, and encouraged by promises of arms and support from the Nazi government in Germany, Palestinian Arabs rose up in revolt against the British Mandate government throughout the region in 1936. This violent rebellion continued until the outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939. The rebellion was specifically directed against the British occupation government, not the Jews, although the presence of over 400,000 Jews in Palestine was the specific focus of Arab resentment. It was therefore inevitable that violent clashes between Arabs and Jews would become a prominent factor in the conflict. The Jewish population, under the brilliant leadership of David ben Gurion, attempted to remain neutral in the struggle, adopting a policy of strict non-involvement, responding only in self-defense to Arab attacks upon Jewish settlements. In 1937, the Peel Commission, appointed by the British government, recommended a partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs. The plan recommended the creation of a Jewish territory in Galilee and along the Mediterranean coast. Implementation of this recommendation would have involved the resettlement of over 250,000 Palestinian Arabs. Zionist leaders voted to accept the plan as a first step toward the foundation of a Jewish state. For the same reason, Palestinian leaders vehemently rejected the proposal, and eventually it was discarded as unworkable. Later, in light of subsequent events, Ben Gurion ruefully observed: “*Had partition (referring to the 1937 Peel Report) been carried out, the history of our people would have been different and*

six million Jews in Europe would not have been killed because most of them would have been in Israel.” The British quickly put forward another proposal for the joint government of Palestine by Arabs and Jews without a partition of territory. It was firmly rejected by both sides. At that point, the British government closed legal immigration into Palestine and prohibited the purchase of land by Jews in 95% of the country. These steps were taken to calm the Arab population and decrease popular support for the revolt. The practical effect of this approach was to trap millions of Jews in Europe who were desperately trying to escape the unfolding horror of the holocaust. The sense of remorse experienced by the British government over this misguided and bitterly resented policy was a significant factor in Great Britain’s co-operation in the establishment of the State of Israel after the war.

As conflict spread across Europe, the Jews in Palestine offered to form a Jewish army to fight alongside the British against the Nazis. Churchill supported the offer but the British military rejected the concept, fearing that an organized Jewish army would cause significant problems in Palestine after the war. Nonetheless, a Jewish Defense Force, “*the Palmach*” was created independently in 1941 to defend the Jewish people in Palestine against the Afrika Korps of Field Marshall Erwin Rommel which was sweeping across North Africa toward the Middle East. This group did indeed become the core of the Israeli army.

The Arab population of Palestine continued to be highly supportive of the Hitler government throughout the war because of their hatred for their common enemy the Jews. The highest ranking Muslim cleric in Jerusalem, the Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini, actually traveled to Berlin to meet with Hitler and Himmler in order to enlist the Führer’s support for the Arab cause against the Jews. The Mufti was given the red carpet treatment meeting with the most prominent leaders of the Nazi government. Al-Husseini subsequently traveled throughout



Grand Mufti Haj Amin Al-Husseini Meeting With Hitler



Grand Mufti Amin Haj Al-Husseini Offering The Nazi Salute To An Islamic SS Unit In Coratia Which He Helped Recruit

the Muslim regions of the Balkans, now under German occupation, to recruit young Muslim warriors into the service of Allah in the Nazi SS. After war, Al-Husseini was charged as a war criminal by the Allies. Great Britain, however, arranged for him to be pardoned because of his strong support among Palestinians. He was the great -uncle of Yassar Arafat who became the founder of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Arab support for Nazi Germany also served to alienate the British and American governments from the Arabs and make them more sympathetic to Jewish pleas for their own homeland.

Great Britain came out of World War II exhausted and bankrupt, its empire in tatters. The British were confronted by the reality of massive numbers of Jews from Europe, desperate to escape to Palestine in the aftermath of the holocaust. The British feared that the result of opening Palestine to the immigrants would be anarchy and chaos with the Arab majority in the country and immediate invasion from the hostile Arab nations which surrounded Palestine on every side. They therefore clamped down on Jewish immigration and attempted to prevent any more Jews from entering the country. The result was civil war, waged by the Jews already in Palestine against the British army from 1946-1948. The civilized world was horrified by the grotesque images pouring out of the Nazi Death Camps across Hitler's Empire. The fact that such a moral monstrosity had been allowed to occur in the heart of Western Europe gave the Jews the moral high ground in the battle for Palestine, making it much more difficult for governments to oppose their desperate appeals for a homeland of their own. The British were only too eager to hand the dilemma over to the newly formed United Nations. The UN Committee charged with devising a solution recommended the



President Harry Truman Announcing American Recognition of the State of Israel to the Nation

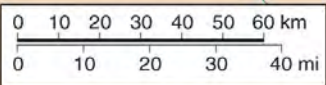
division of the British Mandate into two separate countries, one Arab and one Jewish, with the ancient city of Jerusalem remaining an international city under the control of the UN. Despite the angry opposition of the Arab world, that recommendation was approved by the UN General Assembly in the form of UN Resolution 181, on November 29, 1947. The Mandate was officially scheduled to end in May of 1948. On May 14, 1948, Israeli President David ben-Gurion announced the establishment of the State of Israel as the restoration of the historic homeland of the Jewish people. The following day, Israel was invaded by all of its Arab neighbors: Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. To the astonishment of everyone, Israel not only held its own in the face of the massive invasion, but quickly took the offensive and gained crucial territories which had not been included in the UN Partition. The conflict dragged on into 1949. An armistice was signed in February of that year.. A Palestinian State, as called for in the UN Resolution, never came into existence. Egypt seized the Gaza Strip and Jordan took the West Bank. The Palestinians were thus the greatest losers because of the duplicity of their erstwhile allies. The United States was one of the first nations to recognize the new Israeli nation. President Truman overruled his own State Department who were concerned that alienating the Arab world would open the Middle East to Soviet influence. In the ceremony which signed the document of recognition, Truman, a devout Southern Baptist, hailed his action as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. His action came eleven minutes after President Ben Gurion's declaration of statehood.



Israeli President Ben Gurion

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

- ⊛ National capital
- ⊙ District (meḥoz) centre
- City, town
- ✈ Airport
- International boundary
- - - Boundary of former Palestine Mandate
- - - Armistice Demarcation Line
- - - District (meḥoz) boundary
- Main road
- Secondary road
- Railroad
- Oil pipeline



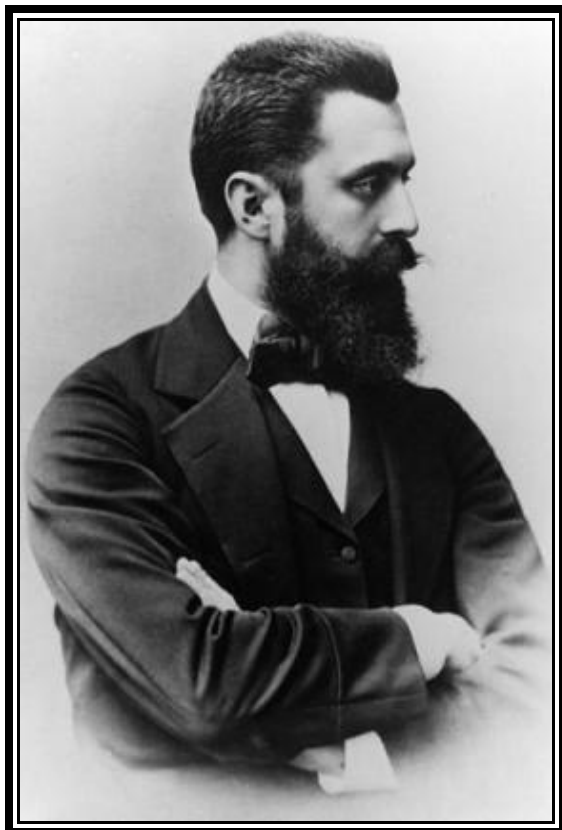
5. Zionism and the Founding of the State of Israel

A. Political Zionism and the Creation of a Jewish State

Zionism is a political/religious movement dedicated to the restoration of the Jewish nation as a separate and distinct entity. In its modern form, initiated by Austrian Jew Theodore Herzl in 1896, Zionism was refined to include the creation of “*a publically and legally assured home in Palestine*” for the Jewish people.

Zionism is based on the Biblical term “*Zion*” which originally referred to the fortified crest of the ridge rising between the Tyropoeon and Kidron valleys in the Jebusite settlement of Jerusalem. (2 Samuel 5:6-10; 1 Chronicles 11:4-9) The Temple Mount, (“*Haram esh-Sherif*”) would ultimately be established just north of this area further up the same ridge line. Thus, reflecting the original sense of the term, when Solomon had completed his temple, he commanded the elders of the tribes of Israel “*to bring the ark of the Lord’s covenant from Zion, the City of David.*” (1 Kings 8:1) The Temple Mount, and eventually the entire City of Jerusalem, came to be included in the designation of Zion. So the psalmist rejoiced that “*Mount Zion, the City of the Great King*” had become the dwelling place of God:

“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, His holy mountain. It is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the City of the Great King. God is in her citadels; He has shown Himself to be her fortress.” (Psalm 48:1-2)



“Theodor Herzl”

The restoration of Zion became the dominant theme of messianic prophecy. For example, the prophet Jeremiah promised: “*I will choose you, one from a town and two from a clan, and bring you to Zion...At that time they will call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord.*” (Jeremiah 3:14,17) In the context of the Messianic return to Jerusalem and the land of Israel, Zionism became a most appropriate and effective designation for the movement to return the Jews to the land of Palestine.

The modern Zionist movement was largely secular, led by non-religious Jews responding to the rising tide of nationalism throughout Europe and the consequent increase in violent anti-Semitism across the continent. Theodor Herzl, an Austrian Jewish journalist, wrote an article in the early 1890's entitled “*The Jewish State.*” The widespread

response to this article, especially in Eastern Europe in which anti-Jewish persecution was most severe, led to the organization of the Zionist movement. A series of World Zionist Conferences were held in Basel, beginning in 1897. In its early years Zionism was opposed by majorities of both Reform Jews - who were convinced that Jews should continue to assimilate into the culture of the Western democracies - and Orthodox Jews - who believed that only the coming of the promised Messiah could bring about the return of Israel to its ancient homeland. Nonetheless, Herzl and his companions continued to work toward the realization of their dream of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Their plan was to obtain the co-operation of the political power controlling the



Orthodox Rabbis And Palestinians Marching Together In Opposition to Zionism

region, initially the Ottoman Empire and later the British after the defeat of the Turks in the First World War. In 1903, the British offered an independent homeland for the Jews in the British East African colony of Uganda. Herzl supported this offer as an interim until settlement in Palestine would become feasible. The consideration of this proposal caused bitter divisions within the Zionist ranks and was ultimately declined after Herzl's death the following year.

The number of Jewish immigrants arriving in Palestine, fleeing anti-Semitic persecution in Europe began to dramatically increase in the 19th Century. Zionist refer to Jews returning to their homeland with the Hebrew word "*aliyah*" which means to ascend or to go up. The first Aliyah began in 1882. It included about 35,000 Jews. The majority of these people came from Russia, with a smaller contingent from Yemen. The next wave of mass immigration (the second Aliyah) took place between 1904-1914. It involved about 40,000 Jews most of whom sought to escape the growing social unrest and anti-Semitism that preceded the downfall of czar of Russia. The settlement which would become the Israeli city of Tel Aviv was established by this group. With the end of the First World War and the establishment



*Nazi Propaganda Poster
The Nazis Guard the German Race*



*Nazi Propaganda Poster
Jew Poisoning German Children*

government for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and the approval of that declaration by the League of Nations in 1922. This encouragement, combined with deteriorating conditions for Jews throughout Europe led to significantly increased immigration in the pre-WWII years. Between 1924 and 1929 a wave of 60,000 Jews came to Palestine from Hungary and Poland, fleeing from rising anti-Semitism throughout Europe. Most of these people settled in cities and villages, establishing small businesses and light industry. The largest single increase in Jewish immigration came between 1929 and 1939 in response to the rise of Nazism and the election of the Hitler government in Germany. During these tumultuous years over 250,000 German Jews took Adolf Hitler at his word and fled the impending holocaust of European Jewry. By 1939, the Jewish population in Palestine had risen to nearly half a million. Violent Arab protests to increased Jewish immigration limited the number of Jews which the British were able to allow into Palestine through the end of the Second World War. Zionist organizations were then compelled to smuggle Jews into the country around the blockades of the British authorities. Contemporary estimates suggest that over 110,000 Jews came to Palestine in this way. By 1948, and the establishment of the State of Israel, the Jewish population of Palestine totaled 650,000 compared to an estimated 1.3 million Muslim /Christian Palestinians.

The Nazi holocaust dramatically increased Jewish support for Zionism. At the same time, the death of millions of Jews in Nazi concentration camps made the governments of Europe and the United States a great deal more sympathetic to the creation of a homeland for the Jews. The Jewish right to settle in Palestine became an increasingly acceptable concept throughout the West and the number



***Palestinian Delegation To London - 1929 - Grand Mufti of Jerusalem
And Hitler Crony Haj Amin al-Husseini Front And Center***

of Jewish immigrants continued its steady rise. A steady increase in Palestinian resentment and often violent protests was concomitant to the influx of Jews into Palestine. The Arab world in general, and the Palestinians in particular, perceived the arrival of the Jews in Palestine and the eventual establishment of the State of Israel as the expedient solution of a European problem unjustly imposed upon Muslims who were too weak and corrupt to resist the Western powers. At the same time, as previously noted, the reality of that weakness and corruption signified an intolerable affront to the honor of Islam.

Zionists perceived all of this from an entirely different perspective. In their view, the Jews were simply returning to their ancestral homeland, a land that had been promised to them in perpetuity by God Himself. In his testimony before the British Peel Commission in 1936, David Ben Gurion asserted the core Zionist conviction that the land of Israel had been permanently bestowed upon the Jews by divine decree in words designed to contrast the inferiority of the British League of Nations mandate to govern Palestine. *“The Bible is our mandate!”* Ben Gurion declared. (Rose, p. 7) These words may be somewhat surprising, coming from a self-avowed atheist! The Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, read by Ben Gurion on May 14th, 1948, defined the God-given right of the Jewish people to their historic homeland in these words:

“The Land of Israel is the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national character was formed. Here they achieved independence and created a culture of both national and universal significance. Here they wrote and gave the Bible to the world. Exiled from Palestine, the Jewish people remained faithful to it in all the countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom. Impelled by this historic association, Jews strove throughout the centuries to go back to the land of their fathers and regain their statehood. In recent decades they returned in their

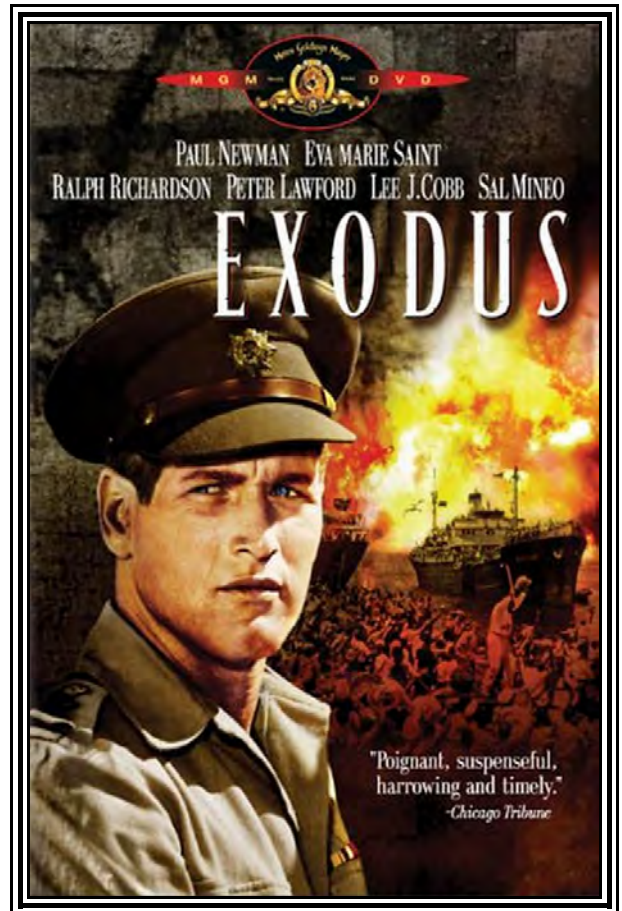
masses. They reclaimed the wilderness, revived their language, built cities and villages, and established a vigorous and ever growing community of its own economic and cultural life. They sought peace yet were prepared to defend themselves. They brought blessings to all the inhabitants of the country.” (Ben Gurion, p. 2)

These convictions were expressed and applied in the “Law of Return” - adopted by the State of Israel in 1950 - which guaranteed the right of every Jew, no matter what his current nationality, to immigrate to the land of Israel. Leon Uris, a Jewish/American author, wrote his best-selling novel *Exodus* in 1958 about the plight of the Jewish refugees and the founding of Israel. The “*Exodus*” for which the book was named, was an actual refugee ship, loaded with concentration camp survivors, which attempted to run the British blockade after the war. The book’s raw emotional power captured the imagination of the West and sold millions of copies throughout the Western world and its movie version - starring Paul Newman and Sal Mineo - was one of the most popular films of the 1960's. The theme song of the movie expressed the fundamental belief of Zionism in these heroic words:

“This land is mine - God gave this land to me: This brave and ancient land to me. And though I’m just a man, When you are by my side, With the help of God I know I can be strong. To make this land our own, Until I die, I’ll try to make this land our own. Until I die, this land is mine.”

Israelis contend that the entire concept of a Palestinian people who have been displaced from their historic homeland by a Jewish occupation is without historical substance. The overwhelming majority or those who now consider themselves to be Palestinians are, in fact, simply Arabs from neighboring countries whose parents or grandparents immigrated to the former Ottoman provinces which had become Palestine in order to take advantage of the economic developments which had taken place in the region because of the British Mandate and the Jewish Zionist settlements. These people are completely indistinguishable, both ethnically and culturally, from the populations of the twenty-one Arab nations which surround Israel. The great majority of them have lived in Palestine no longer than the original Zionist settlers. Jewish author David Naggar summarized this viewpoint in his recent book *The Case For A Larger Israel*:

“At the start of the 20th Century, the Arabs of Palestine didn’t think of themselves as Palestinians. They had only just begun to think of themselves as Arabs. They were Muslims, or Christians, from this family or that clan, or this town or that village - only they had a unique problem to deal with - Jews! The success of the Palestinian



movement is that virtually all Arabs who live or have ever lived west of the Jordan River in what was part of the 'British Mandate Palestine' call themselves Palestinians now, even if there is not cultural or historic difference between them and the majority of the people living in Syria or Jordan...This identity was created, even though the majority of the population of Arabs living in Palestine more than doubled from 1922-1947 as a direct result to British infrastructure and economic opportunities flowing from the Jewish presence. That so many people who never living in the area before the British Mandate was established, now claim the designation of Palestinian as their own is remarkable.” (Naggar, p. 41)



PLO Leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah

While this is historically accurate, it does not resolve the difficulty of dealing with the needs and demands of those who now consider themselves to be Palestinians - the rightful owners of the land currently “occupied” by Israel. In 2005, the United Nations listed the number of Palestinian refugees at 4.25 million. These are individuals, or their descendants, who fled from territory once included in the British Mandate of Palestine during one of the series of Arab attacks upon Israel since 1948. The majority currently reside in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. Determining the future of this massive group of people constitutes one of the major stumbling blocks to a permanent settlement of the crisis in the Middle East. Unfortunately, the Palestinians have been thoroughly radicalized by violent Islamic extremists, making them the single most volatile component in Middle Eastern politics today. Hassan Nasrallah, a leader of the major Palestinian faction Hezbollah, spoke for the great majority of Palestinians when he recently declared: “*There is no solution to the conflict in this region except with the disappearance of Israel. Peace settlements will not change reality - which is that Israel is the enemy and that it will never be a neighbor or a nation.*” (Naggar, p. 42) Such viewpoints leave little room for negotiation or peaceful resolution.

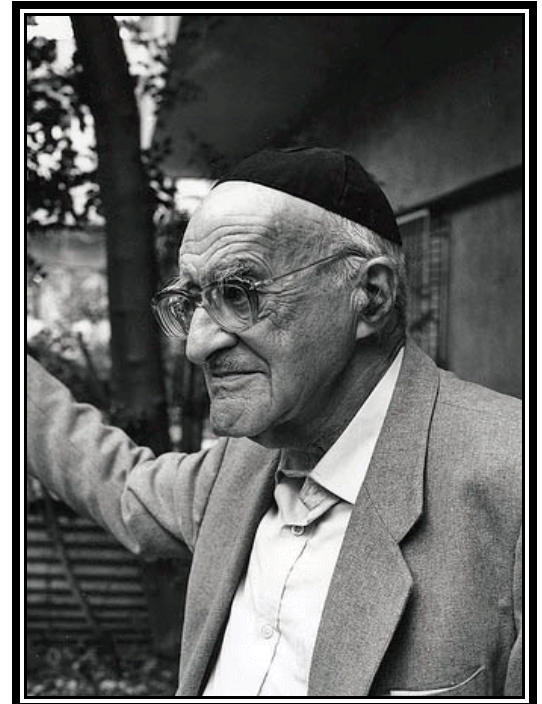
Before leaving the issue of population it must also be noted that the majority of the world’s Jews continue to live outside of the borders of Israel. Israeli Jews constitute only 40.6% of the world’s total Jewish population. This despite the constant efforts of the Israeli government to encourage and facilitate Jewish immigration. There are as many Jews living in America today as there are in Israel. This reality constitutes a significant concern for Israel and poses a genuine threat to her national security and survival. When Jews were allowed to emigrate after the recent collapse of the former Soviet Union, a large majority of those Jews chose to go to the U.S. or Western European nations rather than to Israel. The Israeli government applied major political pressure on its allies to place

limits upon that emigration and thus compel the Russian Jews to go to Israel. While the great majority of Jews throughout the world are strong supporters of the State of Israel, these statistics reveal ongoing ambivalence within the Jewish community as to the necessity - or the viability - of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

5b. Religious Zionism in Contemporary Israel

As previously noted, conservative orthodox Jews originally constituted one of the strongest sources of opposition to Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel. While that opposition has diminished, it remains significant both within Israel itself and in Jewish communities across the world. The orthodox tend to view the destruction of Biblical Israel and the dispersion of the people as God's righteous judgement upon the unbelief and apostasy of His people. They believe that the restoration of the Israel of God to its ancient homeland may not be accomplished by presumptuous human self-assertion but only by the coming of the Messiah and his fulfillment of the prophetic promises. To be a Jew, from the perspective of these most conservative practitioners of Judaism, can never be a matter of ethnic descent or national identity, but of submission to the Torah as it has been explicated and applied in the Talmudic writings of the rabbis across the centuries. Thus, the philosophy of Zionism, realized in the State of Israel, is perceived to be an abomination and a contradiction. Yeshayahu Liebowitz, an orthodox professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, lamented the success of Zionism in transforming Jewishness from a religious reality to an ethnic or national identity:

“The historical Jewish people was defined neither as a race, nor as a people of this country or that, or of this political system or that, nor as a people that speaks the same language, but as the people of Torah Judaism and its commandments, as the people of a specific way of life, both on the spiritual and the practical plane, a way of life that expresses the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, the yoke of the Torah and its commandments. This consciousness exercised its acceptance from within the people. It formed its national essence; it maintained itself down through the generations and was able to preserve its identity irrespective of times or circumstances. The words of Rabbi Saadia Gaon more than a thousand years ago, ‘Our nation exists only in the Torah’ had not only a normative but empirical meaning. They testified to a historical fact whose power could be felt until the nineteenth century. It was then when the fracture, which has not ceased to widen with time, first occurred; the break between Jewishness and Judaism. The human group recognized today as the Jewish people is no longer defined from the factual viewpoint, as the people of historical Judaism, whether in the consciousness of the majority of its members, or in that of the non-Jews. There indeed exist within these people a substantial number of persons who strive, individually or collectively, to live the Judaic way of life. But the majority of Jews - while sincerely conscious of their Jewishness - not only does not accept Judaism, but abhors it.” (Rabkin, p. 35)



Dr. Yeshayahu Liebowitz - The Hebrew University - Jerusalem

Professor Liebowitz, who in 1992 refused to accept the “*Israel Prize*” - the nation’s highest award - in recognition of his academic achievements, denounced Israel’s use of Biblical language in defense of its “*national pretensions*” as a “*prostitution of the values of Judaism*” and a reconstruction of the golden calf. Such strident language has led to his own denunciation by Israeli opponents as a “*Judeo-Nazi*”! Opposition notwithstanding, Liebowitz and his orthodox cohorts are convinced that the Zionist establishment of a secular Jewish nation-state constitutes a total perversion of God’s intention for His chosen people and jeopardizes the integrity of Judaism.

“But there is worse a sort of disqualification at once religious and moral, a spiritual corruption at the hands of lies and hypocrisy that borders on blasphemy, in the fact that a people could make use of the Torah to strengthen its national pretensions, while the majority of its members, as well as the social and political regime that it has adopted, have no connection with religious faith, and see in it nothing but legends and superstitions. This is a kind of prostitution of the values of Judaism, which amounts to using these values as a cover for the satisfaction of its patriotic urges and interests. And if there exists Jews willing to join the national-occupationist trend, and so far as to make a ‘Greater Israel’ the essential element of their faith, a religious commandment, well then, these people have become the heirs of worshipers of the golden calf who also proclaimed ‘Behold your God, O Israel!’ The golden calf need not necessarily be made of gold. It may also be called ‘nation,’ ‘land,’ ‘State.’”
(Rabkin, p. 81)



Orthodox Soldiers At Prayer In An Israeli Army Unit

Liebowitz reserved the most scathing condemnation for his fellow religious Jews who - from the professor’s perspective - have made the worship of “*Greater Israel*” the key component of their religion. These orthodox/conservative converts to Zionism have ironically become the most aggressive supporters of the State of Israel and the restoration of the land to its Biblical boundaries including, as a bare minimum, the entire West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Many of these religious Jews also favor the reconstruction of the Temple upon Mount Moriah or at least the removal of the present Muslim shrines on the Temple Mount and the exclusion of all visitors from the site where the Temple once stood. The orthodox identify themselves as the “*Haredim*” - “*the God Fearing.*” They are most strict in the application of rabbinic regulation and oppose any and all religious

innovation. The “*Haredim*” are readily identifiable by their distinctive long black coats and broad brimmed black hats. They participate in Israeli national life through two main political parties, based upon whether they came to Israel from Western Europe (“*Ashkenazi*”) or from North Africa or the Middle East (“*Sephardi*”). “*Yahudat Ha’Torah*” (“*Judaism of the Law*”) is the political party of those who came from Europe while “*Shas*” (an abbreviation for “*Samri Torah Sephradim*” - (“*Sephardic Guardians of the Torah*”)) represents the Jews who came to Israel from the Orient. The “*National Religious Party*” represents the conservatives who remain committed to the observance of religious law. Their men wear the traditional “*yamuka,*” skull caps, but with that exception they dress like non-observant Israelis.

Their militant followers are disproportionately prominent in Israel’s most elite military forces. Students in their theological schools and rabbinical seminaries carry their rifles to class and NRP party rallies are typically attended by well armed warriors ready to defend Israel against her enemies. On March 7th, 2008, an Arab terrorist entered the campus of a conservative “*yeshiva*” (a theological school for the study of the Torah and the Talmud) in east Jerusalem. He pulled out a gun and began shooting at everyone in sight. In a matter of moments, the terrorist had been killed by one of the seminary students, a sharpshooter from the Israeli special forces who carried his rifle to class each day - obviously a prudent course of action! The “*Gush Emunim*” (“*Block of the Faithful*”) dedicated to the aggressive establishment of Israeli settlements on the occupied West Bank also grows out of the NRP. Their slogan “*The Land of Israel for the People of Israel According to the Torah of Israel*” expresses the core conviction of these religious Jews that they have a God-given right to all of the territory once occupied by the Old Testament ancestors. Since the victorious 1967 War, when Israel seized the entire West Bank from Jordan, 120 Jewish settlements including over 268,000 people have been established on the West Bank, which “*Gush Emunim*” prefers to identify as “*Judea and Samaria.*” They are firmly opposed to abandoning any of these settlements or turning the heartland of the Jewish homeland over to Palestinians. Their militant supporters have often clashed with Israeli police and military forces trying to prevent unauthorized settlements or expel Jewish settlers from illegal encampments.



Orthodox West Bank Settlers Training Their Children In the Use of Automatic Weapons

All of these orthodox/conservative political groups together represent roughly 20% to 25% of the total population of Israel. In recent years, however, they have been able to exercise disproportionate influence because of the ongoing deadlock between Labor (Left) and Likud (Right), the two major secular political parties. By entering into coalition governments with both of the major parties over the years, the religious minority has played a major part in determining the policies of Israel and in limiting withdrawals from the West Bank.

5c. Religious Zionism and the Temple Mount

For orthodox/conservative Israelis, the divine mandate for the restoration of Biblical “*eretz Israel*”

(the Land of Israel) focuses particularly on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The Palestinian Liberation Organization - to the amazement of virtually every historian and archaeologist in the world - maintains the official position that there never was a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and therefore Israel has no claim whatsoever to “*Haram al-Sharif*” - the Arabic designation for the Temple Mount - and the Muslim holy places located there. In 2002, Yassar Arafat declared that no Jewish Temple had ever existed in Jerusalem or in Palestine and that Israeli archaeologists were deliberately falsifying evidence to support current Israeli claims to the Mount:

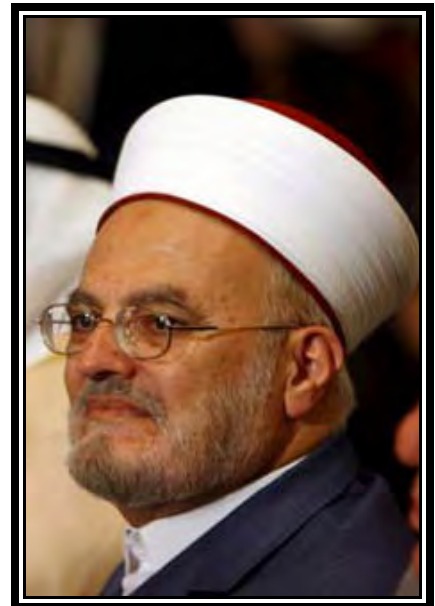
“For 34 years the Israelis have dug tunnels around the Temple Mount...They found not a single stone proving that the Temple of Solomon was there, because historically the Temple was not in Palestine at all. They found only remnants of the shrine of the Roman Herod...They are now trying to put in place a number of stones so that they can say, ‘We were here!’ This is nonsense. I challenge them to bring a single stone from the Temple of Solomon.” (ADL, p.1)

Arafat also argued that the prayers of devout Jews at the Wailing Wall were a deception invented by the rabbis and that in fact the ancient wall had no connection to the Jews but was actually a part of the original foundation of the Al Aqsa Mosque. Palestinian radio reported their Chairman’s remarks as follows:

“President Arafat said that no one can impose anything on us with regard to Jerusalem...He reiterated that the Wailing Wall (the Western Wall), as they call it, is Al-Buraq wall which is a religious endowment since the issuance of Umar’s covenant...He added that even the chief rabbis prevented prayers there, because it cannot be proven that the Temple was located there.” (ADL, p.2)

Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, the current Mufti of Jerusalem appointed by the PLO as the chief Muslim religious leader of the Palestinians, carried Arafat’s ridiculous argument even further when he asserted that Jerusalem and the Haram were exclusively Islamic and rejected the academic archaeological consensus regarding the location of the Temple at the site of the Dome of the Rock as a classic example of the Jews’ genius for deception:

“There is not even the smallest indication of the existence of a Jewish Temple on this place in the past. In the whole city, there is not even a single stone indicating Jewish history. Our right, on the other hand, is very clear. This place has belonged to us for 1,500 years. The Jews do not even know where their Temple stood! Therefore, we do not accept that they have any rights, underneath the surface or above it...It is the art of the Jews to deceive the world. But they can’t do it to us. There is not a single stone in the Wailing Wall relating the Jewish history...The Jews began praying at this Wall only in the 19th Century, when they began to develop national aspirations.” (ADL, p.2)



**“Sheikh Ikrima Sabri -
Grand Mufti of Jerusalem”**

Such politically self-serving fantasies aside, the location of the Hebrew Temple on Jerusalem’s Temple Mount is beyond dispute. Authentic Muslim tradition authenticates this site when it indicates that the Prophet Mohammad began his ascent into heaven astride the magical steed Buraq from the crest of Mount Moriah where the Patriarch Abraham built the altar to sacrifice his son Ishmael (not Isaac as indicated in the Old Testament). Hebrew tradition links the location of the Temple’s great altar to this same location. Even the Arabic name for Jerusalem is “*El Kuds*” which means “*The Temple.*” Islam does not have temples, thus this is a reference to the Jews’ Temple.

All Orthodox Jews long for the restoration of the Temple with the rituals and sacrifices which were once the essence of Judaism. The only disagreement between the non-political Orthodox and the Orthodox/Conservatives who have become the most militant defenders of the State of Israel is the means by which this restoration is to be accomplished. As previously noted, the non-political Orthodox believe that Jerusalem and the Temple can only be restored by God Himself through the coming of Israel’s promised Messiah. They reject any human attempt to rebuild the Temple as blasphemous presumption. The Orthodox militants of Israel’s right-wing, on the other hand, perceive themselves to be the agents of God’s will in restoring the Biblical “*Eretz Israel*” (the Land of Israel including all of the territory which was part of the Kingdom of David and Solomon) and reconstructing the Holy Temple in Jerusalem so that the true worship of God, as commanded in the Torah, may resume.

“*The Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful*” is an organization at the forefront of this movement. The group was founded by its present leader Gershom Salomon, an officer in the Israeli Defense Forces who was personally involved in the liberation of the Temple Mount during the Six Day War. When Salomon and other members of the IDF raced to the crest of Zion to reclaim the ancient site of the holy Temple, the young soldiers life was transformed. Salomon is firmly convinced that the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and its miraculous victories over 22 Arab states in the wars which have followed were the beginning of a divine plan which will culminate in the coming of “*the King of Israel, Messiah ben David.*” The restoration of the Temple Mount and the resumption of the Temple services are, in this view, absolutely crucial as the means by which the secular nation of Israel would be recalled to its spiritual identity and godly purpose. These devout believers scorn the secular leadership of the nation, their endless talk of political realism and their willingness to barter away the precious heritage of Israel in endless compromise with the Arab foe. The goals of the movement are clear and unequivocal:



The Prophet’s Night Journey Astride Buraq

“1. Liberating the Temple Mount from Arab (Islamic) occupation. The Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque were placed on this Jewish or Biblical holy site as a specific sign of Islamic conquest and domination. The Temple Mount can never be consecrated to the Name of G-d without removing these pagan shrines. It has been suggested that they be removed, transferred, and rebuilt in Mecca.

2. Consecrating the Temple Mount to the Name of G-d so that it can become the moral and spiritual center of Israel, of the Jewish people, and of the entire world according to the words of all the Hebrew prophets. It is envisioned that the consecration of the Temple Mount and the Temple itself will focus Israel on fulfilling the vision and mission given at Mt. Sinai for Israel to be a chosen people separate unto G-d, and a holy nation of priests and becoming a light unto all the nations (Yeshayahu (Isaiah 42:6) so that the Name of G-d may be revered by all nations and the Biblical way of life may be propagated throughout the world.



Gershon Salomon - Founder Of The Temple Mount Faithful

3. Rebuilding the Third Temple in accordance with the words of all the Hebrew prophets. This temple will be a House of Prayer for the people of Israel and all the nations.

4. Providing a Biblical point of assembly in order that all Israel may fulfill the command to assemble three times annually at the times of G-d festivals and at the place where G-d established His Name forever.

5. Making Biblical Jerusalem the real, undivided capital of the State of Israel in accordance with divine command.

6. Rejecting false ‘Peace Talks’ which will result in the dividing of Israel and the breaking of G-d’s covenant. God promised to Abraham and to his seed that land and the borders of Israel are eternal and cannot be divided and given to other people’s and nations.

7. Supporting the settlements in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the Golan Heights as they are holy. No one is allowed to break the Word and the will of G-d by commanding the settlers to leave. In the Biblical era, God commanded the people of Israel to settle the land completely. This command is applicable today. The holy connection and covenant between G-d, the people of Israel and the land of Israel is eternal.” (TMF)

In 2004, the Temple Mount Faithful arranged to have two massive 4 ½ ton marble cornerstones carved for use in the construction of the Third Temple. The stones were cut out by diamond cutters so that they might remain pure from contact with iron implements in conformity with the Biblical stipulation (Exodus 20:25). The cornerstones, draped in Israeli flags, were placed on a flatbed truck and driven to the southern gate of the Old City of Jerusalem and the temple Mount, followed by a large procession of the Faithful praying for the restoration of the Temple and the deliverance of Israel from her enemies. The demonstration attracted worldwide media attention and sparked protests throughout the Arab world.



The Temple Institute's Cornerstones For The Third Temple

In a similar vein, the members of the “*Temple Institute*” in the Old City of Jerusalem are meticulously crafting the furnishings and vestments which they fervently hope will soon take their place within the sanctuary of a restored Third Temple. Each piece, from the massive golden Menorah to the smallest implements and instruments of the priestly rituals is being fashioned in conformity with the materials and methods spelled out in the texts of the Old Testament. In the view of these devout believers the land of Israel without her sacred Temple is a land without a soul. It is their conviction that authentic obedience to the Torah and genuine practice of Judaism is impossible without the Temple and its divinely mandated sacrifices and services. The “*Statement of Principles*” of the “*Temple Institute*” declares:

“The Temple institute is dedicated to all aspects of the Divine commandment for Israel to build a House for G-d’s presence, the Holy Temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem...The Jewish people accepted the ‘Yoke of Heaven,’ the structure of their relationship with their Creator and their spiritual responsibility, at the Mount Sinai revelation. This relationship is based on Israel’s acceptance and fulfillment of the Torah’s 613 Divine commandments. But in fact, fully one third - 202 of these commandments - are totally dependent on the existence of the Holy Temple for their fulfillment...But we fool ourselves if we think that the state of Judaism today, without the Temple, is normal. On the contrary, we are like fish out of water. If 1/3 of the Torah’s commandments center on the Temple, it would seem that Biblical observance

in the Temple's absence is but a skeleton of what God had intended it to be...Sadly, much of our contemporary attitudes regarding the Holy Temple are a reflection of our own spiritual bankruptcy and alienation from the spiritual underpinnings of true Torah knowledge and faith...When the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem, it was the soul of the Jewish people, and the entire world, as we believe it will be once again.”
(TI)

The centrality of the Temple in the is well attested throughout historic Judaism. The Talmud eloquently reflected this view in the comment of a 9th Century AD rabbi:

“As the navel is set in the center of the human body so is the land of Israel the navel of the world, situated in the center of the world, and Jerusalem in the center of the land of Israel and the sanctuary in the center of Jerusalem, and the holy place in the center of the sanctuary, and the ark in the center of the holy place, and the foundation stone before the holy place, because from it the world was founded.” (Sizer, p. 26)

Millions of dollars in support of these enterprises have poured into Israel from Jews all over the world and from evangelical Christians whose eschatology motivates them to share in a desire for the reconstruction of the Temple at the earliest possible moment. The secular majority of Israel's population and political establishment view the reconstruction of the Temple as a dangerous irrelevancy and in the Six Day War the IDF prevented any disturbance of the Temple Mount. However, the strategic role which these Judaic conservatives and their Gentile allies in the United States play in Israeli politics provide them with disproportionate influence on both Israeli and American policy. Thus the Temple Mount remains a dangerously emotional issue in discussing the future of Jerusalem. The constant presence of the faithful at the Wailing Wall, lamenting the destruction of the Temple and praying earnestly for its return is a constant reminder to both Jews and Palestinians of the urgency of this concern.



The Temple of Herod In 1st Century Jerusalem

ZIONISM

AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL



A MORAL
INQUIRY



בנימין זאב הרצל

Binyamin Ze'ev (Theodor) Herzl

1860 - 1904

*"Visionary of the Jewish State" (Hove Ha'Medinah),
the father of modern political Zionism.*

1 From Zionism to the establishment of the State of Israel

As will become clear, several streams converge to issue in the broad and complex ideology of 'Zionism', a term used in its modern sense for the first time by Nathan Birnbaum in 1890 (Bein 1961: 33). Whether one approaches the question from a strictly secular perspective, or from one which takes account of religious considerations, the role of the biblical narrative is a critical element in any discussion of Zionism.¹ However, overt appeal to the Bible and its interpretation in underpinning Zionist nationalism was not prominent in the beginning, and only assumed a critical role when the religious settler movement collaborated with the new phase of Zionist expansionism which was inaugurated by the conquests of the 1967 War.

Since theological discourse should aspire to familiarity with unfolding realities, it is desirable to situate the Zionist movement within the social and political contexts in which it arose and progressed. I divide the history of the movement into five phases, beginning with Herzl's programmatic statement calling for the establishment of a state for Jews, and bringing the discussion up to the present day. I trust that this survey will be illuminating for those not familiar with the aspirations of the Zionist movement and its planned programme to realise its ideal to establish a state for Jews. Antecedents of Herzl's vision, and the sacralisation of the Zionist project will be examined in succeeding chapters.

The early phase of Zionism (1896–1917)

While Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) was not the first to suggest the establishment of a state for Jews, he was the one who most systematically

1 I have shown elsewhere how the Bible has been deployed in support of different forms of colonialism emanating out of Europe (Prior 1997a). If the European settlers could deploy its narrative as a legitimating charter for their enterprises, the case for Jews doing so appears to require less justification.

planned the elevation of his vision into a programme of action. He interested himself in the Jewish Question as early as 1881–82, and while in Vienna had considered mass Jewish conversion to Catholicism as a solution to the problem of being a Jew in European society. By 1895 he judged the efforts to combat antisemitism to be futile (Herzl 1960, vol. 1: 4–7).² He composed the first draft of his pamphlet, *Der Judenstaat*, between June and July 1895.³

On 17 January 1896 the editor of the London *Jewish Chronicle*, although decidedly unsympathetic to Zionism, invited Herzl to summarise his scheme, and published his article, 'A Solution of the Jewish Question'. Herzl called for the establishment of a model and tolerant, civil, Jewish state, which, while not a theocracy, would 'rebuild the Temple in glorious remembrance of the faith of our fathers'. He summed up, 'We shall live at last as free men, on our own soil, and die peacefully in our own home'. The editorial was sceptical: 'We hardly anticipate a great future for a scheme which is the outcome of despair'. The response to the article was lukewarm, and for several more years, despite the *Jewish Chronicle* giving lavish space to Zionist activities, its editor continued to view Zionism as 'ill-considered, retrogressive, impracticable, even dangerous'. Matters changed in 1906, when Leopold J. Greenberg, a leading figure in English Zionism bought the paper (in Finklestone 1997: xiii–xiv). In February 1896, Herzl published the full statement of his programme.

It is commonly held that the public degradation of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, an Alsatian Jew on the French General Staff, wrongly convicted of selling military secrets to the Germans (5 January 1896), signalled for Herzl the impossibility of Jews ever assimilating into European society, and confirmed him as a Zionist. Nevertheless, Herzl's journalistic dispatches from Paris were by no means 'Zionist'. It was only after the second guilty verdict of September 1899 that he publicly declared that Dreyfus' fate was essentially that of the Jew in modern society, and he suggested for the first time, in an article for the *North American Review* (1899), that the original Dreyfus trial had made him into a Zionist (Wistrich 1995: 17). There is no word about the Dreyfus affair in the early part of his diaries, and nothing in *Der Judenstaat*.

2 Herzl began his Diaries in 1895, and continued until shortly before his death. Seven volumes of the Letters and Diaries have been published, vols 1–3 edited by Johannes Wachten *et al.* (1983–85), and vols 4–7 by Barbara Schäfer (1990–96). Raphael Patai edited an English translation of the diaries in five volumes. In general, I quote from Patai's edition (rendered Herzl 1960), which I have checked against the original in Wachten and Schäfer. Where I judge it to be important, I give the original German (or other language) from the latter (rendered Herzl 1983–96).

3 Invariably, the items of Herzl's affairs I note are described fully in his Diaries, at the appropriate date, e.g. in this case in the complete German edition, Vol II: 277–78.

Herzl's vision and its underpinning

Herzl insisted that Jews constituted one people (Herzl [1896] 1988: 76, 79), and spoke of 'the distinctive nationality of Jews' (p. 79).⁴ Wherever they were, they were destined to be persecuted (pp. 75–78). Antisemitism was a national question, more than a social, civil rights or religious issue, and could be solved only by making it a political world-question (p. 76). The solution to the Jewish Question could be achieved only through 'the restoration of the Jewish State' (p. 69), in which sovereignty would be granted over a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the rightful requirements of a nation (p. 92). Jews could rely on the governments of all countries scourged by antisemitism to assist them obtain that sovereignty (p. 93), and on the Powers to admit Jewish sovereignty over a neutral piece of land. The creation of a Jewish state would be beneficial to both the present possessors of the land and to adjacent countries (p. 95). Concerning whether the state should be established in Argentina or Palestine, he said, 'Palestine is our ever-memorable historic home. The very name Palestine would attract our people with a force of marvellous potency' (p. 96).

Reflecting typical nineteenth-century European colonialist attitudes, Herzl presented the proposed Jewish state as 'a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilisation [Herzl's term was 'Kultur'] opposed to barbarism' (p. 96). Elsewhere he reflects the world-view of European racist superiority. He assured the Grand Duke of Baden that Jews returning to their 'historic fatherland' would do so as representatives of Western civilisation, bringing 'cleanliness, order and the well-established customs of the Occident to this plague-ridden, blighted corner of the Orient' (Herzl 1960, vol. 1: 343).

On the religious aspect, 'The Temple will be visible from long distances, for it is only our ancient faith that has kept us together' (Herzl [1896] 1988: 102). He appealed for the support of the rabbis (p. 129), and asserted, 'Our community of race is peculiar and unique, for we are bound together only by the faith of our fathers' (p. 146). But the Jewish state would not be a theocracy: 'We shall keep our priests within the confines of their temples in the same way as we keep our professional army within the confines of their barracks' (p. 146). Herzl's final words were:

A wondrous generation of Jews will spring into existence. The Maccabeans will rise again. . . . The Jews who wish for a state will have it. We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and die peacefully in our own homes. The world will be freed by our liberty,

4 Quotes in what follows are from *The Jewish State*, New York: Dover (1988).

enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness. And whatever we attempt there to accomplish for our own welfare, will react powerfully and beneficially for the good of humanity.

(pp. 156–57)

Herzl's proposal met with considerable opposition, not least from Chief Rabbi Moritz Güdemann of Vienna, who maintained that the Jews were not a nation, and that Zionism was incompatible with the teachings of Judaism.⁵

Herzl acknowledged that the notions of 'Chosen People', and 'return' to the 'Promised Land' would be potent factors in mobilising Jewish opinion, despite the fact that the leading Zionists were either non-religious, atheists or agnostics. However, Rabbis representing all shades of opinion denounced Zionism as a fanaticism and contrary to the Jewish scriptures, and affirmed their loyalty to Germany. On 6 March 1897 the *Zionsverein* decided upon a Zionist Congress in Munich for August, but the Munich Jews refused to host it. Moreover, the executive committee of the German Rabbinical Council 'formally and publicly condemned the "efforts of the so-called Zionists to create a Jewish national state in Palestine" as contrary to Holy Writ' (Vital 1975: 336). On the Zionist side, Herzl's critics found little specifically Jewish about the state he envisaged.

In addition to the challenge his programme proposed to traditional Orthodox Messianic eschatology – the Almighty alone would bring about the Jewish 'return' – Herzl's insistence on unredeemable antisemitism was a source of considerable annoyance to the Jewish leadership in several Western countries. In England, for example, Chief Rabbi Herman Adler judged Herzlian Zionism to be radically divergent from the main core of Judaism, which it would undermine. He regarded the First Zionist Congress as an 'egregious blunder' and an 'absolutely mischievous project'. No less seriously, where the Jewish leadership of the Rothschilds, Montagus, Cohens, Montefiores and others had honours bestowed on them by government and crown, there was no enthusiasm for the Herzlian dogma that life in the diaspora was inherently unnatural (see Finklestone 1997: xi–xxi).

Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress (29–31 August 1897) in Basle. On the day before the Congress, though non-religious, he attended a synagogue service, having been prepared for the reading of the Law (Vital 1975: 355). The purpose of the Congress was, in three days, to lay the foundation stone of the house to shelter the Jewish nation, and advance the interests of civilisation. The civilised nations would appreciate the value of establishing a cultural station, Palestine, on the shortest road to Asia, a task Jews were ready to undertake as the bearers of culture. Zionism, he

5 (1897) *Nationaljudentum*, Leipzig and Vienna, p. 42, quoted in Laqueur 1972: 96.

summarised, seeks to secure for the Jewish people a publicly recognised, legally secured (*öffentlich-rechtlich*) home in Palestine for the Jewish people.⁶

The Congress also founded the World Zionist Organisation, and adopted the motion to establish a fund to acquire Jewish territory, which 'shall be inalienable and cannot be sold even to individual Jews; it can only be leased for periods of forty-nine years maximum' (in Lehn 1988: 18), the forty-nine years reflecting the divine provenance of land-possession (Lev 25).⁷ Herzl envisaged that the European powers would endorse Zionism for imperialist self-interest, to rid themselves of Jews and antisemitism, and to use organised Jewish influence to combat revolutionary movements. After the Congress, Herzl wrote in his diary (3 September),

If I were to sum up the congress in a word – which I shall guard against pronouncing publicly – it would be this: At Basle I founded the Jewish state. If I said this out loudly today, I would be greeted by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, and certainly in fifty, everyone will know it.
(Herzl 1960, vol. 2: 581)

Herzl's tactics would combine mobilising the Jews with negotiating with the imperial powers, and colonisation. Realising that intensive diplomatic negotiations at the highest level, and propaganda on the largest scale would be necessary (11 May 1896, Herzl 1983–96, vol. 2: 340–41), he obtained audiences with key international figures, including the Sultan, the Kaiser, the Pope, King Victor Emmanuel, Chamberlain and prominent Tsarists. During his first visit to Palestine (1898) he was received by the German emperor, Wilhelm II, at his headquarters outside Jerusalem (2 November) after which he realised that the Zionist goal would not be achieved under German protection. Jerusalem, with its musty deposits of two thousand years of inhumanity, intolerance and uncleanness lying in the foul-smelling little streets, made a terrible impression on Herzl (31 October, 1983–96, vol. 2: 680). In a series of meetings with Sultan Abdul Hamid (May 1901 to July 1902), Herzl promised that Jews would help him pay his foreign debt, and promote the country's industrialisation. The Sultan promised lasting

6 (1911) *Protokoll des I. Zionistenkongresses in Basel vom 29. bis 31. August 1897*, Prag: Selbstverlag – Druck von Richard Brandeis in Prag, p. 15.

7 The Fifth Zionist Congress in Basle (29–31 December 1901) established the Jewish National Fund (JNF), which from the beginning was an instrument for the realisation of a Jewish state. The JNF, legally established in 1907, with the 'primary object' to acquire land for exclusive and inalienable Jewish settlement, purchased its first Arab-owned land in 1910 from absentee landlords. So difficult was it to purchase land from small holders that by 1919 it had obtained only 16,366 dunums (a dunum being 1,000 square metres, i.e. about one quarter of an acre; see Lehn 1988: 30–39). The Director of its Palestine Office, Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943), promoted 'economic segregation', as signalled in the axioms of 'self-help' or 'self-labour'.

protection if the Jews would seek refuge in Turkey as citizens. However, Herzl, unable to raise a fraction of the money, decided to open negotiations with Britain. As we shall see, Britain would have its own interests in supporting the Zionist enterprise.

Herzl explained to Joseph Chamberlain, Britain's Colonial Secretary, that in patronising the Zionist endeavour the British Empire would have ten million agents for her greatness and her influence all over the world, bringing political and economic benefits (October 1902, 1983–96, vol. 3: 469). In this *quid pro quo*, England would undertake to protect its client Jewish state, and world Jewry would advance British interests. In August 1903, Herzl discussed with the Tsarist government the speeding up of the emigration of Russian Jews, and argued that the European powers would support Jewish colonisation in Palestine not only because of the historic right guaranteed in the Bible, but because of the European inclination to let Jews go.

Chamberlain had raised already the option of Jews settling in Uganda, rather than Palestine, which was hotly debated, and finally carried at the Sixth Zionist Congress at Basle (22–28 August 1903), with 295 for, 175 against and 90 abstentions. Herzl emphasised that Uganda would only be a staging post to the ultimate goal of Palestine, but fearing that the issue might split the Zionist movement, lifting his right hand, he cried out, '*Im Yeshkakkbekh Yerushalayim . . .*' ('If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand wither'), quoting Psalm 137.5 (Laqueur 1972: 129). The Seventh Congress, at which Herzl was not present, officially buried the Uganda scheme.

With failing health, Herzl visited Rome on 23 January 1904, and met King Victor Emmanuel III and Pope Pius X. To Herzl's request for a Jewish state in Tripoli, the king replied, '*Ma è ancora casa di altri*' ('But it is already the home of other people') (Herzl 1983–96, vol. 3: 653). Neither Pius X nor the Secretary of State, Cardinal Merri del Val, considered it proper to support the Zionist intentions in any way (Herzl 1960, 4: 1602–1603), opposing it on religious grounds. Herzl made the last entry in his Diaries on 16 May 1904, and died in Edlach on 3 July. On the day of his burial Israel Zangwill, the Anglo-Jewish writer and propagandist, compared him with Moses, who had been vouchsafed only a sight of the Promised Land. But like Moses, Herzl 'has laid his hands upon the head of more than one Joshua, and filled them with the spirit of his wisdom to carry on his work' (Zangwill 1937: 131–32).

Evaluation of Herzl

That Herzl provided the inspiration, the leadership and the organisation of the Zionist movement is reflected in David Ben-Gurion's proclamation of the State of Israel (14 May 1948) under his portrait, and in the transfer of his remains to Jerusalem in 1949. His genius lay in elevating his vision and plan into action, through remarkable organisational and diplomatic skills. While others who advocated the establishment of a Jewish state hoped that someone else would lead the march, Herzl organised practical means to

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advance it, most significantly the convening of the First Zionist Congress in 1897. He was very much a man of action, a 'Tatmensch', as Martin Buber put it. To have dealt with the Kaiser, the Sultan, a king and the Pope, as though he were the leader of a state was no mean achievement. Moreover, his early death ensured that he could be embraced by all factions within the broad Zionist and Israeli camp:

This iconisation of Herzl has been a useful and unifying force for Zionism, transcending the gulf between Right and Left, liberals and conservatives, secular and religious Jews. There is potentially something for everybody in Herzl's rhetoric of unity, in his visionary 'third way' between capitalism and socialism, in his enlightened, optimistic liberalism.

(Wistrich 1995: 3)

Although Herzl's motivation was not dictated by a religious longing for the ancient homeland, nor by appeal to biblical injunctions, e.g. to go to the Promised Land in order to observe the Torah, at various times people referred to him as the Messiah, or King of Israel, and as the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures. At his graveside, Buber did not hide the fact that Herzl had no sense of Jewish national culture, and no inward relationship to Judaism or to his own Jewishness. Moreover, he had the soul of a dictator (in Wistrich 1995: 30–31). Indeed, Herzl's Zionism had much in common with 'Pan-Germanism', with its emphasis on *das Volk*: all persons of German race, blood or descent, wherever they lived, owed their primary loyalty to Germany, the *Heimat*. Jews, wherever they lived, constituted a distinct nation, whose success could be advanced only by establishing a Jewish nation-state.

Moreover, Herzl's claim to construct a separate state 'like every other nation' amounted to special pleading. The basic assumption of European nationalisms was the indigenous nature of a specific community, and its desire for independence from the imperial power. Moreover, reflecting stereotypical colonialist prejudices, he gave little attention to the impact of his plans on the indigenous people. Notwithstanding, he knew what was needed to establish a state for Jews in a land already inhabited. An item in his diary entry for 12 June 1895 signals Herzl's plans. Having occupied the land and expropriated the private property, 'We shall endeavour to expel the poor population across the border unnoticed, procuring employment for it in the transit countries, but denying it any employment in our own country'.⁸ He added that both 'the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor

8 I offer this translation of 'Die arme Bevölkerung trachten wir unbemerkt über die Grenze zu schaffen, indem wir in den Durchzugsländern Arbeit verschaffen aber in unserem eigenen Lande jederlei Arbeit verweigern' (Vol. II: 117–18), in preference to Zohn's translation, 'We shall try to spirit the penniless population ...' (Herzl 1960, 1: 87–88).

must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly'.

In public, however, he showed a different face. In a letter of 19 March 1899 he assured a concerned Jerusalem Arab: 'But who would think of sending them away? It is their well-being, their individual wealth, which we will increase by bringing in our own' (in Childers 1987: 167). This kind of duplicity, as we shall see, was a characteristic of Zionist discourse, which masked true Zionist intentions. Moreover, after Herzl's death in 1904, his private diaries were held by the Zionist movement, and until 1960 only edited versions were released, carefully omitting his 'population transfer' plans.

Furthermore, the modern, secular Jewish state of Herzl's novel *Altneuland* (1902), set in 1923 and for European consumption, was a haven of the liberal spirit and a blessing for the natives. To the visiting Christian, Mr Kingscourt, who had asked, 'Don't you look upon the Jews as intruders?', the Palestinian Rashid Bey, replied, 'The Jews have enriched us, why should we be angry with them. They live with us like brothers. Why should we not love them?' But in 1902 also, Herzl's general disdain of natives was obvious from his response to Chamberlain's protest that Britain could not support the Zionist proposal for a joint Anglo-Zionist partnership, since it was against the will of the indigenous population of Cyprus (Herzl's diary of 23 October 1902). Earlier in the entry for the same day, we read: 'Not everything in politics is disclosed to the public – but only results of what can be serviceable in a controversy'.

Zionism and European Imperialism

The early Zionists realised the necessity of winning the support of at least one of the major European powers, whose own agenda might favour the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. Reflecting international political interests in the controversies surrounding Jerusalem and the Holy Places throughout the Ottoman period Britain stationed a Consular Agent in Jerusalem in 1838, after which a Protestant (Anglican) Bishopric in Jerusalem was established in 1841. Moreover, Britain sought to ensure safe and speedy overland communication with its newly acquired territories in India, and wished to protect her trade with the Persian Gulf region, as well as to keep Mohammed 'Ali of Egypt in his place.⁹

Having already occupied Egypt in 1882, Britain set its sights on Iraq in the years before the outbreak of the First World War, while the French, in

9 'The Jewish people, if returning under the sanction and protection and at the invitation of the Sultan, would be a check upon any future evil designs of Mohammed Ali or his successor' (my emphasis; Viscount Palmerston to Viscount Ponsonby, 2 August 1840, Foreign Office 79/390 [No. 134] Public Record Office).

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anticipation of the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, invested heavily in Syria. Dr Chaim Weizmann (1874–1952), the Zionist leader and, later, the first President of Israel, reflected the prevailing colonialist attitudes of the European powers:

We can reasonably say that should Palestine fall within the British sphere of influence, and should Britain encourage Jewish settlement there, as a British dependency, we could have in twenty to thirty years a million Jews out there, perhaps more; they would develop the country, bring back civilization to it and form a very effective guard for the Suez Canal.

(Letter to *Manchester Guardian*, November 1914,
in Weizmann 1949: 149)

The Zionist enterprise would resemble the struggle between progress, efficiency, health and education, on one side, and stagnation on the other: 'the desert against civilization' (Weizmann 1929–30: 24–25). Weizmann considered it self-evident that England needed Palestine for the safeguarding of the approaches to Egypt, and that if Palestine were thrown open for the settlement of Jews, 'England would have an effective barrier, and we would have a country' (letter to Zangwill on 10 October 1914, in Stein 1961: 14–15).

The entry of the Ottoman Empire into the War in October 1914 had a profound impact on future developments in the Middle East. The British Government, fearing a hostile Pan-Islamic opposition led by the Ottoman sultan-caliph, looked to the Sharif of Mecca, Husayn ibn 'Ali to advance its interests. The Sharif agreed, on condition that when the Turks were defeated, the British would support Arab independence in the whole of the Arabian Peninsula (with the exception of Aden), Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Trans-Jordan and Iraq (Ingrams 1972: 1–2). Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, with certain important reservations, agreed on 24 October 1915, 'to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs within the territories included in the limits and boundaries proposed by the Sharif of Mecca', i.e. from Cilicia in the north to the Indian Ocean in the south, and from the Mediterranean to Iran (Letter to the Sharif, in Laqueur 1976: 16–17).

Yet, in the Sykes–Picot Agreement 3 January 1916 France and Britain agreed on how to carve up the Middle East: France would control Cilicia, coastal Syria and Lebanon, and Britain would acquire Basra, Baghdad, the southern region of the Middle East, and Haifa and Acre, with the rest of Palestine being placed under an undefined international administration. Among the differences between the terms of the Sykes–Picot Agreement and the letter from McMahon to Husayn were the status of Iraq, the degree of independence of the Arab state(s), the position of Haifa and the status of Palestine. The absence of reference to Palestine in the McMahon letter suggests that it would presumably fall within the Arab state(s), whereas in the Sykes–Picot Agreement it was to be internationalised. However, new

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Is It Time for the Jews to Leave Europe?

By Jeffrey Goldberg



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For half a century, memories of the Holocaust inoculated the Continent against overt anti-Semitism. That period has ended—the recent fatal attacks in Paris and Copenhagen are merely the latest in a mounting tide. Today, right-wing fascist strains of Jew-hatred are merging with a new threat from radicalized Islamists, confronting Europe with a crisis, and its Jews with an agonizing choice.

IS IT TIME FOR THE JEWS TO LEAVE EUROPE?

BY JEFFREY
GOLDBERG



The Rue des Rosiers, at the center of the Jewish quarter, in Paris's Fourth Arrondissement, February 15, 2015

*"All comes from the Jew;
all returns to the Jew."*

—Édouard Drumont (1844-1917),
founder of the Anti-Semitic League of France

I. THE SCOURGE OF OUR TIME

The French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut, the son of Holocaust survivors, is an accomplished, even gifted, pessimist. To his disciples, he is a Jewish Zola, accusing France's bien-pensant intellectual class of complicity in its own suicide. To his foes, he is a reactionary whose nostalgia for a fairytale French past is induced by an irrational fear of Muslims. Finkielkraut's cast of mind is generally dark, but when we met in Paris in early January, two days after the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre, he was positively grim.

"My French identity is reinforced by the very large number of people who openly declare, often now with violence, their hostility to French values and culture," he said. "I live in a strange place. There is so much guilt and so much worry." We were seated at a table in his apartment, near the Luxembourg Gardens. I had come to discuss with him the precarious future of French Jewry, but, as the hunt for the *Charlie Hebdo* killers seemed to be reaching its conclusion, we had become fixated on the television.

Finkielkraut sees himself as an alienated man of the left. He says he loathes both radical Islamism and its most ferocious French critic, Marine Le Pen, the leader of France's extreme right-wing—and once openly anti-Semitic—National Front party. But he has lately come to find radical Islamism to be a more immediate, even existential, threat to France than the National Front. "I don't trust Le Pen. I think there is real violence in her," he told me. "But she is so successful because there actually is a problem of Islam in France, and until now she has been the only one to dare say it."

Suddenly, there was news: a kosher supermarket in Porte de Vincennes, in eastern Paris, had come under attack. "Of course," Finkielkraut said. "The Jews." Even before anti-Semitic riots broke out in France last summer, Finkielkraut had become preoccupied with the well-being of France's Jews.

We knew nothing about this new attack—except that we already knew everything. "People don't defend the Jews as we expected to be defended," he said. "It would be easier for the left to defend the Jews if the attackers were white and rightists."

I asked him a very old Jewish question: Do you have a bag packed?

"We should not leave," he said, "but maybe for our children or grandchildren there will be no choice."

Reports suggested that a number of people were dead at the market. I said goodbye, and took the Métro to Porte de Vincennes. Stations near the market were closed, so I walked through neighborhoods crowded with police. Sirens echoed through the streets. Teenagers gathered by the barricades, taking selfies. No one had much information. One young man, however, said of the victims, "It's just the *Feuj*." *Feuj*, an inversion of *Juif*—"Jew"—is often used as a slur.

I located an acquaintance, a man who volunteers with the Jewish Community Security Service, a national organization founded after a synagogue bombing in 1980, to protect Jewish

institutions from anti-Semitic attack. "Supermarkets now," he said bleakly. We made our way closer to the forward police line, and heard volleys of gunfire. The police had raided the market; the suspect, Amedy Coulibaly, we soon heard, was dead. So were four Jews he had murdered. They had been shopping for the Sabbath when he entered the market and started shooting.

France's 475,000 Jews represent less than 1 percent of the country's population. Yet last year, according to the French Interior Ministry, 51 percent of all racist attacks targeted Jews. The statistics in other countries, including Great Britain, are similarly dismal. In 2014, Jews in Europe were murdered, raped, beaten, stalked, chased, harassed, spat on, and insulted for being Jewish. *Sale Juif*—"dirty Jew"—rang in the streets, as did "Death to the Jews," and "Jews to the gas."

The epithet *dirty Jew*, Zola wrote in "*J'Accuse ...!*," was the "scourge of our time." "*J'Accuse ...!*" was published in 1898.

THE RESURGENCE OF ANTI-SEMITISM in Europe is not—or should not be—a surprise. One of the least surprising phenomena in the history of civilization, in fact, is the persistence of anti-Semitism in Europe, which has been the wellspring of Judeophobia for 1,000 years. The Church itself functioned as the centrifuge of anti-Semitism from the time it rebelled against its mother religion until the middle of the 20th century. As Jonathan Sacks, the former chief rabbi of Great Britain, has observed, Europe has added to the global lexicon of bigotry such terms as *Inquisition*, *blood libel*, *auto-da-fé*, *ghetto*, *pogrom*, and *Holocaust*. Europe has blamed the Jews for an encyclopedia of sins. The Church blamed the Jews for killing Jesus; Voltaire blamed the Jews for inventing Christianity. In the febrile minds of anti-Semites, Jews were usurers and well-poisoners and spreaders of disease. Jews were the creators of both communism and capitalism; they were clannish but also cosmopolitan; cowardly and warmongering; self-righteous moralists and defilers of culture. Ideologues and demagogues of many permutations have understood the Jews to be a singularly malevolent force standing between the world and its perfection.

Despite this history of sorrow, Jews spent long periods living unmolested in Europe. And even amid the expulsions and persecutions and pogroms, Jewish culture prospered. Rabbis and sages produced texts and wrote liturgical poems that are still used today. Emancipation and enlightenment opened the broader culture to Jews, who came to prominence in politics, philosophy, the arts, and science—Chagall and Kafka, Einstein and Freud, Lévi-Strauss and Durkheim. An entire civilization flourished in Yiddish.

Hitler destroyed most everything. But the story Europeans tell themselves—or told themselves, until the proof became too obvious to ignore—is that *Judenhass*, the hatred of Jews, ended when Berlin fell 70 years ago.

Events of the past 15 years suggest otherwise.

We are witnessing today the denouement of an unusual epoch in European life, the age of the post-Holocaust Jewish dispensation.

When the survivors of the Shoah emerged from the camps, and from hiding places in cities and forests across Europe, they were met on occasion by pogroms. (In Poland, for instance, some Christians were unhappy to see their former Jewish neighbors return home, and so arranged their deaths.)

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But over time, Europe managed to absorb the small number of Jewish survivors who chose to remain. A Jewish community even grew in West Germany. At the same time, the countries of Western Europe embraced the cause of the young and besieged state of Israel.

The Shoah served for a while as a sort of inoculation against the return of overt Jew-hatred—but the effects of the inoculation, it is becoming clear, are wearing off. What was once impermissible is again imaginable. Memories of 6 million Jewish dead fade, and guilt becomes burdensome. (In *The Eternal Anti-Semite*, the writer Henryk Broder popularized the notion that “the Germans will never forgive the Jews for Auschwitz.”) Israel is coming to be understood not as a small country in a difficult spot whose leaders, especially lately, have (in my opinion) been making shortsighted and potentially disastrous decisions, but as a source of cosmological evil—the Jew of nations.

An argument made with increasing frequency—motivated, perhaps, by some perverse impulse toward psychological displacement—calls Israel the spiritual and political heir of the Third Reich, rendering the Jews as Nazis. (Some in Europe and the Middle East take this line of thought to an even more extreme conclusion: “Those who condemn Hitler day and night have surpassed Hitler in barbarism,” the president of Turkey,

↑
 The Hyper Cacher kosher supermarket in the Porte de Vincennes neighborhood of Paris, in the aftermath of the January 9 attack that killed four Jews

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, said last year of Israel.)

The previously canonical strain of European anti-Semitism, the fascist variant, still flourishes in places. In Hungary, a leader of the right-wing Jobbik party called on the government—a government that has come under criticism for whitewashing the history of Hungary’s collaboration with the Nazis—to draw up a list of all the Jews in the country who might pose a “national-security risk.” In Greece, a recent survey found that 69 percent of adults hold anti-Semitic views, and the fascists of the country’s Golden Dawn party are open in their Jew-hatred.

But what makes this new era of anti-Semitic violence in Europe different from previous ones is that traditional Western patterns of anti-Semitic thought have now merged with a potent strain of Muslim Judeophobia. Violence against Jews in Western Europe today, according to those who track it, appears to come mainly from Muslims, who in France, the epicenter of Europe’s Jewish crisis, outnumber Jews 10 to 1.

That the chief propagators of contemporary European anti-Semitism may be found in the Continent’s large and disenfranchised Muslim immigrant communities—communities that are themselves harassed and assaulted by hooligans associated with Europe’s surging right—is flummoxing to, among others, Europe’s elites. Muslims in Europe are in many ways

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a powerless minority. The failure of Europe to integrate Muslim immigrants has contributed to their exploitation by anti-Semitic propagandists and by recruiters for such radical projects as the Islamic State, or ISIS.

Yet the new anti-Semitism flourishing in corners of the European Muslim community would be impoverished without the incorporation of European fascist tropes. Dieudonné M'bala M'bala, a comedian of French Cameroonian descent who specializes in Holocaust revisionism and gas-chamber humor, is the inventor of the *quenelle*, widely understood as an inverted Nazi salute. His followers have taken to photographing themselves making the *quenelle* in front of synagogues, Holocaust memorials, and sites of past anti-Jewish terrorist attacks. Dieudonné has built an ideological partnership with Alain Soral, the anti-Jewish conspiracy theorist and 9/11 "truther" who was for several years a member of the National Front's central committee. Soral was photographed not long ago making the *quenelle* in front of Berlin's Holocaust memorial.



↑ Top: Workers wash anti-Semitic graffiti from the Holocaust memorial at the former Kraków-Płaszów concentration camp in Poland, March 13, 2010. Bottom: Demonstrators make the *quenelle* at the Day of Rage protests against President François Hollande in Paris, January 26, 2014.

The union of Middle Eastern and European forms of anti-Semitism expression has led to bizarre moments. Dave Rich, an official of the Community Security Trust, a Jewish organization that monitors anti-Semitism in the United Kingdom, wrote recently:

"Those British Muslims who verbally abuse British Jews on the street are more likely to shout 'Heil Hitler' than 'Allah Akhbar' when they do so. This is despite the fact that their parents and grandparents were probably chased through the very same streets by gangs of neo-Nazi skinheads shouting similar slogans."

The marriage of anti-Semitic narratives was consummated in January of last year, during a so-called Day of Rage march in Paris that was organized to protest the leadership of the French president, François Hollande. The rally drew roughly 17,000 people, mostly far-rightists but also many French Muslims.

"On one side of this march, you had neonationalist and reactionary Catholics, who had strongly and violently opposed gay marriage, and on the other side young people from the banlieues [suburbs], supporters of Dieudonné, often from African and North African background, whose beliefs are based in opposition to the 'system' and on victimhood competition," Simone Rodan-Benzaquen, the Paris director of the American Jewish Committee, told me. "What unites them is their hatred of Jews." That day, on the streets of Paris, the anti-Hollande message was overtaken by another chanted slogan: "*Juif, la France n'est pas à toi*"—"Jew, France is not for you."

Howard Jacobson, the Man Booker Prize-winning writer

whose latest novel, *J*, is a study of a future genocide in an unnamed but very English-seeming country of an unnamed people who very much resemble the Jews, told me the book emerged from an inchoate but ever-present sense of anxiety. "I felt as if I was writing out of dread," he said when we met recently near his home in London.

"It will never go away, this hatred of Jews ... and the proof of this is that barely 50 years after the Holocaust, the desire for Jewish bloodletting isn't over," he said. "Couldn't they have given us a bit longer? Give us 100 years and we'll return to it."

"I know this is a dangerous thing to say ... but the Holocaust didn't satisfy."

I've spent much of the past year traveling across Europe, in search of an answer to a simple, but pressing, question: Is it time for the Jews to leave? Europe is a Jewish museum and a Jewish graveyard, but after the war it became, remarkably—and despite Hitler's best efforts—home once again to living, breathing Jewish communities. Is it still a place for Jews who want to live uncamouflaged Jewish lives?

II. "DON'T GO TO THE JEW"

On the morning of March 19, 2012, a man named Mohamed Merah, a French citizen of Algerian descent,

parked his motorbike in front of the entrance of a Jewish school in Toulouse called Ozar Hatorah, which is in a placid residential neighborhood not far from the city center. Merah, who had been radicalized in a French prison and trained in an al-Qaeda camp in Pakistan, dismounted and almost immediately began firing a 9 mm pistol at students and the parents who were dropping them off. He killed a 30-year-old rabbi and his two sons, who were 3 and 6 years old. Merah then walked into the schoolyard, shooting at students. He chased down an 8-year-old girl named Myriam Monsonego, catching her by the hair. Merah held her down and placed his 9 mm to her head, but the weapon jammed. He switched to another handgun, pressed it against her head, and fired. The sound of shooting had brought the school's principal to the school yard. Yaacov Monsonego arrived to see Merah execute his daughter.

Merah escaped on his motorbike. He was later shot and killed by police. French authorities said he was also responsible for the earlier killings of three French soldiers of Muslim background. In the theology of radical French Islamism, Muslims who cooperate with the state are as much an enemy as Jewish children.

Ozar Hatorah, which is today known as Ohr Hatorah, is surrounded by a high wall, topped in places by barbed wire.

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I visited the school in October with Nicole Yardéni, the Toulouse representative of the national Jewish council. Yardéni wanted me to meet a physician named Charles Bensemhoun, who would explain, she said, the collapsing relationship between Toulouse's 18,000 or so Jews and its much larger Muslim population.

Bensemhoun, who is in his mid-50s, is Sephardic, born in Morocco. Three-quarters of France's Jews are Sephardim, chased from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia in the 1950s and '60s.

Many of Bensemhoun's patients are North African Muslims. "These are people like me, who were born there," he told me outside the school's synagogue. "We speak the same language, literally"—he says he and his patients move easily between Arabic and French—"and we understand each other in very deep ways. They're very comfortable with me as their doctor." He went on, "But it's changed in recent years. Now their children are telling them, 'Don't go to the Jew,' 'You can't trust the Jew.' They've become radicalized. It's upsetting. The new generation is anti-Semitic in a way that we haven't experienced."

Are these patients listening to their children? "Yes," he said. "In some cases, yes."

I asked him whether he thought he had a future in Toulouse. He smiled. "Does any Jew have a future in Toulouse?" The Jewish community is shrinking, Yardéni said. Some families are moving to Paris. Others are moving to Israel.

The Merah attack was the gravest in the modern Jewish history of Toulouse (the slaughter of the city's Jews by Crusaders in 1320 is presumed to have been bloodier). But the list of less tragic, though still damaging, attacks is long. Last July, Molotov cocktails were thrown at a Jewish cultural center; street harassment of Jews walking to and from school and synagogue is common. Early last year, Yardéni and other Jews were banned from a left-wing demonstration called to protest homophobia and—of all things—anti-Semitism, because they were ruled to be Zionists. The local police record dozens of anti-Jewish hate crimes each year. "There is a point where it becomes difficult to stay," Bensemhoun said.

Monsonogo, the school principal who saw his daughter murdered, came out of the synagogue. He is a small, slight man with a graying beard and a hesitant gait. We spoke privately for a couple of minutes. I found him in some ways unfathomable. I don't understand how a father maintains his sanity after witnessing what he witnessed—but his daughter's murder has not caused him to lose faith in God or in his work.

Later, I asked Yardéni why the Monsonogo family has remained in Toulouse. She herself is one of the city's most visible Jewish leaders, and receives many veiled death threats. "If the leaders of the community run away, what will happen to the rest of the people?" she said.

III. "JE SUIS JUIF"

Like many of the banlieues that ring Paris, Montreuil bears no socioeconomic or aesthetic resemblance to the Paris of popular imagination. The architecture is rude, the parks are unkempt, and the people, many of them immigrants from North Africa,

are estranged from *la belle France*. On the way to Montreuil, in the Métro, I passed defaced posters of the musician Lou Reed. Stars of David had been drawn on his nose. Other graffiti was less ambiguous: *NIQUE LES JUIFS*—"Fuck the Jews."

I was visiting a vocational high school, the Daniel Mayer School. The school is associated with ORT, which is a Russian acronym for the Society for Trades and Agricultural Labor. ORT was founded in 1880 to educate the destitute Jews of the Pale of Settlement, the vast ghetto created by czarist Russia for its Jewish subjects. In France, ORT schools educated a generation of Polish and Russian survivors of the Holocaust; today, they primarily educate the children of North African Jews.

The Mayer School is housed in a seven-story building in Montreuil, near the Robespierre Métro station. The principal, Isaac Toutou, gathered a group of students—mainly ages 17 and 18—and teachers in the library to talk with me. These were mostly the children of striving working-class parents; the school, which has a reputation for rigor, is a ladder to the middle class. Its students graduate as opticians, dental technicians, accountants, computer programmers. The school also functions as a haven for young Jews living in a dangerous environment.

"Once we get here we're safe," one of the students told me. "Getting here from home is the hard part." Many of the students live in distant and equally perilous suburbs, including Sarcelles, the site of anti-Jewish riots this past summer; and Créteil, where Jews have suffered beatings and rapes by anti-Semitic gangs.

Each of the 10 students had a story to tell about brutality. "I was in a public school in Créteil but I had to leave. People would yell at me in the halls: 'Dirty Jew.' 'Fucking Jew.' 'I want to kill all of you,'" a student named Paola said. "Two years ago they attacked my brother. They would always scream, 'Go back to your country.' They meant Israel."

The ORT school had itself been the target of harassment. Toutou described a recent incident in which about 20 or so students from a neighboring public school had gathered in front of the building and made the *quenelle*.

The students I talked with in the library generally agreed that their future lay outside of France. "A lot of the Muslims hate us here," a student named Alexandre said. His parents had already moved to Israel. They were two of the roughly 7,000 French Jews who left for Israel in 2014. Alexandre would be joining them after graduation.

Zionism, which at its essence is a critique of Europe—Theodor Herzl, its founder, interpreted the Dreyfus affair in France and the pogroms in Russia as invitations to seek an alternative Jewish future outside of Europe—is perpetually resuscitated by anti-Semitism. Paola said, "Those kids told me to go to Israel, so that's what I'm doing." Others were contemplating the possibility of life in Quebec, and some dreamt of America.

The students talked about ways in which Jews concealed their identity. I'd heard that it had already become fairly common practice in some of the apartment blocks in the banlieues for Jews to remove the mezuzot from their doors. A mezuzah is a piece of parchment that contains Bible verses and that is placed in a case and then affixed to a doorpost. In some suburbs, mezuzot had become pointers for those in search of Jews to harm.

More than half of British Jews surveyed said they fear Jews have no future in Great Britain.

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But the students told me something new. "Jewish people are telling other Jews to take down their mezuzot," one of the students said. "People are being pressured to hide that they are Jewish. The pressure can be very intense." The impetus for this new campaign seems to have been an incident that occurred in early December, in which a group of robbers broke into an apartment in Créteil. They told the occupants that they knew they were Jewish, and therefore wealthy, and then they raped a 19-year-old woman in the apartment.

"Everyone is saying '*Je suis Charlie*' today," Wendy, another of the students, said, in reference to the popular slogan of support for the slain *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists. "But this has been happening to the Jews for years and no one cares."

"It would be nice if someone would say '*Je suis Juif*,'" Sandy, another student, said.

Everyone agreed that more attacks were inevitable. "Next week or next month, no one knows," David Attias, a teacher at the school, said. "But it's coming. Everyone knows it."

The next attack came that afternoon. I met with the students on the morning of January 9. Several hours later came the massacre at the kosher supermarket, about a mile away. One of the dead was a graduate of another ORT school.

IV. FEAR IN SWEDEN

The most persecuted Jew in Europe is almost certainly Shneur Kesselman, the rabbi of Malmö, a city in southern Sweden. He was dispatched there by the Brooklyn-based Chabad Hasidic movement.

Malmö, which sits across the Øresund from Copenhagen, has a population of roughly 300,000. This includes a large number, perhaps 50,000 or so, of Muslim immigrants. The Jewish community is much smaller—by some estimates, there are fewer than 1,000 Jews; the population has dropped by half in recent years. Malmö's leadership has at times been at odds with Malmö's Jews. A former mayor said that the city accepts "neither Zionism nor anti-Semitism"—a statement that was taken as hostile by Jewish Swedes supportive of Israel's existence.

Acts of anti-Jewish harassment and vandalism are common in Malmö, and Kesselman is a main target, because he is the only Jew there who still dresses in an identifiably Jewish manner—kippah, black hat, black coat, and long beard. Jewish teenagers in Malmö told me that wearing a Star of David necklace can incite a beating. Kesselman estimates that he has been the target of roughly 150 anti-Semitic attacks in his 10 years in the city, mainly verbal, but also physical. "There is a lot of cursing at me, and people sometimes throw bottles at me from their cars. Someone backed up their car in order to hit me," he said when I met with him. Occasionally, he said, people spit on him.

Donors recently provided him a car of his own, so he would not have to walk from his apartment to Malmö's sole synagogue, except on the Sabbath, when Jewish law forbids driving. I attended services at the synagogue with Kesselman one Friday night in January. The synagogue is a large, ornate, Moorish-style building that was constructed in 1903. Seventeen others attended the service, most of them men in their 60s. There was no police presence around the synagogue—Scandinavian governments have been far more lackadaisical about Jewish security than France's—but the Jewish community has its own security guards. Before I was allowed to

enter, a security officer, a Swedish Jew—playing a role similar to that of Dan Uzan, the Danish Jew killed in a mid-February attack on a synagogue in Copenhagen—quizzed me at length about my identity, asking me a series of idiosyncratic questions designed to test whether I was, in fact, Jewish. ("What is the address of Chabad headquarters in Brooklyn?" he said. Luckily, I had trained my whole life for this moment.)

After services, I walked with Kesselman and a group of other worshippers through the dark city center. They set an extraordinarily fast pace. I fell in step with a young woman who was born and raised in Malmö but now lives in Israel. She was visiting her father, trying to convince him to leave. "He's stubborn," she said. "I worry about him here." I noted that Israel is not pristinely safe. "It's different. We protect ourselves there."

Kesselman and his wife, the parents of four young children, avoid venturing out in public as a couple, for fear of being targeted together. Earlier, I had asked Kesselman why he has stayed in Malmö. Because Malmö's remaining Jews would have no rabbi if he were to go, he said. Also, many Chabad rabbis resist the urge to leave even dangerous areas, in order to honor the sacrifice of their brethren: in 2008, a Chabad representative and his wife, along with four other Jews, were murdered (after reportedly being tortured) by Pakistani jihadists during the lengthy siege of Mumbai. I asked Kesselman whether he was scared to stay in Malmö. "Yes, of course I'm scared," he said.

I spent one afternoon interviewing people in the main shopping mall of the Rosengård district, which is predominantly home to immigrants. Several of the Muslims I interviewed expressed benign feelings toward Jews. They knew of Malmö's reputation for anti-Semitism, and regretted it. A couple of others expressed objections to Israel's existence, but absolved "the Jews" of collective responsibility. But more common was conflation, and exaggeration. I asked several people to tell me where they find information about Jews and Israel. Television stations such as Al Jazeera and the Hezbollah station, Al-Manar, were cited, as was the preaching of Scandinavian imams. One Danish imam, Abu Bilal Ismail, became famous last year for urging worshippers in a Berlin mosque to kill Jews: "Count them and kill them to the very last one. Don't spare a single one of them." He later explained to a Copenhagen newspaper that he "never meant all Jews."

One man, an Iraqi refugee, told me, "The Jews have too much power everywhere." Another man, of Sudanese background, explained that the Koran itself warns Muslims to fear double-crossing by Jews. "They killed the prophets and tried to poison the Prophet Muhammad," he said. I did not hear critiques of Israel's occupation policies. I heard, instead, complaints about the Jews' baleful influence on the world.

V. THE PERSECUTION OF ANNE FRANK

Many institutions are devoted to memorializing the Shoah, but very few are as iconic as the Anne Frank House, in Amsterdam. Each year, more than 1 million visitors—many of them Dutch

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Jews gather at the Danish Embassy in Paris hours after a shooting at a Copenhagen synagogue, February 15, 2015. Last year, a Danish imam became infamous for urging worshippers to kill Jews.

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students—make their way up narrow flights of stairs to the perfectly preserved “secret annex” where Anne Frank and her family hid until they were betrayed.

The Anne Frank House, which is now encased inside a multimedia museum, is a significant operation, employing 112 people. I went one morning to talk with its head of education, Norbert Hinterleitner, about how the Jewish crisis in Europe is shaping the house’s pedagogical mission. There has always been tension in the public portrayal of Anne Frank. The specifically Jewish qualities of her life have often been marginalized in literature, onstage, and in film, replaced with a more universal and, to some, accessible message.

I began the interview with a faux pas. A very large number of curators, guides, and directors in European Jewish museums, in my experience, are not Jewish. This is due in part to the general lack of Jews, and to the very large number of museums—Europe is a vast archipelago of Jewish museums. And yet somehow I made the assumption that Hinterleitner was Jewish.

“I’m Austrian, actually.” He didn’t know how many employees at the museum were Jewish, but, he said, “there are some people who have Jewish lineage.” He then added, in what I took to be an effort to explain my initial confusion, “Some people here think I’m Jewish, because I’m dark and I have a big nose.”

The Anne Frank House has never had a Jewish director (though Hinterleitner pointed out that at least two members of the board must have a “Jewish background”), and I would learn later that it is widely understood in Amsterdam’s Jewish community that Jews should not bother applying for the job. Hinterleitner said that the museum addresses anti-Semitism in the context of larger societal ills, but also that it recently

issued a strong press statement condemning anti-Semitic acts in the Netherlands and elsewhere. He said the museum has made an intensive study of anti-Semitism in the Netherlands, and has learned that most verbal expressions of anti-Semitism in secondary schools come from boys and are related to soccer.

The Anne Frank House is merely a simulacrum of a Jewish institution in part because, as its head of communications told me, Anne’s father said that her diary “wasn’t about being Jewish,” but also, Hinterleitner suggested, because a museum devoted too obsessively to the details of a particular genocide might not draw visitors in sufficient numbers. “We want people to be interested in this issue, people from all walks of life. So we talk about the universal components of Anne Frank’s story as well. Our work is about tolerance and understanding.”

When I left, two policemen were patrolling the narrow street outside the museum. A temporary surveillance post had been erected just across from the entrance. I asked one of the officers whether this level of security was normal. He said the government had increased security around the museum last spring, shortly after a massacre at another Jewish site: On May 24, four people were murdered at the Jewish Museum of Belgium, in Brussels, allegedly by a French Muslim of jihadist bent named Mehdi Nemmouche. Two Israeli tourists, a French volunteer, and a Belgian employee of Muslim and Jewish descent were killed. Nemmouche had recently returned to Europe after a term with ISIS in Syria, where, according to a former French hostage of ISIS, his specialty was torturing prisoners.

“If you have an anti-Semitic attack on Anne Frank’s house, it won’t be the first,” I said to one of the police officers. We have never had an attack, he said.

Not on his watch. But it is fair to count the August 4, 1944,

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Gestapo raid on the house, which resulted in the arrest of the Frank family, as an anti-Semitic act. Anne died of typhus at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, roughly one month before it was liberated by British forces.

Anne Frank has become an obsession of modern anti-Semites. Her story—universally known, and deeply affecting—is a threat to the mission of the Holocaust-denial movement, and her youth and innocence challenge those who argue that Jews are innately perfidious. In Rome last summer, the slogan “Anne Frank is a liar” was spray-painted on walls in the former Jewish ghetto. In Lebanon, Hezbollah, the radical Shia group, has fought to keep her diary out of schools. In 2006, the Arab European League posted on its Web site a cartoon—this occurred during an earlier round of Europe’s endless, debilitating blasphemy wars—that featured a shirtless, postcoital Hitler in bed with a frightened dark-haired girl. “Write this one in your diary, Anne,” Hitler says.

The police outside the Anne Frank House are not protecting it because it is an international symbol of tolerance and understanding. There are many international symbols of understanding scattered across Europe that are not first-tier targets of jihadist extremists. The police are guarding the Anne Frank House because it is, in fact, associated with Jews, and Jews are under sustained attack in Europe.

VI. HITLER IS DEAD

In January, at a ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp, the American businessman Ronald Lauder, who serves as the president of the World Jewish Congress, said acidly of Europe, “It looks more like 1933 than 2015.” He mentioned Jewish children afraid to wear a kippah on the streets of Paris, Budapest, and London; the sacking of Jewish stores; and attacks on synagogues; and he suggested that a slow-motion exodus from Europe was already under way.

Things have gone terribly wrong for the Jews of Europe lately, but comparing 2015 to 1933, the year Hitler came to power, is irresponsible. As serious as matters have become for European Jews today, conditions are different from 80 years ago, in at least two profound ways.

The first is that Israel exists, and has as its reason for being the ingathering of dispersed Jews. A tragedy of Zionism, the political movement to create a state for the Jews in their ancestral homeland, is that it succeeded too late. If Israel had come into being in 1938, rather than in 1948, an untold but presumably very large number of European Jews who were denied refuge by the civilized nations, including the United States, would have been saved from slaughter. Today, of course, the Jews of Toulouse and Malmö understand that Israel will take



them without question, and many thousands of European Jews—mainly, though not exclusively, French—have moved to Israel in recent years.

The second way—and this is a historical astonishment—is that in 1933, the new leader of Germany announced himself as the foremost enemy of Jewish existence; today, Germany’s leader is among the world’s chief defenders of Jews. Chancellor Angela Merkel has made the defense of Jews a principle of the nation: “Germany’s support for Israel’s security is part of our national ethos, our *raison d’être*,” she said in 2013. At a rally against anti-Semitism held last September at the Brandenburg Gate, in Berlin, Merkel said: “Anyone who hits someone wearing a skullcap is hitting us all. Anyone who damages a Jewish gravestone is disgracing our culture. Anyone who attacks a synagogue is attacking the foundations of our free society.”

In France, Manuel Valls, the Socialist prime minister, is, if anything, an even more ardent defender of Europe’s Jews. He argues that the French idea itself depends on the crushing of anti-Semitism.

“The choice was made by the French Revolution in 1789 to recognize Jews as full citizens,” he told me when I met him late last year in Paris. “To understand what the idea of the republic is about, you have to understand the central role played by the emancipation of the Jews. It is a founding principle.”

In 1980, shortly after the bombing of the Rue Copernic synagogue, in Paris, which took the lives of four people, Raymond Barre, who was then the French prime minister, described the attack as one “that sought to target Jews who were in this synagogue and that struck innocent Frenchmen who were crossing Rue Copernic.”

France’s Jews were wounded by Barre’s statement. To be excluded from the community of “innocent Frenchmen” by

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A monument in Sarcelles commemorating the victims—three children and a rabbi—of a shooting at a Jewish school in Toulouse in March 2012

a prime minister is not something readily forgotten. Roger Cukierman, the head of France's national Jewish council, told me that French Jews are grateful that Valls has been so willing to speak in their defense.

Valls, whose father is Spanish, framed the threat of a Jewish exodus this way: "If 100,000 French people of Spanish origin were to leave, I would never say

that France is not France anymore. But if 100,000 Jews leave, France will no longer be France. The French Republic will be judged a failure."

Valls is deliberate and—unusual for a French politician of the left—blunt in identifying the main culprits in the proliferation of anti-Jewish violence and harassment: Islamist ideologues whose anti-Semitic and anti-Western calumnies have penetrated the banlieues. But he goes further: France's "new anti-Semitism" is also the product of what he understands to be a malicious sleight of hand on the part of Israel's enemies to repackage anti-Semitism as anti-Zionism.

"It is legitimate to criticize the policies of Israel," Valls said. "This criticism exists in Israel itself. But this is not what we are talking about in France. This is radical criticism of the very existence of Israel, which is anti-Semitic. There is an incontestable link between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. Behind anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism."

Frequently, Valls said, anti-Zionists let the mask slip. It is impossible, he said, to ascribe the attacks on synagogues—at least eight were targeted in France last summer—to anger over Israel's Gaza policy. The demonstrators who chanted "Hamas, Hamas, Jews to the gas" at rallies in Germany last year clearly have more on their minds than Israel's West Bank settlement policy—but evidently not everyone in authority believes that attacks on synagogues are axiomatically anti-Semitic: in early February, a German court ruled that the firebombing of a synagogue in the city of Wuppertal last year was motivated not by anti-Semitism but by a desire to bring "attention to the Gaza conflict."

Valls and Merkel think more clearly about the implications of Jewish persecution than many others in Europe. So too does David Cameron, the prime minister of the United Kingdom. When I met with Cameron in January, on his most recent visit to Washington, D.C., he expressed, with something close to Valls's passion, a fear for the future of Britain's Jewish minority. "The Jewish community in Britain has been there for centuries and has made an extraordinary contribution to our country," he said. "I would be heartbroken if I ever thought that people in the Jewish community thought that Britain was no longer a safe place for them."

According to the Community Security Trust, 2014 saw the highest number of anti-Semitic incidents in the United Kingdom, which is home to 300,000 Jews, since the organization began its monitoring efforts, in 1984: it recorded 1,168 anti-Semitic incidents. This is more than double the number of incidents in 2013, and exceeds the previous record, from 2009, of 931 incidents. In a recent survey conducted on behalf of the Campaign Against Anti-Semitism, a quarter of British Jews said they had considered leaving the country; more than half of those surveyed said they fear that Jews have no future in Great Britain.

Cameron condemned demonstrators who took out their frustrations with Israel on Europe's Jews. I asked him whether there existed in his mind a bright line that separates anti-Zionism from anti-Semitism. He answered: "I think it is unfair and wrong to lay at the door of Jewish communities of Europe policies pursued by the government of Israel that people might not agree with—just completely wrong."

He went on to say: "As well as the new threat of extremist Islamism, there has been an insidious, creeping attempt to delegitimize the state of Israel, which spills over often into anti-Semitism. We have to be very clear about the fact that there is a dangerous line that people keep crossing over. This is a state, a democracy that is recognized by the UN, and I don't think we should be tolerant of this effort at delegitimization. The people who are trying to make the line fuzzy are the delegitimizers."

The fight against anti-Semitism led by Merkel, Valls, and Cameron appears to be heartfelt. The question is, will it work? After the January massacres in Paris, the French government deployed several thousand soldiers to protect Jewish institutions, but it cannot assign soldiers to protect every Jew walking to and from the Métro. The governments of Europe are having a terrible time in their struggle against the manifestations of radical Islamist ideology. And the general publics of these countries do not seem nearly as engaged in the issue as their leaders. The Berlin rally last fall against anti-Semitism that featured Angela Merkel drew a paltry 5,000 people, most of whom were Jews. It is a historical truism that, as Manuel Valls told me, "what begins with Jews doesn't end with Jews." But this notion has not penetrated public opinion.

Nevertheless, comparisons to 1933 remain overripe.

"It's not 1933 all over again, because it's not generally acceptable to try to mobilize political power by making explicitly anti-Semitic arguments," David Nirenberg, a scholar of anti-Semitism at the University of Chicago, told me. "We're not at a moment when you can make a mass democratic argument about Jews as aliens. The danger here, and the reason French Jews, for instance, fear not having Manuel Valls in office forever, is that if political power isn't willing to protect European Jews against minority movements that legitimate themselves through anti-Zionist discourse, no one is going to protect them."

VII. THE COFFIN OR THE SUITCASE

It is not 1933. But could it be 1929? Could Europe's economic stagnation combine with its inability to assimilate and enfranchise growing populations of increasingly angry Muslims in such a way as to clear a path for volatile right-wing populism?

A few weeks after the January massacres, I met with a group of aggrieved Jews in a café near the main synagogue in Sarcelles, the suburb that was the center of last summer's anti-Jewish riots. French troops in combat gear patrolled the street. The synagogue is now also used as a base of operations for the more than 40 soldiers who have been assigned to protect the town's Jewish institutions.

"We're very glad for the soldiers," one of the men, who asked me to identify him only as Chaim, said. "But soldiers in the synagogues means that there is no life here, only danger. This is why I'm leaving." It is, he said, using an expression common during the Algerian civil war, a choice between *le cercueil ou la valise*—"the coffin or the suitcase."

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But another man, who asked to be called Marcel, responded that it would be cowardly to flee for Israel at the first appearance of Molotov cocktails. "Running, running, running," he said. "That's the Jewish way." He said his parents had arrived in Sarcelles from Tunisia in 1967, driven out by anti-Jewish rioters who were putatively distressed by Israel's victory in the Six-Day War. "We ran from Tunisia. We're not running from here."

"But no one wants us here," Chaim said. "They'll attack us again as soon as the soldiers go."

I said that I didn't think Manuel Valls was going to remove the soldiers anytime soon.

Marcel laughed. "I don't count on the Socialists. I would count on the National Front before I count on the Socialists."

It is disquieting, but no longer unusual, to hear Jews of North African descent express affinity for the National Front. The popularity of the party's leader, Marine Le Pen, across non-Jewish (and non-Muslim) France is well documented; according to a recent poll, she is the leading presidential candidate for 2017.

The January massacres created a moment for the anti-immigrant Le Pen; the refusal by the French government to invite her to participate in the giant unity march following the attacks only inspired more sympathy for her message, which is a simple one: the rise of Islamism in France poses an existential threat to the republican idea, and to the bedrock principle of *laïcité*, or secularism—the notion that sectarian identities must be subsumed to the concept of Frenchness.

Le Pen, who inherited the National Front from her father, Jean-Marie, has worked diligently to bring her party closer to the French mainstream: no more thugs in leather jackets; no more public expressions of longing for Vichy; certainly no more Holocaust obsessiveness. (In 1987, Jean-Marie Le Pen famously said, "I ask myself several questions. I'm not saying the gas chambers didn't exist. I haven't seen them myself ... But I believe it's just a detail in the history of World War II.")

Marine Le Pen is positioning herself as something of a philo-Semite. She is not under the illusion that she will sway large numbers of Jews to her side; in any case, the Jewish vote in France is minuscule. But people who follow her rise say she understands that one pathway to mainstream acceptance runs through the Jews: if she could neutralize the perception that the National Front is a fascist party by winning some measure of Jewish acceptance, she could help smooth her way to the presidency.

I met with Le Pen in February at her office in Nanterre, a Paris suburb. Outside the three-story National Front headquarters is a statue of Joan of Arc; inside, posters of Le Pen's father hang on the walls. Le Pen has a brisk manner and a well-honed skill of deflecting journalists' questions.

I told her I was shocked to find Jews in the banlieues who would look to the National Front for political salvation. She professed not to be shocked at all.

"The reality is that there exist in France associations that are supposedly representative of French Jews, which have stuck with a software that came out of the Second World War," she said, meaning that members of the Jewish leadership are still preoccupied with the threat of Nazi-like fascism. "For decades they have continued to fight against an anti-Semitism that no longer exists in France, for reasons of—how should I say this?—intellectual laziness. And by a form of submission to the politically correct. And while they were doing this, while they were fighting against an enemy that no longer existed, an anti-Semitism was gaining force in France stemming notably from the development of fundamentalist Islamist thought."

She went on, "But indisputably today, many Jewish French feel unsafe in France, assaulted because they're Jewish." She offered a partial defense of the allegation—popularized by, among others, Fox News—that some neighborhoods are too dangerous for non-Muslims to enter. "I challenge anyone to walk through one of these neighborhoods with a French flag at 7 o'clock at night and come out physically intact. And

I didn't even say an Israeli flag," she said, laughing. "Because then ... one wouldn't have anything to wonder about."

I asked her whether she agreed with Prime Minister Valls's notion that the departure of 100,000 French Jews would be tragic for the country. I brought up Valls's name on purpose: he and Le Pen may very well face each other in a future presidential contest, and Valls's tough public statements about the threat of radical Islam seem motivated partly by a need to blunt Le Pen's advantages with voters worried about terrorism.

"I don't see Jews as a *community*," she said. "I see fellow countrymen who are of Jewish faith but who are fellow countrymen, and I think that all French have the right to see themselves protected from the threats that weigh on them."

She went on to disparage France's current leaders for what she judged to be their ineffectiveness in countering Islamism. "Mr. Valls gave a grand and lovely speech," she said, referring to his remarks after the January massacres, and then mocked his government's plan to build a Web site called Stop Jihadism. "In my view," she said sardonically, "this is going to *terrorize* the fundamentalists."

Le Pen's plan is more dramatic than anything offered so far by France's two main parties: she would immediately strip "jihadists" of their citizenship, end immigration, and reinforce *laïcité* by limiting the public expression of religion. One manifestation of France's debate about secularism is the frequent arguments over the acceptance of Muslim dress in the public square, so I asked whether a France ruled by the National Front would also prohibit Jews from wearing a kippah in public.

"I think the meaning is not the same," she said. "To not acknowledge that is not to see reality. The meaning of the proliferation of the veil in France is not to be placed on the same plane as the wearing of the kippah. We know very well that



January 16, 2015: Marine Le Pen, the popular leader of the right-wing National Front party, speaks about the Paris shootings the previous week.

the proliferation of the wearing of the veil—and in certain neighborhoods, the burka—is a political act. A female Muslim philosopher said, quite rightly, a little while ago, ‘A veiled woman is a walking morality lesson.’”

Her message is clear, though for obvious reasons it has been skeptically received: her father may have been an enemy of the Jewish community, but she is a friend.

“Jews,” she told me, “have nothing to fear from the National Front.”

VIII. THE PROMISED LAND

One evening this past September, Vice President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, hosted a gathering in Washington to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year. The guests—political supporters, leaders of Jewish organizations, members of Congress, Jewish officials of the Obama administration, and the stray journalist or two—gathered by the pool of the vice president’s house, on the grounds of the U.S. Naval Observatory.

Biden was characteristically prolix. He talked about the Shoah, and about the many contributions Jews have made to American life, and he mentioned, as he invariably does in such settings, his first encounter with a legendary Israeli prime minister:

“I had the great pleasure of knowing every prime minister since Golda Meir, when I was a young man in the Senate, and I’ll never forget talking to her in her office with her assistant—a guy named Rabin—about the Six-Day War,” he said. “The end of the meeting, we get up and walk out, the doors are open, and ... the press is taking photos ... She looked straight ahead and said, ‘Senator, don’t look so sad ... Don’t worry. We Jews have a secret weapon.’”

He said he asked her what that secret weapon was.

“I thought she was going to tell me something about a nuclear program,” Biden continued. “She looked straight ahead and she said, ‘We have no place else to go.’” He paused, and repeated: “‘We have no place else to go.’”

“Folks,” he continued, “there is no place else to go, and you understand that in your bones. You understand in your bones that no matter how hospitable, no matter how consequential, no matter how engaged, no matter how deeply involved you are in the United States ... there’s only one guarantee. There is really only one absolute guarantee, and that’s the state of Israel. And so I just want to assure you, for all the talk, and I know sometimes my guy”—President Obama—“gets beat up a little bit, but I guarantee you: he shares the exact same commitment to the security of Israel.”

There was applause, and then photos, and then kosher canapés. I will admit to being confused by Biden’s understanding of the relationship between America and its Jewish citizens. The vice president, it seemed to me, was trafficking in antiquated notions about Jewish anxiety.

Nearly 30 years ago, I moved to Israel, in part because I wanted to participate in the drama of Jewish national self-determination, but also because I believed that life in the Diaspora, including the American Diaspora, wasn’t particularly safe for Jews, or Judaism. Several years in Israel, and some sober

thinking about the American Jewish condition, cured me of that particular belief.

I suspect that quite a few American Jews believe, as Biden does, that Jews can find greater safety in Israel than in America—but I imagine that they are mainly of Biden’s generation, or older.

A large majority of American Jews feels affection for Israel, and is concerned for its safety, and understands the role it plays as a home of last resort for endangered brethren around the world. But very few American Jews, in my experience, believe they will ever need to make use of the Israeli lifeboat. The American Jewish community faces enormous challenges, but these mainly have to do with assimilation, and with maintaining cultural identity and religious commitment. To be sure, anti-Semitism exists in the United States—and in my experience, some European Jewish leaders are quite ready to furnish examples to anyone suggesting that European Jews might be better off in America. According to the latest FBI statistics, from 2013, Jews are by far the most-frequent victims of religiously motivated hate crimes in America. But this is still anti-Semitism on the margins. A recent Pew poll found that Jews are also the most warmly regarded religious group in America.

For millennia, Jews have been asking this question: Where, exactly, is it safe? Maimonides, the 12th-century philosopher, wrestled with this question continually, asking himself whether it was better for Jews to live in the lands of Esau—Christendom—or in the lands of Ishmael.

“The thing about this question is that it is always about a decision made at a specific point in time,” David Nirenberg, the University of Chicago scholar, told me. “If you looked around the world in 1890, you might have said Germany and England were the best places. If you’re looking around the world in 1930, you could have made a good argument that the United States was not a great place for Jews.”

Today, the world’s 14 million or so Jews are found mainly in two places: Israel and the

United States. Israel has the largest Jewish population, slightly more than 6 million. The U.S. has about 5.7 million. Europe, including Russia, has a Jewish population of roughly 1.4 million. There are about 1 million Jews scattered across the rest of the world, including significant communities in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Australia, and Canada.

It is not uncommon to hear European Jews argue today that their departure from the Continent would grant Hitler a posthumous victory. The desire of so many Jews in Europe to remain in Europe, and remain European, is admirable. All across Europe—from Great Britain, where the situation does not feel so dire, to Sweden, where it does—I met Jews leading full Jewish lives.

In Stockholm, I spent a day at a small Jewish institute called Paideia, which focuses in good part on classical text study. Its students are mainly young European Jews who have expressed a commitment to remaining in their home countries. “These are not naive people, and they are not suicidal,” the institute’s founding director, Barbara Spectre, said. “They grew up with a full understanding of the Holocaust and its implications. The fact that they are staying in Europe testifies to something that we must respect: there is going to be Jewish

“Jews,” Le Pen said, “have nothing to fear from the National Front.”

life in Europe. There is a certain nobility about the decision to stay in Europe.”

On the other hand, there is this: a 2013 survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights found that 60 percent of Sweden’s Jews fear being publicly identified as Jewish.

Critics of the Jews have often called us stiff-necked, but sometimes this insult can be understood as a compliment. And yet, stubbornness for the sake of stubbornness has a half-life.

One night, I had dinner in Brussels with Ariella Woitchik, a senior official in the European Jewish Congress, and her husband, Gregory, a lawyer. The congress lobbies the European Union on matters related to the well-being of Jews. Woitchik’s job demands that she be publicly committed to the perpetuation of European Jewish life, but she seems to come by this feeling honestly. “On a moral and philosophical level, the question is, why should we leave?” Woitchik said. “Belgium is our country.”

I told them of my visit, earlier that day, to the Jewish Museum of Belgium, the recent massacre site. The museum, by necessity, is not well marked. When I asked police officers on the street whether I had indeed found the museum, one asked me, “Why?”

“Because I want to visit,” I said.

“Why?” he asked.

I gave what turned out to be the correct answer: “*Je suis Juif*.”

In a courtyard I found a plaque memorializing the victims of last May’s attack. It read, in French, Dutch, and English:

This aggression against a specific culture, aims at isolating the relevant community from the population of which it is an integral part. With unanimous consent, the Jewish Museum of Belgium considers that the continuation and the development of its activities are the most appropriate answer to this barbarian act.

So admirable—but also, perhaps, so futile. What I did not find at the museum were visitors; I was the only person there.

Woitchik admitted she is hesitant these days to attend services at her synagogue. “If we have children,” she said, “I’m worried about sending them to the Jewish schools, because they’re targets. But in the public schools, Jewish kids are themselves individual targets of anti-Semitic bullying ...” She trailed off.

“Maybe we’re just kidding ourselves,” she finally said.

I tend to think they are. European Jewry does not have a bright future. A declining population (the German Jewish community in 2013 recorded 250 births and more than 1,000 deaths); the return of old habits of anti-Semitic thought; the rise of the far right in a period of stagnation and cultural crisis; the waning of Shoah consciousness; the inability of European states to integrate Muslims; and the continued radicalization of a small but meaningful subset of those Muslims—all of this means that Jews across large stretches of Europe will live for some time to come with danger and uncertainty. (Perhaps the saddest, and most debasing, comment I saw from a Jewish leader came in the wake of the Copenhagen synagogue attack, from Jair Melchior, the head of Denmark’s Jewish community, who was arguing that anti-Jewish activity in the country was relatively mild. “It’s not a dangerous anti-Semitism,” he told Reuters. “It’s spitting, cursing, like that.”) Of course it is

February 15, 2015: A man worships in the Ohel Abraham synagogue, near where the anti-Semitic riots in Sarcelles erupted last summer.

possible, in ways that were not 80 years ago, for Jews to dissolve themselves into the larger culture. But for Jews who would like to stay Jewish in some sort of meaningful way, there are better places than Europe.

Despite all of this, we will not witness a mass exodus anytime soon. It is not so easy to pick up from one place and move to another. The Jews, the “ever-dying people,” in the words of the late historian Simon Rawidowicz, have a gift for self-perpetuation. “All Jewish stories come to an end,” the German Jewish novelist Maxim Biller told me recently, “but then they just keep going.”

The Israeli government, as one might expect, is interested in accelerating the departure of Jews from Europe. Israeli leaders have lectured French Jews about the necessity of aliyah, or emigration to Israel, in ways that have displeased French leaders, including the prime minister, and have also frustrated some French Jewish leaders. “To all the Jews of France, all the Jews of Europe, I would like to say that Israel is not just the place in whose direction you pray. The state of Israel is your home,” the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said after the kosher-market attack. (He reprised this entreaty after the attack in Copenhagen a month later.)

Even some French Jews who are contemplating aliyah, and who tend toward the right end of the Israeli political spectrum, told me that they found Netanyahu’s remarks unhelpful. Others noted that life in Israel is not especially tranquil. Jews die violently in Israel, too. And while the presence of so many Jews in one narrow place has created a dynamic country, it has also created a temptation for those inclined toward genocide. In 2002, Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, reportedly said in a speech that if the Jews “all gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide.”

The argument for Israel is one that has been made since Theodor Herzl witnessed the humiliation of Alfred Dreyfus: Jews living in their own country are at least masters of their own fate. No more relying on the fleeting kindness of Christian princes or the caprice of Ottoman viziers. Or, for that matter, on the continued embrace of a French prime minister or the uncertain mercies of the National Front. Israel’s success, or failure, is largely in Jewish hands.

Yet Israel’s future as a Jewish haven is an open question. Alain Finkielkraut, the French philosopher who is a harsh critic of his country’s management of the jihadist threat, is also a strong critic of current Israeli policy. “It is an irony of history that people who move to Israel as Jews might be moving to





a state that in the next decades becomes a bi-national state with a Jewish minority, because of the occupation of the West Bank and the settlements,” he told me when we talked in Paris in January. “Moving from France to escape the attacks of Arabs to a country that will not be Jewish does not make a lot of sense.”

LAST SPRING, on a visit to Chişinău, the capital of Moldova, the former Soviet republic situated between Romania and Ukraine, I met a delightful group of Jews in their teens and 20s, most of whom had learned only recently that they were Jewish. This is a common occurrence in Europe’s east; the collapse of communism has allowed Jews to admit to themselves, and to their children, the truth of their origins. (This is becoming a phenomenon in other countries as well. A 2008 genetic study found that about 20 percent of the populations of Spain and Portugal have some Jewish heritage.) Barbara Spectre, the Jewish educator in Sweden, calls these people the “dis-assimilated.” The youth group I encountered meets each week to learn Jewish prayers and sing Jewish songs.

The modest rebirth of Jewish life in Chişinău is a remarkable thing, because Chişinău, which is known in Russian as Kishinev,

“Moving from France to escape the attacks of Arabs to a country that will not be Jewish does not make a lot of sense.”

today southern Moldova.

I am predisposed to believe that there is no great future for the Jews in Europe, because evidence to support this belief is accumulating so quickly. But I am also predisposed to think this because I am an American Jew—which is to say, a person who exists because his ancestors made a run for it when they could. ■

Jeffrey Goldberg is a national correspondent for The Atlantic.

was the location, in 1903, of one of the most terrible pogroms in European history—a pogrom that turned tens of thousands of Jews toward Zionism, and sent many more on the path to America. Included in this latter group was a branch of my family. My grandfather grew up in a pogrom-afflicted village, not far from Kishinev, called Leova.

One afternoon, I met Moldova’s then-prime minister, Iurie Leancă, to discuss the return of another sort of European historical pathology—Vladimir Putin’s attempt to rebuild the Russian empire at the expense of, among others, Leancă’s small and hapless country. The prime minister, a progressive, pro-Western politician, was eager to make his case for American support, but he was especially eager to tell me of his sadness that Moldova is home to so few Jews today. He was touchingly sincere; my grandfather would have been moved—and incredulous. As I was leaving, the prime minister mentioned that he was trying to raise funds to build a Jewish museum in Chişinău. The parliament is willing, he said, but the country is poor. “A friend of mine said I should ask the Rothschilds for help,” he said. “Do you know any Rothschilds?”

The next day, I drove an hour southwest to Leova. My grandfather had painted vivid pictures of his shtetl youth, and Leova, which has not left poverty in the intervening century, came alive before my eyes. Here was the river where he watered the half-blind family horse; here was the Jewish cemetery; here, down a muddy path, was the old synagogue; here was the church where the priests denounced the Christ-killers.

There are no Jews left in Leova. What used to be the synagogue is now a gymnasium; the caretaker tried to sell it to me. The Holocaust history of Leova is incompletely known, but the last Jews appear to have been rounded up in late 1941 by Germany’s Romanian allies. According to records in the Moldovan State Archives, this group included six people who I believe were part of my grandfather’s family, among them five children, ages 15, 12, 9, 7, and 3. Their last known destination was a concentration camp in Cahul, in what is

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THE SATURDAY ESSAY

The Return of Anti-Semitism

Seventy years after the liberation of Auschwitz, violence and hatred against Jews is on the rise, especially in the Middle East and among Muslims in Europe



Auschwitz survivor Miroslaw Celka walks out the gate with the sign saying 'Work makes you free' after paying tribute to fallen comrades at the 'death wall' execution spot in the former Auschwitz concentration camp in Oswiecim, Poland, on the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camp on Jan. 27 PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PESSE/GETTY IMAGES

JONATHAN SACKS

Jan. 30, 2015 12:28 p.m. ET

Last Tuesday, a group of Holocaust survivors, by now gaunt and frail, made their way back to Auschwitz, the West's symbol of evil—back to the slave-labor side of the vast complex, with its mocking inscription *Arbeit Macht Frei* ("Work makes you free"), and back to the death camp, where a million and a quarter human beings, most of them Jews, were gassed, burned and turned to ash. They were there to commemorate the day, 70 years ago, when Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz and saw, for the first time, the true dimensions of the greatest crime since human beings first set foot on Earth.

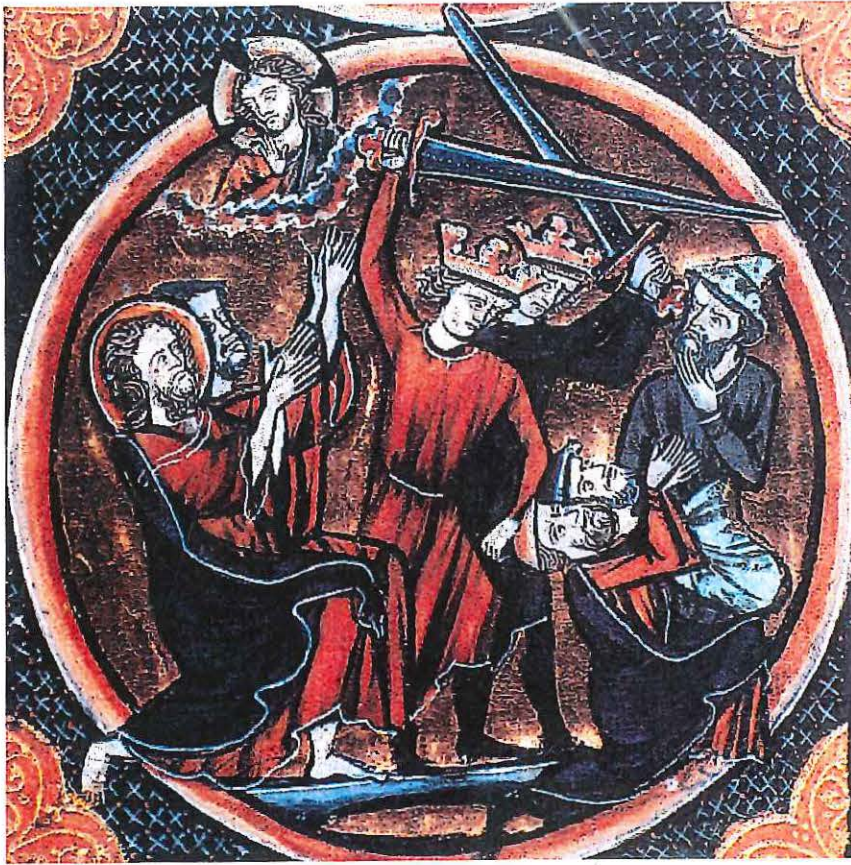
The moment would have been emotional at the best of times, but this year brought an especially disturbing undercurrent. The Book of Genesis says that, when God told Abraham what would happen to his descendants, a “fear of great darkness” fell over him. Something of that fear haunted the survivors this week, who have witnessed the return of anti-Semitism to Europe after 70 years of political leaders constant avowals of “Never again.” As they finished saying Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for mourners, one man cried out, “I don’t want to come here again.” Everyone knew what he meant. For once, the fear was not only about the past but also about the future.

The murder of Jewish shoppers at a Parisian kosher supermarket three weeks ago, after the killing of 12 people at the offices of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, sent shivers down the spines of many Jews, not because it was the first such event but because it has become part of a pattern. In 2014, four were killed at the Jewish Museum in Brussels. In 2012, a rabbi and three young children were murdered at a Jewish school in Toulouse. In 2008 in Mumbai, four terrorists separated themselves from a larger group killing people in the city’s cafes and hotels and made their way to a small Orthodox Jewish center, where they murdered its young rabbi and his pregnant wife after torturing and mutilating them. As the Sunday Times of London reported about the attack, “the terrorists would be told by their handlers in Pakistan that the lives of Jews were worth 50 times those of non-Jews.”

An ancient hatred has been reborn.

Some politicians around the world deny that what is happening in Europe is anti-Semitism. It is, they say, merely a reaction to the actions of the state of Israel, to the continuing conflict with the Palestinians. But the policies of the state of Israel are not made in kosher supermarkets in Paris or in Jewish cultural institutions in Brussels and Mumbai. The targets in these cities were not Israeli. They were Jewish.

According to the Middle East Media Research Institute, an Egyptian cleric, Muhammad Hussein Yaqub, speaking in January 2009 on Al Rahma, a popular religious TV station in Egypt, made the contours of the new hate impeccably clear: “If the Jews left Palestine to us, would we start loving them? Of course not. We will never love them... They are enemies not because they occupied Palestine. They would have been enemies even if they did not occupy a thing... You must believe that we will fight, defeat and annihilate them until not a single Jew remains on the face of the Earth... You will not



Two Jews, kneeling at right, about to be put to death by the sword as revenge for the death of Jesus, who looks on at top left. Manuscript illumination, c1250, from a French Bible. PHOTO: THE GRANGER COLLECTION

survive as long as a single one of us remains.”

Not everyone would put it so forcefully, but this is the hate in which much of the Middle East and the Muslim world has been awash for decades, and it is now seeping back into Europe. For Jews, “never again” has become “ever again.”

The scope of the problem is, of course, difficult to gauge precisely. But recent polling is suggestive—and alarming. An Anti-Defamation League study released last May found “persistent and pervasive” anti-Jewish attitudes after surveying 53,100 adults in 102 countries and territories world-wide. The ADL found that 74% of those surveyed in the Middle East and North Africa held anti-Semitic attitudes; the number was 24% in Western Europe, 34% in Eastern Europe and 19% in the Americas.

Or consider a 2011 Pew Research Center study, which found that favorable views of Jews were “uniformly low” in predominantly Muslim regions that it surveyed: 4% in Turkey and the Palestinian territories, 3% in Lebanon, and 2% in Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan.

At this juncture in the history of hate, we must remember what anti-Semitism is. It is only contingently, even accidentally, about Jews. Jews die from it, but they are not its only victims. Today Christian communities are being ravaged, terrorized and decimated throughout the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia, and scores of Muslims are killed every day by their brothers, with Sunnis arrayed against Shiites, radicals against moderates, the religious against the secular. The hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews.

Anti-Semitism has existed for a very long time. One critical moment came around the end of the 1st century C.E., when the Gospel of John attributed to Jesus these words about the Jews: "You belong to your father, the Devil." From being the children of Abraham, Jews had been transformed into the children of Satan.

But it took a millennium for this text to spark widespread violence against Jews. That came in 1095, when Pope Urban II delivered his call for the First Crusade. A year later, some Crusaders, on their way to "liberate" the holy city of Jerusalem, paused to massacre Jewish communities in Northern Europe, in Cologne, Worms and Mainz. Thousands died. Many Jews committed suicide rather than submit to the mob and forcible conversion to Christianity. It was a traumatizing moment for European Jewry—and the portent of worse to come.



A copy of Adolf Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' is sold at a street stall in Cairo in 2009. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PESSE/GET IMAGES

in Cairo in 2009. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PESSE/GET

From the time of the Crusades onward, Jews in Christian Europe began to be seen not as human beings but as a malevolent force, a demonic and destructive power that mysteriously yet actively sought the harm of others. Jews were accused of desecrating the sacramental bread used in communion, poisoning wells and spreading the plague. They were held responsible for the Black Death, the epidemic that in the 14th century cost millions of lives. They lived in fear.

This period added to the repressive vocabulary of the medieval West such terms as book burning, forced conversion, Inquisition, auto-da-fe, expulsion, ghetto and pogrom. In duration and intensity, it ranks among the most sustained chronicles of animosity in history. What had happened to activate a hate that had been incubating for 10 centuries, since Christianity emerged from Judaism?



The
same

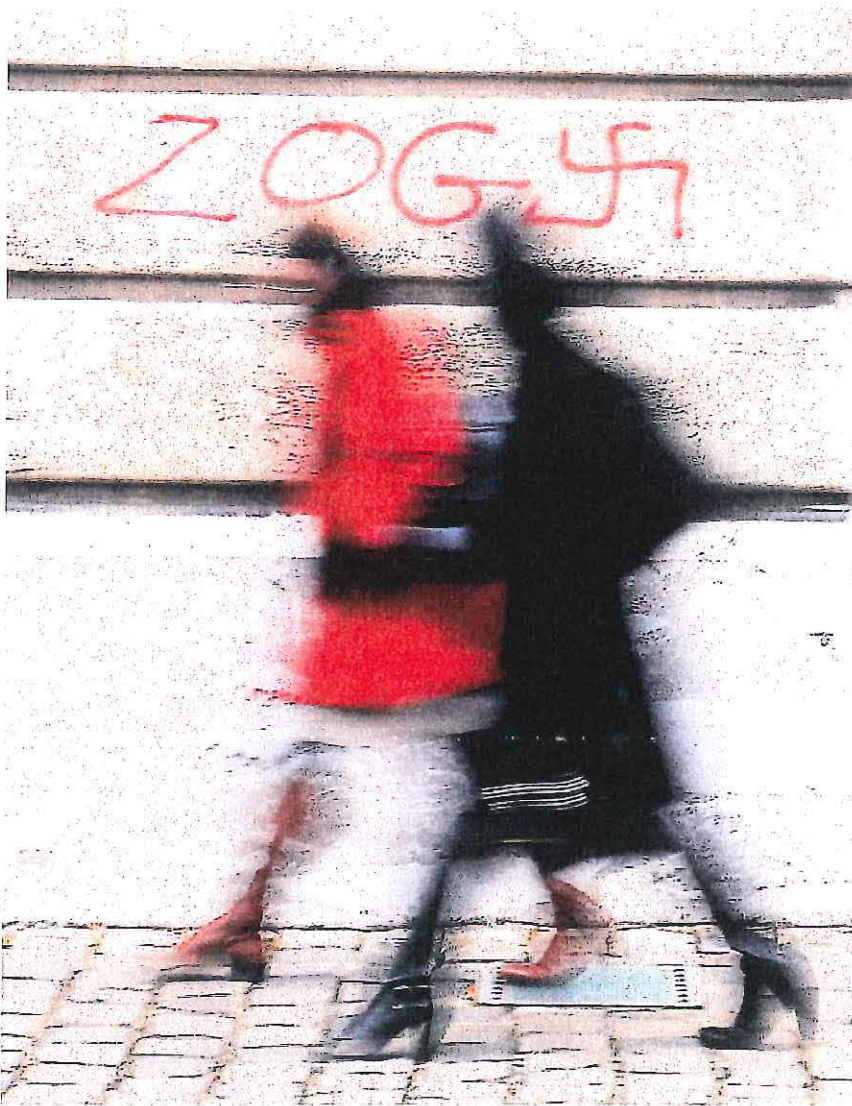
The grand mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husayni, inspects Bosnian SS members in 1944. PHOTO: ALAMY

question could be asked about Nazi Germany. Had someone been asked in the 1890s to identify the epicenters of anti-Semitism in Europe, the answers would probably have been Paris (where Alfred Dreyfus, a French military officer of Jewish descent, was framed as a spy and unjustly imprisoned) and Vienna (whose bigoted mayor, Karl Lueger, became Hitler's inspiration and role model). Why was it Germany that conceived and executed the Final Solution, an elaborate program with the sole purpose of exterminating Europe's Jews?

The answer is the same in both cases: Anti-Semitism becomes deadly only when a culture, nation or faith suffers from a cognitive dissonance so profound that it becomes unbearable. It happens when the way a group sees itself is contradicted by the way it is seen by the world. It is the symptom of an unendurable sense of humiliation.

Christianity, which had been transformed by the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, found itself overtaken by Islam by the 11th century. Germany, which had seen itself as the supreme nation in Europe, was defeated in World War I and then punished under the Treaty of Versailles.

These humiliations resulted not in introspection but in a search for foreign culprits—for external enemies who could be blamed and destroyed. The parallel in Islam over the past century was the defeat and dissolution of its one remaining bastion of imperial power, the Ottoman Empire, in 1922. Six years later, radical political Islam was born in Egypt in the form of the Muslim Brotherhood.



In 2009, the entrance of a synagogue in Lille, northern France, was defaced with graffiti referring to the supposed 'Zionist Occupation Government' that many anti-Semitic conspiracy theorists claim controls the government, finance and the media. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PESSE/GETTY IMAGES

Hate cultivated for such cultural and political ends resolves the dissonance between past glory and current ignominy. By turning the question "What did we do wrong?" into "Who did this to us?", it restores some measure of self-respect and provides a course of action. In psychiatry, the clinical terms for this process are splitting and projection; it allows people to define themselves as victims.

The question then becomes: victims of whom? There were many possibilities. Between the 15th and 18th centuries, Europe blamed witches and killed some 40,000 of them, according to the British historian Ronald Hutton. But Europe's problems remained. For two millennia, another candidate also has been available: the Jews.

Despite what some intemperate voices claim, anti-Semitism has no genuine provenance within Islam. The historian Bernard Lewis drew a wry distinction: Islam has traditionally had contempt for the Jews, he said, not hate—adding, "From contempt you don't die. From hate you do." Anti-Semitism entered Islam from the outside, in the form of two classic myths imported from Europe.

The first was the blood libel, the mad idea that Jews kill Christian children to use their blood to make matzo, the unleavened bread eaten during Passover. The idea is absurd, not least because even the tiniest speck of blood in food renders it inedible in Jewish law. The libel was an English invention, born in Norwich around 1144, and was unsuccessfully condemned by several popes. It was introduced into the Middle East by Christians in the 19th century, leading to trials of innocent Jews in Lebanon and Egypt and, most famously, in Damascus in 1840.

The blood libel is still in circulation. In 1983, Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Tlass embraced it in his book, "The Matzo of Zion," according to scholars like Stephen Eric Bonner and Anthony Julius. In 1991, according to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, the Syrian delegate to the U.N. Human Rights Commission praised this "valuable book," saying it "unmasked the racist character of Zionism."

"Protocols of the Elders of Zion"—a late 19th-century forgery about a supposed global Jewish conspiracy, produced by members of the czar's secret police and exposed as a fiction by the Times of London as early as 1921—became one of Hitler's favorite texts.

In Nazi Germany, it became, as the historian Norman Cohn put it, a "warrant for genocide." The "Protocols" were introduced into the Middle East in Arabic translation in the 1930s by, among others, the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husayni, who spent World War II in Berlin, producing Arabic broadcasts for the Nazis.

“The Protocols of the Elders of Zion” continues to be reprinted and widely read. In 2002, a 41-part dramatic series called “Horseman Without a Horse,” which the Anti-Defamation League reported “portrays the ‘Protocols’ as historical fact,” was shown on Egyptian television during Ramadan. In 2003, a similar series called “Diaspora” was shown on a Lebanon-based satellite television network owned by the terrorist organization Hezbollah, also according to the Anti-Defamation League. The 1988 charter of the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas warns that the Zionists’ “plan is embodied in the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion,’ and their present conduct is the best proof of what we are saying.”

Tragically, Europe, having largely cured itself of anti-Semitism, now finds it returning, carried by the very cultures that Europe itself infected with the virus. Fortunately, there are young Muslims, some of them ex-radicals, who are working for a more tolerant Islam, and in organizations such as the Coexist Foundation and New York University’s “Of Many” Institute for Multifaith Leadership, you find Jews and Muslims fighting anti-Semitism and Islamophobia together.

The real tragedy would be if the West continued to see anti-Semitism as a strictly Jewish problem. It isn’t. Jews die from it, but it isn’t about Jews.

The blood libel was the creation of Christians who believed in the Eucharist and feared that the power of the sacraments and the Church were slipping away. The “Protocols” were a fabrication of Russian czarists, dreaming of empire and glory while fearing that their world was about to be shattered by revolution. To understand hate, it is crucial to examine the hater, not the hated.

Judeophobia in the Middle Ages led Christians to defeat in the Crusades. Anti-Semitism led Germany to self-destruction and moral shame. Today, anti-Semitism is a key ingredient in the poisonous mix of ideas that has turned so much of the Middle East into a cruel state of nature, a war of “every man against every man,” as Thomas Hobbes memorably described it. Hate harms the hated, but it destroys the hater.

A passage in Deuteronomy has momentous modern-day implications. Moses, nearing the end of his life, is addressing the next generation of Israelites, the people who will cross the Jordan River and enter the Promised Land. “Do not hate an Egyptian,” he tells them, “for you were a stranger in his land.”



Roses left by mourners lie next to one of the many plaques detailing transports of Berlin Jews to concentration camps at the Gleis 17 (Track 17) last week in Berlin. *PHOTO: CARSTEN KOALL/GETTY IMAGES*

This is one of the most counterintuitive verses in the Bible. The Egyptians had enslaved the Israelites and planned a slow genocide against them. Was this not a reason to hate them?

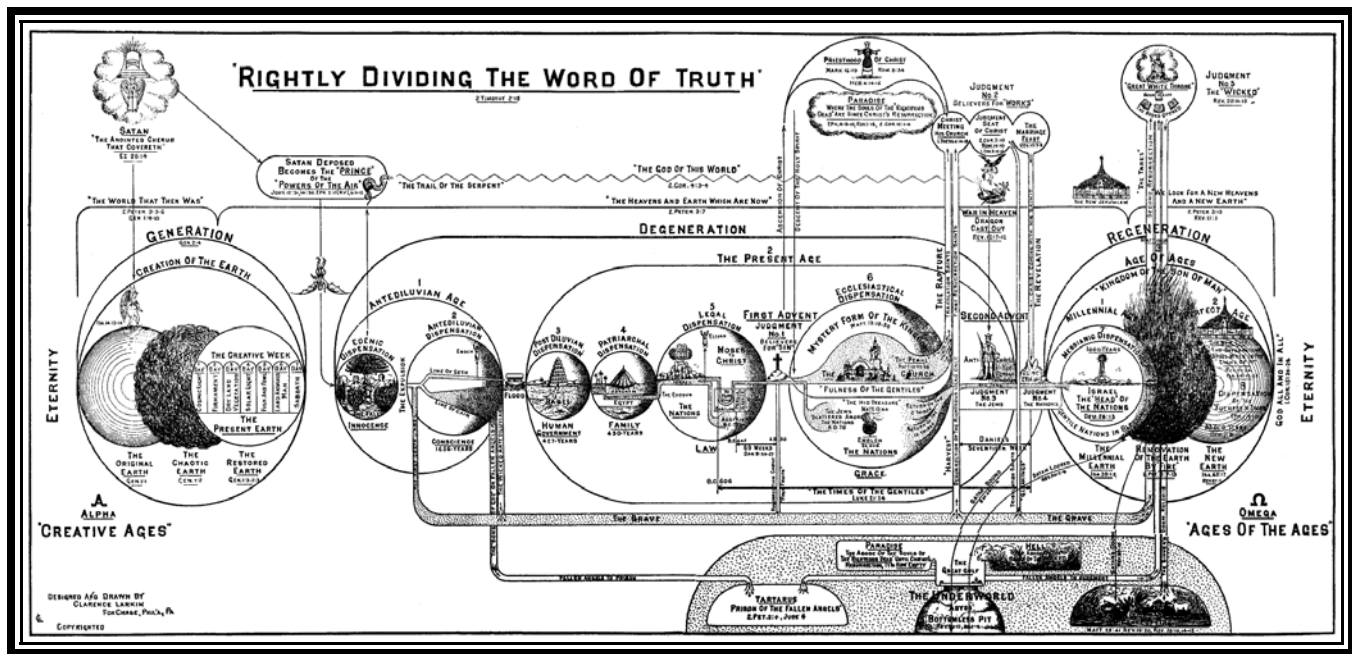
But Moses' words are among history's wisest political insights. If the Israelites had continued to hate their erstwhile persecutors, Moses might have succeeded in leading them out of Egypt, but he would have failed in taking Egypt out of them. The Israelites would still have been slaves: to their memories and resentments, their sense of humiliation—slaves, in short, to the past. To be free, you have to let go of hate. You have to stop seeing yourself as a victim—or else you will succeed only in making more victims.



The Rapture In Dallas



Pretribulation Rapture Of The Saints



“Rightly Dividing The Word Of Truth” by Dr. Clarence Larkin

6. Pre-millennial Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism - Ancient Errors in Contemporary Guise

A. Introduction

In 1530 at the Imperial Diet of Augsburg, Emperor Charles V called upon the leaders of Lutheranism to offer a declaration of that which was taught and confessed by their churches. Their response to the emperor’s summons was the “*Augsburg Confession*” which remains the foremost statement of Lutheran doctrine to this day. In reference to the millennialism which was already flitting around the radical fringes of the Reformation the confessors at Augsburg declared: “*They (Lutheran churches) also condemn others who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions to the effect that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.*” (AC, XVII) These insightful words recognize that the numerous variations of millennialism, all of which anticipate a 1,000 year reign on earth at some time by some one, are derived from the self-serving misunderstanding of the promises of God which afflicted the Jews. The tragic consequence of this misunderstanding led the great majority of Israel to reject Jesus, the true Messiah who had come to offer humanity forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation. Instead, they continued to wait for a political deliverer who would destroy their enemies and restore their earthly glory. Dr. C.F.W. Walther made the same connection in his 1857 “*Theses Against Millennialism:*”

“The Millennialistic teaching which we have referred to is nothing else than the old Jewish fable which was present long before the writing of St. John and the New Testament by which the holy apostles themselves were held captive before they received enlightenment. This Jewish fable arose again after the time of the apostles and finally was rejected in the 17th Article of our Augsburg Confession. The Jewish Talmud gives proof and many places in the New Testament confirm that since ancient times the Jews held the hope that the Messiah would set up an earthly kingdom in which they would rule over the kingdoms of the heathen; that he would resurrect the patriarchs, prophets, and other Jews who had died, lead them together with those who were still living into the land of Canaan, establish the temple in

Jerusalem and the Levitical sacrifices, thus reconstituting the kingdom of God visibly.”
(White, 252)

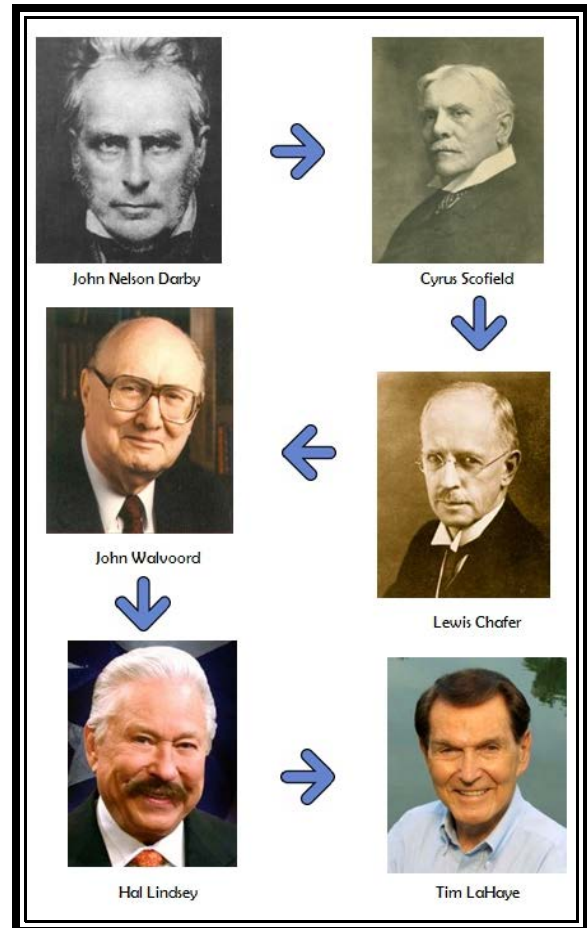
2. Dispensational Pre-Millennialism

The core of the millennialist delusion is the insistence that the Israel of God must be determined by ethnicity or national identity. In this view, the Jews are the people of God because of their blood descent from Abraham. Therefore, all of the divine promises proclaimed by the prophets must be literally fulfilled for this particular nation in order to maintain the veracity and integrity of God.

In pursuit of this core conviction, millennialists have concocted an ongoing succession of complicated end times scenarios. The prevalent variation at the moment is that of pre-millennial dispensationalism, the view held by the great majority of conservative American Protestants. This system originated among the Plymouth Brethren, a splinter group from the Church of England. Its foremost spokesman was an early 19th Century theologian named John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). Dispensationalism was popularized in America by C.I. Scofield thru the notes included in his widely used “*Scofield Reference Bible.*” In recent years Hal Lindsey’s best seller “*The Late Great Planet Earth*” and Tim LaHaye’s “*Left Behind*” series of books and movies have effectively conveyed the pre-millennialist message to millions of Americans.

Dispensationalists divide the history of God’s dealings with humanity into seven distinct dispensations. “*A dispensation is a period of time in which man is tested in regard to his obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.*” When man fails that particular test, God proceeds to the next of His dispensations. Dispensationalists list seven such periods in the history of God’s dealings with humanity: 1. Innocence (Creation - Fall); 2. Conscience (Fall-Flood); 3. Civil Government (Flood-Babel); 4. Promise (Abraham-Sinai); 5. Mosaic Law (Sinai-Pentecost); 6. Grace (Pentecost-Second Coming); 7. Millennium (Second Coming -Final Revolt). These arbitrary and artificial distinctions reduce the wonder of God’s grace demonstrated by the death of Christ on the cross from the decisive theme of all Scripture to one dispensation among many. The primary focus shifts from grace to glory and our view of the nature of Gods is fundamentally transformed as the cross recedes into relative insignificance while we become obsessed with time lines for magnificent earthly kingdoms.

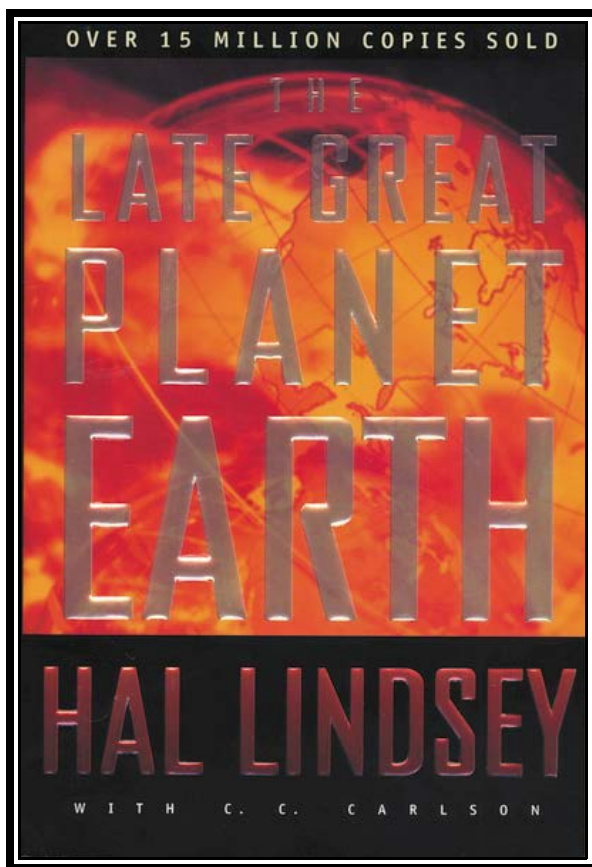
Based upon their identification of the Israel of God as the blood descendants of Abraham, pre-millennialists insist that God promised ethnic Jews a glorious earthly kingdom, a restoration of the realm of David and Solomon, included all of the territory over which they once ruled. They further believe that when the Jews of Christ’s time rejected His offer of that kingdom, it was postponed until some point in the future. In the meantime, often referred to by dispensationalists as “*the parenthesis,*” the Gentile church was formed. That parenthesis has now endured for 2,000 years! At the end of the Church Age, the Lord will covertly return to carry out the “*secret rapture*” of the saints. That is, every believer living on earth will be caught up into



“Leading Dispensationalist Theologians”

the clouds to be with Christ while life on earth for the rest of humanity continues in its ordinary fashion as though nothing had happened. The purpose of the Rapture is to get the Gentile Church out of the way that God's plan for the conversion and glorification of ethnic Israel may be resumed.

The Secret Rapture will mark the beginning of a seven year Tribulation Period during which the Anti-Christ will arise to lead the persecution of the Jews. These persecutions will result in the return of the Jews to the Promised Land of Israel and prepare them for the coming of their Messiah King. The Messiah will lead the nation of Israel in a series of conflicts against their enemies which will culminate in the massive Battle of Armageddon which will result in the utter destruction of the Anti-Christ and all the forces of unbelief. This triumphant victory will bring about the establishment of Israel as the foremost nation on earth and Jerusalem will become the capital of the world. The glorious Third Temple will stand in the midst of the city and the sacrifices which were suspended in AD 70 will be resumed. The Messiah King will reign over this grand Jewish kingdom for 1,000 years and in this way all of the prophecies of the Old Testament will have been fulfilled.



Obviously, to advocates of this grandiose scenario the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 is of crucial significance. In *“The Late Great Planet Earth”* Hal Lindsey described Israel as *“the fuse to Armageddon.”* Writing in 1970, Lindsey declared:

“With the Jewish nation reborn in the land of Palestine, ancient Jerusalem once again under total Jewish control for the first time in 2,000 years, and talk of rebuilding the great Temple, the most important sign of Jesus Christ’s soon coming is before us. This has now set the stage for other predicted signs to develop in history. It is like the key piece of a jigsaw puzzle being found and then having many adjacent pieces rapidly fall into place. For all those who trust in Jesus Christ it is a time of electrifying excitement!” (Lindsey, p. 58)

While dispensationalists recognize that the establishment of the secular State of Israel by largely non-religious Jews does not fulfill the Biblical promise of the nation’s return to God, they believe that it does set the stage for the spiritual return of the Jews to the God of their Fathers during the Tribulation Period. For that reason, evangelical Protestants have been among Israel’s most ardent supporters. Dr. Jerry Falwell, founder of *“The*

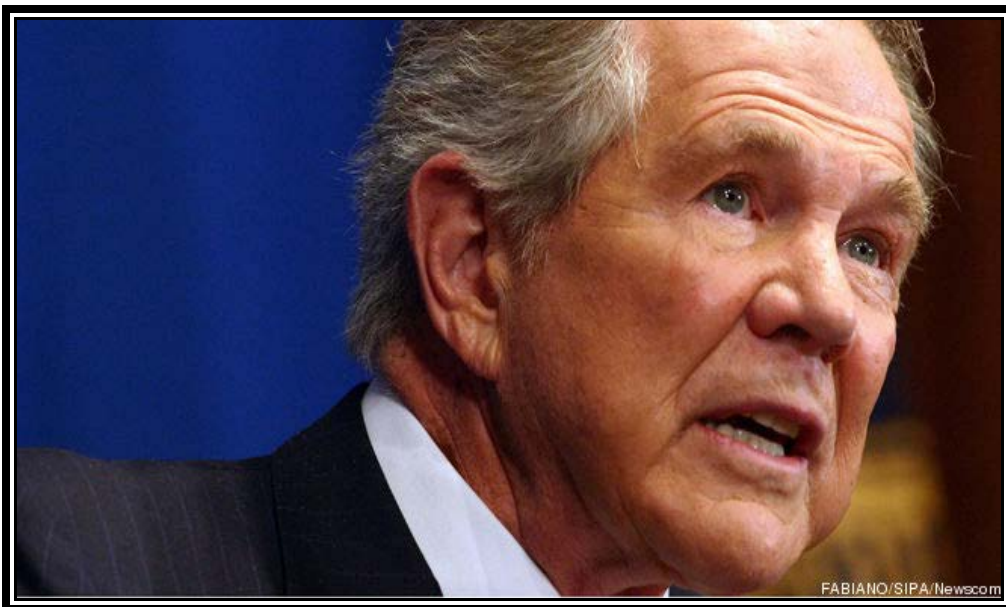
Moral Majority,” listed *“support for Israel and Jewish people everywhere”* as one of the four basic goals of his influential organization. Falwell explained his belief, based on Genesis 12:3, that the future of America depended upon her steadfast support for Israel:

“I firmly believe God has blessed America because America has blessed the Jew. If this nation wants her fields to remain white with grain, her scientific achievements to remain notable, and her freedom to remain intact, America must continue to stand with Israel.” (Brog, p. 138)

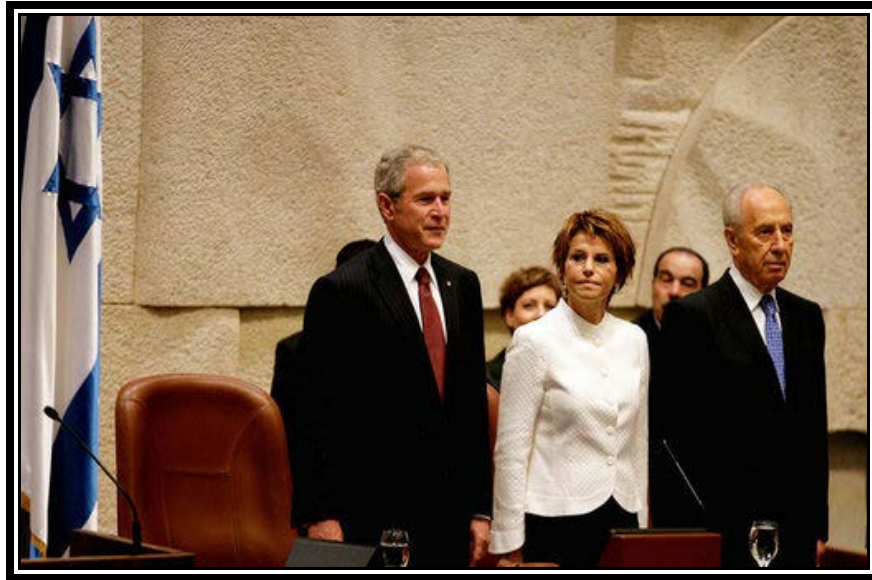
The link between contemporary American foreign policy and the premillennial conviction that the existence of the State of Israel is the fulfillment of a divine promise was articulated most clearly in a 2002 speech by Oklahoma Republican Senator Richard Inhofe, explaining his support for Israeli annexation of the occupied West Bank. On the floor of the United States Senate Inhofe declared:

“This is the most important issue, because God said so. In Genesis 13:14-17 the Bible says: ‘The Lord said to Abram, ‘Lift up now your eyes and look from the place where you are northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which you see to you will I give it, and to your seed forever. Arise, walk through the length of it and the breadth of it, for I will give it to thee.’ That is God talking. The Bible says that Abram moved his tent and dwelt in the Plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron and built there an altar before the Lord. Hebron is in the West Bank. It is at this place where God appeared to Abram and said, ‘I am giving you this land’ - the West Bank. This is not a political battle at all. It is a contest over whether or not the Word of God is true.” (Brog, p. 157)

As the result of dispensationalist fantasies we have come to the point where specific details of America’s foreign policy are perceived to be a test of the truthfulness of the Bible as the Word of God. Advocates of this view then determine their position, not on the basis of America’s national interests, but on the basis of their personal theology. Total unconditional support for the State of Israel is a divine mandate. Support for Israel is not defined by the realities of the Middle East but by Biblical boundaries spelled out in the days of the kingdom of David and Solomon. The Temple must be rebuilt in its precise historic location despite the fact that this location is currently occupied by two of Islam’s most holy sites. The most aggressive and assertive foreign policy positions of any Israeli government must strive to conform to God’s irrevocable gift of the land to the Jewish people. If that means war in the Middle East, then so be it. If that means international destruction, then so be it. All this is the will of the God who chose the Jews as His own and gave them the Holy Land in perpetuity. A more extreme example of the same dangerous combination of theology and politics can be seen in Pat Robertson’s (the founder of the Christian Coalition) fantastic announcement that the massive stroke suffered by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2006 was God’s punishment for Sharon’s willingness to cede portions of the Gaza strip to the Palestinians. Robertson declared: *“He was dividing God’s land and I would say, ‘Woe to any Prime Minister of Israel who takes a similar course’...God says, ‘This land belongs to Me and you better leave it alone.’” (CNN)*



“Pat Robertson - Founder of the Christian Coalition



***U.S. President George Bush And Israeli President Shimon Peres
Before the Knesset To Celebrate Israel's 60th Anniversary***

A significantly more moderate expression of the same perspective was clearly evident in President George W. Bush's speech to Knesset (Israel's Parliament) during the celebration of Israel's 60th anniversary in 2008. The president hailed the establishment of the State of Israel as the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham and to Moses. The prevalence of this view, that all of the land of Palestine (and significant portions of the territory of adjacent nations) belongs to modern Jews by divine right, is indicative of the predominance of dispensational pre-millennialism within contemporary American Christianity. The President declared:

"The alliance between our governments is unbreakable, yet the source of our friendship runs deeper than any treaty. It is grounded in the shared spirit of our peoples, the bonds of the Book, the ties of the soul. When William Bradford stepped off the Mayflower in 1620, he quoted the words of Jeremiah - 'Come, let us declare in Zion the words of the Lord.' The founders of my country saw a new promised land and bestowed upon their towns names like Bethlehem and New Canaan. And in time, many Americans became the most passionate advocates of a Jewish state...What followed was more than the establishment of a new country. It was the fulfillment of an ancient promise given to Abraham, Moses, and David - a homeland for the chosen people in Eretz Yisrael...You have raised a modern society in the Promised Land, alight unto the nations, that preserves the legacy of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

3. Christian Zionism

The most ardent supporters of the State of Israel as a nation uniquely chosen and re-created by God in order that He might fulfill His ancient promises to the Jews in the End Times are self-styled "Christian Zionists." Their foremost spokesman is Pastor John Hagee, of the 15,000 member Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas. But this ideology goes far beyond political support for the State of Israel to transform the entire substance of the Christian faith. In a truly amazing fashion Pastor Hagee's passionate convictions about the Jews as the chosen people of God, take precedence over the commitment of this otherwise strictly conservative protestant to Jesus Christ as the only Savior of mankind. Hagee certainly does not advocate universalism of any sort. Faith in the Christian Gospel of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is the only way to salvation for everyone else. But the Jews, whether observant practitioners of Judaism or not - constitute

a unique, one of a kind, exception. The clear teaching of Scripture, and the consistent affirmation of two thousand years of Christian doctrine notwithstanding, Hagee demands a separate and distinct plan of salvation for the Children of Israel. He scorns what he calls “*Replacement Theology*” - the conviction that the unique role of Israel as the custodians of the Messianic promise ended with the coming of Christ and that the people of God are to be defined by faith in Christ rather than national origin - as inherently anti-Semitic. Instead, the dynamic preacher demands that every true Christian acknowledge that God’s covenant



Pastor John Hagee Addressing Christians United For Israel

with the Jews remains in force today and that God’s promises to the Jewish nation have yet to be fulfilled. On the basis of those two core beliefs, Hagee insists that unconditional support the State of Israel is a fundamental Christian responsibility. Any Christian who fails in that responsibility is guilty of anti-Semitism, a despicable and damnable sin. Such false teachers are nothing less than contemporary Nazis in ecclesiastical disguise, who must be identified and rooted out. In an amazing 1987 diatribe entitled ***Should Christians Support Israel*** (1987) Hagee warned that “*the ghost of Hitler lives*” within the Christian Church today among all those “*amillennial - allegorical*” pastors and teachers who dared to disagree with his end times scenarios and the central role of the Jews in those climactic events. His specific list of dangerous anti-Semitic heresies included the following positions: “*The Church must know that she is the true Israel! The Jews do not have a claim to the land of Israel! Israel is not blessed above all nations! Israel is not reborn!...The old covenant is dead and replaced by the new covenant!*” (Hagee, p. 1) The list concluded with this hyper-dramatic flourish:

“This is the message of anti-Semitism! ...It is now being preached from Christian pulpits from coast to coast to a laity that has been duped into believing that the pastor or priest speaks only the truth... This heresy of hatred is being taught in Sunday Schools to young impressionable minds that are learning to ‘hate thy neighbor’ in the Name of God!”
(Hagee, p. 1)

True Christians, Pastor Hagee proclaimed, must turn away from such false teachings and abandon the heretical churches which propagate them.

For Christian Zionists, Replacement Theology has been the cause of every outburst of Anti-Semitism in Western history up to and including the Nazi Holocaust. In his recent book ***Standing With Israel*** (which



“Auschwitz Concentration Camp”

(which opens with an effusive Forward by John Hagee) David Brog uses the poignant story of Jules Isaac, a French Jew whose entire family perished in the holocaust, to explain how historic Christianity’s unwillingness to accept Judaism as a valid alternative caused the Nazi holocaust:

*“The finger of ultimate blame was not pointed at the Nazis, but at the Christian Church...The real culprit was the centuries old tradition of Christian anti-Semitism... Isaac traced the source of this Christian anti-Semitism to the church’s traditional teaching on the Jews and Judaism which Isaac named ‘the teaching of contempt.’... Isaac concludes **Jesus and the Jews**: ‘The glow of the Auschwitz crematorium is the beacon that lights, that guides all my thoughts. O my Jewish brothers, and you, as well, my Christian brothers, do you not think that it mingles with another glow, that of the cross?’ ...The Christian majority embraced ‘the teaching of contempt’ and a ‘replacement theology’ which held that the church had superceded the Jews as God’s chosen people...most Christians viewed the Jews as the enemies and murderers of Christ...By removing the Jews from God’s love, the dominant Christian theology of the day left them vulnerable to man’s hate.” (Brog, pp.2-3)*

In Pastor’s Hagee’s version of Christianity one’s attitude toward the Jews is absolutely decisive. Anti-Judaism/Anti-Semitism/Anti-Israel becomes an unforgiveable sin, a incredible new perspective on the “*Sin Against the Holy Ghost*.” This sin, in and of itself will determine salvation or damnation. In his book ***In Defense of Israel*** , the fiery preacher declared:

“In Christian theology, the first thing that happens when Christ returns to earth is the judgement of nations. It will have one criterion: How did you treat the Jewish people? Anyone who understands that will want to be on the right side of that question. Those who are anti-Semitic will go to eternal damnation.” (Hagee, p. 118)

The most basic difference between Christian Zionists most of their fellow pre-millennialists is the Zionist assertion that Jews can be saved without personal faith in Christ. As we have observed, John Hagee vehemently equates anti-Judaism with anti-Semitism. If one does not accept Judaism - with its specific

repudiation of Jesus as the promised Savior - as a valid means of salvation, then one is guilty of anti-Semitism. He contends that because of their permanent national covenant, Jews need not convert to Christianity in order to be saved. In his view, (often called “*Dual Covenant Theology*”) Jewish evangelism is unnecessary and counterproductive because devout Jews will be saved through Judaism without Christ or Christianity. In a 1988 interview with “*The Houston Chronicle*” Hagee declared:

“In fact, trying to convert Jews is a waste of time. Everyone else, whether Buddhist or Bahai, needs to believe in Jesus. But not Jews. Jews already have a covenant relationship with God through the law of God as given through Moses that has never been replaced by Christianity. I believe that every Gentile person can only come to God through the cross of Christ. I believe that every Jewish person who lives in the light of the Torah, which is the word of God, has a relationship with God and will come to redemption. The law of Moses is sufficient enough to bring a person into the knowledge of God until God gives him a greater revelation. And God has not.” (Cephas, p. 1)

In Hagee’s opinion, the Jews will only accept Messiah Jesus when he comes during the Tribulation Period to destroy the Antichrist and establish the glorious Jewish kingdom on earth which they are convinced they were promised through the prophets. Dr. Stephen Sizer author of *Christian Zionism - Road Map to Armageddon?* summarizes the perspective of Pastor Hagee and his fellow Christian Zionists and the advantage it provides in dealing with Israel in this way:

“Dispensationalists like Scofield, Lindsey, Hagee and the ICEJ, as well as others such as Brearley, therefore, disavow ‘missionizing’ Jewish people, in part because they believe the Jewish people have a separate covenant relationship with God which makes belief in Jesus as Savior unnecessary or at least not essential until after he returns. Conveniently, it also insures they receive favored status as ‘Christian’ representatives within the State of Israel.” (Sizer, 143)

Hagee and his cohorts go so far in emphasizing the primacy of God’s covenant with Israel as to contend that if the Jews had originally accepted Jesus a gospel outreach to the Gentiles of the world would never have occurred. This blasphemy reduces the Creator of the universe to the status of a petty tribal deity. Hagee’s bizarre assertion is completely unambiguous: *“If the Jewish people had accepted the suffering Messiah, every Gentile would have been forever lost.”* (Sizer, p. 140) In his zeal to assert God’s unique love for Jews, Hal Lindsey also contends that we Gentiles ought to be most grateful for the Jews’ rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. If Israel had accepted Jesus they alone would have been saved by God:

“The Gospel and the age of grace would not have come to us Gentiles unless Israel had fallen into



***“The Scribes and the Pharisees”
19th Century Bible Illustration***

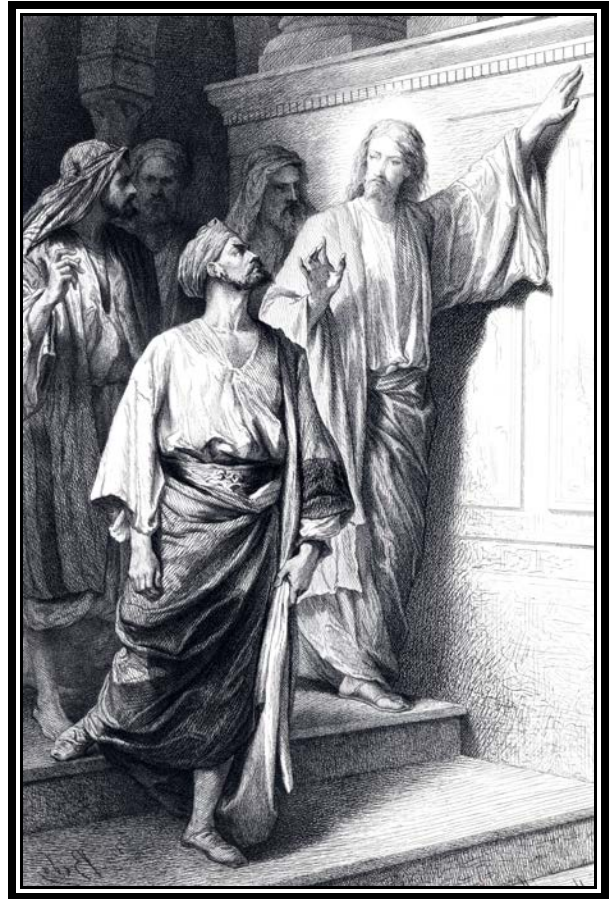
unbelief. So, in one sense, they were made enemies so that the Gospel could be spread throughout the Gentile world.” (Lindsey II, p. 208)

From the perspective of pre-millennialists generally and Christian Zionists particularly, the salvation of humanity was nothing more than a fall back plan when God real desire - to save His chosen people ,the Jews - had to be postponed. The “*parenthesis*” of the “*Church Age*” was inserted while God prepared for the ultimate salvation of His chosen people, the Jews. These ridiculous conclusions diminish the God of the Bible who “*so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should have everlasting life*” (John 3:16) into a petty national deity who was willing to settle for the Gentiles only because His chosen people, whom He loved more than anyone else, had already rejected Him. This view entirely misrepresents the nature of God’s covenant with the nation of Israel, in a manner tragically reminiscent of the Jews’ own self-serving distortion of God’s covenant 2,000 years ago. Personal salvation has always been by grace through faith. Initially that faith was in God’s promise of the Savior who was to come. Once the incarnation had occurred, the object of the believer’s faith became the Savior who had come in the person of Jesus Christ. In either case, God’s gift of faith was the means through which the salvation of the individual was accomplished.

Ethnicity or nationality had nothing to do with salvation. God’s national covenant with Israel, defined at Sinai, was designed to set the nation apart so that they might serve as the custodians of the divine promise of the Messiah for humanity. The messianic prophecies which God spoke through His Hebrew prophets were intended to provide the context in which the world’s Messiah, Jesus Christ could be recognized and identified. The sacrifices and rituals of Tabernacle and Temple prefigured the one great sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross. This important responsibility was certainly a great honor for Israel. However, like all of God’s blessings, it was bestowed to enable Israel to be a blessing to all of mankind. Furthermore, like all of God’s blessings, it was bestowed by grace despite the unworthiness of the recipient. These important issues will be discussed in greater detail in the Biblical assessment of the Israel of God which follows. By its denial of these basic Bible truths Christian Zionism destroys the fundamental unity of God’s plan of salvation throughout the ages.

Christian Zionists are firmly committed to the realization of “*Eretz Israel HaShlema,*” that is, the complete or total land of Israel. The real estate included in this transaction reaches far beyond the present borders of the Israeli state. The Biblical texts which define the boundaries of Greater Israel for Zionists, both Christian and Jewish, include the following:

“On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I give this land, from the River of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates - the land of the Kenites, Kennizites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.’” (Genesis 15:18-21)



“Jesus Prophecying the Destruction of the Temple” - 19th Century Bible Illustration

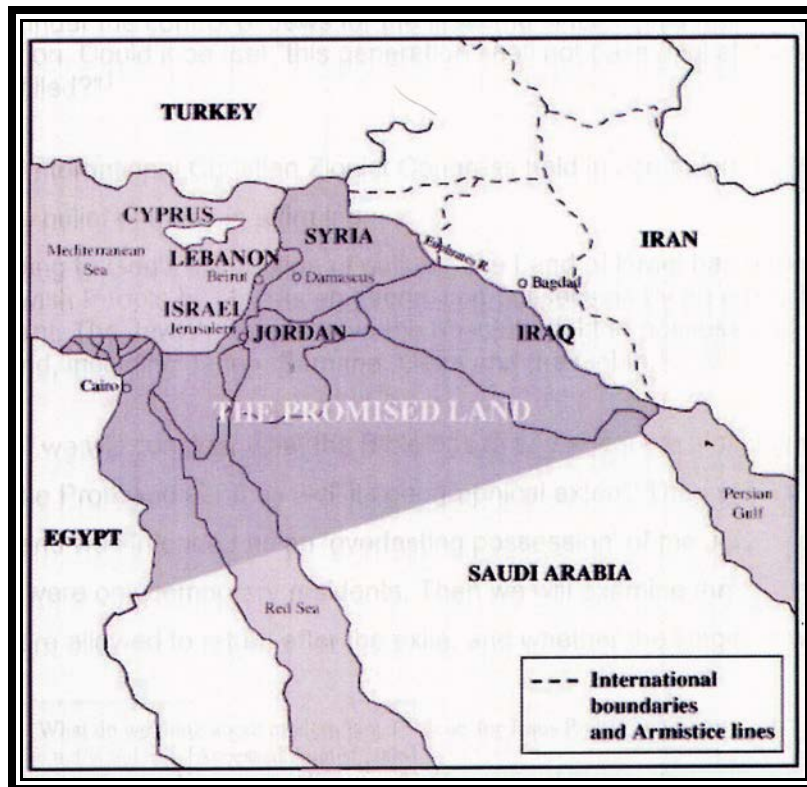
“If you carefully observe all these commands I am giving you to follow - to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to hold fast to Him - then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and stronger than you. Every place where you set your foot will be yours. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, from the Euphrates River to the Western Sea. No man will be able to stand against you.” (Deuteronomy 11:22-25)

“Now then, you and all these people get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them - to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates - all the Hittite country - to the Great Sea on the west. No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life.” (Joshua 1:2-5)

“At the northern frontier Dan will have one portion, it will follow the Hethlon Road, to Lebo, Hamath, Hezar Enan and the northern border of Damascus next to Hamath will be part of its border from the east side to the west side.. The southern boundary of Gad will run south from Tamar, to the waters of Meribah Kadesh, then along the Wadi of Egypt to the Great Sea. This is the land you are to allot as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel and these will be their portions, declares the Sovereign Lord.” (Ezekiel 48:1,28-29)

John Hagee describes these texts as the divine *“Title-Deed”* which God has unconditionally granted to the descendants of Abraham in perpetuity.

“The Royal Land Grant that God, the original owner, gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their seed forever, includes the following territory the West Bank which is presently occupied by Israel, all of Lebanon, one half of Syria, two thirds of Jordan, all of Iraq, and the northern portion of Saudi Arabia.” (Hagee, p. 99)





*“God Could Raise Up Sons Of Abraham From These Stones”
by James Tissot*

4. Blood Israel’s Unconditional Title Deed to the Land of Palestine Examined Biblically

The key component in the Dispensationalist argument that the land of Palestine belongs to the Jews by divine right forever is the contention that God’s original covenant with Abraham was absolutely unconditional. In this view, it is irrelevant whether Abraham or his physical descendants believed in God or obeyed His commands. No matter how rebellious or unfaithful they may have been throughout history or are today, whether they recognized or repudiated the Messiah who was the heart and core of the covenant, the patriarchs and their physical descendants would remain the beneficiaries of every promised covenant blessing - specifically, in this instance, the Promised Land - forever. This radical assertion not only distorts the entire nature and purpose of God’s covenants with His people - which will be discussed in greater detail in the following segment - but directly contradicts the dynamic of Law and Gospel which is the essence of the Biblical message both for Abraham and for us. The covenant promises of God are always grace - the expression of his undeserved love for sinful men. When man responds to that Gospel in faith, his faith itself is God’s gift through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Catechism’s Explanation of the Third Article says it very well: *“I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him. But the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the one true faith.”* But at the same time, the Law sternly warns that man retains the right to spurn and reject God’s gracious blessings. A consistent pattern of willful, deliberate sin will ultimately destroy faith and deprive man of the gracious blessings which God has proffered. In the context of this reality, the concept of *“conditional”* or *“unconditional”* covenants becomes inadequate and misleading. Certainly God’s gracious promises to Abraham and his descendants were complete in and of themselves. They did not depend upon human contribution or participation. But they could also be rejected by stubborn sinners who had chosen to go their own way, or to redefine God’s blessings in terms of their own expectations or desires. Such rejection would most certainly deprive those individuals and their posterity of the blessings which God had graciously promised. The fault lay not in the divine promise, but in the human rejection of that promise. Dr. Walter Kaiser offers this helpful summary of the issue:

“In our judgement, the conditionality was not attached to the promise, but only to the participants who would benefit from these abiding promises. If the condition of faith was not evident, then the patriarch would become a mere transmitter of the blessing without personally inheriting any of its gifts directly. Such faith also must be evident in an obedience that sprang from faith...The connection is undeniable. The duty of obedience (law, if you wish) was intimately tied up with the promise of a desired sequel.” (Kaiser, p. 94)

Sadly, such was the case with physical Israel which ultimately failed to receive the promised blessing by faith. Nonetheless, the love of God continued to reach out to the true Israel of God, all those who, like Father Abraham, have been justified by grace through faith, whether Jew or Gentile. The texts in which the covenant is declared and defined clearly reflect this crucially important dynamic.

The Abrahamic Covenant is presented in six texts in the book of Genesis. The first of those texts, the call of Abram is in Genesis 12:1-3. That call is prefaced with the command: **“Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.”** Obviously, if Abram had refused to obey that command and chosen to remain in Haran, the covenant blessings which God had promised would not have come to him. The text emphasizes this truth by concluding the initial declaration of the covenant with a report of Abram’s obedience: **“So Abram left as the Lord had told him.”** (Genesis 12:4)

From the outset, the individual experience of covenant blessings by Abram and his descendants was conditional upon their obedience of the Lord’s commands. God restated the covenant to Abram in Genesis 12:7 and 13:14-17. The most detailed description of the boundaries of the Promised Land is included in God’s restatement of his covenant with Abram in Genesis 15:1-21. This is a favorite text of Zionists (both Christian and Hebrew) in arguing for a vastly expanded Greater Israel in the contemporary Middle East, as previously noted. The critical role of faith in the personal reception of the promised blessing is unmistakably indicated by the key statement: **“Abram believed the Lord and He credited it to him as righteousness.”** (Genesis 15:6)

The New Testament repeated stresses the crucial importance of the faith described in these words. In Romans Chapter 4, Paul quoted this verse in an extended discussion of Abraham as the father of all believers, both Jew and Gentile:



“What does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness’... Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had the power to do what He had promised. This is why it was ‘credited to him as righteousness.’ The words ‘was credited to him’ were not written for him alone but also for us to whom God will credit righteousness.” (Romans 4:3,20-23)

The apostle quoted this verse again as he pleaded with the Galatians to recognize that salvation has always been by grace through faith apart from the observance of the law:

“Consider Abraham: ‘He believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.’ Understand

“God’s Promise to Abram” by E. M. Lilien

then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced the Gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” (Galatians 3:6-9)

In this context, the importance of Abraham’s faith is clear. The reception of covenant blessings was not absolutely unconditional. Had Abram chosen not to trust in God’s promise and instead had left Canaan to return to his homeland in Mesopotamia in despair over his childlessness, his disbelief and disobedience would have deprived him and his posterity of God’s promised blessings

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, a Messianic Jew and a determined advocate of Dispensational eschatology with its permanent covenant between God and the Jewish people, contends that the Abrahamic covenant must be absolutely unconditional because of the manner in which God utilized the traditional contract ratification practices of the ancient Near East to confirm His covenant with the patriarch. It was customary among the peoples of the Fertile Crescent for sacrificial animals to be cut in half and the parties to the covenant to pass between the halves of the slaughtered animals. Their symbolic action sealed the agreement in blood as the ritual signified the fate of either party should they violate the terms of the covenant. Ancient documents indicate that the participants took the self-maledictory oath “*”May it be so done to me if I do not keep my oath and pledge.”* (NIV, p. 29) This brutal message is reflected in God’s condemnation of the faithless leadership of Judah through His prophet Jeremiah:

“The men who have violated My covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before Me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces. The leaders of Jerusalem and Judah, the court officials, the priests and all the people of the land who walked between the pieces of the calf, I will hand over to their enemies who seek their lives. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.” (Jeremiah 34:18-20)

Accordingly, in Hebrew the idiom for making a covenant “*kerit berith*” literally means “*to cut a covenant.*” The Lord instructed Abram to make the customary preparations for the ritual in the customary manner. Genesis 15 reports what then took place: “***When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking fire pot and a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram.***” (Genesis 15:17-18) Fruchtenbaum surmises - despite the absence of any such indication in the text - that because Abraham did not pass between the animals bodies along with the theophanic symbols of God the covenant must be absolutely unconditional. His assumption is that God is binding only Himself while Abraham and his descendants were free to do as they pleased. Needless to say, the come to such a critical theological conclusion on the basis of assumption is perilous at best.

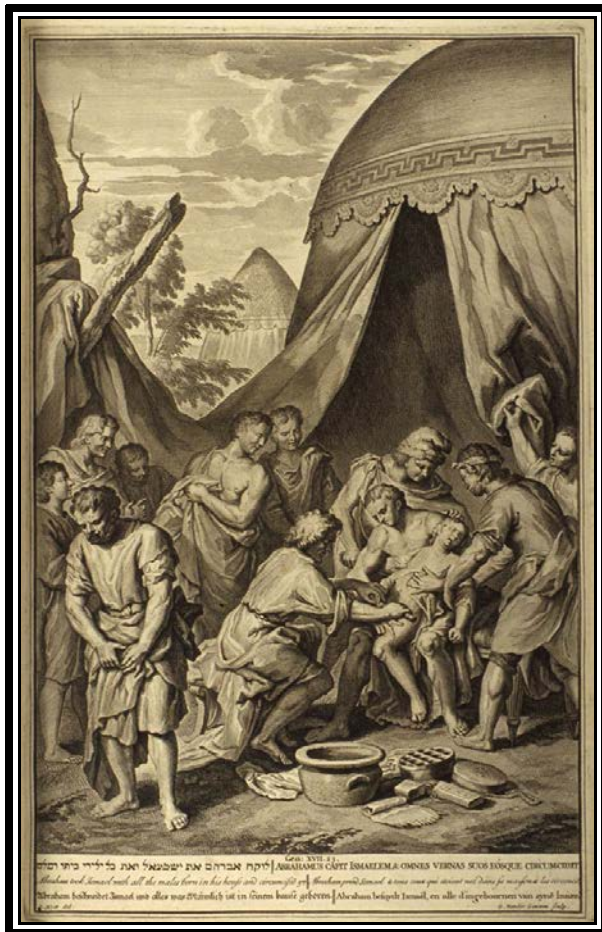


“God Seals His Covenant With Abraham”

“The manner in which this covenant is signed and sealed rendered this covenant un-conditional...Normally both parties making the covenant would walk together between the pieces of the animals rendering the terms mandatory on both parties. If one failed to keep his terms it would free the other from keeping his. In this way the covenant was conditional. In this case, however, it was not God and Abraham who walked between the pieces of the animals, but God alone, binding only Himself to the terms of the covenant. This rendered the covenant unconditional. Its fulfillment is based purely on God’s grace, regardless of how often Abraham or his seed may fall.” (Fruchtenbaum, p. 573)

Fruchtenbaum’s assumption is untenable for a number of reasons. First, and most importantly, it contradicts the variety of Biblical texts which define the Abrahamic covenant. Secondly, it is inconsistent with the facts of Biblical history. The sad reality is that the seed of Abraham - because of their persistent disobedience and idolatry - has not possessed the Promised Land for the majority of the past 4,000 years. Even if some end times restoration were to occur, that historical reality would still constitute a denial of God’s promise, if that promise had ever been absolutely unconditional. The discrepancies between the covenant ceremony of Genesis 15 and customary Near Eastern practice are the obvious result of the fact that this is a covenant with God, not an ordinary agreement between two men. That being the case, the typical protocols of the ceremony could not have been consistently applied. In the first instance, the extraordinary nature of this encounter is indicated by the fact that Abraham saw the torch and the smoking fire pot pass between the animals in a vision. These were not actual events but a visionary experience. The purpose of that vision

was to allay Abram’s fears and reassure him that he would not remain childless. God did not need reassurance, Abraham did. Hence, God enacted the ceremony for His servant’s benefit in a manner which would address and allay his fears. The patriarch was an observer of that which was enacted, not a participant as would ordinarily have been the case. Furthermore, to have placed Abraham alongside the symbols which represented the presence of God in his vision would have suggested a completely inappropriate parity between the two parties to this agreement. God was adapting a human custom to a situation in which it could not be perfectly (or literalistically) applied. Given these completely unique circumstances, the divergence from ordinary practice was not only predictable but essential.



“Circumcision Instituted As The Mark Of The Covenant In The Household Of Abraham” - Gerhardt Hoyt

The next restatement of the covenant to Abraham was given in conjunction with the institution of circumcision as the physical sign of the covenant. The command to observe and maintain this practice is clearly defined as a condition of covenantal blessing. In fact, in this instance, the Lord specifies most emphatically that anyone who remains uncircumcised has broken the covenant and is to be ***“cut off from his people.”*** The adamant Dispensationalist contention that the covenant is unbreakable flatly contradicts this Biblical text. Having reaffirmed the substance of His previous promises, God declared to Abraham:

“I am God Almighty, walk before Me and be blameless. I will confirm My covenant between Me and you and will greatly increase your numbers...As for you, you must keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is My covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision and it will be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. For the generations to come, every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought from a foreigner - those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”
(Genesis 17:1, 9-14)

The most striking feature of this text is the juxtaposition of the gracious promises of God with the obedience of faith through which the promised blessings are received by the individual. While plainly asserting that any man who refuses circumcision has broken the covenant and is to be expelled from the community of God’s people, at the same time, the text repeatedly affirms that the covenant of God is **“everlasting.”** (Vss. 7,8,13,19). Both the certainty of God’s promises and the necessity of faith as the means through which those covenant blessings are to be received is clearly emphasized by the contrast.

This same dual emphasis is evident in the final statement of the covenant by the Angel of the Lord upon Mount Moriah. Having interrupted Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac, the Angel prefaced the covenant declaration with these explicit words in reference to Abraham’s obedience of faith:

“Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the sea shore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed Me.” (Genesis 22:16-18)

Abraham’s obligation to respond to God’s wondrous promises by faith which manifested itself in obedience is unmistakably clear throughout these texts. R. Allen Killen described the relationship between Abraham’s faith and works in this way: *“Abraham was justified by faith alone, but the faith which justified him was not alone...Abraham was not justified before God by faith and works, but by a faith which worked (see Galatians 5:6)...While the covenant promise was not given to Abraham because he fulfilled the law or the covenant conditions, the Bible is also clear that the covenant would not operate apart from obedience on the part of Abraham and his descendants. The covenant fellowship imposed upon him the responsibility of being devoted and upright.”* (Youngblood, p. 38) Ultimately, of course, man’s best efforts must always fall far short of the



“The Sacrifice of Isaac’ by Simon Bishley

demands of God's perfect righteousness and holiness. Thus, as prefigured in Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, God would offer His own Son in our place upon the cross that His perfect righteousness might become ours by grace through faith.

"Christ's obedience has not rendered ours unnecessary; rather, it has rendered ours acceptable...The Law of God will accept nothing short of perfect and perpetual obedience, and such obedience the Substitute of God's people rendered, so that He brought in an everlasting righteousness, which is reckoned to their account." (Youngblood, p. 45)

Those who contend that God's promise of blessing to physical Israel was unbreakable and perpetual despite the chronic disobedience and apostasy of the nation reduces the love of God to that which Dietrich Bonhoeffer scorned as *"cheap grace."* This caricature of God's love has no impact of the lives of those who consider themselves to be God's people by birth and actually encourages the impenitent sinner to continue in his sin. This is precisely the spiritual problem which afflicted the Jews of Christ's day, and which led them to reject a Messiah who called them to repentance rather than rewarding them with what they believed to be their birthright of glory and power. In the well chosen words of Dr. John Bright, this corporate self-righteousness *"now had hardened into the national dogma which the people clutched to their hearts; this nation and this dynasty will always endure, for so God has promised!"* (Youngblood, p. 31)

The use of this same fatally flawed view of God's covenant as an irrevocable *"title-deed"* to most of the Middle East for modern Israelis is a blueprint for disaster - spiritually (in fantasies of a dual covenant which proffers salvation to the Jews apart from Jesus), and politically/militarily (in determining America's Middle East policies on the basis of theological peculiarities rather than national self-interest).

The Bible specifically addresses the issue of Israel's right to the Promised Land as being conditional upon the people's obedience to God in Deuteronomy 22:

"If you carefully observe all these commands I am giving you to follow - to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to hold fast to Him - then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you

and you will dispossess nations larger and stronger than you. Every place where you set your foot will be yours. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon and from the Euphrates River to the Western Sea. No man will be able to stand against you. The Lord your God, as He promised you, will put the terror and fear of you on the whole land, wherever you go. See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse - the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today, the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way the way that I command you today by following other gods which you have not known...You are about to cross the Jordan and enter and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you. When you have taken it over and are living there, be sure that you obey all the decrees and laws I am setting before you today."

(Deuteronomy 22:22-28,31-32)



Evangelical Pro-Israel Poster



Jesus Lamenting the Impending Downfall of Jerusalem

Once again, the distinction between God’s gracious promise of blessing and the reception of that promise by obedient faith is clearly evident. Old Testament scholar Dr. Gleason Archer points out: *“While all this territory was bestowed upon the seed of Abraham and Isaac by covenant promise, the Hebrew nation was to enjoy actual possession of it (in its entirety at least) only as long as they were faithful and obedient to God.”* (Youngblood, p. 41)

Dispensationalists go on to assert that the unconditional land promises which God made to the physical descendants of Abraham have never been completely fulfilled and must therefore await literal fulfillment in the future in conjunction with the modern nation of Israel. This assertion directly contradicts the repeated Biblical statements that God’s promises to Abraham have already been fulfilled, in the conquest of the land under Joshua and in the kingdoms of David and Solomon:

“So the Lord gave Israel all the land He has sworn to give their forefathers, and they took possession of it and settled there. The Lord gave them rest on every side, just as He had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the Lord handed all their enemies over to them. Not one of all the Lord’s good promises to the House of Israel failed. Every one was fulfilled. (Joshua 21:43-45)

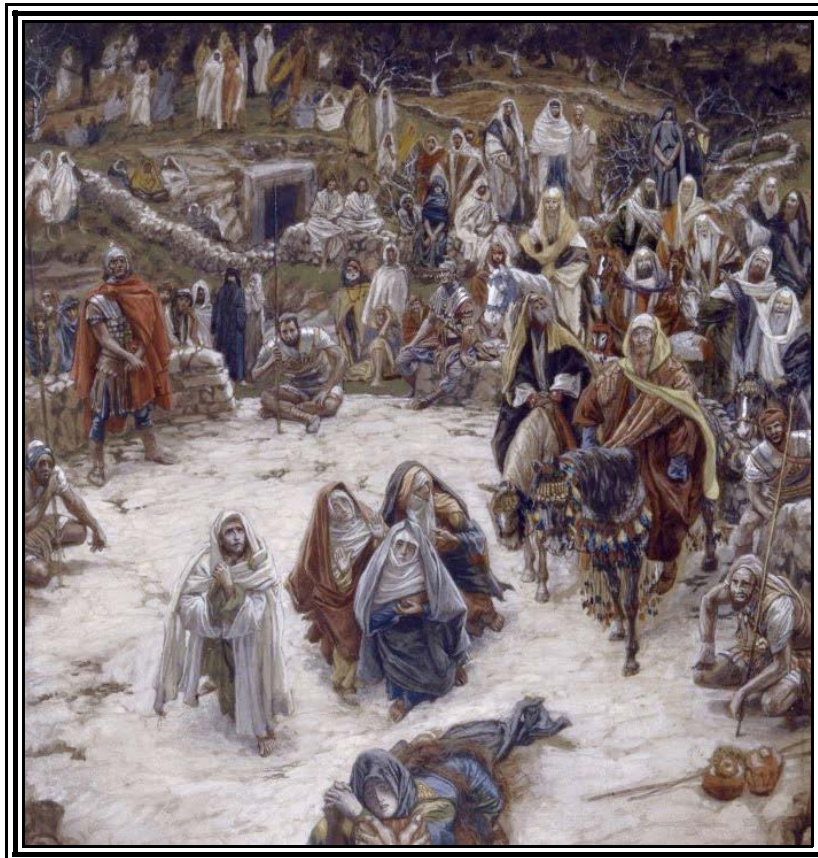
“The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank, and they were happy. And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms, from the River to the Land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon’s subjects all his life... Praise be to the Lord who has given rest to His people Israel. Not one word has failed of all the good promises He gave through His servant Moses. May the Lord our God be with us as He was with our fathers; may He never leave us nor forsake us.” (1 Kings 4:20-21; 8:56-57)

It is evident from these clear texts that Scripture does not view the promises of God in the literalistic manner of contemporary Dispensationalists. God kept His Word to His people. He brought them to the land He had promised and gave them possession of that land. However, His people failed to complete the conquest of the land and eliminate the pagan nations which dwelt there according to God’s command. He was

patient and longsuffering in the face of their persistent defiance and disobedience. He chastised them repeatedly, attempting to lead them to repentance. But their repentance was always short lived. As soon as conditions improved the Israelites promptly returned to their idolatry and sin. Finally after centuries of prophetic warnings, in the face of that chronic rejection, Israel was justly deprived of their kingdom and their homeland. They had chosen to spurn God and disobey His Word. They had perverted His Promised Land into a place of idolatry and sin. God's judgement came as He had foretold. But God's blessings had served their purpose in the accomplishment of His plan for the salvation of humanity. The promise of the Messiah had been proclaimed through the prophets. The dispersion of the Jews among the nations which followed the loss of the Promised Land and the destruction of Israel as an independent nation served to set the stage for the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ among all nations. Human rejection and disobedience cannot frustrate or hamper the ultimate fulfillment of the plans and purposes of God.

In the preceding chapters we have traced the development of Zionism among the Jews and Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism among many segments of Christianity. The convergence of these views has become extremely powerful both in America and in Israel. British scholar Dr. Nur Masalha offers this somber assessment:

“Their doctrine has aggressively imposed an aberrant expression of the Christian faith and an erroneous interpretation of the Bible which is subservient to the political agenda of the modern State of Israel; Dispensationalism is being used today to give theological justification to what the U.N. regards as racism... it incites religious fanaticism by supporting the rebuilding of a Jewish Temple on Mount Moriah...and advocates an apocalyptic eschatology likely to become a self-fulfilling prophecy.” (Masalha, p. 130)



“If You Are The Son Of God Come Down From The Cross”
James Tissot

E. The Israel of God and the Promised Land in Scripture

1. Christ as the Center of Scripture and the Personification of the True Israel

The fantasies of Zionists, both Hebrew and Christian notwithstanding, the Biblical view of the Israel of God and the Promised Land is clearly defined in Scripture. The Bible is a thoroughly “*Christo-centric*” book.

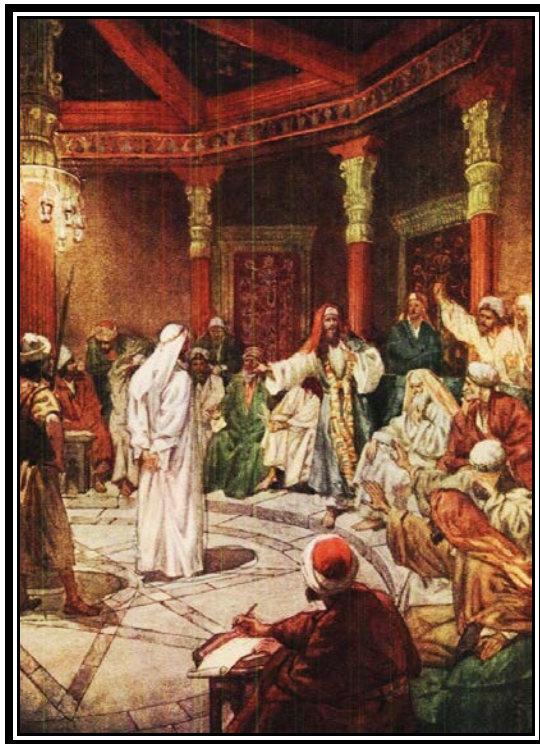
Jesus, the Savior/ Messiah who would offer His life in humble submission to the will of the Father for the sins of fallen humanity in a manner that confounded all worldly wisdom and expectation is the major theme of Scripture throughout both Old and New Testaments. Thus St. Paul had declared to the Corinthians:

“Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified; a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:22-24)

After His resurrection, Jesus had sternly reproved His own disciples for allowing themselves to be influenced by their countrymen’s desire for a national Messiah and their own sinful human inclination toward worldly glory to preempt the prophetic promises of the Old Testament. The Savior then proceeded to lead them through the Hebrew Scriptures to enable them to see the text on its own terms without the distortion of human desire and expectation.

“How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter His glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.” (Luke 24:25-27)

As noted in the introduction to our review of modern Dispensationalism above (cf. Notes, pp.), the Pre-



***“Are You The Christ, The Son Of God?
Yes. It Is As You Say!”***

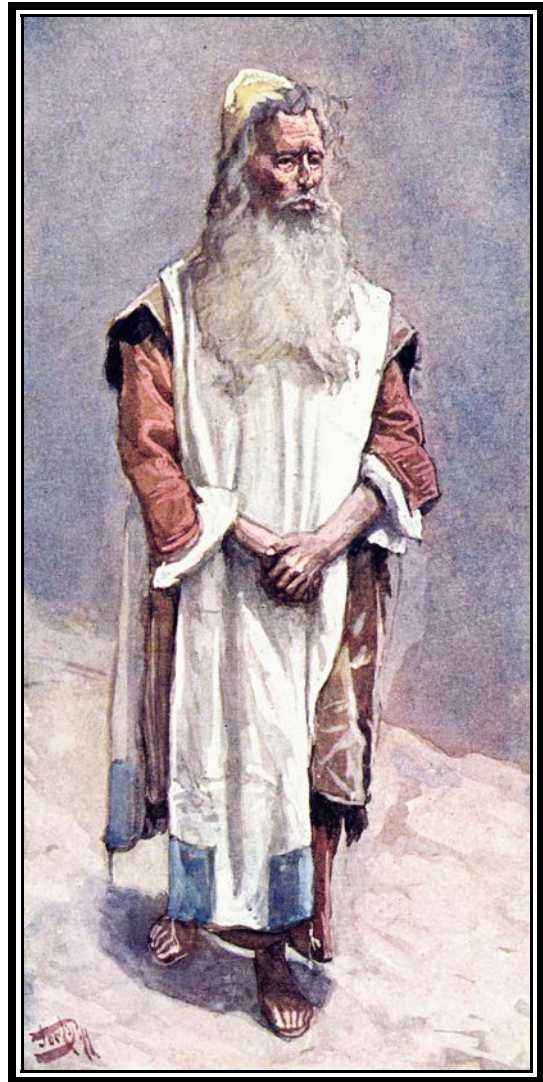
millennial obsession with the land of Israel and the Jewish people is nothing more than a tragic reassertion of the same ancient error which led God’s people to reject the Savior whom their own prophets had foretold because He did not conform to their self-serving distortion of God’s promised salvation. The tragedy of this parallel is bitterly ironic. In a typically human fashion the Jews had come to expect a Messiah who would bring them the worldly victory and success which they were convinced they deserved as God’s chosen people. They yearned for the sweet savor of revenge as the mighty Gentile empires which had oppressed and conquered them would be crushed beneath their heels and Israel would finally be vindicated and exalted high above every other nation on earth. This was the kind of Savior they wanted and they would accept no other. Blinded by their own pride and self-righteousness, they ignored the pathetic record of their own consistent disobedience and rebellion and were therefore unable to perceive the amazing long-suffering and mercy which God had extended to them over the centuries. They came to the delightful conclusion that they had earned God’s love and that because of their superiority He had chosen them to be His own, spurning every other nation as unworthy. They had become completely blind to

the wonder of God’s gracious love for humanity, and the unique role which they had been blessed to play in His plan of salvation despite their own unworthiness. St. Paul sadly lamented the spiritual blindness of his countrymen: ***“But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.”*** (2 Corinthians 3:14) Rather than acknowledging the truth of the law which reveals every man’s sinfulness and then focusing their attention on the precious Gospel of God and His love, the Israelites across the generations chose self serving distortions about themselves and their own nation. Contemporary scholar Hans LaRondelle described the Christo-centric nature of Scripture in these well chosen words: ***“For the apostle Paul the central truth of the Hebrew Bible is not about Israel and its national future, but rather about Messiah Jesus, the Lord of Israel and the Redeemer of the world.”*** (LaRondelle, p. 6) The apostle concluded his epistle to the Romans with this stirring affirmation that the Gospel throughout the Old Testament had always been about the salvation of mankind, not merely that of a chosen people or nation:

“Now to Him who is able to establish you in my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made know through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey Him - to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.” (Romans 16:25-27)

In his parting words to Israel, Moses had gone out of his way to emphatically remind the Jews that their selection to be the chosen people of God and their calling to play a critical role in His divine plan for the salvation of mankind was demonstration of His absolutely undeserved love. God’s gracious choice of Israel was designed to serve as a prime example of the manner in which God lavished His love upon those who were unworthy of that love. God did not choose Israel because of their size or strength. He chose them despite the fact that they were a tiny, insignificant nation:

“The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession. The Lord did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of other peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath He swore to your forefathers that He brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Know, therefore, that the Lord your God is God. He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commands. But those who hate Him He will repay to their face by destruction; He will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate Him. Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today.” (Deuteronomy 7:6-11)



“The Prophet Moses” by J. James Tissot



“The Apostasy Of The Golden Calf At Mount Sinai”

Nor did God choose Israel because of their unique righteousness or pious spirituality. As Moses forewarned the Israelites to avoid the sin of pride as the result of all the blessings which God had bestowed upon them, he recalled in sad detail their pathetic record of consistent disobedience and sin - ***“You have been rebellious against the Lord ever since I have known you!”***

“It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the Lord your God will drive them out before you to accomplish that which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people...And the Lord said to me, ‘I have seen this people and they are a stiff-necked people indeed!’...You rebelled against the command of the Lord your God, you did not trust Him or obey Him. You have been rebellious against the Lord ever since I have known you...I prayed to the Lord and said... ‘Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Overlook the stubbornness of this people, their wickedness and their sin.’” (Deuteronomy 9:5-6, 13,23-24,27)

The New Testament portrays Christ as the personification and perfection of Israel, the Chosen One who succeeded where the chosen people had failed. This is most evident in Matthew’s Gospel, the earliest account of Christ’s ministry directed to a largely Hebrew Christianity. When Mary and Joseph take the infant Jesus to Egypt to escape Herod’s wrath, Matthew explains: ***“And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I called My son.’”*** (Matthew 2:15) The evangelist’s quotation is from Hosea 11:1 which is clearly a reference to the Israel’s exodus from Egyptian bondage. Yet the New Testament informs us that the ultimate fulfillment of these words took place in Christ, the new Israel. At the baptism of Jesus, as the Lord came up out of the water, God’s voice from heaven declared: ***“This is My Son, whom I love. With Him I am well pleased.”*** (Matthew 3:17) The terminology is directly drawn from Psalm 2:7 (***“You are My Son. Today I have become Your Father.”***) which were originally addressed to King David (cf. Acts 13:33) and Isaiah 42:1 (***“Here is My Servant whom I uphold, My Chosen One in whom I delight.”***). The Isaiah text is the beginning of the prophet’s extended description of the Messiah as the Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 42-53). Later in the same chapter, the Lord promised that through His Messianic Servant He would fulfill His covenant in a way that includes all people: ***“I will keep You and will make You to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles...See, the former things have taken place and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.”*** (Isaiah 42:6,9) Following His baptism the Lord withdrew into the wilderness for forty days - a clear allusion to the forty years of Israel’s wilderness wandering - to be tempted by the devil. Moses had described the purpose of those forty years in this way: ***“Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep His commands...Know then in your heart, that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you.”*** (Deuteronomy 8:2,5) Where the nation of Israel failed dismally, Jesus succeeded victoriously. He resisted all of the Tempter’s wiles and, most appropriately, each time rebuked Satan with

quotations from the Book of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 6:13,16; 8:3). One more example of Scripture's consistent identification of Christ as Israel must suffice. In the great "*Resurrection Chapter*" of the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle declares - "***that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.***" (1 Corinthians 15:4) The only Old Testament text which refers to a third day restoration to life



"Rest On The Flight To Egypt" by Merson

is Hosea 6:1-2. In this passage the prophet calls Israel to repentance and promises that God would restore His repentant people in the aftermath of the Assyrian/Babylonian captivities: "***Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but He will heal us; He has injured us but He will bind up our wounds. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will restore us, that we may live again in His presence.***" The apostle's application of this prophecy to the resurrection of Jesus demonstrates again the identification of Israel and the Messiah.

The insight that Jesus is the personification of all believers - the Israel of God - is of profound theological significance. In this way, by grace through faith, His perfect life, His substitutionary death, and His glorious resurrection all become God's gift to every believer. "*On the basis of the Old Testament concept that the Messiah includes in Himself the whole people of God, or redeemed humanity, Christ's sufferings, death and resurrection mean more than the isolated experience of a righteous individual.*" (LaRondelle, p. 65) St. Paul makes in the same point in his comparison of Adam and Christ as the only two men whose actions have impacted all humanity. As the disobedience of first Adam brought sin and death upon mankind so the obedience of Christ, the second Adam, brought life and salvation to all believers. (Romans 5)

2. The Israel of God Defined By Faith Alone

Since Christ is the new Israel, all those who are incorporated into Him by faith also become the New Israel and are thus included among the descendants of Abraham. The Lord Jesus scorned the self-righteous pretensions of ethnic Israel. When they asserted that as the children of Abraham they did not need His offer of forgiveness and freedom in the gospel, this revealing interchange resulted:

"Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. As it is, you are determined to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only father we have is God Himself." (John 8:39-41)

Jesus proceeded to inform his defiant opponents that their true father was not Abraham but the devil. This could be seen in the fact that they had rejected Him.



“We Are The Children Of Abraham”

When the Roman centurion of Capernaum demonstrated his remarkable faith and humility, Jesus foretold the coming of the Gentiles to the feast of salvation with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob:

“I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith! I say to you that many will come from the east and the west and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 8:10-11)

This Biblical affirmation of faith as the constituting element of the new Israel and its concomitant rejection of an ethnic definition of Israel is completely unambiguous:

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:26-29)

“Therefore remember that you who are Gentiles by birth and called ‘uncircumcised’ by those who call themselves ‘the circumcision’ (that done in the body by the hands of men) - remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made the two one, and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing in His flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in Himself, one new man out of the two, thus making peace and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross.” (Galatians 2:11-16; cf. Ephesians 2:11-22)

“It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are Abraham’s descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, ‘it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.’ In other words, it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.” (Romans 9:6-8)

“Therefore the promise comes by faith so that it may be by grace and be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring - not only those who are of the law but those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written, ‘I have made you the father of many nations.’ He is our father in the sight of God in whom he believed.” (Romans 4:16-17)

Paul used his own personal experience as ***“a Hebrew of the Hebrews”*** to assure the Gentile Christians of Phillipi that faith in Christ is the only continuation of the true Israel of God - ***“it is we who are the circumcision:”***

“For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus and who put no confidence in the flesh - though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, in regard to the Law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.” (Philippians 3:3-8)

Paul went on to declare that the inclusion of the Gentiles had always been God’s purpose and had been clearly foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament:

“What if He did this to make the riches of His glory known to the objects of His mercy, whom He prepared in advance for glory - even us, whom He also called not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? As He says in Hosea: ‘I will call them ‘My people’ who are not My people; and I will call her ‘My Loved One’ who is not My loved one.’ And, ‘It will happen that in the very place that it was said to them, ‘You are not My people, ‘ they



“The Pharisees Attack Jesus” by Ernst Zimmermann



“The Destruction of Sodom and Gommorah” by Karl Bruliov

will be called sons of the living God.’ Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: ‘Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. For the Lord will carry out His sentence on earth with speed and finality.’ It is just as Isaiah said previously: ‘Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom; we would have been like Gomorrah.’” (Romans 9:23-29; cf. John 12:37-41)

The Letter to the Ephesians was addressed to an exclusively Gentile congregation (Cf. Ephesians 2:11,17; 4:17). Accordingly, the inclusion of Gentiles as citizens of the new Israel is a major theme of the epistle. The salvation of the Gentiles was not an afterthought or a fallback plan, as Dispensationalists would have us believe. Instead it was the predestined purpose of God before creation began (Ephesians 1:4-5,11) to unite all believers, Jew and Gentile alike, in Christ.

“For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world...now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ...Consequently you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household...And in Him you are built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.” (Ephesians 1:4; 2:13,16,22)

The same absolutely unambiguous definition of *“the Israel of God”* as all believers irrespective of ethnic origin - both Jews and Gentiles - is included in the conclusion of the apostle’s letter to the Christian congregation in Galatia. Paul sternly rejected the efforts of Judaizers who sought to force Gentile Christians to conform to the rites and practices of Judaism - *“Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, what counts is new creation.”* He then defined the essence of Christianity and identified those who held to *“the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”* as *“the Israel of God.”*

“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world... Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.” (Galatians 6:14-16)

Old Testament Prophecy of Israel

Exodus 19:5-6, Isaiah 43:20

Joel 2:28-32

Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 55:3; Psalm 16:10;
Habbakuk 1:5; Isaiah 49:6

Leviticus 26:11-2; Ezekiel 37:21-28

Deuteronomy 30:12-14

Deuteronomy 31:6

Deuteronomy 32:36-38; Psalm 135:8-
14

Joel 2:32

Isaiah 28:11-12; 45:14; Zechariah
8:23 Psalm 22:22-24

Psalm 44:22

Isaiah 28:14-16

Isaiah 49:8

Isaiah 52:7

Isaiah 54:1

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hosea 1:10-11; 2:21-23

Hosea 13:9-16

New Testament Application to the Church

1 Peter 2:9

Acts 2:14-21

Acts 13:32-48

2 Corinthians 6:14-16

Romans 10:6-10

Hebrews 13:5

Hebrews 10:28-31

Hebrews 2:9-15

Romans 8:36

Romans 10:9-13; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1
Peter 2:4-8

2 Corinthians 6:1-2

Romans 10:15

Galatians 4:26-28

Hebrews 8:6-13

Romans 9:22-26; 1 Peter 2:9-10

1 Corinthians 15:53-55

Romans 10:9-13

1 Corinthians 14:21-25; Matthew

Hans La Rondelle did not exaggerate in the least when he described this text as the “*sedes doctrinae*” (literally - “*the seat of the doctrine*” that is, the clear Biblical statement which becomes the foundation for a particular teaching) for the identification of the Christian Church the true Israel:

*“Paul’s benediction in Galatians 6:16 becomes, then, the chief witness in the New Testament in declaring that the universal Church of Christ is **the** Israel of God, **the** seed of Abraham, **the** heir to Israel’s covenant promise.”* (LaRondelle, pp., 110-111)

This truth is further demonstrated in the consistent apostolic practice of citing Old Testament prophecies which referred to Israel as having been fulfilled in the Christian Church. This pattern predominates throughout the preaching of the apostles as reported in the Book of Acts. It is equally prevalent in all of the Epistles which they addressed to congregations which came to be established across the Gentile world. The chart on the preceding page lists a representative sampling of these citations.

Dispensationalists disparage the New Testament’s identification of the Christian Church as the Israel of God as “*Replacement Theology*.” But actually, Christians - Jewish and Gentile alike- are not the replacement of Israel in the inspired writings of the apostles. Rather, they are the fulfillment or completion of the faithful remnant of believers which had always existed within ethnic Israel.



“Israel Entering The Promised Land Led Across the Jordan River By The Ark of the Covenant’ - James Tissot

3. The Promised Land in Scripture - A Preview of Heaven Not a National Heritage

Jewish and/or Christian Zionism’s insistence that those who consider themselves to be the racial descendants of Abraham have a unconditional divine right to the land of Palestine in perpetuity is based upon a similar distortion of the Biblical text. The land did not belong to Israel in any absolute or irrevocable sense. It belonged to God. The Psalmist declared: **“Thus He brought them to His holy land, to the hill country His right hand had taken. He drove out nations before them and allotted their lands to them as an inheritance.”** (Psalm 78:54-55) Scripture specifically rejected the Christian Zionist’s “*title-deed*” concept when God spoke through Moses to remind Israel that this land actually belonged to Him, not to them, and that they were really nothing more than “*My tenants*” within the land: **“The land must not be**

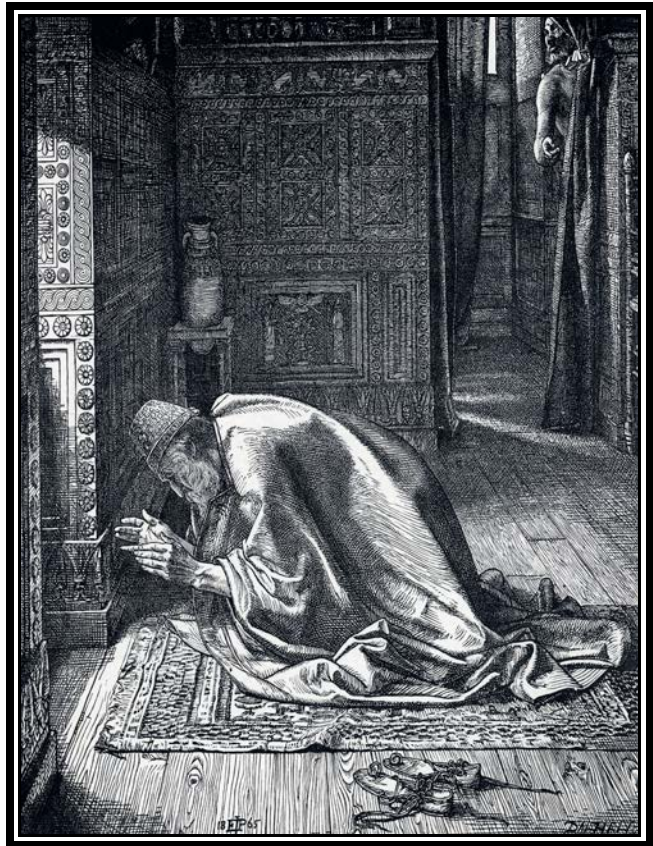
sold permanently because the land is Mine and you are but aliens and My tenants.” (Leviticus 25:23)

Israel’s existence as the covenant people and their continued presence in the land of promise was always dependant upon the presence of God in their midst: ***“I will put My dwelling place among you and I will not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be My people.”*** (Leviticus 26:11) But the presence of God in the midst of His people was conditional upon faithful obedience and humble repentance for sin. God warned the people that if they stubbornly persisted in disobedience and idolatry then He would ultimately banish them from the land and scatter them among the nations: ***“I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out My sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste and your cities will lie in ruins.”*** (Leviticus 26:33)

When that judgement finally came to pass after centuries of defiance and disobedience God reminded His apostate people of His ownership of the land to which He had brought them - ***“the Lord’s land.”*** Through the prophet Hosea He described the Assyrian conquest of the northern Kingdom of Israel as His reversal of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage: ***“For you have been unfaithful to your God...They will not remain in the Lord’s land; Ephraim will return to Egypt and eat unclean food in Assyria.”*** (Hosea 9:3) When the same judgement fell upon the southern Kingdom of Judah shortly thereafter, God lamented the ingratitude of His people in similar language - ***“My land” “My inheritance”:*** ***“I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce, but you came and defiled My land and made My inheritance detestable.”*** (Jeremiah 2:7) God’s poignant words in the Book of Jeremiah recall the brokenhearted lament of a parent who has been betrayed by the children upon whom he has lavished his love:

“How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation. I thought you would call Me ‘Father’. But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to Me, O House of Israel,’ declares the Lord.” (Jeremiah 3:19-20; cf. Psalm 105:43-45)

The sad reality is that Israel’s presence in the Promised Land was an uninterrupted series of spiritual failures and political disasters for the chosen people. Their pattern of disobedience and sin was already evident in the incomplete conquest of Canaan in the days of Joshua which permitted the persistent presence of idolatry to present its most often irresistible allure throughout and around the country. The same pattern continued in the spiritual roller coaster of the days of the judges and on into the worldly adaptation of the monarchy. The great majority of Israelites consistently failed to trust in God and obey His Word. They conformed to the sinful and idolatrous ways of the world rather than remaining faithful to God. After the tumultuous reigns of only three kings, the nation was divided on the basis of tribal rivalries. Finally, through Assyrian and Babylonian conquests, the Israelites were permanently deprived on their independence and possession of the land. The prophet Daniel, living in exile in Babylon after the downfall and destruction of Jerusalem,



“The Prayer of Daniel” by E.J. Poynter



eloquently acknowledged the righteous appropriateness of God’s judgement upon His rebellious people:

“O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with all who love Him and obey His commands, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled, we have turned away from Your commands and laws. We have not listened to Your servants, the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. Lord, You are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame - the men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where You have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to You. O Lord, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against Him, we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws He gave us through His servants the prophets. All Israel has transgressed Your law and turned away, refusing to obey You. Therefore, the curses and sworn judgements written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against You. You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster.” (Daniel 9:4-12)

In the context of our study of the nature of Israelite nation’s claim to the Promised Land, Daniel’s prayer is particularly noteworthy for a number of reasons. First of all, the prophet frankly acknowledged the persistent sinfulness of the nation in contrast to the patient longsuffering of God in the face of His people’s disobedience. Furthermore, Daniel indicated that the people had been repeatedly forewarned of God’s judgements in the writings of the prophets, beginning with Moses himself. Finally, the prophet specifically identified the righteous judgement of God as exile and the loss of the Promised Land - **“You have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to You.”** The prophet’s remarkable prayer offers a summary of the relationship between the Israelite nation and the Promised Land which is both concise and precise.

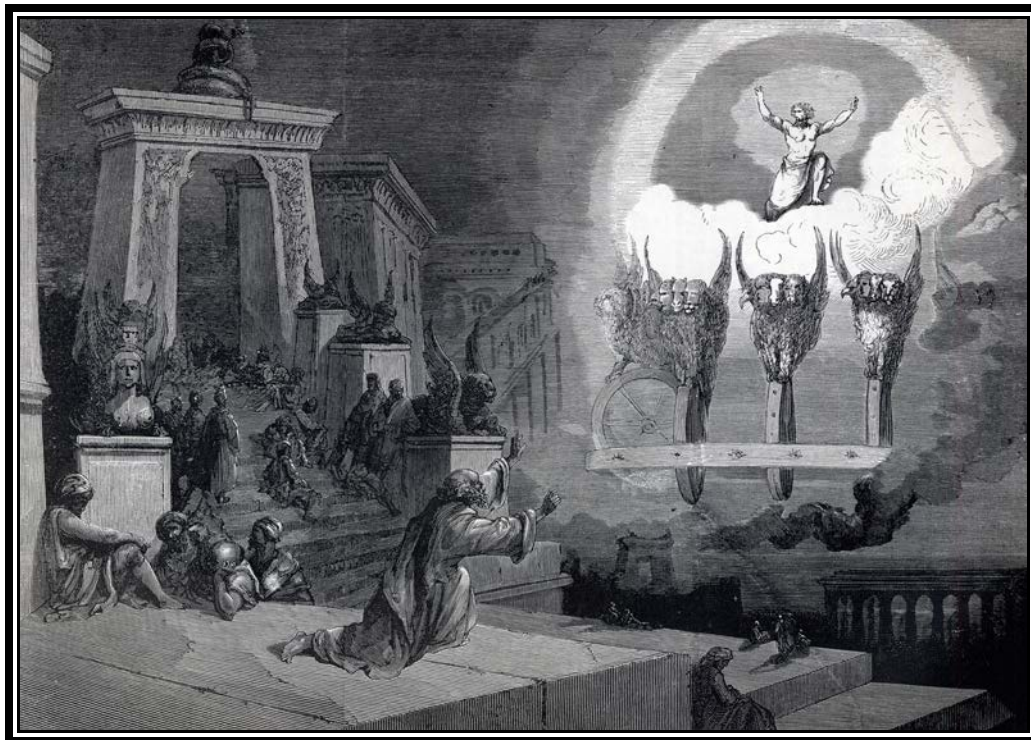
“When Israel became persistently unfaithful to its covenant God, the Lord therefore took His inheritance back from Israel. That means, in the Old Testament Israel’s dispersion among the Gentiles and the destruction of the land. With the rejection of Israel as the faithless nation, God thus also rejected its land as no longer under His blessing.” (La Rondelle, p. 137)

As previously noted, the identity of the Israelites as God’s covenant people and the sanctity of their land was always derived from the presence of God among them. The fundamental shift in the relationship between God and the Israelite nation and the status of Israel in the Promised Land can be seen in the presence and ultimate departure of the *“shekinah.”* During the period of the theocracy - from the Exodus to the Babylonian Captivity - when God ruled His people through divinely appointed prophet/judges and anointed kings, the presence of the Lord in the midst of His chosen nation was graphically demonstrated

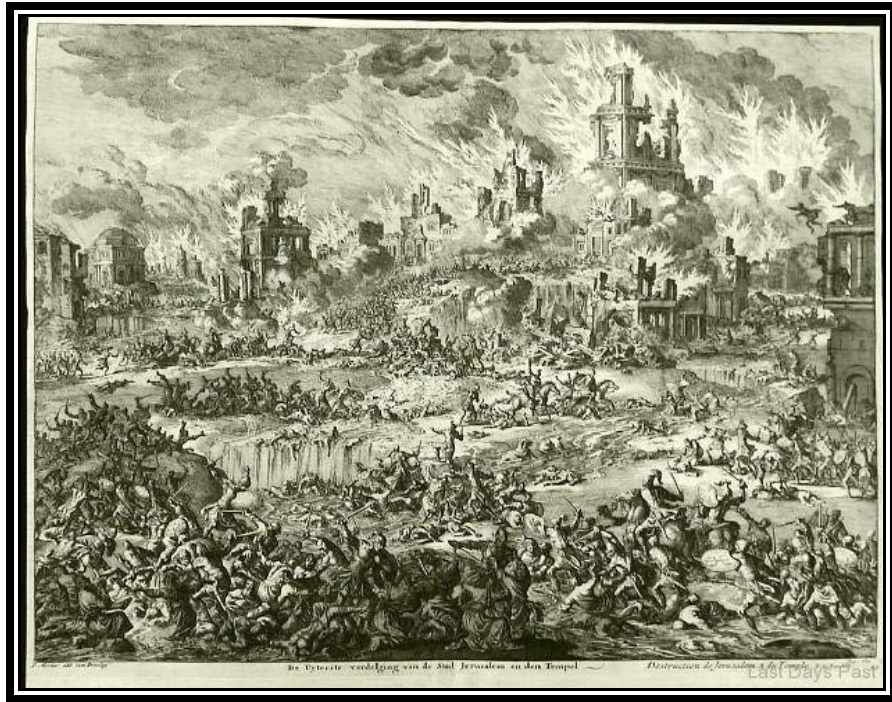
by the presence of the glory cloud which came to be known as the “*shekinah*.” The term is derived from a Hebrew word which means “*to be present*” or “*to dwell*.” The “*shekinah*” was first manifested in the pillar of cloud/fire which led Israel out of Egypt and into the wilderness. After the construction of the tabernacle, it rested over the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. ***“Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.”*** (Exodus 40:34-35) When Israel enter the Promised Land they followed the sacred Ark and the “*shekinah*” through the parted waters of the Jordan River. The presence of the “*shekinah*” was also dramatically evident in the Temple of Solomon: ***“When the priests withdrew from the holy place, the cloud filled the Temple of the Lord; and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled His temple.”*** (1 Kings 8:11) This magnificent manifestation of the presence of God among His people ceased with the destruction of the Temple of Solomon by the Babylonians and the disappearance of the Ark of the Covenant. The Prophet Ezekiel had been given a vision of the departure of the “*shekinah*” from the temple and from the land as a consequence of the people’s idolatry and disobedience.

“Then the glory of the Lord departed from over the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim. And while I watched, the cherubim spread their wings and rose from the ground, and as they went, the wheels went with them. They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the Lord’s house and the glory of the God of Israel was above them...Then the cherubim with the wheels beside them, spread their wings, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. The glory of the Lord went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it.” (Ezekiel 10:18-19; 11:22-23)

The “*shekinah*” was not present in the temples of Ezra or Herod nor was the Ark of the Covenant ever recovered. The permanent absence of the “*shekinah*” indicated God’s judgement upon apostate Israel. While the temple building was restored, the visible presence of God was never experience there again. The reconstructed temple in Jerusalem was permanently destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. during a disastrous



“Ezekiel’s Vision of the Glory of the Lord Within the Temple”
19th Century Bible Illustration



“The Roman Destruction of Jerusalem And The Temple”

uprising against Roman authority. The defeat of the Jews in this conflict brought an end to a significant Jewish presence in Palestine.

In the New Testament St. John uses the language of the *“shekinah”* to describe the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the truth that in the person of Christ the dwelling of God in the midst of His people had been restored: ***“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*** (John 1:14) The introduction to the Book of Hebrews used the same terminology while alluding to the ceremonies and services of the temple in asserting the deity of Christ:

“The Son is the radiance of the Father’s glory, and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for all things, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven.” (Hebrews 1:3-4)

The prophet Zechariah had foretold the return of the *“shekinah”* at a time when God would dwell again in the midst of His people through the coming of the Messiah. God would live among His people, in a manner more perfect and complete that could ever before have been the case, the prophet promised, and all the nations shall be gathered together:

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of you says the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be My people, and I will dwell in the midst of you, and you shall know that the Lord of Hosts has sent Me to you.” (Zechariah 2;10-11)

The Lord promised to dwell among His people in a manner only foreshadowed by the *“shekinah.”* The final vision of the Book of Revelation applies this grand prophecy to the Christ and ultimately to the New Jerusalem itself where the saints will dwell eternally in the glorious presence of Jesus:

“I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people and God Himself will be with them and be their God.’” (Revelation 21:2-3)

Because of the wondrous enhancement of the “*shekinah*” in the New Jerusalem, all who dwell there - “*those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life*” - will require neither a temple nor any other source of light. John explained in language clearly designed as an allusion to the “*shekinah*” -

“I did not see a temple in the city for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light.” (Revelation 21:22-24)

The gracious manifestation of God’s presence in the midst of His people through the “*shekinah*” and its subsequent withdrawal as His judgement upon the nation’s apostasy is a most significant indication of the nature of the covenant and of Israel’s claim upon the land of promise. The New Testament’s identification of Christ’s incarnation as the fulfillment of the “*shekinah*” is a critically important example of the Biblical insight that all of the promises, blessings, and institutions of the old covenant point toward the Messiah and find their genuine fulfillment in Him.

This fundamental truth is particularly evident and important in the case of the Promised Land. God’s gift of the land to Israel was never an end in itself, a mere piece of earthly real estate which was to become the permanent possession of a particular people. Israel was blessed with the land of promise to enable them to be a blessing as the custodians of the Messianic promise for humanity. At the same time, the Holy Land, hallowed by the presence of God who dwelt among His people there, became a prototype of the Messianic promise that God would come to dwell among His people in the person of His Son. By His life, death and resurrection, God’s Son would accomplish the salvation which would enable the Israel of God, believers from throughout history, out of every nation, to dwell in God’s immediate presence forever in the perfection of heaven. To reduce this grand design for the eternal salvation of humanity to a real estate transaction which draws the geographical boundaries for one national/political entity borders on blasphemy as it trivializes that which the Almighty Creator has accomplished for the redemption of His entire creation.

The Bible teaches that the Land of Canaan which God graciously bestowed upon the Israelites was an imperfect image of the new heavens and earth where all the people of God will dwell with their Creator and Redeemer throughout eternity. This is clear both in the prophecies of Old Testament themselves and in the use and application of those prophecies by the inspired apostles of the New Testament.

On the eve of the kingdom of Judah’s final destruction, Jeremiah not only foretold the impending judgement of God upon His people’s unfaithfulness and idolatry but also promised the establishment of a new covenant with a new Israel that would be reconstituted and restored in a manner that would reach far beyond a particular land or nation to include all humanity and the entire world. To enable the Jews to repent of the self-righteous pride which had perverted their role in the salvation of mankind into a national cult and return to Him in humble repentance, the Lord prefaced His promise of a new covenant with a dismal review of Israel’s past. He recounted the chosen people’s abject failure to remain faithful throughout their history, and the manner in which they had corrupted the holy city of Jerusalem into a den of the most vile idolatry and moral depravity:

“The people of Israel and Judah have done nothing but evil in My sight from their youth;

indeed, the people of Israel have done nothing but provoke Me with what their hands have made, declares the Lord. From the day it was built until now, this city has so aroused My anger and wrath that I must remove it from My sight. The people of Israel and Judah have provoked Me by all the evil they have done - they, their kings and officials, their priests and prophets, the men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem. They turned their backs to Me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen nor respond to discipline. They set up their abominable idols in the house that bears My Name and defiled it. They built high places for Baal in the valley of Ben Hinnon to sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molech, though I never commanded, nor did it enter My mind, that they should do such a detestable thing and so make Judah sin.”
(Jeremiah 32:30-35)



“The Children Of Israel Worshiping Baal and Molech in the Valley of Hinnon Below the Temple”

But God would not allow Israel’s failure to frustrate His plan for the salvation of mankind. Self-righteousness and national pride had caused the downfall of both Israel and Judah. The people had been exiled throughout the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, scattered and dispersed in every direction. Nonetheless, the Lord promised that He would act through the Messianic King whom He would raise up from the line of David to restore the Israel of God to a perfected Promised Land:

“In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; He will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which He will be called; the Lord our righteousness.” (Jeremiah 33:15-16)

In his fearless sermon to the men of Jerusalem on Pentecost Peter identified Christ as the promised Descendant of David who would reign upon his royal throne not over a political kingdom in a particular place, but over a heavenly kingdom of believers from every nation on the face of the earth:

“Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the Patriarch David died and was buried and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that He would place one of his descendants on his throne... Therefore, let all Israel

be assured of this; God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ...The promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.
(Acts 2:29-30,36,39)

The prophets repeatedly promised the return of God's people from exile to the promised land. But this will not be the restoration of a political entity in a particular physical location. Hans LaRondelle is correct when he categorically declares: *"A secular political reconstitution of Israel as a nation is nowhere envisioned in Old Testament prophecy."* (LaRondelle, p. 137)



"Moses and Aaron Before the Ark" by J. James Tissot

One of the most eloquent examples of God's promise of the restoration of His people to the Promised Land is given in the opening segment of the Book of Jeremiah. It is unmistakably evident in this text that humble repentant faith, not race or national identity, is the constituting component of the Israel of God. The Lord foretells that He will choose His own from towns and clans, not because of who they are or where they live, but because they have repented and returned to Him. Although the terminology and place names of the ancient land of Israel are used throughout this segment, it is also clear that this true Promised Land will be holy, not because of its location or its boundaries, but because the Lord Himself will dwell there. The sacred ark of the covenant, once so centrally important as the physical assurance of God's presence among His people in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle and the Temple will become obsolete and forgotten because it will have been replaced by the infinitely superior personal presence of God among His people in the person of the Messiah:

"Return faithless people," declares the Lord, "for I am your husband. I will choose you - one from a town and two from a clan - and bring you to Zion. Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart who will lead you with knowledge and understanding. In those days, when your number have increased greatly," declares the Lord, "men will no longer say, 'the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord.' It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made. At that time they will call Jerusalem the Throne of the Lord and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor

the name of the Lord. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their hearts. In those days, the house of Judah will join the house of Israel and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance.” (Jeremiah 3:14-18)

All of this will only be possible because of that which God Himself will accomplish by His wondrous grace through the ministry of the promised Messiah. The nature of this transformation was signaled in Jeremiah’s promise of a **“new covenant”** which would complete the original covenant and achieve its purpose by forgiving the sins of mankind and removing sin’s curse upon humanity:

“The time is coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke My covenant though I was a husband to them,’ declares the Lord. ‘This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’ declares the Lord. ‘I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be My people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know Me, from the least to the greatest,’ declares the Lord. For I will forgive their wickedness and I will remember their sins no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34)



“Aaron in the Vestments of the High Priest”

The Letter to the Hebrews directly applied this promise to the Christian Church and the heavenly ministry of Jesus Christ as our great High Priest at the right hand of God in heaven:

“The point of what we are saying is this: we do have such a high priest who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man...But the ministry of Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which He is the Mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises. For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people and said: (Jeremiah 31:31-34 is quoted) By calling this covenant ‘new’ He has made this one obsolete and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.” (Hebrews 8:1-2,6-13)

In the face of these wonders, the prospect of national restoration in a specific geographical location pales into justly deserved insignificance. Particular places or people have never been the point. The Epistle to the Hebrews argues that this cosmic perspective - that is God’s plan for the eternal restoration of the entire universe as the perfect dwelling place for redeemed humanity - is not an alteration or an afterthought but has been the heart and core of the true believer’s faith since the days of Abraham. It had been the Creator’s intent from the beginning. Neither the people nor the land of Israel had ever been the basic focal point of the Lord’s universal purpose.

“By faith, Abraham when called to go to a place that he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God...All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had the opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better county, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.” (Hebrews 11:8-10; 13-16)



***“John’s Vision of the New Jerusalem”
by Rudolf Schäfer***

The apostle concluded his divinely inspired definition of the true Promised Land by using the ***“new covenant”*** language of Jeremiah and identifying Mount Zion, the rugged ridge upon which the holy temple once stood, and the city of Jerusalem, the ancient capital of the Israelite kingdom, as prototypes of the eternal dwelling place of the people of God;

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:22-24)

St. Paul interpreted the land which God promised to Abraham and his seed in the same way as he assured the believers in Rome - Jew and Gentile alike - that Abraham ***“is the father of us all”*** and that the land which God promised our father Abraham was not merely an insignificant piece of Palestinian real estate but ***“the world.”***

“It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith... Therefore the promise comes by faith so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring - not only those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: ‘I have made you a father of many nations.’ He is our father in the sight of God in whom he believed.” (Romans 4:13-17)

The prophets’ use of the language of Canaan as an image of the heavenly dwelling place of the saints is

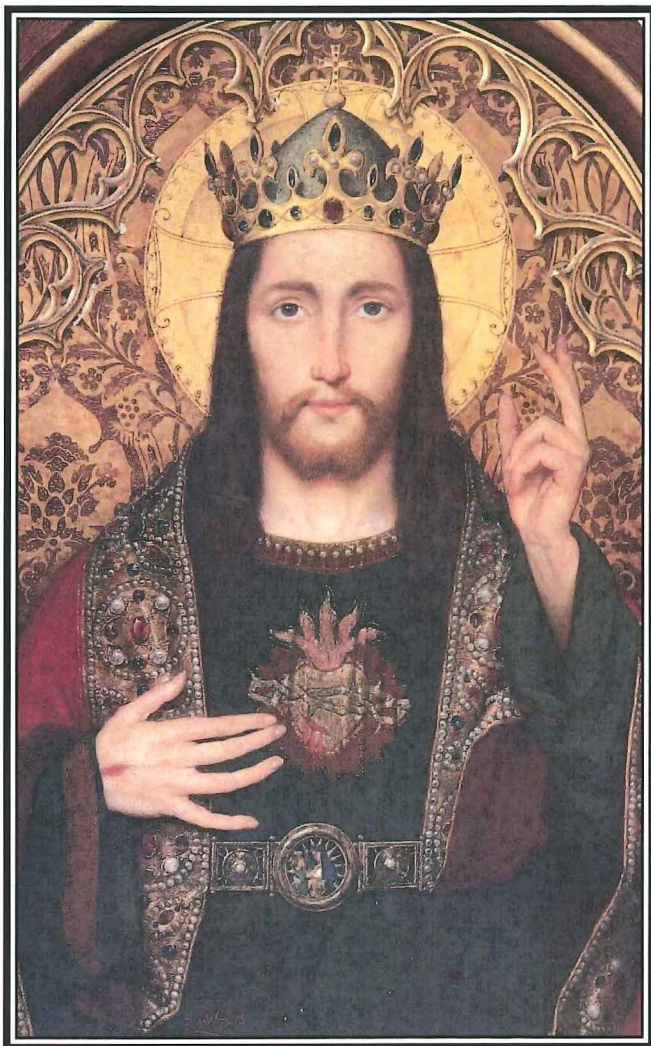
consistent. So, for example, God declared through Isaiah:

“Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in My people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.” (Isaiah 65:17-19; cf. 24:21-23)

St. John the Revelator cites this beautiful text as he described the perfectly restored universe in which the saints of God will dwell throughout eternity:

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.” (Revelation 21:1-2)

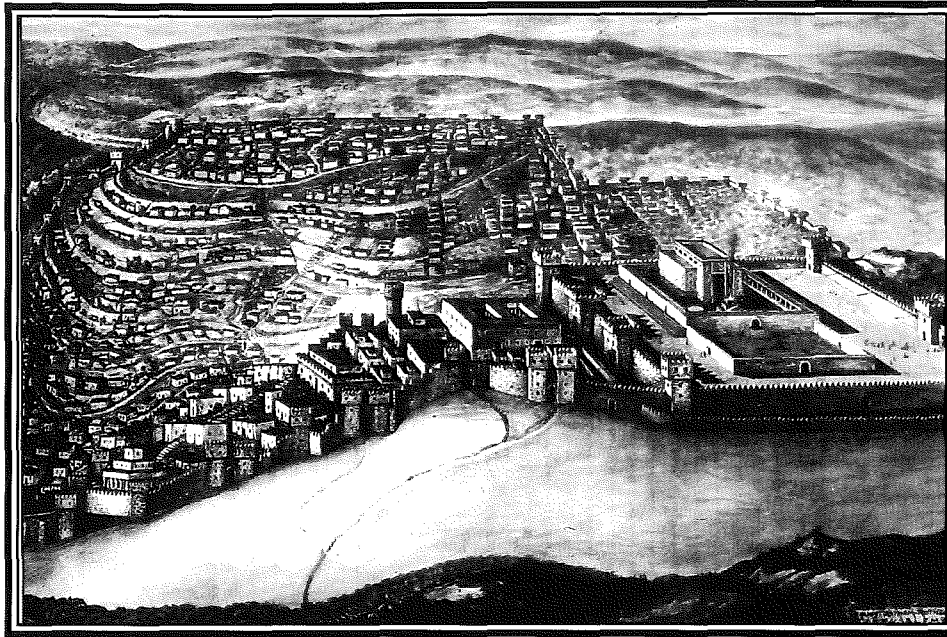
Psalm 102 is one of the most poignant restoration texts in the Old Testament. It speaks of the Jewish people’s love for the very stones from which the city of Jerusalem had been built and the dust of her streets. The Psalmist foretold the appointed time when the Lord ***“will rebuild Zion and appear in His glory.”***



“Christ Our Great High Priest”

“But You, O Lord, sit enthroned forever; Your renown endures through all generations. You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come. For her stones are dear to Your servants; her very dust moves them to pity. The nations will fear the Name of the Lord, all the kings of the earth will revere Your glory. For the Lord will rebuild Zion and appear in His glory...So the Name of the Lord will be declared in Zion and His praise in Jerusalem, when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the Lord.” (Psalm 102:12-16,21-22)

On the face of it, this text - with its stones and dust - would appear to be an unequivocally direct reference to the restoration of the earthly city of Jerusalem and its temple upon Mount Zion. Yet, the inspired author of the New Testament’s epistle to the Hebrews specifically asserts that Psalm 102 is a Messianic psalm which describes the nature of the promised Messiah and His ministry of salvation. (Cf. Hebrews 1:1-14) Jesus used the same language to introduce His ministry: ***“The time has come,” He said, “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.”*** (Mark 1:15) Christ had indeed come to fulfill all of the prophetic promises of restoration for Israel, Jerusalem, and Zion. But that restoration would come in a manner that would confound all



“The Temple of Solomon in Ancient Jerusalem

human expectation and pride. The creation of the new **“Israel of God”** was to be brought about not by military conquest or the reconstruction of an earthly city but by the gospel entrusted to the twelve apostles - a number specifically chosen to reflect the twelve tribes of Israel. Citizenship in the **“Kingdom of God”** would not be a matter of political affiliation or ethnic descent but of faith. The new Jerusalem would not be an earthly location but the heavenly dwelling place of God:

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God... to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel” (Hebrews 12:22-24)

The same understanding of the Temple upon Mount Zion in Jerusalem as a foreshadowing of God dwelling in the midst of His people in the person of His Son is reflected in the New Testament’s use of the prophecy of Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 28:16. In Psalm 118 the victorious king is leading a procession through the gates of the Temple into the sanctuary. As he does so, he rejoices: ***“The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.”*** The prophet Isaiah denounced the corruption and pride of the leaders of Jerusalem who rested secure behind the high walls of their citadel. They scorned God’s Word and trusted in their own political schemes and military alliances. Isaiah also spoke of a ***“precious cornerstone”*** as he warned of the destruction of Jerusalem and her holy sanctuary and promised that a new temple would rise on the crest of Zion: ***“So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.’”*** Jesus was confronted by ***“the chief priests and the elders of the people”*** (Matthew 21:23) as He and His disciples walked through the magnificent courts of Herod’s temple early on the week of His passion. When the Jewish leaders challenged His authority to teach and preach, Jesus replied in the words of Psalm 118:

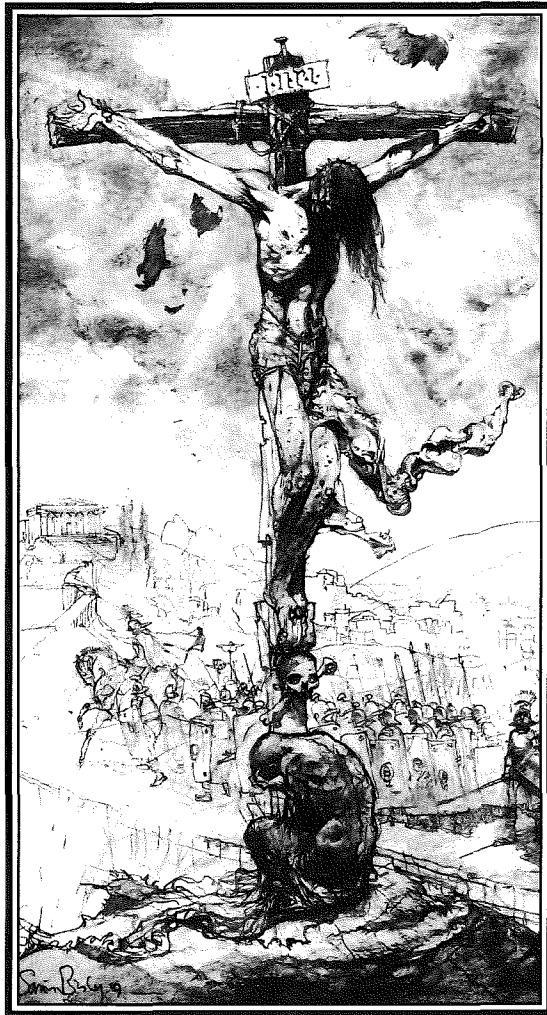
“Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone, the Lord has done this and marvelous it is in our eyes.’ Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce

its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it fall will be crushed.” (Matthew 21:42-44; cf. Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17)

Peter cited this sake text in reference to Jesus in his defense before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:11). St. Paul also used this text to assure the Christians in Ephesus that as God once dwelt within the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem’s Temple so He now dwelt among them by faith in Christ: **“In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.”** (Ephesians 2:21-22) The most comprehensive affirmation of the Jerusalem Temple as a prophetic promise of God’s presence among His own in Christ comes in 1 Peter 2. The apostle depicts the Temple and all of its rituals and services as having been fulfilled

in Christ and His people: **“As you come to Him, the living Stone - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him - you also, like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”** (1 Peter 2:4-10) Peter then cites Isaiah 28:16, Psalm 118:22 , and Isaiah 8:14 from the Old Testament to document his conclusion. German theologian Leonhardt Goppelt offers this cogent summary of text’s perspective on the Jerusalem Temple and its services:

“What in the OT was shadowy and inadequate and was the concern of a select few, belongs in the NT to the whole people of God, who are chosen from both Jews and Greeks. In Christ, they can all approach God as priests and bring true sacrifices to Him...In the Church’s relationship to God and in its worship, everything is fulfilled that was ever said about the temple, the thank offerings and the priesthood - and also what has been said about the mission and dignity of Israel. Consequently these things have become proto-types.” (Goppelt, p. 154)



“Jesus of Nazareth - King of the Jews”
by Simon Bishley

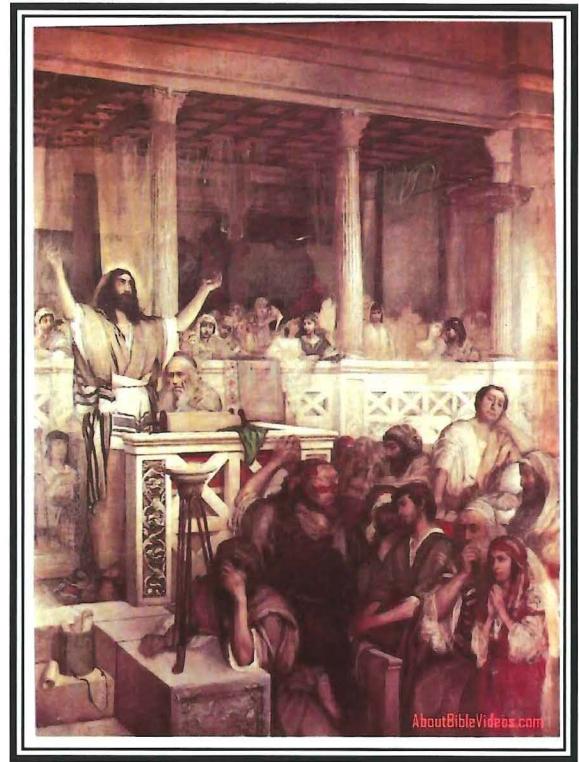
In all of these passages, and hosts of others like them, the land of Israel, the city of Jerusalem and the temple upon Mount Zion come to represent the new heavens and earth where God will dwell among His own forever. They are prototypes and promises of that which God has had in mind since the very beginning. Neither Christ nor His apostles demonstrated the least bit of interest in earthly kingdoms or particular places in this world. The Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah precisely because He refused to bow to their

demands for an earthly king who would restore worldly glory and power to the Israelite nation. In view of the salvation which God actually had prepared for His people every earthly realm pales into absolute insignificance. It is ironically appropriate that Caiaphas and the Jewish political/religious establishment used their own national distortion of the title King of the Jews to bring about Christ’s condemnation by the Roman procurator. When a bewildered Pontius Pilate inquired as to whether Jesus was the king of the Jews, the Lord’s response was direct and forthright: **“Jesus said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews. But now My kingdom is from another place.’”**

(John 18:36) These words, in and of themselves, should settle the debate over end times fantasies of glorious worldly realms. But sadly, given the remarkable human propensity to overlook the plain teaching of God's Word in favor of personal inclination, they have not. Judaism and much of Protestant Christianity remains obsessed with the restoration of an earthly Israelite state. At worst this Zionist obsession is a damnable replacement for the Gospel of Salvation. At best it is a dangerous distraction from it.

4. Conclusion

The blood descendants of Abraham were never given their own plan of salvation based upon national descent. They were given the honor of playing a unique role in the salvation of humankind. Tragically, that unique honor mutated into a curse as the Jews came to view their calling as an entitlement based upon their own moral superiority. The authentic grace religion of the Old Testament was designed by God to demonstrate the message of Law and Gospel and prefigure the coming of the Messiah who would offer His own life upon the cross as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. All of this was gradually cast aside in favor of a false religion of works through which the righteous demonstrated their superiority as God's chosen people by their meticulous legalistic observance of the Torah. In consequence, their view of the promised Messiah changed from the Savior from sin foretold by the prophets, to a national hero who would reward Israel for its faithfulness with worldly power, wealth and glory. Hence, when Messiah Jesus came He was scorned and rejected by the chosen people and in the centuries which have passed since that time the Jews have remained the most adamant and ardent opponents of the Gospel of Christ as they continue to await their worldly deliverer. The addition of Zionism as a major component of Jewish identity and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1947 have further complicated the nature of Judaism and added dangerous political and military dimensions to the equation. The decision by the victorious Western powers, haunted by the horror of the Nazi holocaust, to carve out a Jewish state in the midst of the Arab world, dramatically increased the traditional hostility between Jews and Arabs. Israel's remarkable success in defending itself against Arab attacks in a series of wars has only intensified that animosity.



“Jesus Preaching In A Synagogue”

In a sadly similar fashion Islam has been obsessed with the vindication of the message of Mohammad by military conquest thru jihad and worldly power and wealth since its violent inception. The world conquests of early Islam proved the power of Allah and the truth of his holy prophet. The resurgence of militant Islam in the 20th century, fueled by the collapse of Western colonial empires and funded by the endless flow of petro-dollars has provided Islam with renewed confidence wealth and power. As noted above, the establishment of the state of Israel in the midst of the Arab world and the series of defeats which they have suffered at the hands of Israeli Defense Forces has radically intensified traditional Arab anti-Semitism. Having failed so dismally in conventional warfare against Israel, Islam has resorted devastating terrorism as the contemporary form of jihad. Fanatical warriors of Allah bring death and destruction to those whom they perceive to be his enemies around the world.

The prominence of Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism in American Protestantism has only served

to make an already explosive situation all the more dangerous. This faulty theology in effect affirms the error of Judaism by its fervent assertion that God's promises of an earthly kingdom to Israel remain unfulfilled and that the Jews have an eternal divine right to the land of Palestine. Such nonsense directly contradicts Scripture and the Gospel of salvation. The only way for anyone to be saved is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. ***"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."*** (John 14:6) The land of Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple Mount never possessed an inherent sanctity of



"The Interior Of The Dome Of The Rock Upon The Temple Mount"

their own. They were hallowed for a time only because God graciously chose to dwell there in the midst of His people to enable them to carry out their role in His plan for the salvation of mankind. That presence finally ceased because of the chronic unfaithfulness and disobedience of the Israelite nation. In these last days God dwells among us in the person of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ who comes to us according to His promise in Word and sacrament - ***"For wherever two or three gather together in My Name, there am I with them."*** (Matthew 18:20) In the new heavens and earth God will restore the perfection of His original creation. Because of the salvation which He has accomplished for us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, He will dwell among us forever. ***"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men and He will live with them. They will be His people and God Himself will live with them and be their God.'" (Revelation 21:1,3)*** All of this was imperfectly prefigured by God's presence in the midst of sinful Israel in the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem in days of old. None of the blessings and gifts which God bestowed upon Israel were ends in themselves. They all pointed forward to and were fulfilled in the coming of Christ: ***"Theirs is the adoption as sons; the covenants, the divine glory, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all."*** (Romans 9:4-5)

Accordingly, the modern secular state of Israel holds no unique significance for the Biblical Christian. It is no different than any other nation. Its viability or its value should be determined by the same standards which are applied to other countries. The ongoing crisis in the Middle East has been infinitely complicated by the intrusion of misguided religious convictions into political matters by both sides. America's policy toward the state of Israel should be determined by America's national interests and America's values not

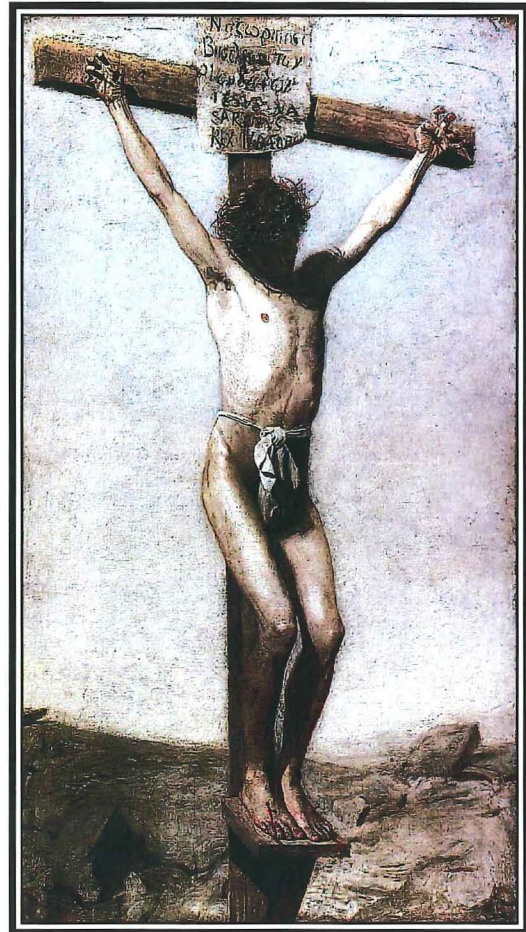
erroneous eschatological fantasies. Grace Halsell, author of *Prophecy and Politics - Militant Evangelicals on the Road to Nuclear War*, has correctly observed:

“Dispensationalist preachers are apt to give fanatical backing to each and every military and expansionist move directed against the Arabs by Israeli authorities, and they inculcate in those under their influence a conviction that, come what may, the State of Israel must be defended to the last drop of American blood.” (Halsell, p. 51)

Political and military concerns notwithstanding, for Christians the most basic issue at play here is a fundamental distortion of the church’s mission . The consequence of this distortion is that the mission of salvation is jeopardized and ultimately contradicted by Dispensationalist Christianity’s dangerous dabbling in the volatile politics of Israel and the Middle East. Dr. John Stephenson aptly summarized Scripture’s view in this way:

“Against the Dispensationalist cult of the present-day State of Israel we must testify that the tragic wrangling between Jew and Arab over possession of the land of Palestine is a political matter within the left hand of God, where neither side possesses a monopoly of right and where Christians should certainly not be found pouring oil on troubled waters to the benefit of either party in the dispute. Moreover, the heart of Christian concern in the tangled and, as it seems, humanly insoluble mess of the Middle East is not at all the victory of one side over the other, but the reconciliation of bitter foes through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died to make one new man out of not only Jew and Gentile, but also Arab and Jew in His Church. Mission, not misplaced revival of medieval crusades, is where the rubber of truly Christian eschatology hits the road.” (Stephenson, p. 88)

Our concern must finally be not who wins the war or who controls the land of Palestine or the city of Jerusalem or whether a third temple or the Dome of the Rock stands on Mount Zion. Our concern must be who is saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. A dire need for this salvation is the one thing that every Jew and Arab have in common.



“Christ Crucified” by John Eakins