

GOD IS A ZIONIST

A CASE FOR CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

The "Golden Gate" on the Eastern Wall of the Old City of Jerusalem as viewed from the "Mount of Olives."



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WAR IN GAZA

These are troublesome times. War has been raging between the modern state of Israel and the Islamic group that governs over the Gaza strip known as Hamas and other groups such as Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah since October. The war began when militants from Hamas crossed the border from Gaza mercilessly and indiscriminately attacking and killing over 1200 (exact count varies) Israeli and foreign civilians near Gaza in settlements, kibbutzim, and at an open-air concert, taking over 200 (again, exact count varies) people as hostages. The brutality of the attacks were documented with body cam and cell phone footage by the perpetrators themselves and others as hostages and victims were paraded through the streets of Gaza.¹ Even more shocking was the support for Hamas and celebrations of the attacks by people on American soil at cities and college campuses across the country and the world. In addition, as the war has progressed, the vows to eliminate the terrorist group Hamas by the Israeli government have been exaggerated by many to imply a call for “genocide” for the entire Palestinian population, while the chants of “from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” by pro-Palestinian protesters is defended as an understandable call for peaceful liberation, rather than the true genocidal intent originally behind the slogan.² Nothing in this article is intended to lessen the reality of the humanitarian plight of war, or the suffering of civilians on all sides.

I am writing this to give my perspective as a Bible believing Christian who cares about humanity in the light of God’s purposes and plan as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. As a student resident of Israel in 1986 in the Arava desert for 4 months, and as a volunteer teacher and graduate student in Jerusalem for over 2 years from 1988-1990, I bring an up close perspective along with Biblical insight. People that know I lived in Israel have been asking me my view on the situation and this is it. My original working title for this article was “Why I am a Christian Zionist”, but I changed the title because while there are a number of reasons someone may be a “Zionist”, in the end only one reason matters, “GOD is a Zionist”! If God is a Zionist, then it makes sense that I should be one too. I will use **bold** print for emphasis throughout this article.

WHAT IS ZIONISM?

If you were to read the articles footnoted in the previous section and listen to some modern Marxist jabber you could be left with the impression that Zionism is nothing but a political movement that started about a century and a half ago. Some will claim it was an attempt by colonial powers to exercise control over the middle east by planting a Jewish state in the historical homeland of the Jewish people while displacing thousands of Arab Palestinians. While there are elements of truth regarding the various circumstances in which the modern state of Israel came to be, the reality runs much deeper, as deep as the heart of God, the reality of His promises and covenants, and the deepest aspirations of the Jewish people.

Zionism **is** the name given to the political movement started by Theodore Herzl in 1897 to reestablish the homeland of the persecuted Jewish people in land of their roots. It was called Zionism after the word “Zion” which is another name for the city of Jerusalem.³ This is where the deep roots of truth are hidden. I believe a “Zionist” is anyone who believes

¹ These basic facts and a brief modern history are reviewed by Reuters at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/whats-israel-palestinian-conflict-about-how-did-it-start-2023-10-30/> (Reuters: Compiled by Reuters journalists; editing by Edmund Blair, Stephen Farrell, Mark Heinrich, 2023). Another brief synopsis of the current crises can be found on this BBC site, <https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-44124396> (BBC, 2023). The inhumane brutality of the attack is documented here: <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hamas-attack-military-war-a8f63b07641212f0de61861844e5e71e> (APNews: By JULIA FRANKEL, 2023)

² <https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/opinion/337807/the-real-meaning-of-from-the-river-to-the-sea/> (Tanny, 2021)

³ This History.com article gives a much deeper background of the conflict as well as links to sources for further study. <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/zionism> (Editors, 2018)

that God gave what is known variously as the Holy Land, Land of Promise, Land of Israel, or land of Palestine to Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob, and that it belongs to them. This is what makes God a Zionist.

GOD IS A ZIONIST

Zion was the name of the Jebusite fortress captured by David which became the capitol of his kingdom, aka Jerusalem. (2 Sam 5:6-17) It is written in Psalms 87:1-3

¹ *His foundation is in the holy mountains.*

² *The LORD loves the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.*

³ *Glorious things are spoken of you,
O city of God! ...*

This text reveals in three short verses why we can boldly say that God is a Zionist:

1. **God is a Zionist**, because “The LORD loves the gates of Zion...” It is where God chose to make His name abide. (Deut 12:10-12, 2 Sam 24:16-25, 1 Chr 21:18-22:1)
2. The land is the divine inheritance of the children of Jacob (Israel, the Jewish people) because God loves Zion/Jerusalem “...more than all the dwellings of Jacob”, clearly implying that Zion is part of the dwellings of Jacob. More on this to come, but **fundamentally God has given the land through promise to the descendants of Jacob, there is no other legitimate claim that any other people group can make.**
3. The intense antagonism over Jerusalem and the historical territory of the Holy Land is directly related to the fact that “the LORD loves the gates of Zion” and made land promises to the people of Israel. **It is the goal of God’s enemies to thwart his plans and purposes wherever possible and so until the age to come when God’s enemies have been completely vanquished, the land of God’s promise is under intense spiritual and political pressure.** Often people are unaware that they are being used as tools in a supernatural war.

KEEPER OF PROMISES AND COVENANTS

To really grasp the depth of the historical right and connection of the Jewish people to the land, we will go back to the calling of Abraham in Genesis.

¹ *Now the LORD had said to Abram:*

*“Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father’s house,
To a land that I will show you.*

² *I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you*

*And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.*

³ *I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;*

*And **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**” Genesis 12:1-3*

God led Abram, whose name was later changed by God to Abraham (Gen 17:5), to the land rightfully today called “the Land of Israel”. (Gen 13:14-17, 15:18-21) It was given to Abraham and his descendants by God via a covenant agreement.

¹⁸ On the same day **the LORD made a covenant** with Abram, saying:

“To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— ¹⁹
Genesis 15:18

While the modern State of Israel only occupies a fraction (about 1/3) of the land that was promised according to the above description, the present-day Israelis would have been content with what was allotted under the UN in 1948 if they had been left to it. But they were attacked by all the surrounding nations as soon as they became a sovereign state in 1948.

God, however, keeps his promises and covenants, because he said to Moses and the children of Israel after bringing them out of Egypt:

⁷ The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸ but because the LORD loves you, and because **He would keep the oath** which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

⁹ **“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy** for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; ¹⁰ and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. Deuteronomy 7:7-10

The covenant God made with Abraham was a promise with few conditions other than Abraham had to take Him at his word, which he did. It is recorded that “Abraham believed God, and he accounted it to him for righteousness” (Gen 15:6). The covenant God made with the nation of Israel coming out of Egypt built upon that promise putting stipulations on Israel as a people with consequences for disobedience. However, ultimately the stipulations and consequences placed upon the nation do not replace the original promise “to your descendants I have given this land”. It was revealed directly to Moses and to the people of Israel by God that after they had settled in the land of promise that they would forget God and that they would be judged via exile from the land but would later return.

*“When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger, ²⁶ I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed. ²⁷ And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. ²⁸ And there you will serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. ²⁹ **But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice ³¹ (for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.** Deuteronomy 4:25-31*

The predicted judgement and exile have happened multiple times. First to the northern tribes under the Assyrian empire (~750 BC exile, return, not so much) then to the southern tribe of Judah, Levitical priests, and remnants of other tribes under the Babylonian empire for 70 years (~598-538 BC). There was a return from the Babylonian exile under the Media/Persian empire; the temple and the city walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt in turbulent times (See Daniel 9:25). Jesus of Nazareth was born in the second temple period and warned of the destruction of the second temple. (Luke 19:41-44) From 66 – 136 AD, the Jews were in a desperate struggle to regain political freedom from the Romans in their historical land, called Judea and Samaria at the time. However, in 70 AD the Romans captured Jerusalem and destroyed the famous 2nd temple, the first having been destroyed by the Babylonians around 587 BC. In 136 AD, after the war lead by would be “messiah” Simon Bar Kokhba, the Romans completely leveled Jerusalem and renamed the territory “Syria Palaestina” (after Israel’s old enemy the Philistines) and a new city built on the ruins of Jerusalem called

“Aliea Capitolina” attempting to end the association of the land with the Jews.⁴ This is why the Land of Israel is still called by some Palestine, and from which the “Palestinians” get their name.

After the destruction in 136 AD, most (not all) of the Jewish population went into exile, known as the diaspora. For hundreds of years Jews celebrating the Passover in the lands where they were scattered ended the Passover celebration (Seder) with the proclamation “Next Year in Jerusalem”, revealing a deep ingrained longing to once again live in the land of their fathers. What I will call the Roman diaspora, officially ended (in my opinion) when Israel became a Jewish state in 1948 and proclaimed the right of return to Jews in the diaspora. Israel is now the second biggest melting pot next to the USA in terms of people (of Jewish ancestry) with different cultural heritages that have come from around the world to a new land and a new life. It was only natural that the movement which was to fulfill the deep cry “next year in Jerusalem”, would be called Zionism. **Even if some of those behind the movement were people of their times, atheists, socialists, Marxists, or Jews and Christians that had hopes centered in Biblical promises, the deep ties of the land to the descendants of Jacob cannot be blotted out, nor can the historic promises in scripture be lightly brushed aside.**⁵

The prophet Jeremiah predicted the Babylonian exile and return (Jer 24-25), but the following passage I am convinced refers to the Roman exile which was brought about due to judgement against sinful shepherds (teachers/rulers) along with the appearance of the messianic King of Righteousness who eventually will cause Judah and Israel to dwell safely in the land.

¹ “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!” says the LORD. ² Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: “You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings,” says the LORD. ³ “But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. ⁴ I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,” says the LORD.

*⁵ “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD,
“That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;
A King shall reign and prosper,
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.*

*⁶ In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will dwell safely;
Now this is His name by which He will be called:
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

⁷ “Therefore, behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “that they shall no longer say, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ ⁸ but, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ And they shall dwell in their own land.” Jeremiah 23:1-8

Three elements in Jeremiah’s prophecy point to the Roman exile after the arrival of Jesus and the work of his early Jewish followers. One, the judgement comes as a result of bad leadership, but a remnant will be gathered. Jesus was constantly confronting the religious leaders of the time (for example Mark 15:1-9), predicted the destruction of the 2nd temple (Matthew 24:2) while at the same time gathering a flock and developing new leadership to go into all the world (Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8). Two, one of the key teachings of the New Testament is that Jesus brought the gift of salvation and righteousness, he is the Lord our Righteousness (1 Cor 1:18-31, 2 Cor 5:20). Three, Jesus testified that he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and when asked about restoration of the kingdom to Israel, he did not deny it would take place, but had his disciples focus on the global mission first (Acts 1:6-8). Paul said that “blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the gentiles has come in” (Romans 11:25-32). After

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bar_Kokhba_revolt&oldid=1192316502 (Contributors, Bar Kokhba Revolt, 2023)

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Christian_Zionism&oldid=1188672664 (Contributors, Christian Zionism, 2023)

centuries of rivalry, animosity, and bad mojo between Christians and Jews, in these last days many Christians have felt called by God to assist in the return of the Jewish people to their land, convinced that God was restoring them once again. **Indeed, the return of the Jewish people to the land of promise in the past century uniquely and precisely fulfills verses 7 and 8 from Jerimiah 28 quoted above. The return in scope, distance, and population far exceeds the exodus from Egypt.** The fact that it was and is supported by key elements of the Christian community give credence to the apostle Paul's words, "through the mercy shown you, they may also obtain mercy."

MY LIFE IN ISRAEL

Experiencing Israeli society during my time in Israel as a student for 4 months in 1986 and as a volunteer teacher and graduate student from 1988-1990, I can certainly testify that the accusations that Israel is trying to commit "genocide" against the Palestinian people is completely ludicrous. Without a doubt there are elements on both sides that hold animosity toward the other, there are also a great many people who want to live at peace with one another. While most Israelis are Jewish, there are Israeli citizens of Arab decent, Israeli Christians, Israeli Muslims, etc. In Israel there is freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. I made close Jewish friends, some were secular and didn't really believe in God, some were deeply religious Jews in Judaism, some were Jews that believed Jesus (Yeshua) was the Messiah, some were new age, etc. I had Arab friends, some were Israeli, many were Palestinian, some were Muslim, many were Christian, and some were believers in Jesus that had been raised Muslim. While I was a volunteer teacher at a school run at a small Catholic Convent in Jerusalem, I met an Arab Christian family from Lebanon that had been allowed to live in Israel by the Israeli government because of attacks of the Muslims against the Christians in Lebanon in the 80s.

I witnessed the constant fear people in Israel must live with. One day after picking up a record player I had taken to get repaired for the school, I stopped by the phone company office to pay my phone bill and accidently left the record player on a ledge by the counter after I had paid my bill and left. When I realized I had forgotten the record player I quickly ran back inside to retrieve it. When I reentered, everyone was frozen, their eyes were locked on the record player. Imagin the relief when I walked up and grabbed the machine, apologizing repeatedly in Hebrew as I left.

Being a people set apart (holy) does not mean one is perfect, but that God has a purpose. I believe God has a purpose for everyone if we will just seek Him and His purpose out. Some reading this have been in exile from God's love, but if you wish to return from your personal exile God is saying:

"¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13

Believing that God has given the Jewish people the land, and that they belong there is a far cry from saying that everything the Israeli government does is good and should be supported, or that the Jewish people can do no wrong. Jewish people are human beings like all the children of Adam.

⁹ What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin. Romans 3:9

MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT IN PERSPECTIVE

For centuries the Jewish people suffered persecution in many of the nations (and sadly many "Christian" nations) where they were scattered after the Roman diaspora, but there was also always a Jewish presence in the Holy Land. It wasn't the best place to live, because in the Ottoman era, there was a tax on trees, so most of them were cut down to avoid the tree tax. This made the once beautiful, forested areas more like desert. The Jews living in other nations started to return to Israel during the severe Russian pogroms of the late 1800s. They began buying land in Israel (called Palestine at the time) and planting trees. Over time what was once barren began to blossom like a rose. In the 1930s Hitler wanted a scape goat for the German depression and found it in the Jews. After massacring 6 million Jews as well as

thousands of Christians, dissidents, and those who were considered not “pure” enough, the Nazis were defeated. In 1948 the UN created the partition plan that allowed for Israel and Palestinian states. The Palestinians refused to form a state, but Israel declared itself a state and was immediately attacked.

The question is, why did the Palestinians refuse a state in 1948, why did Yassar Arafat refuse a state in the 1990s, and why does Hamas refuse to recognize Israel’s right to exist today, creating a great barrier to peace? The answer lies in the foundations of Islam laid by Mohammed in the late 7th century AD. Because what Mohammed created was not just a religion based on Judaism, Christianity, and local Arab customs. What Mohammed created was also a political system, with the concept of the “Islamic State”. With the mission to expand the Islamic State until it consumes the whole world and until the day of judgement, it is also held that once territory has been under the Islamic state, it cannot go back to being governed by infidels but must remain under Islamic law (Sharia). Muslims sincerely believe that all the world should be under the Islamic State.⁶ This is the struggle, the Jihad. “Palestine” was under the Islamic Kalifate of the Ottoman empire until taken over by the British after WW I, which was bad enough for Muslim sensibilities, and they pressured Great Britain to renege on the promises of the Balfour Declaration which promised a Jewish state after the first world war. But the Jews forming a basically secular state in territory that was once under Islamic law in 1948 under the UN plan was and is an intolerable situation to many Muslims. This quote from the Hamas Covenant articles 7 and 8 says it all:

Article Seven:

As a result of the fact that those Moslems who adhere to the ways of the Islamic Resistance Movement spread all over the world, rally support for it and its stands, strive towards enhancing its struggle, the Movement is a universal one. It is well-equipped for that because of the clarity of its ideology, the nobility of its aim and the loftiness of its objectives.

On this basis, the Movement should be viewed and evaluated, and its role be recognized. He who denies its right, evades supporting it and turns a blind eye to facts, whether intentionally or unintentionally, would awaken to see that events have overtaken him and with no logic to justify his attitude. One should certainly learn from past examples.

The injustice of next-of-kin is harder to bear than the smite of the Indian sword.

"We have also sent down unto thee the book of the Koran with truth, confirming that scripture which was revealed before it; and preserving the same safe from corruption. Judge therefore between them according to that which Allah hath revealed; and follow not their desires, by swerving from the truth which hath come unto thee. Unto every of you have we given a law, and an open path; and if Allah had pleased, he had surely made you one people; but he hath thought it fit to give you different laws, that he might try you in that which he hath given you respectively. Therefore strive to excel each other in good works; unto Allah shall ye all return, and then will he declare unto you that concerning which ye have disagreed." (The Table, verse 48).

The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the links in the chain of the struggle against the Zionist invaders. It goes back to 1939, to the emergence of the martyr Izz al-Din al Kissam and his brethren the fighters, members of Moslem Brotherhood. It goes on to reach out and become one with another chain that includes the struggle of the Palestinians and Moslem Brotherhood in the 1948 war and the Jihad operations of the Moslem Brotherhood in 1968 and after.

Moreover, if the links have been distant from each other and if obstacles, placed by those who are the lackeys of Zionism in the way of the fighters obstructed the continuation of the struggle, the Islamic Resistance Movement aspires to the realization of Allah's promise, no matter how long that should take. The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, has said:

⁶ This includes Muslims in the United States. I went to a Muslim meeting in Chicago where there was much talk about the Islamic State. I asked if they wanted the US to be under the Islamic State and the answer was “of course”. And then I asked, “Wouldn’t that negate the Constitution”? There was silence.

"The Day of Judgement will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Moslems, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him. Only the Gharkad tree, (evidently a certain kind of tree) would not do that because it is one of the trees of the Jews." (related by al-Bukhari and Moslem).

The Slogan of the Islamic Resistance Movement:

Article Eight:

Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model, the Koran its constitution: Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes. ⁷

Serious Muslims of the Hamas persuasion will never accept a 2 State solution, because in their mind the state of Israel has no right to exist. Their plan is to bring all the territory now governed by Israel and all the world under Islam, plain and simple. If they were to accept a 2-state solution, it would only be a steppingstone to eventually taking everything. I hope this helps one to see that **Israel's stated purpose of defeating Hamas is not a call to genocide, but a call to prevent genocide happening to them and their country.**

THE COMING KING

So, what is the solution to the Middle East situation? Since the Bible teaches that God is a Zionist, then the wise thing would be for the "Palestinians" to accept the fact that God has given the land to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and stop trying to push them out of it. Then I am sure Israel would help them rebuild and settle into Gaza and work on rebuilding an economy, peace, and prosperity. The Muslim countries that have made peace with Israel are demonstrably better off than they were before making peace. Based on the Hamas Covenant, I don't see peace with Hamas happening. In the Bible, the prophet Zacharia in chapter 12 predicted a time when all the nations would come against Jerusalem, but they would be defeated and Israel would "look on Him who they have pierced", and weep and mourn and ultimately be restored. All the nations that remain will send representatives to Jerusalem once a year to celebrate the feast of Tabernacles. I foresee this prediction of Zacharia coming sooner than later. The King of Righteousness is coming to rule from his chosen city, Zion. May we all be ready for that great day.

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