

# IN PURSUIT OF A PROMISE

By

Curtis Dickinson

An amazing number of Christians are being turned aside from pursuing the goal of godliness and discipleship to concentrate on the land of Israel and to advance the cause of an anti-Christ movement: political Zionism.

Not only is this contrary to the teaching of Christ and the apostles, but it keeps pressure on our Congress to continually fuel the fires in the Middle East in which both Jews and Arabs are suffering. The popular TV evangelists who present modern Israel as a fulfillment of biblical promise have had great influence in keeping national leaders from dealing with the situation objectively.

So powerful has become the Zionist lobby, with the backing of Premillennial preachers, that ex-congressman Paul Findley says that they dictate our Middle East policies, and Jerry Falwell told a Jerusalem press conference in 1983 that the day would come when “no candidate unfriendly to Israel can be elected to any U.S. Office.” (See *Prophecy and Politics* by Grace Halsell, Lawrence Hill & Company.) By encouraging and supporting this Zionist lobby, Christians have participated in the killing of more than 65,000 Palestinians and Lebanese, as well as the suffering of young Jews who are pressed into the military to serve the Zionist cause. If thousands of our own young people are called on to die in a Middle East war, who will have to share the blame?

The Zionist claim to the homes and lands of the Palestinian Arabs is based upon what they call the Abrahamic promise found in the book of Genesis. There are several things wrong with this claim.

The promise that the land would go to Abraham’s fleshly descendants was fulfilled when it was occupied by the twelve tribes of Israel. Just before his death Joshua said, “And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He swore unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein...they failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord has spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass” (Joshua 22:43, 45). Both David and Solomon reigned over the land from the Euphrates to Egypt. Before Stephen was killed, he reminded the Jews that this promise had been fulfilled, saying that “they entered into the possessions of the nations” (Acts 7:44-45). Further assurance is given in Nehemiah 9:7, 8 and Jeremiah 32:31.

Even so, like many of God’s promises, this one was conditional. The promise included a covenant relation between Israel and God which required loyalty and faithfulness to His commandments. In Deuteronomy 28 Moses warned them that if they proved unfaithful to God, they would lose their nation and be scattered and come under God’s severe curse. By their own national apostasy, which is predominantly recorded in scripture, they lost their land in 597 BC, although it was promised that a remnant would return. This also was fulfilled. They returned to Judea after the Babylonian captivity and rebuilt the walls and the temple. But by the time Christ appeared, they had apostasized again, and Jesus plainly told them: “Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:42). In 70 AD judgment fell on Jerusalem and the nation so that it was

thoroughly destroyed. The priesthood and its function had already been replaced by Jesus' sacrifice and establishment as High Priest. With the destruction of the temple, there was nothing left that had made Israel a covenant nation. There is not a word from Jesus or His apostles to indicate that it were to be restored. Modern Israel has no relation to the Old Covenant Israel we read of in the Bible.

Another fact overlooked by the "Christian Zionists" is the problem of identifying who is a Jew. This is one of the questions debated in the Israeli parliament, and there is no full agreement on it. The majority of Jews are not descendants of Jacob but are of Khazar extraction or of some other race, such as, for example, Sammy Davis, Jr., or Elizabeth Taylor. The majority of Israeli Jews today deny any belief in God. *Newsweek* (Nov. 30, 1985) reported that 54% of Israelis consider themselves secular Zionists. Others put this figure as high as 65%. The religious Jews, for the most part, follow the Talmud and not the Bible. Although the term "anti-Semitic" has been cleverly used by Zionists to smear anyone who opposes their political aims, the historical records fail to show that they are Semites but that they are represented in all races and therefore have no claim to biblical promises made to Abraham and his descendants.

Old Testament prophecies and promises must be interpreted in the light of the revelation of Jesus and the apostles. The apostle Paul explains that the pre-eminent "seed" of Abraham is the Messiah, Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed (This seed is singular in number. ED.) were the promises made. He says not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal 3:16). Through our relationship to Christ, all Christians are, biblically, the seed of Abraham, as Paul explains: "And if Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). Abraham's fleshly descendants are not the ones to whom the blessing are promised. "That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are the children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed" (Rom. 9:8). "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of Promise" (Gal. 4:27). Ishmael was Abraham's son by Hagar, the slave, born after the natural course, but Isaac was born of the free-woman according to the promise, that is, by God's decree, after the mother was past the age of procreation.

Even if the Israelis were, indeed, the fleshly descendants of Abraham, such a fact would not qualify them to receive the promised Abrahamic blessings. (Note: The Arabs are also fleshly descendants of Abraham by Ishmael.) "Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham" (Rom. 3:7-9). The blessings are centered in Christ and the gospel, and only those who put their faith in Him, forsaking all trust in physical ties, can be said to be "of faith" and sons of Abraham.

The ancient nation of Israel was a type, with a typical house of God, a typical priesthood, typical sacrifice, incense typical of Christian prayers and typical throne of David. The types have all been replaced by realities: believers make up the house of God; all Christians are priests unto God; Jesus is our one and final sacrifice; prayers now rise from all saints; and Christ is seated on the royal throne in heaven. Jerusalem and its land are important only as a part of history and as a means of remembering events that happened there. At Christ's return, it will be destroyed. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements

shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (II Peter 3:10). The land of Palestine is no exception.

The old types of things to come have been replaced by the eternal. Hebrews 12:22 says that Christians are come “unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” This is the “new Jerusalem” of Revelation 3 and 21. It is the “Jerusalem which is above” mentioned by Paul (Gal. 4:26). God has set His king upon the hill of Zion (Psa. 2:6, 7) and that throne is in heaven (Psa. 89:35–37, 110:1, 2, Acts 2:29–36, Eph. 1:20–223).

Abraham never personally received the land of promise. In Hebrews 11 there is a great “roll-call” of the faithful, including Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and many others. In verse 13 it says of them: “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off...” Then it is explained that they will receive the promise when it is fulfilled for all believers: “And these all, having had witness born to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect” (Verses 39 and 40).

Abraham’s inheritance is far greater than a patch of land in the Middle East. “For the promise that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Rom. 4:13). The true children of God are “heirs of the world” — not “this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4) which is under a curse (Gal. 3:10), and destined for fiery destruction — but of the “new earth wherein dwells righteousness” (II Peter 3:13).

Christians who support Zionism ought to take another look at scripture and heed the words of Jesus: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5).

.....  
Copyright © Curtis Dickinson. Formatted and Posted by Ken Fortier Ministries.  
Permission is hereby granted by Mrs. Regina Dickinson to reproduce and distribute  
Curtis’ articles to as many as possible. This statement is to remain attached to this article  
for permission to be valid. Vol. XXVIII, Number 2.  
.....