

THE PROMISE FULFILLED

By

Curtis Dickinson

This subject has been complicated by controversy, so please read it carefully with a mind for truth.

On July 17, about 1000 American Jews placed an ad in the *New York Times* expressing their views of what is needed to bring about peace in the Middle East. On August 13, a full page “Open Letter From American Jews to our Government” appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*, in support of the Times ad.

These American Jews say that a fair solution would include: (1) Two national states, Israel and Palestine, with equal sovereignty, equal rights, and equal responsibilities; (2) Partition along the pre-1967 border; (3) Israeli evacuation of all settlements in the occupied territories. They also state. “The U. S. bears a special responsibility for the current tragic impasse, by virtue of our massive economic and military support for the Israeli government: \$500 per Israeli citizen per year.”

Such ads make it clear that these American Jews do not believe that Jews have a divine right to the land they have taken by military force, financed by the U.S. government. In fact they call on the government to use its “extraordinary leverage on Israeli policy” and “make continued aid conditional on Israel acceptance of an internationally agreed two-state settlement.”

So who is right, the American Jews, or the Christian Zionists? The latter group includes Jerry Falwell, Tim Lahaye, Pat Robertson, Hal Lindsay and a host of others including sensationalists on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, who preach that Jews are entitled to Palestine because of God's promise to Abraham. Ever since Israel was established in 1948 these dispensational “Israel-First” Christian Zionists have exerted a steady pressure upon our government to support the Israelis in money and arms as they drove Palestinians, including many Christians, from lands that had been in their possession for generations and took over their homes and businesses. The excuse for the atrocities committed in this ethnic cleansing is twofold: that God promised the land to these Jews through Abraham, and that they are God's chosen people.

Here is the promise: “Now Jehovah said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation. And I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curses thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:1-3).

All of the promise has been fulfilled. It is obvious that God did not intend for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to inherit the land personally. It was long after their deaths and after the

years of Egyptian bondage that Joshua led Israel in the conquest of Canaan and the land promise was fulfilled. As they prepared to take possession, God said, “Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which Jehovah swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give unto them and their seed after them” (Deut. 1:8).

God kept His promise: “So Jehovah gave Israel all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it and dwelt therein...There failed not aught of any good thing which Jehovah had spoken unto the house of Israel; **all came to pass**” (Joshua 21:43, 45).

In his farewell message to the people Joshua reminded them that the promise had been fulfilled: “And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which Yahweh your God spoke concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing has failed thereof” (Joshua 23:14).

Like all covenants between two parties, this land covenant was conditional. God promised the land to Israel as long as Israel obeyed the law given through Moses. But there was a big **IF** in the covenant. In his farewell speech in Deuteronomy chapter 28 Moses said that Israel would be established in the land “if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Yahweh thy God, to observe to do all his commandments...” (vs. 1). Then he said “But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy God, to observe to do all his commandments...that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee” (vs.15). The next 53 verses record a long list of the fearful consequences of their disobedience and breaking the covenant. Among those consequences is that of being destroyed as a nation and driven from the land.

For over 500 years they possessed the Promised Land, but in spite of frequent warnings through the prophets, the tribes of Israel refused to keep the covenant. The Northern Kingdom went into Syrian captivity in 722 B.C. and the Southern Kingdom (Judah) went into Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C.

The prophets predicted a return from captivity. Zionists claim that this prophecy is being fulfilled today in Israel. But this is clearly wrong. The prophecy is found in Jeremiah 29:10-14, and explicitly states, “After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you-in causing you to return to this place.” The return took place in three stages, being completed in 516 B.C. with the dedication of the rebuilt temple. There are other prophecies concerning a restoration of Israel, but these were all made before their return from Babylon, and do not refer to some future restoration.

The land promise has been fulfilled, and there is no “restoration of the land” still due the Jews of today. Like the first possession, their second occupation was conditional upon their faithfulness to God, and for the second time they proved unfaithful.

Jesus repeatedly warned of the coming destruction of the nation. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Luke 13:35). In the parable of the wicked husbandmen Jesus pictured the Jews as the wicked husbandmen who killed the owner's son. He didn't leave any room for questions, when he said to 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. And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spoke of them" (Matt. 21:33-45).

In 70 A.D. this promise was fulfilled when, after three and a half years of Jewish rebellion against Rome, the Roman armies completely destroyed Jerusalem and wiped out the nation of Israel. The people of modern Israel cannot claim racial or blood relationship to Abraham. There are Jews of every race, from the black Ethiopian to the Chinese orthodox Jew. In his book, *What Price Israel*, Alfred Lilienthal writes. "There is no Jewish or Semitic race" (Pg. 214). Lilienthal is Jewish. He said, "Members of the Jewish faith are found in all three races (Negro, Oriental, Caucasian) and in their subdivisions." According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1973) "There is no Jewish race." Large portions of European Jews are descendants of the Khazars, a Turkish nation that adopted Judaism as their religion in the 8th century (*Encyclopedia Judaica, The Jewish Encyclopedia, The Encyclopedia Britannica, The Thirteenth Tribe*, etc.). They have no connection to Biblical Israel. There can be no such thing as a "return" to a place they have never been. There is no Biblical basis for political Zionism.

There was more to the promise to Abraham than land. The inheritance given to Abraham by promise was actually promised to Christ who was "the seed" of Abraham (Gal.3:16 and 3:19). The New Testament interprets this promise as the spiritual blessings we receive in Christ. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3:14).

Paul taught "And if you be Christ's, than are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:29). This means, .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. 4:13-14). Abraham did not expect a home in Palestine, but "looked for a city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10; Gen. 13:15-17).

The apostle Peter told us who God's chosen people are. Writing to those redeemed by Christ, Peter said "But you are an elect (chosen) race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Pet. 2:9). We who are in Christ are participants in God's new covenant, and it is our mission to hold forth the truth of Christ and the gospel in order to make disciples of all the nations. (Matt. 28:19).

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible" (Eph 6:24).

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