Zionism Versus The Holy Bible

by Pastor Thomas Williamson

Much of our Christian emphasis on foreign policy in the Middle East today is based on the promise that God made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, *"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."*

The first half of this verse is a promise that God made to just one person, Abraham. The original Hebrew is in the second person singular, meaning that God is speaking only to Abraham. The King James Version correctly reflects this grammatical construction, since "thee" is singular, referring only to one person, whereas "ye" would refer to multiple persons.

Matthew Henry's commentary states of Genesis 12:3a that **"This made it a kind of league, offensive and defensive, between God and Abram."**

Of the second half of the verse, Matthew Henry says, **This was the promise that crowned all the rest; for it points to the Messiah, in whom 'all the promises are yea and amen.' Note, (1), Jesus Christ is the great blessing of the world, the greatest that ever the world blessed with."**

Recently Genesis 12:3 has been spiritualized by Christian Zionist preachers, who say that this verse applies not just to Abraham, but also to Abraham's descendants, specifically to the modern state of Israel founded in 1948. Supposedly, it means that evangelical Christians as individuals, and America as a nation, are bound to provide unquestioning support, financial and otherwise, to the state of Israel. It is said that if America fails to back up Israel in every way possible, financially, militarily and otherwise, then God will be through with America and will have us nuked.

When it is pointed out that the various Arabs nations, including Palestine, are also descended from Abraham, the Christian Zionists say that the promise of Genesis 12:3 applies only to the descendants of Isaac (Of course, there is no mention of Isaac in Genesis 12:3. They often misquote the verse, saying it refers to "blessing Israel," but Israel is not mentioned in the verse either).

Zionists say, based on their non-literal, speculative, spiritualized interpretation of Genesis 12:3, that we are to give total, unquestioned support to some of Abraham's children, while others of Abraham's children are to be hated, persecuted, ethnically cleansed, bombed back into the Stone Age, maybe even nuked.

But in Genesis 21:13, 17-18 God also bestows His blessing on Ishmael and his descendants, saying, *"For I will make him a great nation."* According to the same principles of interpretation by which we have made Genesis 12:3 a command for political support of the modern nation of Israel, Genesis 21:18 must be taken as a command for political support of the modern Arab nations. (Anybody want to start up a "Christian Ishmaelist" movement to lobby for Arab national greatness?)

Christian Zionists claim to have 70,000,000 followers in America, who insists that our politicians render unquestioning obedience to the military and political agenda of the Israeli Government. **Does God really demand that we support all actions and activities of the Israeli Government, even if those actions violate God's moral standards of righteousness?**

It should be pointed out that even in Old Testament times, when Israel was a nation specially chosen by, and ruled over by, Jehovah, He did not expect His people to support and endorse all actions of the government of Israel.

When the Government of Israel committed human rights violations, the prophets openly condemned them, 2 Kings 6:21

–23, 2 Chronicles 28:9-11, Nehemiah 5:7-11, Jeremiah 34:11-17, Amos 2:6-7, etc. Nowadays, liberal Jewish groups still protest human rights violations in Israel. Nevertheless, most fundamentalists Christians would never dream of doing such a thing – it is against their religion. It is their duty to either deny that such violations take place, or else to endorse and commend such violations. We have been told that God will smite us if we disagree with anything that Israel does.

The lawgiver Moses commanded the Hebrews that they should not oppress the strangers or non-Jews in their lands, Exodus 12:49, 22:21, 23:9, Leviticus 19:33-34, 25:35, Deuteronomy 10:18-19, 23:7, 24:17, 27:19. That message, of course, is not mentioned today – it is considered "politically incorrect."

When King Ahab and Queen Jezebel unjustly expropriated the vineyard of Naboth, the prophet Elijah publicly denounced the kind for this unjust action, 1 Kings 21:17-24, Jehu cited this official action of the government of Israel against Naboth as justification for overthrowing that government, 2 Kings 9:25-26.

But nowadays, when the Israeli government expropriates the lands and properties of Palestinians without compensation, we look the other way and say nothing about it.

In Jeremiah 27:1-5, the prophet Jeremiah picketed a public meeting of the government of Judah with representatives of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon. He was protesting the foreign policy of Judah. We would never do anything like that today – it would be considered a violation of the command to "bless Abraham."

In Jeremiah 27:6-17, the prophet advocated the surrender of Israel's territory to the King of Babylon, in return for peace – today, we would call it **"land for peace."** But today, our warmongering televangelists denounce "land for peace" as

unthinkable for any reason whatsoever, and threaten God's wrath against anyone who would support such a thing.

Supposedly it is better for Jewish and Arab children of Abraham to keep on killing each other over the land (while these sanctimonious war profiteers collect the money from sales of their Armageddon videos. Could it be a conflict of interest to allow American foreign policy to be dictated by these mega-millionaire preachers, who stand to make a profit if there is a war in the Middle East?)

We have seen that God's inspired prophets did not meet the Christian Zionist standard of blind, unquestioning support for Israel. As it turns out, today's Christian Zionists do not meet that standard, either.

Whenever the modern Israeli government takes any action that does not fit in with the speculative doomsday scenarios of the Armageddon Theology, the Christian Zionists will loudly protest and insist that the Israelis are doing wrong.

For instance, in 1994 Christian Zionist leaders, including Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed, publicly condemned the policies of the Israeli government under Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was seeking a peace settlement with the Palestinians. Robertson has also attacked the policies of Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres. **It seems hypocritical for Christian Zionists to threaten the wrath of God against those who express disagreement with any policy of the Israeli government when they have done the same thing themselves.**

Modern-day Israelis and other Jews are well aware of the fact that the Christian Zionists believe, based on a mistaken interpretation of Zechariah 13:8, that there must be a devastating war in the Middle East in which two-thirds of all the Jews will be slaughtered. It is commonly understood that the Christian Zionists do not really care about what is best for the Jews, as evidenced by their constant lobbying efforts

to stir up World War III in the Middle East. Million Jews may wind up dead, but it will be good for sales of the Armageddon videos that are peddled on the televangelists' broadcasts and web-sites. **This raises the question who is really "blessing Israel;" those who are working for peace in the Middle East, or those who are agitating for a war designed to get two-thirds of all Jews wiped out?**

Some gullible evangelical Christians may not understand these issues, but our Jewish friends understand what is at stake very well – they are being prepared to serve as cannon fodder for the next Holocaust.

Gershom Gorenberg, in his book "The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount," says, **"I've listened to….American evangelical ministers who insist on their deep love for Israel and nevertheless eagerly await apocalyptic battles on Israel's soil so terrible that the dry river bed will, they predict, fill with rivers of blood."**

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, has stated that **"People who say there can be no peace are not really friends of Israel."**

Robert O. Freedman, political science professor at Baltimore Hebrew University, says concerning Christian Zionists, **"Once you get in bed with them, you are, to a certain extent, subscribing to their view of what America ought to be. And that, in my view, is not in the best interests of the Jewish people."**

Former Shin Bet secret chief Carmi Gillon and former police commissioner Assaf Hefetz, commenting on the activities of Temple Mount extremists who are financially supported by fundamentalist Americans, warned that an attack on the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem **"would lead to an all-out war and unleash destructive forces that would imperil Israel's existence."**

The eagerness of some televangelists, to get a war going in

the Middle East (along with their vociferous Arab-bashing and Muslim-baiting), must be considered in context of their belief in the infamous Armageddon Theology, which insists that 2/3 of all the Jews must die.

Grace Halsell, in her book "Prophecy and Politics" observed: **"Convinced that a nuclear Armageddon is an inevitable event within the divine scheme of things, many evangelical dispensationalists have committed themselves to a course for Israel that, by their own admission, will lead directly to a holocaust indescribably more savage and widespread than could have generated in Adolf Hitler's criminal mind."**

American Christians who really want to be a blessing to all the children of Abraham (Jews and Arabs) need to realize that they do not have to render blind, knee-jerk support to the most extremist elements of Zionism, or to those who are actively trying to foment massive wars in the Middle East that would be contrary to the interests of the Israeli people. Not everyone is going to agree that stirring up a war to get 2/3 of all Jews killed is a good thing for the Jews.

Nor should we forget that our Prime Directive as Christians is found in the Great Commission. Our mission is to evangelize, baptize and teach, not to try to hasten Christ's coming by agitating war and violence in the Middle East.

Zionism is based on a total misunderstanding of what the Bible teaches. It is true that God gave Palestine to Hebrews in ancient times. But the Bible teaches that their possession of the land was under a conditional covenant with Jehovah. If the Hebrews disobeyed their God, they would lose the land. This is clearly taught in Genesis 17:9-14, Exodus 19:4-5, Leviticus 26:40-45, Deuteronomy 7:12, Joshua 23:15-16, 1 Kings 9:6-9, 2 Chronicles 7:19-22, Jeremiah 34:12-22, Ezekiel 33:23-29, Matthew 21:43, etc.

When the Jews rejected their Messiah, God sent the Romans to

dispossess the Jews from their land in 70 AD. This was God's complete punishment on the Jews for crucifying Christ – therefore, the Jews today should not be persecuted for something that happened 2000 years ago. However, their former title deed on the land of Palestine is not abrogated.

The New Testament teaches that Christians are to focus on the heavenly Jerusalem, not the earthly one, John 4:21, Galatians 4:24-28, Hebrews 12:18-24. We are told in Hebrews 11:13-16 that even Abraham has no further interest in a restored Jewish state on earth, because he is in a much better place in heaven.

Christian Zionism is a movement that claims to be based on the Bible, but as we have seen, it is actually contrary to what the Bible teaches. All Christians should repudiate Zionism and should work for a peace settlement in the Middle East that will be of mutual benefit to Abraham's Jewish and Arab children in Palestine.

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