

IS THE MODERN STATE, ISRAEL, A FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY?



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Holy Book & Holy Land: Clearer Thinking Needed Confusion Thwarts Bible's Offer of Way to Peace

BIBLICAL ISSUE

This LINK concentrates on a single subject: The relationship of the Bible to the "Promised Land." Our next issue will return to the familiar news-reviews-features format.

AS the Problem of Palestine, unsolved, becomes more obviously a threat to world peace, the news media are increasing their attention to some of its underlying causes. They have tended, however, to ignore certain serious irritants, notably the Bible, which have enhanced the dangers in the situation.

You're entitled at this point to exclaim: "The Bible an irritant? The Hebrew Bible with its call to love of God and neighbor? The Christian New Testament with its heralding of peace and good will through glorifying God?"

Yes! A surgeon's scalpel in clumsy or vindictive hands can produce the suffering and death it was designed to defeat. And there are hands today—as in Crusader times—in which the Bible becomes an instrument to thwart its own spirit of mercy, fair play and reconciliation in the very lands that gave it birth.

Backstabbing with 'The Sword of the Spirit'

Using the Bible to tout ethical claims above ethical demands has, alas, been neither unusual nor limited. At the very first U.S. Congress James Jackson of Georgia used Scripture successfully to fight the abolition of Negro slavery. Others, before and since, have taken pains to select biblical passages to quote out of context in favor of such practices as exterminating Indians, discriminating against Jews or disposing Japanese Americans. And now a spate of films, broadcasts and publications is citing Bible texts to endorse Israeli displacement of native Palestinians.

The despondency in Arab refugee camps, the disillusionment of Palestinian intellectuals and the fanaticism of extremists in the commando movements are made more desperate by the resultant belief that in a holy war against their right to return home, And the countries bordering on Israel become the more apprehensive when they're told that divine prophecy authorizes Israeli expansion into their territory.

'Rightly Dividing The Word of Truth'

Replacing these misunderstandings with more positive biblical insights is neither speedy nor easy. We propose two steps, of which the first is to take the most commonly misinterpreted Bible passages and put them back into context. This the Rev. Bradley Watkins—who has lived among both Jews and Arabs—has sought to do on pages 3-12 of this LINK. Sincere liberals, Jews, Muslims and Unitarians may differ with some of his conservative Christian conclusions. But they should welcome his restoring of the oft-quoted promises and prophecies to their moral and historical settings.

We offer his essay not as a platform but as a springboard to further study and discussion, for which the items in Appendix A, below, are recommended as supplementary reading.

Knowing The Facts Makes The Bible Relevant

Step two is to face current realities seriously to find ways in which to apply the Bible's message of reconciliation through truth, honor, compassion, generosity, service, justice, humility and forgiveness. The Hebrew prophets and Christian apostles were keen observers of current events. They offered no prescriptions without first diagnosing a situation. It was their combining of the timeless truths of religion with the timely

facts of contemporary life that gave their utterances impact.

This combination is still valid. Its application to the modern Middle East found repeated expression at the World Conference of Christians for Palestine in Beirut last May. As just one example, here is part of what Father Dumont of Aqaba, Jordan, told that international assemblage:

"My 20 years in Aqaba have made me spiritually a Jordanian. I share the hopes and fears of my neighbors. On April 8, 1969, the Israelis bombed my church and school. Eight of my members were killed. I was wounded.

"I am Jordanian. But I'm a Christian, too. My Bible calls the Jews to unique service for God. It also summons us Christians to partnership in His work of reconciliation. Let the Zionists and all of us turn to the one God who is our God and the God of Israel."

It is fortunate that several authors with solid grasps of the Bible have lived observantly on both sides of the conflict over Palestine and have written as feelingly as Father Dumont. Our Appendix B lists the most readable of them. We believe it will be profitable for you, as it has been for us, to expose yourself to their spirit and insights.

APPENDIX A

Publications that clarify the Bible's statements.

Prof. Alfred Guillaume's classic essay on *Zionists and The Bible* outlines the divine promises bearing on Palestine; what was promised, to whom, for how long and on what conditions. For your free copy send a 6¢ stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Holy Land Center, 777 U.N. Plaza, N.Y., N.Y. 10017.

Rabbi Elmer Berger's Leiden University lecture on *Prophecy, Zionism and The State of Israel* follows the late Martin Buber in seeing the Hebrew prophets as basically less

concerned with predicting future events than with grasping the full nature and implications of the present moment in the light of God's eternal truth. For a free copy, with introduction by historian Arnold J. Toynbee, write *Jewish Alternatives to Zionism, Inc.*, 133 E. 73rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10021.

In Chapter IV of his new book on the *Privilege of Man*, Bishop Kenneth Cragg deals with "The Chosen and The Nations: The Paradox of Jewish Humanity." He offers a sensitive, well-argued treatment of the Biblical meaning of the 'divine election of Israel' and the relation of this to "peoplehood" politics and the possession of the Land. (*Addison Press*, London, 217 pp., \$5.95.)

One of the best treatments, according to Prof. George Landes, is J. J. Stamm's *Der Staat Israel und die Landesverheissungen, der Bibel* which is regrettably still only available in German. Meanwhile you can get *Palestine and The Bible* which includes essays by American, Arab and British Jewish and Christian authorities. (*New World Press*, 135 E. 44 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10017. 60pp. \$1.00.—discount price.)

THE LINK

aims at maintaining contacts among Americans who believe that friendship with the people of the Middle East is essential to world peace, who would contribute to this goal by spreading understanding of the history, values, religions, culture and economic conditions of the Middle East, and who would — in this context — press for greater fairness, consistency and integrity in the U.S. policy toward that area.

It is published by A.M.E.U. (Americans for Middle East Understanding, Inc.) whose directors are: John V. Chapple, Ph.D., Candidate, Columbia University—(v.p.)

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APPENDIX B

Publications that apply the Bible's message.

Furnace of The Lord tells how the Bible brought missionary-author Elisabeth Elliot to Jerusalem and gave her insight into the Jews and Palestinians as people—real people needing, yet at odds with, each other. (*See discount book list below.*)

The Quakers' *Search for Peace in The Middle East*—newly updated—rarely quotes the Bible, but brings biblical integrity, love and humility boldly to bear upon controversial circumstances as they really are. (*American Friends Service Committee*, 160 N. 15th St., Philadelphia, Pa., 19102; 75pp. 75¢)

The most thorough answer to the contentious question, *Whose Land Is Palestine?* is Frank E. Epp's new book by that name. Against a background of claims by Muslims, Christians, the British and the U.N. to special prerogatives in the Holy Land, he weighs present Israeli and Palestinian counterclaims with a determination that justice and security shall come to both contending parties. (*Lerdnans*, 555 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502; 283pp. \$4.95)

A Palestine Entity by Don Peretz, Evan

M. Wilson and Richard J. Ward deals primarily with Palestinian nationalism and the political and economic viability of various suggestions for Palestinian nationhood. The Bible has a place in this study but not a major one. (*Middle East Institute*, 1761 N. St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; 119pp. \$17.5.)

"JERUSALEM" Christmas Cards

The Friends of Jerusalem Society in Beirut has again prepared some most attractive Christmas cards to help support its work for victims of the 1967 June War. Provided with choice of Arabic, English or French text, the cards are beautiful, varied and inexpensive. Write ANERA, Room 900, 733 15th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, for order form with color reproductions.

BOOKS AT A DISCOUNT

Uri Avnery, *Israel, without Zionists: A Plea for Peace in the Middle East*, 215 pp. \$5.95. Macmillan. A remarkable description of Israeli politics and a forceful statement of Avnery's conviction that the Jewish state must become a pluralistic and secular one if it is to achieve reconciliation with the Arabs. Our price \$3.70.

John S. Badeau, *The American Approach to the Arab World*, 204 pp. \$2.95 (paperback), Harper and Row. By a former ambassador to the U.A.R.: an examination of American interests in the Middle East and an appeal for a more consistent and realistic foreign policy in that area. Our price \$2.10.

Henry Cattin, *Palestine, the Arabs, and Israel*, 281 pp. £2.00, sterling. Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd. A Palestinian, now practising international law in London, tells what happened to the Palestine Arabs and what they think about it. Our price \$3.25.

Elisabeth Elliott, *Furnace of the Lord: Reflections on the Redemption of the Holy City*, 123 pp. \$4.95. Doubleday. A well-known author of books on religious subjects, Miss Elliott was commissioned to report on conditions in Jerusalem. The questions she put to Arabs and Israelis are probing, the answers revealing. Our price \$2.90.

Harry Hopkins, *Egypt the Crucible: The Unfinished Revolution in the Arab World*, 533 pp. \$10.00. Houghton-Mifflin Co. A report on the processes of social, economic and political change taking place in the Arab world. Our price \$6.35.

Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, 180 pp. \$1.70. The Institute for Palestine Studies. Judges Israeli policies in terms of its self-proclaimed standards of justice and democracy. Our price \$2.00.

Majida D. Khadduri, compiler, *The Arab-Israeli Impasse*, 223 pp. \$4.95. Robert B. Luce. Essays by Western authorities: Arnold Toynbee, Jean Lacouture, Quincy Wright, Sir John Glubb, Ambassador Charles Yergin, Rabbi Elmer Berger and others. Our price \$3.20.

Fred J. Khouri, *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma*, 435 pp. \$4.25. Syracuse Univ. Press. A scholarly, impartial and objective criticism of the policies of the Arab states, Israel, the United States and Russia. Our price \$3.00.

Kenneth Love, *Suez, the Twice Fought War*, 640 pp. \$10.00. McGraw-Hill. The author, a former correspondent of the New York Times, not only provides additional insights into the crisis of 1956, but also goes into many other matters—notably the suppression, and distortion of news by the Press. Our price \$6.25.

United States Interests in the Middle East, 132 pp. \$3.00. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. A composite study of the deterioration of our relations with the Middle East, and the effect this deterioration has had on our strategic, economic and cultural interests. Our price \$2.00.

Moshe Menuhin, *The Decadence of Judaism in Our Time*, with Postscript, 569 pp. \$5.00 paperback. The Institute of Palestine Studies. A protest against the identification of Judaism with Zionism. Our price \$3.50.

Anthony Nutting, *No End of a Lesson*, 205 pp. \$5.00. Clarkson N. Potter, Inc. Eden's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, who resigned in opposition to the Suez invasion of 1956, tells how and why the plan developed—a story that has not yet become common knowledge. Our price \$1.00.

Maxime Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs*, 239 pp. \$5.95. Pantheon. The author, a well-known contributor to *Le Monde* and professor of Oriental languages, is Jewish and has had long and extensive contact with the Arab world; he is therefore able to write critically, yet sympathetically, of both sides. Our price \$3.25.

Major General Carl von Horn, *Soldiering for Peace*, 410 pp. \$6.95. David McKay. The author describes both United Nations successes and the problems that beset him as Commander of U.N. forces in Palestine, the Congo, and Yemen. Our price \$1.35.

Is The Modern State, Israel, a Fulfillment of Prophecy?

Is Zionist control of Palestine the fulfillment of prophecy? Many devout Christians believe that it is. They base this belief on certain passages of Scripture, which they interpret as predicting a literal return of the Jews to Palestine—a return in the Christian era. Their position resembles closely that of the eleven disciples of Christ, who asked their Lord shortly before His ascension, "Lord, will you at this time restore the Kingdom unto Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

This belief is open to serious doubt, from the standpoint alone of interpretation of the Bible. I write as one who believes that the Bible is the Divinely-inspired Word of God; but I believe that God's last Word to man is Jesus Christ, His Son, the living Word (Hebrews 1:1). In Christ the prophecies of the Old Testament find their perfect fulfillment (Matthew 5:17). To relate the redemption of the world which God made manifest in Christ to the conquest of any particular territory by any particular race is to revert from the New Testament to the Old. It also reflects upon the finality of Christ, the very nature of God, and the mission of God's people.

Consider the prophecies themselves, which it is claimed are being fulfilled in our day by the Zionist occupation of Palestine. We cannot possibly refer to them all; certain ones, however, are essential, and they summarize all the others. Admittedly, we are reading these prophecies from a Christian standpoint. Doubtless their meaning to a Christian is different from their meaning to a Jew. It should be pointed out, however, that not all Jews are Zionists; and many Zionists are not deeply concerned with the Bible. If they are, they generally select certain militaristic and nationalist passages and ignore those which are universal in application and teach love for one's neighbor.

I. THE PROPHECIES, AND THEIR FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST.

A. THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

"Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth will bless themselves" (Gen. 12:1-3).
". . . by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed My voice" (Gen. 22:18).

"To your descendants I will give this land" (Gen. 12:7).

"Behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.

. . . I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" (Gen. 17:4-8).

"He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant. So He led forth His people with joy, His chosen ones with singing. And He gave them the lands of the nations, and they took possession of the fruit of the peoples' toil, to the end that they should keep His statutes, and observe His laws" (Psalm 105:42-45).

In considering the promises to Abraham, the Christian must keep in mind the following points:

1. *These promises were fulfilled, literally, in the conquest of Canaan under Moses and Joshua.* The conquest is specifically linked to God's promise to Abraham in Psalm 105 (quoted above). That passage also points out the purpose of the conquest, and its conditional nature: "to the end that they should keep His statutes, and observe His laws".

2. *The promise includes all nations, and not only the Jews.* Repeatedly the universal scope of the promise appears: "in you shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves"; "you shall be the father of a multitude of nations." The very name Abraham is usually translated, "father of a multitude." Furthermore, the descendants of Abraham include his descendants through Ishmael as well as those through Isaac; God said to Abraham, "I will bless Ishmael and make him a great nation . . . because he also is your offspring" (Genesis 17:20; 21:13). It should be remembered, also, that many Jews today are not physically descended from Abraham, but are descended from converts to Judaism from non-Semitic races. Their racial ancestors never set foot in Palestine.

3. *Abraham himself was not content with mere geographic territory as the completion of his relation to God.* "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land . . . For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:9, 10, 16, 17).

4. *The promise to Abraham was fulfilled completely and forever in Christ.* This proposition is the chief basis of Paul's entire argument concerning the universal application of salvation through Christ. "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'and to offsprings', referring to many; but, referring to one, 'and to your offspring,' which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16). The same theme occupies whole chapters

in Galatians and Romans. Because God honored the faith of Abraham long before the giving of the law, Abraham is "the father of all who believe", both circumcised and uncircumcised (Romans 4 throughout, especially verse 11). Therefore "there is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28, 29).

This emphasis was not invented by Paul; it appears on the lips both of John the Baptist and of Jesus Himself. The Baptizer undermined the nationalistic complacency of his audience thus: "Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham'" (Matthew 3:9). The lengthy debate between Jesus and a group of critics which is recorded in John, chapter 8, deals almost entirely with true descent from Abraham, and reaches its climax with these amazing words: "Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and He saw it, and was glad", and "Before Abraham was, I am". Our Saviour's use of the present tense in this passage, "I am", indicates His timelessness, which transcends the narrow confines of geography and genealogy. The same timelessness is involved in the very name of the God Who spoke to Moses — Jehovah, "I AM" (Exodus 3:14). God's promise to Abraham, "In you and your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed", is fulfilled completely and forever in Christ.

B. THE COVENANT AT SINAI

God said to the children of Israel, through His servant Moses,

"I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines (the Mediterranean), and from the wilderness (the isthmus of Suez?) to the Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you". (Exodus 23:31).

Thus God spoke to the children of Israel through His servant Moses. Does this promise have anything to do with the conquest of roughly the same territory by the state of Israel in the summer of 1967? Before jumping to this conclusion, we must remember the following facts:

1. *This promise was fulfilled in the conquest of Canaan by Joshua* (and the subsequent extension of the borders of Judah under David and Solomon). In his farewell address to the children of Israel, Joshua said,

"not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God promised concerning you; all have come to pass for you" (Joshua

23:14).

2. *This promise was conditional upon Israel's obedience to Jehovah.* Consider the antithetic juxtaposition of the repeated conjunction *if* in this pivotal passage from Moses' farewell address to Israel:

"See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. *If* you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in His ways, . . . then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to possess. *But if* your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess" (Deuteronomy 30:15-18).

"And the Lord will scatter you among all the peoples, from one end of the earth to the other" (Deuteronomy 28:64).

Nothing could be clearer than the statement made in this passage that possession of the land of Canaan was *conditional*. It did not guarantee the children of Israel perpetual possession of the land regardless of their behavior. If they kept their covenant with Jehovah, He would bless them in the land; if they broke the covenant, He would permit affliction to befall them, and they would be driven out of the land and dispersed among the nations.

3. *Israel did break the covenant, and followed other gods; therefore Jerusalem was destroyed and the children of Israel were taken away captive.*

"The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by His messengers," because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising His words and scoffing at His prophets, till the wrath of the Lord rose against His people, till there was no remedy. Therefore, He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans . . ." (II Chronicles 36:15-17).

We relate the sad story, which is spelled out at length in the books of Kings and Chronicles, not to cast stones in self-righteousness at those ancient backsliders — for which of us has not grieved the Holy Spirit? — but simply to put the Jewish conquest of Palestine in its proper perspective in the sacred history. The promise of the land, made at Sinai, was conditional upon obedience to the covenant. The people broke the covenant; therefore they were scattered, and the clause of the covenant

which concerns the land is no longer valid. Palestine was not promised to Israel in perpetuity.

4. *God promised to make a new covenant with Israel, which would be binding in the realm of the heart, and not in external particulars.*

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah — not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which covenant they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people . . . and I will remember their sins no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

This new covenant, foretold through the prophet, was fulfilled in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews quotes this passage from Jeremiah in full, after which he makes the application in one terse sentence: "In speaking of a new covenant He treats the first as obsolete" (Hebrews 8:8-13). A Christian's relation to God rests upon the New Covenant of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; hence the Christian must interpret the Old Covenant, given at Sinai, in this light. Surely the redemption from sin which was concluded on the Cross is in no way dependent upon the occupation of a certain small piece of territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

C. THE PROMISE TO DAVID

God's promise to David is one of the pivotal passages in the Old Testament, especially in its relation to the Gospel. When David had conquered all the territory surrounding Judea and had built a sumptuous palace for himself, he proposed to build a temple as a permanent resting-place for the ark of the covenant, which until then had been housed in a tent. But God said to David, through the prophet Nathan,

"Would you build Me a house to dwell in? . . . The Lord will make you a house (i.e., establish your dynasty). When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your son after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be My son" (II Samuel 7:1-16).

David was not permitted to build the temple, but

his son Solomon was. David himself reveals the reason why he was disappointed in his plan.

"Hear me, my brethren and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God; and I made preparations for building. But God said to me, 'You may not build a house for My name, for you are a warrior and have shed blood'" (I Chronicles 28:2, 3).

Solomon did build the temple; but before long he himself desecrated it. The story of his apostasy is told at length in chapter eleven of I Kings. It reaches its climax in the words of God to the disloyal king,

"Since you have not kept My covenant and My statutes which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and give it to your servant" (I Kings 11:11).

The Divine prediction came to pass, and the kingdom was divided shortly after the death of Solomon between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, the Southern Kingdom and the Northern, Judah and Israel. The earthly dynasty established by David came to an end when Zedekiah was led captive to Babylon (II Kings, chapter 25).

But God's word does not return unto Him void. His promise to David was fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Gospel begins with these words: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1). When the angel Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus to Mary, he said,

"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High;

And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David,

And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, And of His Kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:31-33).

Jesus was frequently called "the son of David", a title which obviously implied recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised King, who was expected to liberate the Jews from the yoke of Rome. On Palm Sunday a great crowd of Jews recognized Him thus, crying, "Hosannah to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 21:9). Jesus referred to Himself as David's Lord (Matthew 22:43), and as one who was greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:42). When His enemies arrested Him and delivered Him to the Roman governor to be crucified, the charge they laid against Him was that He made Himself a king — the equivalent of treason against Rome. When Pilate sought to release Him, they cried out,

"If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; every one who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar" (John 19:12).

Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your king?" They replied, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15, 16). Reluctantly Pilate condemned Jesus to death by crucifixion, and had a sign affixed to the cross, which read, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews".

Thus in His life and in His death, Jesus was recognized as the Son of David and King of the Jews. To be sure, the recognition was often in jest and denial; but He Himself claimed kingship, and a few loyal subjects pledged Him undying loyalty. After His resurrection they presented Him to the people openly as Lord and Christ (Messiah). Already on the Day of Pentecost Peter referred to Jesus as the fulfillment of the promise to David:

"Being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that He would set one of His descendants upon His throne, David foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ . . ." (Acts 2:30, 31).

The actual political kingdom of David and Solomon was limited in time and in space; the unlimited descriptions of Psalm 72 could not possibly refer to it literally:

"May He have dominion from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth!
May His name endure forever,
His fame continue as long as the sun!
May men bless themselves by Him,
All nations call him blessed".

Universal and eternal kingship is reserved for Jesus. In the Apocalypse the veil is lifted and we hear the hosts of Heaven acclaiming Him "King of Kings and Lord of lords; and He shall reign forever and ever."

What relation can there possibly be between this universal kingship of Christ and the establishment of a temporal state in Palestine today? It would be enlightening to contrast actual political conditions in this state with the description in Psalm 72, which speaks of righteousness, justice, peace, compassion, and resistance to oppression; but that would be outside of the scope of this study, which is limited to the Bible. In all fairness, however, we must point out that *David himself was forbidden to build the Temple because he was a man of blood*. Jesus, on the other hand, surrendered Himself to His enemies and endured the Cross, where His own blood was poured out. In answer to Pilate's question He replied,

"My kingship is not of this world. If my kingship were of this world, My servants would fight, that I might not be handed over . . . ;

but My kingship is not from this world" (John 18:36).

D. THE PROMISE OF THE RETURN FROM EXILE AND THE RESTORATION OF JERUSALEM

In wrath, God remembers mercy. Even as He drove Israel and Judah out of the land of Palestine into captivity in Assyria and Babylon, He promised that a remnant would return. Not once, but hundreds of times this promise is repeated in the Old Testament. A typical passage is this from Ezekiel:

"As a pleasing odor I will accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples, and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will manifest My holiness among you in the sight of the nations. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country which I swore to give to your fathers" (Ezekiel 20:41, 42).

In interpreting these promises of return from exile, we must ask the same question we asked concerning the conquest under Joshua: what relation, if any, do they bear to the occupation of Palestine by the Zionist State in the 20th century? Once more we must refrain from taking isolated verses out of context, and must consider them in the light of the whole sweep of revelation. In relation to the return from exile and the restoration of Jerusalem, consider the following propositions:

1. *These promises were fulfilled, historically, under Cyrus, Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.* Cyrus, in the providence of God, was the instrument through whom Babylon was destroyed and the Persian Empire established. His enlightened policy of empire-building included encouraging ethnic groups under Persian hegemony to maintain their identity, which to a large degree centered around their religion. Accordingly he permitted the Jews residing in Babylon — or as many as wished to — to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple. The Biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah tell the story of this return. Actually, only a relatively small number took advantage of the offer — Ezra sets the figure at 42,360 (Ezra 2:64). In the opening words of his book, Ezra specifically states that this return was the fulfillment of prophecy:

"In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing:

'Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The Lord, the God of Heaven, . . . has charged me to

build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all His people, may His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem and rebuild the house of the Lord" (Ezra 1:1-3).

The prophecy given to Jeremiah, here referred to, is recorded in Jeremiah 25:11, 12.

2. The promises in the Old Testament concerning the return from exile and the restoration of Jerusalem are frequently *linked with the extension of Divine grace to all nations*. It follows that the essence of the restoration lies in the universal dimension of the revelation through Israel, and not merely in the literal return to a geographical locale. The best-known of the many passages which make this association is quoted at every disarmament conference, and in spite of every disappointment continues to express the wistful hope of mankind:

"It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills;

And all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:1-4, Micah 4:1-3).

3. A Christian must interpret these promises (return and restoration) in the light of the New Testament. The New Testament quotes passages from the Old Testament, hundreds of times. For the Christian, at least, the New Testament context gives the key to the meaning of the passage as it stands in the Old Testament. An outstanding example is the statement of purpose which the Servant of Jehovah makes concerning Himself, as recorded in Isaiah 61:1, 2 — "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, and He has anointed Me to bring good tidings to the afflicted. . . ." Jesus read these words in the synagogue at Nazareth, then closed the book and said, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:16-21). In other words, he identified Himself as the Anointed Servant (Messiah), and adopted this scripture as the platform for His mission. In the same way, passages concerning the return and restoration are

quoted elsewhere in the New Testament, and in each case are applied specifically to the universal Gospel of salvation through Christ. Peter made this application in the very first Christian sermon, on the Day of Pentecost:

"This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it shall be . . . The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, Before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day. And it shall be that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved'.

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth . . . you crucified, but God raised from the dead" (Acts 2:16-24).

Because of the limitation of space I have condensed the quotation and its application. The point is clear, that Peter takes a quotation from Joel which speaks of God's restoration of the fortunes of Jerusalem (2:28-3:2) and declares categorically that it is fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ.

This point is so important that two more examples must be given.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY:

"It is too light a thing that you (the Messiah) should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6).

NEW TESTAMENT APPLICATION

(Paul in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia):

"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first. Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of Eternal Life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord commanded us, saying, 'I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth'" (Acts 13:46,47).

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY:

"In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by My Name, says the Lord" (Amos 9:11,12).

NEW TESTAMENT APPLICATION

(James, speaking at the Jerusalem Council):

"Symeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets

agree, as it is written, "After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which is fallen down . . . that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by My Name" (Acts 15:14-17).

4. *Jesus also made some prophecies concerning Jerusalem.*

a. He foretold its complete destruction. Chapter 24 from Matthew's Gospel, chapter 13 from Mark's, and chapter 21 from Luke's deal almost in their entirety with the destruction of Jerusalem. The description which comes most quickly to mind states, "there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down." This prophecy was fulfilled almost literally in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D. and again by Hadrian in 135 A.D.

b. Jesus foretold the end of Jerusalem's function as an essential aid to worship. As He stood beside Jacob's Well, the Samaritan woman asked Him His opinion concerning the respective merits of the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim, nearby, and the Jewish temple on Mt. Zion, in Jerusalem. Jesus replied,

"The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father . . . The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:12-24).

c. Jesus recognized in Jerusalem a personification of the spirit of its people, or at least of its religious leaders—the spirit of rejection of the Messiah.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate. For I tell you, you will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed be He who comes in the name of the Lord!' (Matthew 23:37-39).

This spirit of rejection is portrayed dramatically in the parable of the wicked husbandmen, who mistreated one servant after another and finally killed the son. The conclusion of the story is unequivocal:

"Therefore I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43).

To be sure, Paul indicates in an enigmatic pas-

sage toward the end of Romans (chapters 9, 10, and 11) that "the natural branches will be grafted back into their own olive tree, . . . and so all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:24-26). It would be the utmost folly for me to attempt a categorical exegesis of this passage in a brief paper such as this; but two points seem clear: first, the term "Israel", as used here, does not necessarily refer to the entire Jewish people. Second, this passage makes no mention whatever of the land of Palestine. Incidentally, I feel called upon to point out that in the light of the variety of meanings which the name "Israel" can bear in the Bible, it seems presumptuous—or at least confusing—that the Zionist state now established in Palestine chose as its official title the name "Israel".

"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."

Is it not anomalous to take this name, with its holy and universal associations, and identify it with a national state, complete with sophisticated foreign service and ruthless armed forces? The average newspaper reader today, seeing the name "Israel" in the headlines, thinks at once of Moshe Dayan and David Ben Gurion, rather than of that Moses whose farewell to the people was the assurance, "The eternal God is your dwelling-place, and underneath are the everlasting arms"—or of that David who sang, "For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation".

And just as the name Israel has many more connotations than this political one, so Jerusalem is a Holy City to a vast multitude of believers, and not only to the Zionists. The many events in Divine history which took place there culminated in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To be sure, the salvation which He accomplished in Jerusalem is subject to no limitation of time or place. Drawing inspiration from that historical event, and mindful of the destruction of the historical Jerusalem which Jesus foretold, we face calmly the turmoil of our own day; and we anticipate the New Jerusalem which is envisioned in the closing pages of Scripture. For when he sought a symbol of perfect communion between God and His people, the seer turned once more to the ancient Judean shrine, now no longer provincial but rather cosmic in scope:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . . And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God . . . And I heard a great voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men . . .'" (Revelation 21:1-4).

II. IMPLICATIONS

We have now examined representative prophecies from the Old Testament which are sometimes adduced as predicting the Zionist occupation of Palestine in our day. I have endeavored to demonstrate from Scripture itself that these prophecies were fulfilled literally long ago, and that their true and final fulfillment lies in the person of Jesus Christ.

If this thesis is correct it will appear that the assertion, "The Zionist occupation of Palestine in our day is a fulfillment of prophecy", actually contradicts the true interpretation of prophecy. What is implied in this assertion? As I said in my introduction, the issues at stake are no less than the finality of Christ, the nature of God, and the mission of God's people.

A. THE FINALITY OF CHRIST

It has already been pointed out that Jesus is presented in the New Testament as the seed of Abraham, the Son of David, and one who is greater than Moses. If the Bible (including the New Testament) teaches that even after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, we are still to expect a return of the Jews to an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem, what does this imply concerning the work already accomplished by Christ? Is it incomplete? I assume that the religious significance of Jerusalem rests entirely in the temple, the priesthood, and the animal sacrifices; but the New Testament leaves no room for such imperfect mediators, since all the fullness of the deity dwells in Christ. Consider these facets in the finality of Christ, all of which are brought into question by the Christian apology for Zionism.

1. *He is the true temple.* For the most perceptible interpretation of the Old Testament in terms of the revelation through Jesus Christ we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews. The epistle in its entirety relates the ritual prescribed at Sinai to the ministry of Christ, both in detail and comprehensively. Repeatedly it refers to the sanctuary (i.e., the Old Testament tabernacle, followed by the temple) as the pathway which should lead to God, and presents Jesus as the perfect Way.

"For Christ has entered, not into the sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf" (Hebrews 9:24).

It is not without significance that the veil of Herod's temple in Jerusalem was rent in twain from top to bottom, just at the moment that Jesus died on the Cross. "He abolishes the first in order to establish the second" (Hebrews 10:9).

2. *He is the true priest.* Again we turn to Hebrews:

"The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but He holds His priesthood permanently, because He continues forever. Consequently He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:23-25).

3. *He is the true and only sacrifice.*

"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands — that is, not of this creation) He entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:11, 12).

The same person is at once the temple, the priest, and the sacrifice. Well did John refer to Him as "the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world". Speaking of prophecy, we dare not omit the greatest prophecy of all:

"He was wounded for our transgressions,

He was bruised for our iniquities,
Upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole,
And with His stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray,

We have turned every one to his own way,
And the Lord has laid upon Him

The iniquity of us all . . .
He makes Himself an offering for sin."

In all the texts from Isaiah which we hear quoted as justification for the return to Zion today, reference to this description of redemptive suffering, in chapter 53, is strangely lacking.

4. *He is the last, and perfect, prophet.* The essential function of a prophet is to be a medium for the revelation of God. Jesus claimed that He was Himself the perfect revelation of God. When Philip asked him, "Show us the Father", Jesus replied,

"He that has seen Me has seen the Father . . .
I am in the Father and the Father is in Me"
(John 14:9,10).

5. *He is the universal and eternal king.* We have already substantiated this claim in referring to Jesus as the Son of David, above. In addition, the Christian who sees in modern Zionism a fulfillment of prophecy should re-think the entire subject of the Kingdom of God, which was one of the two central themes of Jesus' teaching. Is the Kingdom of God in any way a political state? What then of Jesus' words,

"The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, it is here!' or 'Lo, it is there!'; for behold, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:20,21).

6. *He is the Messiah.* The Gospel story reaches its climax in Jesus' asking the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?", and in Peter's reply, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16: 13-20). (Messiah, in Hebrew, — Christ, in Greek, — Anointed, in English.) Regardless of what the concept of the Messiah means to Jews, to Christians it means that Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfillment of the Old Testament — the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King. This leaves no room for a revived Jerusalem, as though the plan of salvation were yet incomplete. To look for a politico-religious kingdom in Jerusalem is to depend on a geographic Messiah (see Matthew 24: 24, 25).

7. *He is the Son of God.* So Peter recognized Him at Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:16), and so Jesus presented himself to the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:63,64). It was because of this claim that He was sentenced to death (John 19:7). Should He expect any better treatment from a revived Jerusalem?

8. *He is the Son of Man.* This was Jesus' favorite title for Himself. It speaks of the universality of His mission, which extends to the entire human race. Even though in the days of His flesh His ministry in the first instance was to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, He welcomed also Samaritans, and Greeks, and Romans. He was particularly impressed with the faith of a Roman centurion, and exclaimed,

"Not even in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from East and West and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness" (Matthew 8:10-12).

To link the ministry of Jesus once more to "the holy land" is to detract from the universality of the Son of Man.

If it seems that we quote Scripture unduly in defending the finality of Christ we are following a good precedent; for Jesus Himself, on the road to Emmaus, pointed to the same authority in His conversation with Cleopas and the unnamed disciple:

"Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27).

Paul has this to say concerning the finality of Christ: "All the promises of God find their Yes

(or "Amen") in Him" (II Corinthians 1:20). After such a sweeping affirmation, to look once more to the earthly Jerusalem is surely a retrogression. As I said in my introduction, it is to revert from the New Testament to the Old. After the substance has come, who will be satisfied with the shadow? (Hebrews 10:1).

B. THE NATURE OF GOD

"God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth". To attach a particular sanctity to Jerusalem and to look for the establishment of a political-religious kingdom there reflects upon the spirituality of God. It implies that He is to some extent localized in a particular spot on the earth's surface. It makes soil more important than soul. This is to a very real extent a reversion to henotheism — the belief that each territory has its own deity — Baal the god of Canaan, Amon of Egypt, Hadad of Syria, Nabu of Assyria, etc. The central message of the entire Old Testament is to contradict this false religion and to proclaim that there is one and only one God, Maker of heaven and earth. Isaiah reports Him as saying,

"Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:22).

Solomon, even as he dedicated the temple he had erected for Jehovah in Jerusalem, recognized the absurdity of trying to localize God:

"But will God dwell indeed with man on earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built!" (II Chronicles 6:18).

Paul echoed the same truth centuries later when he reasoned with the men of Athens:

"The God Who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of Heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, seeing that He Himself gives to all men life and breath and everything. He made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth . . . He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:24, 27).

For a Christian to see any religious significance in the Zionist occupation of Palestine today reflects upon the spirituality of God; it also reflects on His justice. To displace almost an entire population by force and fear in order to supplant them with an alien population seems strangely out of place in the strategy of the Prince of Peace. Surely there has been some progress in ethics since the day of Joshua. Those who have usurped the houses and

lands of others, as they search the Old Testament for justification, would do well to ponder the story of Ahab and Jezebel, who plotted the death of Naboth in order to add his vineyard to their estate. Naboth refused the royal offer, saying, "The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers" (I Kings 21:3). The Palestinian today, languishing in the refugee camp in the Jordan Valley, feels the same attachment to his ancestral heritage. But Ahab went ahead with his plan of murder and dispossession, and the Divine judgment which was pronounced upon him and his dynasty through the prophet Elijah determined the tragic history of ancient Israel for the following century (I Kings 21 through II Kings 10).

God is the God of justice. The question which Abraham asked centuries ago, as he stood in the highlands of Judea and looked down into the Jordan Valley, still rings out today: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25).

C. THE MISSION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

To consider the Zionist occupation of Palestine in our day as the fulfillment of prophecy has serious implications concerning the finality of Christ and the very nature of God; finally, it contradicts the true mission of God's people. That mission was described originally in God's promise to Abraham, "In you and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed". The Mission unfolds in such passages as this, in which Isaiah represents God as defining the work of the Messiah:

"Behold, My servant, whom I uphold,
My chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him,
He will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry nor lift up His voice,
or make it heard in the street;
A bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning torch he will not
quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not fail nor be discouraged
till he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for His law"
(Isaiah 42:1-4).

The disciples of Jesus appropriated this passage as a description of their Master. (They did the same with many other passages from the Old Testament.) Matthew wrote,

"And many followed Him, and He healed them
all, and ordered them not to make Him known.
This was to fulfill what was spoken by the
prophet Isaiah,
"Behold, My servant whom I have chosen,
My beloved with whom my soul is well
pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,

And He shall proclaim justice to
the Gentiles.

He will not wrangle or cry aloud,
Nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.
A bruised reed He will not break,
or quench a smoldering wick,
Till He brings justice to victory;
And in His name will the Gentiles hope"
(Matthew 12:15-21).

The key word in this passage, inscribed originally by Isaiah and quoted by Matthew, is the *Gentiles* (or the *nations*, or the *peoples*). God chose a certain people, not that His revelation should begin and end with them, but in order that they should be the instrumentality through which the revelation should be made known to all peoples. This theme—the Gentiles—is the key word to the book of *Acts*. It appears first in the conversion of Cornelius, a Roman, and carries through to the very conclusion of the book, where Paul, in Rome, declares to the leaders of the synagogue, "Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen." One of the essential themes of the *epistles* is that there is no longer any distinction between Jews and Gentiles. The dividing wall of hostility has been broken down; in Christ there is no Jew or Greek, but Christ is all and in all: "*whosoever* calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

This unlimited invitation leaves no room for any one race or nation to think of itself exclusively as "the Chosen People." God does not play favorites. When He chooses you, He chooses you to carry out a special assignment. The choice invariably entails a heavy responsibility. When He chose the children of Israel as recipients of His self-revelation, it was in order that through them the message might reach all peoples. Supremely, the choice involved a particular matrix for the Incarnation. It meant that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem rather than in Timbuctoo. If the Word was to become flesh, He had to be born among a particular people. "To them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ" (Romans 9:5).

Thus the purpose for which God chose Abraham and his successors was accomplished in Christ. The election, by necessity narrow in the beginning, was opened to all men, through the Son of Man. The responsibility entailed in this election now rests on all the disciples of Christ, without distinction on the basis of race. "You did not choose Me", He said to the Twelve, "but I chose you in order that you might go and bear fruit" (John 15:16). Indeed, the New Testament makes clear that the mission which was originally entrusted to Israel is to be completed by the Church. Paul speaks of the Church as "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16).

Peter applies to Christians the descriptions which were applied to Israel at Sinai:

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful works of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

This, then, is the true mission of God's people: to make His salvation known to the ends of the earth. Always the motion is *outward* — from the Jews to the Gentiles, from Jerusalem to Rome, and thence to Europe, America, Africa, Asia. How then shall we reverse the order, and look back once more to Jerusalem?

CONCLUSION

I have tried to show that the modern state, Israel, is *not* the fulfillment of prophecy. Hundreds of times each year we read the statement, "The land belongs to the Jews because God promised it to them." This apparently pious and harmless claim appears frequently in the secular press and in Christian journals, as well as in Zionist propaganda. In endeavoring to refute the claim, I have quoted outstanding prophecies which are commonly supposed to support it. I believe that when these passages are examined in their contexts and in the light of the entire sweep of Scripture, they justify the following propositions:

1. The promises of the land of Canaan, to Abraham and to the people at Sinai, were fulfilled literally in the conquest under Joshua.

2. These promises were made upon *condition* that the people would obey the covenant. They did not; therefore they were driven from the land, and the promise of the land was no longer valid.

3. The promise of return from captivity was fulfilled literally under Cyrus, Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, several hundred years before Christ.

4. The New Testament interprets these promises in terms of a spiritual redemption from captivity to sin, a redemption which is available to Gentiles as well as to Jews.

5. The promise to Abraham includes all nations, and not only the Jews.

6. The promise to Abraham was fulfilled, completely and forever, in Christ.

7. Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of David and the King of the Jews, who fulfills the promise to David, "I will establish the throne of your Kingdom forever."

8. Jesus predicted the complete destruction of Jerusalem, and with it the end of the exclusive claims of the Jewish kingdom.

9. Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant, which renders the Old Covenant obsolete.

10. The belief that the modern state of Israel is the fulfillment of prophecy reflects upon the finality of Christ. He Himself is the true temple, Priest, and Sacrifice, the final Prophet, the universal King. After the substance has come, who will be content with the shadow?

11. To link salvation with Zionism reflects upon the nature of God. God is Spirit, and His worship is not restricted to any geographical location. Furthermore, God is just; He cannot condone violent dispossession today any more than He condoned Ahab's seizure of Naboth's vineyard.

12. The chosen people were chosen to be the initial recipients of God's revelation of Himself, in order that they might convey it to all mankind. The New Testament speaks of the Church as "the Israel of God." Upon the Church, therefore, rests the responsibility involved in this choice: to preach the name of Christ "to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). Beginning from Jerusalem, not ending there.

When He gave this commission to His disciples, Jesus was standing for the last time on the Mount of Olives. He looked across at the holy city stretched out before Him, with the Kedron Valley at His feet and the temple directly opposite. The disciples, glorying in the accomplished fact of the resurrection but still blinded by their nationalistic vision, asked Him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" Patiently Jesus replied,

"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8).



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