

ZIONISM

BIBLICAL ZIONISM, PRESENT-DAY ZIONISM

By Arlen L. Chirwood

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” (Ps. 137:1-4).

“Zion” is used in Scripture as a synonym for *Jerusalem* (Ps. 76:2; 126:1; Isa. 1:26, 27; 2:2, 3); and “Jerusalem,” along with “the land of Israel” itself in a larger respect, is used in Scripture as a synonym for *the Jewish people* (Jer. 22:8, 9, 29, 30; Lam. 1:7-9; Ezek. 14:11-13; Hos. 1:2; Matt. 23:37-39; Luke 13:33-35; 19:41, 42; Rev. 11:8; 17:18). Scripture presents an inseparable connection between *the Jewish people, their capital city, and their land.*

In this respect, “Zionism” *centers on Jerusalem, the land in which that city is situated, and the people of that city and land, the Jewish people.*

“Zionism” — as the thought would be expressed through the Jewish remembrance of “Zion” during the Babylonian captivity in Ps. 137:1ff, or as God throughout His Word presents the restoration of the Jewish people to a restored land — could only be seen as *a good and proper expression.* True Biblical Zionism though is far from what is invariably seen being dealt with in Christian circles and the world at large today.

“Zionism,” as the term has been used during modern times (during about the past 120 years, extending into today) *does not* refer to a religious or Biblical movement at all. Though the movement has

its basis in Scripture (God’s promises to the Jewish people as they pertain to the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), the movement itself is centrally *secular* rather than Biblical.

In this respect, Zionism, as it exists today, was founded by and has been promoted down through the years mainly by *secular Jews* rather than religious Jews. And, rather than being in line with Jewish thought as seen in Ps. 137:1ff, or anyplace else in Scripture where the restoration of the Jewish people to a restored land is dealt with, thought within present-day Zionism, almost without exception, is *a complete corruption of how Scripture deals with the matter.*

Present-day Zionism had its beginning about one hundred twenty years ago under Theodor Herzl (1895), a secular Jew who did not hold to that written in the Torah (referring to the five books of Moses; or, in a broader respect, referring to the whole of the O.T.). And many Zionists down through the years have been secular Jews who saw the Torah as outdated, occupying no place in modern-day Jewish life.

In fact, the land of Israel today is filled with Jewish people exhibiting exactly this same type thought, though the land is also filled (to a lesser extent) with religious Jews, some very religious, holding to and seeking to observe the writing in the Torah. And, as well, one could find thought among the Jews throughout the land lying at about every point between these two extremes — completely secular to very religious.

Zionism, as defined more by the Jewish people themselves today, has to do with *a national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel.*

Thus, Zionism — seen solely from this secular respect in which it exists — for all practical purposes, has to do with *the Jewish people rising up, seeking to emancipate themselves from exile apart from their Messiah, and establish a Jewish nation with its own government in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* (though many of them are atheists, disclaiming belief in the God who made this covenant with their fathers).

Then, viewing matters more from a Biblical rather than from a secular vantage point (as in the preceding definitions), Zionism, as it exists today, has to do with the Jewish people — refusing to recognize and realize

God’s purpose for uprooting them from their land and driving them out among the Gentile nations, *i.e., refusing to repent — taking matters into their own hands and attempting to bring about God’s promises pertaining to their restoration to the land and a healing of the land themselves.*

Or, viewing matters from that stated in Matt. 12:43-45; 23:37-39, present-day Zionism has to do with the Jewish people, under their own humanistic power and reasoning, *re-entering a house which had been left desolate, empty, swept clean of anything remaining, and placed in order relative to this unclean and desolate state.*

(The preceding has to do with definitions of Zionism, from two different perspectives — one solely secular [though having a Biblical base], the other from the standpoint of this Biblical base.

And it should be understood that these definitions of Zionism do not, after any fashion, reflect on how numerous individuals today might view Zionism — Jews or Christians. These definitions simply present basic statements about Zionism from two different opposing perspectives — one secular, one non-secular, with numerous things about present-day Zionism, no matter how it is viewed, *having to fit within one of these two perspectives.*

The vast majority of the Jews in Israel or those Jews scattered throughout the world today are, for the most part, *secular humanists*; and many would understand Zionism, at least after some fashion, from the secular definitions which have been given.

Many Jewish rabbis over about the past 100 years have spoken out against Zionism. But this probably emanates more from the secular humanism involved than it does from how Scripture deals with the matter of God fulfilling His promises to Israel pertaining to a restoration of both the people and their land.

Some Jewish organizations today though view matters pertaining to Zionism in *an entirely correct, Biblical respect.* The matter, as it actually exists, could not have been stated in a more accurate, succinct manner than by one of these organizations:

“Zionism, by advocating a political and military end to the Jewish exile, denies the very essence of our Diaspora existence. We are in exile by Divine Decree and may emerge from exile solely via Divine Redemption.”

— True Torah Jews

Christian thought though, pervading large segments of the whole of Christendom today, is another matter entirely. Numerous Christians, not understanding that which Scripture has to say about God's future restoration of Israel and the nation's land, see Zionism as a present work of God among the Jewish people, progressively restoring both the people and their land.

The matter is looked upon different ways by different individuals, though almost all would see that which has been occurring since Israeli statehood on May 14, 1948 as *God progressively fulfilling His O.T. promises concerning the Jewish people being regathered from the nations and restored to a land being healed* [some see a more restrictive form of the preceding — only certain O.T. restorative promises presently being fulfilled].

This in itself only goes to illustrate and show one thing: Numerous Christians today *seem to know very little about something which they should know a great deal about, leaving individuals with a capacity for spiritual understanding knowing far less concerning that which Scripture has to say in this realm than some individuals lacking this capacity for spiritual understanding* [ref. the previous quote from "True Torah Jews"].)

Christian Zionism

"Christian Zionism" is an expression which has been used by Christian groups for decades, thinking that they are aligning themselves with a work of God among the Jewish people through that presently occurring in Zionism.

The reality of the matter though is that God is not involved in present-day Zionism. Christians are out there alone on this one, involved in something secular, of the world, which is not a work of God at all.

From a Scriptural standpoint, a Christian Zionist today could only be *a Christian seeking to help Israel do that which God has not only forbidden but warned against the nation doing. He can only be seeking to help Israel enter into and be at home in an "empty, swept, and garnished house," with an impending punishment for doing this far exceeding anything that the nation has ever experienced, dating all the way back to the inception of the nation during Moses' day.*

In this respect, note Christ's closing recorded words to Israel's religious leaders *after* they had committed the "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" (Matt.

12:24-32), *before* He "went...out of the house," "sat by the seaside," and began to speak "in parables" (13:1-3).

The house of Israel, during time covered by events seen in these parables (the present dispensation and subsequent Tribulation), was to be left "empty, swept, and garnished ['put in order']" (v. 44; cf. Matt. 23:38). The house was to *stand vacant* ("empty"), and it was to be "swept" and "put in order" relative to its vacated state. *Nothing was to remain.*

And, once the house of Israel found itself in this condition (which would include *the people, the temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the land*), the nation was left with only the same previously existing recourse: *Repentance.*

But, should repentance not be forthcoming — with the Jewish people persisting in their disobedience, ignoring the reason for their condition, seeking to bring about a change in the existing situation themselves — *matters would only become worse.*

Matthew 12:43-45 reveals an "unclean spirit" dwelling in the house prior to the house being left "empty, swept, and garnished." Then, following this — because of Israel's refusal to repent, and because of Israel's efforts to bring about a change in the existing situation through naturalistic means — "seven other spirits," *more wicked than the first*, would take up residence in the house, with the latter state of the nation becoming *far worse* than the former state (v. 45).

(And the preceding is exactly what has happened and will happen in the Middle East. *The Jewish people have taken matters into their own hands, regardless of what God has said, and defiantly entered back into a house described in Matt. 12:43-45, in an unrepentant state.*

And numerous Christians today, not understanding the issue at all, are not only trying to help the Jewish people do this but think that they are aligning themselves with the Word of God by aligning themselves with the people of God in this manner, *expecting God's favor, by seeking to help Israel in the nation's efforts to circumnavigate God's present plans and purposes for the nation.*

Note that there is a vast difference between befriending and helping the Jewish people after a Biblical fashion and seeking to help the Jewish people circumnavigate God's Word and end up in a furnace heated seven times hotter than it was meant to be heated [Dan. 3:19ff]. The latter could conceivably be

seen as bordering on just the opposite of that which may have been meant — *bordering on anti-Semitism.*

"Seven" is a complete number, showing *the completeness of that which is in view.* "Seven times," or "seven other spirits," may refer to *completeness* rather than to a *literal seven-fold intensity* [cf. Lev. 26:21-42].

However, either way, matters would be quite similar. With *completeness* in view, *intensity* would be involved; and this intensity could, at times, possibly be even greater than seven-fold.)

God's Resumption of His Dealings with Israel

God is simply not dealing with Israel on a national basis today. Israel has been set aside — Daniel's Seventy-Week timepiece (Dan. 9:24-27) is in *stop-mode* — during which time God is dealing with *the one new man "in Christ,"* with the Spirit presently calling out a bride for God's Son (Gen. 23-25).

But one day *soon*, undoubtedly *very soon*, the Spirit's work in the preceding respect will be finished, the Church will be removed, Daniel's timepiece will once again be set in motion, and God will resume His dealings with Israel.

That day and time though is future, not present. And God's firstborn Sons (Christ, Israel, and the Church [following the adoption]) are to be raised up to live in His sight, not at the end of the second day (present time), but following the second day, *on the third day, on the third 1,000-year period dating back to Israel's crucifixion of her Messiah and the subsequent inception of the Church* (or, *on the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period, dating back to man's creation and subsequent fall* [cf. Hos. 5:13-6:2; Luke 24:20-31; John 1:29-2:11; 11:1-7; Heb. 4:4-9]).

(For additional information on this whole, overall subject, along with the numerous reasons from Scripture why God *cannot* be restoring the Jewish people and their land today, refer to the author's books, *Israel—from Death unto Life, Middle East Peace — How,*

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