

# CHRISTIANS AND ISRAEL

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Today, a problem of conscience poses itself to some Christians with regards to the current State of Israel. Some, sensitized by the "Hitlerian holocaust", feel compelled to recognize it; others - a small number - refuse to recognize the legitimacy of Israel for two reasons:

1. Because they are sensible to the injustice undergone by the Palestinian people, being chased out of their land by violence
2. By reasons related to faith in Jesus, and to the testimony that is due to Him.

As the subject of this study is delicate, and can arouse certain sensitivities, it is necessary, before addressing it, to say that it is not in an "anti-Semitic" spirit with which the problem is treated, but in a spirit of social and religious justice. We are for religious liberty for all and everywhere, even in Israel, where we hope that the millions of exiled Palestinians - Muslims and Christians - are repatriated, and whom the Israeli authorities refuse to reintegrate, **because they are not Jewish**. Is this not racism?!

To clarify the problem, we must ask ourselves the following question: "For a Christian, what is the recognition of the State of Israel?"

Is it to recognize its presence a *fait accompli*? Or to admit the legitimacy of this presence in Palestine today?

For the *fait accompli* camp, which is a historical phenomenon, we cannot but notice the existence, in Palestine, only since 1948, of a political entity that the United Nations, a laic institution, accepted to recognize as the State of Israel.

But what of the legitimacy of this Israeli presence on Palestinian soil?

For example: A man keeps a usurped object; we recognize that the object is in his possession; yet can we, without committing a grave injustice, approve the fact by recognizing **the legitimacy** of this possession?

Thus, the conscience problem that poses itself is the following: "Can we recognize the legitimacy of the State of Israel in Palestine?"

When we speak of the legitimacy of a State, we refer to a historical right on a given territory. In the sole case of Israel, we evoke a biblical right. We will therefore speak of the historical and biblical legitimacy of Israel.

## 1. The historical legitimacy

Not a single historical argument can be found that is sufficiently valid to justify, in the XXth century, an Israeli State in Palestine. It belongs to its Palestinian citizens in the same way as any other country is the property of its own people. Millions of Palestinians claim their legitimate, historical right over Palestine. These rights are pre-Biblical, and the Bible mentions Palestine and the Palestinians. The wars between the Palestinians and Jewish invaders are notorious (1 Samuel 28).

Before the coming of Christ, the Jews often attempted to form a State in Palestine. This took form as a kingdom around 1000 BC. But this kingdom split into two, less than a century later: a kingdom in the North in Samaria, and another in the South in Judaea, which disappeared one after the other. The first was destroyed in 722 BC, about two hundred years after its formation by the Assyrian invasion, and the second in 586 BC, about four hundred years after its formation, destroyed by the Babylonians who exiled the Jews to Babylon.



I. Shammout

It was not until the 1st century BC that the Jewish kingdom was re-established under the Roman Empire, with king Herod the Great in the year 37 BC. Yet this kingdom was again destroyed by the Roman troops of Titus in 70 AD. The Jews then fled Palestine to the four quarters of the world. But the Palestinians remained in Palestine.

Two thousand years later, in 1948, a State of Israel reappears in Palestine, claiming their right on the country to the Palestinians' detriment, who have always lived there. The Jews rushed into the Holy Land from the four quarters of the world, by chasing out the Palestinians by violence. They had to leave their homes in tragic conditions, to live in exile in Arab countries, in tents and slums. The grand powers aided the Jews to settle themselves in Palestine, and recognized the Hebrew State a quarter of an hour after its proclamation, the 14th of May 1948, as if Palestine and the Palestinians never existed.

And yet, the historical proofs of their existence are abundant. (Biblical: Numbers 13,21-33, social, cultural, folkloric, archaeological proofs: ancient and contemporary Palestinian money, etc. . . )

It should be noted that those who support Israel feel, in general, culpable towards the Jews; so they opted to lodge them in Palestine. But is it an act of justice to give to one what is torn away from others? Can we dispose of the other's property? An American, an English, or a French, for example, have the right to dispose of a Palestinian land that does not belong to him?

A question: why is it that those who want to satisfy their conscience by placing the Jews in a homeland, not give them a part of their own soil, American or European, since they can arrange it?

To this, the general response is in mentioning a biblical legitimacy: Israelis would have a biblical right over Palestine. Here, we are thus transferred from the historical plan, to the biblical plan, and most often by persons who are ignorant of the Bible.

It is therefore as Christians that the Jews ask us to recognize them a biblical right over Palestine. Today, Jesus Christ's people are solicited to render a testimony favorable to those who renounce Jesus. And this in the name of the Bible. Such is the test of faithfulness predicted by Christ for the end of Times. The Vatican itself has failed.

For Judaism is neither a race, nor a geographical land, but a religion which has found its perfect achievement in Christ Jesus. For a Christian, it is also absurd to recognize a Jewish State for Jews, or a Christian State for Christians as well.

## 2. The Biblical legitimacy

Many Christians support the State of Israel in good faith to help the "chosen people" on their "promised land". It is therefore important for us to recall what it means, in the light of the Gospel, by the notions of the Promised Land and the Chosen People.

### 2.1 The Promised Land

Palestine is not a land promised by the Bible to the Israelis of today, for the following two reasons:

1. The Promised Land is the symbol of a spiritual reality.
2. It was promised under condition.

## The Promised Land is spiritual

God promised Abraham and his descendants a land. The notion of this Promise Land, as intended by God, was explained throughout the centuries by the Bible, to appear finally as a spiritual, and not, a geographical reality. It is why St. Paul says: "By faith he arrived, as a foreigner, in the Promised Land, and lived there as if in a strange country, with Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. They lived there in tents while he looked forward to a city founded, designed and built by God" (Hebrew 11,9).

The spiritual aspect of the land already has its roots in the Old Testament. Therefore, the tribe of Levi did not possess a land, God Himself being their stake. In fact, the Bible says:

"To the tribe of Levi alone no inheritance was given; Yahweh the God of Israel was · their inheritance, as he had told them." (Joshua 13,14 & 33)

Similarly, Psalm 37 (36) says that it is the virtuous who will inherit the earth, and it does not state that all the Israelis in Palestine are virtuous. These virtues can be found all over. Finally, Jesus explains this fact by saying that the "Kingdom of God" is not a visible entity, but is found in a man's heart. To the Pharisees who ask him when the Kingdom of God is to appear, for them, meaning the universal Zionist empire, Jesus answers:

"The coming of the Kingdom of God does not admit of observation and there will be no one to say, 'Look, here! Look, there!' For, you must know, **the Kingdom of God is within you**" (Luke 17,20-21).

Some rabbis are found today, within Judaism, who underline the spiritual dimension of the Promised Land. Here is this commentary of the great rabbi Jonathan Eybeschutz: "It is written: 'And you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors' (Ezekiel 36,28). The Eternal had promised to give Abraham the land of Canaan, yet when Sarah died, he did not even possess a land to bury her in. How then, is the Promise accomplished? It is that there are two lands that port the name Israel: there is the Heavenly land of Israel, and the terrestrial land of Israel below. The Holy Land is the Heavenly Land, where the Divine Palace resides, and from which the sources of Wisdom flow. It is this spiritual Land that was promised and given to our ancestors, and not the material land" ("Le Royaume de Dieu et le Royaume de César", by the rabbi Emmanuel Levyne, editions "Le Reveil", Beirut).

As for Abraham's descendants, the heirs of the Promised Land, this is also a spiritual notion. A Christian should not search for it in a historical or ethnic genealogy that passes the heritage from father to son, but according to the faith in Jesus' Messianism. Indeed, Saint Paul says: "Merely by belonging to Christ you are the posterity of Abraham, the heirs he was promised" (Galatians 3,29).

Thus for a Christian, any Jew who refuses to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, and is awaiting another, should not be considered as Abraham's descendant, nor heir of the Promised Land, whether spiritual or material.

## The promise is conditional

God disinherited the Jews even before the coming of Jesus Christ because the land was promised **on the condition** of fidelity to the Covenant. This condition was not respected; the Covenant was thus **broken** by the Jews. God then announced a New Covenant, one established by Jesus, still refused by the Jews.

**The condition** Suppose that the Promised Land is geographic, we should not forget that the promise was made under condition. Actually, Moses had said to the Jews: "**If** you do not keep and observe all the words of this Law... Yahweh will strike you down with monstrous plagues, **you and your descendants...**"

The conjunction "**if**" demonstrates that the promise is conditional. Moses continues: "For **not obeying** the voice of Yahweh your God, just as Yahweh took delight in giving you prosperity... so now he will take delight in bringing you ruin and destruction. You **will be torn from the land** which you are entering..." (Deuteronomy 28,58-64).

It is thus clear that in the case of treason, not only is it a question of land, but of painful punishments and expulsion from this land, for the Jews and their descendants. These are the terms of the Covenant.

**The break up of the Covenant** The Jews did not respect the conditions of the Covenant. The Bible says frankly that they betrayed God by worshipping the idols of neighboring countries. They even offered their children in sacrifice, thus imitating pagan rites (See 1 Kings 16,30-34 / Jeremiah 7,30-32). Even Psalm 106 (105) addresses the outcome of the Jewish people's infidelities: "They defied the Most High... They made a (*golden*) calf at Horeb... They accepted the yoke of Baal... Serving the pagans' idols, they found themselves trapped into sacrificing their own sons and daughters to demons... offering them to the idols of Canaan..."

This is why God, speaking through the prophets, hurled his wrath against Israel:

"Now listen to this, you princes of the House of Jacob... you who loathe justice and pervert all that is right, you who build Zion with blood, Jerusalem with iniquity... and say: 'Is not Yahweh in our midst?' ... Because of this, since the fault is yours, Zion will become plowland, Jerusalem a heap of rubble..." (Micah 3,9-12).

God says again in the Book of Isaiah: "I reared sons, I brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib, Israel knows nothing...' A sinful nation, a people weighed down with guilt, a breed of wrongdoers, perverted sons. They have abandoned Yahweh..." (Isaiah 1,2-4).

**Rupture and the New Covenant.** After having denounced Israel's infidelity, God declared through Jeremiah the rupture of the Covenant by the Jews. He announced the coming of a New Covenant, **that will not be like the first**, since a believer's share is not a land, but God Himself: "See, the days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks—when I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel, but not a Covenant like the one I made with their ancestors... They **broke** that Covenant of mine... This is the Covenant I will make... Deep **within them** I will plant my Law, writing it **on their hearts**. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31,31-33).

It is evident that this New Covenant differs from the first, since "it will not be like it". One of the differences resides in the fact that it does not promise any geographical land, but in return, it is God who gives Himself to all those who believe in Jesus, Founder of the New Covenant.

The Jews still refused Christ's Covenant, because it did not promise them any geographical territory, nor does it grant them the "privilege", to establish the world Zionist empire that they wish.

## 2.2 The Chosen People

The divine election never had the objective of a Hebraic people as some still think. God's choice fell **on a man**, Abraham the Syrian, and not on a Jewish nation that did not exist before Abraham. It is therefore wrong to believe that Judaism is a race; it is why the Bible reminds the Jews that their ancestor Abraham is **Aramaean**, that is to say **a Syrian**. Moses insists on this point when he tells the Jews: "In the presence of Yahweh your God, you will then pronounce these words: "My father (*Abraham*) was a wandering Aramaean." (Deuteronomy 26,5)

The purpose of Abraham's choice was to form a social environment to welcome the Messiah. The aim was not therefore the people, but the Christ who "came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him" (John 1,11).

But to all those who have received Jesus as Messiah, independently of their race, He "gave power to become children of God" (John 1,12), and thus form the universal people of God. According to the Gospel, God's people are those of Jesus.

In the past, Jesus told the Jews:

"If you do not believe that I am He (*the Christ*) you will die in your sins", and: "If God were your Father, you would love me..." He finally declares to them: "You are from your father, the devil, and you prefer to do what your father wants" (John 8,24-44)

Today, what do Christians tell them?... "You are our elder brothers", Pope John Paul II told them in the synagogue of Rome. How can a disciple of Jesus and His negator be brothers?

"If anyone comes to you bringing a different doctrine, you must not receive him in your house or even give him a greeting. To greet him would make you a partner in his wicked work" (2 John 10-11).

For Jesus, to whom we bear witness, the true Jew is the disciple of Jesus. In the Apocalypse, does not Jesus denounce the Jews as "people who falsely claim to be Jews, but are really members of the synagogue of Satan?" (Revelation 2,9 & 3,9).

This is why Saint Paul says: "Merely by belonging to Christ you are the posterity of Abraham, the heirs he was promised" (Galatians 3,29). He therefore invites the Jews to believe in Jesus, so to be "grafted" onto the people of God (Romans 11,23).

It is then not a question of repelling the Jews as a people, but Israel as a State. The Jews, on the contrary, are invited to follow Jesus to become part of God's people. Love and Truth incite us not to sink them in their error, by letting them believe that they are still the Chosen People, in return to their Promised Land.

For we should understand that the Jews, who continue denying that Jesus is the Christ, port the specific characteristic of the Antichrist announced by St John: "Who is the liar if not the one who claims that Jesus is not the Christ? This is the Antichrist" (1 John 2,22).



All Christians and all Muslims recognize that Jesus is the Christ. We find some disciples of Jesus even in Buddhism and Hinduism. Gandhi often spoke of his admiration of Jesus, and did not hide his deception of Christians: "Give me Jesus, and keep the Christians for yourselves", he had said.

John's prophecy on the Antichrist cannot be applied on those who recognize that Jesus is the Christ, but on those who refuse his messianism. This characteristic is applied solely on the Jews who, explicitly, deny Jesus and await another Messiah. They are the Antichrist.

We should not be astonished of the fact that the Jews who do not believe in Jesus, are not the chosen people. Jesus had said with regards to a Roman officer who manifested his faith in Him:

"I tell you solemnly, nowhere in Israel have I found faith like this. And I tell you that many will come from east and west to take their places with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the kingdom of heaven; but the subjects of the kingdom (*of Israel*) will be turned out into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth." (Matthew 8,10-12).

The opposition between the Kingdom of God and that of Israel's is at the center of the dispute between Jesus and the Jews. This opposition manifests in the words of Christ, when he denounces the subjects of the Israeli kingdom, and dooms them to external darkness (Matthew 8,11).

Thus, with the coming of Jesus, the concept of a chosen people transformed from a tribal and chauvinistic notion, to a universal one. It is why Jesus condemns the "subjects of the kingdom" of Israel who wanted to understand Judaism in a nationalist manner: "You are from your father, the devil, and you prefer to do what your father wants" (John 8,44). Those who have the devil as father, cannot be the "elder brothers" of those who have Jesus as Father.

It is also why Jesus always refused to be the king of a Zionist Empire: "My Kingdom is not of this world", He had said (John 18,36) (See the text: "[The Tragedy of Jesus](#)").

The prophets had already extended the election to peoples of all races. Isaiah, eight centuries BC, had not proclaimed this oracle of God: "I am coming to gather the nations of every language... And some of them I will make priests and Levites, says Yahweh." (Isaiah 66,18-21) Thus, the choice of ministers of cults amongst non-Jewish nations, as Christians practice, is a proof of the authenticity of Jesus' universal priesthood.

## 2.3 What to conclude then?

St Paul responds: "What follows? It was not Israel as a whole that found what it was seeking, but only the chosen few." (Roman 11,7)

Thus his elected are Jesus' disciples.

## 3. Israel, sign of the times

Since the Jews who are gathered today in Palestine from the four quarters of the earth are not the Chosen People on their Promised Land, then what does the re-appearance of Israel mean?

It's a sign of the times.

We often speak of the signs of the times, without specifying which times are concerned. This expression evokes the "end of times".

Speaking of these times, Jesus had said: "Jerusalem will be trampled down by the pagans (*the Israelis*), until their time is complete" (Luke 21,24). Israel therefore incarnates paganism by its refusal of Christ.

After the advent of Christ Jesus, the pagans are then those who deny that Jesus is the Christ; they are the symbol of paganism in its various aspects, the Antichrist "par excellence".

When the Jews forbade the Apostles to speak of Jesus, the latter, praying, said to God: "In this very city, Herod and Pontius Pilate made an alliance with the pagan nations and the **peoples of Israel against** your holy servant, Jesus, whom You anointed" (Acts 4,27).

The word "**against**" reveals the spirit of the **Anti**-Christ that dwells in "the people (goyim) of Israel"; "the people", which signifies the "Pagans of Israel" (See the text "[The Antichrist Yesterday and Today](#)").

The Jews want us to believe that their return to Palestine is a "great sign" and the prodigious accomplishment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. Now we know that the prophecies in question concern the return of the Jews from their exile in Babylon in the VIth Century BC. Let us not be fooled.

For it is rather time now, to understand the prophecies of the New Testament that tell us of the end of the Pagans. We can thus understand who these pagans are. Jesus told us that "the abomination of the desolation shall be in the Holy Places" (Matthew 24,15). On the other hand, the Apocalypse also reveals that the Antichrist will gather his subjects in the holy places, in Palestine, and specifically in the beloved City, Jerusalem, where they are assembled by Satan, and not by God, from the four quarters of the earth, for war, not for peace (Revelation 20,7-9). (See the text "[The Key of the Apocalypse](#)").

## 4. The attitude of every true Christian

Finally, what should be the attitude of a Christian committed to Christ Jesus towards the current State of Israel?

This is a moment to meditate, to put into practice, these words addressed by the Book of Revelation to those who still want to be witnesses of Jesus:

"You must prophesy **again** against many peoples..." (Revelation 10,11)

If the Lord commands his Apostles, in these Apocalyptic times, to **prophesy "again"**, it is because the majority among them have allowed themselves to be seduced by the Antichrist, whom they did not recognize. Instead of denouncing it, they establish good relations with it. The Revelation comes then, to remind them of their duty as Apostles and witnesses of Jesus; after having kept their silence, they must, today, witness **again**, against their enemy: Israel.

When Christ came, His own people did not accept Him. Today "his own people" welcome the Antichrist...

No Christian can recognize the legitimacy of a Jewish State in Palestine without denying their Christianity, for it would implicitly admit that the disciples of Jesus are not the prophetic Israel and that Jesus is not the Christ. Jesus had said: "No man can serve two masters"; we cannot serve the Kingdom of Jesus and that of Israel at the same time. We cannot safeguard the testimony to Jesus' Messianism without denouncing Israel's false messianism. The Jews know it, and the Christians ignore it.



For a matter of such importance, neutrality or silence denote a lukewarm stance: “I know all about you: how you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other, but since you are neither, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth”, says the Lord in Revelation 3,15.

A choice, therefore, should be made, and we will be judged according to our commitment: it is not by recognizing Israel that a Christian remains faithful to his testimony, but by inviting the Jews to recognize Jesus.

Pierre (1978)

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