

Opinion on Israel: I'd Rather Be Righteous Than Cool

As soon as the aircraft's wheels touched the ground, cheers filled the plane. I had just arrived in the Holy Land as part of a student trip with Christians United for Israel to learn firsthand about the Jewish state's biblical and modern history as well as its national security challenges.

Nothing can compare to reading the biblical words of Jesus in the exact place in which He spoke them—as I did on the Mount of Beatitudes and in the Garden of Gethsemane. Nothing discredits the media's black-and-white portrayal of the modern history and politics of this region like hearing directly from local leaders and experts—as I did when meeting with Jerusalem's deputy mayor, Naomi Tsur, who works alongside Palestinians to ensure everyone in the holy city gets what they need from their local government.

And nothing puts into stark relief the national security challenges the Jewish state faces like walking beside Israel's security fence—as I did with its designer, Israeli Army Col. (res) Danny Tirza, who explained that the fence has decreased successful Palestinian terror attacks by more than 95 percent.

I am an American Christian woman. I believe in God-given equal rights for all, regardless of race, religion or gender; these are my values. As one looks across the Middle East, there is but one nation that shares these values with me: Israel. It is upon these values that my support for that nation is built.

The foundation of Christian Zionism is biblical. The God of the Bible is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has demonstrated a perpetual love for Israel and the Jewish people, beginning with God's promises to Abraham and continuing through Paul's instruction to Christians to

remember that God has not forsaken His chosen people. The Lord has manifested throughout Scripture and world history that He will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse her (Gen. 12:3).

Today, Christian support for Israel—especially in America—is widespread. However, this is a relatively recent historical development that is challenged by Christians who embrace the false teaching of replacement theology, which claims God has replaced Israel with the church.

Early on in church history, Gentile Christians began persecuting Jews through forced conversion, displacement and discrimination. Those Christians who did not actively participate in the oppression were often silent and apathetic in its face. To this day, this remains a tragic problem. For example, in recent weeks, an arm of the Presbyterian Church (USA) released a guide, “Zionism Unsettled,” that uses half-truths and whole lies to demonize Israel and her supporters. In addition, conferences like “Christ at the Checkpoint” seduce unsuspecting Christians to embrace anti-Semitic replacement theology.

We as Christians need to learn from our past mistakes and vigorously choose not to repeat them. When our brothers and sisters in Christ are lured by anti-Semitism, we need to guide them back to God’s Word and blessing. We need to confront those who spread falsehoods about Israel—such as the disgusting lie that Israel is an apartheid state—with the truth that we have seen with our own eyes.

It may be trendy to oppose Israel’s existence. It may be chic to sit in our safe and protected homes and condemn the Israelis for their security measures. It may be easy to sit quietly as professors denigrate the decisions of Jerusalem’s democratically elected government. However, God never instructed us to be trendy, chic or take the easy path. He commanded us to be righteous.

So let us stand up to those who, by advancing replacement theology, call God a promise breaker. Let us not be so arrogant as to condemn—lest we be condemned—Israeli soldiers when we know nothing of the dangers they and their families face every day. Let us never be silent in the face of Israel's demonization.

Unless we as Christians go to the ultimate authority on Israel—God—we are in danger of just repeating someone else's ignorance. By searching the Scriptures, we discover God's heart for Israel and our God-given responsibility to pray for and support Israel and the Jewish people.

We should be Zionists because we are Christians. I am a Zionist because I am a Christian.

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