

Ron Phillips: In Solidarity With Israel

Here are a few interesting statistics:

- Of the more than 850 Nobel Prize winners since 1901, better than 20 percent have been Jews.
- One-fourth of the Fields Medal winners, which is an award for mathematics, have been Jewish.
- One-third of the conductors of the leading symphonies in the United States have been Jewish.
- Nearly two-thirds of Broadway's longest-running musicals were written by Jews.
- 38 percent of Best Director Oscars have gone to Jewish directors.
- Nearly 30 percent of Kennedy Center Honors have gone to Jews.

I could go on and on—Grammys, Pulitzer Prizes and more.

With names like Albert Einstein, Jonas Salk, Sigmund Freud, Albert Sabin, Levi Strauss and countless others, there is no denying that, in spite of their small percentage of the population (Jews comprise only 1/2 of 1 percent of the world's population), the world has indeed been blessed beyond measure by the existence and contributions of the Jewish people.

However, in spite of not just these accomplishments, but what the Bible plainly says about Israel and the Jews, I have observed with sadness the use of *replacement theology* among Western Christian conservatives.

Replacement theology is the belief that the church replaced Israel and that Israel no longer exists. One only has to read Romans 9-11 and Ephesians 2 to understand that this belief is totally without biblical support.

The rise of replacement theology had its roots in the edicts of Constantine, who banned the observance of Jewish holy days that were observed in the early church. Across the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and even Protestant worlds, the appalling silence during WWII and the Holocaust gives witness to their embrace of replacement theology.

“First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”

—Martin Niemöller, German Protestant pastor

Many voices coming from the Arab church in the Middle East embrace replacement theology. Simply stated, they say, “The Jewish people have no claim to that small parcel of land [less than 1 percent of the Middle East]—they should be driven out.” However, not only is this approach contrary to Scripture, but it also flies in the face of history.

When has there ever been a country of Palestine? If East Jerusalem belongs to a “Palestine,” why didn’t the Arabs claim it from Jordan from 1948 to 1967? For 19 years, there was never a claim.

A brief look at history—including Scripture—reveals the following facts:

- God gave the land to Israel forever. Its ownership is unconditional, while possession of the land carried conditions.
- There is no Palestine in Middle Eastern history.
- The Ottoman Empire ruled the land for centuries until it was defeated by the British early in the 20th century.
- The Ottoman’s were Turks. Can anyone find a Palestinian claim for the land in the entire Ottoman history? Where

was the outcry then for a Palestine?

- Early in the 20th century, the Balfour Declaration partitioned the defeated Ottoman Empire into lands for Jews and Arabs.

All of the modern Middle East—with the exception of Egypt, Israel and Syria—was carved up by Winston Churchill:

- Iran: Persia
- Iraq: Part of Assyria
- Jordan: Intended to be the Palestinian territory, it is now ruled by the Hashemites from Saudi Arabia.
- Saudi Arabia: Midian

Palestine was how the Romans referred to the land in 116 A.D.

Rise and Terror of Anti-Semitism

In spite of overwhelming evidence, some naïve evangelicals and their liberal friends choose to ignore Palestinian support of the terror that brought down the Twin Towers. They totally reject biblical eschatology that clearly prophesies the very scenario we are experiencing today. Think about it—while every special interest group is vociferously defended (homosexuals, environmentalists, abortionists, Muslims, etc.), where are the voices for millions of displaced Christians from the Sudan, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, the West Bank, Afghanistan and other Muslim countries (not to mention the current atrocities against Christians in North Korea)? Where are all those so-called Palestinians from? There are now more people claiming Palestinian heritage than lived in Israel before the 6-Day War.

The Truth

The fact is, Islam wants Jerusalem, or *Al Quds*, as they call it. We have watched the Muslim Brotherhood try to destroy Egypt and take down Syria because of its secular government. This same philosophy is embraced in Gaza and other places in

and near Israel.

Impossibility

There can be a Palestine territory in Israel much like the French Territory in Canada. However, the land is too small, too close and too infiltrated with terrorists to ever have a separate entity. The people of Israel have a right to protect themselves, and such a scenario would make viable defense that much more difficult.

Evangelicals claiming the authority of Scripture would do well to embrace the fact that the only biblical position is support of Israel. While I do recognize there has been injustice and unfairness on both sides, the land has belonged to Israel and the Jewish people ever since God promised it to Abraham in Genesis 12. As believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we have no logical choice than to stand on the side of Israel with regard for their birthright.

Postscript

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” (Matt. 7:1-5)

For all of their cries about justice, equality and fairness, certain evangelicals and others who oppose the Jews might do well to focus their attention on America. Are they prepared to return lands to native Americans? What about the slaughter of Native Americans at places like Wounded Knee?

How does one criticize the concentration camps of Germany yet say nothing of the American “reservation system”? (It is a fact that the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota has the highest poverty rate of any place in the Western Hemisphere except for Haiti.) In light of the way our government has treated the indigenous people of this nation, the voices that accuse and criticize Israel for human rights violations are crying out, not from a moral high ground, but from the quicksand of hypocrisy.

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