

Prophecy in Perspective

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An Email Newsletter

Our Times - *Prophecy in current events*

"So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel..."
(God's command to protect Israel, Ezekiel 33:7b)

There are increasing efforts to relax restrictions on qualifications for citizenship in Israel. There is also growing numbers within the Church that wish to replace Israel, and God's covenant people, the Jews, with the Church. First let's look at an article from the Jerusalem Post which addresses a disturbing trend to relax qualifications for citizenship in Israel for non-Jewish immigration. Is the motive here in the interest of more equal rights in the Jewish nation? Or is the intention to allow potential terrorists to infiltrate and endanger the security of the tiny and already highly vulnerable nation of Israel?

In Israel, the High Court of Justice decided on Wednesday (Jan. 11, 2012) to "uphold the Citizenship and Entry Law, which severely restricts the right of Palestinians married to Israelis to receive Israeli citizenship." ("Protecting Israel," *The Jerusalem Post*, Jan. 13, 2012) Many might want to criticize the Court by accusing them of discrimination or racism. Yet I believe this is a ruling that is to be applauded by those of us who love Israel and believe that Bible prophecy strongly predicts the rebirth of Israel in the latter days.

Being familiar with the prophecies of the latter days we know that Israel and the Jews will be hated and maligned by their enemies who will actually seek the total destruction of the only distinctly Jewish nation in the world (John 16:2).

There have been 54 cases in the years between 2001 and 2010 where Palestinians "who received Israeli citizenship via marriage (or whose parents did) were involved in terror activities." On April 1, 2002 a driver of a car bomb who killed 16 Israelis and wounded 40 was a Hamas terrorist who had married an Israeli and carried a blue Israeli identity card. (*The Jerusalem Post*, Jan. 13, 2012)

I commend the Israeli High Court of Justice for upholding this very important restriction for the protection of the nation of Israel from the infiltration of enemies of God's people, the Jews. The Bible predicts the rise of one in the future who will have widespread acceptance in Israel and throughout the world, but who will position himself as the most horrible terrorist of all time. This will be the Antichrist who will persecute and terrorize the Jews for their destruction. Zechariah 13:8 predicts that fully two-thirds of Israel will be destroyed through this Great Tribulation persecution of the Jews.

Yet, wonderfully the Lord Jesus Christ will return with His Church to the earth to rescue the remaining Jews and will destroy the Beast and all who follow him and who fight against Israel. Again Zechariah says: ***"Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (this is the same mountain in Israel from which Jesus ascended and to which the angels promised He would one day return in Acts 1:11), which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, making a very large valley... Then you shall flee through My mountain valley..."*** (Zechariah 14:3-5).

As believers in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to believe every word of the Bible, much of which is prophecy and much of which predicts the future re-gathering of Israel, the intense hatred of the world, and even so-called Christians against them. We need to be "watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem" through prayer and other means of support for God's people, the Jews.

The Church Today - Doctrine and Prophecy Today

**"God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew."
(Paul affirms God's promises for Israel - Romans 11:2)**

Prophecy in Perspective has before addressed an issue that is of utmost importance to the Church and to Israel today. This is the issue of Replacement Theology. This is the unbiblical teaching gaining many adherents these days, teaching that the Church has replaced or superseded Israel.

Most who are from the Catholic and Reformed Theological traditions today hold to this view and have for many years. But, today, many are joining the Palestinian mantra that the nation of Israel has no spiritual or Biblical validity. Growing numbers are writing and teaching against Christians who support Israel. They say that those of us who view Israel as being fulfillment of God's promises, are actually contributing to division and conflict in the world today. They say that the idea of a national Israel in today's world is unbiblical. For example, the Church of Scotland has stated officially that "The Christian Zionist worldview has cataclysmic consequences for a religiously integrated and lasting peace in Palestine/Israel." (General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 2007) How can this statement be supported by the Bible? It cannot be! It is the opinion of men who have ignored and misrepresented the clear teachings of the Word of God. But such is the spirit of apostasy that is working in the Church today in preparation for the global Church and the Antichrist.

A recent article of Dave Hunt's *Berean Call* newsletter states, "Anglican priest, Stephen Sizer, whose church is a member of the Evangelical Alliance and the Willow Creek Association of Churches (Lynne Hybels, the wife of Willow Creek Community Church's pastor, is a supporter of Sizer. She rejects the modern state of Israel as a fulfillment of prophecy). His first book, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* received numerous endorsements from evangelical leaders." It is noted that, reviewers of this book "praised it as the 'most important and most comprehensive on the subject to date,' and as a 'scholarly treatment to counteract the *rabid prophecy pack*.'" This is a mocking reference to those of us who believe in the prophecies of Israel's latter day restoration as a nation. Sizer, and many others believe that this view is actually dangerous and threatens world peace. Paul Wilkinson, in his important book on this subject has named this viewpoint, "Christian Palestinianism." (Paul Wilkinson's booklet, *Prophets Who Prophesy Lies n My Name--Christian Palestinianism and the Anti-Israel Crusade*. Available through the Berean Call, 800-937-6638, or www.thebereancall.org)

To be clear, the teaching of "Christian Palestinianism" is against the idea that God is has a plan for Israel as a distinct nation. Christian Palestinianism teaches that God is essentially through with the Jews as God's chosen people and that the Church is the new Israel. This is also known as Replacement Theology. Supporters of this view are now calling our beliefs in the re-establishment of Israel, "Christian Zionism." Sizer condemns Christian Zionism as "pernicious," a totally unbiblical menace," "a powerful force that encourages the destruction of millions of people," and "one of the most dangerous and heretical movements in the world which fuels the Arab-Israeli conflict."

Famous Reformed scholar John Stott, has characterized Christian Zionism as "biblically anathema (cursed) to the Christian faith. Hank Hanegraaff of the Christian Research Institute, host of the 'Bible Answer Man' writes, 'Sizer's Christian Zionism dramatically demonstrates how a politicized religious movement with a dubious pedigree is a prescription for disaster...Christian Zionist beliefs and behaviors are the antithesis of biblical Christianity.'" It is sad to say that even D. James Kennedy (deceased) and R.C. Sproul are among the growing numbers who support this unbiblical and hostile attitude toward a re-established Israel as well as toward students of prophecy who believe in the truth that God, who has chosen Israel, will never abandon them. In 2002, Dr. Kennedy issued "An Open Letter to Evangelicals and Other Interested Parties: The People of God, the Land of Israel, and the Impartiality of the Gospel." "This statement denied that the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (i.e., the Jews) have any special blessings of place in prophecy, much less any claim upon the land of Israel. It was initially signed by 71 evangelical leaders, among them R. C. Sproul and Michael S. Horton:

Section VI: The inheritance promises that God gave Abraham...do not apply to any particular ethnic group, but to the church of Jesus Christ, the true Israel....Section IX: The entitlement of any one ethnic or religious group to

territory in the Middle East called the "Holy Land" cannot be supported by Scripture. In fact, the land promises specific to Israel [meaning the Church] in the Old Testament were fulfilled under Joshua." (Excerpts from "Chrislam? Christian Palestinianism??," *The Berean Call Newsletter*, January 2012, pp. 1-2)

Here we can see the basis of what I consider an example of the growing hostility and outright rejection of the prophetic Scriptures regarding Israel's continued existence and identity as God's distinct people.

It is indeed both sad and disappointing to realize that there are many otherwise trusted men of God who have bought into the Catholic and Covenantal viewpoints that the Church is to be regarded simply as a replacement for Israel and that the Jews in Israel today are not in any way the result of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

Yet, the Bible is clear that God has declared 70 weeks (490 years) for Israel until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. There is, according to the prophet Daniel (chapter 9) to be one more week, or seven years more to go where God will work in a supernatural way for all the world to see through restoring the Jews to their homeland, Israel, and to begin again to unfold His prophetic plan for the world through them.

The Bible nowhere teaches that the Church replaces Israel! But Israel has been temporarily put aside during the dispensation of the Church Age while God is gathering in the Gentiles and many Jews into the Church. God has not forsaken Israel! The Apostle Paul asked this question: "*I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not!*" (*Romans 11:1*) Paul stated clearly "*that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*" (*Romans 11:25*) We see that God has partially blinded Israel to the truths about Jesus Christ and the gospel, but He in no way has rejected Israel! Further, neither Paul, nor Jesus, nor any other New Testament writer ever states that the Church and Israel are the same or that the Church has replaced Israel. In fact, Paul clearly states that this blindness in Israel is distinctly designed by God to eventually get them saved. While many Jews are coming to Christ along with the Gentiles to build the Church, God will once again work through Israel more fully after the "*fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*" As the Williams Translation has it, "*and so, in that way all Israel will be saved*" (*Romans 11:26*). In other words, throughout the Church Age, God will be stirring the Jews to jealousy as a people, but, after the "*fullness of the Gentiles has come in,*" or, after the conclusion of the Church Age, and after the removal of the Church from the earth to heaven, then God will restart His prophetic time clock for Israel as spoken of in Daniel 9 (1 Thess. 4:17; 2 Thess. 2:1; Titus 2:13).

Again, when all of the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and the Church Age is completed (*Romans 11*), then all Israel will be saved. Even now God is graciously re-gathering the Jews back to Israel and working for their establishment as a nation and for their salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Now they are gathering mainly in unbelief in Christ and are taking the shape of a secular state, just as predicted in *Ezekiel 37*. The salvation of most of the Jews in Israel will occur after the rapture of the Church and during the Great Tribulation period when God seals the 144,000 Jewish preachers from the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Bible consistently maintains the distinction between Israel and the Church. It is only through the spiritualization of prophecy that Catholic and Reformed/Covenant theology is able to come up with Replacement Theology. I believe this theology to be unbiblical and even Satanic at its root. It serves to delegitimize the existence of Israel and make void the prophetic oracles of God regarding His plan for His people. Further, Replacement Theology within the Christian Church emboldens the enemies of Israel, namely the Muslims, to step up their hateful rhetoric toward Israel and even legitimizes their calls for Israel's destruction. God has covenanted that He will keep Israel as His people and His nation forever, "*For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable*" (*Romans 11:29*). (See also *Genesis 12:1-3*; *Ezekiel 37*; *Romans 9-11*).

In March of 2012 there is planned a gathering of people who support Christian Palestinianism. They will renounce those who support the existence of Israel as a nation. Among them will be Stephen Sizer, who's book we quoted earlier in this article. It is important that we who believe the prophetic Scriptures continue to support the nation of Israel through our prayers and even our financial means. God will not forsake His people, but, as we are witnessing in these latter days, there is growing hostility toward the existence and well being of God's Chosen people, the Jews. "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee*" (*Psalm 122:6*).

Upward Call - How to walk in view of Prophecy

'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'
(Jesus teaches there is no communication by the dead - Luke 16:31)

The Bible tells us: "***Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons***" (***1 Timothy 4:1***). This and other prophecies warn latter day believers to look for the arising of false teachings that will draw people away from the truth of the Bible into other strange beliefs. Some of those who will do this will even be from among those that we consider trustworthy evangelicals within the Church. Paul stated in Acts 20:30 that, "***Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.***"

I have attempted to caution believers about books like the recent Heaven is For Real. I stated that we can expect to see other books along these same lines that will promote extra-biblical messages and information which not only is not taught in the Scriptures but is, at times, contradictory to Scripture. Just a few years ago we saw how the heretical book: The Shack became very popular reading among evangelicals. It is still promoted by leaders who seem willing to encourage venerable and hurting Christians to suspend their biblical discernment in order to offer false direction and promote works which clearly contradict the Bible.

There is a new book out called Have Heart, Bridging the Gulf Between Heaven and Earth. In this book, the authors, Steve and Sarah Berger write about how they tragically lost their 19-year-old son Josiah in an auto accident in 2009. They relate in this book how they and others have experienced visitations from Josiah in dreams and even during church services. I just wanted to restate here, as I pointed out in our last edition of *Prophecy in Perspective*, about the need for **discernment** in 2012. The Bible cannot be clearer on this issue that those who die do not communicate with the living on earth. Those who practiced seeking communication with the deceased in the Old Testament were strongly discouraged and even condemned for doing so. Isaiah 8:19 says: "***And when they say to you, 'Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter, 'should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?"*** (see also *Deuteronomy 18:10-12*).

In Luke 16, the rich man in the torment section of Hades asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to tell his brothers about the suffering that awaits them if they do not repent. But "***Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'***" (***Luke 16:29***) However, the rich man in torment apparently did not believe in the sufficiency of the Word of God, so he requested another manner of communication through the means of one coming back from the dead. But Abraham (and Jesus) flatly rejected that option. He responded: "***If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.***" (***Luke 16:31***)

May we as students of the Word of God and of Bible prophecy be faithful to uphold the sufficiency of Scripture and not seek additional revelations or communications from any spirit, or dream, no matter how emotionally inviting it is to do so. Paul warned: "***And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light***" (***2 Corinthians 11:14***). He cautioned us in his letter to the Thessalonians, "***we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter as if from us***" (***2 Thessalonians 2:1b-2a***). So, let's be careful not so easily to buy into the current trends of deceptions that are coming up in these latter days. The devil would delight in getting you away from the Word of God and into other revelations, writings, dreams, visions, etc. His intention is clearly laid out in Scripture that in the latter times "***false christ and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect***" (***Matthew 24:24***). We can be sure that the devil will use any supernatural phenomena or demonic teaching he can to impress people and to prepare for the revealing of the future false messiah, the Antichrist. (For further research on this and related subjects, go to <http://www.lighthousetrailsresearch.com/>)

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(Note: If you would like to interact with Dr. Downing concerning this newsletter, views, etc. you can "blog" with him at prophecyinperspective.com. If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter at no charge, please send your email address to: sgdowning@bellsouth.net. Also, you can purchase his latest book, "Good News From a Far Country", a study in the book of Daniel [\$15] by contacting him.)