

ZIONISM: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

We, at Ariel Ministries, get many letters asking us to explain what Zionism is. There is much confusion among believers as to the nature of Zionism and whether or not they should support it or stand against it. Let us begin by discussing what it is not.

First, on November 10, 1975, the United Nations compared Zionism to South African apartheid and determined that “Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination.” This UN resolution was supported by the former USSR, its allies, and the Arab nations. Between 1948 and 1973, the Arab states had tried four times to defeat Israel with the force of arms and failed each time. They then began a propaganda campaign equating Zionism with racism. Thanks to their oil, the Arab nations had the power to bribe and to intimidate other UN member nations. As a result, the victims of racism were accused of being racists themselves. In one stroke, then, the United Nations legalized the destruction of Israel by her enemies. By condemning Zionism’s right to exist, they condemned Israel’s right to exist, for it is impossible to separate Zionism from Israel. The United Nations ceased to be an organization seeking justice and peace for the world and has instead become a tool for the destruction of existing nations. It is guilty of playing into the hands of Satan, who will, during the Great Tribulation, organize a world-wide invasion of Israel (Zech. 12:1-3; 14:1-2). Even though the UN resolution was repealed in 1991, the damage had already been done. Zionism had been declared to be racist.

Second, some claim that Zionism is a world-wide Jewish conspiracy to undermine Western culture in order to allow for a communist takeover. In these circles, Zionism is equated with communism. Much literature is being published propounding this belief by anti-Semitic groups, and this writer has had the ugly experience of having to see and read much of this hate literature. One of the most famous works that gives this view of Zionism is known as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. It purports to be the record or “protocols” of Jewish elders who came

together to develop a program for world domination; however, it has been proven to be a Russian forgery by anti-Semitic czarists who were trying to propagandize the masses against the communists. From this came the popular view that communism was a Jewish conspiracy.¹

If Zionism is neither racism nor a conspiracy to control the world, what is it? And what most believers want to know is this: Is Zionism biblical? Every believer who takes the Bible literally and seriously must answer with “yes.” The root word of the term Zionism is “Zion.” Although the word “Zion” originally referred to the mount upon which the Jewish Temple stood, it eventually became equivalent to the name “Jerusalem.” Biblically, Zionism is concerned with the land of Zion and with its capital, Jerusalem.

Zionism describes a feeling. It is an expression of a yearning placed into every Jewish heart by God Himself. Unfulfilled Zionism is being outside the land of Israel. Fulfilled Zionism is being in and living in the land. It is an expression of the longing and yearning that the Jewish people have had in the past and still have for their homeland. Zionism existed during the Egyptian bondage. It existed during the Babylonian captivity. It exists in these days of the Dispersion which began in A.D. 70. As soon as a Jew expresses a desire to go back to his land regardless of his reason, he is expressing Zionism. Any Jew who looks toward and identifies himself with the Promised Land, whether he knows it or not, whether he admits it or not, is a Zionist.

A typical Zionist passage of Scripture is found in Psalm 137:1-6:

¹ *By the rivers of Babylon,*

There we sat down, yea, we wept,

When we remembered Zion.

² *Upon the willows in the midst thereof*

We hanged up our harps.

³ *For there they that led us captive*

required of us songs,

And they that wasted us

required of us mirth, saying,

Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

⁴ *How shall we sing Jehovah's song*

In a foreign land?

⁵ *If I forget you, O Jerusalem,*

¹For further reading see the Wikipedia article on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion or go to <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-ldquo-protocols-of-the-elders-of-zion-rdquo>.

Let my right hand forget her skill.

⁶Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, If I remember you not;

If I prefer not Jerusalem

Above my chief joy. (ASV)

The word “Zion” is used twice in this psalm, as is its equivalent, Jerusalem. Zion is to be remembered (v. 1), and so are its songs (v. 3). Jerusalem must not be forgotten (v. 5), but preferred above all joys (v. 6). It is impossible to be more Zionist than the author of Psalm 137, and the longing to go back to Israel by the Jewish captives in Babylon is an expression of Zionism.

Another Zionist was Isaiah the prophet, for he wrote in 62:1:

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. (ASV)

Many other passages may be cited, but these should suffice to show that Zionism is a biblical expression.

Therefore, believers should be active in two things: first, standing by the right of the State of Israel to exist; and second, condemning all misrepresentation of Zionism as either racism or a conspiracy.

