

I. Introduction

- A. We want to take time to understand the Biblical concept of Zionism.
- B. God was the first Zionist. It's His idea, He loves Zion.

“The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob.” (Ps. 87:2)

II. What is Zionism?

- A. “The national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel.” – Nathan Bimbaum (a contemporary of Theodore Herzl, considered the father of modern Zionism)

- 1. Zion is a reference to the city of Jerusalem, which has been central to God's plans and purposes on the earth: it is where Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac, where King David ruled & reigned, and where Yeshua was crucified, buried, resurrected, and will return again.
- 2. Zion is not only a reference to the city of Jerusalem, but in many scriptures, we see that it is used synonymously with the whole land of Israel. And we know that the Lord bequeathed the whole land to the people of Israel.

“⁷He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth. ⁸He remembers his covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, ⁹the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, ¹⁰which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, ¹¹saying, ‘To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance’.” (Ps. 105:7-11)

B. Secular (Political) Zionism

- 1. Since the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948, Zionism has come to include the movement for the development of the State of Israel and the protection of the Jewish nation in Israel through support for the IDF.
- 2. From its inception, Zionism advocated both tangible and spiritual aims, and was supported by Jews of all persuasions (left & right, religious & secular).
- 3. In the late 19th century, religious and racist antisemitism led to a resurgence of pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe. This stimulated Jewish immigration to Palestine from Europe.

- a. Simultaneously, a wave of Jews immigrated to Palestine from Yemen, Morocco, Iraq, and Turkey. These Jews were unaware of political Zionism or of the European pogroms. They were motivated by the dream of “Return to Zion”, and a fear of intolerance and rising antisemitism where they lived.
4. Jewish leaders formally organized the Zionist movement in 1897. They called for the restoration of the Jewish national home in Palestine, where Jews could find sanctuary, self-determination, and work to rebuild their civilization and culture.
5. Around this time, world leaders attempted to come up with a solution for Jews worldwide, even offering them land in Africa (specifically Uganda). Theodore Herzl famously responded: “Zionism demands a publicly recognized and legally secured homeland in Palestine for the Jewish people. This platform is unchangeable.”

C. Religious Zionism

1. The Zionist ideal of returning to the land of Israel has profound roots in Jewish identity:
 - a. Many Jewish prayers peak of Jerusalem, Zion, and the Land of Israel. The injunction not to forget Jerusalem, the site of the Temple, is a major tenet of Judaism.
 - b. The Hebrew language, the Torah, laws in the Talmud, the Jewish calendar, and Jewish holidays and festivals all originated in Israel, and revolve around its seasons and conditions.
 - c. Jews pray toward Jerusalem and recite the words “next year in Jerusalem” every Passover.
 - d. Jewish religion, culture, and history are clear that a Jewish commonwealth can only be built in the land of Israel.

III. God is a Zionist

- A. The theology of Zionism supports the right of Jewish people to return to their homeland on scriptural grounds. Its biblical foundation is found in God’s covenant with Abraham, where He chose to birth a nation through him, through which He could redeem the world. To do this, He bequeathed them a land on which to exist as this chosen nation.
- B. This is then confirmed throughout the Hebrew Scriptures (Mosaic and Davidic covenants) and is consistently confirmed through both the major and minor prophets, as they spoke of a future restoration to the land after a period of exile.

“For behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the LORD, and I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall take possession of it.” (Jer. 30:3)

“³⁷Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. ³⁸And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. ⁴⁰I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from Me. ⁴¹I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.” (Jer. 32:37-41)

“‘I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them’, says the LORD your God.” (Amos 9:15)

“²⁰But Judah shall be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to all generations. ²¹I will avenge their blood, blood I have not avenged, for the LORD dwells in Zion.” (Joel 3:20-21)

C. The Jews’ return to Zion is like life from the dead!

“¹¹Then he said to me, ‘Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, “Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.”’

¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.’” (Ezek. 37:11-14)

IV. Christian (Biblical) Zionism

A. Though Replacement theology prevailed for much of Church history, Restorationism (Christian Zionism) grew steadily in support after the protestant reformation, when gentile believers began to read and understand the Bible firsthand.

B. Restoration holds 3 main tenets:

1. The Jewish people are still God’s elect people and will be preserved as a distinct people forever.
2. The people of Israel will be returned to their historic homeland in the Middle East.
3. Israel, as a nation, will one day accept Yeshua and be submitted to His kingship.

- C. A Christian Zionist should simply be defined as a Christian who supports the Jewish people's right to return to their homeland.
 - 1. Just as Jews of all persuasions formed the Zionist movement, so Christians of all persuasions can fall within this broad definition.
 - 2. For this very reason, Christians' reasons for supporting Israel can vary (political, historical, and/or religious reasons).
 - D. Christian Zionism is the contrast to Christian antisemitism/Replacement theology.
 - 1. Replacement theology teaches that Israel's special relationship with God, national destiny, and national homeland have all been lost because of her rejection of Yeshua. The Church has therefore become the New Israel, and inherited all of Israel's promised blessings, while the judgments and curses remain over Israel.
 - 2. Christian Zionism teaches that God's covenant with Abraham is still valid today: that there remains a national destiny for Israel, that her homeland is her everlasting possession (Ps. 105:10-11), and her gifts and calling are irrevocable (Rom. 11:29).
 - a. The verse most pointed to as their biblical mandate is Gen. 12:3, "I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."
 - E. Christian Zionism has been increasing since the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948, as people are beginning to understand the importance of God's faithfulness to His everlasting covenant with Abraham.
- V. Conclusion
- A. God has not rejected Israel! (Rom. 11:1)
 - B. Zion will again be the centre of all things (Mic. 4:2; Is. 2:3), so we need to commit to keep praying for Israel (Is. 62), being unafraid to be a Zionist.