



Should Christians endorse Every Israeli action?

One Christian Lebanese, whose house had been destroyed by the Israeli army (IDF), likened the invasion of Lebanon to the Allied invasion of France in World War II. Cities were destroyed, blood shed, but it was necessary to rid the nation of the terrorists.

Those of us who are friends of Israel understand. If my neighbor was to sneak over each night and try to shoot my children, and the police refused to help, I would soon visit my neighbor—with a bazooka.

However, even though Israel's use of force to stop the Palestine Liberation Organization seems justified, Christians should be careful about blanket endorsement of everything Israel does.

Where, I ask myself, does self-defense end and aggression begin? I may be justified in shooting the rapist who attacks my daughter, but am I justified in shooting him 10 times—pausing to reload between shots?

Some of my Christian friends, who are "gung-ho" supporters of all Israel does, told me that the "very state of the gospel" was at stake in Israel's recent war with the PLO.

I grow uneasy with these kinds of gross exaggerations.

The Jews are, by nature, an intimidating people. They've had to be to stay alive. But I am weary of being called anti-Semitic everytime I question some of their activities.

I am weary of hearing men of principle sidestep basic theological issues because they might offend their Jewish friends.

A pastor I know, who leads the invocation at the local Rotary Club, no longer prays "in Jesus' name" because a Jewish dentist loudly objected to the board of directors.

When Oral Roberts was asked on the "Phil Donahue Show" if he thought Jews went to heaven, he answered, "I certainly believe they do."

But when Roberts preaches to gentiles on TV, he reminds us there is no way to heaven except through Jesus.

Is there one gospel for the gentiles and another for the Jews?

Certainly Bailey Smith, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention,

went too far when he stated that God does not hear the prayers of Jews. God, it seems, can hear anyone He wants to hear.

Here in America we take 2 Chronicles 7:14 as though it were written to us. We need to remember that verse was given to the Jews first—calling on them to repent, turn from their evil ways, and seek God's face.

God's face, Christians know, looks like Jesus.

But merely saying that opens me to being called "anti-Semitic" by the very people I love. And when I suggest Israel should pay for the land they took from the Palestinians, I am called an enemy of Israel.

Israel was indeed *chosen*, but they were chosen to be a light to the gentiles. They

In our enthusiasm over what God is doing in Israel, we must be careful not to forget that the central message of the Bible is Jesus Christ.

were chosen to birth a Savior—whom they, as a nation, still reject.

To deny this means to deny the central message of the Bible. Remember, it was "to the Jew first" that Jesus came.

I am troubled by a statement made by my friend Mike Evans at last year's Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem. He referred to Menachem Begin as King David's successor.

There is but one successor to King David—the Lord Jesus.

In our enthusiasm over what God is doing in Israel, we must be careful not to forget that the central message of the Bible is Jesus Christ.

After David du Plessis attended a recent breakfast meeting in Washington, D.C., sponsored by a group of pro-Israel Christians, he told me, "I could not be-

lieve what I heard at that meeting. If what they said about Israel and the Jew is true, then everything I have been preaching about salvation through Jesus Christ is false."

The old warrior is right. The primary need for Israel is not guns or butter; they—like all nations—need Jesus.

Do the Jews have the right to all the land from Wadi El Arish to Iraq? Was South Lebanon actually settled by the tribe of Dan and thus part of biblical Israel? There is much Old Testament Scripture to support such.

But Jesus was not concerned about political boundaries. He was not even concerned about the Roman occupation of "God's land." He said he had come to usher in a new Kingdom.

I am a strong supporter of political Israel. I am pleased they have refused to play their assigned role as, in Saul Bellow's words, a "moral health resort" for the world. As a nation, they are determined to be more than a museum of Christian artifacts. That's good.

I am excited that the Jews are returning to their homeland. That is a fulfillment of prophecy. As a bird builds her nest for eggs yet unlaidd, the nation of Israel is getting ready for its last *aliyah*.

When God said, "I will say to the north, give up my children" (Isa. 43:6), He was speaking of a day about to come when the Russians will allow the three million enslaved Jews to return to Israel.

The stage is being set for the return of our Lord.

There are reports of messianic revivals in Israel. These are more than reports on tour-bus drivers who have learned to "accept Jesus" with each new batch of tourists so that they get bigger tips. It seems there are growing numbers of Jews coming to Jesus.

There are also reports of Arabs accepting Jesus—and living in harmony with their new brothers in Christ. That's the way it should be. Jesus' Kingdom is not of this world. In Him there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female.

Whether a man wears an Arab *kaffiyeh* or a Jewish *yarmulke*, there is no way to God but through Jesus. And to believe that does not make me anti-Semitic. ☞