

JOSHUA (3) – Joshua and Christian Zionism

Covenant Fellowship Church

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JOSHUA AND CHRISTIAN ZIONISM: The Land, The People, and The Promise A Five-Week Exploration

- **Week 1:** Definitions and Directives (What is Christian Zionism?)
- **Week 2:** The Scriptural Lens (Key Passages and Interpretation)
- **Week 3:** Two Ways of Reading the Story (Covenantal v. Dispensational)
- **Week 4:** The History and The Heroes (How we got here)
- **Week 5:** The Modern Middle East and The Mission of the Church

Week 1: Definitions and Directives: What is Christian Zionism?

Goal: To define Christian Zionism and understand its core motivations.

- **Key Concept:** Zionism is the belief that the Jewish people have a biblical and legal right to their ancestral homeland (Israel). *Christian Zionism* adds a theological layer: that the modern State of Israel is a direct fulfillment of biblical prophecy.
- **Core Logic:** Many Christian Zionists believe God’s promise to Abraham in **Genesis 12:3** (“I will bless those who bless you”) applies directly to how the U.S. government treats the modern State of Israel.

Let’s read the following passages, since they will help us understand the discussion.

Genesis 12:1–3

Genesis 15:18–21

Genesis 17:7–8

John 8:31–47

Romans 9:6

Genesis 12:7 ~ Genesis 17:7 ~ Galatians 3:16

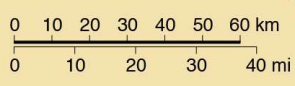
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ISRAEL. יִשְׂרָאֵל.

- ★ National capital
- ⊙ District (meḥoz) centre
- City, town
- ✈ Airport
- International boundary
- - - Boundary of former Palestine Mandate
- - - Armistice Demarcation Line
- - - District (meḥoz) boundary
- Main road
- Secondary road
- - - Railroad
- Oil pipeline



- Districts of Israel**
- 1 Northern District
 - 2 Haifa District
 - 3 Central District
 - 4 Tel Aviv District
 - 5 Jerusalem District
 - 6 Southern District



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Glossary of Terms

The Basic Framework

- **Zionism:** The belief that the Jewish people have a right to a sovereign homeland in Israel.
- **Christian Zionism:** The belief that the modern State of Israel is a direct fulfillment of Bible prophecy and a requirement for Christ's return.
- **Covenant Theology:** The Reformed view that God has one consistent plan of grace for one people (the Church) throughout history.
- **Dispensationalism:** A system that divides the Bible into different "ages" or "dispensations," usually teaching that God has two separate plans for Israel and the Church.

The "End Times" (Eschatology)

- **Eschatology:** The study of "last things" or the end of the world.
- **The Rapture:** The belief that Christians will be suddenly snatched up to heaven before a period of global suffering.
- **The Tribulation:** A predicted seven-year period of intense disaster and judgment on Earth.
- **The Millennium:** The 1,000-year reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation 20:6.
- **Premillennialism:** The belief that Jesus returns *before* the 1,000-year reign to set up an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem.
- **Amillennialism:** The common covenantal view that the "1,000 years" is a symbol for Christ's *current reign* from heaven through the Church.

Theology and Interpretation

- **Hermeneutics:** The "science" of how we interpret the Bible (e.g., literal vs. symbolic).
- **Literalism:** The approach of taking every prophecy as a physical, future event rather than a spiritual or poetic one.
- **Typology:** The study of "types"—Old Testament people or things (like the Temple) that foreshadow a greater reality in Jesus.
- **Supersessionism:** (Often called "Replacement Theology") The claim that the Church has replaced Israel. *Note: covenantal Christians prefer "Fulfillment Theology."*
- **Remnant:** The small group of Jewish people throughout history who believe in the Messiah (see Romans 11).

Places and People

- **The Levant:** The geographical region along the eastern Mediterranean shores (includes Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon).
- **The West Bank / Judea & Samaria:** The territory between Israel and Jordan; "Judea and Samaria" are the biblical names often used by Zionists.
- **Gaza Strip:** A small, densely populated coastal territory on the Mediterranean.
- **Eretz Israel:** A Hebrew term meaning "The Land of Israel," often referring to its biblical boundaries.
- **The Diaspora:** The dispersion of Jewish people outside the land of Israel throughout history.

Key Historical Figures

- **John Nelson Darby:** The 19th-century priest who created the "two-plan" system of Dispensationalism.
- **C.I. Scofield:** The man whose study Bible popularized "End Times" charts in American churches.
- **John Calvin:** The Reformer who argued that all Old Testament promises find their "Yes" in Jesus, not in a plot of land.

The “Zionist Vocabulary” Deep-Dive

1. The “Eretz Yisrael” (The Land of Israel): In Christian Zionism, the specific borders of the land are vital.

- **The “Nile to Euphrates” view:** Some cite *Genesis 15:18* to argue that Israel’s biblical borders are much larger than their current ones.
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- **The Covenantal Response:** We see “The Land” as a **Temple-prototype**. Just as the Garden of Eden was where God dwelt with man, the Land was a temporary “Sacred Space” until the Holy Spirit came to dwell in *believers* (*1 Corinthians 6:19*). The “Sacred Space” is now the Church, not a geography.

2. Christian Zionism v. Political Zionism

- **Political Zionism:** Started by Theodor Herzl (a secular Jew) in the late 1800s. It was about safety and a state for a persecuted people.
- **Christian Zionism:** Often predates Herzl. It’s the belief that Jews *must* return so that the Second Coming can happen.
- **The Tension:** Many *Jewish* Zionists are actually wary of *Christian* Zionists, because the Christian “script” usually ends with most Jews either converting or being destroyed in Armageddon.

3. Armageddon (The Valley of Megiddo)

- **The Zionist View:** A literal, future nuclear or supernatural battle in a specific valley in Israel.

Example from TODAY: A military commander told a group of non-commissioned officers that President Donald Trump was “anointed by Jesus to light the signal fire in Iran to cause Armageddon and mark his return to Earth,” according to a complaint filed with a religious freedom watchdog. From Saturday morning through Monday night, more than 110 similar complaints about commanders in every branch of the military had been logged by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF).

- **The Covenantal View:** Most covenantal commentators see “Armageddon” in Revelation 16 as a **symbolic** picture of the final defeat of evil, not a GPS coordinate for World War III.

Analogy: The Passport v. The Birth Certificate:

If you have an American birth certificate, you are a citizen. But if you commit treason, you can lose your rights.

In the Old Testament, Israel had a ‘birth certificate’ (lineage), but they committed ‘spiritual treason.’ In the New Testament, Jesus gives us a **Passport**. It doesn’t matter where you were born; it matters whose Kingdom issued the passport. We are citizens of Heaven because of our King, not because of our ancestors.