

10 Reasons Why
***Christians
Support
Israel***



INTRODUCTION

Over the centuries, Jewish people have received little love from those who call themselves Christians. The Crusades, Spanish Inquisition, Martin Luther's venomous treatises, pogroms in Eastern Europe, and modern anti-Zionism are all examples of the hateful treatment Jewish people have suffered—often in the name of Christ. In fact, many Jewish people associate the term *Christian* with persecution.

Yet countless evangelicals around the world genuinely love the Jewish people—and with good reason. Our love is rooted in a shared commitment to the Hebrew Scriptures and the God of Israel, and we want to support the Jewish people whenever we can.

Here are 10 reasons why Christians support Israel.

1

We are
indebted
to Israel.

At the most basic level, we are indebted to the Jewish people because we have received so much from them—particularly the Scriptures and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

THE SCRIPTURES

To begin with, God chose to reveal Himself directly to Abraham (Gen. 17:1); Abraham's son Isaac (26:24); and Isaac's son Jacob (28:13), whose name He changed to Israel (32:28; 35:10). With Israel, God would create a special nation through which He would redeem the world. Eventually, God chose Moses, giving him the Torah (the Law) for the children of Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex. 20). The entire *Tanakh* (Old Testament) is God's revelation of Himself to them.

Christians believe the Bible—both Old and New Testaments—is God's Word, and we have the Jewish people to thank for transmitting it to the world. Every book, with the exception of two books in the New Testament, was penned by Jewish men under the inspiration of the Spirit of the God of Israel.

Literally, everything we know about God comes from the Jewish people. They meticulously copied

the Scriptures over the centuries and zealously preserved them. Without the Jewish people, we would not have the Bible and, therefore, would not know about the Lord.

THE MESSIAH

It's no secret that Jews and Christians disagree on the identity of Israel's promised Messiah. Most Jewish people believe he is yet to come. Christians believe the Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth, who first came into the world to become the final sacrifice for our sins and who will return one day to reestablish David's kingdom and rule the world in righteousness. Consequently, we have a special affinity for the Jewish people because it was through them that Jesus, a direct descendant of both Abraham and King David, was born.

For Christians, Jesus is not simply an historical figure, good teacher, or wise sage. He is God in the flesh, the promised Redeemer, Messiah, and King of Israel. Nothing is more precious to a follower of Jesus than Jesus Himself; and we are indebted to the Jewish people for Him.

2

We believe the
Jewish people
are God's
Chosen People.

The term *Chosen People* makes some Jewish people uncomfortable. Historically, it has caused them to stand out, which, sadly, brought persecution. Some identify with Tevye the milkman in the classic musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, when Tevye asks God, "I know, I know, we are the chosen people; but once in a while can't You choose someone else?"

The truth is, God did not choose them for persecution; He chose them to point the world to the one true God. Consequently, the Almighty has a unique relationship with the nation, and Christians gladly recognize this fact.

In the Torah, God told Israel, "You are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth" (Dt. 7:6). He made it clear He didn't do so because Israel was a great nation, "for you were the least of all peoples" (v. 7). He did it "because the LORD loves you" (v. 8). In His sovereignty, God chose to love the Jewish people and set them apart for His special purpose.

He privileged them by revealing His glory to them in the Tabernacle and Temple; making

covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David; entrusting the Mosaic Law to them; employing them in the Tabernacle and Temple service; making unique promises to them; and giving them the prophets, the promised Messiah, and the Scriptures.

God has chosen Israel as His special nation; and because of this fact, we love the Jewish people unconditionally.

3

We have been
blessed by the
Jewish people.

Although Jewish people constitute an infinitesimal one tenth of 1 percent of the global population (there are cities with more people), they have received nearly 23 percent of all Nobel Prizes for their contributions to the world in literature, chemistry, medicine, physics, peace, and economics. The Jewish people have blessed the world in ways that are hugely disproportionate to their small size. Here are just a handful of their contributions:

Haym Salomon (1740–1785) financed much of the American Revolution. When George Washington needed money for supplies for his troops, Salomon helped secure the funds needed to win the war.

Abraham Jacobi (1830–1919), a physician, dedicated his life to the medical care of children, opening the first American pediatric clinic in New York in 1860. He is known as “the father of American pediatrics.”

Emma Lazarus (1849–1887) was a poet whose poem “The New Colossus” is inscribed on a plaque at the base of the Statue of Liberty.

Jonas Salk (1914–1995) and Albert Sabin (1906–1993) are credited with eradicating polio

with their vaccines.

Simcha Blass (1897-1982), an Israeli, patented drip irrigation in the 1960s, making not only the Israeli desert bloom but many barren areas around the world.

Other Jewish innovations used every day include digital facial recognition, instant-messaging technology, and drug-eluting stents for people with coronary artery disease. The list could go on and on.

4

Jesus is Jewish.

If asked, "Who was the most famous Jewish person who ever lived?" few probably would say Jesus of Nazareth. But make no mistake, Jesus is Jewish.

He had a *brit milah* (circumcision) and was given His name, *Yeshua*, when He was eight days old, according to the Law and Jewish tradition (Lk. 2:21). He celebrated the Jewish festivals (Mt. 26:17-30; Jn. 10:22); went to synagogue and taught there (Lk. 4:16); and identified with the Jewish people, calling them His brothers (Mt. 25:40).

Jesus was born a Jew, died a Jew, rose from the dead a Jew, ascended to heaven a Jew, and will return to Earth one day as a Jew. To truly love Jesus is to love the Jewish people. Conversely, as one evangelical leader put it when discussing anti-Semitism, "If you hate Jews, you hate Jesus." It's impossible to separate Jesus from His Jewishness.

That said, Christians should be Israel's greatest supporters outside the Jewish community; and we are.

5

God blesses
those who
bless Israel.

When God chose Abraham to be the father of the Jewish people, He made specific promises to him, one of which involves the Gentiles as much as it does the Jews: "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you" (Gen. 12:3).

Throughout history, many have cursed the Jewish people. God, however, has been true to His Word. All of Israel's enemies—from Haman in ancient Persia (see the book of Esther) to the empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Rome, to Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime—eventually have been cursed and tossed on the ash heap of history. God has been true to His Word, and He will continue to be true to it in the future.

Evangelical Christians take God at His word, not only when it comes to the curses, but also when it comes to the blessings. We believe God meant it when He said He would bless those who bless His Chosen People, and this belief motivates us to do all we can to be a blessing to them.

Jesus Himself taught His followers that caring for the Jewish people, especially in distressing times, is the same as caring for Him (Mt. 25:40). We believe it pleases God when we bless the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

It was this promise of blessing, in fact, that in 1938 inspired the formation of The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry. A small group of Christian businessmen and pastors wanted to help the Jewish people in war-torn Europe. They mobilized Christians to raise money and prayer support throughout the country, which enabled them to provide food, clothing, passports, and safe passage out of Europe for Jewish refugees. They wanted to bless Israel.

As believers in the God of Israel, we are called to pray for the peace (well-being) of Jerusalem (Ps. 122:6-9) and to do all we can to bless the Jewish people around the world.

6

God loves Israel.

There's a saying, "A friend of yours is a friend of mine." As Christians, we are called to love whom God loves.

Of course, all people are made in God's image, and He loves them all. But God has a special love for Israel—and it's not based on their performance record. God's love for Israel is based entirely on His choice to love them (Dt. 7:8).

Throughout their long history, the Jewish people have experienced great pain and persecution. In fact, many of their historical calamities are remembered each year on *Tisha B'Av*, and the destruction of the Temple is commemorated at Jewish weddings with the smashing of a glass. But through all of this heartache, God has promised to preserve His people. He says the only way to destroy them is to stop the sun, moon, and stars from shining and the waves from roaring (Jer. 31:35–36).

In both the *Tanakh* and New Testament, God warns Gentiles not to treat the Jewish people with arrogance or malice (Obad. 12). As Christians, we are to love what God loves and preserve what God preserves. He loves Israel and promises to preserve the nation. Therefore, we love Israel too.

7

Israel is a
testament
to God's
faithfulness.

From Israel's earliest days, God has done the impossible for the Jewish people. For example, He allowed Abraham's barren wife, Sarah, to give birth when she was 90 years old and Abraham was 100. God promised to give them a boy they would name Isaac, and that's exactly what He did (Gen. 21).

He promised to deliver the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt (Ex. 6:6-8), and He did. Each year, Jews around the globe gather at Passover to remember the fulfillment of God's promise to them.

Despite their history of disobedience, which the prophets repeatedly condemned, God promised never to allow the Jewish people to be destroyed (Jer. 31:35-36). Even Hitler's systematic attempt to annihilate them was no match for God.

He also promised to bring Israel back into its own land. Beginning in the 1880s, waves of immigration brought thousands of Jewish people back to *Eretz Yisrael*, culminating with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Many Jewish people continue to return today.

When we look at Jewish history, both ancient and modern, we cannot help but see God's hand

in it all. He has faithfully cared for His people,
which gives us confidence that we can trust Him
too.

8

God gave
Eretz Yisrael
(the land of
Israel) to the
Jewish people.

It's hard to believe that a country the size of New Jersey generates such great controversy, but it does. Since its establishment in 1948, the State of Israel has had to defend itself continually against threats to its existence. To this day, its enemies vow to wipe it off the map and push the Jewish people into the Mediterranean Sea; and their threats have been anything but idle. Israel's enemies have launched many terrorist attacks and offensive wars against the Jewish state and are waging an ever-bigger propaganda war in the hopes of delegitimizing the nation in the world's eyes and destroying it.

THE LAND

But the Jewish people's identity is inseparable from the land. God gave them the land forever (Gen. 17:8) through an eternal, unilateral covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's descendants for all time—a promise reiterated more than 130 times in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments (Ps. 105:8–11; Acts 7:5).

And the Jewish people have had a continual presence in that land since the days of Joshua, when God brought them out of slavery in Egypt.

When they were exiled from their land, they longed to return to it.

Though politicians, activists, and terrorists continue their attempts to extract the Jews from their real estate in the Middle East, we support Israel because God has given the land to the Jewish people.

9

Anti-Semitism
is evil.

We believe anti-Semitism is evil and that, at its root, Jew-hatred is a spiritual problem. Satan (Lucifer, the chief of demons) rebelled against God and is on a quest to dethrone the Almighty (Isa. 14:12-14). God promised that, through the Jewish people, He would bring a Redeemer, the Messiah, who will defeat Satan and establish God's righteous rule on Earth. In an effort to prevent Messiah's rule, Satan has relentlessly persecuted God's Chosen People. This spiritual battle is what motivates anti-Semitism (cf. Est. 3:6).

Evangelicals who support Israel believe harming the Jewish people is like the rebellious act of raising a hand against God Himself (Zech. 2:8; Mt. 25:45). So we do all we can to oppose anti-Semitism and stand with God's Chosen People.

10

Israel has a
bright future.

The closing chapters of Deuteronomy are monumental and prophetic. They outline how God will deal with His people in both obedience (blessing) and disobedience (cursing). Unfortunately, disobedience has been the theme so far. But brighter days will come.

In Deuteronomy 30, God promises that, following national repentance, the Jewish people will experience incomparable blessing. He will regather them to their land (vv. 4-5); give them hearts that seek after Him (v. 6); and prosper and bless them with children (v. 5).

Additionally, He will stamp out anti-Semitism once and for all. Undoubtedly, this is a difficult claim for many Jewish people to believe. But God promises to judge those who have scattered and persecuted His people (Joel 3:2; Zech. 14:12); and someday, Gentiles will clamor to be in their presence:

Thus says the LORD of hosts: "In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you'" (Zech. 8:23).

God has planned a bright future for the Jewish people. He will bless them by bringing them back to their land, prospering all they do, destroying their enemies, and lifting them up to a place of honor among the nations. Christians support Israel because we believe all these things will surely come to pass.

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Historically, the Jewish-Christian relationship has been a tumultuous one. It is no wonder many Jewish people view Christian support of Israel with suspicion. However, there are evangelical Christians around the world who support Israel out of a sincere love for the Jewish people that is rooted in a Bible-based faith.

We have been blessed by Israel in innumerable ways, both materially and spiritually; and we owe a bottomless debt to the children of Jacob. Our desire is to be a blessing to the Jewish people, in good times and bad, because in them all the families of the earth have truly been blessed (Gen. 12:3).



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