

## Does Israel Still Need Canaan? By Trey Sullins

On May 14, 1948, a modern nation of Israel was founded. The creation of this state was celebrated by premillennialists worldwide. In its most basic form premillennialism is a belief that teaches that Jesus will return physically establish and rule a physical kingdom on Earth at His coming. This belief was created largely by a literal interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6. Because of this doctrine premillennialists want Israel as a part of Jerusalem. In their minds if Jerusalem is owned by Israel, then the throne of Christ is sitting ready for the beginning of the 1000-year reign at the Lord's return. While politically we can debate whether it is good for modern Israel to be there, biblically speaking the Bible shows us that it no longer matters who controls the physical "land of Israel."

**First**, Old Israel's Promised Land was already given to them (Joshua 21:43-45, 23:14; 1 Kings 4:20-21; Nehemiah 9:7-8). It cannot be said that they require the land in order to fulfill His promise, because He's already fulfilled that promise!

**Second**, the prophesied return to Jerusalem was already fulfilled in Biblical times (Nehemiah 1:8-10; Ezra 1-8). Just because a modern state of Israel was established does not mean that the first return found in the Bible doesn't count anymore. Again, God has fulfilled His promise to return the people to the land.

**Third**, God's covenant with Israel was broken when they rejected Him (Deuteronomy 28; Leviticus 26:14-46; Lamentation 2:17; Daniel 9:11-13; Hosea 4:6; Malachi 2:9). This covenant between them was conditional based on their faithfulness. If you break a contract today by not fulfilling your responsibilities, then generally speaking the other party no longer needs to fulfill theirs. That is the case with old Israel. Old Israel continually rejected God at numerous occasions for over 1000 years. If that was not enough to break the covenant, then nothing is.

**Fourth**, Israel's law has been done away with. Therefore, they can no longer serve God as the physical nation of Israel which God gave the Law of Moses to and called. When Jesus Christ came, he removed the old law. Colossians 2:13-14 explains that the requirements were removed and taken away. Several other verses are Hebrews 7:18-19, 8:13, 10:9. The priesthood was also done away as it is a part of the law of Moses. Furthermore, the old law was never enough to remove sins (Hebrews 7:11-12, 9:9-10, 10:4). This wasn't a flaw but by design of God, because the ultimate sacrifice of Christ would come. Without the God given law that separated Israel from the world and made them God's people, it cannot be the same Israel anymore.

**Fifth**, Christ's kingdom was already established in the first century. The terms kingdom, church, Israel are referring to the same group and sometimes used interchangeably. Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus said He would build His church and give Peter the keys to this kingdom. Jesus of course didn't mean that He would give Peter the keys 2000 plus years later because the kingdom had not come yet. But just like John the baptizer said, "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2) the kingdom was coming very soon in their day and has already come in our day. There are many more verses on the kingdom's existence in the first century: 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 15:24; Revelation 1:9; Colossians 1:13.

**Sixth**, the church is spiritual Israel. In Galatians 3:29 Paul says that those who are Christ's (Christians) are Abraham's seed. This cannot mean that Jesus followers become Jews physically, but it must be spiritually. Christians are spiritually Abraham's seed. Romans 2:28-29 explains that a true Jew is one who has his heart set on following God. He said this after explaining that circumcision of the flesh is not what matters, but service to God is what matters.

**Seventh**, Jesus has finished His work on earth and therefore has no more reason to return and build a kingdom (John 4:34, 17:4 19:30). He is reigning in heaven and has been since his final ascension (Mark 16:19; 1 Peter 3:22; Hebrews 8:1, 9:24). At His final return He will take all people from the planet for judgment (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:24; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) and destroy the planet (2 Peter 3:10-12).