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*"The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light"*

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*Editor:* A. McDONALD REDWOOD

# TO WHOM DOES PALESTINE BELONG?

R. H. C. HILL

Some may shrug their shoulders and answer with the counter question, "who cares " The question, however, is more than academic, for in rejecting the right answer only serves to keep the world in turmoil. Palestine is ever the cause of the world's international sorrow or prosperity. In the Divine promise given in Genesis 12:1, the people and the land are declared to be a blessing or a cursing to those who come in contact with them. Forseeing man's unfavorable reaction to the people of the land it is called "a burdensome stone' to all who meddle with it (Zech. 12:3). At the moment Britian would like to be rid of the burdensome land and people.

At the time of writing a decision has been reached to divide the land of 10,000 square miles between the Jews and the Arabs. The Arab world at present includes some seven million one hundred and fourteen thousand square miles from Iran to Morocco. If the Arabs want room it has been intimated by British experts that Iraq has room for a population of fifty million, forty-seven million more than she has at present. Once upon a time there were, so it is said, thirty million people tilling the soil of Iraq.

There are now one million on the soil in Iraq. British Government official reports on Iraq indicate that the land's paramount and desperate requirement is an *increase* in population; so it cannot be land-hunger that motivates the Arabs in their desire to keep Jews from coming to Palestine. Iraq borders on the Trans-Jordan area of Palestine.

To date, previous attempts to gain and retain possession of the Land have involved Jerusalem in warfare during more than three millenniums. Twenty-seven times she has been besieged and blockaded. These have required eighteen reconstructions of the city. For two long periods while history is silent on the subject, she lay desolate. Changing hands she has six times passed from one religion to another. Valleys in the city have been filled in, and hills dug down. At one time a part of the city was under the plough and was a tilled field: but the end is not yet.

To divide Palestine between the Jews and Arabs may lead to two significant developments: 1. The Jews of Palestine may attain statehood. That will be a truly significant event in the light of prophecy. 2. The Jews and Arabs may clash in a conflict that may involve more than Palestine. As one newspaper writer put it—"An apparently irresistible force is about to collide with a seemingly immovable object in Palestine. The force is Zionism and the object is Arab opposition to it." 3. The attempt to divide the Land is to be the cause of the final judgment of the nations; God said "they parted My Land" (Joel 3:2).

Gog, identified by many as a Northern confederation headed by Russia, will covet the land and come against it (Ezek. 38:8-12). Eventually the world will gather in two camps to fight for it (Joel 3:1, 2, 12-14; Zech. 14:1-3). These are Divine prophecy.

The stormy history of the Land will last till at least three years after the Lord has come and taken His church out of this warring world. Then, once and for all, the claim of the rightful possessors of the Land will be established and her own people will "marry the Land." Only those having right and title to the Land will be able to retain it permanently. Who are they? Not those who might lay claim to it as being the aboriginal inhabitants of the Land; they have ceased to exist.

The earliest inhabitants of Palestine whose traces have been discovered seem to have been the Horites, called Troglodytes, or Cave Dwellers by early historians. Traces of them are found in various parts of Palestine. Instead of building houses they lived in caves. Sometimes they enlarged existing caves or even built them out of rock, as at Gezer. Some of their caves still exist deep under present Jerusalem. They were a blond race. The Horites, however, have gone. One of Esau's wives was a Horite, of Idumea (Gen. 36:2, 24). By the time of Abraham they seem to have left Palestine but to have been found elsewhere.

There were three ethnological groups that occupied Palestine, according to Prof. Sayce.\* One was comprised of Amorite clans that spread over the country under names like Anakim, Rephaim and Zamzummin. They apparently dwelt along with the Horites and finally superceded them. They too were a blond race and

\* *Races of the Old Testament*

claimed relationship with peoples of North Africa and even peoples of Western Europe such as the Libyans, the Berbers of today.

These people had blue eyes and light hair. Their cities were "great and walled up to heaven." Amorite walls at Lackish have been discovered 28 feet 8 inches thick. Figures of Amorites on inscriptions of the captures of Shishak (B.C. 975, 1 Kings 14:25) who invaded Judea under Rehoboam, indicated that the predominant type of population in that part of Palestine at that time was still Amorite. The race was never extirpated.

A second ethnological group was the Canaanites, traders rather than agriculturalists, and residing in towns rather than villages. They belonged to the Semitic race but had separated from them at an early period.

When Abraham arrived "the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. 12:6; 13:7). The word "then" indicates "already." There was a time when they did not dwell there. Hence they were not the earliest inhabitants. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with the Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites were the third group, or Semites. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were tent dwellers.

The Amorites were apparently conquered by the Hittites who seem to have been related to the Hyksos of Egypt. It may have been the combined Amorites and Hittites who conquered N. Egypt. These Hyksos were afterward driven out and returned to Palestine where they fortified Jerusalem. When the prophet Ezekiel (ch. 16:3) refers to the idolatrous practices that Jerusalem inherited from these people he says, "Thy father was an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite."

These Hyksos were called "Shepherd Kings" and thought to have been the kings friendly to the Israelites during their early days in Egypt. They were driven out of Egypt about 1550 B.C. Hyksos is now said to mean something like "Rulers of Countries" and they are thought to have been non-Semites and probably Amorite-Hittites. If they were the kings who were favorable to the Israelites, the Israelites would likely have been expelled with them. They may have made the Israelites build such cities as Pithom and Raameses, but, when the Hyksos were driven out the native kings also made the Israelites work; for they started to build great monuments to their own glory. We are told that

the Egyptian people were forced to work at these, and much more so, non-Egyptians; they worked as slaves.

These earlier peoples who dwelt in Palestine are eliminated as contenders for it now: they no longer exist. But, both before Abraham and up till the present, various peoples have conquered and held the Land. None of them can establish a valid claim to it, however, for the Owner of the Land (God) gave it to Abraham and his descendants. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof;" but in a special sense He retains Palestine as His. His own word is "The Land is MINE" (Lev. 25:23).

Abraham's title deeds are found in three chief passages. In Genesis 12:7 and 13:15, the Owner says, "I *will* give it," and in Genesis 15:18, He says "I HAVE given it." In view of these promises and covenants of the Creator of the ends of the earth it is interesting to note the attitude of Abraham and his children towards the Land when they were in it. When Terah, Abram's father, set forth for Canaan with large flocks and herds as well as a large company of people, he expected no opposition from the inhabitants of the Land. The Canaanites do not seem to have occupied the whole of the Land nor to have considered it their exclusive property. They later allowed Abraham to come peaceably although he was quite a prince with a retinue of 318 servants born in his house and an unknown number not so born. Only those born in his house were trained as fighters, it seems. He entered the land as a petty sovereign and as such he fought with, and made alliances with, other kings as equals (ch. 16), as later did his sons (Gen. 21:25-27; 26:1-31). When the son of the king of Shechem ravished Dinah and was so severely dealt with, the miscreant sons of Jacob were neither tried nor punished (Gen. 34:25-30).

We see Isaac and Jacob exercising the right of proprietorship, traversing the land with their herds and flocks, without being subject to anyone, or acknowledging the Canaanites as their masters. When they entered and dwelt in the Land by faith all that they could occupy was theirs. Later, when Israel and his children went to Egypt, they intended, apparently, to return (Gen. 46:4). See also Jacob's burial in the Land (Gen. 47:29-31; 50:7-13).

When the Exodus finally took place the Israelites spent forty

years in the Wilderness. During all that period and afterward, as long as Egyptian authority lasted, the Israelites were friendly with them (Deut. 23:7) and in some sense, subject to them. The Egyptians made no attempt after the crossing of the Red Sea, to hinder the Israelites; and they offered no opposition to their conquest of Palestine when that began. In fact, the Egyptians were at war with the people of Canaan while the Israelites were in the wilderness. This was God's way of preparing for the conquest of the Land by Israel. The inhabitants were thereby weakened and the Egyptians the more ready to allow the friendly Israelites to subdue and consolidate the Land.

When God's time came to give the Land to Israel as a nation He promised to send His fear and the hornet before them (Exod. 23:27). Apart from God's promised help in this way they were impotent to dislodge the Canaanites, as the disastrous attempt in Numbers 14:40-45 revealed. It is suggested by one writer<sup>1</sup> that the hornet referred to may be an allusion to the king of Egypt whose hieroglyphic sign was a hornet. The effect of the fear of the Lord is seen in the case of Jericho (Josh. 2:11); and it might have been heightened by the knowledge that the Israelites had the sympathy of Egypt in their attack on Palestine. After the conquest Joshua reminded the people that God had fulfilled His promise and sent the hornet which drove out the Amorites; but not with Israel's sword or bow (Josh. 24:12).

When God gave the *title-deeds to Palestine to the Israelites* in the Wilderness He stipulated that it was to be held by them as *His Land* and therefore it could never be sold (Lev. 25:23, 24). Disobedience to all the terms of the Covenant caused them to lose possession of the Land on two occasions and it was restored to them on two occasions. They then lost it a third time, and a third time it will be restored to them. This time it will be in accordance with the unconditional Covenant made with Abraham and his seed, and it will be to enjoy the Land to an extent, as regards area, that the nation has never yet done. The day for that restoration of the Land is at hand. When most of the world is gathered there to dispute about its possession Immanuel will

<sup>1</sup> *Chronology*, by G. B. Mitchell, O.B.E.

give "Immanuel's Land" (Isa. 8:8) to those whose it shall be forever.

Read Amos 9:11-15 regarding the future fruitfulness of the land. A recent report on Palestine is significant in the light of those verses. The assistant chief of the Soil Conservation of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture made a study of Palestine. He says that boring a tunnel from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea will give Palestine the highest waterfall in the world, unlimited electrical power, and a way of diverting the waters of the Jordan River for irrigation purposes, thus increasing the productivity of the soil five times.

Not until the Lord comes will the saying be fulfilled: "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, and her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received of the Lord double for all her sins." "And so all Israel shall be saved." "Thy people also shall be righteous: *they shall inherit the Land forever.*"

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## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PENTATEUCH

A. McDONALD REDWOOD

We proceed to consider the evidence of authorship:—

(1) *The direct testimony of the Pentateuch itself.* It is expressly declared that all the arrangements for the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai were made by Moses, and that the Ten Words were uttered in his presence (Ex. 20:19 cf.). Logically he was, therefore, the most likely because the best equipped person to write the record of the facts. In Exodus 24:4 it is stated that "Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah" in obedience to the divine command. By "these words" is meant the covenant between Jehovah and His people, including what is usually termed the Sinaitic legislation (so far as it had yet been revealed i.e., Ex. 21 to 23). At the renewal of the covenant, after the idolatry of the people led by Aaron, Moses was again commanded to "write these words", Exod. 34:27.