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Holy Convocations!

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Two recent church convocations have reached conclusions that are unbiblical but widely believed in Christian circles. The first was the special Synod of Catholic Bishops of the Middle East, which concluded with the official secretary of the gathering insisting that Israel was no long a “chosen people” and that the Abrahamic Covenant has been “annulled.” By doing so, he sought to negate Israel’s divine right to the land of Canaan and to Jerusalem. If this be true, then modern-day Israel enjoys no biblical significance, her restoration is an accident of history, and she simply like any other nation on earth – the same as Zambia or Switzerland!

The second convocation was that of the recent Lausanne Conference on World Evangelization held in Cape Town. Oddly, this assembly of leading Evangelicals initially considered a resolution that would have agreed entirely with the Bishop’s statement made in Rome: *“...no single ethnic identity can any longer claim to be “God’s chosen people”... We strongly believe that the separate and privileged place given to Jewish people today or to the modern Israeli state in certain forms of dispensationalism or Christian Zionism, should be challenged, inasmuch as they deny the essential oneness of the people of God in Christ.”*

Thus, this indicates many Evangelicals also see no biblical significance whatsoever in Israel’s restoration. Christians should ignore it and move on to more important spiritual matters. At least the Catholic Bishop was honest in recognizing his stand on Israel meant he must declare the Abrahamic Covenant obsolete. There is just one problem, however. Scripture nowhere says it. It is an argument crafted from silence!

In fact, if anything the New Testament scriptures everywhere affirm the ongoing efficacy of the Abrahamic covenant, even going so far as to declare that it cannot be annulled (Galatians 3:17); that it constitutes an example to believers of God’s truthfulness and unswerving faithfulness (Hebrews 6:13-20); and that the finished work of Jesus on the cross was to make good its promises (Galatians 3:9; 13-14;). Indeed, if we are Christ’s we are “Abraham’s children according to the promise (covenant).” (Galatians 3:29)

Moreover, I know of no Christian Zionist who affords a privileged place to Jews or Israel. If anything, the call of God over the Jewish people was never a “privileged place” but a place of servant-hood, of suffering and rejection for the sake of the world! As a gentile believer in Jesus I would not want their role in history, but truly I have been eternally enriched by it because “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22), “we share in their spiritual things” (Romans 15:27), and from them “Christ came who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.” (Romans 9:5)

To assert then that, since Jesus’ coming, the Abrahamic Covenant has been abolished is quite frankly theological ineptitude! The scriptures nowhere support this theory. In fact, if accepted, these convocations are guilty of the very theological position that they claim to be against! That is, they are guilty of being dispensationalists because they endorse the movement from one plan of salvation to another down through history. This is classic dispensationalism, which we reject in all its forms! There has only and forever been one plan of God for redeeming the whole world (Revelation 13:8). This plan was unveiled and promised in the Abrahamic Covenant which, according to Paul, was the first and foundational proclamation of the Gospel (Galatians 3:8). The fact that this saving

initiative also promised land as an everlasting possession to the Jewish people (Genesis 17:8-9) has always “stuck in the throat” of many people and groups (Nehemiah 2:19-20; 4:1-3; 6:1-2).

The fact is all nations are blessed and saved by faith in the finished work of Jesus because of the peculiar servant role that Israel has played out on their behalf. This calling Paul declares to be irrevocable! (Romans 11:29) For this role or calling to be removed the Abrahamic Covenant has to be removed but, if that ever happens (and it will not) then God’s decision to save the world also has to be removed!

Some attendees at the Lausanne Conference and the Mideast Catholic Bishops have failed to “rightly divide” the word of God and are also casting doubt over the character of God. For even years after Israel’s rejection of the Messianic credentials of Jesus, the writer of the book of Hebrews holds up the Abrahamic Covenant to wavering believers as an example of God’s faithfulness to His word, character and promises (Hebrews 6).

Rev. Hedding is Executive Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem; www.icej.org/

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