

Dispensationalism and Racism

By [Thomas Williamson](#)

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What would you think of a religious sect that taught that there is one race that is by nature superior, and another race that is by nature inferior?

And suppose that this sect taught that the superior race has a divine right to dispossess members of the inferior race and take their properties without compensation, and to ethnically cleanse those who resist this expropriation, using violence if necessary?

And suppose that this sect believed so strongly in this system of racism and ethnic cleansing that it was willing to plunge the world into war in order to fulfill its objectives.

And suppose that this sect claimed 70,000,000 adherents in the world's most powerful nation, and had a stranglehold on the foreign policy of that nation, so that the military and financial might of that nation was directed toward the goal of helping the superior race and suppressing the inferior race?

Welcome to the wonderful world of American dispensationalism. Dispensationalists, who are found in many fundamentalist and evangelical denominations, follow the theological beliefs of John Nelson Darby, C. I. Scofield and Hal Lindsey, who taught that ethnic Jews constitute a superior race who are destined to take over Palestine, then the entire Middle East and finally the world. This naturally leads to a resentment of Palestinian Arabs, and all other Middle Eastern nations that sympathize with the Palestinians in their resistance to the program of pushing them out of their historic homelands. Dispensationalism, taken to its logical conclusion, leads to racism.

It should be emphasized that not all American fundamentalists and evangelicals are dispensationalists. Not all dispensationalists are Zionist who support the Israeli takeover of the Middle East, although it would be difficult to find prominent dispensationalist spokesman who would publicly disassociate themselves from Zionism. A few dispensationalists display personal animosity and hatred toward members of Middle Eastern ethnic groups they dislike, while most attempt to maintain cordial relations with individuals from such groups.

Having made these disclaimers, it must be admitted that the modern dispensational movement produces a lot of rhetoric and propaganda against the Arab peoples that can only be described as racist.

For instance, an article on the web site of Cutting Edge Ministries of Attleboro, Massachusetts, in an article entitled "White Hot Genocidal Arab Hatred of Israel and All Jews is Setting the Stage for End of the Age Fulfillment of Prophecy," contains this white hot denunciation of the Arabs: *"As Arabs armies advanced toward the heart of Europe, they wantonly killed, raped, and pillaged entire villages and cities. This is the true Arab, and please do not ever forget it."*

In October, 2000, Evangelist Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham who has built a reputation for fighting racism, stunned observers with this attack on the Arabs, made during

a "Festival" in Lexington, Kentucky: *"The Arabs will not be happy until every Jew is dead. They hate the state of Israel. They all hate the Jews. God gave that land to the Jews. The Arabs will never accept that. Why can't they live in peace?"* Dispensationalist followers of the Grahams apparently were undisturbed by this declaration that all Arabs are evil and that they have no civil or property rights in the land of their birth.

In his Last Call newsletter, Pastor F. M. Riley of Roswell, New Mexico denounces the Palestinians as "lazy" and accuse them of stealing Palestine from the Jews, saying, *"The Palestinians (and other Arabs) have never been anything but 'squatters' on land that never belonged to them in the first place."*

Even dispensationalists who do not indulge in overt racist condemnations of the Arabs often follow the assumption that the Palestinians are meant to be subservient to the recent Jewish colonists and settlers who have taken over their country, and that Palestinians are not entitled to the same basic human rights as all other peoples and ethnic groups are. This is an inherently racist ideology.

Another common teaching among dispensationalists is that the Palestinians Arabs are Edomites, or the "House of Esau," and that it is God's will that all the Old Testament curses and judgments on the ancient Edomites are meant to fall upon the modern Palestinians.

However, in reality there is no connection between the Edomites and the Palestinians. Josephus, in his "Antiquities of the Jews," Chapter IX, (2), stated that the entire Edomite or Idumean nation was absorbed into the Jewish nation in the 2nd Century BC, and this statement is accepted by modern historians and Bible reference works. Thus, much anti-Arab prejudice is based on a totally false application of Old Testament prophecies against ancient Edom (similar to the misapplication which places the "curse of Ham" upon modern blacks).

Meanwhile, although Iran is a non-Arab country, the current government of Iran has sided with the Palestinians. As a result, some dispensationalists regard the existence of Iran and the Iranian people as a threat to their theological belief that Israel must take over the Middle East and therefore Iran must be bashed also, as was done by Jimmy DeYoung in an article in the October/November 1998 issue of the Zionist magazine "Israel My Glory," in which he states, contrary to all Biblical and historical evidence, that *"Persia, that ancient biblical enemy of the Jewish people, is the modern state of Iran. The hatred the Persians had for the Jewish people has carried over to the Iran of today."*

So, many modern dispensationalists are displeased with the Arabs and the Iranians, for supposedly hindering the divine plan for Jewish hegemony in the Middle East. But it turns out that many of these dispensationalists are equally irritated with the Jews and will even vocally condemn Jews, for their alleged sin of choosing to live in America and other Western countries, instead of moving to Israel where they supposedly belong according to dispensational ideology.

Here we have a paradox – Gentiles are allowed to live in America or anywhere else they wish (unless you are a Palestinian desiring to live in Palestine, which is forbidden). But Jews, who are supposedly the master, superior race, are not allowed to choose where they can live like everyone else – they must live in Israel, the new ghetto set aside for them, or suffer the divine displeasure. Some have even suggested that the Holocaust during World War 2 was God's punishment upon the Jews for not relocating to Israel, and part of God's plan to force them to go there anyway.

Dwight Wilson in his book "Armageddon Now" has extensively documented anti-Semitic attitudes on the part of some dispensationalists in the early 20th Century, as well as their

distribution of the anti-Semitic forgery "Protocols of the Elders of Zion." Regarding dispensationalists of the 1930's and their attitude to German persecution of the Jews, Wilson says, "In spite of being theologically more pro-Jewish than any other Christian group, the premillennarians also were apathetic – because of a residual anti-Semitism, because persecution was prophetically expected, because it would encourage immigration to Palestine, because it seemed the beginning of the Great Tribulation and because it was a wonderful sign of the imminent blessed hope." Since that time evangelical concern for the welfare of Jews, as well as Arabs, has often played second fiddle to their desire for their peculiar prophetic schemes to be fulfilled, regardless of the cost in human misery.

Meanwhile, entire sermons have been preached and books have been written on the subject of the greedy Jew who stays in America so he can make money, instead of going to Israel where he belongs. The 1987 book "Let My People Go – The Struggle of the Jewish People to Return to Israel" by Tom Hess has on its front cover a Jewish man who is unable to go to Israel, because he is chained to a pole marked "Wall Street," thus perpetuating the offensive stereotypes of the rapacious Jew who will do anything for money.

Although there has never been a society more hospitable to the Jews than America, this book attempts to scare Jews into fleeing to Israel, saying that millions of American Jews will soon be butchered by the KKK, Islamic terrorists or the KGB unless they hightail it for the Holy Land now. In a chapter entitled "American Jews" – Bound by Materialism," Hess accuses American Jews of being enslaved by the god of mammon, and tells them, "It's time to stop saying, 'I'm an American Jew,' stop bowing down and worshipping the god of materialism in America and fulfill your end-time biblical destiny. Return to the land of your forefather..."

If someone demanded that Americans of African, Mexican or Chinese ancestry stop identifying themselves as Americans and get out of the country, and go back where their ancestors came from, this would quickly be identified and condemned as reprehensible racism. If we do thus to American Jews, it is clearly racism also.

In discussing the latent racism against Jews, Arabs and other Middle Eastern peoples, on the part of dispensationalist who are frustrated of all these peoples to do exactly what they think is necessary to fulfill by the failure the "Armageddon theology" end-times fantasies that have been predicted by their favorite prophecy preachers, it must be emphasized that I am not accusing all dispensationalists of being racists or holding to racist views. This article describes the attitudes of some dispensationalists, not all of them. No doubt there are many sincere dispensationalists who would publicly repudiate such views, if given the opportunity.

Therefore, I hereby invite all American dispensationalists to publicly subscribe to and declare their agreement with the following 2-point manifesto against racism:

1. We affirm that all American Jews are to be embraced and welcomed as American citizens at all times, and encouraged to stay in America if they wish, to enjoy the benefits that this society has provided for the Jewish people. At no time will we give the impression that American Jews do not belong here or that they belong in Israel.

2. We affirm that the Palestinian people are endowed with the same human, civil and property rights as all other peoples of the world, including the right to reside in their homeland, to travel freely, to govern themselves free of foreign military occupation, and to return to their homeland in the event that they have been exiled. Whatever privileges we may regard the Jews as having been divinely in this dispensation, those privileges do not include the right to oppress the Palestinians in any way or to expropriate their property without compensation.

This is a platform that all of us, dispensationalists and non-dispensationalists, can agree on. It is a scriptural platform, because the Bible teaches that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek (Romans 10:12), that God has put no difference between Jews and Gentiles (Acts 15:9), that God has made of one blood all the peoples of the earth (Acts 17:26), and that in Christ there is Jew or Greek (Galatians 3:28). The Apostle Paul taught that there is no advantage in being a Jew, Galatians 5:6, 6:15, Philipians 3:3-9.

Any theological teaching that gives Jews a place of privilege over Palestinians or Gentiles in general, or that places any added burdens and restrictions upon the Jews because of their ethnicity, is a relic of an unenlightened past, should be erased from our thinking or preaching.

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