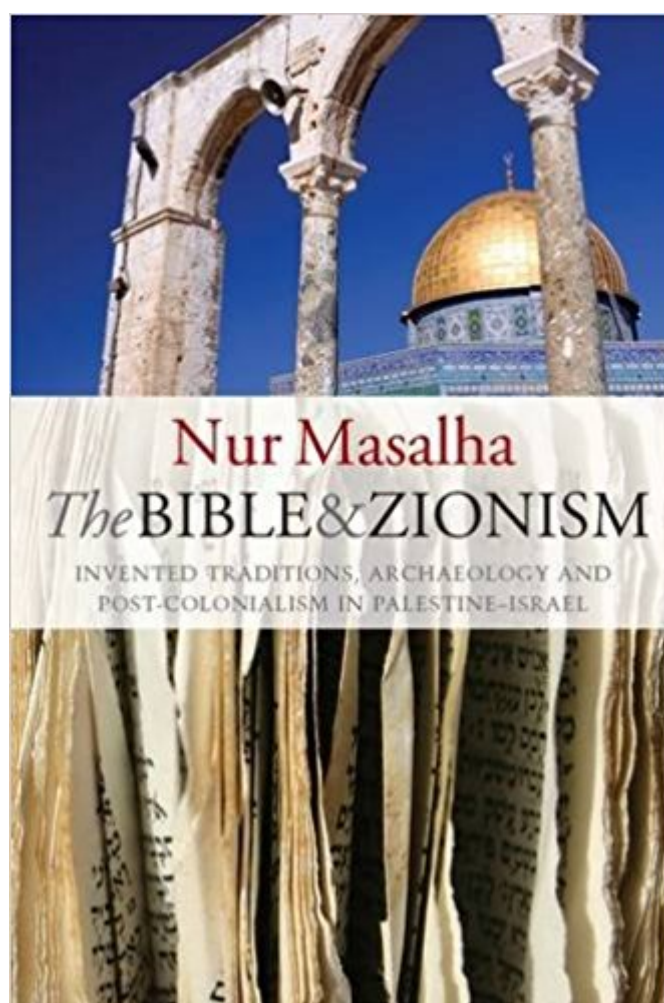


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The Bible And Zionism: Invented Traditions, Archaeology And Post-Colonialism In Palestine-Israel



Synopsis

Does the bible justify Zionism? Since the foundation of the Israeli state in 1948, Torah and tank have become increasingly inseparable, resulting in the forced expulsion and subjugation of millions of indigenous Palestinians. Nur Masalha's groundbreaking new book traces Zionism's evolution from a secular, settler movement in the late 19th century, to the messianic faith it has become today. He shows how the biblical language of 'chosen people' and 'promised land' has been used by many Christian and Jewish Zionists as the 'title deeds' for Israel, justifying ethnic division and violence. With Edward Said, Masalha argues that a new politics of peace can only be achieved through a single, democratic state, which replaces religious zealotry with secular equality.

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Customer Reviews

'Groundbreaking'. Abrar 'His argument should be read and taken deadly seriously...Nur makes a fascinating comparison between US backing for Israel today and British Christian backing for the Zionist project over a hundred years ago.' John Rose, International Socialism 'As a collection of virtually independent, yet interdependent essays, this books must strike the reader as unique in its breadth of discourse in the now increasingly over-subscribed as well as predominately `area study' focussed discipline of Middle Eastern politics and history ... very important and contextually relevant.' Sam Jacob, University of Exeter, Friends of Al-Aqsa 'Challenging.' The Pastoral Review

Nur Masalha is a Senior Lecturer and Director of the Holy Land Research Project at St.Mary's

College, University of Surrey, UK. He is Editor of Holy Land Studies: A Multidisciplinary Journal.

This extraordinary book analyses the links between Biblical studies and Zionism. It shows how Zionism uses the Bible to justify the most appalling practices - war, genocide and racism. For example, in 1980, Rabbi Yisrael Hess published an article in Bat Kol, 'The Genocide Commandment in the Torah', in which he wrote, "we shall all be called to this holy war, to this commandment of the annihilation of Amalek." He was writing about the Palestinians. He then approvingly quoted 1 Samuel 15.3, "kill man and woman, baby and suckling." Again, "Our leaders should have entered Lebanon and Beirut without hesitation, and killed every single one of them", wrote Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, in Nekudah, 12 November 1982. Dr Mordecai Nisan, a supporter of Gush Emunim (the settler movement which is the most influential Jewish fundamentalist movement in Israel) wrote, "it is likely that a sharp and extreme solution will be raised as a remedy to the Arab plague that afflicts the country." Imagine the reaction if a Palestinian leader referred to 'the Jewish plague'. Racism, it would seem, is a religious duty, ordained by God. Zeev Herzog, Professor of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University and director of its Institute of Archaeology, wrote, "Following 70 years of extensive excavations in the Land of Israel, archaeologists have found out: The patriarchs' acts are legendary, the Israelites did not sojourn in Egypt or make an exodus, they did not conquer the land. Neither is there any mention of the empire of David and Solomon ..." So it is wrong to treat the Bible as a historical record, and even more wrong to treat it as a source of legal title. How could an alleged word from a mythical deity trump 1,400 years of Palestinians living in Palestine? The great Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides defined 'who is a Jew' in terms of faith choice (not of national, racial or ethnic affiliation), contradicting the Zionist principle of ethnic and racial separation. The facts refute the supremacist and essentialist notion of the Jews as a divinely 'chosen people', with a God-given right to a promised land.

Masalha has devoted his scholar career to prove that anything to do with Israel is wrong. Identifying any old rabbi or what have you as a representative of Zionism just because it serves Masalha's cause is on the verge of dishonesty [figures he carefully selects have never been heard of by many in Israel]

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