

Editorial

God's chosen people

We are truly living in a terrible time. That a whole nation—Iraq—can be literally leveled to the ground, violates all of the tenets of God's law; yet it is being justified in God's name.

Not only is Iraq being destroyed, but there is every indication that the Israelis and Syrians, with British and American blessing, intend to wipe out the Palestinians. There is already fierce bombardment of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, while on the West Bank, 1 million people are being left to starve in virtual concentration camps, shot if they leave their homes except during one two-hour period daily.

In what way does this differ from Nazi atrocities during the Second World War? Is not the situation of the Palestinians comparable to that of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto? Yet, unlike the case of Hitler's concentration camps, none of us, no one in this age of televised violence, can claim ignorance.

If some Jewish fundamentalists claim they are the Chosen People and that they are conducting a holy war by exterminating the Palestinians and other Arabs, they are not the only ones who use the Lord's name as a cover for their own evil acts.

For example, the British royal family, since the days of Queen Victoria, has patronized a particularly evil sect who call themselves the British Israelites. These are not Jews (in fact they are open anti-Semites); rather they claim that the British, not the inhabitants of Israel, are the true chosen people. They have an elaborate mythological structure intended to show that the British are a lost tribe of Israel.

They use a nasty kind of number-magic called cabalism, to interpret the Bible. According to this nasty cult, Jan. 1, 1991, was an especially auspicious time to begin a war against Iraq, because it marked the 2,520th anniversary of the Chosen People's return to the Promised Land after the Babylonian captivity.

The British Israelites use a kind of coded language to justify Anglo-American imperial aims. For example, just as they are the "true" Jews, so the Pope, and Germany as a nation, for them represent Babylon—along with Iraq, which is located in the geographical region of the former Babylonian empire.

They see the war against Iraq as a first stage in a Third World War, which will be a re-run of the First and Second World Wars, only this time using weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear bombs. These evil men have no fear of Armageddon, so long as it brings them power in the end. For them, the Second Coming of Christ is interpreted as the racist British Empire come to life again.

There are also Christians who share some of the same beliefs. They have been convinced to accept the present war as the unfolding of the Revelation. They welcome the destruction of Iraq as hastening the day of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ. It is no doubt to encourage such destructive fantasies, rather than for personal consolation, that President Bush invited evangelist Billy Graham to the White House on Jan. 16. It was Graham's task to convince those criminally foolish Americans who now accept Bush's war, that the Lord will reward America for the slaughter of whole nations.

On Aug. 8, 1990, two days after Bush decided to commit U.S. forces to what was then known as Operation Desert Shield, Graham issued a statement from his headquarters in Minneapolis. "An outbreak of war in that region would affect every nation and every person on earth—economically, politically, and socially. Upheavals there also could have major spiritual implications. These events are happening in that part of the world where history began, and, the Bible says, where history as we know it will some day end." More recent statements have been in the same vein.

It is surely not a great exaggeration to call Graham a fellow traveler of the British Israelites, although unfortunately many honest Christians take his pronouncements at face value. It is not a question of how one interprets the Bible, whether Babylon is considered to be located where Iraq is or on the continent of Europe: It is a question of whether genocide can ever be condoned.

If there is any people whom God has chosen above all others, then surely it be the children of the world. For that reason, we ask you to join us in fighting for their right to life.