

**Document A: “The Zionist Revolution”, Harold Fisch  
(1978)**

In every one of the Covenants with the patriarchs the promise of the land is included.

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give to thee and thy seed after thee the land in which thou dost sojourn, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.  
(Genesis 17:7,8)

The Jew is driven by a force as old as history itself to reunite himself with his land. It is the Holy Land where the Sanctuary is to be constructed. There and there alone can Israel perform its service as ‘a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’. If the vocation of Israel is a mystery, then the vocation of the land is no less mysterious. ‘Zion,’ says [Martin] Buber, ‘is the heart of the renewed world.’ It is the ‘city of the Great King’ (Psalms 48:3), chosen to be the physical setting for the fulfillment of the covenant drama. It is by reunion with its land that Israel is redeemed. For if the Covenant roots itself in time, it also roots itself in space. If history becomes the history of salvation, then geography, too, is touched with promise.

*Source: The Zionist Revolution, Harold Fisch, St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1978, p. 20.*

## Document B: “Genesis”

Chap. 15, verse 18

On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “to your offspring I assign this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

Chap. 17, verses 7-8

I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come. I assign the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting holding. I will be their God.

Chapter 28, verses 13-15

And the Lord was standing beside him and He said, “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac: the ground on which you are lying I will assign to you and to your offspring. Your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and your descendants. Remember, I am with you: I will protect you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.

*Source: The Torah: The Five Books of Moses, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1999 (First Published 1992), p. 36-77.*

## Document C: “Deuteronomy”

### Chap. 28, verses 1-14

Now, if you obey the Lord your God, to observe faithfully all His commandments which I enjoin upon you this day, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. All these blessings shall come upon you and take effect, if you will but heed the word of the Lord your God:

Blessed shall be the issue of your womb, the produce of your soil, and the offspring of your cattle, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock.

Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

Blessed shall you be in your comings and blessed shall you be in your goings.

The Lord will put to rout before you the enemies who attack you; they will march out against you by a single road, but flee from you by many roads. The Lord will ordain blessings for you upon barns and upon all your undertakings: He will bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. The Lord will establish you as His holy people, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the Lord's name is proclaimed over you, and they shall stand in fear of you. The Lord will give you abounding prosperity in the issue of your womb, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to assign to you. The Lord will open for you His bounteous store, the heavens, to provide rain for your land in season and to bless all your undertakings. You will be creditor to many nations, but debtor to none.

The Lord will make you the head, not the tail; you will always be at the top and never at the bottom – if only you obey and faithfully observe the commandments of the Lord your God that I enjoin upon you this day, and do not deviate to the right or to the left from any of the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day and turn to the worship of other gods.

*Source: The Torah: The Five Books of Moses, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1999 (First Published 1992), p. 589-590.*

## Document D: “Deuteronomy”

Chap. 28, verse 15-48

But if you do not obey the Lord your God to observe faithfully all His commandments and laws which I enjoin upon you this day, all these curses shall come upon you and take effect:

Cursed shall you be in the city and cursed shall you be in the country.  
Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.  
Cursed shall be the issue of your womb and the produce of your soil, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock.  
Cursed shall you be in your comings and cursed shall you be in your goings.

The Lord will let loose against you calamity, panic, and frustration in all the enterprises you undertake, so that you shall soon be utterly wiped out because of your evildoing in forsaking Me. The Lord will make pestilence cling to you, until He has put an end to you in the land that you are entering to possess. The Lord will strike you with consumption, fever and blight and mildew; they shall hound you until you perish. The skies above your head shall be copper and the earth under you iron. The Lord will make the rain of your land dust, and sand shall drop on you from the sky, until you are wiped out.

The Lord will put you to rout before your enemies; you shall march out against them by a single road, but flee from them by many roads; and you shall become a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. Your carcasses shall become food for all the birds of the sky and all the beasts of the earth, with none to frighten them off.

The Lord will strike you with the Egyptian inflammation, with hemorrhoids, boil-scars, and itch, from which you shall never recover. The Lord will strike you with madness, blindness, and dismay. You shall grope at noon as a blind man gropes in the dark; you shall not prosper in your ventures, but shall be constantly abused and robbed, with none to give help.

If you pay the bride-price for a wife, another man shall enjoy her. If you build a house, you shall not live in it. If you plant a vineyard, you shall not harvest it. Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not

eat of it; your ass shall be seized in front of you, and it shall not be returned to you; your flock shall be delivered to your enemies, with none to help you. Your sons and daughters shall be delivered to another people, while you look on; and your eyes shall strain for them constantly, but you shall be helpless. A people you do not know shall eat up the produce of your soil and all your gains; you shall be abused and downtrodden continually, until you are driven mad by what your eyes behold. The Lord will afflict you at the knees and thighs with a severe inflammation, from which you shall never recover – from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head.

The Lord will drive you, and the king you have set over you, to a nation unknown to you or your fathers, where you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone. You shall be a consternation, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples to which the Lord will drive you.

Though you take much seed out to the field, you shall gather in little, for the locust shall consume it. Though you plant vineyards and till them, you shall have no wine to drink or store, for the worm shall devour them. Though you have olive trees throughout your territory, you shall have no oil for anointment, for your olives shall drop off. Though you beget sons and daughters, they shall not remain with you, for they shall go into captivity. The cricket shall take over all the trees and produce of your land.

The stranger in your midst shall rise above you higher and higher, while you sink lower and lower: he shall be your creditor, but you shall not be his; he shall be the head and you the tail.

All these curses shall befall you; they shall pursue you and overtake you, until you are wiped out, because you did not heed the Lord your God and keep the commandments and laws that He enjoined upon you. They shall serve as signs and proofs against you and your offspring for all time. Because you would not serve the Lord your God in joy and gladness over the abundance of everything, you shall have to serve – in hunger and thirst, naked and lacking everything – the enemies whom the Lord will let loose against you. He will put an iron yoke upon your neck until He has wiped you out.

*Source: The Torah: The Five Books of Moses, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1999 (First Published 1992), p. 592-594.*

## Document E: “The Jewish War”, Josephus (75 C.E.)

### Chapter V

While the Temple was ablaze, the attackers plundered it, and countless people who were caught by them were slaughtered. There was no pity for age and no regard was accorded rank; children and old men, laymen and priests, alike were butchered; every class was pursued and crushed in the grip of war, whether they cried out for mercy or offered resistance. Through the roar of the flames streaming far and wide, the groans of the falling victims were heard; such was the height of the hill and the magnitude of blazing pile that the entire city seemed to be ablaze; and the noise – nothing more deafening and frightening could be imagined. There were the cries of the Roman legions as they swept onwards *en masse*, the yells of the rebels encircled by fire and sword, the panic of the people who, cut off above, fled into the arms of the enemy, and their shrieks as they met their fate. The cries on the hill blended with those of the multitudes in the city below; and now many people who were exhausted and tongue-tied as a result of hunger, when they beheld the Temple on fire, found strength once more to lament and wail. Peraea and the surrounding hills, added their echoes to the deafening din. But more horrifying than the din were the sufferings.

The Temple Mount, everywhere enveloped in flames, seemed to be boiling over from its base; yet the blood seemed more abundant than the flames and the numbers of the slain greater than those of the slayers. The ground could not be seen anywhere between the corpses; the soldiers climbed over heaps of bodies as they chased the fugitives. The rebel horde managed to push through the Romans, and to break through to the outer courts of the Temple Mount and from there to the city, while the surviving population took refuge on the outer porticoes. Some of the priests at first tore out from Temple roof the spikes with their lead sockets and hurled them at the Romans; but subsequently as they did not achieve anything and the flames leaped toward them, they withdrew to the wall, which was eight cubits wide and stayed there.

However, two men of note, who were in a position either to save their lives by going over to the Romans, or to stay there and face the same fate as the others, threw themselves into the fire and were consumed with the Temple; they were Meirus son of Belgas, and Josephus son of Dalaeus.

*Source: Josephus: The Jewish War, General Editor, Gaalya Cornfeld, Contributing Editors, Benjamin Mazar, Paul L. Maier, Masada Ltd. Publishers, Givatayim, 1982. p. 423-424.*

**Document F: “Jewish Worship”, Abraham Millgram  
(1971)**

The people remove their shoes and sit on the floor or on low stools like mourners, and the prayers are recited in subdued voices. In this setting the mournful melody of the Book of Lamentations is chanted:

*How doth the city sit solitary,  
That was full of people!  
How is she become as a widow!  
She that was great among the nations,  
And princess among the provinces,  
How is she become tributary! [Lam. 1:1]*

...Ever since the first century, when the Second Jewish Commonwealth was destroyed, Jews have mourned the destruction of the central shrine of Judaism as an immediate personal loss of tragic dimensions. ... This melancholy observance of the Ninth of Av was already the accepted practice during the geonic period. In the Middle Ages the number of dirges increased, the mourning deepened, and the tears flowed even more freely.

***Vocabulary***

Geonic period: from end of the 6th century A.D. to about the beginning of the 11th century. (500-980 A.D)

Source: “Jewish Worship”, Abraham E. Millgram, *The Jewish Publication Society of America*, 1971. pp. 278-279

**Document G: “The Jewish War”, Josephus  
(75 C.E.)**

**Eleazar's first address**

Eleazar, however, intended neither to slip out nor to allow anyone else to do so. Seeing the wall going up in flames and being unable to devise any further means of escape or heroic resistance, he foresaw clearly what the Romans would do to the men, the women and children if they won, and he thought that death was preferable for all. Deciding that this was the best course under the circumstances, he assembled his toughest companions and urged it upon them in the following address:

"Long since, my brave companions, we determined to serve neither the Romans nor anyone but only God, for He alone is the true and righteous Lord of men; now the time has come that bids us prove our resolution by our deeds. At this crisis we must not disgrace ourselves; up till now we have never submitted to slavery even if it involved no danger; in choosing slavery now we would deliberately accept the horrible penalties that await us if we fall alive into Roman hands. For as we were the first of all to revolt, so are we the last to fight against them. Moreover, I think it is God who has granted us this privilege, that it is in our power to die bravely in freedom – unlike others who were unexpectedly defeated. It is evident that tomorrow we will be captured, but we are free to choose an honorable death together with those we love most. Our enemies cannot prevent this though they fervently pray to take us alive; nor can we defeat them in battle. Perhaps from the very first, when we were bent on freedom, but suffered such hard treatment from one another – and worse from our enemy – we ought to have read God's purpose and realized that His once beloved Jewish race had been doomed to extinction. For if He had remained gracious or only slightly indignant with us, He would not have shut His eyes to such wholesale destruction or have abandoned His holy city to be burnt to the ground by our enemies. And did we really hope that of all the race we alone would come through safe, still in possession of our freedom, as if we were guiltless before God and had taken part in no crime – we who had been the teachers of all the others?

Now, see how He shows us the folly of our hopes, plunging us into more dire distress than we could have anticipated. For not even the impregnability of this fortress has sufficed to save us; and though we have

food stores in abundance, piles of arms, and more than enough of every other necessity, yet manifestly God Himself has deprived us of all hope of deliverance. For the flames that were carried hack into the enemy lines did not turn back of their own accord towards the wall we constructed; no, all these things signify God's vengeance for the many wrongs that we dared to inflict on our countrymen in our madness. For these crimes let us pay the penalty not to our bitterest foes, the Romans, but to God – by our own hands! It be easier to bear His judgment than theirs. Let our wives die undishonored and our children without knowing slavery; and when they are gone, let us do each other an ungrudging kindness, preserving liberty as a noble funeral monument. But first let us destroy our belongings and the fortress by fire; for the Romans, I know, will be grieved to lose persons and all their gain at the same time. Let us spare only one thing – our store of food; for it testify when we are dead, that we did not perish through want but because, in keeping with our initial resolution, we chose death to slavery."

### **The entry of the Romans into Masada**

Expecting further resistance, the Romans armed themselves by daybreak, bridged the gap between the earthworks and the walls with gangways, and advanced to the assault. Seeing no enemy but an awful desolation on all sides, flames within and silence throughout, they were at a loss to guess what had happened. At last, as if giving the signal for a volley, they shouted, hoping that some of those within would show signs of life. The shout was heard by the women who emerged from the aqueduct and informed the Romans of what had happened, one of the two giving a lucid report of both of [Eleazar's] address, and how the deed was done. They found it difficult to believe her and were skeptical of such amazing fortitude; in the meantime, they attempted to put out the fire and soon cut a passage through which they entered the palace. As they came upon the mass the slain bodies, rather than exult over them as foes, they admired the nobility of their resolve and their contempt of death in carrying it out without hesitating.

*Source: Josephus: The Jewish War, General Editor, Gaalya Cornfeld, Contributing Editors, Benjamin Mazar, Paul L. Maier, Masada Ltd. Publishers, Givatayim, 1982. p. 492-503.*