

Evangelical Christian and U.S. VP Mike Pence Spits in the Eye of Judaism

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Jews Didn't Understand What Mike Pence Was Really Saying

The author has done an excellent job of analysing Pence's recent speech in Jerusalem. The author analysed the secondary layer discourse, which most often transmits the real message, usually subliminally, as the focus of the conscious mind is on the primary layer discourse. The REAL: message is an eye-opener and should be a shock to all Jews as it denigrates their faith, or at best places it in a subservient relationship with Christianity.



US VP, Mike Pence -- bigoted racist and religious extremist

When Mike Pence addressed Israel's parliament this week, his speech was liberally seasoned with scripture. His Bible was on his lips when he asked all present to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalms 122:6). He invoked Abraham and the promise that he would be the "father of many nations", (Genesis 17:4), and he said the establishment of Israel was the fulfilment of a messianic promise (Isaiah 66:8).

Two significant references, however, were lost on the majority of Jews who heard the speech.

Pence explained that, "It was here, in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, that Abraham offered up his son, Isaac, and was credited with righteousness for his faith in God." Rabbinic [Jewish and Christian traditions](#) place the binding of Isaac, on a mountain in the Land of Moriah, "the land that I will show you," in Jerusalem. Genesis 22, which tells the story of this "offering", has nothing to say about "faith."

So where did Pence's framing come from, that this was an act of faith?

In Genesis 15 Abraham is distressed that he still has no children in his old age. God takes him outside and says that he will have as many descendants as the stars in the night sky. Abraham then "had faith in the Lord, and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness."

Joshua Blachorsky, a doctoral candidate at New York University's Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, has noted that this verse was central to the thought and work of the apostle Paul, who in his letter to the Romans, chapter 4, uses this verse to explain that Abraham was considered "righteous," worthy of salvation, not because of his observance of the commandments

("works") or his circumcision, the act by which he entered into a divine covenant, but because of his faith.

In Christian readings of Paul, the Jewish Torah and its commandments "bring wrath" and cannot bring about the promises of inheritance to Abraham. Rather, only faith can bring about salvation – not just to Abraham but to humanity at large.

Paul concludes: "Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him,' were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification."

In this reading, Abraham is the father of the faithful, not the father of the circumcised. Paul goes on to explicitly exclude the "carnal" Jews from their Abrahamic descent in Romans 9.

Pence's emphasis on faith (which he mentioned 13 additional times in his speech) echoes Chapter 11 of the non-Pauline, but canonical, Epistle to the Hebrews, which surveys all the heroes of the Hebrew Bible, including the offering of Isaac (11:17-20). All these deeds and miracles, according to the Epistle, were done by faith. Hebrews concludes: "Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us [Christians] so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect." (Heb 11:39-40).

Can present-day Israel, or modern-day Jews, be "made perfect," if they continue to dissent from Christianity? Pence's emphasis on faith says, resoundingly, no.

Jews in this story are a tool or a pawn for the triumph of the evangelical Christ, perhaps in some apocalyptic event in the future. The redemption of the Jews is a harbinger for the ever-closer second coming of Jesus.

The acts of Old Testament heroes (and modern Jews by extension) only gain the status of acts of faith in their 'reincarnation' as protagonists of Christian faith. As Jews, acting within a Jewish identity, those acts would have no spiritual or redemptive meaning: "They did not receive what was promised."

Historically, Christians have understood these texts to mean that faith in Christ as savior was the only path to "justification," or salvation. Since the crucifixion of Jesus, the Church replaced the Jews as God's chosen people. These scriptures justified the persecution and killing of Jews, who refused to accept Christ: think the Crusades and the Inquisition. In more recent centuries, this theology has been especially pronounced in the Evangelical Lutheran tradition.

That tradition had a lasting and significant influence on modern German anti-Semitism, even when it was couched in 'scientific' and secular tropes. The Holocaust brought about significant soul-searching about the validity of this theology in many circles. The successes of [political Zionism](#) also required some modifications to this theology.

Regardless, per Pence, the tribulations and successes of the Jews are valuable only as pre-figurations and theological models for Christians. But the Jewish state is also necessary for his eschatology. [Evangelicals](#) like Pence see the urgent need to literally encourage Jews to return to Zion and to sovereignty as a critical step towards Christ's second coming.

The U.S. Vice President stood before the assembled delegates of the Jewish state (the Arab MKs had been [shamefully expelled](#) from the chamber minutes earlier) and told them, right after talking about

the Holocaust, that Abraham was not their father but that Abraham was his father.

Pence, who claims to be righteous on account of his own faith, used texts that insinuated that any redemption that would come to the Jews was but a harbinger of final and real redemption for the world under Christ as king and messiah.

He ignored the staunchly secular and socialist components of political Zionism. He recast what was meant to be a secular democracy acting within history as an agent of divine providence performing the miracles of the end of history. He said, quite simply, that before what he regards as the messianic establishment of the State of Israel, Jews were "fragments of a people."

The Jews applauded.

Pence surely has the right to interpret scriptures. They are his scriptures too, according to his own religious tradition. Still, it takes a special kind of hutzpah to stand in front of a Jewish audience and explain their own tradition to them using language and texts that historically have rendered actual Jews pathologically redundant to the world, and still today cast us as a tool for the salvation of Christians.

The quiet implications of Pence's speech take on an even more bizarre character in light of the recent [report](#) that large parts of the speech were drafted by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, the UK's chief rabbi emeritus.

That expose suggests that the Pence speech isn't just a public display of theological impudence but of Jewish subservience, in which a prominent Orthodox rabbi internalizes Christian supercessionism and parrots it back as politically expedient pablum.

And this too is the level to which Israel's Knesset has stooped. Its overwhelming right-wing and religious majority obsequiously traded the historical Jewish claim to Abraham, the Torah, and redemption according to the Jewish narrative, for the lentil stew of American "recognition" of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the city where, Pence and others hope, Christian dreams may still come true.

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