

# OpenTheo

## The Modern State of Israel



### Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg provides insights into the establishment of the modern state of Israel and the role of the nation in the Christian faith. He suggests that while Christians have historically supported Israel based on Dispensationalist beliefs and the idea that the establishment of Israel is fulfillment of prophecy, the blessings of the nation of Israel are conditional on their obedience to the covenant they made with God. Gregg also advises Christians to evaluate the modern state of Israel based on the Bible and to be wary of relying solely on the Dispensationalist narrative.

### Transcript

When I travel and speak places, I actually try to avoid controversial subjects. Not that I don't mind talking about controversial subjects. People can call me on the air about any controversial subject and I'll talk about it.

But when people invite me to speak, if I'm given a choice, I try to pick something that's not going to offend anybody. But sometimes I'm asked to speak on something specific. Tonight, I've been asked if I'd speak on a subject that is in fact one of the most controversial subjects among Christians.

Only probably because most Christians don't know it's controversial. They just think the Bible says a certain thing about a certain subject and everyone believes this way. No one thinks it's controversial until I bring it up.

The truth is that I present a different view than what many, many Christians think is true. Now the view I present is a view that many Christian denominations would present. I'm not part of any of them, but I mean, it is not the only view out there held.

And it certainly is the one that's been held the longest in church history. But we are all products of our own age. We are all very provincial.

We've heard the teaching of our church and other churches like our churches and on the radio stations that we listen to and TV shows we watch that are Christian. And if they're all saying pretty much the same thing, it never occurs to us that this is a new idea that

they're bringing up. And that Christians in an earlier age would not have held to this view and did not.

And that many Christians still do not. However, it's a subject that's very controversial to the point that those who disagree with what I'm going to share are very often very emotional about it. Now I'm not very emotional about the subject.

To me, I don't have a dog in this race. I just I don't care which way the Bible goes. I'll go with which other way I find in the Bible.

But my own views about the. The subject of Israel have changed over the years. I was raised and eventually was a teacher in the dispensational camp for many years.

Eventually, my views on a number of things related to that camp changed. I didn't know I was a dispensationalist because my teachers who were teaching dispensationalism never even used that word. They just said, this is what the Bible teaches.

So I didn't know there was anything else that the Bible might teach. But what I was taught. And therefore, when I began to see things in the scripture a little differently than my teachers, I was a little concerned because about me.

I thought I was the one going astray. But I was I knew I was seeing. I knew what was there.

And it's it's always difficult when you begin to feel like you're seeing things in the scriptures that no one else, you know, is holding to. But when I did change my views, I eventually found people did come out of the woodwork and say, yeah, that's what that's what I believe. And I found books from people who believe.

So I thought, OK, I'm not alone in this. That's a little more comforting. But whether I was or not, I'd still see the Bible the same way.

And that's just what you got to do. But I don't have to impose the view on anyone else. And that's why I wouldn't have talked on this subject tonight if I wasn't specifically asked to.

I was asked to speak on the subject of the modern state of Israel, modern nation of Israel. And every teacher I ever hear, and this would have included me in the earlier part of my ministry. I'll say pretty much the same things about it.

But in 1948, Israel became a nation again after many, many centuries of having been dispersed throughout the world. In 70 A.D., the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, the capital, and destroyed the temple and dispersed the Jews throughout the world. And they've been in the diaspora for, you know, most of 2000 years.

And that didn't change until 1948. And at that time, Israel was declared to be a nation in

their old former land in the Middle East, what had been called Palestine until that time. And that was we're told that's a tremendous fulfillment of prophecy.

I was told that there's probably no prophecy more significant than that could be fulfilled in our time than the restoration of the nation of Israel. The system of belief that I was taught held that the last days are all about Israel. That everything's about Israel.

That Antichrist is going to set up an image of himself in Israel in a temple in Jerusalem. That, you know, everything's going to be about Israel. That all the nations are going to come against Israel.

God's going to save the Jews at the very end. They're going to look on him whom they've pierced and they'll weep as for one pictures about it. But since I have moved away from dispensationalism, I never consciously moved away from dispensationalism because I moved completely away from it before I knew it was called that.

My views changed piece by piece without knowing where they were going. I wasn't being persuaded of another view anywhere. I was just I didn't know where my views were going to end up, but I was studying the Bible.

And it was only after I was no longer dispensationalist that I knew that dispensationalism was the name for what I'd been taught. And that it was a new view. A relatively new view began in the early 1800s.

In the 1830s by a man named John Nelson Darby. Now, Darby had a tremendous impact on the church's thinking about Israel. And those who followed him, and there were a great number, especially in America and England, who followed Darby's teachings, which originated around 1830.

They had a tremendous impact on not only the thinking of Christians about Israel, but also on the actual establishment of the nation of Israel, believe it or not. Israel is a nation today partly as a result of the rise of something called Zionism in the late 18th century. And many Jews, including leaders in the Zionist movement, recognized the father of Zionism to have been a man named William Blackwell, who was a dispensational preacher.

I'm going to tell you more about that. But when people say, well, it's a tremendous miracle that Israel became a nation again in 1948 after being dispersed throughout the world. My pastor used to say, and I used to repeat it faithfully, that there's never been any people who existed as a distinct ethnic group for 2,000 years without a homeland to identify them and so forth and then come back together.

It's an unprecedented thing. And so we always talked about it like it's a miracle. You know, when the Arab nations go to war against Israel in the Six-Day War or even in Africa at the Entebbe rescue and things like that, we see tremendous evidence that God was

on their side.

And we were quite convinced that no matter what happens, God is always going to be on Israel's side because these are the last days. And God has a great deal to do for Israel and through Israel in the last days. In fact, the pre-tribulation rapture doctrine, which is was originated when dispensationalism originated.

It was not taught in the church before then. The preacher of rapture presupposes that once the church is taken away, then there's seven years that God's working exclusively with Israel called the tribulation period. And then they say there will be a millennium after Jesus comes back, during which Israel will be established as the chief of the nations again.

The temple will be rebuilt. The Levitical priesthood will be functioning again, offering animal sacrifices on a regular basis in the temple, according to their interpretation of Ezekiel chapter 40 through 48 and so forth. Now, in other words, everything that is not the church that matters is Israel.

And that the establishment of the nation of Israel again in 1948 was like the prophetic clock began ticking again. They say that that there was a prophecy in Daniel chapter nine called the 70 weeks of Daniel. And if I don't want to go into that detail, because that'll take us too far afield.

But the point is, they believe that there were four hundred and ninety years predicted for God to deal with Israel from the beginning point of a decree of a Persian king. Back in the sixth century B.C., a Persian king who made a decree that Jerusalem would be rebuilt after Babylon had destroyed it 70 years earlier. And from that decree of that Persian monarch, there would be four hundred and ninety years to complete God's dealings with Israel.

They believe and I believed that the first four hundred and eighty three of those years, that is, all of them except seven. The total number is four ninety and they believe that for eighty three, the whole number less seven, that four hundred and eighty three of those years passed until Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. And then because the Jews rejected him, the clock stopped.

The last seven years didn't happen. They were postponed. And because the prophetic clock stopped when the Jews rejected Jesus.

I have to say, I'm not sure why God would have predicted things so accurately, but didn't predict that the Jews would reject Jesus and stop the clock like that. But the point is, they say that when Israel became a nation. Again, it's not that the clock started again, but it set things up so that the clock can start again, that God's going to deal with Israel again in the last days.

They believe when the church is raptured. That that will be when the clock really starts and the last seven years tick away and that's going to be the future tribulation until Jesus comes back. That's that's the dispensational system.

And maybe you've been taught that as I was. Well, of course, because of that, dispensational churches are fascinated by all things Israel. Some even have Israeli flags in their churches.

Anyone ever been in church that has an Israeli flag, the Star of David up on this platform? Do you know that Israel is not a Christian nation? It's not even a godly nation. Israel is a secular nation. There are Christians, Christian Jews and Gentiles in Israel.

They make up a very, very tiny minority of the population. And then even another minority are Orthodox Jews who believe actually in God and the law of Moses and things like that. But the majority of Jews in Israel are not religious at all.

The nation is not religious. That might surprise you. It's not it's not built upon the law of Moses.

The Knesset is a secular organization. It's a pluralistic society, just like America. You can be of any religion you want, except you'll be persecuted more if you're a Christian than if you're anything else.

The Knesset back in the 80s made a law that said anyone who's Jewish by birth can come back and be an Israeli citizen automatically because of them being Jewish. Unless they believe in Jesus. You can be a Jew who's a Buddhist or an atheist or New Ager or Hindu or any brand of Judaism.

If you come back to the land, you can be an automatic citizen of Israel, but not if you believe Jesus is the Messiah. Now, that doesn't mean that there are no Jewish citizens that believe Jesus is the Messiah. You just have to go through a more it's not automatic.

You have to go through the same kind of immigration process that any foreigner would, even though you're Jewish, if you are. But you see, they single out Christians, Jews for special negative treatment. But they're not.

They're not even they don't even show favoritism necessarily toward godly Jews over secular Jews. It's not a godly nation. It's just a political nation.

But some say, nonetheless, it's a miracle that they're there at all. They've been persecuted throughout history. You know, the pogroms in Russia, the Holocaust in Western Europe during World War Two and other things like that.

Even the Crusades and so forth targeted Jews many times to try to wipe them out. And look, they've been preserved all this time. It's a miracle of God.

And therefore, we have to look at the nation of Israel today as a miracle of God, which deserves our support no matter what. I was an elder in a dispensational church back in Santa Cruz in 1980 or so. And one of the other elders was very favorable toward the nation of Israel.

And he was actually saying that American churches should support Israel financially and economically. We should buy Israeli products before we buy products from China or somewhere else. We should send military aid to Israel and so forth.

And that we need to support Israel because he said, and I would have said this one time, too. If you bless Israel, God will bless you. If you curse Israel, God will curse you.

Anyone heard that one before? I'm sure you have. Now, is that what the Bible teaches? Now, of course, I will say this. Every verse that ever is quoted or can be quoted that makes anything out of Israel being special more than any other nation is an Old Testament verse.

You will not find one verse in the New Testament that makes any predictions about the future of Israel. Now, you do find, of course, Paul saying in Romans 11, 26, Thus all Israel will be saved. Now, depending on how you read Romans 9 through 11, you may or may not believe he's talking about ethnic Israel.

He says all Israel will be saved. Some believe he is and some believe he's not talking about ethnic Israel. But given the description of the olive tree immediately before that, where the olive tree is Israel and it has some Jewish and some Gentile branches, they're the believing branches.

The unbelieving branches, including Jewish unbelieving branches, are not on the tree anymore. So he's basically describing a community of believers in Christ, which we would normally call the church. And that's what he refers to, apparently, as Israel because that's the olive tree in Romans 11.

And that's the olive tree that is called Israel in Jeremiah 11 also. Anyway, I don't want to go too fast and over too much. What I'm saying is this.

Even if Romans 11, 26 is talking about ethnic Israel and says all Israel will be saved, that says nothing about a political nation in the Middle East. Many Jews are saved already and Gentiles, too, and don't even live in Israel. To say that Israel will be saved has nothing to do with geography, has nothing to do with politics, has to do with Jesus.

If all the Jews are going to get saved, more power to them, I'm all for it. But they don't have to be in Israel. The Bible doesn't anywhere predict that they will be.

I should say the New Testament doesn't. There are predictions in the Old Testament, quite a few, especially in Jeremiah and in Isaiah and in Ezekiel and some of the minor

prophets, about God bringing Israel back to their land and establishing them there again as a nation. No Christian who believes in the Bible would ever deny that.

And it did happen. It happened after the Babylonian exile. All those prophecies were made during or prior to the Babylonian exile.

The Jews had been taken from their land. Their temple had been destroyed just like it was in 70 AD. It was back in 586 BC.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, destroyed the temple, deported the Jews. They were exiles in Babylon for 70 years and then a remnant of them did go back. And when they did go back, we have every reason to believe they fulfilled those prophecies.

The prophets said God was going to bring them back and build up the temple again. They did exactly that. This happened 539 BC.

After that, there were no more prophecies about the Jews returning. Well, a few years later, Zechariah around 520 or so did talk about more Jews coming back and more did. Some came with Ezra, some came with Nehemiah.

But the point is that after that wave, those waves of returning exiles returned, you don't find any more predictions in the Old Testament and none in the New that have anything to do with a restoration of Israel at any other time. Now, I just want that to sink in for a moment, if you would. Whenever someone says, what the Bible says Israel will be established in the last days, I say, show me the verse, please.

I'm not trying to be ornery. I'm just very interested in seeing what verse of the Bible you think says that. Invariably, they appeal to verses in Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, minor prophets, which were fulfilled hundreds of years before Jesus came.

And there's no predictions after that that say anything about a restoration of the nation of Israel. But it happened in 1948. So what are we to make of that? Maybe it's a dual fulfillment? Some prophecies have dual fulfillments.

And so a lot of people say, well, I think maybe that's a dual fulfillment. It happened in 539 BC. It happened again in 1948.

Well, I don't know of any valid exegetical approach to any Bible verse that would suggest that there's supposed to be a double fulfillment there. Do I believe in double fulfillment of prophecy? Sometimes, yes, when the Bible identifies it. And sometimes it does.

There are prophecies that are fulfilled in the Old Testament, and then the New Testament identifies a second fulfillment, usually in Christ, usually a spiritual fulfillment. But you don't just generate second fulfillments of prophecy just because you'd like to see them there. When the Bible says something's going to happen, then it happens.

There's no intrinsic reason to say, ah, and it'll happen again too. The Bible predicted in Micah that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. He was.

Is he going to be born there again? I don't think so. Certainly there's no reason to believe so from the passage. Zechariah 9 talks about Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

He did. Is he going to do that again? Why in the world would we think so? Most prophecies only have one fulfillment, only need one. Occasionally there's a prophecy fulfilled that foreshadows something else, and when it does, the New Testament identifies for us what it foreshadows.

And that's how we, only because of the authority of the New Testament itself, do we know that there's a second fulfillment, because you wouldn't have gotten it from reading the Old Testament prophecy itself. Now what I'm saying is, the return of the exiles from Babylon fulfilled the prophecies that predicted that. If there's a second fulfillment, the Bible is silent on it.

And therefore we would have to evaluate any such modern fulfillment to see if it is of God or not, and we'd have to judge it like we'd have to judge anything based on the Bible. We have a Bible, and we can actually see what it does say that might impact our thinking about this. Now, many Christians, and I want to say this, I was asked to teach on this for the first time, I think maybe two, three years ago.

I have to say that although I've been in the ministry and I've been teaching almost full-time for 48 years, five years ago, I couldn't have taught on this subject of modern Israel. I didn't know any more than the average Christian does. I only knew what my teachers told me, which wasn't much.

They had wrested several scriptures out of context and made them look like it's talking about today, and then they told me a few fragments of information about how the Jews are back in their land now, it's restored, they're going to build a temple and all that. But I hadn't really studied it, except to hear these reports and repeat them myself. And when I was teaching recently my series, What Are We to Make of Israel, I wanted to include in it, this is probably two, three years ago, I wanted to include something about how Israel became a nation again in these last days, so we'd know what we're to do about it, what we're supposed to think about it.

So for the first time I actually began to research it from people on both sides, those who were dispensational and those who were not dispensational. Those who were pro-Israeli, those who were actually more favorable toward the Palestinians who are in conflict with the Israelis over there. And what I found is, I found Jewish, Christian, and Palestinian authors all supporting one narrative.

And I found only dispensational authors supporting a different narrative. In other words,



the narrative I knew and had been taught was only taught, as near as I can tell, by dispensationalists. The other narrative I'm going to share with you today is taught by many Christians and Israeli-Jewish authors and Palestinian authors.

So we've got three different religious groups with different agendas, obviously, different preferences about the matter, all giving the same story. Now I want to say this. I have a ton of information.

I won't be able to give it all tonight because of the limits on our time. But I also want to say that I have not personally been able to fact check everything. And I give this disclaimer.

I got a lot of this from books. I got some of it from the Internet. Now, obviously, some things you get on the Internet aren't totally reliable.

You found that out. However, the things I have provided from the Internet either are confirmed or at least are in line with things I've found from authors who are expert theologians and historians and sociologists and Middle East scholars and all that kind of thing. And so I'm going to give you... All the information I give you, as far as I know, is true.

But I haven't... I mean, there's pages and pages of it. I haven't been able to look at everything that's in these quotes and verify them. But you'll see that some of the people I quote are very respected Christians.

One of them, and I don't know if you're younger Christians, you might not know these names, but they were legends in my youth, Brother Andrew, who wrote the book *God Smuggler*. Famous, you know, internationally famous guy for smuggling Bibles into communist countries before that became a faddish to do and risked his life. And there was a book written about him back in probably 1970, I would imagine, called *God Smuggler*.

He's a very credible Christian. He's very respected throughout the evangelical world. He's a Dutch Christian.

Another person, a Christian I consult, is Elizabeth Elliot. Now, if you don't know who Elizabeth Elliot is, I really feel sorry for you, you're too young. Elizabeth Elliot was the wife, and eventually the widow, of Jim Elliot.

Jim Elliot was one of five missionaries that went down to Ecuador in the early 50s. They got speared by the natives that they were going to evangelize. They kind of thought that might happen because the natives had done that to the previous missionaries who had gone to them 50 years earlier.

So they kind of were ready for it, and it happened. But after her husband was killed,

Elizabeth took her 3-year-old daughter, they went down to the same Indians and won them to Christ. The whole tribe got converted.

And she became, of course, internationally famous. Eventually she was a Bible college professor, I think at Wheaton, if I'm not mistaken, and wrote many, many books. One of the soundest Christian woman theologians I've ever encountered.

I've driven an hour or more to go hear her speak before. She's dead now, but she died recently. Nobody who knows of Elizabeth Elliot has any reason to doubt her sincerity, her competence to speak on whatever she chooses to write about.

Two of the Christian sources I got on this tend to confirm the general narrative, too. Both of them have spent time in Israel with the Jews and the Palestinians, and they have both written on it. And they both confirm the narrative that I'm getting from Israeli and Palestinian sources elsewhere.

So while some of the things that I'm going to read, I can't guarantee that all the people who say them are saying everything just right, I don't have any real reason to doubt them, and I have got confirmation on much of it. Now let me give you a little historical background about Israel. The nation of Israel was founded around 14 centuries before Christ through a leader named Moses.

Now before that, they had descended, most of them had descended, from a line that began with Abraham. God had made a promise to Abraham to do something special with his seed, that is to bless all the nations of the earth through his seed. According to Paul in Galatians 3.16, that seed is Christ.

So the promise was that God was going to bring the Messiah into the world to bless all the nations, and that Messiah would come through this man Abraham. And then he was told his son Isaac would be the next generation through whom it would come, and then Jacob. And Jacob had 12 sons.

In the time of Jacob and his 12 sons, the whole family moved down to Egypt to avoid a famine, and they ended up liking it so much they stayed when the famine was over. But it got too comfortable, and eventually they were put under slavery by the Egyptians, and then they were not comfortable for a long time, hundreds of years. And at this point, at the end of their slavery in Egypt, there were about 3 million of them, all descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or at least most of them.

And they were just a big family. They were not a nation. They had just been a big clan of related people who went down into Egypt, and they became slaves, and then they weren't a nation, but God had a promise he'd made to their ancestors, and he delivered them through this man named Moses.

And he brought them to Mount Sinai, and there at Mount Sinai, he established them as a

nation. It was a covenantal arrangement he described in these terms. In Exodus 19, verses 5 and 6, he said, I am the one who has delivered you out of Egypt and carried you on eagle's wings to this place of safety.

And he says, now, if you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then you will be a peculiar treasure to me among all the nations, for all the earth is mine, says the Lord, and you'll be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. So God took this bloated family of 3 million people, all pretty much descended from the same roots, and said, I want to make a nation out of you among the nations of the world. You'll be the most precious nation to me among the nations.

All the earth is mine, but I'm going to make you precious among the nations. You'll be a kingdom of priests, and you'll be a holy nation to me, special, my people. And that's when they became a nation.

They agreed to those terms. But those terms were conditional. If you read it, Exodus 19, verse 5 says, If you will obey my voice indeed, and if you will keep my covenant, then you'll be a holy nation.

You'll be my kingdom of priests. It's not an unconditional promise. And so, as you know, if you read the Old Testament, they didn't really keep the covenant very well.

They didn't even keep it for a month. They were worshipping a golden calf before the month was over. And God was ready to wipe them out.

He said to Moses, get out of my way. I'm going to wipe them out and make from you a greater nation than them. And Moses interceded for them, got God to agree to give them another chance.

And God did show great patience with them, because throughout the period of the judges, well, actually the 40 years of wilderness wandering, and the period of the judges, and even the period of the kings, Israel, more often than not, was worshipping idols. They were breaking the covenant almost every time they turned around. Once in a while, they had a good king like Josiah or Hezekiah or Jehoshaphat.

But most of the time, they were worshipping other gods. So they were breaking the covenant continually. Now the prophets came and said, you know, God's going to send the Messiah.

And, you know, the sins of the nation will be laid on Him. And He's going to restore His relationship with His people. And then Jesus came and began to preach that the time was fulfilled, and this is what was happening in His time.

Well, the remnant of Israel was a group that always existed in Israel. Even when Israel as a nation was worshipping Moloch and Baal and other abominations, there was always a

few, some, who were faithful to God, and they were not worshipping the idols. They would follow guys like Elijah or Elisha or Samuel.

Or they'd follow Isaiah or Jeremiah. Not many. Jeremiah only had one guy following him, as far as we know.

But there was always a tiny and sometimes a somewhat larger tiny remnant of faithful people. And God made many promises to those faithful. And when Jesus came, the faithful remnant in Israel came to Him.

As they would have come to any true prophet, because they were faithful to God, they would follow the prophets that God sent. This time it was the Messiah. They followed Jesus.

They became what we call the disciples. This was the remnant of Israel. They were now the disciples of Jesus.

Eventually the Spirit was poured out upon them in Jerusalem in Acts 2, and they became what we normally call the church. They were all Jewish. They were the faithful remnant of Israel.

As there had been a faithful remnant in every generation previously, there was, at the Day of Pentecost, 120 of them in the upper room. By the end of the day, there were 3,000 of them. A few days later, there were 5,000 men, not including women and children.

The remnant that embraced the Messiah grew bigger and bigger and bigger, and eventually Gentiles were invited in too, almost against the will of the apostles. But God had to knock Peter over the head with a vision three times to get him to be open to the idea of letting Gentiles in. And when the Gentiles began to come in, they came pouring in.

And God sent an apostle named Paul to go out to the Gentiles and gather them in. So Gentiles, like most of us, perhaps all of us are Gentiles. I don't know if you're Jewish.

You're certainly probably not in the majority in this group. But we think of the church largely as a Gentile thing now because it's all nations have been brought in. But all that's really happened is Gentile branches have been grafted in to what was the faithful remnant of Israel, just as could happen in Old Testament times.

There were Gentiles who became part of Israel in the Old Testament. The law made provision for it. They could get circumcised.

They could keep the Sabbath, keep Passover, and they'd be just like one of the natives of the land, a Gentile. Could become a Jew. There never was a time when Israel was only an

ethnic designation.

Even the group at Mount Sinai that God made the covenant with weren't all Jewish. It says in Exodus chapter 12, which is before that, that the group that came out of Egypt with them were a mixed multitude. That means racially mixed.

There's a racially mixed multitude, mostly Israelites. But also some Egyptians and some others were there. And we find that to be true as you read the story of Moses and subsequent stories because there are Gentiles, people born Gentiles, but who have become part of the covenant community.

In other words, Israel the nation was never based entirely on who your parents were or who your ancestors were. Israel as a nation was never completely an ethnic homogeneity. There was a mixed multitude that was part of Israel from the very beginning.

And any Gentile who wanted to, Ruth, Rahab, any Gentile who wanted to could become part of Israel if they were willing to meet the conditions of the covenant. And that's just it. The nation is defined in terms of the covenant, not race.

If you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, you will be a holy nation to me. The nation of Israel is defined by keeping the covenant. That's why a Gentile who chose to keep the covenant and get circumcised would be part of it.

A Jew who rejected the covenant would be cut off from the people according to the law. Now we think of Israel as an ethnic designation. And it largely is because, of course, the majority of those who have ever been part of Israel were those who were descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But it has never been completely so. And since Pentecost, well, I should say since the House of Cornelius in Acts chapter 10, there's been a great number of Gentiles come in. And until 2,000 years later, there's more Gentiles than Jews in.

But it's a new covenant now. We don't have to be circumcised. We don't have to keep the Sabbath and Passover and things like that like they did under the old covenant.

We Gentiles have come in on terms of the new covenant because Jesus in the upper room with his disciples said, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Where there's a new covenant, the old covenant is obsolete, the writer of Hebrews tells us in Hebrews 8.13. And therefore, the old covenant that defined Israel in the Old Testament is defunct. It's obsolete, the Bible says.

There's a new covenant now, and that's what defines Israel today. The true Israel, the remnant, have come into the new covenant and are believers in Christ. And originally it was thousands of Jewish people only.

But then Gentiles started coming in, and then they came in in droves. And now there's more Gentiles than Jews in it. But it's still the same thing.

It's still the remnant of Israel. It's just that a lot of Gentiles have become covenant keepers by following Jesus Christ. And many Jews, of course, have rejected Christ and don't keep the new covenant.

Nor do they keep the old one in many cases. Jesus said even the Pharisees who were very legalistic, he said even they don't obey Moses. So to find Jews who are real covenant keepers, you've got to find Jews who've embraced the Messiah.

Because you can't be faithful to God and not be faithful to Jesus. Jesus said whoever does not honor the Son, the same does not honor my Father. He said that to Jews.

If you don't honor me, you're not honoring God. Now, this is something that we need to start with. Being Israel never, except when it was just a family before they became a nation, from the time the nation was founded on Sinai to this day, being Israel never had anything to do, well, I shouldn't say didn't have anything to do, but certainly did not have everything to do with race.

Any race could be in. And any Jew could be out if they rejected the covenant. It's covenant faithfulness that defines what Israel is.

Now, the question we have to ask about Israel today, the nation, are they a covenantally faithful people? Or which covenant? Whether you choose the old covenant or the new, most of the nation of Israel, including its leaders, are not faithful to any covenant because they're secular, just like a Gentile. And by the way, the Bible makes it very clear that an unbelieving Jew is on exactly the same terms with God as an unbelieving Gentile. John the Baptist said, don't think to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father.

God is able to, from these stones, to raise up children of Abraham. Jesus was talking to Jews. He said, I know you're descended from Abraham, but if you were the children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham.

He believed in me and you don't. You're of your father of the devil, he said. That's in John chapter 8. Paul said in Romans 2, 28 and 29, he is not a Jew who's one outwardly, and that is not circumcision, which is outward of the flesh.

He is a Jew who's one inwardly. Paul said to Philippians in Philippians 3, 3, we, meaning the Christians, we are the true circumcision, meaning the true Israel, who worship God in the spirit, who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh. In other words, being the true Israel has nothing to do with anything in the flesh, like fleshly ancestry, fleshly race.

That's in the flesh. We put no confidence in the flesh. We rejoice in Christ Jesus.

That makes us Christians. We are worshiping God in the spirit. It's a spiritual thing.

Now, those are only a few of the verses in the New Testament that make that very clear. There's some in the Old Testament that make that clear, too. I don't have time for all that because we're not talking about Old Testament.

We're not even talking about the New Testament. We're talking about Israel today. But we have to say, how are we supposed to evaluate Israel today? Well, some people say, well, you've got to support them because, and no matter what, you've got to support them because they're God's chosen people.

Well, they were. That's true. At Mount Sinai, God chose them and made a nation of them, but that was conditional.

If you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you will be my people. You'll be a kingdom of priesthood. You'll be a holy nation.

Those conditions do not pertain to any nation on earth today. America isn't God's chosen people. Israel isn't.

South Korea isn't. Scotland isn't. There's no nation that is.

The chosen people are those who follow Jesus Christ. That's a transnational, global entity called the body of Christ. Those are the ones who keep the covenant.

Now, what then are we to make of Israel in the Middle East? Isn't it a miracle that they came back together? Well, let's talk about that. How did the nation of Israel come to be? As I said, I wouldn't have been able to answer that question with any kind of information of detail five years ago. It's only been in that short time, that recently, that I've actually studied this out.

And so some of it's kind of new to me, too. I knew, of course, that Israel had been destroyed as a nation in 70 AD by the Romans, and they continued. The Jews in the Roman Empire remained under Roman dominion, and Palestine, their land, remained under Roman control until the 4th century.

After that, it was under control of the Byzantine Empire, which is Greek. And they were under control of the Byzantine Empire until about 632. At that time, they came under the control of Arabs, largely because of Muhammad and his conquest of the region, and the Seljuk Turks.

Now, in the 7th century, 632 and beyond, Arabs dominated the region. There were Jews in the region, still some, but they intermarried. And, therefore, the people of the region became predominantly Arab.

There was some Jewish ancestry in there, and other nations, too, Turkish. But these people became what we call the Palestinians, because the land was called Palestine. The Romans called it Palestine.

And so these Arab, mostly Arab-type people, began to dominate the area from the 7th century on, which means that people who are Arabic-Palestinians today, their ancestors have controlled that land for 1,300 years, until 1948. Now, you might think that would give them a reason to think it's their land. We have controlled this part of North America for, what, 300 years or less? We kind of think it's ours.

But the Jews were there first. Yeah, and the American Indians were here first. Do we think of it as their land? No.

Nations lose and gain lands. There's not one nation on the planet, probably. There may be some that I don't know about.

Most nations do not have their original ethnic populations living on them anymore. Most nations have been conquered centuries ago by more modern people who drove out the ancient ethnic groups that were there. And many nations have changed hands many times.

And I want to say this. No matter what I say that might sound sympathetic toward Palestinians, I don't want to give the impression that I'm against the nation of Israel. I'm not.

I'm not against Israel being a nation in the Middle East, having their own government, any more than I'm against America having this government here in this part of the world. It's something that's politically established. You can't turn the clock back in any way that I know about.

I think we just have to live with the political realities there are. We can't really give all of Europe back to the Romans, either, or whatever. I mean, I know the Pope would like that, but that's not, can't be done.

Can't turn back the clock on these things. History progresses. Lands are inhabited and conquered by new groups, and they're there for centuries.

All I can say is that the Palestinians, I mean, put yourself in their place just for a moment, their ancestors were in that land for 1,300 years until the United Nations decided to say, no, this belongs to Israel now. Now, you might be sympathetic with the United Nations and with the idea that Israel's there. I'm not against them being there, as I pointed out.

I'm not anti-Israeli. But I do want to be realistic. And I'm not saying anything I'm saying in order to take a side.



I will do my very best to give just the facts I know of. But the region was populated by the ancestors of the modern Palestinians for 1,300 years from that time on. Now, the region came under the Ottoman Turks, the Ottoman Empire, in 1517.

And it remained under their control for 400 years until World War I. And General Allenby, Edmund Allenby, with the help of the French and the Arabs, drove out the Turks out of Israel, out of Palestine, in 1917, near the end of World War I. At that time, the League of Nations, which was a European league sort of like the United Nations today, but it was before there was a United Nations, there was the League of Nations between World War I and World War II. They decided that since the Turks, the Ottoman Turks, no longer controlled Palestine, somebody had to. And so the League of Nations had a mandate they put together in 1922, giving Palestine under the control of Britain and Syria, which is adjoined to it to the north, under the control of France.

So the League of Nations mandate put Israel, what we call Israel today, Palestine, under British control. Now, the British had a strong element within them that were very favorable toward Israel becoming a nation again. This feeling arose in the late 1800s with the rise of what we call Zionism.

Now, Zionism was founded by a Jewish man from Eastern Europe named Theodor Herzl. He was not religious. He was a secular Jew.

It is believed that he died of, I think, syphilis. And he was not a man who was a godly man, but he had it in his head that it would be good for the Jews to be able to go back and have their homeland again. Now, this is before World War I. This is like 1897 or something like that.

And the Zionist movement began. However, later Zionist leaders recognized that before Herzl was advocating this, a man named William Blackstone, who was a dispensationalist preacher, was advocating it. And even secular Israeli historians often recognize the role that dispensationalism played in creating the modern state of Israel.

Now, I want to say this. When I was growing up, my dad had a book that was published in the early 1900s, I think 1909, by Clarence Larkin, a dispensationalist. He was saying, Israel is going to become a nation again someday.

Now, he was like 40 years ahead of his time. And when it happened, the dispensationalists had been predicting it for a long time. So when Israel did become a nation, dispensational Christians said, we knew this was going to happen.

We've been saying it was going to happen. It proves we were right. It proves our system of prophecy is true.

But most dispensationalists have no idea exactly how much the dispensationalists made this happen. Now, they didn't make it happen all on their own. But they were the first

influence in Great Britain to promote the idea that Israel ought to return to their land.

Now, Herzl, who started Zionism, it's a secular movement. It was not a religious movement. But Herzl was not influenced by the dispensationalists, as far as I know.

But the dispensationalists were pushing for this before Herzl was. He just happened to have the same ambition, and that's to have the Jews who had been scattered for almost, well, for 1900 years, have them return to their land and have a nation again. Famously, anyone who studies the restoration of the nation of Israel talks about the Balfour Declaration.

Lord Balfour was a British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. His name was Arthur James Balfour. And he wrote a document as a British state official in 1917.

Now, that's when the Ottoman Turks were driven out of Palestine by General Allenby. Now, at that time, Lord Balfour wrote this declaration. I'm going to quote it exactly.

His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities, that'd be the Palestinians, in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. So this is the first time that a government official of any country, happened to be Britain, and Britain, under the League of Nations mandate, was in charge of Palestine. Lord Balfour said the British government approves and strongly encourages the reestablishment of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine.

And said we'll do what we can to facilitate this. Now, I just point this out to you. Balfour was a dispensationist, or he's a premillennialist Christian.

And so it's very possible that his own theological position influenced him this way. And his mandate, almost everybody who talks about the restoration of the nation of Israel in the last days, mentions the Balfour Declaration. This was the first thing in 1917, right after World War II, World War I, that really set the ball rolling in a big way.

Herzl and his Zionist movement had been around for about 20 years at that time, and was growing in popularity. I believe the movement grew to 20,000, then to 200,000, and kept growing. The Zionist movement, this is mostly a secular movement.

But the dispensational movement had been around for 70 years before Herzl started the Zionist movement, and were strongly seeking to influence European Christians to support the restoration of the nation of Israel. How they brought that to pass, and what the Bible may say about it, we'll look at after we take a brief break. We have another portion of this lecture.

We'll take a break right now so you can stretch. All right, if you could find your way back over here, we'd appreciate that. As I said, in 1917, Arthur James Balfour issued the Balfour Declaration, which announced Britain's interest in reestablishing a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, in their ancient home.

And then in 1922, the League of Nations, they had a mandate where they put Palestine, which it would be wrong to call it Israel at this point, because there was no nation of Israel there yet. But they put Palestine under the control of the British, and Syria under the control of the French. Now, the British, soon after that, well, not real soon, about 20 years later, about 1947, the British announced that they were not interested in continuing to govern Palestine.

One reason for that is because Jewish terrorists were blowing up their soldiers and policemen and hanging them and doing things like that. Yes, the Jewish terrorists were. Menachem Begin, who you might recognize if you paid attention to Jewish political history in recent years, or at least recent decades in my lifetime, very important, one of the presidents of Israel, I think he was the sixth.

I'm not positive about the number there. He was the head of an organization called IRGN, which was a Jewish terrorist organization. Among other things, they blew up the King David Hotel a few years before Israel was made a nation, killing like 90 people.

This is where the British troops were housed. Killed a bunch of British soldiers by blowing up a hotel. The kind of stuff you think that only Arabs do.

This was a Jewish terrorist organization headed by Menachem Begin. This is not a secret. He's publicly, I mean, he couldn't deny it anyway, but he publicly acknowledges it.

And they were not the only Jewish terrorist organization, and they were making it really hard for the British to govern there, just like the Romans had found it hard to govern that land. In fact, everyone, Babylon, everyone had found it hard to govern that land. But the British didn't like it, and they announced in 1947 their intention to give up their authority over it.

And so something else had to happen. No one else wanted to govern it, and that's why the idea of a Jewish state tended to come to the fore more. Well, what the League of Nations decided was to divide Palestine into two nations, a Jewish nation and a Palestinian Arab nation.

And they were going to give 52% of the land to the Jewish nation. Now, remember, for 1,300 years, Palestinians thought that was where they lived. That was their country.

Imagine if the United Nations today would just make a mandate that said they're going to give the Navajo Indians 52% of the places where we live now. Now, I don't have anything against the Navajo Indians. I'm just saying.

You know, the house that my parents lived in, you know, the house that my grandparents lived in. Suddenly, they got to move out because this now belongs to the Navajos. And where do we go? Well, that's your problem.

You see, the land was populated by the Palestinians, and fairly densely so, for 1,300 years. Now, 52% of the property that's theirs is going to be given to another nation called Israel. And then 48% of the land was going to go to the Arab population there.

This plan was approved by a two-to-three majority vote in the League of Nations General Council. Actually, by this time, I'm sorry, it was now the United Nations. The League of Nations was between the two world wars.

By 1947, there had been World War II, and instead of the League of Nations, there was the United Nations. So it was the UN Nations mandate. They wanted to have a two-nation solution.

But what that meant was that they're going to take over 50% of the land that always had belonged to the Palestinians, at least for over a millennium, and give it to somebody else, who didn't even live there, for the most part. And you might say, weren't there Jews living there? A few. 95% of the population of the region were Arabs.

5% were Jewish. And they're going to give 52% of the land to the Jews. And what that means is that the Arabs who had been living on that land, it was now no longer theirs.

Now, no one can approve, I hope, of any of the terrorist acts done by either Israelis or Arabs. And the ones we hear about the most in our news are the ones now done by Hamas and by Arab groups. Partly because Israel is an ally of the United States, and the press tends to publicize what things are done against our allies.

And there is terrorism on both sides. I am under the impression, though I've heard people say that I'm naive about this, that perhaps there's more terrorism now being done by the Arabs than by the Jews. I can't guarantee that, and I do have a friend who tells me I'm quite wrong about that.

And it does depend on which media you read. But the point is, while we could never approve of terrorism done by anybody, you might understand if some European entity decided that the United States, the portion you live in, is no longer going to belong to you. You might have bought it.

You might have inherited it from your great-grandparents. But it's not yours anymore. It now belongs to some other ethnic group that they are saying this is going to be theirs now.

Now you might not like that very much. You know, I was watching a movie some years ago. I don't remember which movie it was.

I was going to say it was Sophie's Choice, but I don't think it was. I don't remember. Did Sophie's Choice have a section where they were in the Polish ghetto, where the Nazis had rounded up the Jews and they were in the Polish ghettos there? Was that? Okay, maybe it was that.

And I remember watching it thinking, those poor Jews, the Nazis have rounded them up and put them in a corner, and there were Jewish guys who'd sneak out at night and do terrorist acts against the Nazis. And the audience being Western people like ourselves, of course, were on their side. Yay, take out those Nazis.

The enemy of my enemy is my enemy. I mean the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Let's put it that way.

And therefore, but then I got thinking, I thought, okay, I'm in favor of these Jews defending themselves against this. They're freedom fighters. I remember thinking for the first time in my life, what if these were Palestinian Arabs who had been rounded up off their property by, let's say, a Jewish majority, and they were running out and doing those same kind of things to Jews? We'd call that terrorism, not freedom fighting.

But they would see it as freedom fighting. So, I mean, not to say that terrorism is ever okay. I'm totally against all terrorism.

But you can decide, if you're in their position, you can see maybe why they're getting frustrated. Because what they thought was theirs was taken from them just by a mandate from someone who doesn't live anywhere nearby. These people in the Middle East, they've been there for 1,300 years, and someone over in Europe, another continent, is making decisions about who owns their land.

I'm not sure you'd like that. I wouldn't. I wouldn't do terroristic acts because I'm a Christian.

Christians don't do that kind of thing. But I wouldn't like it. And I think I would understand those who do do acts of violence to try to restore their land.

They wouldn't be Christian acts, but they'd be kind of understandable in some ways. Well, in April 9, 1948, this is just before Israel was declared to be a nation, Irgun, a Jewish paramilitary group led by Menachem Begin, killed, by some reports, 254 Arab men, women, and children in a village called Deir Yassin. This is a well-known fact.

There's many books, articles about it. It's well-documented. It was witnessed.

Survivors have told their stories. It's not denied. Even the Jews don't deny that this happened.

This is before this was a nation of Israel. Menachem Begin and his terrorist group went

into Deir Yassin and killed 250-something men, women, and children. To read the reports, it was just as ugly as Nazis coming in and killing innocent Jews.

These were not militants that were being killed. These were peasants, farmers. It's just a village that Israel wanted.

And they did this, by the way, with quite a few villages, but this event was very noteworthy because it led to an Arab retaliation. Three days later, on April 12, 1948, by way of reprisal, Arabs killed 77 Jewish doctors, nurses, teachers, and university students in a convoy traveling to the Hadassah Hospital. So some medical staff and students were traveling in a convoy to a hospital and Arabs killed 77 of them.

This was in reprisal for having wiped out 254 men, women, and children in an Arab village. So both sides had blood on their hands. And things didn't get better after that.

It was sort of like the Hatfields and the McCoys, you know? There's always another person to pay back for the last thing the other one did, and it just goes on like a family feud. And that's why the Middle East is all messed up as it is. But what happened was, in 1948, Israel declared independence from Britain, from the other Palestinians.

They just declared independence. Now remember, the UN had partitioned into two states where the Jews were supposed to get 52% and the Arabs 48%. The Arabs never liked that.

They never agreed to it. No one asked them. They just said, no, we don't agree to that.

Well, then this war broke out in 1948 when the Israelis declared independence and the United Nations recognized them. And then the Israelis had an all-out war that went on for some time. The British Mandate ended in May 14, 1948.

The same day, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, who was the first president, I think, or prime minister of Israel, raised a flag with the Star of David, and David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the new state of Israel. The Arabs did not agree with the UN partition plan, and they sought to destroy the Jewish state. Within hours of the proclamation, forces from Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, and Iraq attacked.

Arab troops were disorganized, had no central leadership, and they were no match for the Israelis and their modern Western-supplied war fighting force and so forth. Fighting continued for seven months. By the time of the ceasefire in January 1949, Israel controlled 77% of the land instead of the 52% that was given by the partition plan.

They now had 77% of the land, including Galilee and the Negev, which would have been part of the Arab state under the partition. Jerusalem was divided, with Israel controlling the western and Jordan controlling the eastern sectors. Jordan also annexed the West Bank.

Now, Palestinian-Arab society was largely destroyed. In the war, that seven-month war, 750,000 Palestinians fled from their homes because the Israelis with superior fighting force came into their villages and were killing people and destroying them. So three-quarters of a million Palestinians fled just into the wilderness.

It would be as if, let's just say, North Korea or let's say China because they have a larger fighting force, invaded America and they were coming into our cities and we all fled into the woods or out into the desert to just kind of scratch out some subsistence survival because our homes had been invaded by invaders coming in. Well, that's what happened to 750,000 Palestinians. They became refugees.

Other nations didn't want to take them in and they weren't allowed to come back to their homes after the fighting was over. They just became refugees. And so their society was largely destroyed.

750,000 Palestinians fled their homes, their farms. They crossed borders into Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. About 200,000 were confined to the Gaza Strip, which is only 139 square miles in size, which already had 88,000 residents.

These Palestinians were not permitted by Israel to return home after the ceasefire. They became homeless refugees. Over the next three years, the new wave of immigrants, meaning Jewish immigrants from Europe and other places, doubled the Jewish population of Israel.

And so from that time on, of course, Jews from all over the world have immigrated to Israel. So that they've, Israelis are of course the dominant ethnic group there now. And Palestinians are still marginalized into places like Gaza and West Bank and places like that.

But Israel has fought some more wars. The Six-Day War, for example, they recovered many of the territories that Jordan had controlled, including all of Jerusalem. And that war, by the way, was sparked by Egypt lining up munitions in the Sinai, which does not belong to Palestine, it belongs to Egypt.

But they brought troops and stuff into the Sinai and seemed to be menacing the state of Israel. This is 1967. They didn't attack, and there's no guarantee that they would attack, but they might have planned to.

But the Israelis, their air force took off and destroyed like 85% of the Egyptian air force while they were on the ground. And that's why the Six-Day War was only six days. It didn't last very long at all, because within hours, basically the Egyptian air force was destroyed by a preemptive strike by Israel.

Now, it's possible that that preemptive strike saved Israel from a strike that would have come from the Egyptians. No one knows. The Egyptians didn't strike, and so we don't

know if they were going to or if they're just building up the border there.

In any case, Christians have to say, well, why did all this happen? Did God make this happen? Well, maybe he did. God does raise up kingdoms and brings down kingdoms. I can't say that Israel doesn't exist in the land today because of God.

Maybe God is the one who did it. But I can say that its claim on the land is no different than the claim on the land of any nation in the land they live in. There is no biblical mandate.

There's nothing in the Bible that says that they own that by some kind of divine mandate. There's no prophecy that's fulfilled by them being there. That's what I would argue.

I'd certainly invite anybody who thinks otherwise to present one for me. But it is because of Zionism, which was, of course, a movement to get the Jews back to Palestine and have their own Jewish state. The Balfour Declaration was not the first time anyone had an idea about it.

That was just the first time that a nation expressed an interest in making it happen. The dispensationalists were promoting that before that. I mentioned William Blackstone.

William Blackstone was a premillennial dispensational Christian. And I'm reading this from Jerry Klinger, president of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation. This is a Jewish historian writing this.

He said, Reverend William E. Blackstone was a premillennial dispensational Christian evangelist and missionary. He was the author of a hugely successful and influential book called *Jesus is Coming* in 1878. That's before Herzl started Zionism.

His book, *The Veritable Reference Source of American Dispensationalist Thought*, sold millions of copies. It was translated into 48 languages. It was sort of like the late *Great Planet Earth* of the late 19th century.

It's how Lindsay's book did in the 1970s. Translated into 48 languages, Blackstone clearly laid out the biblical justification for the return of the Jews to the reestablishment of the Jewish state as a precondition for the second coming of Jesus. Now, this is a Jewish writer telling us about Blackstone, not a Christian writer.

His efforts influenced countless millions of Christians to identify as Christian Zionists. Now, Jerry Klinger, the same writer, says this. In 1891, Blackstone assembled a memorial to President Harrison.

The memorial was signed by 413 prominent Americans, business leaders such as J.P. Morgan, John Rockefeller, prominent congressional leaders including William McKinley,



the later American president, Thomas Reed, Speaker of the House of Representatives, religious leaders, Christian and Jewish, editors and publishers, and major American print media. These are all the guys who signed this thing. And even the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Melville Fuller.

The memorial, this is a written thing that was signed by all these people, called for the American support in concert with the world community for the creation of a humanitarian solution to the Jewish suffering in Russia. This is before World War II when there was the Holocaust. His solution, permit the Jews to return to Palestine.

The memorial was formally presented to President Harrison March 5, 1891. That's before Herzl started secular Zionism. The memorial was a major American news for a week, or for weeks.

The complete text was printed in the Chicago Tribune. President Harrison did not move on the proposal, but 25 years later in 1916, a similar memorial was presented to President Woodrow Wilson. This document had an influence upon Wilson, encouraging his sympathy with the Balfour Declaration, Britain's first official endorsement of Zionism.

Now, I want you to know that the leader of American Zionism, there was Zionism in other countries too, but American Zionism had as its leader the first Jewish Supreme Court Justice who was appointed by Woodrow Wilson, whose name was Louis Brandeis, very famous Jewish thinker. There's a Brandeis University, I believe, named after him. He was a Jewish Supreme Court Justice, the very first Jew to be appointed to such an office.

He became the leader of American Zionism. Now, here's an interesting thing. Nathan Strauss, assistant to Louis Brandeis, that is, assistant to the Jewish Supreme Court Justice who was the leader of American Zionism in the early part of this last century, Nathan Strauss was assistant to Louis Brandeis.

He wrote to Reverend Blackstone, May 8, 1916, and here's what this leading Jewish Zionist, secular Zionist, wrote to this dispensational preacher. He says, Mr. Brandeis is perfectly infatuated with the work that you have done along the lines of Zionism. It would have done your heart good to have heard him assert what a valuable contribution to the cause your document is.

In fact, he agrees with me that you are the father of Zionism as your work predates Herzl. So the leading authority who headed up American Zionism, Louis Brandeis, Supreme Court Justice, believed that real Zionism's father, the real father, was a dispensational preacher who pushed president after president to support the creation of the state of Israel. Now, Israel was eventually recognized by the United Nations, but it was only through the United States' influence, and that was later on under Harry Truman.

I won't go into all that now, but suffice to say that there's nothing about this that would not be capable of being seen as a self-fulfilling prophecy. The dispensationalists were the first in modern history to suggest that Israel would ever become a nation again, and then they pushed for it and pushed for it and pushed for it for generations. Finally, especially after World War II, when it was clear from both world wars that the Jews were badly persecuted in the lands where they were exiles, general support for the establishment of a Jewish nation became an international issue, and therefore Harry Truman actually strongly pressured many reluctant United Nations members to support it.

He actually called some of the world leaders in some of the South American countries and said they'll get no more financial support or no more support of certain types from America if they don't vote for the establishment of the Jewish nation. This was all political, and it was political that was strongly influenced by dispensational sentiments. Now, we could say, but God did it through these means.

I'd say, okay, I won't say God can't have done it through those means. What I'm saying is it could have happened through these means whether God did it or not. This is a very political thing.

Now, like I said at the beginning, I'm not against Israel being a nation. I'm not against America being a nation, and we weren't here first. And also, not only were we not here first, but we did some rather nasty things to the Native Americans, but that doesn't mean our nation is illegitimate.

It means that every pagan nation, which ours is, yes, of course, the founders of our nation, some of them were Christians and some of them were deists, and most of them were God-fearing people, but nonetheless, it's a secular nation. Our Constitution does not mention God. Our Declaration of Independence mentions a creator, but it doesn't mention Jesus Christ.

Unlike the charters of most of the European nations, most of them mention Jesus Christ as the Lord in their charters because those modern nations were founded during the time under Catholicism or Protestantism where they had national religions. America was deliberately founded by people who didn't want there to be a state religion. And so there's no mention of Jesus Christ in our founding documents, and we are and were founded to be one of the first religiously pluralistic nations.

Now, the fact that many of the people who were founders were Christians, and Christianity is the most vigorous and believable of all religions in the world, you know, obviously meant that America has always had a strong Christian influence, and rightly so, thankfully for all of us. But that doesn't mean that we always did Christian things. Things we did to the Native Americans, some of them are despicable.

But I still believe that we have every right to be here because pagan nations usually

become what they are and have the territory they do by conquering someone else, and usually not in very pretty ways. That's what Israel has done, too. And it was worked out through an international political agreement.

It was worked out through military, some of them perhaps legitimate, some of them terroristic on the part of Israel. There's been good and there's been bad in it. It's certainly not just a real clean thing that says God just came and did it.

It's a development that had people pushing for it for a long time, and the earliest ones pushing for it were the dispensationalists who were very influential on the people who finally made the decision. I'm going to pass over a great deal. I want to just say how should Christians evaluate this? Well, first of all, if anyone ever suggests, as I do, that the reestablishment of the nation of Israel is not a fulfillment of prophecy and that they don't have specifically a divine mandate to be there, invariably there's going to be a very large number of dispensationalists who say you're anti-Semitic.

This has nothing to do with anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is racism against Jewish people. I don't have a thing against Jewish people any more than I have against Chinese people or Japanese people or Brazilian people or German people.

I'm not a racist. I don't care what race a person is. It doesn't make any difference to me.

I am interested in justice because Christians are supposed to be interested in justice. Justice is an important thing. And I have to say that while I'm not the least bit anti-Semitic, I do have concerns about some of the things that transpired when Israel's been formed as a nation and some that have happened since then.

What I can say is this. I'm not in the crowd that says because they are Jewish and because they're Israel, we cannot criticize any atrocities that they may commit. Israel has committed some atrocities.

So have their enemies. I'm not really able to say who's done more. I don't have a full list of them all.

All I can say is to say that we must always support Israel is no more true than saying we should always support England or any other ally. They are an ally of the United States, and therefore there's a certain amount of support by treaty that's expected, and I'm in favor of keeping treaties. I think that's part of justice.

You make a treaty, you keep your treaties. So I believe that there's some kind of support that America owes to Israel as an ally. But, and frankly, I'm very sympathetic toward the plight of people in Israel right now.

I mean, most of the people in Israel now were not there in 1948. They were either born there or they've come there since then, and they came to a situation where they may

not have displaced any Palestinians. Those Palestinians were displaced a lot earlier, in an earlier generation.

So an Israeli who's born in Israel, and probably most of the people there now have been born there, they didn't drive out any Palestinians, any more than I drove out any American Indians. I didn't drive anyone out of here. I was born here.

I understand that people who are born in Israel are in a very precarious situation. Their buses get blown up, their synagogues get shot up, their bar mitzvahs get terrorized by their enemies, and, by the way, certain things go the other direction too. I do pity anyone who lives in that region.

I'm not sure why anyone would want to if they didn't have to. It's a war zone. It's been a war zone for over a generation now, and I'm very sympathetic toward those terrible victimized situations where Israelis have just been killed by terrorists.

I'm also sympathetic toward Palestinians who are killed by terrorists, or any other way. By the way, you may not be aware, there's a lot of Palestinian Christians. Per capita, I've been told, there's a much higher percentage of Palestinians who are Christians than of Israelis that are Christians.

Certainly in Israel, only a very small minority of Israelis are Christians. But Palestine has had the Eastern churches, and the Coptic churches, I guess, in the region for a long time. There's a lot of people there who are supposed to be our Christian brothers.

And so when we just give our unwavering support to Israel, no matter what happens, a lot of times we're supporting people who don't have any love for us as Christians, who are making war against people who are our brothers and sisters in Christ. And I'm not saying the Israelis don't feel provoked. I'm sure they do.

And I think that probably the Palestinians feel provoked too. There's a lot of hatred going both ways, and that's a sad situation. I don't know what the best solution is.

Perhaps a two-nation situation would be good, except the Arabs, of course, the surrounding Arab nations won't let Israel exist. They see them as intruders, and you can see, the history might lead them to feel that way about it. And therefore, they want to wipe them out.

Obviously, most of the Arabs are not Christians, and they're not going to have any Christian love toward Israel. And therefore, I'm not sure how things can be any different right now. Hopefully, they can.

Hopefully, somehow, in the progress of history, Israel can become a peaceful place someday, and that Palestinians and Israelis won't hate each other and want to kill each other. That already happens in churches. There are churches where Christians who are

Palestinian and Christians who are Jews fellowship together and love each other.

Only in Christ can there be reconciliation. But in terms of political reconciliation, I have no idea how that can be resolved. What I can say is the church has to be very, very careful about supporting things that Christians ought not to support.

And a lot of times, Christians do support or turn a blind eye to wrongdoing by Israelis, or we don't even hear about it in our press here. But people over there do. And we just kind of turn a blind eye because, oh, they're God's chosen people.

They're supposed to be there. This is fulfillment of prophecy. Let me just clarify from Scripture, since we Christians supposedly do believe in Scripture.

I do. In Jeremiah 18, a very important thing that God said to Israel about themselves. In Jeremiah 18, in verse 7, he says, The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up, to pull it down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will repent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

Now God just said, any time I threaten to destroy a nation, if they repent, I won't. And we know of a very important case like that in the Old Testament, don't we? Nineveh. Yeah.

I mean, God sent Jonah to Nineveh and said, In 40 days, Nineveh will perish. The people repented, and God repented and didn't destroy them. Now notice, Jonah didn't say, unless you repent.

There was no mention of repentance in Jonah's message. But the king of Nineveh said, Maybe if we repent, God will have mercy on us. And lo and behold, he was right.

And God says, that's right. Whether I mention it or not, if they repent, I will repent of the evil I said to do. But then it continues.

Now on the other side of the ledger here, verse 9, And the instant I speak concerning a nation and a concerning kingdom, to build and to plant it. Do you know of any nations in history that God has ever said he would build and plant? I only know of one. And that would be who? Israel, in the Old Testament.

God promised to build and plant them. He says, whenever I say I'm going to build and plant a nation, He says, if it does evil in my sight, so that it does not obey my voice, He says, then I will repent concerning the good that I said I would do to it. In other words, if I say I'm going to do good to a nation, that's conditional.

If they go the wrong way, I will repent of all the promises I made to them. If I say I'm going to destroy a nation, and they repent, then I'll forget what I said. I'm going to change my mind.

I won't do it. God's saying, I don't give anyone an unconditional pass here. If you're an evil nation, and I threaten to destroy you, if you turn to God, I won't destroy you.

If you're my nation, that I promised to build and plant, but you turn and do evil, I'm going to repent of all the promises I made to you. Now, this is not something new coming up in Jeremiah. This was back in the law.

Moses said the same thing twice, in Leviticus 26 and in Deuteronomy 28. Particularly, look at Deuteronomy 28, if you would. Both of these chapters, Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, God tells Israel what He will do for them if they are obedient, and then He tells what He's going to do if they're not obedient.

Deuteronomy 28 is more extensive than Leviticus, so I want to look at that. Notice, Deuteronomy 28 begins this way. Now, it shall come to pass, if you, that is you Israel, diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, and observe carefully all His commandments, which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you on high above all the nations of the earth, and all these blessings shall overtake you and come upon you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God.

Not because of who your ancestors are, not because of your race, because of you obeying me, I will give these blessings. Blessed shall you be in the city, blessed shall be in the country. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground, and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle, and the offspring of your flocks.

Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, blessed you shall be when you go out, and so forth, a lot more blessings besides. Now, when he comes to verse 15, he says, the flip side, in verse 15 he says, but it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all the commandments, and all His statutes, which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you, and overtake you.

Cursed shall you be in the city, cursed shall you be in the country, cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl, cursed shall be the fruit of your body, and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle, and the offspring of your flocks, cursed shall you be when you come in, cursed shall you be when you go out, and so forth, and this goes on to the rest of the chapter, very much at length. But, if you look at verses 45, well, look at verse 20, for example, and 21, he says, the Lord will send on you, cursing, confusion, and rebuke, in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed, and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings, in which you have forsaken me. The Lord will make the plague cling to you, until He has consumed you from the land, which you are going to possess.

Okay, so if they break the covenant, they lose the land. Further on down, in the same chapter, verses 45 and 46, he says, moreover, all these curses shall come upon you, and

pursue you, and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments, and His statutes, which He commanded you. And they shall be upon you, for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever.

Whoa! Forever? The curses of the violated covenant, will be upon Israel and their descendants forever? You know, a lot of people, dispensationalists, myself included, when I was one, would say, these promises that God made to Israel, they're forever. He promised them the land, forever. He said they'd be His people forever.

Yeah, but there were conditions, weren't there? Of course there were. Now He says, if you violate those conditions, you'll have all these curses on you, forever. It's all forever, but it's all conditional.

They could be a blessed people forever, if they keep His covenant, and obey His voice, or they could be a cursed people forever. There's no unconditional blessing to any people on earth. Being the nation of Israel, required that they obey His voice, and keep His covenant.

That was the first contract He made at Mount Sinai. They broke it, and again, and again, and again. And they never broke it so badly, as when they crucified the Messiah.

And Jesus said to them, just before that, He said, the kingdom of God is taken from you, and it's given to a nation, that will bring forth the fruits of it. He said that in Matthew 21, verse 44, I think it is. So, what do we see? We see a nation, that was given more privileges, than any other nation.

Greater blessings, promised than any other, but they're conditional. Everything's conditional. There's no unconditional promises.

Jeremiah made that very clear. If I say I'm going to bless, and plant, and build a nation, if they turn from me, I'm going to repent of all the things, I said I'd do for them. We're done.

Now, does that mean that, you know, Israelis can't be saved, or Jews can't be saved? No, of course they can't be saved, as anyone else. But they are saved as individuals. And when they're saved, they're part of what we call the church.

Now, the body of Christ. There's no Jew or Gentile in Christ. In other words, being Jewish, isn't significant, any more than being Irish.

It never really was, when they were disobedient to the covenant. Because the nation of Israel was defined by covenant obedience, not by race. Korah, who was, the earth opened up and swallowed Korah, he was a Levite, he was a Jew.

Judas Iscariot was a Jew. Caiaphas was a Jew. These guys are in shale today, you know.

These guys are not saved. No one was ever saved by being a Jew. People were God's people, because they were obedient to the covenant, or not.

Then they weren't. And Jesus came, made a new covenant, and anyone who wants to be one of God's people now, can be. A Jew can be, a Gentile can be.

There's no distinction. And when they come in, there's no distinction either. Once they become Christians, they are, there's no distinction.

You know, when I was at dispensation, when I was young, I knew the Bible said things like that, but I just haven't processed it. I think I was very much a product of the whole mood of the church I was in, which was all about Israel. All excited about Israel.

My pastor took tours to Israel every year. I think maybe more than once a year, I'm not sure, but at least every year, for 40 years or more. So excited.

They'd send money to Israel for the rebuilding project of the temple. You ever heard of a church doing that? There are churches that do that. I think John Hagee's church does that.

I'm not sure. I don't want to lie about it, but there's quite a few churches that do that. I think he does.

And the church I was in did. Do you realize what that means? What is the temple? It's a slaughterhouse where animals are sacrificed because people who do it don't recognize Jesus as the final sacrifice. It's a different religion than Christianity.

To support a Jewish temple is to support a religious shrine that is in opposition to Jesus Christ. Just like if you built a mosque or a Hindu temple or something like that. A temple that isn't about Jesus is about a religion that's anti-Jesus.

And that churches would send money to build the temple, that they'd have an Israeli flag on their platform, that they get all excited about everything Israel. I don't know if you've noticed, but some people are so excited about Israel, they're not anywhere near as excited about Jesus. I don't want to say that was true of all the dispensationalists I knew, and it wasn't of me.

Jesus was always first to me even when I was a dispensationalist. But there are people I meet more excited about Israel than Jesus. There are preachers who preach more about Israel, at least with more excitement about Israel than about Jesus.

I don't think they're in the majority even among dispensationalists, but they exist. John Hagee, in fact, who holds what's called dual covenant theology, he believes that Gentiles to be saved have to be obedient to Christ. That is, they have to believe in Christ.



They have to come into the new covenant. But Jews can be saved by keeping the old covenant. That's what John Hagee teaches.

Now that's just a perversion of dispensationalism. But see, dispensationalism holds that the Jews are special. Most dispensationalists wouldn't make them so special that they don't need Jesus.

But, I mean, John Hagee has in his pulpit prime ministers of Israel, or generals from the Israeli army on a regular basis to come speak to his congregation. And they're not even Christians. They're part of another religion, part of another nation.

But this is because Israel is so central to the concerns of dispensationalism. Not so much in the Bible. And I think it's because we are told this is a great miracle that has happened.

Well, again, I'm not prepared to say God didn't orchestrate these things. Maybe he did. I actually think that God orchestrated the discovery of America.

Even though some bad things happened in our history, I think that America exists because of some plan that God has. But I'm not saying that because I think we're God's chosen people. I think England exists, and Ireland exists, and I think every nation exists because God has some purpose for the people who live there and has some use for them.

I think that's true of the modern state of Israel, too. But I don't think the modern state of Israel was a necessity in the sense that it was destined to happen because the prophets said it would, and God owes them something, it was going to do that. No.

If you disobey my commandments, my curse will be on you and your descendants forever, he said. And a Jewish person or a Gentile person has exactly the same standing before God. If they're not a Christian, they're lost.

If they are a follower of Christ, they're saved. And there's no distinction between them. God is not a racist.

God doesn't care who your ancestors are. He cares who your God is and what covenant you're obeying. So what should we say? I think when it comes to thinking about modern Israel, we should think about modern Israel as we think about any nation.

If they do things that are unjust, we should condemn those things. We don't delegitimize them as a nation. We just say those are things that no one should do.

Those are bad things. If they do a lot of them, then we begin to think of them as a bad nation. But on the other hand, if they are trying to mind their own business, trying to live in a peaceful society, a just society, and they're victimized by enemies who are

aggressive and nasty, we should sympathize with them in those cases.

But every nation has a little of both of those things. Every nation on the planet has some things they do right and some enemies that come against them for no good reason. And every nation has some things they do wrong, which Christians have to stand aloof from the national loyalties and stand as members of the kingdom of God, which is transnational.

The kingdom of God is the whole society of followers of Jesus Christ, internationally. And we have to judge our own nation. And we have to judge the other nations.

That is, insofar as we have an opinion, we have to make a judgment. Are they doing the right thing or the wrong thing? And we shouldn't give anyone a pass. We shouldn't give America a pass when we do unjust things.

I actually think America is a good country, and I think we do more good things than most nations do. But we've done some things that Christians should not blind ourselves to. We should recognize evil when it's done, even when it's our own nation.

And we should recognize when it's done by Israel or any other nation, too. The main thing about the modern state of Israel is it's just a modern state. It's not a religious people.

It's not a godly people. It's certainly not a Christian people. And they are a state that has a modern democracy, which makes them a lot more like ourselves in that respect and unlike the nations around them, and makes them more of a natural ally to us.

And so as allies of America, I think we should support them as America should support its allies. But as far as making them have a divine mandate that nothing can, you know, they're invulnerable from all criticism, that I don't think is part of the Christian's attitude toward any nation, including Israel. So that may be all news to you.

And I have 14 pages of notes that I've not brought up because... But I actually have, you know, some hours on this at my website teaching on this as well. It's not something that I actually like to teach about very much. Because I don't, I mean, if I was against the nation of Israel, then I'd look for every opportunity I could to undermine them.

I'm not against them. I'm not against them. But what concerns me is how many Christians are favorable toward them, like without making any moral judgments at all.

I don't think that we're allowed to be politically in favor of any nation without moral judgments being made about them. And so that's, I think we should evaluate Israel as we'd evaluate any nation. For more information visit [www.fema.org](http://www.fema.org)