

Biblical and Theological Factors Affecting the Middle East Crisis

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INTRODUCTION

- A. This outline I've provided is an expanded version of the one I distributed the last time I spoke on this subject. Here at the outset, I would like to highlight some of what I covered at that time to review key Bible texts that are necessary for us to remember and to understand regarding this matter, and to provide an important foundation for those who were not here at that previous class.
- B. We must be aware of, and develop the ability to distinguish between, truth and error in this issue. As A. C. Forrest, editor of the Canadian magazine, *The Observer*, has well-written, "Too many of us have been victimized by false propaganda, and suffered from imbalanced information... We have been victimized by faulty Biblical exposition and naïve understanding of prophecy."¹
1. While explaining some of this false propaganda, the misunderstanding of many Christians, and referring to the fact that a considerable number of Palestinians are Christians, Rev. Rodney Koopmans observes, "[t]he irony here is that a family of people in this country [the United States] provide uncritical support for our country's provision of billions of dollars of aid for distant cousins, the Jews in Israel, while giving no regard for closer family members and their children, a family which for almost two thousand years has claimed the name of Christ as their own, but has been unrecognized and disregarded by others who later have also claimed the name of Christ. Their safety is left in the hands of God, while in the name of God, others plot their removal from their homeland and their destruction as a family. Ironic, not at all Christlike."²
 2. Thus, it is important for Christians, largely in the West—but in the rest of the world as well where an errant view of prophecy is held—to know that this view is very harmful to our Palestinian brothers and sisters in Christ and also to many others. One of the main purposes of this paper, and its class discussion, is to identify some of this harm, its extensiveness, and why it is wrong.
 3. Christians who are not from the Near and Middle East should also know that it is mystifying and highly disappointing to Palestinian and other Arab Christians, that this unbiblical and errant view of prophecy (*op cit.* below), which is so harmful, is even considered much less promoted, by fellow believers elsewhere in the world. This disappointment is devastatingly impactful to Arab Christian young people.

¹ A. C. Forrest, "Myths about the Middle East," *The Middle East Newsletter*, April 1969, Vol. III, No. 3, p. 7.

² Rodney J. Koopmans, "Tears for Jerusalem," *The City Gate*, Spring 1992, p. 11.

They are so deeply disturbed by this claim made by many Western Christians, that the current state of Israel and its policies fulfill Biblical prophecy, that they have difficulty accepting the credibility of the Old Testament.³ That is very serious, and it also shows how important are the study of Christian theology and Biblical hermeneutics, the practice of Scripture interpretation!

Further, these young Arab Christians feel that what “Christian nations have done against Arabs’ makes the Christian faith seem [to them as] irrelevant. And they ‘doubt both the ability and readiness of Christian forces in the world to contribute significantly toward the achievement of justice and peace.’”⁴ This is especially mystifying to them in the light of Deuteronomy 16:20 (“justice, and only justice, you shall pursue” [NRSV]) and the many related Bible passages, to say nothing about the egregious personal suffering that such errant interpretation and theology have inflicted upon them and hinder our Lord’s Great Commission to “go and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19)

Not just young people but church leaders observe the same developments. The NCCC report states that “Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant church representatives with whom we spoke were courteous and forbearing, but also utterly frank in voicing their disappointment and disillusionment that Christians of the West, especially those in the United States, have not been (according to their understanding of the matter) more vigorous in pursuit of justice.”⁵

- C. Since the pro-Israeli literature makes a big point, if not their major one, of basing their claim to the land on the prophetic promises of God in the Bible, it is absolutely essential that we examine the promises God made in his Word to see if he is being quoted correctly.

In fact, that is necessary for us to do **anytime anyone** uses the Bible to support a claim. People often do that and make the Bible say something just the opposite of what God wills and what his Word says!

- D. I want you also to know that no one is more aware than I of the fact that much more could be said than we will cover in this document and in this class and the one next week.

³ Humphrey Walz, “A Link with the Holy Land’s Christians,” *The Presbyterian Outlook*, September 30, 1968, p. 5. This article is a report of, and with extensive quotes from, a detailed report by a deputation team authorized by the General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCC) to investigate the Arab-Israeli conflict and how it has impacted and been affected by the churches in the region and elsewhere in the world. In their investigation, “they conferred with officials and citizenry of every stripe” (p. 5) in order to ascertain the truth. For those of us who are concerned with the considerable errors that have been made by the NCCC, we need to keep in mind that they are not wrong about everything. Here is one issue on which we need to appreciate their important contribution.

⁴ Humphrey Walz, “A Link with the Holy Land’s Christians,” p. 5.

⁵ Humphrey Walz, “A Link with the Holy Land’s Christians,” p. 5.

That is true just of the Biblical and theological material alone, but there are other important related subjects for us to study. We will consider some of those subjects in what follows.

- E. Furthermore, I am not unrealistic. Indeed, any student of the Bible and Reformation theology's understanding of the effect of sin on the unregenerate mind (i.e., those who have not received the new nature from the Holy Spirit) is most realistic.

The suggestions for action that I'm recommending are not given with the expectation of providing a heaven on earth. Neither they nor any others will stop the fighting permanently. They are offered as a means of bringing a measure of justice and a degree of peace—for brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering greatly (read what follows) and for the others involved, who also bear God's image and whom he wants to be in his kingdom (e.g., 1 Timothy 2:4)—as much as possible in a world in which our Lord himself told us that before he returns there will be “wars and rumors of wars.” (Matthew 24:6)

- F. I also want in this session and next week to provide much opportunity for discussion. So we will only attempt to go partway through this document today; we'll take up the rest next week. This is one of those profound subjects that defy the preferences of many who have what I call a “bumper sticker mentality in the sound bite age.” It is a complex subject, and we need to dialogue about it in order to integrate its many facets into a helpful understanding.

- G. Let us now begin with the Biblical teaching on who God's people are and his purposes for them, which constitute key Biblical and theological factors affecting the Middle East crisis that are often not known or misunderstood.

- I. The Bible reveals God establishing a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17), in and through whose descendants, i.e., believers in and followers of Jesus Christ, he will accomplish his purposes. (Galatians 3:29)

- A. This covenant is what scholars in the field of Biblical literature call a major motif, or theme, that is observed throughout the whole Bible. The covenant is the key to understanding the main teaching of the Bible.

- B. The purpose of the covenant is for function not status. This fundamental distinction was forgotten by most of Old Testament Israel.

- 1. God called his covenant people to communicate to the whole world in word and in deed his plan of salvation for everyone, whereby those from “every tribe and language and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9; cf. Genesis 12:1-3), that is, from every race, could be made fit for fellowship

with God, who, while graciously being all love (1 John 4:8), is also just (Deuteronomy 32:4) and not only holy but holy, holy, holy. (Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 4:8)

2. Though the church sometimes has members and attendees who are spiritual infants in elementary stages of sanctification,⁶ not yet mature in Christ (Ephesians 4:11-24), and not treating all others of every race in a loving Christlike manner, it is clear in this passage and throughout the whole Bible, that such behavior does not please God and is not in accord with his will.

→ *Thus, the church can never rightly be accused of “systemic racism” or of being inherently racist. Clearly, God has called the church to lovingly reach out to all people and invite them into his kingdom.*

- a. That reality is also true individually as well as corporately. I know and have worked with many Christians of every color who are not at all racist. Christian missionaries of every color are called by God to live in lands as far as half the world away from where they were born and raised and where their parents, other family members, and beloved friends continue to live. If they were racists, what would explain their leaving these loved ones to live with another race? It certainly is not for money. Believe them when they explain they are responding to their call, which is part of the great commission of the Lord to “go and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19) One of the nicest compliments I’ve ever received, occurred after teaching a course for Chinese students on an extended trip to Asia. Having packed the luggage in the car, a considerable number of those in the class and I were exchanging warm farewell wishes when one of the students said, “Dr. Seely, we observe that though you are white on the outside, you are yellow on the inside.” That loving comment still makes my eyes water. Would any of those scholars say, “All white people are racist?” Or, would they say that about all Christians? Of course not.
- b. Those who are members of a church congregation and in good standing, i.e., who are faithful in worship and in other ways living according to God’s Word and will, know that the church is the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27-28 *et al.*) and has been called to reach out to the whole world. The original Old (e.g., Deuteronomy 9:10

⁶ Sanctification is the term in the Bible and Christian theology that means growth in holiness, maturing in Christ. For more on the meaning of this important word and the covenant, see [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions](#).

[LXX⁷]) and New Testament Greek word for church is ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*) > ἐκ (*ek*), out of + καλέω (*kaleō*), to call, i.e., those who have been called out to serve God, who throughout the Bible reveals that he wants all people to be in his kingdom and has called the church to bring the good news of God’s plan of salvation in Jesus Christ (John 14:6, who himself was a man of color as well as divine), who lived, suffered, died, and was resurrected for the sake of everyone in the world who will believe in and follow him. (Genesis 12:3; Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 16:25-27; 1 Corinthians 15; Galatians 3:26-29; Revelation 21:22-27)

- C. An essential continuity exists between the covenant begun with Abraham in the Old Testament and the new covenant in and through Jesus Christ in the New Testament.
1. The purpose of Abraham’s calling (vocation) and mission, which is still that of his descendants in the new covenant, is stated in rudimentary form in Genesis 12:1-4.
 2. Read Genesis 17:1-8 in the light of Galatians 3:26-29. In Genesis 17:4-7 we see a glimpse of God’s plan and why the church is New Testament Israel. (Cf. also Galatians 6:16)
 3. God fulfilled his original intention to bless all nations (Genesis 12:3), and to include persons of “every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9) when Jesus instituted the new covenant at his Last Supper, as he said, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:28)
 - a. Jesus here instituted the new covenant, i.e., the new form of the ancient covenant made with Abraham, which God revealed to the Prophet Jeremiah. (31:31-33)
 - b. Notice that this passage from Jeremiah is quoted in Hebrews 8:8-13. The context indicates that the “house of Israel and...the house of Judah” (Jeremiah 31:31), referring to the faithful remnant (Isaiah 10:20-21; 37:32; Jeremiah 23:3; 31:7; 50:20; Joel 2:32; Micah 2:12; 4:7; 5:7-8; 7:18; Zephaniah 3:13; Acts 15:17; Romans 9:27; 11:5), are included now the church in and of Jesus Christ.

³¹ “The time is coming,” declares the LORD,
 “when I will make a new covenant

⁷ The Old Testament (OT) was originally written in Hebrew. About 250 B. C., when the Greek empire was dominating the Near and Middle East, and the lingua franca was Greek, the OT was translated into Greek; it is called the Septuagint, abbreviated LXX. It was the translation used by Jesus and the early church.

with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah.
³² It will not be like the covenant
I made with their forefathers
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they broke my covenant,
though I was a husband to them,”

declares the LORD.

³³ “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time,” declares the LORD.

“I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

³⁴ No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest,”

declares the LORD.

“For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more.”

- 1) The essential unity of the covenant throughout the Old and the New Testaments is seen clearly in the Greek of both the Old and the New. In the references to the new covenant in the New Testament, the Greek word for new, is usually *καίνος* (*kainos*). The word *kainos* means new in nature or quality, that is, renewed, not new in time or origin, i.e., brand new, which is designated by another Greek word *νέος* (*neos*). See also these passages: Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:8 (quoting Jeremiah 31:31 [38:31 in the Septuagint]); 8:13; 9:15. The word *neos* signifies something that was not there before in contrast to *kainos*, which means “different from the usual, impressive, better than the old, superior in value or attraction.”⁸ That which is *kainos* is new in its essence, not in its chronology; or, one can say, it is essentially new, not chronologically new.
- 2) What this means, explains the author of Hebrews in verse 8:13 is that “[b]y calling this covenant ‘new,’ he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.”

⁸ See Johannes Behm, “Kainos” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 447 ff.

- 3) Yet the two covenants have continuity in the person of Jesus Christ, through the identification with whom by faith his followers are Abraham's descendants. As the Apostle Paul tells us in his letter to the Galatians, "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (3:29)
4. Compare Deuteronomy 7:6 with 1 Peter 2:9. God's original mission continues but now in, through, and with the promised Messiah who has come, Christ Jesus.
 - "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession." (Deuteronomy 7:6)
 - "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9)
5. The covenant promise is through Isaac; therefore, [Islam is not an Abrahamic religion](#), but Ishmael, one of the ancestors, indeed the primogenitor, of the Arabs, is also cared for by God. (Genesis 21:12-21; Romans 9:7; Hebrews 11:17-20) Nevertheless, they, as all other people on earth, must come to God through Jesus Christ. (John 14:6)
6. Galatians 3:26-29 and 6:16 are just two passages which clearly indicate the essential unity of the old and the new covenant.
 - "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:26-29)

Thus, all people who believe in and follow Jesus Christ, both those with a Jewish background and those with a non-Jewish background, are now one in Christ and together form his church, the visible manifestation of the new covenant.

- "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. ¹⁶Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God." (Galatians 6:15-16)

→ After reviewing the information above, guess which Greek word for new in the term “new creation” the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Paul to write in verse 15. Yes, *kainos*!

CONTEMPLATE AND TALK WITH OTHERS about the implications of that profound word choice.

7. Not flesh, blood, and genes but faith, and maturing obedience that demonstrates the genuineness of that saving faith, indicate who are Abraham’s descendants and heirs of the promise. (Romans 4; 9:6-8) What is that faith? Faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Lord (John 14:6; Romans 10:9; Ephesians 2:8-10) is what saves us, but the Lord expects true faith to issue forth in concomitant and confirming deeds. (Matthew 7:15-23; 25:31-46; James 2:14-26)
8. God has not abandoned the Jews, and we must never disrespect them or become arrogant (Romans 11:20). They are the first people to whom he chose to reveal himself, his plan of redemption for all his creation, and through whom he would bring into his covenant those of us from “every nation, tribe, people and language.” (Revelation 7:9; cf. Genesis 12:3) Yet they, as all others, must come to God the Father through Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son. (John 14:6; 3:16; Romans 10-11) While it is the work of the Holy Spirit that brings all people to faith in Christ, solely humanly speaking, Jewish people will respond more to speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) than to arrogance, disrespect, and rejection. Who doesn’t?
 - a. But neither are the Jews who reject Christ Jesus still the covenant community or heirs of God’s promise to Abraham. As Jesus told the Jewish leaders, “The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.” (Matthew 21:43. See the context in 21:33-46; cf. Deuteronomy 28; 1 Kings 9:1-9; Acts 3:18-23. Notice v. 23, ““Anyone who does not listen to him [Jesus] will be completely cut off from his people.””) The people of God now are the church of Jesus Christ, the new covenant community, prophesied by Jeremiah (31:31-33; cf. 1 Peter 2:9-10; Titus 2:14).
 - 1) But be very careful: Not everyone who calls him or herself a Christian and claims to believe in Jesus, is so necessarily. Many are false prophets. Consider for now just these passages:
 - Jesus said, “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A

good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

²¹“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ ²³Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matthew 7:15-23)

- “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)
 - “But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. ¹⁹You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.” (James 2:18-19)
- 2) However, note well that these passages do not teach the unbiblical concept of works righteousness. Our works, good deeds, while necessary, by themselves do not save us. The above passages indicate clearly that those who have the true faith in Jesus, whereby God credits to them Jesus’ righteousness due to their faith (Romans 4), demonstrate the genuineness of that faith in concomitant deeds. The context of these Scripture passages, indeed the whole Bible, indicates that in this age true believers also will sin, and those who repent (meaning not only regretting but resolving to not repeat the sin) will receive God’s forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Thus, the sins Paul lists in the 1 Corinthians 6:9ff. passage, are forgivable IF they are repented and not repeated. People who profess faith and continue to regularly repeat evil are the ones who are being referred to in these passages. The Holy Spirit’s inspiration guiding what Paul wrote was addressing a sinful and evil lifestyle of continual behavior in the regular practice of these sins.

- 3) Similarly, believers in and followers of Jesus Christ, who are truly trying to obey and repent when they do sin, redoubling their efforts to obey, need not fear their salvation. See the entirety of 1 John and the rest of God's Word for assurance.
 - b. In the words of medical missionary Dr. Donald Bosch, who lived in the Middle East for 17 years as a surgeon in the American Mission Hospitals of the Arabian Gulf, and Dr. Eugene Osterhaven, Western Theological Seminary professor of systematic theology, the Jewish people as such "are no more the covenant community than any other group unless and until they accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Then they, like other believers, become a part of the fellowship of the people of God."⁹
- D. In the Old Testament, the beginning government of Israel was a theocracy and distinct from government in the age of the New Covenant. (Judges 8:22-23; 1 Samuel 8:1-9; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-4)
1. It was God's desire to be Israel's king, and he was at first through the time of the judges to the time of the judge and prophet, Samuel, but God accommodated his desire to his people's request for a human king.
 - a. God promised David (2 Samuel 7:16) and Solomon (1 Kings 9:4-5) that their throne would be established forever. But that promise was conditioned on obedience. (1 Kings 9:4,6; Deuteronomy 28)
 - b. Nevertheless, God fulfilled his promise, in spite of Israel's disobedience, through the New Covenant in David's and Solomon's descendant, Jesus the Christ, whose kingship is forever. (Matthew 1:6-16; Psalm 45:6; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44; Luke 1:33; 2 Peter 1:11)
 2. Some people point mistakenly to the conquest of the land under Joshua as a justification for the current state of Israel taking Palestinian land.
 - a. First, God can do according to his will with his land; it's all his—as is the whole heavens and the earth—He created them all and is thus the owner. A human analogy clarifies. If you make something you not only own it, but with ownership comes privilege; you can decide what to do with it, including loaning or giving it to someone else, for a period of time or permanently, and with stipulations—all of which are part of the covenant.¹⁰

⁹ *The Church Herald*, 4/11/69, p. 6.

¹⁰ For further very important information on the covenant God made with Abraham, see the PowerPoint, [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology](#), the [Bible Digest Notebook](#), and other documents on my free and secure [WordPress Website](#). On the homepage, use the Search bar to enter any word or term you want to access, e.g., covenant, and the relevant documents will immediately appear. Copyright © 1999, 2001, 2011, 2017, 2022-2026 by Edward D. Seely. Permission is granted to use this paper, without charge and without changing the text, for Christian education and other Christian ministries worldwide. 10

- b. Second, God had a plan, always good for he is all good, a good plan for giving the land of the Canaanites to his chosen people, the Israelites.
3. In addition to other Bible texts cited below, key differences between Old Testament Israel and the current state of Israel involve the former being a theocracy where God revealed his will to leaders he raised up, wherein he directed them in certain ways to accomplish his purposes for that period of time. Joshua's conquering of the land God promised to Abraham was to accomplish spiritual objectives for that time, namely the spiritual nurture of his covenant people (Genesis 15:16; Deuteronomy 7:16) and his judgment on the evil of the pagan peoples inhabiting the land. (Genesis 15:16; Leviticus 18:24-28) Doing so was to accomplish his plan of redeeming his creation, including all people (1 Timothy 2:4), the plan he explained in an elementary form throughout the Old Testament, beginning all the way back in Genesis 3:15, immediately after Satan-inspired human sin corrupted God's perfect creation, which the message of the Bible reveals, he is in the process of restoring. The most important part of that restoration has been done in Christ Jesus' first coming, and it will be completed in his second coming.
 4. The Israeli (not the Biblical term, Israelite) government today is secular and makes no claim to be a theocracy. In fact, freedom of religion in the current state of Israel includes the freedom even to not believe,¹¹ not at all what Abraham and his descendants covenanted with God. (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4)

II. God's promise of land to Abraham and his descendants was conditional on Israel's obedience.

- A. This key point is omitted in and contradicted by pro-Zionist (*op cit.*) literature. Since they appeal to the Bible to support their conclusions, it is essential that we understand what the Bible actually says on this and related matters.
- B. The promise in Genesis 17:8 is conditional on the Israelites' obeying the LORD their God and observing the commands and decrees he gave them. (See also Leviticus 18:24-28, Deuteronomy 28:25, 58, 63-68; 30:16-18; Joshua 23:14-16; 1 Kings 9:1-9; Jeremiah 18:1-9.)
 1. When Israel disobeyed and God cut off Israel from the land temporarily (for 70 years), he brought Israel back as he had promised (Jeremiah

¹¹ Shimon Shetreet, "[Human Rights in Israel: Freedom of Religion](#)," Jewish Virtual Library. (Accessed 12/12/2022)

16:10-15; 29:10-14), literally fulfilling the prophecy in the return from Babylonian captivity under Zerubbabel and Joshua (536 BC) and under Ezra (458 BC),¹² even though many Jews chose not to return and whose descendants still live in these same parts of the world, e.g., Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, though many in recent times have been leaving if they can, due to the Muslims' harsh treatment of the Jews in those lands since the 1948 establishment of the current state of Israel.¹³

2. Ultimately, however, God has revealed that the final restoration of the land will take place when Jesus returns in his second coming. Here we must make note of the unique features of prophetic writing in the Bible.
 - a. In the scholarly literature in the field of Biblical interpretation (called hermeneutics, from the Greek, ἐρμηνεύω [hermēneuō], to interpret), we learn of a very important principle that helps us understand passages written by the prophets. This hermeneutical principle is called the principle of prophetic foreshortening, or the prophetic perspective. More commonly, it is called the principle of near and far fulfillment.

Using this principle, we observe the prophets writing about coming events that fulfill God's prophetic Word in the near and far future without distinguishing between them, i.e., without indicating which events will occur in the short term and which will take place much later. For example, prophets revealing the restoration of Israel from the Babylonian captivity (cf. Isaiah 48:20-53:12) use terms that pertain in a limited way to what will be occurring before very long, but those terms also pertain to what will take place in the complete fulfillment of Israel's restoration, which will occur in the Messianic age, the inauguration of which is already here, beginning at Jesus' first coming, but which will be completed in the latter part of the Messianic age yet to come when Jesus returns in his second coming.

We see in Isaiah 11 another example of prophetic foreshortening. Verses 1-3a refer to the first coming of the Messiah and are fulfilled in Jesus' first advent. Verses 3b-9 refer to Jesus' second advent/coming that will occur at the end of the age, and include the resurrection of the dead and those still living, all of whom will receive resurrection bodies. All this will be followed by the final judgment and the new heaven and the new earth. In this passage, the prophet Isaiah doesn't indicate that there are two distinct though related periods of time in this prophecy, and he does not make a differentiation between the

¹² See, e.g., Ezra 1-2, 8; Nehemiah 2, 5-13.

¹³ "The Jews in the Arab World," *Time*, February 7, 1969. Jews have entirely left Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Messiah's first and second coming. God revealed to his prophets only what the people could understand and what he wanted them to focus on at that point of time in their spiritual development in order to equip them for their mission in his plan of redemption.¹⁴

- b. While the prophets wrote in terms the people could understand, in the light of later revelation we understand much more. Notice the expansion of our understanding of the land the meek inherit as described in Psalm 37:11 in what Jesus says in Matthew 5:5.
 - c. The Bible does not teach that Christ will reign in Israel during a literal 1,000 year period, which some call the Millennium. Another hermeneutical principle helps us understand this passage: literary genre or style. The book of Revelation is written in the literary genre called apocalyptic, which is highly symbolic. In the one chapter of the Bible, Revelation 20, which speaks of a 1,000 year reign of Christ and his believers, the number 1,000 is properly to be interpreted symbolically and is seen as referring to the Lord's reign in heaven that is going on now.¹⁵
 - d. Another outstanding theologian, the late Albertus Pieters, states, "Since the Christian church is now the seed of Abraham, under the New Covenant all the promises of God to his people must be understood as her heritage, and all the prophecies concerning Israel not yet fulfilled and still to be fulfilled must be fulfilled in her; leaving nothing at all of either promise or prophecy for those who are merely descendants of Abraham after the flesh."¹⁶
3. Therefore, in the light of Genesis 17:8-9, 1 Kings 9, and many related Bible passages, we see that Israel ignored God's Word, thus (with the exception of a small remnant) abandoning their high and holy calling to bring the good news of God's plan of redemption designed for people of every nation, resulting in God doing what he had promised.
- "But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, ⁷then I will cut off Israel from the land I have

¹⁴ For more on hermeneutics and the end times, see [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions](#). Use the Find feature to locate specific topics, such as hermeneutics and eschatology (the Biblical teaching pertaining to the end times).

¹⁵ For an excellent interpretation and explanation of the relevant Biblical texts, see Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 235. See also my paper, "[Dispensationalists and Dispensational Premillennialism](#)," on the meaning of the 1000 years.

¹⁶ Albertus Pieters, *The Seed of Abraham* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950), p. 121.

given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples....” (1 Kings 9:6-7)

→ Quite significantly, contemporary ultra-Orthodox Jews such as Mea Shearim (*op cit.* below) readily admit that reality, and its application, that the current state of Israel is not a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.

Here we see that the Kingdom of God is not a matter of land or of political rule in this era. It is the Lord’s rule in his people’s hearts and minds. (Luke 17:21; John 4:21-26) Jesus clearly said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” (18:36)

- C. As we have just seen, the continued existence of the temple was also contingent on Israel’s obedience. (1 Kings 9:1-9, esp. vss. 6-9)
 - 1. In John 2:19, Jesus teaches that in the new covenant his followers meet God in a new place, and that new place will be neither in Jerusalem nor in Samaria. (John 4:21-24)
 - 2. The new temple is in the Body of Christ, the church (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16 [corporately] and 1 Corinthians 6:19 [individually]).¹⁷
 - 3. A physical temple is no longer needed and will not be in the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:22), for sacrifices are no longer needed. Jesus has performed the once-for-all sacrifice (Hebrews 9:26) that enables all who believe to be credited with his righteousness (Romans 4), which alone permits access into the very presence of God.
 - D. Even many modern Jewish interpreters of the Bible reject the claim that the contemporary state of Israel is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, e.g., Elmer Berger, *Israel: Covenant Community or National State* (The Netherlands: University of Leiden Press).
- III. With regard to the Bible, we must acknowledge the following about the current state of Israel.
- A. The Israel of today is not an extension of or connected with Old Testament Israel; neither is it a fulfillment of prophecies in the Bible. There is no Biblical support for the current state of Israel.

¹⁷ For further information and inspiration on these two words, see [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions](#).

- B. We should lament the injustices done in its institution. See the sections in this paper which follow.
- C. As we've seen above, justification for its existence has to come from sources other than the Bible.
- D. The current state of Israel is the result of actions motivated by the pain of persecution, a sense of guilt on the part of some (including those involved directly or indirectly with the Jewish Holocaust), and political expediency on the part of people who were ignorant of the Bible and others who interpreted it contrary to the above Scripture texts.
1. Christian millenarianism, with its peculiar view of prophecy,¹⁸ grew in the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries at the same time as European powers, especially Great Britain and France, were grappling with a decision as to how to resolve the fallout of the breakup of the Turkish empire.
 2. Zionism is the movement largely responsible for the modern state of Israel. The name is based on the mountain, or high hill, called Zion, which is in Jerusalem and on which was the site of the temple. By the literary figure of metonymy, the term Zion came to refer to Jerusalem, and by further extension to the international movement that began in order to establish a place to live for Jewish people, which soon developed into an organized effort to build a modern state of Israel on the land of Old Testament Israel that would be a homeland for Jewish people. It gained special impetus following the Jewish Holocaust during World War II in order to prevent a recurrence of that egregiously unjust persecution of Jewish people.

The Jewish Holocaust, during which 6,000,000 Jewish people were put to death unjustly, should never be minimized. Nevertheless, the adjective, Jewish, should always be used with the term Holocaust; the term Holocaust should never be used without an adjective, which would be to indicate, especially with the definite article, that only one Holocaust has occurred. In fact, Christians have been in ongoing holocausts, including at the same time the Jews were in their Holocaust. Depending on which study one reads, Stalin alone killed 40,000,000 to 60,000,000 Christians, thus as high as 10 times as many Christians as Jews were killed at that time, just in the USSR. That is an egregious Christian Holocaust! Moreover, more Christians have been martyred in the last 100 years than in all the previous 20 centuries combined. Over 100 Christians per week

¹⁸ See the paper, "[Dispensationalists and Dispensational Premillennialism](#)" and the related sections in [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions](#).

are killed worldwide; 16 Christians are killed per day.¹⁹ Open Doors, a global organization that serves persecuted Christians, publishes a World Watch List. There are now fifty countries on the current watch list that have been identified as being especially dangerous for Christians.²⁰ Therefore, we must also never forget the Christian Holocaust—which continues—nor forget to pray for our many, many brothers and sisters in Christ who are experiencing horrible and very grim suffering!

- a. Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), an Austrian Jewish writer and the father of modern Zionism, experienced persecution himself and saw others persecuted because of their Jewish faith. He longed for and wrote about the establishment of a homeland for Jews.
- b. One of Hertzl’s followers, Chaim Weizmann, a Russian Jewish chemist, attained high office in the British government. He influenced the passing of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 which “viewed with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people” but never specified precisely what would constitute that “national home.” In subsequent policy statements the British tried to appease Arabs and Jews while at the same time advancing their own political ends.
- c. The British occupied Palestine in Post-World War I times, and beginning in 1918, there were 56,000 Jews living there.
 - 1) When they left in 1948 the Jewish population had grown significantly to 650,000 (33% of the total population).
 - 2) By 1939 the British Government realized the contradictions and injustices inherent in the Balfour Declaration; by then they believed it was too late to turn back.
- d. Post-World War II Western leaders saw the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine as a good way to provide restitution to the Jews for their horrific suffering in the Hitler years. As the NCCC investigation concluded in its report, “Western nations, out of a sense of guilt for the persecution of Jews in Europe, created the State of Israel, requiring the eviction of Arabs from their homes. Israel, permitted to ignore U.N. resolutions for justice to the dispossessed, has enlarged and consolidated its position. Westerners backed Israel in the Six-Day War. Since then, as since 1948, the U.S. has virtually paralyzed U.N. remedial action by its non-support.”²¹ Here we see another of the

¹⁹ Jay Sekulow, American Center for Law and Justice update, February 23, 2022.

²⁰ John Stonestreet and Roberto Rivera, *Breakpoint Daily* from the Colson Center, January 26, 2021.

²¹ Humphrey Walz, “A Link with the Holy Land’s Christians,” p. 5.

many reasons why Biblical theology is so vitally important and another of the many serious effects of unbiblical theology.²²

3. However, considerable opposition to the Zionist movement developed. Significantly, not all Jewish people signed on to the movement, and some, in particular ultra-Orthodox Jews such as Mea Shearim, an enclave/neighborhood in Jerusalem, are strongly opposed to Zionism, viewing it as “the scourge of God. They believe the Jews were exiled from Israel for violating God’s laws but with the stipulation that if they honored God’s will and commandments, the Holy Land would be returned to them. We sinned and we are exiled not because we lack tanks and aircraft. We must remain exiled until the era of the Messiah.”²³
 - a. While correct about why God exiled them, they fail to see that the Messiah, Christ Jesus, has already come, and that the prophecies of his (first) coming were never to rout the Romans and establish a political rule here on earth in this age, a point Christian dispensationalists also need to take into account.
 - b. Furthermore, when those in opposition to Jewish Zionism say they must remain exiled until the era of the Messiah, they are not referring to Jesus’ second coming.²⁴
4. Arab relations with Jews in Palestine and elsewhere in the Middle East were remarkably good prior to the 20th century. Many Jewish ultra-Orthodox, such as the late leader, Rabbi Moshe Hirsch, advocate union with an independent Palestine. Hirsch said, “Orthodox Jews had lived with Palestinians in peace long before the Zionist state” made them enemies “in the Zionist lust for power.”²⁵
5. Arabs perceived the establishment of the current state of Israel as another effort in the long history of foreigners attempting to control them. Arabs reasoned that if restitution were needed for the Jews, why should Arab land be given them? Why should that restitution not more justly come from Germany and other countries which engaged in injustices to the Jews?

²² For more of these reasons and effects, see [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions](#).

²³ Uli Schmetzer, “Jewish sect envisages new state,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 6, 1988, Sec.1, p. 5.

²⁴ For more on Jesus’ first coming and his second coming, see [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions](#).

²⁵ Uli Schmetzer, “Jewish sect envisages new state,” p. 5.

6. The establishment of the modern state of Israel initiated many injustices. To cite just a few:
 - a. The Partition Resolution of the United Nations, to which the British turned over the whole matter in 1947, gave the new State of Israel 56.47 percent of the total area of Palestine, even though Jews only owned ten percent of the land at that time. The Arabs were given 42.88 percent of the land, and the International Zone of Jerusalem 0.65 percent. The UN gave away land it was not theirs to give.
 - 1) Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, including many Christians, were forced to leave, lost their homes and property, and have not returned.
 - 2) Evangelical churches are not officially recognized by the Israeli government. Evangelism is illegal.
 - 3) The most difficult challenge facing Christians is in East Jerusalem. They are being targeted by radical Jewish groups, who for example spit on clergy and write offensive and inciting slogans in graffiti on walls, especially in the old city of Jerusalem.
 - 4) A study was done that counted more than 30 churches that were closed, because Palestinians were expelled from the land.²⁶ In the third decade of the 21st century Palestinian Christians were still in decline, one reason being that it is illegal in the state of Israel to evangelize for Christ—just *the exact opposite* of what Israel in the Bible was called by God to do, and the exact opposite of Christian churches of all time.
 - b. The establishment of Israel was done without Arab approval. Whole villages, including Emmaus, Beit Nuba, and Yalu, were bulldozed out of existence.²⁷

How would you feel, if people came to your home and property right now, evicted you, took what was yours without considering you and your family at all, and moved you to a crowded location like the Gaza

²⁶ Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac, Palestinian Pastor of Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, in an interview with Tucker Carlson at <https://www.bitchute.com/video/IfbckPcYebVQ/>, *Tucker Carlson Uncensored*, April 9, 2024, TCN. (Accessed 4/21/2024) Though Dr. Isaac employs substandard Biblical hermeneutics in some of his explanation, e.g., ignoring the distinction between the individual ethic and the corporate ethic (*op cit.*) in his interpretation of certain Scripture texts addressing individuals and applying them in a corporate context, nevertheless, he does accurately and importantly point out grievous Israeli injustices to the Palestinians, primarily in Israel, the West Bank, and in Gaza.

²⁷ Humphrey Walz, “A Link with the Holy Land’s Christians,” p. 5.

Strip which is crime ridden; exceedingly dangerous, especially for women; has high unemployment, resulting in the majority living below the poverty line; severe lack of sanitation; unjust rates for Palestinians who do have access to some utilities; rationing; harsh curfews; limited access to routine medical care; unjust treatment by the Israeli military; and other inhuman conditions?²⁸ Unsurprisingly, violence is rising in the occupied territories.²⁹

- c. The Arabs were deprived of their homes and farms, forced into unpleasant refugee camps, and denied the capital to start a new life in a strange land.
- d. The placement of over one million Jewish refugees in Palestine resulted in the uprooting of over one million Arabs—not only Muslims but also Christians—without adequate compensation and often by force including terrorism as psychological warfare. We must keep in mind that many of the Palestinians who are being treated unjustly are Christians.³⁰

Ironically, and hypocritically, the Israelis are committing against the Arabs punishments against civilians, some even worse, than they themselves experienced in the Jewish Holocaust. “The Geneva Convention outlaws collective punishment against civilians—a favorite Nazi trick in occupied Europe—and the destruction of civilian property even in wartime.”³¹ A Palestinian Christian scholar adds more:

The facts are not ambiguous.

Since 1948, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians—including Christians—have been expelled and forcibly displaced from their homes and cities. Today, under Israeli occupation, we endure military checkpoints, an ugly wall, land seizures, home demolitions, and the daily humiliation of military control that denies us the most basic human rights.

²⁸ Rod Koopmans, “A Land of Broken Promises,” *The Church Herald*, June 1992, pp. 17-19.

²⁹ Matthew Lee, “Biden faces quandary with new Netanyahu government,” *The Associated Press, Reporter-Herald*, January 8, 2023, p. 7.

³⁰ Yohanna Katanacho, “Christian Palestinian Arabs: Spreading Hope in the Middle East,” *In the Gap: John Stott Ministries Newsletter*, Fall 2004. Katanacho explains, “These Christians are shaped by...diverse histories, beliefs and traditions, but generally they can be placed into four classifications: Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, [Roman] Catholic and Protestant.”

³¹ A. C. Forrest, “Harsh Life Under The Israeli Boot,” *The Church Herald*, January 31, 1969, p. 13.

In Gaza, our churches have been bombed by Israel, and more than 40 Christians have been killed since the beginning of the ongoing, terrible war. In Jerusalem, Israeli settlers spit on us and our clergy, assault us for wearing the cross, attack our churches, set them on fire, and desecrate our cemeteries. In Jenin, our homes are demolished. In Bethlehem, our farms and lands are stolen. On Holy Saturday, we are beaten, humiliated, arrested, and locked out of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by Israeli soldiers—the very tomb from which our Lord rose—simply because we wish to pray.³²

- e. Following Israel’s takeover of Jerusalem and the West Bank in 1967, it annexed the city and attached to it 44 square miles of Arab land. This land was taken from 28 Arab villages. Katanacho adds, “As a result of the establishment of the modern Israel in 1948, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians became refugees and lost their precious olive trees, vine gardens and ancestral homes. More than 400 Palestinian villages and towns were destroyed and more than 50,000 Christians became refugees.³³ Unfortunately, the enmity from this war determines the relationship between these two peoples to the present day. Israeli Jews are still looking for security and Palestinians are still seeking justice. Neither is having peace.”³⁴
- f. The Israeli Knesset has passed the nation state law which states that the right for self-determination in Israel is exclusive to Jewish people only. This law makes Jewish people superior to all other groups and limits religious freedom in Israel.

³² Jack Nasser, “[Will You Remember Us? A Palestinian’s Plea to the Reformed Church.](#)” *The Aquila Report*, June 23, 2025. The author states, “I am a Semitic Palestinian Christian. I was born under difficult Israeli occupation, baptized in a church that stood centuries before the Reformation, and raised in the land where Christ walked. My worship is in Arabic. My theology is anchored in the early Church. And my grief is profound.”

³³ Yet, the number of Christians in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territory is declining significantly, largely due to unjust and oppressive Israeli political and economic policies and practices. “According to the *Afro-Palestine Newswire Service*, indigenous Christian Palestinians once constituted over 19 per cent of the population of historic Palestine, but number less than two per cent today, as the Arab-Israeli conflict has caused the majority of Palestinian Christians to leave their homeland.” “[Christian population in Palestine declining due to Israeli occupation](#),” MEMO (Middle East Monitor), October 21, 2019. ““We were subjected to such pressures we couldn’t stand it any longer,” I was told by Syrian Presbyterians who had recently come to Damascus as refugees.” A. C. Forrest, “Harsh Life Under The Israeli Boot,” p. 13. Jessica Buxbaum adds, “While Palestine is the birthplace of Christianity, individuals identifying as Christian in the land have dwindled from 12.5 per cent before the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 to a mere 2.2 per cent in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.” Jessica Buxbaum, “How Israeli settlements threaten Palestine’s Christian heritage,” <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/how-israeli-settlements-threaten-palestines-christian-heritage> (Accessed 02/20/2026)

³⁴ Katanacho, “Christian Palestinian Arabs: Spreading Hope in the Middle East.”

- g. Consider some of the many ongoing illustrations of injustice to the Palestinians as a result of the land issue, which we looked at closely last time, but recall these key points:
- 1) A major concern of Israel since 1967 has been to keep a Jewish majority in Jerusalem. To do so, housing quotas have been set up to work toward encouraging, and in many cases forcing, Arabs to leave with no possibility of returning. This policy leads to massive overcrowding in Arab neighborhoods.
 - 2) A policy of racial quotas has been implemented, which places Arabs in extremely difficult circumstances. If they live outside the city limits, they lose their “residency card” necessary for employment, and they cannot return to live and/or work in Jerusalem. If they want to build on land their family has owned, in many cases for many generations, they cannot obtain building permits.
 - 3) Gary Burge, of the Wheaton College Graduate School, Chairman of the Board of Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding (EMEU), wrote, “Today in Arab E. Jerusalem, 43,000 Jewish homes are standing entirely on expropriated land...By some estimates 35% of E. Jerusalem has been confiscated for Jewish development (and 90% of this land was privately owned by Palestinians).”³⁵ And that land has been handed down to them by their ancestors for many generations. Many Christian communities in particular grapple with the difficult question of whether they can remain on their ancestral land.³⁶

Pro-Israeli argumentation tries to establish Israeli ownership due to God’s much earlier covenant with Abraham. However, as we’ve seen above that argument cannot be sustained Biblically.³⁷

- 4) Even land for embassy property has come from confiscation of Arab land, including land targeted for the U.S Embassy if it moves to Jerusalem.³⁸ Those plans are now in place.

³⁵ Gary Burge, *EMEU Journal*, September 2000. This article contains much more documentation of egregiously unjust, thus unbiblical (e.g., Micah 6:8), Israeli policies that negatively affect Palestinians. Gary is now Professor of New Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary.

³⁶ Elizabeth Owens, “[Jewish settlers attack the only entirely Christian village in the Holy Land once again, according to the Catholic parish priest himself](#),” ZENIT News/Jerusalem, 02.12.2026.

³⁷ Recall, e.g., Deuteronomy 28; 1 Kings 9:1-9. See also “[Dispensationalists and Dispensational Premillennialism](#)” and the related resources in the section below, “Selected Sources for Further Reading.”

³⁸ Gary Burge, *EMEU Journal*.

- 5) The Jerusalem Municipal Budget is heavily skewed toward Jewish neighborhoods regarding “town beautification,” public transportation, parks and facilities, libraries, hospitals, roads, and other government services, even though Arabs pay taxes as do others. This is one reason why Jewish tour guides don’t want to take tourists to Arab neighborhoods; they don’t want visitors to see the deteriorating conditions of Arab homes and communities, due to the unfair and unjust lack of government investment in those areas. Another reason is that more tourist money stays in Jewish sectors, and less if any is spent in Arab areas, and thus does not contribute to the Palestinian economy.

- 6) The Israeli government continues to put in place more adversarial anti-Arab moves. The government has approved “a series of punitive steps against the Palestinian leadership in retaliation for the Palestinians pushing the U.N.’s highest judicial body to give an opinion of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank.”³⁹

Further, the government is withholding “millions of dollars from the Palestinian Authority and transferring those funds to a compensation program for the families of Israeli victims of Palestinian militant attacks. And it will deny benefits, including travel permits, to Palestinian officials who ‘are leading the *political and legal* war against Israel.’”⁴⁰



³⁹ Matthew Lee, “Biden faces quandary with new Netanyahu government,” p. 7.

⁴⁰ Matthew Lee, “Biden faces quandary with new Netanyahu government,” p. 7. *Emphasis* in the quote is mine.

⁴¹ *Chicago Tribune*, September 9, 1980, Sec. 3, p. 6.

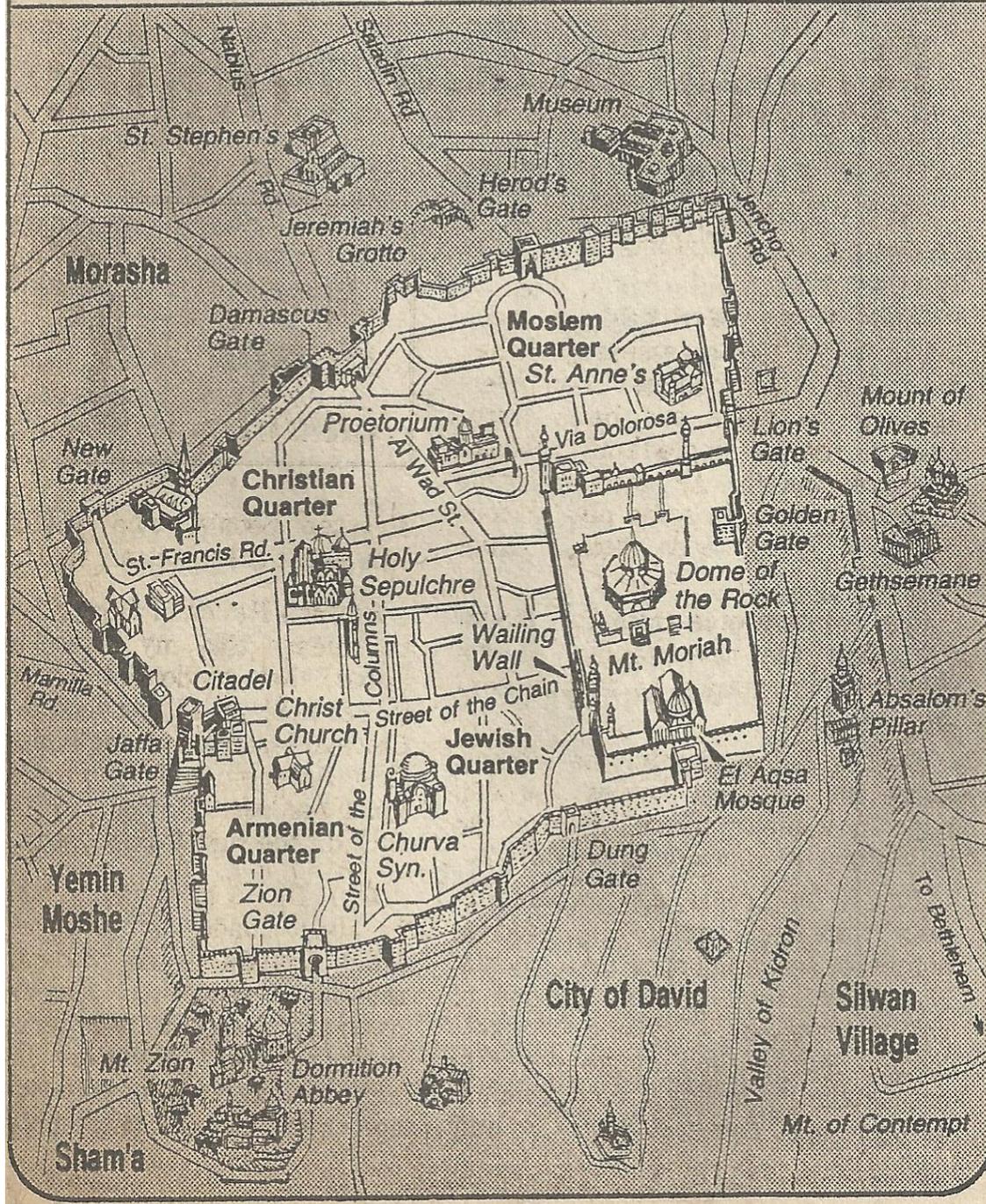




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⁴² *Time*, March 18, 1996, p. 72.

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⁴³ *Chicago Tribune*, September 9, 1980, Sec. 3, p. 6.

While not acceptable, it is understandable, how Palestinian frustration leads to aggression, including to the point of violence. Other countries individually, and the U.N. corporately, must speak and act in ways that draw the Israeli government's attention to this reality. The uncooperative and excessive Israeli oppression, even when the Palestinians are trying to employ *political and legal* means to achieve justice, is counterproductive to a peaceful resolution of the Middle East crisis.

Questions to ask Israel:

- a) Pertaining to the Palestinians in their midst, is the Israeli government more interested in peace or power? If the former, on what basis can the government reasonably expect to accomplish that objective by constraining human freedom with so many exceedingly inhuman injustices?
 - b) Would you want to live in the conditions you have imposed on the Palestinians?
 - c) Where is there a legitimate use of Israeli power? It's for defense to protect against attack by other countries, e.g., Iran, not for offense to unjustly constrain those within their own midst. See below for more on this matter.
- h. The confiscation of Arab lands in Palestine continues in direct violation of UN Resolution 242, the Geneva Convention, the Oslo Accords, and the Camp David Accords, all of which Israel signed, as well as other international agreements.
- 1) For just one example, the Israeli security cabinet has approved measures permitting extensive settlement expansion, land purchasing, and building permits in regions that the Oslo Accords stipulate are under full or partial Palestinian jurisdiction.⁴⁴
 - 2) As native Syrian, now U. S. citizen and Christian missionary to the Middle East for many decades, Rev. Bassam Michael Madany, has written, "In November 1967, the UN passed Resolution 242, calling for the withdrawal of Israel, in exchange for peace between Israel and its neighbors, including the push for a two-state solution with the Palestinians."⁴⁵ That promised peace has not occurred.

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Owens, "[Jewish settlers attack the only entirely Christian village in the Holy Land once again, according to the Catholic parish priest himself](#)," ZENIT News/Jerusalem, 02.12.2026.

⁴⁵ Bassam Michael Madany, "The Hundred Year War: Israel and Its Neighbors," *Christian Renewal*, August 17, 2024, p. 33. See this article with additions at "[The Unending Wars to Destroy Israel](#)."

Periodic bombing was occurring when I was leading tours to the lands of the Bible, including Israel, prior to 2006 when HAMAS was elected as the official government of the Gaza Strip, a counterproductive event that, as Madany writes, “derailed a peaceful settlement of the governance of the West Bank and Gaza. HAMAS [is an Arabic acronym and] stands for the ISLAMIC RESISTANCE MOVEMENT, and by its election victory, the equation changed drastically. The problem was now an Israel-Muslim one!”⁴⁶

Jerusalem-based Journalist, Jessica Buxbaum, discloses further information on the Israeli settlements. She writes, “While all Israeli settlements are illegal under international law, outposts, which can range from a few tents to caravans and other structures, are also illegal under Israeli law, but often legalised retroactively.”⁴⁷

- 3) Ironically, uninformed and misguided theology is producing more, extensive, and counterproductive results. Much of the money from churches in the U. S. goes not only to the Israeli military but to the building of illegal settlements on land confiscated from Palestinians, many of them Palestinian Christian families, thus severely harming fellow Christians. That harm from these developments is causing many Palestinian Christians to sense there is no future for them in their land and to leave.⁴⁸ Furthermore, extended to other settings, similar and additional misguided actions are causing consequences on the Christian presence and having a negative impact throughout the Middle East—e.g., Iraq losing half of its Christian population in its recent war—resulting in a severe interference with the accomplishment of our Lord’s Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).
- 4) In fairness, it must be mentioned that UN Resolution 242 included a provision that the Palestinians have not kept. Palestinians are also building illegal settlements in the West Bank,⁴⁹ what Israel refers to as Judea and Samaria, another way Israel is errantly trying to prove an unbroken link with the Old Testament.

⁴⁶ Madany, p. 33.

⁴⁷ Jessica Buxbaum, “How Israeli settlements threaten Palestine’s Christian heritage.” (*Op cit.*) Buxbaum cites and explains several other serious injustices to Palestinians, and to Christian Palestinians in particular.

⁴⁸ Accompanying misguided lobbying in the U. S. Congress also contributes to and exacerbates the problem. Munther Isaac Interview with Tucker Carlson, *Tucker Carlson Uncensored*, April 9, 2024, TCN.

⁴⁹ Joshua Arnold, “[Expert: Israeli Actions in Judea and Samaria Respond to Attempts to ‘Erase Jewish and Christian History.’](#)” *The Washington Stand*, February 18, 2026 (Accessed 02/19/2026). See below for more on Palestinian settlement building.

- a) As explained above, God took the land away from Israel, as he warned he would if they broke his covenant with them. The Jews lost the land, because they did just what God told them not to do; they turned from him, disobeyed him by worshipping the false idols of pagan religions, and engaged in abominable demonic behavior contrary to God's commandments to which they had agreed, thus breaking their covenant with God.
 - b) However, a key factor contributing to the crisis is "massive illegal construction going on by the Palestinian Authority" (PA) in territory that "is really a strategic battleground," according to David Wurmser, who served as Middle East advisor to former U. S. Vice President Dick Cheney, quoted by Arnold.⁵⁰
 - c) This illegal (and importantly: misguided) settlement building by the PA is counterproductive, not only contributing to hostilities but to loss of heritage and to economic loss. The PA settlements are defended with the argument that it is one of the only effective ways to preserve their land from the extensive Israeli settlements being built. While there is truth in that argument, an even more significant reason for the PA's settlement-building is that the Muslim-run PA in the process is destroying important archaeological sites of places in the Bible. This destruction is rooted in the Islamic doctrine that Muslims are to conquer the world and destroy Jews and Christians, as will be documented in the discussion which follows. The alarming eradication of Biblical sites also harms Muslim Palestinians; it removes valuable tourist attractions that would contribute not only to the Biblical heritage of Christians and Jews but also bolster the PA's weak and declining economy that would help all people in the Palestinian territories.
- 5) An Israeli watchdog organization, called Peace Now, has documented the construction of new Jewish communities in Palestinian territory. The Peace Now report is not disputed by either the Israeli government or the Yesha Council, a settler movement, which "confirmed that new Jewish homes are being built on West Bank land, which it refers to as Judea and Samaria and believes was given to Jews by God."⁵¹ The U. S. has repeatedly called the settlements illegal.⁵²

⁵⁰ Joshua Arnold, "[Expert: Israeli Actions in Judea and Samaria Respond to Attempts to 'Erase Jewish and Christian History.'](#)"

⁵¹ Richard Bourdreaux, "Israel Flouts Pledge to Curb Settlements," *The Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 2007. See also Matt Rees, et al., "Who Wants to Settle Here?" *Time*, December 4, 2000, pp. 56-57.

→ DISCUSS (OR FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION): In the light of God’s Word cited above and below, how would you respond to this statement by the Yesha Council and others who hold to this misunderstanding of Scripture?

- i. Israel has ignored repeated UN resolutions calling for the correcting of injustices, including a yearly one that Israel permit refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace to do so at the earliest possible date and that compensation should be paid for those choosing not to return and for loss or damage to property.

Palestinians do not want to accept offers of compensation, even if they were close to fair value, because they know that to do so would prohibit them from ever recovering their generations-owned homes and properties if a truly just restoration of their land is ever forthcoming.

- j. For those Palestinians who have been able to retain their land, they face intimidation, beatings and stealing. James Hider reports,

In an olive grove on the edge of Nablus, Fuad Amr and his sons keep one eye on the branches they are stripping and the other warily on the Jewish settlement that overlooks their land from a hilltop.

The settlers could descend at any time to intimidate them or even beat them and steal the fruit of their labour, as happens every year across the West Bank in the olive season.

The Palestinian farmers, however, have found unlikely allies—Jewish activists, some of them Orthodox rabbis, who risk violence to protect them.

“I am afraid,” Mr Amr said, as he flung black olives on to a plastic sheet, from which his wife gathered them into a sack. “I’m picking the olives and all the time I’m looking out for settlers. They come in buses, sometimes 20 or 30 of them.”

“Despite the danger to their small children and themselves, the Jewish settlers here stay largely out of religious conviction, a belief that the land they occupy was deeded to the Jews by God.”... “Noam, 28, ‘This is a God-given land. God wills that we fight for this land.’ He says, pointing to a map of Solomon’s biblical kingdom which shows the border of Israel extending south of the Gaza Strip into Sinai,...”

⁵² “Whose Land Is This?” *Time*, March 31, 1980. Matt Rees, “Who Wants to Settle Here?” pp. 56-57.

...Every year, however, Israeli and foreign peace activists come to protect the Palestinians during the harvest and help them to pick their crops. Some of them have also been beaten by settlers, but they say that their presence prevents the Palestinians from being driven off their fields.

One of the Jewish groups is Rabbis for Human Rights, which aims to promote religion as a point of harmony and justice between Jews and Arabs.

“For us it’s a never-ending task to do the right thing,” David Nir, an Israeli physicist, said. He added that the bitter, low-level struggle fought in the olive groves and fields on the West Bank was wearing down many activists, with fewer showing up these days. “In the last two years I’ve seen people express despair,” he said.

...Mr Nir, the peace activist, said that Israel was complicit in the violence that haunted the Palestinian olive pickers every year: “It’s the Government. They want to humiliate the Palestinians...The hidden agenda of Israel is to take as much as possible of the land.”⁵³

- k. Violent injustices by Jewish settlers are daily realities.⁵⁴ Associated Press reporter, Giovanna Dell’Orto, recounts more that is occurring in the West Bank village Taybeh—which in the first century AD was called Ephraim and visited by Jesus—and which is now the last village in the West Bank that has an entirely Christian population. “After leading the music ministry at a recent Sunday’s Catholic Mass, as he’s done for six decades, Suheil Nazzal walked to the village’s edge to survey his terraces of olive trees. Settlers no longer allow him and other villagers to harvest them, he said.”⁵⁵

Elizabeth Owens recounts more.

⁵³ James Hider, “Olive Branch Blossoms Amid Harvest of Fear,” *The Times*, November 9, 2007.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Owens, “[Jewish settlers attack the only entirely Christian village in the Holy Land once again, according to the Catholic parish priest himself](#),” ZENIT News/Jerusalem, 02.12.2026.

⁵⁵ Giovanna Dell’Orto, “The West Bank’s dwindling Palestinian Christian communities continue to struggle amid violence,” <https://apnews.com/article/west-bank-christians-israel-palestinians-mideast-war-912c4f0ea073d8f091e762f1466a7423> (Accessed 02/20/2026) The population of Taybeh today is ca. 1,300-1,500, and located about 30 kilometers (a little over 18 ½ miles) north of Jerusalem and east of Ramallah.

According to Father Bashar Fawadleh, the Latin parish priest, the pattern of violence is no longer sporadic but systematic. In a detailed account covering January 2026 through February 5, he describes land seizures, intimidation, vandalism and arson. In the early hours between 2:30 and 3:00 a.m. on February 4, three individuals reportedly linked to the so-called “Hilltop Youth” (Jewish) set fire to two civilian vehicles near the village cemetery. Surveillance cameras captured other episodes, including the invasion of private property, racist graffiti and additional vehicle burnings.

The damage extends beyond symbolic attacks. Palestinian officials report that on February 5 alone, coordinated settler actions across several areas of the West Bank led to the uprooting of roughly 300 olive trees in the northern Ramallah and al-Bireh province. In al-Mughayyir, northeast of Ramallah, residents were assaulted while grazing livestock. In the Nablus governorate, pepper spray was used against Palestinians, and three young men were beaten while working. Olive cultivation, a pillar of Palestinian rural life, has been hit particularly hard. In recent months, 1,245 olive trees have reportedly been uprooted, destroyed or poisoned: 750 in Hebron, 245 in Ramallah and 250 in Nablus. Palestinian statistics cite 349 acts of vandalism and theft against property in the same period.⁵⁶

1. All the above is surely contrary to God’s will for Biblical Israel. See such passages as the following:
 - 1) “Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt.” (Exodus 22:21)
 - 2) “The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the alien, denying them justice.” (Ezekiel 22:29)
 - 3) Christians and some Jews in addition to those mentioned above who helped Palestinians harvest their crops and in other ways. For some poignant stories of such caring for neighbors and documented injustices, see the related article by Jill Nelson.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Owens, “[Jewish settlers attack the only entirely Christian village in the Holy Land once again, according to the Catholic parish priest himself.](#)” February 12, 2026.

⁵⁷ Jill Nelson, “[The Christian and Jewish Israelis Protecting West Bank Palestinians.](#)” *Christianity Today*, April 22, 2025.

- m. It must also be recognized that injustices have been done on both sides. It is not only Israel that has acted unjustly.
- 1) In order to establish a position on the degree to which Israel should respond to attacks, such as that of Hamas in the October 7 war, one has to decide whether he or she believes Israel has a right to exist. As explained above, the Bible cannot be used to support the existence of the current state of Israel.
 - 2) However, there are plausible arguments for supporting the existence of Israel, including their realistic understanding of Islam's Qur'an-based command to dominate and rule the world⁵⁸ and Israel's effective opposition to Islam's goal, albeit with the condition Israel adheres to justice and make the needed policy changes indicated in the preceding and subsequent pages. If one chooses the latter, and believes Israel has a right to exist, then the following rationale must logically proceed based on Islam's authoritative writings, specifically the Qur'an and the Hadith.
 - a) As of this writing, Hamas, which started the October 7 war with a horrific attack on Israel, is being defeated by Israel, who responded to the attack with a devastating invasion of the Gaza Strip. Since Islam calls for the complete destruction of Israel and the dominance, including killing, of Jews (and, it should be remembered, also Christians), it is unreasonable to advise Israel to agree to a unilateral ceasefire, make it permanent, and thereby permit Hamas to regroup and continue daily bombing of Israel.
 - 1- It also must be remembered that the Qur'an was written long before the current state of Israel was established.
 - 2- Those who call for Israel to conduct a unilateral ceasefire do not understand Islam and its purposes or living in a country that for many years has faced constant rocket and other attacks. They also do not know how horrible war is. Anybody who urges Israel to ceasefire and participate in "peace" talks with Hamas and its ilk should be required to live in Israel for six months.
 - 3- Those who urge Israel to cease fire—indefinitely and even permanently—are more interested in their own political

⁵⁸ [“Is Islam Really a Religion of Peace? The Death Penalty in the Qur'an, the Hadith, and the Sira \(Excerpts from Articles by TheReligionofPeace.com\)”](#)

ambitions than being a supportive ally of Israel. I hope and pray that they are not in office if our country is ever attacked.

- 4- The West and the rest of the world need to know the truth about Hamas. Consider these facts from a well-informed Palestinian, political analyst Bassem Eid, who points out that Hamas' military operations are ensconced in residential areas, schools, hospitals, and office buildings in order to protect themselves as much as possible from Israeli counterattacks. Money given from foreign sources such as the United States to help the Palestinians in Gaza, winds up in the hands of Hamas and is used for their own purposes, including personal enrichment.⁵⁹ Hamas also operates in and by mosques.

The question is raised why non-Hamas, civilian, Palestinians in Gaza don't tell Hamas to leave their residential areas, schools, hospitals, and the other above places where they hide and terrorize among the non-combatants. Others wonder why if Hamas won't leave, the civilians don't just leave. Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu explained why in an interview by Fox News and radio host, Mark Levin. The Prime Minister said that Hamas prevents the civilian population from leaving; they will shoot their own people if they try to leave the war zone so Hamas can keep their cover and also use the Western media bias and resultant coverage to make it look like the Israelis are killing the Palestinian civilians who are trying to flee to safety.⁶⁰

b) Islamic injustices to Christians should also be known.

- 1- The Islamic teaching that Christians as well as Jews and those of other religions (all of whom Islam calls "infidels," "unbelievers," and "pagans") should be killed, is based on the Qur'an (e.g., 2:216; 4:101; 8:12) and the Hadith (Sahih Bukhari 52:177; Sahih Bukhari 52:256; Sahih Muslim 19:4321-4323; Tabari 7:97; Tabari 9:69) with some references to the Sira (Ibn Ishaq/Hisham 990; Ibn Ishaq/Hisham 992).⁶¹

⁵⁹ Bassem Eid, "[A Palestinian Explains Hamas](#)," Prager University video. (Accessed 4/24/2024)

⁶⁰ Cal Thomas, Commentary: "[Netanyahu tells the truth](#)," *Reporter-Herald*, July 18, 2025, p. A4.

⁶¹ For this and further information, see TROP, "[What Makes Islam So Different: What Does Islam Teach About...Violence](#)." TROP is an acronym for TheReligionofPeace, which their website explains is "a non-

political, fact-based site which examines the ideological threat that Islam poses to human dignity and
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this paper, without charge and without changing the text, for Christian education and other Christian
ministries worldwide.

2- Modern manifestations of Islamic hatred for Christians has been demonstrated in many ways. To cite just a few of those manifestations pertaining to the suffering of Christians in Gaza, since Hamas came to power, they have perpetrated repeated acts of vandalism and bomb attacks on Christian schools, homes, and other Christian institutions. Christians have suffered murder and incidences of attempted murder, and a Canadian NGO has confirmed that

“members of Hamas have repeatedly desecrated Christian graves and exhumed the bodies, in order to ‘decontaminate’ the soil from the corpses of Christians who they believe to be unworthy of burial on Palestinian land.”...

...It is stories such as this that call us to remember—and pray for—our brothers and sisters across the world. What can we do for them? It’s up to us to make their plight known—to speak up about the injustices and abuses they face every day as outspoken believers in dangerous places. And above all else, to remember them in our hearts and our daily prayers.... They are facing persecution and dangers we can hardly imagine.⁶²

c) As the people of God, called to be holy to Him and speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), we Christians need to inform those with whom we are having conversations about this issue, and in other ways (e.g., writing letters to the editor of news media⁶³), about the untrustworthiness of Islam. To cite one of

freedom.” The TROP explanations of these and many other passages are well-documented, including cross references comparing and contrasting conflicting passages in the Qur’an, Hadith, and Sira, and responses to the disputed interpretations of Muslim apologists. (Accessed 09/08/2025) See also the related paper, “[Is Islam Really a Religion of Peace? The Death Penalty in the Qur’an, the Hadith, and the Sira \(Excerpts from Articles by TheReligionofPeace.com\).](#)”

⁶² Lela Gilbert, “[Are Christians Disappearing in the Middle East?](#)” The Washington Stand, September 2, 2025. (Accessed 09/05/2025)

⁶³ Pertaining to writing letters to the editor of news media, we should be prepared to admonish the media for its bias when necessary and always guard against it. The “fact checkers” themselves need “fact checkers.” Media bias is constantly evident. See, e.g., “More strikes in Gaza kill 18 children,” an *Associated Press* article by Mohammad Jahjouh and Samy Magdy in the *Reporter-Herald*, Monday, April 22, 2024, p. A4. This article illustrates daily reports on the Israel-Hamas war and how when Israel issues statements, the AP repeatedly adds “without providing evidence,” failing to even-handedly call out Hamas—which of course is Islamic, thus holding to and operating on the Muslim doctrine of Taqiyya that authorizes lying—for not citing evidence to support their numbers and other accusations.

many bases for this observation, inform people of the Muslim doctrine of Taqiyya, in which the Qur'an teaches that in Islam it is permissible to lie. Thus, no one can be sure a Muslim is not lying.

- 1- This is very understandable for us who are Christians, who have been informed by the Bible, the Word of God and the basis of our faith, that all religions outside the Bible are worshipping demons. (Cf., e.g., 1 Corinthians 10:20) Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, also revealed in the Bible that Satan is the father of lies. (John 8:44)
- 2- As social science research, and human experience clearly show, without the ability to trust another person or group, a relationship with that person or group is not possible.
- 3- This is not only important—but essential—information to keep in mind when talking with Muslims. At the same time, we need to remember to discern—typically over more rather than less time—in which of two major orientations an individual Muslim places him- or herself:
 - a- Some are “Muslim-in-name-only.” Does someone with whom you are speaking identify as a Muslim simply due to being born in a country with an Islamic majority but doesn't know, and maybe not care a whole lot, about Islamic doctrine? Many Muslims think of themselves as Muslim only because they were born and raised and live in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia or any other Muslim-majority nation and don't take their religion very seriously.
 - 1] These “Muslim-in-name-only” people are the ones who have been leaving Islam when the ISIS movement disclosed its objectives to reestablish the caliphate—and do so with world-alarming atrocity. When the widespread publicity of what ISIS was doing in the name of Islam came to the attention of the Muslim-in-name only people, the latter said, “If this is what Islam is all about, I don't want any part of it!” So, they began leaving Islam in droves, but not all converted to Christianity. Many did, but many others joined another religion, and many others took an agnostic or atheistic position.

- 2] There are also many Muslims who are seeing the unjust oppression of people and counterproductive governing by the Islamic regimes running their country, and are turning away from Islam.
 - 3] These are the people who, with the Holy Spirit's help, will be more inclined to consider the Gospel of Christ Jesus, as Christians develop a relationship with them and speak the truth in love about Jesus.
- b- Other Muslims you meet at work or elsewhere take their faith very seriously. You should know—and keep in mind—that they are in the United States and in other non-Muslim majority countries as missionaries for Islam. They have several agendas, all of which involve their most important goal: world domination—putting all people under subjection to Islam—even by the sword. Their agenda involves settling in a specific area in the country they are focused on, working to become the majority of that area's population, and then, when they reach 51%, establishing that community as a “No Go Zone” and declaring Sharia Law, to which all who live in that jurisdiction are subject. When the country has enough “No Go Zones,” and a Muslim population of 51%, they institute Sharia Law for all of its citizens. For current examples of countries who are waking up and sensing the threat, investigate France and other European countries that are now making changes to avoid that scenario occurring, including deporting Muslims from their country.
- 1] These Muslims, who take their faith—and its basis, the Qur'an and the Hadith—seriously, typically don't assimilate into the culture of their non-Muslim host country, so it is—humanly speaking—more challenging to engage them in meaningful conversations, especially about Christ Jesus.
 - 2] Nevertheless, with our triune God, all things are possible,” (Mark 10:27) so don't give up or write them off. God wants them to be in his kingdom too (Revelation 7:9), but of course they can only do so by believing in and following Jesus Christ as their only Savior and Lord. “And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how

can they hear without someone preaching?”
(Romans 10:14)

- It is important to notice here, that the last two words in the original Greek, which the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Paul to write, are χωρίς (*chōris*, without, apart from) κηρύσσοντος (*kērussontos*, heralding, preaching, announcing, telling, declaring). That is, not just ordained preachers are to be doing this telling and declaring, but all believers in and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ are to proclaim this Gospel, this Good News, including to Muslims and to Jews!

3] Ask God’s guidance and proceed, relying on the Holy Spirit to help you speak the truth in love, in a context of caring about the well-being of the other person.

- d) All Christians and Americans must keep in mind that Islam also has in writing the mandate to destroy and kill Christians and Americans. Those Muslims who take their faith seriously are vowing to do so and many plans for carrying out those objectives have been and are being put into place. One of the clearest and most painfully memorable is the 9/11 tragedy in the United States.
- e) Therefore, it is not logical to conclude that “We can just sit down and talk out our differences.” When the enemy has one stated and non-negotiable goal, to destroy your country and conquer and kill you, that is not a reasonable premise upon which to build a plan for a peaceable negotiation; it does not logically follow that a solution satisfactory to both sides can be constructed. Their premise is non-negotiable, because Islam believes it has come from their god, Allah.

Any talks about “peace” would not include eliminating the goal to conquer and wipe out Israel, America, Jews and Christians; that would remain on the table. The only question from the Islamic perspective is: When do you want your destruction, now or later? Any talking would only be for the purpose of enabling Islamic forces to gain more time, funding, military preparedness, refinement of plans, and identifying a strategic time when they think their enemy, that is we ourselves, would be most vulnerable.

Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who appears to know Islam, its teaching about the Muslim objective of world domination, and the intentions of Muslim-dominated nations far better than many—if not most—in the West, has accurately summarized a much more realistic perspective pertaining to unilateral ceasefire and negotiation proposals than left-wing positions. Netanyahu knowledgably and succinctly said,

We have internalized the lessons of history.
When an enemy says he intends to destroy you—
believe him,... When the enemy develops the
capabilities to destroy you — stop him.⁶⁴

- f) Many Christians need to be more careful about their interpretation of the Bible. A basic principle of hermeneutics (the field of interpretation) distinguishes between the individual ethic and the corporate ethic.
- 1- Christians often quote the passages that we believers in and followers of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ should “love our enemies” and “turn the other cheek.” Certainly that is God’s Word, and we must obey his Word. At the same time, when we look closely and carefully at the Bible and interpret these passages with their intended hermeneutic, we see that these texts are addressing the *individual ethic*. The meaning is that in my personal interaction with others I should love those who hate me and turn the other cheek when they insult me and offend me in other ways; in fact, I should even consider it a blessing when such treatment is the world’s false response to my obeying the Lord in his name. (Matthew 5:11; Luke 6:23,26; see also Proverbs 10:12; 19:11.)

Likewise, we must always include the whole counsel of God in our understanding and reasoning. When Jesus says to “turn the other cheek,” he is not saying to do this when the other person intends to kill you. Remember also the Lord’s command, given to his disciples, individuals, to buy a sword (ἀγορασάτω [agorasatō] μάχαιραν [machairan])? (Luke 22:36,38) The verb *agorasatō* is an imperative, a command. Furthermore, it is to be acted on immediately: the verb is in the aorist (Greek past) tense and active voice (the one receiving the command is to act). Together with

⁶⁴ Staff, “[Israel Kills Top Iranian Military Officials](#),” *Truth*, June 13, 2025. (Accessed 6/18/2025)

the imperative, the past tense powerfully denotes, informs us—and emphasizes—certainty that it will be done and quickly. Don't waste any time getting this done; it's that urgent. The command cannot be interpreted figuratively or symbolically.

- 2- However, when it comes to countries, we need to look to God's Word for guidance on how to engage such situations in the Bible's *corporate ethic*. Why do you think Jesus said that between now and when he returns in his second coming there will be wars and rumors of wars? (Matthew 24:6) This reality will exist in this phase of life until he returns in his second coming at God the Father's right time and when Christ Jesus will then conduct the final judgment. One of the purposes of government is "that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." (1 Timothy 2:2) Thus, God, whom the governing authorities serve—whether they know it or not (Romans 13:1-7)—has established government to protect us, and that protection sometimes must come militarily.
- 3) We must note, lament, and oppose the unwillingness of the Islamic nations to recognize non-Muslims as having equal rights to those of Muslims.⁶⁵ In order to survive, solely humanly speaking (since Israel is a secular state), Israel must demonstrate power to resist and defend itself. From a human perspective, Islamic nations are only deterred by the power of opposing force with superior weaponry and military expertise. What Israel needs to realize is that their power should only be directed, and appropriately so, toward other countries and their subsidiaries, e.g., Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, that want to destroy them, not to people within their borders with whom they need and want peace.
- 4) We must denounce in the strongest terms the terrorist activities, such as the bombing of buses and places where many people who are trying to live peaceably are horribly injured and killed, and other Arab injustices toward the Israelis that are well documented in the media and in the footnotes herein.

Such terrorist activity is also counterproductive to the cause of peace. The attempt is to externally control human behavior by force, which is unrealistic. Both sides need to understand this reality of human nature. God has built into us real and genuine but

⁶⁵ This Muslim belief is taught in their literature, including the Qur'an, that is authoritative to them. See the writings below by Bassam Madany in the Selected Sources for Further Reading section of this paper.

limited aspects of his image; we are made in the image of God.
(Genesis 1:26-30)

One of the aspects of his image, that he has in macrocosm and is unlimited, that he has given us in microcosm and is finite, is freedom, a true, real, and genuine, but limited, freedom, but which is negatively affected by our sinfulness. When we sense someone is trying to constrain, and even take away, our freedom that is so much a part of who we are, we tend to resist, and resist strongly and sometimes wrongly.

Human freedom can be restrained with external motivation through power (e.g., in prisons), but it is done with great effort at great cost, especially when done unjustly. One of the costs is loss of peace. It is much more effective to strive for internal motivation (as much as possible) to have peace; in order to do so, justice must be evident and prevail. Due to the presence of sin in everyone (Romans 3:23) and the evil in the spiritual warfare in which we are engaged (Ephesians 6:10-18; Revelation 12-20), complete peace will not occur in this age, but the above information will be much more effective at producing the peace that is possible.⁶⁶

- 5) As Christians committed to righteousness/justice (Micah 6:8 and Deuteronomy 16:20) we must speak out and say that while all the above injustices to the Arabs, and their continuance with no real attempts to fairly resolve them, are understandably enormously frustrating, that does not justify violence against the Jews and other Israelis. Furthermore, such violence is counterproductive and only results in retaliation that exacerbates and escalates the hostility.

While never justifying such terrorism and other belligerence, we must understand its roots which include, among other factors the following:

- a) the unjust UN expropriation of Arab land from those who've lived there for generations;
- b) bleak economic conditions as a result of repressive Israeli laws, policies, and practices;
- c) all combined with Islamic teachings that to kill unbelievers means bliss and reward in the next life. Such thoughts,

⁶⁶ For more on this subject, see [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions](#).

becoming dreams embedded in the fabric of their being, explain why there are sufficient candidates for suicide bombing.

d) Thus, our message to both Israel and the Palestinians must include the above observations for both sides.

1- For Israel we must affirm their need under present conditions to be ready with superior power but that that power should be only used defensively against other countries and their Islamic subsidiaries that want to destroy Israel, not against its own citizens and neighbors who want to live in peace with Israel. We should also urge Israel to remember and turn to the Messiah who already has come and is the only one who can bring true peace. (John 16:33) See also the following section.

2- For the Palestinians we need to emphasize the importance of not losing hope and do all we can to find just solutions, beginning with God's help. See the following section.

n. Much more could be said. The preceding is enough for now. Since the current state of Israel is a secular state, the justice implications of the Bible texts are as much and even more for us as Christians: Micah 6:8—contrasted with such current events as the preceding. God's Word is to his people for our action.⁶⁷

IV. What should we do?

A. Humphrey Walz concludes his article on the NCCC report with these words that all thoughtful and caring Christians, especially those progressing in the sanctification process, consider in such matters: “Don't just stand there; *do* something!’...What *can* we do? The American Ambassador to Jordan...challenged the churches to spread a knowledge and understanding of the facts...”⁶⁸ Walz concludes with a related quote from the report:

The deputation returns...with the conviction that the American people, and particularly the American churches, must be better informed about *all* the factors involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and their effect on the Middle East, and ultimately the entire world. The deplorable conditions of refugees, the deep chasm of bitterness between Arabs and the people of Israel

⁶⁷ See also *Time*, October 16, 2000, pp. 72-73.

⁶⁸ Humphrey Walz, “A Link with the Holy Land's Christians,” p. 5-6.

demand from Christians an understanding concern and a commitment to justice which are indispensable to the discovery of a permanent solution of the problems, and toward the achievement of a just peace in the Middle East.”⁶⁹

Therefore, when we have the opportunity to do so, we should speak up. Do not wait until you feel like an expert; tell people what you do know. Let your family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and others know these facts.

We can also do more. Here are some other steps we can take:

- B. Most importantly, pray for peace with a just resolution of the issues. Pray for the only sure and lasting hope for a just peace, the extension and nurture of God’s Kingdom throughout the whole world and in the Middle East in particular.
 - Pray for, and consider supporting, Salim Munayer in Bethlehem and the [Musalaha](#) (Arabic meaning reconciliation) Christian ministry that brings together people from Palestinian and Israeli backgrounds where they work together to learn the Way, Christ Jesus, to true and lasting peace. This is a helpful ministry for effective reconciliation.
- C. Read the Bible each day to know God’s will and develop the mind of Christ, and use well-established hermeneutical (interpretation) principles to understand the original intent of the authors (e.g., avoid generalizing from any one text and to take into account all the teachings of the Bible regarding any one subject). Urge others to do so as well.
- D. Always be encouraged and try, relying on God’s help, to uplift others with the assurance of God’s sovereignty, presence, and love. As Yohanna Katanacho concludes, “even if the tasks are huge and the political situation is gloomy we will continue to trust in the Lord, anticipating the resurrection of the church of the Arabs and the spread of the Kingdom of Christ in the Middle East. Only his kingship can bring true justice and impeccable peace.”⁷⁰
- E. Eliminate any anti-Jewish and anti-Arab sentiment in our hearts and minds. Speak the truth in love concerning both sides, (Ephesians 4:15) and keep in mind that God’s will and plan is to have in his kingdom representatives from “every nation, tribe, people and language.” (Revelation 7:9)
- F. Remember that Arabs and the rest of the world look at us in the United States as a Christian nation (since most nations are linked with a particular religion).

⁶⁹ Humphrey Walz, “A Link with the Holy Land’s Christians,” p. 6.

⁷⁰ Katanacho, “Christian Palestinian Arabs: Spreading Hope in the Middle East.”

Missionaries have told me that every time the U. S. sells another shipment of arms to Israel, their mission to the Arabs takes two giant steps backward.

G. Contact the appropriate government official in your country. Americans, contact your Representatives and Senators in Congress, the President, and any others who can help. In addition to any other requests you want to make, include these:

1. Our government should significantly reduce or discontinue all economic and military aid to Israel until the Israelis do the following:

a. Stop the settlements; no more unjust, illegal, and counterproductive building by either side on Arab land.

b. Adhere to U.N. Resolution 242, the Geneva Convention, the Camp David Accords, and other international agreements it has already made but not kept, as soon as the Palestinians commit to—and demonstrate with a track record—keeping their part of these agreements.

c. Fairly compensate the Palestinians for, or return to them, what has been taken from them.

d. Increase the government budget for just allocation of tax funds for all Arab communities, including in Jerusalem.

e. Preserve for the Palestinian refugees their right to return.

f. Grant the Palestinians in Israel full rights of citizenship.

g. Provide true religious freedom for everyone, including elimination of all persecution of Christians, including in Gaza, e.g., the sniper shooting of two women Christians when they stepped outside the Roman Catholic Church in which they were taking refuge during the post-October 7 war on Hamas. Quote Tucker Carlson’s policy recommendation:

1) “It would be pretty easy for Republicans in the U. S. Congress to say, ‘We support the government of Israel, but if you touch a single Christian, harm a single church, prevent any Christian from practicing his religion, you’re done. Not a single dollar will come from the U. S. Congress for you. That doesn’t seem hard.’”⁷¹

⁷¹ Tucker Carlson, *Tucker Carlson Uncensored*, 4/9/24. <https://www.bitchute.com/video/IfbckPcYebVQ/>. (Accessed 4/22/2024)

- 2) Apply this same principle to require Israel to correct the injustices to all Palestinians identified above in this paper. If they refuse to do so, stop U. S. aid.
 - h. Expand the boundaries of Jerusalem, dividing it so each nation can have its capital in its jurisdiction and so Palestinians can access their workplaces and not lose many days and sometimes weeks and months of work due to curfews.
 - i. Eliminate unjust curfews. Make any curfews that are necessary, due to terrorist attacks, as short as possible.
 - j. Pursue the peace process leading to the Israelis' recognition of statehood for the Palestinians.
2. Include also requests to use economic and other leverage to bear upon the Palestinian leadership to stop the terrorism.
3. Attach this paper or its [Weblink](#) in order to document your position.
- H. Avoid supporting well-meaning but ill-informed and mistaken Christian efforts to aid Zionist purposes, such as expropriating Arab land and properties and rebuilding the temple. Engage in conversations with those who do support these efforts, and inform them of the matters in this article, including Biblically and theologically inaccurate dispensationalism.

No longer be silent. “Speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15), remember and apply such texts as Leviticus 19:17, Romans 15:14, Galatians 6:1, Colossians 3:16, and admonish fellow believers who are doing what is contrary to God’s Word. The Bible is clear in these and many other passages; we must help one another to mature in the sanctification⁷² process—growing in Christlikeness—and avoid sharing in the guilt of those who are disobeying God. A Colorado Christian attorney and radio talk show host, Dan Caplis, made this point well one day on his radio program when he said, “What you tolerate, you endorse.”⁷³ This comment parallels an old saying, “Silence is tacit approval.”

- I. By Israeli law, tour groups must hire a state-approved guide. When planning a tour to Israel, or linking up with a tour group when you arrive, keep in mind that Jewish tour guides typically want to steer you away from the Palestinian

⁷² See [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—for Now and Eternity \(PowerPoint\)](#).

⁷³ Dan Caplis, “The Dan Caplis Show,” KCOL (AM 600), October 11, 2024.

Territory, e.g., one told me “It’s too dangerous.” I never found that to be so. For more than one reason, that is not likely for tour groups.

If you don’t go into Palestinian places, you won’t be able to see where some important Biblical events occurred, so ask for a non-Jewish tour guide, especially a Christian guide. As part of my work as Pastor of Education at Christ Church of Oak Brook, I led trips to the lands of the Bible and church history. I’ve had experience with tour guides who are Jewish, Muslim, and Christian; the Christian will offer you much more than the Jewish and Muslim tour guides.

In the Palestinian areas, be sure to ask to see, e.g., Shechem and Sychar, now Nablus, [the site of Jacob’s well](#) and the very place of Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman as told in John 4:1-42. Note v. 11, “the well is deep.” See in this video link all the rope needed to lower the bucket. The time it took water poured from a cup to reach the water in the well was four seconds! (Hear the splash.)

- J. Explain to others that it was an injustice to establish the current state of Israel, especially the way it was done. In the light of the above explanation, emphasize that there is no Biblical basis for the concept that the current state of Israel is any kind of fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. Consider carefully that such a misinformed contention can be a stumbling block for people, especially Middle Eastern people—who God also wants in his kingdom—to believe the Bible and its life-saving message about eternal salvation in Jesus Christ alone. (John 14:6) Especially after this amount of time, there may be a way to resolve the injustices and find one or more reasons for the existence of modern Israel, but Biblical prophecy cannot be one of them.

Selected Sources for Further Reading

Available in Christ Church Library and Bookstore (When Presentation First Offered⁷⁴)

1. O. T. Allis, [Prophecy and the Church](#)
2. John Gerstner, [Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Critique of Dispensationalism](#)
3. Anthony Hoekema, [The Bible and the Future](#) In particular, see Hoekema’s interpretation of Romans 11:26a, pp. 143-145.
4. _____, *The Christian and the Millennium* (booklet, 236 HOE in Christ Church Library)
5. Graham Keith, *Hated Without A Cause? A Survey of Anti-Semitism* (Carlisle, Cumbria, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 1997), pp. vii, 301. Reviewed by Rev. Bassam M. Madany, Calvin Theological Journal, Vol. 33, No. 2, November 1998

⁷⁴ Some of these resources have been added to accompany information added since this presentation was originally offered at Christ Church of Oak Brook.

6. Bassam Madany, [*The Bible and Islam*](#)
7. _____, [A Review Arabs in the Shadow of Israel 1 \(1\)](#)
8. _____, “The Hundred Year War: Israel and Its Neighbors,” *Christian Renewal*, August 17, 2024
9. Jack Nasser, “[Will You Remember Us? A Palestinian’s Plea to the Reformed Church](#),” *The Aquila Report*, June 23, 2025.
10. Edward Seely, “[Dispensationalists and Dispensational Premillennialism](#)” on the [Christian Theology](#) page of the free and secure Website, [From Acorn to Oak 12.com](#).
11. TheReligionofPeace.com, “[Is Islam Really a Religion of Peace? The Death Penalty in the Qur’an, the Hadith, and the Sira \(Excerpts from Articles by TheReligionofPeace.com.\)](#)”

For Use in a Presentation

1. Use a lecture/discussion format.
2. If possible, project this paper on a video screen as a note-taking guide in a lecture/discussion presentation.
 - a. If time does not permit lecturing the entire content herein, ask the attendees to access it online at one of the websites below, to read it prior to the class, especially the Bible passages, and come prepared to discuss it. The day of the presentation, begin by highlighting key points and other matters you want to emphasize, and then ask for discussion. Encourage those who plan to attend to also read the related links in the paper for further information and discussion.
 - b. The paper can be read and/or downloaded on either of my two websites at: <https://fromacorntooak12.com> (also a shorter URL, edwardseely.com) and <https://seelyedward.academia.edu>).