

Israel, Current Events, and Eschatology (Part II)

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Introduction: This morning, we looked at the biblical history concerning the nation of Israel. When we move through **the historical records** of the New Testament, the focus shifts from the nation of Israel to the church. **Prophetically in the N.T., the focus is on Israel!**

The time we are in now is referred to as a parenthetical period, where God has set aside Israel for a time. **God is not done with Israel.** We noted that **chapters 9-11** in the book of Romans deal with this subject.

In the previous lesson, God made certain promises to the nation of Israel through the covenants given to Abraham and David. These covenantal promises, as we noted, have not been fulfilled in totality. These **promises are reiterated by the prophets.** The Messianic Kingdom (the Millennial Kingdom is the expectation of the nation of Israel because of God's promises.)

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Acts 1:6-7 *“6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time **restore again the kingdom to Israel?** 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”*

This tells us two things, (1) **the kingdom of Israel at that moment was not what is was**, and (2) **there is an expectation for the kingdom of Israel to exist in the future.**

John Stott had this to say “The verb *restore* shows that they were expecting a political and territorial kingdom; the noun *Israel* that they were expecting a national kingdom; and the adverbial clause *at this time* that they were expecting its immediate establishment.”

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As we begin tonight, consider these verses that speak about **how important Israel is to God:**

Deuteronomy 7:6–8 “6 *For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.* 7 *The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:* 8 **But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.**”

Deuteronomy 11:12 “12 *A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.*”

Deuteronomy 32:9–10 “9 *For the Lord’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* 10 *He found him in a desert land, And in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, he instructed him, He kept him as the apple of his eye.*”

Psalms 121:4 “4 *Behold, he that keepeth Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep.*”

And likewise, **Zechariah 2:8** “*For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.*”

Jeremiah 31:35–37 “35 *Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, And the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, Which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name:* 36 **If those ordinances [listed above] depart from before me, saith the Lord, Then the seed of Israel also shall cease From being a nation before me for ever.** 37 *Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel For all that they have done, saith the Lord.” - In other words, it will not happen.*

Knowing that God is going to again use the nation of Israel, I would like to walk us through just a few dates concerning Israel and the land God gave her.

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What is Israel's History beyond the historical records of the Bible?

After **the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ**, the book of **Acts focuses on church history**. The book of Acts walks us through a transitional period. In the first part of the book, the church is **primarily Jewish (Acts 2-10)** and then eventually becomes **primarily Gentile**. During this time, the Bible describes persecution from the Jews toward Christians--- just as they persecuted Christ.

Saul-Paul is a primary example. Then what happens to Paul by the Jews further illustrates the point. But before the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, **Jesus had prophesied the destruction of the Temple** in Jerusalem in **Matthew 24:1-2**.

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Notice what the Bible tells us in **Matthew 24** "*1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*"

This chapter is commonly referred to as the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25, Mark 13 and Luke 21).

The event the Lord spoke about **at the beginning of Matthew 24** took place in **70 AD**.

As we look at these events realize that each one of these climatic events for the nation of Israel resulted in the dispersions of the Jews. I want to remind you of what I stated this morning, from the time of the Babylonian captivity moving forward, the nation of Israel **has never again held independent sovereignty as a nation until 1948**.

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Destruction of 70 AD

In **70 AD** the Roman General **Titus** ordered Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed. The final end of the 70 AD campaign would take place in **72-74 AD with the siege of Masada**.

(Slide-57) Masada

At Masada, the Jewish rebels had set all the buildings but the food storerooms ablaze and had killed each other, declaring "a glorious death ... preferable to a life of infamy".[15]

According to Josephus, "The Jews hoped that all of their nation beyond the Euphrates would join together with them to raise an insurrection", but in the end, there were only 960 Jewish Zealots who fought the Roman army at Masada. According to Josephus in his history record, 1.1 million were killed.¹ 70 AD is cited as a watershed moment for biblical interpretation because of the fulfillment of prophecy and the reference or should I say, non-reference to it in the New Testament. In other words, the fact that it is not mentioned and that the Temple is mentioned is an apologetic as to the dating of the NT books of the Bible.

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The next important date is in **AD 132-136**. This is referred to as **the Bar Kokhba Revolt**.

"Simon bar Kokhba was hailed as a messianic figure who could bring freedom to Jerusalem. Rome sent **six full legions** to destroy his movement. As a result of the Bar Kokhba Revolt, **all Jews were banned from the city of Jerusalem.**"

"The Roman writer Cassius Dio (who lived circa. A.D. 155 to A.D. 235) wrote that this last rebellion led to the desolation of the Jewish population. "Five hundred and eighty thousand men were slain in the various raids and battles, and the number of those that perished by famine, disease and fire was past finding out ... thus nearly the whole of Judaea was made desolate..."

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"After stamping out the province of Judea's second insurrection, the Romans renamed the province **Syria Palaestina**—that is, "Palestinian Syria." They did so resentfully, as a punishment, **to obliterate the link between the Jews** (in Hebrew, Y'hudim and in Latin Judaei) **and the province.**"

This name "Palestine" would stick and is greatly misunderstood in modern times. Between the dates of **138-200 AD** there is some reprieve from the

¹ <https://www.thetorah.com/article/why-did-vespasian-and-titus-destroy-jerusalem>

Roman Emperors.

It is at this time that **Judaism begins to really compile and modify Rabbinical Teachings.** (Mishnah and Midrash—etc...)

“In **222-235 AD**, Emperor Alexander Severus allowed for a revival of Jewish rights, **including permission to visit Jerusalem.**”²
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In **312 AD** following historically some intense **periods of persecution for Christians, Roman Emperor Constantine embraced “Christianity.”** In **315 AD**, the “Code of Constantine limits rights of non-Christians, is Constantine's first anti-Jewish act.”³

One Jewish encyclopedia noted, “In **329 AD** he issued laws prohibiting Jews to own Christian slaves, prohibited mixed marriages and punished by death conversion of Christians to Judaism.”⁴

“One of Constantine’s religious laws regarded attempts to stop Jews from converting to Christianity. It was noted that Judaism was **“an abominable sect”**”⁵

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“In the **4th century**, the Roman Empire split, and Palestine came under the control of the Byzantine Empire.” It was called such because of the moving of the Empire’s throne from Rome to Byzantium (modern day Istanbul).

“During the Byzantine period, Jewish life was centered in the holy land in a mostly rural society oriented around synagogues, which served as places of communal gathering, study, and prayer.”⁶ By this time **Jews existed in various parts of the world.**

Moving forward in time, following the Byzantine Empires is the **Early Muslim conquests.**

² JewishVirtualLibrary.com

³ Ibid.

⁴ <https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4620-constantine-i-flavius-valerius-aurelius-constantinus>

⁵ <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/jewish/jews-romanlaw.asp>

⁶ [https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2012/byzantium-and-islam/blog/.](https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2012/byzantium-and-islam/blog/)

According to the MET Museum, “When the Muslim armies reached Palestine, some Jews heralded the conquerors as harbingers of the Messiah, and the early Islamic world was generally more stable for Jews, even though as non-Muslims, they were placed in a socially inferior position.”

During the Islamic period, diaspora communities continued to grow, and Baghdad and Cairo, where most of the Jewish manuscripts in this exhibition were produced, became very important centers of Jewish life. Trade was an important occupation for Jews in these urban centers. Arabic replaced Greek and Aramaic as the spoken language of these Jewish communities, but Hebrew was still used for prayers and for the study of ancient texts.”

In 1099 still moving forward, you have the Crusaders who invade Jerusalem as I understand it are under early Catholicism--- Western Roman Empire.

From there, the area was controlled by the **Mameluke Empire (Egyptian Rule - A slave-based Muslim militant system)** from **1260 AD to 1516 AD.**

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At this point, I would like to quote from a couple of authors summarizing the history leading up to our current times:

“In the ensuing years, Palestine came under the rule and influence of a succession of different powers. There was the Byzantine period followed by the early Muslim period. Then the Crusaders began to infiltrate the land. The Mameluke Empire, a slave-based Muslim militant system, defeated the Crusaders and ruled until they were conquered by the Ottoman Empire (Turkish). An interesting sidelight of the Ottomans is their attempt to overrule biblical prophecy. Understanding that the Jewish Messiah was expected to come through the Eastern Gate of Jerusalem, they purposefully discouraged the Jews by encasing the Eastern Gate with concrete and defiling the entrance with a graveyard just outside the gate. For almost 1900 years, Palestine was occupied by Muslim tribes and Islamic faiths. For God to bring His people back to the land He promised to them, it had to be freed from Muslim control. **History shows that World War I accomplished this.**” Dr. Paul Chappell *Understanding the Times*

William Grady, in his in-depth historical volumes on Israel, stated this, “The first official usage of “Palestine” began with the Romans in the bloody wake

of the Bar Kokhba revolt in AD 135. Intent on removing all traces of Judaism, Emperor Hadrian named "Judaea" (the main Jewish principality) "Palestina." He also changed "Jerusalem" to "Aelia Capitolina," while banning circumcision, the Sabbath, the Law, even Judaism itself. Ironically, in view of the new appellation, Jews who fled these repressive measures became the first true "Palestinian" refugees."

He goes on to state, "At this point, the reader is reminded that this material represents the most complex historical subject in history. Not only is the area of focus situated on the other side of the world, but the period is both ancient and protracted." (He states it covers a 3500-year span.)

"Involving the religious, political, and cultural mores of Jews, Arabs and Christians, among others....Also, as stated before, getting to the truth is further hampered by decades of lies and disinformation..." and he implicates many sources of lies and finishes that statement by saying, "**not to mention Satan's interest in keeping the waters muddied.** (1 Corinthians 14:33)"

"To summarize:

1. There has never been a tangible, structural, or political entity known as the Palestinian "anything" within the borders of present-day Israel.
Note: What is known as the Palestinian Authority is a recent invention formed in 1994.
2. The area has been ruled by successive ebb-and-flow waves of foreign powers centered in Rome, Constantinople, Mecca, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, and Istanbul. Apart from the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem (AD 1099- 1291), the fleeting Mongol invasions of Genghis Khan that hastened its demise and the brief Napoleonic reign of 1799. "The only Arab domination since the conquest in 635 AD hardly lasted, as such 22 years..."
3. There is no such race as a "Palestinian race," the word being a politically correct misnomer. Those who identify as Palestinians are normally "Arab," but never "Palestinian."

The actual historic residents of "Palestine" have comprised of Arabs, Greeks, Franks, Turks, Germans, Syrians, Hungarians, Scots, Kurds, Circassians, Egyptians, Bretons, Algerians, Indians, Georgians, Bulgarians, Persians, Russians, Danes, Bosnians, Latins, Motawila, Tartars, Sudanese, Jews, and a few Americans as well; the oldest inhabitants being identified in Scripture as Canaanites, Amalekites, Jebusites, Ammorites, Moabite, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, Edomites, and of course, the Philistines." William Grady

On Holy Ground The True History of the State of Israel.

“In 1911, there was no less than 50 spoken languages in Palestine...” In 1931, the census listed 60..

The other thing we want to point out as well is although these various other nations and empires have borne rule over this area of land, the dispersions commonly referred to as diasporas did not expel all of the Jews. An indigenous Jewish remnant maintained an unbroken presence in the land, and this vestige was periodically reinforced by waves of Jewish immigrants, usually fleeing persecution elsewhere.

Evidence of this fact is from the Palestine Royal Commission Report **(presented to the British Parliament in 1937)**.

“Always, or almost always, since the fall of the Jewish State, some Jews have been living in Palestine. Under Arab rule, there were substantial Jewish communities in the chief towns. In the period of the Crusades and again in Mongol invasions, they were nearly but not entirely blotted out. Under Ottoman rule, they slowly recovered. Fresh immigrants arrived from time to time, from Spain in the sixteenth century from Eastern Europe in the seventeenth. They settled mainly in Galilee, in numerous villages spreading northwards to Lebanon and in the towns of Safad and Tiberias... There was no schism between the Jews in Galilee and Moslem and Christian peasants amongst whom they lived... they were equally exposed to raids of marauding tribesmen... These inroads multiplied as public security deteriorated. Galilee steadily declined. A hundred years ago, there were only some 4000 Jews in Safad and some 3000 in Tiberias... But small though their numbers were, the continued existence of those Jews in Palestine meant much to all Jewry. Multitudes of poor and ignorant Jews in ghettos of Eastern Europe felt themselves represented, as it were, by this remnant of their race who were keeping a foothold in the land against the day of the coming Messiah.”

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Why is there such unrest today?

To answer that question, we can look **at the recent history** of this land God has promised to Israel. The story begins at the end of WWI and leads to the recognition of Israel's statehood. At the end of the day, whether folks chalk all of this up to politics, nations and kings, land disputes, or even ideological differences, the fact is **that the enemy of God and of man is behind the unrest.**

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At the **end of WWI, the Ottoman Empire** was on the losing side. The Ottoman Empire, which was a Turkish Empire, was comprised of all of the Arab nations as we would see them today. The Arab people were either part of or sided with the Ottoman Empire. Because of this, they were on the losing side. Of course, WWI is called the war to end all wars because of its scope and magnitude. At the end of the war, there **was a dissolution of the Ottoman Empire**. This is important because the land of Israel was part of the Ottoman Empire. At that time, the term Palestine was not precisely defined. We noted its origin to Roman times... the terms Eastern and Western Palestine were assumed by the split of the Jordan.

The winners of WWI, primarily America, Britain, and France, over the course of a couple of years held meetings to determine what was to be done with the lands that were conquered... one might say the spoils of wars. **The world was redrawn at this point.**

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Just before this time, a man by the name of Theodore Herzl had laid the groundwork for the establishment of a Jewish State.

In 1897 the first Zionist Congress took place, which was an organization of Jews who sought diplomatic support for a Jewish Country. A little-known fact is that Herzl in 1903, proposed the Jewish Homeland to be in Uganda (see the Sixth Zionist Congress 1903), which was met with resistance from both Jews and the British.

We do not have time to get to the backstory of how all of that took place. But suffice it to say if you look up Edmond James Rothschild, Lord Balfour (of the British Parliament), Sir Edmund Allenby, and David Ben-Gurion (Israel's first prime minister), you can read all about it.

Let's go back to the end of WWI.

At the conclusion of the war, in a series of political meetings from 1918 – 1922, a decision was made to give **an Arab state** and **a Jewish state** in what you and I would term the Middle East. According to Dr. Craig Hartman of Shalom Ministries, a Jewish New York attorney, "The Jewish people were supposed to get every inch of what is now Jordan and every inch of what is now Israel." — this is how he reads the Balfour Declaration.

(Slide-66) (See Map British Mandate)

The area was to be called Palestine. We associate the term Palestine with

non-Jews, so it is of course, very ironic that that name is chosen. In **1922** because of uprisings and difficulties, the British, who had control of this area, chopped off what they would call Trans-Jordan for the Arab people.

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(See 1922 British mandate splitting off Trans-Jordan)

“What Israel possesses now if you include the West Bank, Gaza, and the “disputed” territories is pretty much what **we find in the 1922 split.**” (Dr. Hartman) According to Dr. Hartman, “In **1922, Israel lost 22%** of what they were supposed to have.”

Between **1922 and 1948** there were many proposals floated by different commissions attempting to politically settle the issues between the Arab states and what would be recognized as national Israel.

“Several proposals for partition were offered, and each time, it was “the Jews” who said yes and the Arabs who said no. This was the proposal by the 1937 Peel Commission, accepted by the Jews and rejected by the Arabs:”

This brings us to WWII, along with it, the holocaust. Because the holocaust was so extreme, “the world” community was finally willing to designate the **homeland for Israel**. (Even though, as you will remember, that was “in the plans” since WWI.) At the end of **WWII (1939-1945) in 1945** you have the constitution of **the United Nations**. In 1946, you have the dissolution of the League of Nations, who basically transitioned everything over to the UN.

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1947 United Nations Partition Plan

1948 Declaration of Israel’s Statehood

Immediately after this declaration, the Arab nations invaded Israel. “The Arabian nations promised to “drench the soil with Jewish blood” if this recognition were to be acknowledged by the world. The day after recognition, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq invaded Israel with all their fury.” There was another war in **1956 dealing with Egypt**. Known as the Suez Crisis.

1967 The Six-Day War

Once again, Israel was attacked by the Arab nations around her in what is called the Arab-Israeli war. (All of the Arab nations attacked Israel - who is involved? Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq).

During the early years after the acknowledgment of Israel's statehood, Arab people within the borders had a choice whether or not to become citizens of Israel. Those who chose to assimilate with Israel became citizens of Israel. Today if you were to look at the figures, there are about 2 Million- Arabs - 7 Million Jews. The ones who did not accept citizenship thought they were going to be saved by the Arab nations around. They were never repatriated by those countries. Those **who declined are a people without a nation**. Most were from Jordan. Like the story in Judges with Gideon, some thought Israel would be conquered by these surrounding Arab nations.

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The "Palestinians" today are these displaced people. (The number has grown from several hundred to 2 million.) There is **no ethnic connection** between the Philistines of the Old Testament and Palestinians today. The **Philistines** (mentioned in the OT) were **an Aegean people**. What we really see is a whittling away of the land from its first design to its present state. Really the issue when you look at the history is that the Arab Nations do not just want some piece of land; they **want Israel gone**. From a biblical perspective, what must be surely understood is that behind all of this is Satan's war against God. At the end of the day, God gave Abraham and His posterity the land in question through the promised line of Isaac and then Jacob --- who is Israel.

What does this mean prophetically?

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Israel had to be regathered because of God's promises.

- a. The prophets spoke of Israel's regathering. (**Isaiah 11:11, 27:12-13, 49:8-16; Jeremiah 16:14-16, 23:3-8; Ezekiel 11:17-21, 20:33-38, 36:10, 36:24, 37; Hosea 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:4-7; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Zechariah 8:4-8**)
- b. There will be a future spiritual awakening of the nation of Israel. (**Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:25-27**)

- c. The land was promised to be fully possessed and in peace. (**Ezekiel 37:26**)
- d. The peace covenant made by the Antichrist is with **a sovereign Israel**. (**Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15**)
- e. The defilement of the Temple and the Antichrist's declaration as god presupposes the reconstitution of Israel and the rebuilding of the temple. (**Daniel 9:27, 12:11**)

Ezekiel 38 speaks to a powerful coalition of nations that will assault Israel in the latter days. This assumes the regathering of Israel in her land. This is referred to as the battle of Gog and Magog and the key participants are given:

Rosh - which is the region of Russia.
Meshech - is Western Russian.
Tubal - is Siberia.
Persia - Iraq and Iran.
Ethiopia and Lybia.
Gomer - region surrounding Germany.
Togarmah - Turkey

Zechariah 14 speaks about the Lord's return and the fact that He will defend Israel in that day.