

ISRAEL, THE JEWISH PEOPLE, AND JESUS

Beloved for the Sake of the Fathers

Abraham Isaac Jacob
Boaz and Ruth
Judah and Tamar

PEREZ
HEZRON
RAM
AMMINADAB
NAHSION

OBED
JESSE

David

and Bathsheba

Solomon

Salmon

and Rahab

REHOBOAM
ABIJAH
ASA
JEHOSHAPHAT
JEHORAM
UZZIAH
JOTHAM
AHAZA

AMON
JOSIAH

JECONIAH
SHEALTIEL
ZERUBBABEL
ABIUD
ELIAKIM
AZOR
ZADOK

ACHIM
ELIUD
ELEAZAR
MATTHAN
JACOB

Ezekiah

MANASSEH

Joseph

Jesus

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Israel, the Jewish People, and Jesus

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CHAPTER 1:

THE PROMISES OF GOD TO OUR FOREFATHERS

Does the Existence of Israel Prove That God Exists?

The question of the existence of God is taken for granted by so many in one way or another. Some believe God exists, and others presume He does not! But what is the basis for believing whether God exists or not? It is our hope that, in reading this booklet, you will find reasons for faith in God's existence. It is our premise that the nation of Israel and the Jewish people demonstrate that God is real—that He exists, and that history actually tells His story!

Who are the Jewish people and what is Israel? Are we referring to a group of people deemed the “chosen people” living in the promised Holy Land, or a religious faith, ethnic group, and modern Middle Eastern nation? Perhaps the Jewish people and nation of Israel are all these at the same time. But, most importantly, we want to know what relationship God has, or wants to have, with the Jewish people.

To answer these questions, we must turn to the Bible and explore what the Scriptures tell us about Israel and the Jewish people. It is only when we view Israel through the lens of Scripture that we can begin to understand God's purposes and plans for the chosen people and the Holy Land of promise.

We invite you to consider the possibility of God's presence in history, specifically through the history of the Jewish people, and then to draw your own conclusions about God, the role of the Jewish people, and more critically, to discover your personal relationship with the God who made the heavens and the earth. You will never be sorry that you set out on this journey of faith and spiritual exploration.

God and History

In the 1930s, the great and venerable historian, Arnold Toynbee, maintained that the Jewish people did not fit any definition of nation, race, or religion. According to Toynbee, Jewish people are not a nation in the usual sense of the word because they have lived in dispersion for centuries without a land. Neither could they be considered a race because they are composed of members of many races. Additionally, he argued, they do not constitute a religion because some do not believe in God.

However, given their continued existence over 3,000 years (or more than 5,000 according to Jewish tradition), Toynbee classified the Jewish people as “fossils” of history, unaccountable, irrelevant, yet somehow still present.¹ Toynbee's characterization may seem unfair to you, but his assessment does highlight the mysterious nature of the Jewish people's continued existence.

Like Toynbee, Mark Twain also sensed the enigmatic nature of the Jewish people when he wrote:

If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. . . . Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. . . . His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also very out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in the world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. . . . The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone. . . . The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was. . . . All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?²

Twain was an agnostic and a skeptic. Although he recognized the seemingly miraculous preservation and influence of the Jewish people, he could not answer his own question. He had no explanation for the “the secret of [the Jew's] immortality.” Is it because the answer is related to God and His Word? That is the question we should consider. What other possibilities could there be to explain how a nation that suffered so much was brought to the point of annihilation, lost their land and language, and yet today continues to exist as an influential culture, religion, and modern democratic state?

1 Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), 135-139.

2 Mark Twain, “Concerning the Jews,” in *The Complete Essays of Mark Twain. For the First Time in One Volume, All the Famous Essays of One of America's Most Renowned Authors.*, ed. Charles Neider (Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963), 249-250.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the Jewish people, we must turn to the Bible and examine the sacred Scriptures themselves.

The Bible and the Preservation of the Jewish People

Does the preservation of the Jewish people give evidence of the truth of Scripture? You decide!

According to the Bible, God made a covenant with Abram (later called Abraham) that was restated many times in the book of Genesis in which God promised that Abram would be the father of a nation, receive the deed to the Land (detailed in Genesis 15), and was told that God's promise would continue through his sons.

In fact, the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were described as eternal!

God said to Abraham,

*“I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for **an everlasting covenant**, to be God to you and to your descendants after you”* (Genesis 17:7).

This passage emphasizes the *everlasting* nature of this covenant, marking the Jewish people as forever related to the God who chose them as His special people. The everlasting God makes an everlasting covenant with His everlasting people. This central concept—the guarantee that God would keep faith with and preserve the descendants of the patriarchs and matriarchs of Israel—is a cornerstone of biblical history.

The great prophet Jeremiah also guaranteed the preservation of the Jewish people. This promise was especially significant because Jeremiah predicted God's judgment of Israel through the Babylonians (Jer 25:8-14), yet He assured Israel that her defeat would not bring about her total destruction.

“‘For I am with you,’ declares the Lord, ‘to save you; for I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you, only I will not destroy you completely. But I will chasten you justly and will by no means leave you unpunished’” (Jer 30:11).

Even though God disciplines Israel for disobedience to the Torah, He also assures the nation of a glorious future!

Through Jeremiah, God promised Israel a New Covenant, which will also last forever (Jer 31:31-34), whereby sins will be forgiven and He would write His Torah upon the hearts of the Jewish people. In other words, the day would come when the Jewish people, as a whole, would again be rightly related to the God who chose them for His holy purposes. The apostle Paul made it clear that a remnant of Jewish people would come to faith in the Jewish Messiah Jesus, and that, one day, that remnant would actually be inclusive of the entire nation!

“In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice” (Romans 11:5).

Paul further wrote:

“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own

estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:25–26).

Again, the Lord promised Israel that she will never be destroyed:

Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the Lord of hosts is His name: “If this fixed order departs from before Me,” declares the Lord, “then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever.” Thus says the Lord, “If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done,” declares the Lord. (Jer 31:35–37)

These verses demonstrate the eternal nature of God’s covenant with the Jewish people in two ways. First, God assured Israel’s preservation by comparing their existence to that of the fixed “heavenly” order of nature. Just as God ordained the sun, moon, and stars, as well as the ocean waves, so He established the permanence of Israel. Only if this natural order can be destroyed, *“then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever” (Jer 31:36).*

The second refers to the measuring of the heavens and searching the foundations of the earth—both impossibilities. If these impossible conditions occur, only then will God

“cast off all the offspring of Israel” (Jer 31:37). In other words, it is as unthinkable that the Jewish people will cease to exist as it is impossible for someone to stop the sun, moon, and stars from shining or measure the heavens or explore the core of the earth.

These vivid images only serve to reemphasize God’s promise of the preservation of His people.

Historical Efforts to Destroy the Jewish People

How, then, do we understand the facts of history in the repeated, intentional, and determined efforts of many nations who attempted to destroy the Jewish people? In fact, their efforts make the preservation of the Jewish people even more remarkable and a more powerful validation of the authenticity of Scripture.

Pharaoh murdered Israelite male babies (Exodus 1:15–16), Balak attempted to curse the Jewish people through Balaam (Numbers 22:4–8), and Haman formulated plans for the genocide of all the Jewish people in the known world (Esther 3:8–10). After the return from exile (539 BCE), the Jewish people experienced two horrific defeats at the hands of the Romans (70 CE and 135 CE) in which nearly two million Jewish residents in Israel died.³

From the Middle Ages to the modern period, the Jewish people endured murder and mistreatment at the hands of

³ These dates comprise the First Jewish-Roman War and the Bar Kochba Revolt. The casualty report for the First Jewish-Roman War was documented by Josephus. See William Whiston, trans., *Josephus: Complete Works*, Illustrated. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1960), 587–588. The figure from the Bar Kochba Revolt was reported by Cassius Dio. See Frank McLynn, *Marcus Aurelius: A Life* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2009), 35.

crusaders, Cossacks, and others. They suffered *pogroms*, persecution, and ultimately, the Holocaust, when Adolf Hitler attempted to destroy all Jewry. Yet, despite the horrific murder of the six million Jewish individuals and all that went before, the Jewish people continue to exist and even thrive today as a nation.

Former Israeli prime minister, Menachem Begin, made a similar point, speaking at the Western Wall in Jerusalem as part of the closing ceremonies of the first World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors on June 18, 1981. Specifically addressing the question of faith in God in light of the Holocaust, Begin reminded his audience how close Hitler and Nazi Germany came to winning the Second World War. Had Hitler been successful, it would have meant the murder of not only six million European Jewish people but could likely have led to the murder of virtually all Jewish people living around the globe.⁴

Though the heartbreaking question of why God allowed the Holocaust to take place still looms large in our hearts and in modern Jewish life, Begin nonetheless passionately begged his audience of Holocaust survivors to believe in the faithfulness of God.

A Conclusion Based upon the Evidence

In conclusion, history has shown that despite persecution, pogroms, and genocide, the Jewish people continue.

4 Michael Rydelnik, "The Jewish People: Evidence for the Truth of Scripture," in *The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel: Israel and the Jewish People in the Plan of God*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2014), 258.

If the Bible is found true in predicting the regathering of the Jewish people once scattered throughout the world, and if the Jewish prophets were correct in envisioning the restoration of Israel as a modern Jewish nation, then what does that say to you and me? It means we can trust the Bible and believe what it says about life, the future, and even about the Messiah. If the Bible was right about Israel, then we should take what it says about all topics more seriously.

You may admit that the remarkable, continuing existence of the Jewish people, the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel, and the creation of a modern Jewish homeland suggest that the promises and prophecies of the Bible are no mere coincidence.

Why Does This Matter to Me?

But why does it matter and what impact should this have on our lives?

To understand this, we must explore one final piece of the puzzle that remains, without which the rest of the puzzle simply does not give us the full picture.

God's preservation of the Jewish people and restoration to the Land validate the claims of Scripture. These signs cause us to trust the Bible, and this is critical as the Scriptures also predicted the coming of the long-awaited Messiah. The Bible makes it clear that this individual would be God's instrument of transformation for the entire world . . . and this Messiah would be a child of the chosen people. If the Jewish people were destroyed then the Messiah could not possibly have been born as promised, as His person and work are validated by fulfilling the prophetic Scriptures.

This same Hebrew Bible that so credibly underwrites the preservation of the Jewish people and their return to the Promised Land also vouches for the appearance of a Messiah whose resumé suspiciously resembles that of the Messiah of the New Testament.

So, who is He?

We believe He is the mighty redeemer and healer of the world Jewish tradition esteems Him to be and more! He is also the one whose obedient life and voluntary sacrifice purchases our forgiveness and reconciliation with God forever.

Isaiah 53 is a classic chapter portraying the life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah. He would be despised by many (Isaiah 53:3), He would give His life for us and take our sins upon Himself (Isaiah 53:7), He would suffer (Isaiah 53:10) and be resurrected (Isaiah 53:10-12). Many Jewish people, when reading Isaiah 53 for the first time, have thought that these words must be from the New Testament, since they paint such a clear portrait of Jesus of Nazareth. It is astonishing that these verses are, in fact, from the Hebrew Bible. They were written by Isaiah more than 700 years before Jesus was born!

Read this powerful prophecy for yourself. Perhaps you will see, as so many Jewish and Gentile men and women have recognized, as the prophet describes a dimension of life and human experience that draws us to connect with a God who has at times seemed distant and inaccessible. Through this Messiah who came to suffer and die, God comes near to His creation as it is stated in the Gospel of John:

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Messiah is the missing piece of the puzzle that completes the picture of God’s promises. In a sense, the Messiah also brings all the threads together—the survival of the Jewish people, the return to our Land and heritage, and redemption, personally and nationally, through the Messiah. God had to keep His promises to His chosen people if He was to keep His promises to the world.

All you must do is say yes to your part. As Jews and Gentiles have done throughout the centuries, acknowledge your need for forgiveness, be reconciled to God through faith in Yeshua, and begin a new life guided by God’s Word and the power of His Spirit. And if you already have made this decision—then remember to pray for the Jewish people and the peace of Jerusalem and to continue pondering the depth of God’s love for you and for His chosen people. Again, if He was not faithful to Israel and loved the Jewish people despite their rebellion, then how could we possibly be sure of His love and faithfulness to us who know Yeshua as our Messiah? God is always the same and never changes. He always keeps His promises!

CHAPTER 2:

THE JEWISH PEOPLE TODAY

WHO ARE THE JEWISH PEOPLE?

Where are the Jewish People?

According to the PEW Forum: “Jews were largely concentrated in North America (44%) and the Middle East-North Africa region (41%) in 2010. Most of the remainder of the global Jewish population was found in Europe (10%) and the Latin America-Caribbean region (3%).”⁵

- **Israel**—6,103,200
- **United States**—5,700,000
- **France**—475,000
- **Canada**—385,300
- **Latin America**—383,500
- **Britain**—290,000
- **Russia**—186,000
- **Germany**—118,000
- **Australia**—112,500
- **Africa**—74,700
- **South Africa**—70,000
- **Ukraine**—63,000
- **Hungary**—47,900
- **Iran**—20,000
- **Asia**—19,700
- **Romania**—9,400
- **New Zealand**—7,600
- **Morocco**—2,400⁶

From the PEW Forum: “As of 2010, there were nearly 14 million Jews around the world. In 2050, the Jewish

5 “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050: Jews,” *Pew Research Center*, last modified April 2, 2015, accessed September 27, 2021, <https://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/jews/>.

6 Itamar Eichner, “Jewish Worldwide Population in 2015 Is Nearly 16 Million,” *Ynetnews*, June 26, 2015, accessed September 27, 2021, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4673018,00.html>.

population is expected to number about 16 million. The share of the world's population that is Jewish—0.2%—is expected to remain about the same in 2050 as it was in 2010.”⁷

What Is a Messianic Congregation?

Messianic congregations are faith communities that stress the Jewish context of the gospel of Jesus the Messiah. Messianic congregations often employ Jewish forms of worship, use Hebrew in their liturgy, and stress the connection of Messiah to the Hebrew Scriptures. By enlisting as many of the features of the synagogue as are consistent with the Messiah's teaching, Messianic congregations provide a familiar environment for Jewish believers and seekers, many of whom are intimidated, confused, or simply uncomfortable among the trappings of Christian churches.

Messianic Jewish families often turn to Messianic congregations because they help children understand what it means to be a Jewish believer in the Messiah, and help kids feel linked to a faith community larger than their immediate family. It would be easy for Jewish children to become disconnected from their Jewish heritage in a Christian church. Similarly, many interfaith couples find that a Messianic congregation is the most comfortable home for both spouses, especially when it comes time to raise children.

Messianic congregations also emphasize the celebration of the Jewish festivals, which often become an event for members of the wider Jewish community who do not know the Messiah. These outreaches allow Jewish believers to talk with their fellow Jews and answer their questions about how a person can believe in Messiah Jesus and still be Jewish. Connection with Jewish life through their Messianic congregations often eases such concerns.

7 “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050: Jews.” As noted elsewhere in this work, the Jewish population was nearing this prediction in 2015.

CHAPTER 3:

ISRAEL TODAY

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL

Israel Facts and Figures ⁸

For the last 3,000 years, there has been a continual Jewish presence in the Land, with some brief exceptions when invading empires kicked out the Jewish people.

The exodus from Egypt (c. 1300 BCE) left an indelible imprint on the national memory of the Jewish people and became a universal symbol of liberty and freedom. Every year, Jews celebrate Passover (*Pesach*), Pentecost (*Shavuot*), and Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), commemorating events of that time.

Since the time of Abraham, the Jewish community has always considered Israel its homeland.

Since the time of David, the Jewish people have considered Jerusalem their capital. No other people or nation has considered Jerusalem their capital.

The Bible mentions Jerusalem, and related terms, more than 800 times. By contrast, the Koran does not mention Jerusalem even once.

⁸ "HISTORY: The State of Israel," accessed September 27, 2021, <https://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/history/pages/history-%20the%20state%20of%20israel.aspx>.

When large waves of Jewish immigrants arrived in the Land during the late 1800s, the Land was sparsely populated. These immigrants did not displace millions of Arab residents. The total population living in the Land was approximately 300,000. Although the Jewish community was a small minority, they typically settled in areas their Arab neighbors considered uninhabitable.

Two of the people who had led Israel to statehood became the country's leaders: David Ben-Gurion, head of the Jewish Agency, was chosen as the first prime minister; and Chaim Weizmann, head of the World Zionist Organization, was elected by the Knesset as the first president. On May 11, 1949, Israel took its seat as the fifty-ninth member of the United Nations.

In accordance with the concept of the "ingathering of the exiles" which lies at the heart of Israel's *raison d'être*, the gates of the country were thrown open, affirming the right of every Jewish person to come to the country and, upon entry, to acquire citizenship. In the first four months of independence, some 50,000 newcomers, including many Holocaust survivors, reached Israel's shores. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by the end of 1951, a total of 687,000 men, women, and children had arrived, more than 300,000 of them refugees from Arab lands, thus doubling the Jewish population.

The new Jewish immigrants began cultivating the Land, transforming it from a wasteland to a fertile haven. As a result, Arab immigration into the Land increased as well.

In 1947, the United Nations presented a partition plan to create two separate states in the Land. Despite

significant difficulties with the plan, the Jewish leadership accepted the United Nations resolution, the Arab governments rejected it.

Approximately 20 percent of Israel's 8,200,000 citizens are Arab. Israel's Arab citizens enjoy full rights, including places in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament.

There have been approximately 100,000,000 refugees of all nationalities since the end of World War II, but the Palestinians are the only refugee group that has not been absorbed and integrated into a new land.

While Israel has 1.6 million Arab citizens, 850,000 Jews were forced to flee the surrounding Arab countries, due to pogroms and persecution following the establishment of Israel in 1948. Today, only 26,000 Jewish people live in Arab countries.

Israel is the only functioning democracy in the Middle East.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Charter and the Hamas Covenant continues to call for the obliteration and dissolution of Israel.

Since 2001, thousands of rockets have been fired from Palestinian territory into Israel. As a result of these attacks, 50 people have been killed and 1,900 people injured.

There is one Jewish state in the world, but there are sixty Muslim states, including twenty-two Arab countries.

In 2000, Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered to demolish dozens of settlements and give the Palestinians about

97 percent of the disputed territory, but the Palestinians still would not negotiate to end the conflict. In August 2005, Israel forcibly removed their own citizens from the settlements in the Gaza Strip and in Northern Samaria, but Palestinians continued the terrorist attacks.

In 2008, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's offer to withdraw from 94 percent of the West Bank was rejected.

A Quick Timeline Recounting the Formation of the Modern State of Israel⁹

1863 The relative Jewish majority in Jerusalem is renewed

1897 The First Zionist Congress in Basel under the aegis of Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl

1901 The establishment of the Jewish National Fund—an organization for purchasing land for Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel

May 16, 1916 The Sykes-Picot Agreement between France and Britain, which delineated the two powers' Middle Eastern areas of rule in the Ottoman Empire once the First World War had ended

November 2, 1917 The Balfour Declaration—a document signed by British foreign minister Lord Arthur James Balfour, which espouses a national home for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel

January 3, 1919 The Faisal-Weizmann agreement between Chaim Weizmann and Emir Faisal—an agreement that envisaged the relations between the Arabs in the Arab state to be established and the Jews in the Land of Israel

April 25, 1920 The San Remo Agreement gave Britain rule over the Land of Israel after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and ratified the creation of the national home for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel under the aegis of the British power

May 1-7, 1921 Arab riots in Jaffa, Petah Tikva, Rehovot, Hadera, and elsewhere, in which 43 people were killed. The riots were spurred by the Arab national awakening and the demand to annul the Balfour Declaration

July 24, 1922 The removal of Transjordan from the Jewish national home and its transformation into the Emirate of Transjordan (in the future, the Kingdom of Jordan) in the framework of the publication of the first British White Paper

July 7, 1937 The Peel Commission—the partition resolution is accepted by the British administration, Ben-Gurion, and the Zionist institutions, and is rejected by the Arabs

November 29, 1947 to July 20, 1949 The War of Independence; from May 15 to June 11—the regular Arab armies' invasion of the Land of Israel. 6,000 Jews were killed during the war.

⁹ "Timeline of Main Events in The History of Israel," *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, accessed September 27, 2021, <https://jcpa.org/article/timeline/>.

May 14, 1948 Declaration of statehood by David Ben-Gurion, chairman of the Jewish Agency, before the Provisional State Council.

Jewish and Christian Zionists—an Enduring Partnership

The relationship between Jewish and Christian Zionists predates even the First Zionist Congress held in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. It was given a tremendous boost by the unlikely friendship between Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) and William Hechler (1845–1931), chaplain to the British Embassy in Vienna and author of *The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine According to Prophecy* (1882). Hechler, a devout Christian, was born in India, the son of a missionary. A member of the Church of England, he was also a member of the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Among the Jews. Hechler’s relationships with influential politicians were extensive.

In March, 1896, convinced that his unique network of contacts had groomed him for just such a moment, Hechler paid Herzl a visit and placed himself and what contacts he could access at the disposal of the somewhat astounded Zionist leader. Hechler became an active emissary on Herzl’s behalf. In the brief time that they knew each other, owing to Herzl’s early death, Hechler and Herzl developed a genuine friendship. Not only did Herzl extend Hechler the courtesy of allowing him to address the Zionist Congress, but apart from family members, Hechler was the last person to visit Herzl at his deathbed.

In the United States, the formation of the Zionist Organization in 1897 was followed closely by the creation

of the Federation of American Zionists (renamed the Zionist Organization of America in 1917). The Zionist cause gained much-needed additional influence in America as a political force largely through the efforts of William Blackstone (1841–1935), an energetic missionary who, in the 1880s, had helped to establish Chicago’s Moody Bible Institute and was founder and president of the Chicago Hebrew Mission. He was also known as the first administrative dean of Biola University in southern California. Blackstone was known as the creator of two widely circulated petitions, known as memorials, in support of a Jewish homeland in what was then known as Palestine. The first, in 1891, had been presented to President Benjamin Harrison, and the second, in 1916, reached the desk of President Woodrow Wilson.

In a letter penned May 8, 1916, by the widely respected philanthropist Nathan Straus, founder of the R.H. Macy department store, Straus forwarded the profuse thanks of Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, one of the most important leaders in the Zionist movement in America. Praising Blackstone in glowing words, the letter said,

Mr. Brandeis is perfectly infatuated with the work you have done along the lines of Zionism. It would have done your heart good to have heard him assert what a valuable contribution to the cause your document is. In fact, he agrees with me that you are the Father of Zionism, as your work antedates Herzl.¹⁰

10 Michael Medved, *God’s Hand on America: Divine Providence in the Modern Era* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2019), 118.

A familiar figure at Zionist gatherings, Blackstone modestly referred to himself as “a stranger and a Gentile” who, as he addressed a Zionist meeting on January 27, 1918, declared,

I wish all of you Gentiles were true Israelites in your religious life, and I wish all of you Jews were true Christians. I am and for over thirty years have been an ardent advocate for Zionism. This is because I believe that true Zionism is founded on the plan, purpose, and fiat of the everlasting and omnipotent God, as prophetically recorded in His Holy Word, the Bible.¹¹

Indeed, the connection between Jewish and Christian Zionists was established early and has certainly proven to be enduring.

Some Facts about the Palestinians

Palestine in Antiquity: As with many ancient words, the definite origins of the word “Palestine” are debated by historians. However, the name is believed to have derived from the Egyptian and Hebrew word *peleshet* (meaning “rolling” or “migratory”¹² that has appeared in the Hebrew Bible 250 times). *Peleshet* was often used to describe the Philistines, an Aegean people, who inhabited the land northeast of Egypt. Another derivative of “Palestine” also appears in fifth century BCE Greek literature as “*Palaistinē*” (Παλαιστίνη in Greek).¹³ Current-day Arabs pronounce

Palestine as *Filastin*, which is derived from Latin. It is not found in the Quran.

Palestine’s Connection to Israel: After crushing the Bar Kokhba revolt (132 CE), the Romans renamed the region known as Judea, including Jerusalem, *Palaestina* in order to add insult to injury by naming the region after Israel’s early enemies. Some claim it was an attempt to minimize Jewish identification with the Land of Israel. During the rule of the Ottoman Empire (1517–1917 CE), Palestine was the general term used to describe all the land south of Syria. “Palestine” was never an official designation for the region, and many Ottomans and Arabs simply called the area “southern Syria.” It was not until after World War II that the term “Palestine” was applied to the territory that today includes modern-day Israel and Jordan after it was placed under the British Mandate.

The Islamic Connection to Palestine: The Islamic-Arab connection to Palestine dates back to the Muslim invasions of the seventh century. However, the region of Palestine was never an exclusively Arab country. No independent state existed in Palestine. Philip Hitti, an Arab-American historian and Princeton University professor, testified against partition before the Anglo-American Committee in 1946. He said, “There is no such thing as ‘Palestine’ in history.”¹⁴ At the time, many Palestinian Arabs, including the original PLO chairman, Ahmed Shukeiry, believed Palestine to be part of southern Syria. However, he would later help create a charter that, in places, contradicted this statement.

11 Quoted in David A. Rausch, *Zionism Within Early American Fundamentalism, 1878-1918: A Convergence of Two Traditions* (E. Mellen Press, 1979), 268.

12 James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and the Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009).

13 Anthony R. Meyer, “Palestine, Archaeology of,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

14 Kenneth Levin, “Opinion | What Golda Meir Said About Palestinians,” *The New York Times*, October 12, 1993, sec. Opinion, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/12/opinion/1-what-golda-meir-said-about-palestinians-766493.html>.

Who Were the Palestinians before 1948?

Leading up to Israel's formation in 1948, local and many international news outlets used the term "Palestinian" to label Jews, not Arabs, living in the British Mandate. It was not until some years after Israel's independence that Arabs living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were called Palestinians. Zahir Muhsein, PLO executive committee member, remarked in an interview with the Dutch newspaper "Trouw" on March 31, 1977:

The Palestinian people does not exist. The creation of a Palestinian state is only a means for continuing our struggle against the state of Israel for our Arab unity. In reality today there is no difference between Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanese. Only for political and tactical reasons do we speak today about the existence of a Palestinian people, since Arab national interests demand that we posit the existence of a distinct "Palestinian people" to oppose Zionism.¹⁵

What Did the Region of Palestine Look Like before 1948?

For many centuries, largely due to invasions, denuding, and general lack of upkeep, Palestine was sparsely populated, very poorly cultivated, and neglected. Mark Twain, on his visit to Palestine in 1867, described it as:

. . . [a] desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds—a silent, mournful expanse. . . . A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with

the pomp of life and action. . . . We never saw a human being on the whole route. . . . There was hardly a tree or a shrub anywhere. Even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends of the worthless soil, had almost deserted the country."¹⁶

Similarly, the American consul of Jerusalem had a poor report in 1880 when describing the area: "The population and wealth of Palestine has not increased during the last forty years."¹⁷ As late as 1913, accounts of poor conditions kept coming through:

The road leading from Gaza to the north was only a summer track suitable for transport by camels and carts . . . no orange groves, orchards or vineyards were to be seen until one reached Yabna Village [Yavne, a Jewish village]. . . . Houses were all of mud. No windows were anywhere to be seen. . . . The sanitary conditions in the villages were horrible. Schools did not exist. . . . The western part towards the sea, was almost a desert. . . . The villages in this area were few and thinly populated. Many ruins of villages were scattered over the area, as owing to the prevalence of malaria many villages were deserted by their inhabitants who migrated to the hills.¹⁸

15 David Meir-Levi, *History Upside Down: The Roots of Palestinian Fascism and the Myth of Israeli Aggression* (Encounter Books, 2007), 34.

16 Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1911), 216; 253; 294.

17 Ben Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State: Second Edition*, 2nd edition. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 108.

18 *Report of the Palestine Royal Commission* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1937), 233–234.

What about the Historical Palestinian Governments?

The region called Palestine has never existed as an autonomous (self-governing) entity. It was ruled alternately by Rome, by Islamic and Christian crusaders, by the Ottoman Empire and, briefly, by the British after World War I. There has never been a Palestinian language, no distinct Palestinian culture, and there has never been a country known as Palestine governed by Palestinians.

Before 1920, Arabs and Muslims were not keen on the term Palestine/Palestinian as a cultural/governmental designation, as it was closely associated with Jews and Christians. Many Muslims west of the Jordan showed allegiance to Damascus, identifying as southern Syrians. Trying to make the best of what for them was a bad situation (i.e. precursors to the re-establishment of a Jewish state), some said “after the recent events in Damascus, we have to effect a complete change in our plans here. Southern Syria no longer exists. We must defend Palestine.”¹⁹ Most of these so-called defense efforts were led by Haj Amin al-Husseini, a man who was no friend to the Jewish people, who had even visited Hitler to learn how to fix his “Jewish problem.”

The Palestinian Arab Connection to Gaza

Israel took control of Gaza in the Hasmonean era (c. 140 BCE to 37 BCE). At one point, Gaza was a major port for Israel, although the Jewish population waxed and waned. The variances in the Jewish population of Gaza can be dated back to 61 CE, but there was a constant Jewish presence in the region until 1929. At one point, Egypt was given control over Gaza. Israel regained control

of the area in 1967. Between 2000 and 2005, tensions and Palestinian violence against Jews flared up during the Second Intifada. Israel pulled out all military personnel and all civilians in the summer of 2005, relinquishing full control of Gaza to the Palestinians. Hamas took control from Fatah in 2006.

How Did the Arab Palestinian Refugee Problem Start?

Many Palestinian Arabs left their homes in the time between 1947 and 1948 for different reasons: (1) those who had any money left in anticipation of a war (approximately 30,000); (2) many more in response to their Arab leaders’ requests (many of these moved to all-Arab towns to wait out the removal of Jews with relatives or friends); (3) a few were expelled. If the Palestinian Arabs had accepted the 1947 United Nations resolution, there would be no refugees, and an independent Arab state would now exist beside Israel. Israel’s Proclamation of Independence, (May 14, 1948), reached out to the Arab populace and invited the Palestinians to remain in their homes and become equal citizens in the new state. The invading Arab armies wreaked so much havoc that the Arab exodus from the newly formed state is not at all surprising.

Who Is Helping the Arab Palestinian Refugees?

Following the establishment of the modern-day State of Israel, UNRWA (United Nations Relief & Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) was established by UN General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV). It began operations on May 1, 1950. Originally envisioned as a temporary organization, in the absence of other solutions, the United Nations continues to renew UNRWA’s mandate, despite there being better alternatives. UNRWA provides education, health, relief, and social services to eligible

19 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (Columbia University Press, 2010), 165.

refugees located in or near pockets of the Palestinian population. It is unique in that its sole responsibility and commitment is to just one group of refugees. While all other refugee populations around the world fall under the jurisdiction of UNHCR (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Palestinians are under a special mandate created to deal with their refugees. There are UNWRA camps in Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank, Gaza, and Syria.

Why Are There Still Palestinian Refugees?

The United Nations (UN) created UNWRA specifically to deal with the Palestinian refugee problem instead of using the existing UN agency that helps resettle refugee populations.²⁰ UNWRA purposefully labels all Palestinian Arabs until there is a Palestinian Authority state. Therefore, Gaza's population, with an autonomous entity run by the terrorist group Hamas, can still be considered a refugee populace. While refugees who are resettled by UNHCR lose their status when they receive citizenship from host/resettlement countries, PA refugees do not. And while UNHCR refugees do not pass their "status" to children, PA refugees can and do. This makes it close to impossible for Palestinian Arabs to thrive in any host country. It also locks them and their descendants into perpetual refugee status. Another consequence of UNWRA policies is the swelling of the population from approximately 600,000 (1948) to more than 5 million today.

Many Arab countries refuse to provide refuge for the Palestinian refugees. Those who are allowed to live in other Muslim countries are not given equal rights in host

countries. For example, they are not allowed to go to public schools, are not allowed to vote, are not allowed to own land, are prohibited from holding certain professions, and their movement is often restricted.

Who Governs the Palestinian Arabs Today?

Today, Gaza is governed by Hamas, the Arabic acronym for "The Islamic Resistance Movement" (*Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyya*) and the West Bank by Fatah. After winning the elections in Gaza (2006), Hamas ousted all opposition, even killing Fatah members and supporters (2007). Hamas is an offshoot of the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood movement (Egypt c. 1920). Initially, Hamas' organization acted as a social welfare agency, but soon it was revealed that their objective is to destroy Israel and kill Jews. In 1988, Hamas published a charter outlining its opposition to Israel and its *jihad* (holy war) against Zionism.²¹

21 The preamble of the charter states, "Israel will rise and will remain erect until Islam eliminates it." Further, Article 36 of the Hamas charter states that it will "be of help to all associations and organizations which act against the Zionist enemy and those who revolve in its orbit." Raphael Israeli, trans., "The Charter of Allah: The Platform of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas)," accessed April 15, 2022, <https://irp.fas.org/world/para/docs/880818.htm>.

20 For more information about the UNWRA, see their website: <https://www.unrwa.org/>.

CHAPTER 4:

ANTISEMITISM TODAY

WORLD JEWRY UNDER THREAT

The “Oldest Hatred” Goes Global!

For as long as the Jewish people have existed, their history has been punctuated by antisemitism—the world’s “oldest hatred.” It comes in different forms: from academic boycotts to cemetery desecration to physical violence, not to mention Holocaust denial and even murder.

Based on the statistics from the Anti-Defamation League from 2017, antisemitism was up by 57 percent in the United States over the previous year.²² In 2020, the United States led the world in violent antisemitic attacks, with more than twice the number of incidents as the number two nation, Germany. The third, fourth, and fifth spots are held by the United Kingdom, Ukraine, and Australia respectively.²³ However, there are also parts of France where Jews do not dare to go out wearing a yarmulke or any visible Jewish symbol.

Antisemitism is also growing in Spain, Poland, Greece, and Hungary. We have even started to see the rebirth of political antisemitism with Neo-Nazi parties in Greece and Hungary.

22 “2017 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents,” *Anti-Defamation League*, accessed September 27, 2021, <https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/2017-audit-of-anti-semitic-incidents>.

23 “Number of Violent Anti-Semitic Incidents by Country 2020,” *Statista*, accessed September 27, 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/270223/violent-anti-semitic-attacks-in-selected-countries/>.

Europe is rapidly losing its Jewish communities who, for safety reasons, are immigrating to Canada, the United States, and of course, Israel.

Spreading Hatred in the Middle East

A strong hatred of Jews is also found in the Middle East region, as illustrated by the Arab-Israeli conflict of the last seventy-five years. The global rebirth of antisemitism is at least in part responsible for the world's sensitivity to the xenophobic agenda of radical Islam in the Middle East, and the weed of hatred is spreading. However, Israel might still be the safest place for Jewish people to live, as the country is always well-prepared to defend its people against the daily threat of terrorism.

North America remains a haven for Jewish people from all over the world, but even North America is not immune to the ailment, even if it takes the form of words more frequently than deeds. Universities all over America are promoting yearly anti-Israel conferences under the banner of "Israeli Apartheid Week" on a myriad of campuses. Other organizations prefer to support the BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) against Israel.

South America seems to have a growing Jewish community despite existing concerns about antisemitism. Venezuela remains a major problem, where the "oldest hatred" is state-sponsored.

Today, followers of Yeshua have a unique opportunity to reach out to the Jewish community wherever they are and express Messiah's love and compassion for the "apple of His eye" (Zechariah 2:8). Antisemitic antagonists and

indifferent by-standers of yesteryear can be replaced by people who love, support, and defend the Jewish people. As one of the villagers said in Le Chambon, France, where the whole town saved more than 5,000 Jews during World War II, "*It was the most natural thing to do.*"²⁴

Loving Israel and the Jewish people should be the most natural thing to do for Christian believers who understand the biblical mandate of Genesis 12:3. Even though blessing the Jewish people [with the gospel] might become increasingly challenging, genuine disciples of Yeshua are the few remaining friends of Israel in a world of many foes. As such, we have no choice but to combat antisemitism.

Antisemitism Is Still with Us!

On April 11, 1944, the well-known Anne Frank wrote in her diary,

*"Who has made us Jews different from all other people? Who has allowed us to suffer so terribly up till now? It is God who has made us as we are, but it will be God, too, who will raise us up again."*²⁵

The term "antisemitism" was coined in 1879 by Wilhelm Marr,²⁶ a German political activist who founded the League of Antisemites to counter the influence of Jewish people in German society. His hatred of Jews was founded primarily on racial, rather than religious, grounds. Today,

24 Philip P. Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed* (Harper Collins, 1994), 21.

25 Anne Frank, *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Revised Critical Edition* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 622.

26 Michael Berenbaum, "Anti-Semitism," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, February 4, 2022, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/anti-Semitism>.

antisemitism describes anyone who hates the Jewish people and seeks their harm on the basis of their Jewish identity. It has taken the form of religious persecution of the Jewish people (the Inquisitions, *pogroms*, etc.), as well as non-religious and more racially based oppression. It has resulted in the confinement of Jewish people in ghettos and the imposition of limitations regarding education, jobs, the owning of personal property, and much more.

Ultimately, this racial and government-based antisemitism resulted in the Holocaust.

Antisemitism in America Today

Antisemitism, unfortunately, also has a long history in the United States. In some instances, hatred of the Jewish people was a cultural value exported to the United States from Europe. Jewish people who immigrated to America were not immune from the well-developed European antisemitism that had begun to embed itself in American society, which took the form of discriminatory quotas for immigration, the workplace, and in academic institutions. In 1938, a Gallup poll determined that 50 percent of those responding to a broad survey admitted to having negative views of Jews.²⁷

In spite of this, America has, by and large, been friendly towards the Jewish people. Jews have flourished in America as nowhere else in what many Jewish people coined, “The Golden Land.” However, recent years have seen an alarming rise in antisemitism.

Political campaign slogans such as “With Jews We Lose,” recently became the mantra for one candidate of the extremist and racist White Guard Party, which “seeks to show white people the facts regarding the Jewish role in America’s decline,”²⁸ as well as highlight the destructive effects that multiculturalism, diversity, and political correctness have had on this country.

According to surveys completed in 2013–14 by the Anti-Defamation League and reported by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 9–12 percent of Americans have expressed antisemitic views. There is also an alarming amount of anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist activity on American college campuses. A recent video on YouTube showed an experiment in which students responded better to a man flying the ISIS flag than to another individual holding an Israeli flag.²⁹ The video has since been removed from the web.

In some cases, antisemitism taints the rhetoric of those who oppose the modern state of Israel generally or regarding a particular policy. This conflation of a specific disagreement with Israel with the racist generalizations of antisemitism has become all too common in secular society. It has even reared its ugly head within Christian circles, as Israelis and Jews have been characterized in a harsh and unfavorable light as a people.

Abraham Foxman, United States national director of the Anti-Defamation League, claims that bigotry is still with us. “We haven’t won that battle. We have not found an

27 Daniel Greene and Frank Newport, “American Public Opinion and the Holocaust,” *Gallup.Com*, last modified April 23, 2018, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/232949/american-public-opinion-holocaust.aspx>.

28 “US Senate Candidate Runs Anti-Israeli Campaign,” *Gods News Agency*, accessed September 27, 2021, <http://qodsna.com/en/125178>.

29 Sigal Samuel, “VIDEO: What’s More Offensive — ISIS Or Israel?,” *The Forward*, last modified November 20, 2014, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://forward.com/opinion/209642/video-whats-more-offensive-isis-or-israel/>.

antidote, a vaccine. Until we find that vaccine, it is going to be with us.”³⁰

Statistics on Antisemitism in North America

North America has long been cherished as a haven by those of many nations who have groaned under oppression in their native lands. Jewish people are high on the list of those who have benefitted from the religious freedom and economic opportunity that have characterized North American society, particularly in the United States. They, in turn, have poured their energy and gifts into helping to shape the society and culture of North American life.

However, as the findings of the Anti-Defamation League below indicate, the generally favorable atmosphere for Jewish people in North America is not completely free of troubling trends. According to the ADL, 19 percent of people living in the Americas hold antisemitic or unfavorable views of the Jewish people.³¹

Respondents in the United States responded, “Probably True” in the percentages indicated to the following sampling of questions:

- Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the country they live in—38 percent

30 Uriel Heilman, “Anti-Semitism in America: Down, but Not Out,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, last modified February 18, 2014, accessed September 28, 2021, <https://www.jta.org/2014/02/18/united-states/anti-semitism-in-america-today-down-but-not-out>.

31 “Updated for 18 Countries in 2019: ADL’s Global 100™ Anti-Semitism Index,” *ADL Global 100*, accessed September 28, 2021, <https://global100.adl.org/map#map/americas>.

- Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust—36 percent
- Jews are hated because of the way they behave—26 percent
- Jews think they are better than other people—23 percent
- Jews have too much power in the business world—34 percent
- Jews have too much control over global affairs—24 percent

Respondents in Canada answered:

- Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the country they live in—25 percent
- Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust—28 percent
- Jew are hated because of the way they behave—16 percent
- Jews think they are better than other people—13 percent
- Jews have too much power in the business world—17 percent
- Jews have too much control over global affairs—9 percent

Although according to this world-wide survey, North America is among the regions with the lowest rate of antisemitism, it is evident there is still work to be done, by both Jews and non-Jews, to attain a greater degree of mutual understanding.

The Gospel and Antisemitism

What a great opportunity we have as followers of the Jewish Messiah, Jesus! By joining our Jewish friends and family in withstanding any encroachment of antisemitism in our society, we demonstrate through our actions that we love the Jewish people. Our efforts to stand with the Jewish people against antisemitism, whenever and wherever it rises, gives concrete expression to our belief that it was God’s choice to create a people for His glory

and purposes. This can only lead to a deeper and more profound witness to the Jewish people.

We encourage followers of Jesus the Messiah to speak out against antisemitism in all its forms. To quote Abraham Foxman once more, “The gas chambers in Auschwitz did not begin with bricks; they began with words, with ugly words. Because there was no one who stood up and said, ‘Don’t say that!’ I will not be silent.”³²

As believers in Jesus, we must denounce antisemitism not only as racism, but also as sin and an evil from the pit of hell. Let us not be silent—for the sake of the Jewish people and our Jewish Messiah.

32 Heilman, “Anti-Semitism in America.”

CHAPTER 5:

THE AFTERMATH OF THE HOLOCAUST

THE DARK CLOUD OF THE HOLOCAUST AND JEWISH EVANGELISM

Meaning of the Term

According to Yad VaShem: “The word Holocaust, which came into use in the 1950s as the corresponding term, originally meant a sacrifice burnt entirely on the altar. Many understand Holocaust as a general term for the crimes and horrors perpetrated by the Nazis; others go even farther and use it to encompass other acts of mass murder as well.”

“The biblical word *Shoah* (which has been used to mean ‘destruction’ since the Middle Ages) became the standard Hebrew term for the murder of European Jewry as early as the early 1940s.”³³

Numbers Killed

The following charts are according to the Holocaust Chronicle. There are other charts there too.³⁴

33 Shoah Resource Center, “Holocaust,” accessed April 15, 2022, https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206419.PDF.

34 “Appendices,” *The Holocaust Chronicle*, accessed September 28, 2021, holocaustchronicle.org/holocaustappendices.html.

Total Deaths from Nazi Genocidal Policies	
Group	Deaths
European Jews	5,600,000–6,250,000
Soviet prisoners of war	3,000,000
Polish Catholics	3,000,000
Serbians	700,000 (Croat Ustasa persecution)
Roma, Sinti, and Lalleri	222,000–250,000
Germans (political, religious, and Resistance)	80,000
Germans (handicapped)	70,000
Homosexuals	12,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	2,500

Major Concentration and Labor Camps		
Camp	Location	Jewish Deaths
Auschwitz I	Oświęcim, Poland	1.6 million
Bergen-Belsen	Hanover, Germany	50,000
Buchenwald	Weimar, Germany	60,000–65,000
Dachau	Munich, Germany	35,000
Dora-Nordhausen	Harz Mountains, Germany	8,125
Mittelbau/ Mittelwerk		20,000
Flossenbürg	Upper Palatine, Bavaria	27,000
Gross-Rosen	Lower Silesia, Germany	105,000
Janowska	Lvov, Ukraine	40,000
Jasenovac	Zagreb, Croatia	20,000
Kaiserwald	Riga, Latvia	10,000
Klooga	Tallinn, Estonia	2,400

Mauthausen	Linz, Austria	120,000
Natzweiler-Struthof	Strasbourg, France	17,000
Neuengamme	Hamburg, Germany	55,000
Ninth Fort	Kovno, Lithuania	10,000
Pawiak Prison	Warsaw, Poland	37,000
Plaszów	Kraków, Poland	8,000
Poniatowa	Lublin, Poland	15,000
Ravensbrück	Berlin, Germany	92,000
Sachsenhausen/ Oranienburg	Berlin, Germany	105,000
Sajmiste/Semlin	Serbia	50,000
Sered	Slovakia	13,500 (deported to Theresienstadt)
Stutthof	Poland	65,000–85,000
Theresienstadt	Prague, Czechoslovakia	33,430
Trawniki	Lublin, Poland	10,000

A thirteen-year study showed that the number of lives lost is closer to 15–20 million in total, rather than the six million Jewish lives, and approximately six million more lives of non-Jews. The research also mentioned that well-known concentration camps were part of an extensive network that “covered some 42,400 camps and ghettos across Europe, and also included forced-labour camps and Nazi ‘care’ centres where pregnant women were forced to have an abortion or had their child killed right after giving birth. It also drew in camps, prisons and killing grounds used by Nazi puppet regimes in countries such as France and Romania.

“The number of locations is almost double previous estimates made by the same institution and, all told, they may have imprisoned and killed between 15 to 20 million people.”³⁵

The Holocaust and Messianic Jews

The Holocaust was the most significant challenge to the survival of the Jewish people since the Babylonian captivity. Over the centuries, many threats reshaped the Jewish community, including the crusades, expulsions, *pogroms*, and the ongoing conflicts related to the modern state of Israel. Yet, no other modern trauma brought upon the Jewish people is comparable to the reduction of the Jewish population and destruction of Jewish life caused by the Holocaust.

The impact of this tragedy on the general Jewish population was massive, as was its impact on Jewish followers of Jesus. Jewish believers living in Europe prior to the Holocaust numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Most were either killed or moved to other parts of the globe. Even after seventy-five years, we still live in the shadow of the Holocaust, and the experiences of our spiritual forefathers during the Holocaust continue to shape Jewish missions.

We stand on the shoulders of these heroes of the Holocaust, particularly the Jewish believers of the Warsaw Ghetto, although their achievements and witness remain largely unknown. Their story—as much or as little as we know—must be told.

35 Matthew Day, “‘Shocking’ Holocaust Study Claims Nazis Killed Up To 20 Million People,” *Business Insider*, last modified March 4, 2013, accessed September 28, 2021, <https://www.businessinsider.com/shocking-new-holocaust-study-claims-nazis-killed-up-to-20-million-people-2013-3>.

The Nazi Invasion and the Construction of the Warsaw Ghetto

Nazi Germany invaded Poland in 1939 and anti-Jewish regulations were soon implemented, leading to the construction of the Warsaw Ghetto. The Nazis also built ghettos in other Polish and Lithuanian cities with large Jewish populations, such as Lodz and Vilna.

The Nazis established the Warsaw Ghetto in November, 1940. They placed nearly 500,000 Jewish people within the Ghetto and imprisoned them with a wall. In 1941, about 45,000 Jewish residents died due to overcrowding, forced labor, poor sanitation, scarce food, and disease. In 1942, the Nazis deported most of the Ghetto’s population to Treblinka, one of six death camps, leaving only 60,000 residents. The following year, in April 1943, the Germans attempted to raze the Ghetto and deport the remaining population to Treblinka, initiating an uprising, led by Mordecai Anielewicz. The bitter fighting lasted twenty-eight days, ending with the Ghetto’s destruction.³⁶

Jewish Believers in the Warsaw Ghetto

When the Nazis invaded Poland, conditions among the Jews were already terrible. The Final Solution arrived in Poland like a raging storm from hell. Jews and missionaries to the Jews were rounded up and taken to concentration camps or else killed outright. Chaos was everywhere, and the work of missions ground to a complete halt from which it would not recover.

36 “Definition of Warsaw Ghetto,” *A Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust*, accessed September 28, 2021, <https://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/DEFN/WarsawG.HTM>.

Missions to the Jews died in Poland along with approximately 3,000,000 Jewish people. The largest of the open and active fields of labor among the Jewish people for the gospel was destroyed; the war marked the end of a people and the end of an era.

In his monumental book, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, Peter F. Dembowski calculates that there were 5,000 to 6,000 Jewish believers living in the Ghetto at its height.³⁷

Rachmiel Frydland speaks of his own interaction with the remaining believers in the Ghetto:

In late 1944, by hiding in cemeteries, deserted churches, and the homes of fearful friends, I was one of the few surviving Jews in Warsaw outside the ghetto. In that enclosure were 5,000 Jews, the last of Warsaw's original 500,000. By God's enabling, I secretly slipped into the ghetto and was able to speak comfort to a few of the Jewish believers still alive. Other Jewish brethren heard the message and believed in Messiah Jesus.³⁸

Frydland was one of the most well-known Messianic Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. His first-hand testimony provided information about the life of the Jewish believers in Warsaw before and, to some degree, during the war.

One of the most significant Jewish believing voices was that of Dr. Ludwick Hirszfeld, author of the book, *The*

Story of a Life. Dembowski says, "Herzfeld (sic) is the most knowledgeable informant about the Ghetto and many aspects of the daily life of the Ghetto dwellers."³⁹

Dr. Hirszfeld's autobiography, written soon after his escape from the Ghetto, gives a detailed description of his life and that of others, as well as providing testimony of his faith. He was a well-respected scientist who had served as a medical doctor in the Polish army in Yugoslavia. There, he began his lifetime work of developing methodology to identify blood types, which scientists still use today. Hirszfeld became a believer in his twenties, and the vitality of his faith comes through in both his writings and actions.

According to the records of various Jewish missions and churches, there were many Jewish people who accepted Jesus as their Messiah preceding the Holocaust, which continued all the way until the destruction of the Ghetto. Warsaw, a hotbed of Messianic activity, was home to more than a dozen Jewish missions.

The believers who came to faith through the Jewish mission agencies and evangelical churches before and during the Ghetto counted the cost. These true believers found comfort in their dire straits through the Messiah.

While we do not have many records of their voices, one day we will hear their stories of martyrdom and suffering. In the eternal kingdom, their voices will be lifted with ours in praise and worship to the One who suffered on our behalf and was raised in triumph, conquering death, evil and every enemy of God and His chosen people. The grace of our Messiah and Lord will wipe away the horror of the Ghetto.

37 Peter Florian Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto: An Epitaph for the Unremembered* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 68.

38 Rachmiel Frydland, "Why I Believe That Yeshua (Jesus) Is the Jewish Messiah," *The Association of Messianic Congregations*, accessed September 28, 2021, <http://www.messianicassociation.org/bio-frydland.htm>.

39 Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 114.

CHAPTER 6:

ISRAEL AND PROPHECY

GOD'S PROMISES AND THE RESTORATION TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL

Is the Modern State of Israel the Fulfillment of Prophecy?

Even if we concede for the moment that the continuing presence of the Jewish people is evidence for the reliability of the Bible, we are well within our rights to raise other concerns. What, for example, is the connection between the Jewish people and the highly contested real estate of the Middle East? For some, the relationship of God's covenant promise to preserve the Jewish people and the equally-emphasized "Promised Land" is highly problematic. Today, even committed Jews and Christians may wonder what, if any, relationship the present-day State of Israel has to with it. Although it is not often remembered, in 1948 many Orthodox Jews were horrified that a Jewish state based upon modern notions of nationality could even be contemplated in place of a kingdom under the reign of Messiah.

Yet, politics aside, it is clear that not only have the children of Israel endured despite the harsh treatment they have received, but against all likelihood, after 2,000 years of exile, the Jewish people have once again returned to the Land of Israel as the biblical prophets promised they would. The Hebrew prophets foretold a day when God would draw His people back to Israel. Although centuries

of dispersion caused this aspiration to retreat into the far background of Jewish life, it never fully disappeared. If nothing else, the hope that was voiced every year at the Passover—“next year in Jerusalem”—would serve as an annual reminder of their lost heritage.

So unlikely did a restoration of the Jews to their land seem that, throughout Church history, Christians for the most part could not conceive of a literal fulfillment of this promise. Most therefore interpreted these prophecies figuratively or historically—if they thought of them at all. However, some believers in the nineteenth century did indeed take the promise of a return literally and, therefore, began to anticipate a Jewish return to the Land of Israel. Thus, it may be said that Christian Zionism was birthed at the same time, or even earlier than the Jewish aspiration for modern statehood.

Statehood and the Promise of the Bible

Is the existence of the modern State of Israel a further validation of Scripture’s reliability, along the same lines as that of the continuing presence of the Jewish people in the world? Consider the following conditions set out in the scriptural record.

First, contrary to the views of some, a national spiritual regeneration occurring *prior* to the Jewish return to the Land is not a biblical prerequisite. In fact, the prophet Zechariah indicated the Jewish people will turn to God only *after* returning to Israel. (Zech 12:10; 13:1). Likewise, the prophet Ezekiel stated God promises, “*For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land*” (Eze 36:24). However, He

continues, “*Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. . . . Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh*” (Eze 36:25–26). Note that the spiritual regeneration of Israel follows the restoration of the Jewish people to the Land. Thus reborn, Israel will, as a nation, turn in faith to the promised Messiah.

Second, the Bible predicts Israel will return to the Land in stages. Ezekiel 37 contains the stark and unforgettable vision of a valley of dry bones. The bones come to life in stages: first sinews on the bones, then flesh, then skin, and finally, the breath of life (Eze 37:6–10). Then, God told Ezekiel, “*Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel*” (Eze 37:11). This vivid depiction of the restoration of the Jewish people to their Promised Land is well in keeping with what is occurring even today. The re-gathering does not occur instantaneously; rather, it is a process that culminates when the nation as a whole receives the Messiah according to Jewish expectation.

The dry bones represent Israel in exile—without hope. The process of the bones coming together with sinew, flesh, and skin refers to the successive waves of returning Jews before Israel’s rebirth, which is, in fact, how the Jewish people have returned—and continue to return—to the Land. There were the five separate *aliyot* (immigration waves) from 1881 to 1939, returning Jewish people from Europe to the Promised Land. Then, after the birth of Israel in 1948, some one million European Jewish survivors came to Israel, followed by 800,000 Jewish people driven from their homes in Arab countries. More recently, 1.5 million Jewish people fled the Former Soviet Union and

immigrated to Israel. These immigration waves show how the Jewish people have returned in stages. The body without breath represents unbelieving Israel, restored but not yet regenerated. Finally, according to this passage, God breathes life into these bodies, representing the day when all Israel turns to the Messiah.

Third, the Bible predicts Israel will return to her Land through persecution. The Hebrew Scriptures say of Israel, *“For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers”* (Jeremiah 16:15b). God will use “fishermen” and “hunters” to pursue His people back to Israel (Jer 16:16). This metaphor for persecution has been literally fulfilled in Israel’s rebirth. Since the birth of modern Zionism, the primary motivation for return to the Land of Israel has been anti-Jewish persecution. In the last hundred years, God has used Czarist *pogroms*, Polish economic discrimination, Nazi genocide, Arab hatred, Soviet repression, and now an alarming rise in European antisemitism to drive Jewish people back to their homeland.

Fourth, the Bible predicts that, after a period of exile, the children of Israel will return to reestablish national identity, thus setting the stage for the arrival of Messiah and the consummation of history as we know it. At that time, the Messiah will deliver Israel from her enemies (Zechariah 14:3).

Ask yourself, “Do the facts of history—particularly the emergence of modern Jewish nationality—line up sufficiently with the predictions of the Hebrew Bible to form a credible connection?” Since Israel has returned in unbelief, in stages, through persecution, it is likely that the modern State of Israel fulfills the predictions of the ancient Hebrew prophets, setting the stage for events yet to come.

The return to Zion is powerful evidence of the truth of Scripture. Would you not agree that it is beyond remarkable that a dispersed and despised people have been restored to their Land after two thousand years of exile? Given the relationship between these events and the predictions of the Bible, would you say it is more or less likely that this has truly come about by the hand of God?

If the above is true—what impact might this have on our lives? It is a good question to ponder.

CHAPTER 7:

PRAYING FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM

PRAYER WITH A PROMISE (PSALM 122:6)

Pray for Israel

The psalmist encourages us to pray for Israel, but believers may not fully appreciate the reasons why God instructs us to pray specifically for Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6). Yet, our motivation to pray for the peace of Jerusalem is embedded in the very words of the psalmist: *“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May they prosper who love you.’”*

Praying for the peace of Jerusalem is a prayer for physical and spiritual peace—which only comes through the Prince of Peace. Praying for peace reminds us that, as human beings, we are incapable of creating peace for ourselves and that only God can bring peace to a broken world—both on this side of heaven (Philippians 4:6–7) and in the world to come (Isaiah 2:2–4; 11:6–9).

Praying for the peace of Jerusalem is, in reality, praying for Jesus to return, as peace will only come to the world when He takes His rightful throne in Jerusalem and reigns forever (Matthew 23:37; Revelation 11:15). Praying for the peace of Jerusalem is a way of asking God to place His peace in the hearts of both Jewish people and Gentiles by personally accepting the Prince of Peace as Lord of their lives.

Praying for the peace of Jerusalem also brings blessings to those who pray, especially as God views our prayers as blessing the Jewish people (Genesis 12:3). God still has plans for His chosen people. As Paul reminded us, “*They are beloved for the sake of the fathers*” (Romans 11:28).

HOW SHOULD WE PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM?

Five Ways to Pray for Israel

The following might give you some ideas about how to pray for the peace of Jerusalem more effectively:

1. Pray for Jewish Israeli and Palestinian leaders to both negotiate a temporary, politically based peace and to also find peace in their hearts through accepting Jesus. These are the people we should pray for at this time: the Israeli prime minister and members of the Knesset, the Palestinian leaders, and our leaders in the United States.

We can pray that God guides these leaders to make decisions that bring peace instead of war and suffering for their citizens.

2. Pray for the work of God’s people in bringing the message of the gospel to the almost 200,000 Holocaust survivors living in Israel. During the recent conflict with Hamas, our staff was able to provide care for many of these survivors, both materially and spiritually. One of them describes the peace of heart he has now experienced through receiving Jesus as Messiah and Lord:

“Something happened in my life when I went to Poland on a Chosen People Ministries—Israel trip for Holocaust survivors. I received a Bible, which I read day and night while we were in Poland. Since then, I have dedicated myself to reading Scripture and studying. I was baptized and know fully that Jesus the Jewish Messiah has died and conquered death for me!”

Your prayers can make a difference serving this treasured community, which may die out within a decade.

3. Pray for the quiet reconciliation efforts of Jewish and Arab believers in Israel seeking to encourage one another by developing deeper relationships between the Jewish and Palestinian Church. There are more than 140 Messianic congregations in Israel, ranging from small house fellowships to established places of worship. Pray that the work of the Prince of Peace will grow among Jewish Israelis and Palestinians and that they can provide a powerful witness of Messiah’s reconciliation among their neighbors.

4. Pray for God to help the church to be better informed about what is happening in Israel and to find ways to glean information for continued prayer outside of the slanted approach of the media.

5. Praying for the peace of Jerusalem reminds us of our blessed hope! Even though peace is elusive today, it is still our prophetic destiny. As Isaiah the prophet wrote, “*And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning*

hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war” (Isa 2:4).

The *shalom* we are seeking is now available for all people, as this peace transcends the terror of ISIS, the wars with Hamas, and whatever conflict or suffering this world thrusts upon us. Jesus said,

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful” (John 14:27).

His peace is all we need today to keep our hearts from being consumed with fear. His peace is our destiny, as one day the Prince of Peace will arrive from heaven and establish His throne in Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2; 9:6–7)

Praying for Israel and the Jewish people reminds us of the *shalom* the Lord has planned for all humanity. There is a beautiful Jewish prayer that sheds new light on Psalm 122:6,

May He who makes peace in the heavens make peace descend upon us and all Israel, and let us say, “Amen!”

Dispelling Myths about Christians Who Support Israel and the Jewish People

I believe there are dedicated and godly believers on both sides of the question of where Christians ought to stand on “the Israel question.” Although I try to stay positive, it is becoming increasingly difficult. There are a growing number of untruths being promoted in the debate, and I

am sorry to say that the rhetoric is also becoming harsher in tone. This is why I want to take a moment and try to shed light rather than heat on five of these critical untruths.

Myth #1: Christians Who Support Israel Do Not Care about Palestinians

Nothing could be further from the truth. Most Christians I know who support Israel do so because they believe the Bible, which includes John 3:16 that states that God sent His son to die for the whole world. This includes Jewish people, Arabs, Muslims, and all nations and religious groups on the face of the earth. Most of us who support Israel and the Jewish people have a sincere love and compassion for the peoples of the Middle East.

Arguing that Christians who love Israel do not care about Arabs is a straw man argument, overly simplistic, naïve, and untrue. Believing that God gave the Land to the Jewish people does not mean that one automatically lacks compassion or concern for Palestinians and others.

Myth #2: Christians Who Support Israel Believe That Israel “Can Do No Wrong”

This is also patently untrue. Personally, I do not know any Jewish person or Christian who believes that any government “can do no wrong.” We believe the land belongs to the Jewish people because it was promised to the chosen people in God’s covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 12:1–3; 15:18–21; 26:3–5) and reiterated throughout the remainder of the Bible. We will only witness a perfect government when the Messiah reigns upon His rightful Davidic throne.

Myth #3: Christians Who Support Israel Favor the Jewish People over the Palestinians

Of course, there are extreme views on every issue. However, many of those who are critical of Christian supporters of Israel do not believe that God granted the deed to the Land of Israel to the Jewish people. Therefore, any support for Israel is deemed “over the top” and “imbalanced.” The biblical teaching on land ownership seems to be getting lost in the shuffle of our varied narratives.

Can people be unfair? Of course! However, it is unfair for enthusiastic support of Israel as a Jewish homeland, based upon an understanding of the Bible, to be deemed anti-Palestinian. This is indeed prejudice. Supporting Israel’s claim to the land is not a question of fairness or unfairness! It is affirming God’s choice and celebrating and supporting His plan.

Myth #4: Jewish People Do Not Yet Have a Right to the Land Because They Have Not Recognized Jesus as Messiah

Clearly, the majority of Jewish people alive today have not yet come to know Jesus as Messiah. If this were otherwise, I would be blessedly and happily unemployed. However, our God of grace did not promise the Land to the Jewish people on the basis of their deserving it any more than the salvation we enjoy was earned (Ephesians 2:8-9).

God never rescinded the covenant He made with Abraham, and that sacred agreement endures from generation to generation. **The Jewish people have a divine right to the Land at all times.** God gave the Land to the Jewish people as a gift. Thus, Jewish ownership of

the Land is always available to the Jewish people based upon the covenant God made with the Patriarchs, but peace will not come until the Prince of Peace reigns (Isaiah 9:6-7). In that day, the nations of the world will join in the celebration as well (Zechariah 14:16-19)!

Myth #5: Jewish People Lost Their Election and Right to the Land When They Rejected Jesus

This is a basic tenet of what we called supersessionism, or replacement theology—the Jewish people rejected Jesus, so God rejected the Jewish people. As a result, the Church is the new chosen people and has replaced Israel. Therefore, all the promises God made to the Jewish people are fulfilled in the Church. As a result, the promise of the Land of Israel has been taken away from the Jewish people and can no longer be taken literally!

My response to this is simply to quote the apostle Paul, who wrote in Romans 11:28-29, *“From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”* Does this sound to you like God has rejected the Jewish people? Absolutely not!

If we begin our discussion by believing that God gave the Land of Israel to the Jewish people, then we can discuss the ways in which this might be effectuated peaceably and fairly. On the other hand, if we do not believe the Jewish people have a divine right to the Land, then the discussion is really of a different nature. Either way, the Scriptures remind us to *“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May they prosper who love you.’”* (Psalm 122:6)

CHAPTER 8:

ISRAEL, THE JEWISH PEOPLE, AND YESHUA

Why Preach the Gospel to the Jewish People?

For many Christians, the keystone verse, Romans 1:16: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek,”* is the clarion call for Jewish evangelism. However, Jewish evangelism remains a controversial and sensitive issue.

It is well known that, over the centuries, the relationship between Jewish people and Christians has often been troubled and, for the Jewish people, even lethal. Many Christians today are properly ashamed of this—so much so that they think that the kindest thing they can do for Jewish people is to delete them from the Great Commission and leave them alone. This chapter will make the case that this often-well-intended sentiment is not only misguided, it is also highly unscriptural. In addition, as we shall see, there are other far-reaching reasons for Christians to bring a gospel witness to Jewish people in addition to saving Jewish souls, important as that may be.

It cannot be denied that the overwhelming majority of Jewish people throughout the centuries have, indeed, rejected the claim that Jesus is the Messiah. Why this is so is a deeply troubling matter—and not a new question.

It is, in fact, this question that the apostle Paul addressed in the book of Romans, especially in chapters nine through eleven. Yet, Paul used this question to usher us into some of the most profound truths there are about the role of the Church and the role of the Jewish people as history presses toward its appointed goal.

One reason Paul wrote to the Romans was his pressing pastoral concern about the relationship between the Jewish and non-Jewish believers in the Roman congregation. Another reason is more theological in nature and concerns us closely. It is the above-mentioned question of the widespread unbelief among the Jewish people in general. As he tackles both issues, we shall see that Paul weaved them together in a way that has no less than cosmic implications that affect us even to this day.

“I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” (Romans 9:1-3)

This Jewish rejection was no small mystery to the early believers to whom Paul wrote. But for Paul, this rejection on the part of the Jewish people was not a cause for doubt or confusion. Indeed, it was nothing less than an affirmation of his faith. Why? Because Paul knew it was a theme that is repeated throughout Israel’s history. Paul knew, in himself, Israel’s stubbornness first-hand. For him, the disbelief in Yeshua among his fellow Jews that was so troubling to some of his fellow believers was, by now, a

familiar pattern. This pattern, which weaves the themes of revelation, disobedience, chastisement, repentance, and restoration that permeate Israel’s history, exists within the much larger framework of God’s plan.

The preaching of the gospel to the Jewish people is an integral part of this plan, and it is here that the love of the largely non-Jewish Church for the Jewish people and the larger dimension of eschatology are brought together: *“I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous”* (Romans 11:11).

The charge that Paul has placed upon the Church to provoke the Jewish people to jealousy with the reality of God’s love and the truth of the gospel has not gone away. We are still called to be a part of the glorious and redemptive work of blessing those through whom we have been so richly blessed, by bringing the good news of the Jewish Messiah to the Jewish people. Paul continued:

“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’”
(Romans 11:25-27)

As we see, Paul showed us that the inability of Jewish people to see the Messiah is a temporary condition. It

has created the opportunity for those “*who were far away*” (Ephesians 2:17) to enter the kingdom. For Paul, the temporary blindness of his “beloved kinsmen,” the inclusion of the Gentiles, the church’s evangelistic outreach to the Jewish people, Jewish repentance and the return of Messiah, and the fullness of the kingdom are so closely bound together that they can be one mighty movement of God’s will.

Does this sound too grand? Or does Jewish evangelism still sound too hard? It is—except for one thing. The Lord has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and His strength is indeed made perfect in our weakness. What can the Lord not do with our poor gifts when we offer them to Him in humility and obedience?

Therefore, far from being of peripheral concern, Jewish evangelism ought to be, as it was for Paul, at the forefront of the church’s engagement with the Great Commission.

What Does It Mean to Make Jewish People Jealous? (Romans 11:11–29)

Paul wrote, “*I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous*” (Romans 11:11).

Why, of all people, were the apostle Paul’s “beloved kinsmen” so slow to embrace the saving message of the gospel? In wrestling with this issue, the apostle devoted three chapters (9–11) in his epistle to the Romans. He dealt with pressing questions that many Jewish and Gentile believers would have had regarding the current spiritual condition of the nation of Israel. First and foremost, these

questions would be linked to the believers’ understanding of Old Testament prophecy.

They would already know that, throughout the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, the arrival of God’s Kingdom was directly related to the physical return of the Jewish people to the Land and the spiritual rebirth of the entire nation of Israel (see Deuteronomy 30:1–10; Ezekiel 37:1–14). But after the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the believers realized that the fulfillment of the Kingdom promises had been postponed for an unknown duration (see Acts 1:6–8). In the meantime, a great mystery had been revealed—this same salvation that Israel had been longing for was available to Gentiles, as well! A great harvest among people from the nations was underway, and Paul recognized its place in God’s Kingdom plan. It is here where we find him in Romans 11:11–15 addressing the issue of how Gentile believers who are part of this great ingathering are to relate to Jewish people who have not accepted Jesus as Messiah.

Paul affirms that, through Israel’s national rejection of her Messiah, salvation has come to the Gentiles. He is firmly convinced and wants the Roman followers to know that one of the main by-products of non-Jews being saved is that Jewish people would be provoked to jealousy by the covenant relationship that Gentiles would now enjoy with the God of Israel. What does not seem to be in question here for Paul is whether the faith of Gentiles has the ability to provoke Jewish people to jealousy. He knows that it can, and he knows that God can use even jealousy as a means of bringing a Jewish person to the point of receiving Jesus as their Lord, Savior, and Messiah. This truth extends to the modern day as well, and it helps the

many believing Gentiles throughout the world, who love Israel and the Jewish people. There is no question about it—God can use their faithful witness to bring Jewish people to faith.

So, what exactly does this look like? How can the faith of a Gentile make a Jewish person jealous? There are several ways this can be done, but I believe that at the heart of this provocation is the believer demonstrating the fruits of the Spirit. Indeed, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer is the clearest indicator that the New Covenant has been initiated. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel spoke of the changed heart that would accompany the New Covenant, and the role of the Spirit in affecting that change (see Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26). That Gentile believers have experienced such a change is a startling and transformative truth. This reality stunned even the early apostolic community after they realized that Gentile believers could receive the same indwelling of the Holy Spirit as they had “at the beginning” (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-18). For a Jewish person to see a Gentile experiencing the fullness of New Covenant promises and blessings is surprising, to say the least. Those promises were made to Israel, not the nations. A Jewish person might be left asking, “What about me?!? That is our covenant; those are our blessings! I want that! How can I have it?”

When Gentile believers demonstrate love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control toward their Jewish neighbors, then hearts will stir, curiosity will grow, and even jealousy will be provoked to bear the blessing of newfound belief. When the fruits of the Spirit are paired with knowledge and understanding of God’s own unconditional covenant love

for Israel, then the Gentile believer will be fully equipped to fulfill Paul’s words in Romans of the salvation promised to Israel through faith in Jesus the Messiah.

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THE HISTORY OF CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES

Chosen People Ministries was founded by Rabbi Leopold Cohn in 1894 to bring the gospel of Jesus the Messiah to the Jewish people. In carrying out this purpose, the Mission also seeks to inspire the church to participate in and support the work of Jewish evangelism, helping fellow believers carry out this vital part of God's divine redemptive plan.

Rabbi Leopold Cohn founded Chosen People Ministries in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York, shortly after he received Jesus as his Messiah. In its earliest days, people affectionately referred to the Mission as the Brownsville Mission to the Jews. Rabbi Cohn established an outreach headquartered in a renovated horse stable, where the Mission offered a variety of services and classes for the growing population of Jewish immigrants. His wife, Rose, was instrumental in organizing some of the outreach programs. The Mission published the first issue of its monthly newsletter, *The Chosen People*, in October 1895.

The proclamation of the gospel to the Jewish people encountered resistance from some, but there were many in the Jewish community who welcomed the message that the Jewish people could receive Messiah's gift of eternal life while maintaining a Jewish identity.

After a few years, the Mission moved its headquarters to Williamsburg (Brooklyn), and then to Manhattan. As ministry expanded beyond a regional focus, the Mission changed its

name to *American Board of Missions to the Jews* to reflect the wider scope of the organization. Missionaries began following God's call to reach the Jewish community throughout North and South America, Europe, and Israel. Eventually, the Mission changed its name to Chosen People Ministries, and, after several years in Charlotte, North Carolina, the Mission headquarters returned to its birthplace in New York City. Chosen People Ministries continually seeks to meet the needs of each generation with both spiritual and material assistance.

The Mission has continued to develop a rich tradition throughout its history. Following Rabbi Cohn's death in 1937, Joseph Hoffman Cohn succeeded his father as Mission leader, serving until his death in 1953. A long line of godly men has served Chosen People Ministries as effective leaders. Mr. Harold Pretlove, Dr. Daniel Fuchs, Mr. Harold Sevener, and Sam Nadler have each left an indelible mark on the character of the century-old Mission. Now under the leadership of Dr. Mitch Glaser, Chosen People Ministries continues to experience an exciting time of renewal and expansion.

Just as it did over one hundred years ago, Chosen People Ministries offers English as a Second Language and Bible classes to Jewish immigrants. The Mission also seeks to utilize new means of communication to reach Jewish people in this new millennium with the eternal message of God's love in Jesus the Messiah. Chosen People Ministries is eager, with God's help and your prayers and support, to reach the Jewish people of the twenty-first century. Yes, the world and the Jewish community have experienced enormous changes—but humanity's need for reconciliation to God remains the same. Chosen People Ministries continues to follow its calling to proclaim the unchanging message of the gospel to the Lord's chosen people.

OUR MINISTRY PROGRAMS

Chosen People Ministries exists to pray for, evangelize, disciple, and serve Jewish people everywhere and to help fellow believers do the same. We fulfill this mission through many types of ministry programs.

Messianic Centers

One of our most effective ministry strategies is to engage local Jewish communities through our Messianic Centers. Our centers are facilities that we rent or own, located in key Jewish population centers; they serve as the base of our ministry operations in the surrounding community. In addition to supporting our evangelistic and discipleship efforts, they provide a place for worship, Bible studies, spiritual counseling, and practical help ministries like food distribution and addiction recovery programs. Some of our key Messianic Centers are located in New York, Los Angeles, South Florida, London, Berlin, Moscow, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem.

Messianic Congregations

Messianic congregations are places of worship where both Jewish and Gentile believers can fellowship together in a Jewish context. In addition, they offer Jewish seekers a familiar cultural setting combined with clear gospel teaching, which communicates our commitment that one can be Jewish and believe in Jesus! We have helped launch dozens of Messianic congregations around the world, and they continue to be an important and viable part of our ministry.

Evangelism and Discipleship

Evangelism has always been the heartbeat of our ministry, and every year we lead outreach programs and events specifically designed for reaching Jewish people with the gospel. Our traditional outreach programs include tract distribution, open-air concerts, book tables, and surveys. During our Isaiah 53 Evangelistic Campaign, we have incorporated newer outreach methods, by utilizing digital media and advertising to offer evangelistic literature to Jewish people. We also host seminars and debates where Jewish seekers can learn about Jesus in a neutral setting. Through each of these outreach events, we meet Jewish people who are seeking spiritual answers. Our missionaries connect with these individuals and build authentic relationships with those who are seeking the truth.

Equipping the Local Church

Another key focus of Chosen People Ministries is to engage and train local churches for Jewish evangelism. Throughout our history, we have observed that one of the key factors in Jewish people coming to know the Lord is the positive influence of Gentile Christians. Therefore, we have made it a priority to develop and offer resources for churches to help believers discover the Jewish roots of the Christian faith and understand the need for Jewish evangelism. We continually develop tools and help equip churches with practical ways for congregants to share Jesus with Jewish people in their communities.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Chosen People Ministries would not exist without the faithful support of Christians around the world who stand with Israel and the Jewish people. We are grateful for the prayers and sacrificial gifts that enable us to continue to bring the gospel to the Jewish people in nineteen countries around the globe.

Would you pray about supporting Your Mission to the Jewish People? I am praying that you will give generously and sacrificially as I believe we have a golden moment to unite in reaching Jewish people that may only come once in a lifetime.

There are several ways you can give

The easiest way is to visit our website:
chosenpeople.com/donate.

You can also mail your donation
to our International Headquarters:
Chosen People Ministries
241 East 51st Street
New York, New York 10022

Lastly, you are always welcome to call us and give your donation with your credit or debit card over the phone.
Please call 212-223-2252!

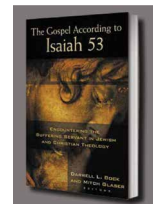
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Use the form on the reverse side to order
or visit chosenpeople.com/store

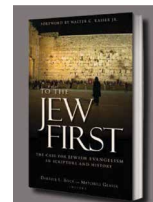


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A walk through the Bible's account of the role of Israel and the Jewish people—both now and in the future. \$16.95



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ISAIAH 53
Equip yourself to present the redemptive work of the Messiah with our Jewish brothers and sisters. \$20.95



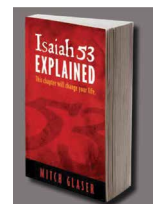
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	<i>The Gospel According to Isaiah 53</i>	3138	\$20.95	
	<i>To the Jew First</i>	3131	\$15.95	
	<i>Messiah in the Passover</i>	3175	\$16.95	
	<i>Isaiah 53 Explained</i>	3135	\$12.95	
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You can also give online at chosenpeople.com/donate

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Chosen People Ministries
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