

The Modern State of Israel – Steve Gregg

[Steve Gregg](#) · 97mins

– SUMMARY –

The transcript summarizes a lecture discussing the modern state of Israel, its establishment as a nation in 1948, the historical and political factors that led to its formation, the role of dispensationalist Christians in pushing for a Jewish homeland, and how Christians should evaluate Israel today. The speaker analyzes the complex history of Israel's founding, including persecution of Jews worldwide, the Zionist movement, impact of dispensational theology, the Balfour Declaration, UN partition plan, 1948 Arab-Israeli war and Palestinian refugee crisis. Key points argue the establishment of Israel was more a political development rather than direct divine prophecy and that Christians should judge Israel like any other nation based on moral actions while understanding the persecution Jews have faced.

* See Transcript Below *

– CHAPTERS –

Background on the Nation of Israel – *The nation of Israel was founded by Moses about 3,500 years ago through a covenant with God tied to obeying His commandments. This conditional covenant defined Israel, not race or ancestry. After exile in Babylon, prophets foretold return of exiles which occurred, but no further predictions of later regathering.*

Rise of Political Zionism – *Zionism seeking a Jewish homeland*

began in the 1800s from Theodor Herzl and was later influenced by dispensationalists like William Blackstone. The 1917 Balfour Declaration signaled British government support for a Jewish nation in Palestine.

UN Partition and 1948 Arab-Israeli War – In 1947 the UN approved dividing Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states against Arab wishes. In 1948 Israel declared independence, prompting invasion by Arab armies and conflict displacing 750,000 Palestinian refugees.

Role of Dispensationalists in Israel's Founding – *Dispensationalists were first to promote Jewish return to Palestine based on prophecy and lobbied American leaders for decades to support Zionism, possibly impacting later key decisions for Israel's formation as a modern state.*

Evaluating Modern Israel – *Israel exists due to political, not prophetic, developments. Like any nation, moral actions should be judged impartially while recalling persecution Jews have faced. Most Israelis are secular, not in covenant with God. Individual Jews and Gentiles are equally saved through Christ.*

– TRANSCRIPT BEGINS –

When I travel and speak places, I actually try to avoid controversial subjects. Not that I don't mind talking about controversial subjects. People can call me on the air about any controversial subject. I'll talk about it. But when people invite me to speak, if I'm given a choice, I try to pick something that's not going to offend anybody. But sometimes I'm asked to speak on something specific. And tonight, I've been asked if I'd speak on a subject that is, in fact, one of the most controversial subjects among Christians, only probably because most Christians don't know it's controversial.

They just think the Bible says a certain thing about a certain subject, and everyone believes this way, and no one thinks

it's controversial until I bring it up. And the truth is that I present a different view than what many, many Christians think is true.

Now, the view I present is a view that many Christian denominations would present. I'm not part of any of them, but I mean, it is not the only view out there held, and it certainly is the one that's been held the longest in church history.

But we are all products of our own age. We are all very provincial. We've heard the teaching of our church and other churches like our churches and on the radio stations that we listen to and TV shows we watch for their Christian.

And if they're all saying pretty much the same thing, it never occurs to us that this is a new idea that they're bringing up, and that Christians in an earlier age would not have held to this view and did not, and that many Christians still do not.

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

To me, I don't have a dog in this race. I just, I don't care which way the Bible goes. I'll go with which other way I find in the Bible. **But my own views about the subject of Israel have changed over the years.**

I was raised and eventually was a teacher in the dispensational camp for many years. Eventually my views on a number of things related to that camp changed. **I didn't know I was a dispensationalist** because my teachers who were teaching dispensationalism never even used that word.

They just said, this is what the Bible teaches. So I didn't know there was anything else that the Bible might teach, but what I was taught. And therefore when I began to see things in

the scripture a little differently than my teachers I was a little concerned because about me I thought I was the one going astray.

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

Okay, I'm not alone in this, that's a little more comforting. But whether I was or not, I'd still see the Bible the same way, and that's just what you've got to do. **But I don't have to impose the view on anyone else.**

And that's why I wouldn't have talked on this subject tonight if I wasn't specifically asked to. I was asked to speak on the subject of the modern state of Israel, the modern nation of Israel. **And every teacher I ever hear, and this would have included me in the earlier part of my ministry, all say pretty much the same things about it,** that in 1948, Israel became a nation again after many, many centuries of having been dispersed throughout the world.

In 70 AD, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, the capital, and destroyed the temple, and dispersed the Jews throughout the world. And they've been in the diaspora for, you know, most of 2,000 years. And that didn't change until 1948. And at that time, Israel was declared to be a nation in their old, former land in the Middle East, what had been called Palestine until that time. And that was, we're told that's a tremendous fulfillment of prophecy.

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

everything's about Israel.

But Antichrist is going to set up an image of himself in Israel, in a temple in Jerusalem, that, you know, everything's going to be about Israel. You know, all the nations are going to come against Israel. God's going to save the Jews at the very end. They're going to look on him whom they've pierced and they'll weep as for one pictures about it. But since I have moved away from dispensationalism, I never consciously thought that I would be able to do that, move away from dispensationalism. I moved completely away from it before I knew it was called that. My views changed piece by piece without knowing where they were going. I wasn't being persuaded of another view anywhere.

I didn't know where my views were going to end up, but I was studying the Bible. **And it was only after I was no longer a dispensationalist that I knew that dispensationalism was the name for what I had been taught, and that it was a new view, a relatively new view, began in the early 1800s.**

In the 1830s by a man named John Nelson Darby. Now Darby had a tremendous impact on the church's thinking about Israel. And those who followed him, and there were a great number, especially in America and England, who followed Darby's teachings, which originated around 1830, they had a tremendous impact on not only the thinking of Christians about Israel, but also on the actual establishment of the nation of Israel, believe it or not.

Israel is a nation today partly as a result of the rise of something called Zionism in the late 18th century. And many Jews, including leaders in the Zionist movement, recognize the father of Zionism to a binemani William Blackwell, who is a dispensational preacher.

Now I'm going to tell you more about that. But when people say, well, it's a tremendous miracle that Israel became a

nation again in 1948 after being dispersed throughout the world, my pastor used to say, and I used to repeat it faithfully, that there's never been any people who existed as a distinct ethnic group for 2,000 years without a homeland to identify them and so forth, and then come back together.

It's an unprecedented thing. And so we always talked about it like it's a miracle when the Arab nations go to war against Israel in the 6-day war, or even in Africa at the Entebbe rescue and things like that.

We see tremendous evidence that God was on their side, and we were quite convinced that no matter what happens, God is always going to be on Israel's side because these are the last days, and God has a great deal to do for Israel and through Israel in the last days.

In fact, the pre-tribulation rapture doctrine, which was originated when dispensationalism originated, it was not taught in the church before then, the pre-trib rapture presupposes that once the church is taken away, then there's seven years that God's working exclusively with Israel called the tribulation period.

And then they say there will be a millennium after Jesus comes back, during which Israel will be established as the chief of the nations again. The temple will be rebuilt, the Levitical priesthood will be functioning again, offering animal sacrifices on a regular basis in the temple, according to their interpretation of Ezekiel chapter 40 through 48 and so forth.

Now, in other words, everything that is not the church that matters is Israel. And that the establishment of the nation of Israel again in 1948 was like the prophetic clock began ticking again. They say that there was a prophecy in Daniel 9 called the 70 weeks of Daniel. And I don't want to go into that in detail because that will take us too far afield. But

the point is they believe that there were 490 years predicted for God to deal with Israel from the beginning point of a decree of a Persian king back in the 6th century BC.

A Persian king who made a decree that Jerusalem would be rebuilt after Babylon had destroyed it 70 years earlier. And from that decree of that Persian monarch, there would be 490 years to complete God's dealings with Israel.

They believe, and I believed once as well, that the first 483 of those years, that is all of them except seven. The total number is 490, and they believe that 483, the whole number less seven, that 483 of those years passed until Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

And then, because the Jews rejected him, the clock stopped. The last seven years didn't happen. They were postponed. And because the prophetic clock stopped when the Jews rejected Jesus. **I have to say I'm not sure why God would have predicted things so accurately, but didn't predict that the Jews would reject Jesus and stop the clock like that.**

But the point is, they say that when Israel became a nation, again, it's not that the clock started again, but it set things up so that the clock can start again. That God's going to deal with Israel again in the last days. They believe when the church is raptured, that that will be when the clock really starts. And the last seven years tick away, and that's going to be the future tribulation until Jesus comes back. That's the dispensational system.

And maybe you've been taught that as I was. Well, of course, because of that, dispensational churches are fascinated by all things Israel. Some even have Israeli flags in their churches. Anyone ever been in a church that has an Israeli flag, the Star of David, up on this platform?

Do you know that Israel is not a Christian nation? It's not even a godly nation. Israel is a secular nation. There are

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

That might surprise you. It's not built upon the law of Moses. The Knesset is a secular organization. It's a pluralistic system, a society, just like America. You can be of any religion you want, except you'll be persecuted more if you're a Christian than if you're anything else. The Knesset back in the 80s made a law that said anyone who's Jewish by birth can come back and be an Israeli citizen automatically because of them being Jewish unless they believe in Jesus. You can be a Jew, a Buddhist or an atheist or New Ager or Hindu or any brand of Judaism.

If you come back to the land, you can be an automatic citizen of Israel, but not if you believe Jesus is the Messiah. Now that doesn't mean that there are no Jewish citizens that believe Jesus is the Messiah. You just have to go through more steps, it's not an automatic. You have to go through the same kind of immigration process that any foreigner would, even though you're Jewish if you are. But they're not even, they don't even show favoritism necessarily toward Godly Jews over secular Jews. It's not a godly nation. It's just a political nation. But some say nonetheless, it's a miracle that they're there at all.

They've been persecuted throughout history. The pogroms in Russia, the Holocaust in Western Europe during World War II, and other things like that, even the Crusades and so forth, targeted Jews many times to try to wipe them out. And look, they've been preserved all this time. It's a miracle of God. And therefore, we have to look at the nation of Israel today as a miracle of God, which deserves our support no matter what.

I was an elder in a dispensational church back in Santa Cruz in 1980 or so. And one of the other elders was very favorable toward the nation of Israel. And he was actually saying that American churches should support Israel financially and economically. We should buy Israeli products before we buy products from China or somewhere else. We should send military aid to Israel and so forth. And that we need to support Israel because he said, and I would have said this one time too, if you bless Israel, God will bless you. If you curse Israel, God will curse you.

Anyone heard that one before? I'm sure you have. Now, is that what the Bible teaches? Now, of course, I will say this. **Every verse that ever is quoted or can be quoted that makes anything out of Israel being special more than any other nation is an Old Testament verse.** You will not find one verse in the New Testament that makes any predictions about the future of Israel. Now, you do find, of course, Paul saying in Romans 11:26, thus all Israel will be saved. Now, depending on how you read Romans 9 through Romans 11, you may or may not believe these talk about ethnic Israel.

These are all Israel will be saved. Some believe he is and some believe he's not talking about ethnic Israel given the description of the Old Testament. **The olive tree immediately before that, where the olive tree is Israel and it has some Jewish and some Gentile branches, they're the believing branches. The unbelieving branches, including Jewish unbelieving branches, are not on the tree anymore. So he's basically describing a community of believers in Christ, which we would normally call the church.**

And that's what he refers to apparently as Israel, because that's the olive tree in Romans 11, and that's the olive tree that is called Israel in Jeremiah 11 also. **What I'm saying is this, even if Romans 11:26 is talking about ethnic Israel and says all Israel be saved, that says nothing about a political nation in the Middle East.** Many Jews are saved already, and

Gentiles too, and don't even live in Israel. To say that Israel will be saved has nothing to do with geography, has nothing to do with politics, has to do with Jesus. If all the Jews are going to get saved, more power to them, I'm all for it. But they don't have to be in Israel.

The Bible doesn't anywhere predict that they will be. I should say the New Testament doesn't. There are predictions in the Old Testament. quite a few, especially in Jeremiah and in Isaiah and in Ezekiel and some of the minor prophets, about God bringing Israel back to their land and establishing them there again as a nation.

No Christian who believes in the Bible would ever deny that and it did happen. It happened after the Babylonian exile. All those prophecies were made during or prior to the Babylonian exile. The Jews had been taken from their land. Their temple had been destroyed just like it was in 70 AD. It was back in 586 BC. Nebuchadnezzar of the king of Babylon destroyed the temple, deported the Jews. **They were exiles in Babylon for 70 years and then a remnant of them did go back.** And when they did go back, we have every reason to believe they fulfilled those prophecies. The prophets said God's going to bring them back and build up the temple again. They did exactly that. This happened 539 BC.

After that, there were no more prophecies about the Jews returning. Well, a few years later, Zechariah around 520 or so did talk about more Jews coming back and more did. Some came with Ezra, some came with Nehemiah. But the point is that after that wave, those waves of returning exiles returned, you don't find any more predictions in the Old Testament and none in the new that have anything to do with a restoration of Israel at any other time.

Now, I just want to let you sink in for a moment, if you would. Whenever someone says, what the Bible says Israel will be established in the last days, they say, show me the verse,

please. I'm not trying to be ornery. I'm just very interested in seeing what verse the Bible, you think, says that. Invariably, they appeal to the verses in Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, men of prophets, which were fulfilled hundreds of years before Jesus came. And there's no predictions after that that say anything about a restoration of the nation Israel. But it happened in 1948. So what are we to make of that? Maybe it's a dual fulfillment. Some prophecies have dual fulfillments.

And so a lot of people say, well, I think maybe that's a dual fulfillment. It happened in 5th or 29th BC. It happened again in 1948. **Well, I don't know of any valid exegetical approach to any Bible verse that would suggest that there's supposed to be a double fulfillment there.** Do I believe in double fulfillment of prophecy? Sometimes, yes, when the Bible identifies it. And sometimes it does. There are prophecies that are fulfilled in the Old Testament, and then the New Testament identifies a second fulfillment, usually in Christ, usually a spiritual fulfillment.

But you don't just generate second fulfillment to prophecy just because you'd like to see them there. When the Bible says something's going to happen, then it happens. There's no intrinsic reason to say, ah, and it'll happen again too.

The Bible predicted Micah that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. He was. Is he going to be born there again? I don't think so. Certainly there's no reason to believe so from the passage. Zechariah 9 talks about Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. He did. Is he gonna do that again? Why in the world would we think so? Most prophecies only have one fulfillment. Only need one. Occasionally there's a prophecy fulfilled that has foreshadowed something else and when it does the New Testament identifies for us what it foreshadows.

And that's how we, only because of the authority of the New Testament itself, know that there's a second fulfillment

because you wouldn't have gotten it from reading the Old Testament prophecy itself.

Now what I'm saying is the return of the exiles from Babylon fulfilled the prophecies that predicted that. If there's a second fulfillment the Bible is silent on it, therefore we would have to evaluate any such modern fulfillment to see if it is of God or not and we'd have to judge it like we'd have to judge anything based on the Bible. We have a Bible and we can actually see what it does say that might impact our thinking about this.

I want to say this, I was asked to teach on this for the first time I think maybe two three years ago. I have to say that although I've been in the ministry and I've been teaching almost full-time for 48 years, five years ago, I didn't know any more than the average Christian does. I only knew what my teachers told me which wasn't much.

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

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

only dispensational authors supporting a different narrative. In other words, the narrative I knew and had been taught was only taught, as near as I can tell, by dispensationalists.

The other narrative I'm going to share with you today is taught by many Christians and Israeli Jewish authors and Palestinian authors. So we've got three different religious groups with different agendas, obviously different preferences about the matter, all giving the same story.

Now I want to say this, I have a ton of information. I won't be able to give it all tonight because of the limits on our time. But I also wanna say that I have not personally been able to fact check everything. And I give this disclaimer. I got a lot of this from books. I got some of it from the internet. Now obviously some things you get on the internet aren't totally reliable. You found that out. But however, the things I have provided from the internet either are confirmed or at least are in line with things I found from authors who are expert theologians and historians and sociologists and Middle East scholars and all that kind of thing.

And so I'm going to give you, all the information I give you as far as I know is true. But I haven't, I mean there's pages and pages of it. I haven't been able to look at everything that's in these quotes and verify them. But you'll see that some of the people I quote are very respected Christians. One of them, and I don't know if you're younger Christians, you might not know these names, but they were legends in my youth, brother Andrew who wrote the book God Smuggler, famous, you know, internationally famous guy for smuggling Bibles into communist countries before that became faddish to do and risked his life and there was a book written about him back in probably 1970 I would imagine called God Smuggler.

He's a very credible Christian. He's very respected throughout the evangelical world. He's a Dutch Christian. Another person Christian I consult is Elizabeth Elliott. Now, if you don't

know who Elizabeth Elliott is, as I really feel sorry for you. Elizabeth Elliott was the wife, and eventually the widow, of Jim Elliott. Jim Elliott was one of five missionaries that went down to Ecuador in the early 50s. They got speared by the natives that they were going to evangelize.

They kind of thought that might happen, because the natives had done that to the previous missionaries. They'd gone to them 50 years earlier. So they kind of were ready for it, and it happened. But after her husband was killed, Elizabeth took her three-year-old daughter. They went down to the same Indians and won them to Christ. The whole tribe got converted. And she became, of course, internationally famous. Eventually, she was a Bible college professor, I think at Wheaton, if I'm not mistaken, and wrote many, many books.

One of the soundest Christian women theologians I've ever encountered. I've driven an hour or more to go hear her speak before. She's dead now, but she died recently. But she was, there's nobody who knows of Elizabeth Elliott has any reason to doubt her sincerity, her competence to speak on whatever she chooses to write about.

And two of the Christian sources I got on this that tend to confirm the general narrative too, both of them have spent time in Israel with the Jews and the Palestinians and they have both written on it. And they both confirmed the narrative that I'm getting from Israeli and Palestinian sources elsewhere. So while some of the things that I'm going to read, I can't guarantee that all the people who say them are saying everything just right, I don't have any real reason to doubt them and I have got confirmation on much of it.

Now let me give you a little historical background about Israel. The nation of Israel was founded around 14 centuries before Christ through a leader named Moses. Now before that, they had descended, most of them had descended from a line that began with Abraham.

God had made a promise to Abraham to do something special with his seed, that is to bless all the nations of the earth through his seed. According to Paul in Galatians 3:16, that seed is Christ. So the promise was that God was going to bring the Messiah into the world to bless all the nations and that Messiah would come through this man Abraham.

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

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

And he brought them to Mount Sinai and **there at Mount Sinai he established them as a nation.** It was a covenantal arrangement he described in these terms in Exodus 19:5-6. He said, I am the one who's delivered you out of Egypt and carried you on eagle's wings to this place of safety. And he says, **Now, if you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then you will be a peculiar treasure to me among all the nations for all the earth is mine, says the Lord. And you'll be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**

So God took this bloated family of three million people all pretty much descended from the same roots. **And so I (God) want to make a nation out of you among the nations of the world.**

You'll be the most precious nation to me, among the nations. All the earth is mine, but I can make you precious among the nations. You'll be a kingdom of priests and you'll be a holy nation to me, special, my people. **And that's when they became a nation. They agreed to that, those terms.** But those terms were conditional. If you read it, Exodus 19:5 says, if you will obey my voice indeed, and if you will keep my covenant, then you'll be a holy nation. You'll be my kingdom of priests.

[Exo 23:31-33 KJV] 31 And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. 32 Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. 33 They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

It's not an unconditional promise. And so, as you know, if you read the Old Testament, they didn't really keep the covenant very well. They didn't even keep it for a month. **They were worshipping a golden calf before no time; Exodus 32.** And God was ready to wipe them out. Exodus 32:7-9 – He said, did Moses get out of my way? [I'm going to wipe them out, make from you a greater nation than them.](#) Moses interceded for them, got God to agree to give them another chance.

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

So they were breaking the covenant continually. Now the prophets came and said, you know, God's going to send the

Messiah. And, you know, the sins of the nation will be laid on him. And he's going to restore his relationship with his people.

And then Jesus came and began to preach that the time was fulfilled. And this is what was happening in his time. Well, the remnant of Israel was a group that always existed in Israel. Even when Israel as a nation was worshiping Mullah and Baal and other abominations, there was always a few, some who were faithful to God and they were not worshiping the idols. They would follow guys like Elijah or Elisha or Samuel or they'd follow Isaiah or Jeremiah. Not many, Jeremiah only had one guy following him as far as we know, **but there was always a tiny and sometimes a somewhat larger tiny remnant of faithful people and God made many promises to those faithful** and when Jesus came the faithful remnant in Israel came to him as they would have come to any true prophet because they were faithful to God they would follow the prophets that God sent.

This time it was the Messiah, they followed Jesus. They became what we call the disciples. This was the remnant of Israel, they were now the disciples of Jesus. Eventually the spirit was poured out upon them in Jerusalem in Acts 2 and they became what we normally call the church.

They were all Jewish. They were the faithful remnant of Israel as there had been a faithful remnant in every generation previously. There was at the day of the Pentecost 120 of them in the upper room.

By the end of the day there were 3,000 of them. A few days later there were 5,000 men and not including women and children. The remnant that embraced them as I grew bigger and bigger and bigger and eventually Gentiles were invited in too, almost against the will of the apostles.

But God had to knock Peter over the head with a vision three times to be open to the idea of letting Gentiles in. And when

the Gentiles began to come in they came pouring in. And God sent an apostle named Paul to go out to the Gentiles and gather them in.

So Gentiles, like most of us, perhaps all of us are Gentiles. I don't know if you Jewish, you're certainly probably not the majority in this group. But we think of the Church of Large as a Gentile thing now because it's all nations have been brought in.

But all that's really happened is Gentile branches have been grafted into what was the faithful remnant of Israel. **Just as could happen in Old Testament times. There were Gentiles who became part of Israel in the Old Testament.** The law made provision for it. They could get circumcised, they could keep the Sabbath, keep Passover, and they'd be just like one of the natives of the land, a Gentile could become a Jew. There never was a time when Israel was only an ethnic designation.

Even the group that Mount Sinai that God made the covenant with weren't all Jewish. It says in Exodus 12, which is before that, that the group that came out of Egypt with them were a mixed multitude. That means racially mixed. There's a racially mixed multitude, mostly Israelite. But also some Egyptians and some others were there. And we find that to be true as you read the story of Moses and subsequent stories because there are Gentiles, people born Gentiles, but who have become part of the covenant community.

In other words, Israel, the nation, was never based entirely on who your parents were or who your ancestors were. Israel as a nation was never completely an ethnic homogene. There was a mixed multitude that was part of Israel from the very beginning. And any Gentile who wanted to, Ruth, Rahab, any Gentile who could become part of Israel if they were willing to meet the conditions of the covenant. And that's just it. The nation is defined in terms of the covenant, not race.

If you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, you will be a holy nation to me. The nation of Israel is defined by keeping the covenant. That's why a Gentile who chose to keep the covenant and get circumcised would-be part of it. **A Jew who rejected the covenant would be cut off from the people according to the law.** Now we think of Israel as an ethnic designation and it largely is because of course the majority of those who've ever been part of Israel were those who were descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

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

There's more Gentiles than Jews in. But it's a new covenant now. We don't have to be circumcised. We don't have to keep the Sabbath and Passover, things like that, like they did under the old covenant. We Gentiles have come in on terms of the new covenant, because Jesus in the upper room with His disciples said, **This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Where there's a new covenant, the old covenant is obsolete.**

The writer of Hebrews tells us, Hebrews 8:13. And therefore, the old covenant that defined Israel in the Old Testament is defunct. It's obsolete, the Bible says. There's a new covenant now, and that's what defines Israel today. The true Israel, the remnant, have come into the new covenant. And our believers in Christ, and originally it was thousands of Jewish people only. But then Gentiles started coming in, and then they came-in in droves.

And now there's more Gentiles than Jews in it. But it's still the same thing. It's still the remnant of Israel. It's just that Gentiles have become covenant keepers by following Jesus Christ. **And many Jews, of course, have rejected Christ and don't keep the new covenant, nor do they keep the old one, in many cases.**

Jesus said even the Pharisees who were very legalistic, He said even they don't obey Moses. So to find Jews who are real covenant keepers, you've got to find Jews who have embraced the Messiah. **Because you can't be faithful to God and not be faithful to Jesus. He said whoever does not honor the Son, the same does not honor my Father. He said that to Jews. If you don't honor me, you're not honoring God.**

From the time the nation was founded, I signed to this day being Israel. Never had anything to do, well I shouldn't say they didn't have anything to do, but certainly did not have everything to do with race. Any race could be in. And any Jew could be out if they rejected the covenant. **It's covenant faithfulness that defines what Israel is. Now the question we have to ask about Israel today is, the nation.** Are they a covenantally faithful people? Which covenant? Whether you choose the old covenant or the new. Most of the nation of Israel, including its leaders, are not faithful to any covenant because they are secular.

Just like a Gentile. And by the way, the Bible makes it very clear that an unbelieving Jew is on exactly the same terms with God as an unbelieving Gentile. John the Baptist said, don't think to say within yourselves we have Abraham for our Father. God is able to, from these stones stories of children to Abraham. Jesus was talking to Jews and he said, **I know you're descended from Abraham, but if you were the children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham.**

He believed in me and you don't. You're of your Father the devil, he said. That's in John 8. **Paul said in Romans 2:28-29, he is not a Jew who's one outwardly.** And that is not circumcision, which is outward of the flesh. He is a Jew who's one inwardly. Paul said to the Philippians in **Philippians 3:3, we, meaning the Christians, We are the true circumcision meaning that the true Israel who worship God in the spirit who rejoicing in Christ Jesus and who put no confidence in the flesh** in other words being the true Israel has nothing to do

with anything in the flesh like fleshly ancestry fleshly race, that's in the flesh.

We put no confidence in the flesh. We rejoice in Christ Jesus that makes us Christians. We are Worshiping God in the spirit. It's a spiritual thing now Those are only a few of the verses in the New Testament That make that very clear. There's some in the Old Testament make that clear too I don't have time for all that because we're not talking about Old Testament, we're not even talking about the New Testament. We're talking about Israel today, but we have to say how are we supposed to evaluate Israel today?

Well, some people say well, you've got to support them because and no matter what you've got to support them, because they're God's chosen people. **Well, they were that's true at Mount Sinai, God chose them and made a nation of them, but that was conditional if you obey my voice and keep my covenant you will be my people.** You'll be a kingdom of priests. You'll be a holy nation. Those conditions do not pertain to any nation on earth today. America isn't God's chosen people. Israel isn't, South Korea isn't, Scotland isn't, there's no nation that is The chosen people are those who follow Jesus Christ.

That's a trans national global entity called the body of Christ Those are the ones who keep the covenant. Now what then are we to make of Israel in the Middle East? Isn't it a miracle that they came back together? Well, let's talk about that. How did the nation of Israel come to be? As I said, I wouldn't have been able to answer that question with any kind of information of detail five years ago. It's only been in that short time that recently. studied this out. And so some of it's kind of new to me too. I knew of course that Israel had been destroyed as a nation in 70 AD by the Romans. And they continued, the Jews, in the Roman Empire and remained under Roman dominion.

And Palestine, their land, remained under Roman control until

the fourth century. After that, it was under control of the Byzantine Empire, which is Greek. And they were under control of the Byzantine Empire until about 632. At that time, they came under the control of Arabs, largely because of Muhammad and his conquest of the region, and the Seljuk Turks. Now, in the 7th century, 632 and beyond, Arabs dominated the region. There were Jews in the region, still some, but they intermarried. And therefore, the people of the region became predominantly Arabs. There was some Jewish ancestry in there and other nations too – Turkish, but these people became what we call the Palestinians because the land was called Palestine. The Romans called it Palestine and so these Arabs, mostly Arab type people, began to dominate the area from the 7th century on. Which means that people who are Arabic Palestinians today?

Their ancestors have controlled that land for 1300 years until 1948. Now you might think that would give them a reason to think it's their land. We have controlled this part of North America for what 300 years or less. We kind of think it's ours. But some of them were there first, yeah, and the American Indians were here first too, we think of it as their land?

Nations lose and gain lands, there's not one nation on the planet probably, there may be some died and most nations do not have their original ethnic populations living on them anymore, most nations have been conquered centuries ago. You know more modern people who drove out the the old, the ancient, you know ethnic groups that were there, and many nations have changed hands many times. I want to say this, no matter what I say that might sound sympathetic toward Palestinians I don't want to give the impression I'm against the nation of Israel. I'm not against Israel being a nation in the Middle East having their own government anymore than we against America having this government here in this part of the world. It's something that's politically established. You

can't turn the clock back in any way that I know about. I think we just have to live with the political realities, we can't really you know. Can't turn back the clock on these things. History progresses, lands are inhabited and conquered by new groups and they get there for centuries. All I can say is that the Palestinians, I mean put yourself in their place just for a moment, their ancestors were in that land for 1300 years until the United Nations decided to say, no, this belongs to Israel now.

Now, you might be sympathetic with the United Nations and with the idea that Israel's there. I'm not against them being there as I pointed out. I'm not anti-Israeli. But I do want to be realistic. And I'm not saying anything I'm saying in order to take a side. And as I'm doing, I will do my very best to give just the facts that I know of.

But the region was populated by these, the ancestors of the modern Palestinians for 1300 years from that time on. Now the region came under... the Ottoman Turks, the Ottoman Empire in 1517. And it remained under their control for 400 years until World War I. And General Allenby, Edmund Allenby, with the help of the French and the Arabs, drove out the Turks out of Palestine, in 1917, near the end of World War I. At that time, the League of Nations, which was a European League, sort of like the United Nations today, but it was before there was a United Nations, there was the League of Nations between World War I and World War II.

They decided that since the Turks, the Ottoman Turks no longer controlled Palestine, somebody had to. And so the League of Nations had a mandate they put together in 1922, giving Palestine under the control of Britain. And Syria, which is north, under the control of France.

So the League of Nations mandate put Israel, what we call Israel today, Palestine, under British control. Now, British had a strong element within them that were very favorable

toward Israel becoming a nation again. This feeling arose in the late 1800s with the rise of what we call Zionism. Now, Zionism was founded by a Jewish man from Eastern Europe named Theodor Herzl. He was not religious, he was a secular Jew. And he was not a man who was a godly man, but he had it in his head that it'd be good for the Jews to be able to go back and have their homeland again.

Now, this is before World War I, this is around 1897. And the Zionist movement began, however, later on, leaders recognized that before Herzl was advocating this, a man named **William Blackstone, who was a dispensationalist preacher, was advocating it.** And even secular Israeli historians often recognized the role that dispensationism played in creating the modern state of Israel.

Now I want to say this. When I was growing up, my dad had a book that was published in the early 1900, I think 1909, by Clarence Larkin, a dispensationalist. He was saying Israel is going to become a nation again some day. Now he was like 40 years ahead of his time. And when it happened, the dispensationalists had been predicting it for a long time. So when Israel did become a nation, dispensational Christians realized that we knew this was going to happen, we'd been saying it was going to happen. It proves we were right. It proves our system of prophecy is true.

But most dispensationalists have no idea exactly how much the dispensationalists made this happen. Now they didn't make it happen all on their own. But they were the first influence in Great Britain to promote the idea that Israel ought to return to their land.

Now Herzl, who started Zionism, it's a secular movement, was not a religious movement. But Herzl was not influenced by the dispensations as far as I know. But the dispensations were pushing for this before Herzl was. He just happened to have the same ambition. The Jews, who had been scattered for

almost, well, for 1900 years, have them return to their land and have a nation again. Famously, anyone who studies the restoration of the nation of Israel talks about the Balfour Declaration.

Lord Balfour was a British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. His name was Arthur James Balfour. And he wrote a document as a British state official in 1917. Now that's when the Ottoman Turks were driven out of Palestine by General Alibi. Now at that time, Lord Balfour wrote this declaration, and I'm going to quote it exactly, **His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object. It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done, which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities, that be the Palestinians in Palestine,** or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

So this is the first time that a government official of any country happened to be Britain, and Britain under the League of Nations mandate was in charge of the restoration of the nation of Palestine.

Lord Balfour said the British government approves and strongly encourages the re-establishment of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine, and said we'll do what we can to facilitate this. Now, I just point this out to you. Balfour was a dispensationalist, or he's a premillennialist Christian, and so it's very possible that his own theological position influenced him in this way. Everybody who talks about the restoration of the nation of Israel in the last days mentions the Balfour Declaration.

This was the first thing in 1917, right after World War II or World War I, that really set the ball rolling in a big way. Herzl and his Zionist movement had been around for about 20

years at that time and was growing in popularity. The movement grew to 20,000 and to 200,000 and kept growing. The Zionist movement, this is mostly a secular movement. But the dispensational movement had been around for 70 years before Herzl started the Zionist movement and were strongly seeking to influence European Christians to support the restoration of the nation of Israel.

As I said, in 1917, Arthur James Balfour issued the Balfour Declaration which announced Britain's interest in re-establishing a homeland for the Jews in Palestine in their ancient home.

And then in 1922, not the United Nations, but the League of Nations, they had a mandate where they put Palestine, which would be wrong to call it Israel at this point, because there was no nation of Israel there yet, but they put Palestine under the control of the British and Syria under the control of the French.

Now, the British, soon after that, well not real soon, about 20 years later, in 1947, the British announced that they were not interested in continuing to govern Palestine. One reason for that is because Jewish terrorists were blowing up their soldiers and policemen and hanging them and doing things like that.

Yes, the Jewish terrorists. Menachem Begin, who you might recognize and if you paid attention to Jewish political history in recent years, or at least in recent decades in my lifetime. Very important, one of the presidents of Israel, I think he was the sixth.

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

killed a bunch of British soldiers by blowing up a hotel. So the kind of stuff you think that only Arabs do. This was a Jewish terrorist organization headed by Menachem Begin.

This is not a secret. He publicly, I mean, this is, he couldn't deny it anyway, but he publicly acknowledged this. And they were not the only Jewish terrorist organization. And they were making it really hard for the British to govern there, just like the Romans had found it hard to govern that land. In fact, everyone, Babylon, everyone, everyone had found it hard to govern that land. But the British didn't like it, and they announced in 1947 their intention to give up their authority over it.

And so something else had to happen. No one else wanted to govern it. And that's why the idea of a Jewish state tended to come to the fore more. But what the League of Nations decided was to divide Palestine into two nations, a Jewish nation and a Palestinian Arab nation. And they were going to give 52% of the land to the Jewish nation. Now, remember, for 1,300 years Palestinians thought that was where they lived. That was their country. Imagine if the United Nations today would just make a mandate that said they're going to give the Navajo Indians 52% of the places where we live now.

Now, I don't have anything against the Navajo Indians. I'm just saying, my parents lived in the house that my grandparents lived in. Suddenly, they got to move out because this now belongs to the Navajos. And where do we go? Well, that's your problem. You see, the land was populated by the Palestinians and very fairly densely so for 1,300 years. Now, 52% of the property that's theirs is going to be given to another nation called Israel.

And then 48% of the land was going to go to the Arab population there. This plan was approved by a two to three majority vote in the League of Nations General Counsel. Actually, by this time, I'm sorry, it was now the United

Nations.

The League of Nations was between the two World Wars. By 1947, there had been World War II. And instead of League of Nations, there was the United Nations. United Nations, so it was a United Nation's mandate. They wanted to have a two-nation solution. But what that meant was that they're going to take over 50% of the land that always had belonged to the Palestinians, at least for over a millennium, and give it to somebody else who didn't even live there for the most part.

And you might say, weren't there Jews living there? There are a few. 95% of the population of the region were Arabs. 5% were Jewish. And they're going to give 52% of the land to the Jews. And what that means is that the Arabs who had been living on that land, it was now no longer theirs.

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

I am under the impression, though, I've heard people say that I'm naive about this that perhaps there's more terrorism now being done by the Arabs than by the Jews. I can't guarantee that and I do have a friend who tells me I'm quite wrong about that. And it does depend on which media you read. But the point is while we we could never approve of terrorism done by anybody, you might understand if you know some European entity decided that the United States, the portion you live in, is no longer going to belong to you, you might have bought it. you might have inherited it from your great grandparents, but it's not yours anymore. It now belongs to some other ethnic group that they are saying this is goanna be theirs now. Now you might not like that very much

I was watching a movie some years ago. I don't remember which movie it was, I was gonna say it was Sophie's choice, but I don't think it was. I don't remember. Did Sophie's choice have a section where they were in the Polish ghetto where the Nazis had rounded up the Jews?

And they were in the Polish ghettos there. Was that okay? Maybe it was that, and I remember watching it thinking those poor Jews the Nazis have rounded them up and put them in a corner. There were Jewish guys who'd sneak out at night and do terrorist acts against the Nazis. The audience being Western People like ourselves, of course were on their side. Yay. Take out those Nazis. The enemy of my enemy is my enemy. I Mean the enemy of my enemy is my friend, and therefore, but then I thought okay, I'm in favor of these Jews defending themselves against this. They're freedom fighters.

I remember thinking for the first time in our life. What if these were Palestinian Arabs who had been rounded up off their property by, let's say, a Jewish majority. And they were running out and doing those same kind of things to the Jews. We'd call that terrorism, not freedom fighting. But they would see it as freedom fighting. So I mean, not to say that terrorism is ever okay, I'm totally against all terrorism. **But you can say, if you're in their position, you can see maybe why they're getting frustrated.**

Because there, what they thought was theirs, was taken from them just by a mandate from someone who doesn't live anywhere nearby. These people in the Middle East, they've been there for 13 hundred years, and someone over in Europe, another continent, is making decisions about who owns their land.

I'm not sure you'd like that. I wouldn't. I wouldn't do terroristic acts because I'm a Christian. Christians don't do that kind of thing. But I wouldn't like it. And I think I would understand those who do acts of violence to try to restore their land. They wouldn't be Christian acts, but

they'd be kind of understandable in some ways.

Well, in April 9th, 1948, this is just before Israel was declared to be a nation, Irgun, a Jewish paramilitary group led by Minachem Begin, killed by some reports, 254 Arab men, women, and children in a village called Deir Yassun. This is a Yassin, excuse me, Deir Yassin. This is a well-known fact. There's many books, articles about it. It's well documented. It was witnessed. Survivors have told their stories. It's not denied, even the Jews don't deny that this happened. **This is before this was a nation of Israel. Minachem Begin and his terrorist group went into Deir Yassin and killed 250-something men, women, and children to read the reports.** It was just as ugly as Nazis coming in and killing innocent Jews.