THE SECRET OF JEWISH IMMORTALITY

Series: Israel or Palestine? Thinking Biblically About the Land of Israel

Selected Scriptures

Mark Twain once wrote, "If 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. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contribution to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstract learning are also way 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; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. 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?"[1]

Even though Mark Twain was an agnostic and skeptic, he recognized the miraculous nature of the Jewish peoples' preservation and influence. He didn't understand it, but he did recognize it. As men and women of God's Word, we should understand it. And if you've been with us through this study (this is part 7) you should understand it by now—that God is faithful to His word and covenant promises with the Jewish people.

Their immortality, or preservation, is what we're going to discuss as we continue working our way chronologically through the history of the Jews as it relates to Scripture. Many people are familiar with the history of the Church for the past 2,000 years, but not many people are familiar with the history of the Jewish people for the past 2,000 years or the significance of it. In an incredibly brief review, we remind ourselves that God promised the land of Israel to the Jews forever in the <u>unconditional</u> (Abrahamic) covenant, but disobedience brought <u>scattering/dispersion</u> from the land and <u>insecurity</u> in it. So instead of ruling over the land autonomously, independently as the head, they are ruled by Gentile powers and made the tail (Deut. 28:13) and scattered to the nations. The word *scatter* or *disperse* in relation to Israel is mentioned dozens of times throughout the OT because there is a cause-and-effect relationship between them, God, and the land due to the covenants. God works in history through the biblical covenants outlined in the Bible.

Deuteronomy 28:64-65 says, *"64 Moreover, the Lord will <u>scatter</u> you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth… Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be <u>no resting place</u> for the sole of your foot; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul. 66 So your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you will be in dread night and day, and shall have no assurance of your life."* **Leviticus 26**, in a parallel passage to Deuteronomy, says the same thing. *"I will make the land <u>desolate</u> so that your enemies*

who settle in it will be appalled over it. You, however, I will <u>scatter</u> among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes <u>desolate</u> and your cities become waste." We see the same prediction of **scattering**. As for the land: **desolation**. And because God has kept his word, Tevye, in *The Fiddler on the Roof*, said things like, "I know we are the chosen people. But once in a while, can't you choose someone else?" Scattering and desolation is too familiar to them.

But remember that neither Deuteronomy nor Leviticus stop there. Nor do the prophets. When speaking of judgment upon Israel, they also interject hope for Israel. For example, **Leviticus 26:44** says, "Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God." In Jeremiah 30:11, God said He would *chasten* them justly, but *not destroy* them completely. So they would not be rejected nor destroyed, but be **preserved** and even **restored**. Deuteronomy and Leviticus become the basis for the seemingly endless prophetic texts about a future restoration of Israel that was not fulfilled in their first return from exiles to Assyria and Babylon (722 & 587 BC).

God promises to <u>preserve</u> and <u>restore</u> national Israel.

The prophet Jeremiah made this point as much as or more than any other prophet. In **Jeremiah 31:35-37**, he said, *"35 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: 36 "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." 37 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."* I don't think you can say it much more strongly than that—"will not cease"… "forever."

And remember that Jeremiah wrote this at the same time he was predicting the first exile. Israel was, as a nation at this time, a nation who made Sodom look righteous (Ezek. 16:52)! Yet God said He would not cast them off for all they have done because **He doesn't deal with them only according to their evil ways or but according to His name** (Ezek. 20:44). He won't have egg on His face. He will keep His word to them unconditionally. He won't abandon that covenant relationship with them because it's not about them, but ultimately about God's covenant keeping character and glory. What this means is that even their present hardness (insensitivity) to the gospel (Rom. 11:25) and temporary, judicial "setting aside" as the primary means of advancing God's redemptive Word (11:17-25) doesn't negate that. Even their present hardness reveals He is remaining true to His word.

Jeremiah says if you can overturn the fixed order of nature or measure the heavens or the depths of the earth—both impossibilities—then Israel would cease to be a nation before God. Arnold Fruchtenbaum has frequently given a lecture on *How to Destroy the Jewish People*. To no surprise, this lecture draws interest from Hamas-sympathizers and Neo-Nazis, both who are genocidal in their view of the Jewish people. Needless to say, they leave in a tizzy because his text is Jeremiah 31:35-37 showing them it's impossible. There is a preservation of the Jewish people that is unexplainable outside of the Scriptures. There have been intentional, determined, and repeated

efforts to destroy the Jewish people throughout history—from Pharaoh to Haman to Hitler to Hussein—but all have failed. Not only that, but in a turn of events, somehow the Jewish people end up on top. As they say, with every war the Jews gain a new holiday (Purim, Hannukah). What I want to do now is start working our way through history from AD 70, where we left off last time, to the present day, testing Jeremiah 31:35-37.

AD 66-73 - First Jewish Revolt against Roman Rule; Temple destroyed, and Jews scattered.
After Israel rejected Christ as the Messiah, what Jesus said would happen, happened. He said that their "house" (the temple; Matthew 23:38-24:1-2) would be left to them desolate and not one stone would be left on another. Well, in AD 70 not one stone of the temple was left standing on the temple mount after Titus and the Roman army sacked Jerusalem. The Jews had to flee Jerusalem, and many would be led captive into all the nations as Jesus said. Jerusalem continued to be trampled underfoot by Gentiles (Luke 21:20-24).

AD 132-135 – **Second Jewish Revolt of Bar Kochba**; **more Jews scattered**
In a last-ditch effort of Roman liberation, the Jewish people rallied alongside Simon Bar Kochba who offered himself as a military messiah. Through guerilla warfare they experienced some initial success. Jerusalem was recaptured and they even minted coins with the inscription "For the freedom of Jerusalem." The coins were dated, "Year One," "Year Two," and "Year Three," but there was no "Year Four."[2] Rome retaliated savagely. Bar Kochba was slain, and the insurrection shattered. Anyone attempting to return and rebuild their home was executed. Rome banished the Jewish people from Jerusalem and forbade them for the next 200 years. The land really was made desolate. Olive groves were cut down. Villages were burned. Slave markets were established at Gaza and Hebron, auctioning Jewish people to foreign slavers who carried them to the far reaches of the world. This is when *the long dispersion* began.

At this time (AD132-135), in *an attempt to erase Jewish remembrance from the land*, **Emperor Hadrian** did a number of things: he renamed Jerusalem as **Aelia Capitolina** and renamed the land to **Syria Palestina—**after their ancient enemies the Philistines**.** The term Palestine started out as an antisemitic term. Over time people forgot what it meant and it was used by the Jews. Jews in the land 100 years ago were called Palestinian Jews. But terrorist Yasser Arafat would eventually (in 1964) formulate a massive lie about an ancient Palestinian nation that always existed in the land. But wherever there was a Jewish or Christian holy site, Hadrian erected a pagan temple on top of it, like a temple to Jupiter on the Temple mount. But while a Jewish **remnant** would always remain in the land—mostly in **Galilee** which is where **rabbinic Judaism** was developed—Hadrian's aggression pushed most Jews to the four corners of the earth.[3] They went everywhere from Europe, Africa, Persia, India, China. They would spend the next 2,000 years chasing religious freedom and running from persecution. These Jews became known as **Diaspora Jews or wandering Jews.** We even have house plants and board games called "wandering Jew." Most Jews since then have lived in the Diaspora, the dispersion.[4]

As they settled around the world, they would retain their Jewish identity and practices, but develop unique Jewish cultures. Among them, three stand out: **Ashkenazi, Sephardic,** and **Mizrahi** Jews. **Ashkenazi Jews** settled along the Rhine River in Germany and northern France. These are the

Jews we think of with the black suits and black hats with long beards and hair. Even though there is propaganda claiming they're not really Jews, DNA tests will trace their heritage back to Judea and the Middle Eastern Jews in the first and second centuries.[5] Ashkenazi Jews were tormented by economic and religious persecution. They were taxed discriminately, prohibited from owning land, and were restricted from certain jobs. Jews sometimes faced expulsion for not converting to Christianity. Because of that, many of them migrated eastward to Poland, Lithuania, and Russia. Many Jews died wandering, longing for a country to take them in.

The Jews who settled in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) became known as **Sephardic** Jews. For a time, they were free to worship and engage in commerce. However, persecution appeared in the 4th century through the Catholic Church. They were isolated through laws prohibiting intermarriage and interaction with them. They were so persecuted by Catholicism that they actually assisted the liberating Muslim armies who invaded Spain in AD 711. And they did well under Muslim rule even though the discriminatory taxes returned. In the 11th century, Catholics began to recapture Spain and forced the Jews to convert or die. In 1492 during the Spanish Inquisition, all practicing Jews were expelled from Spain, and they migrated to northern African countries like Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya.

Then there are the **Mizrahi** Jews. Mizrahi in Hebrew means "eastern" or "oriental" and refers to the Jews who settled in Iraq (Babylon), Iran (Persia), Yemen, Egypt, India and China. But when the Muslim conquests began in the 7th century, Islam became the dominant religion and their social status became second-class and paid special taxes for being non-Muslim. Despite their exile from the land and developing cultures, Jews around the world never forgot Jerusalem (Ps. 137) and would conclude the Passover with, "Next year in Jerusalem!" The never forgot their home.

AD 313-636 – <u>Byzantines</u> ruled over "Palestine" as a continuation of Roman rule.
Constantine legalized Christianity. Many holy sites in the land of Israel—paganized by Hadrian—were identified and reclaimed during this time in Israel. Byzantine churches were built over them. Emperor Julian wanted to restore Jewish Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, but his reign was short and after his death in 363, Jewish persecution began again with anti-Jewish laws. Jews faced discrimination and prohibitions. They couldn't proselytize or intermarry with Christians. In 614, the Jews in the land would support a Persian invasion and they maintained control for 3 years, but when Jerusalem was recaptured by the Byzantines, they expelled Jews from the holy city again.

AD 636-1099 – <u>Arab</u> rule; Islamic conquest of the land.
Islam becomes a religion and conquers the land but *does not establish an Arab population there*. They rule from Damascus (Syria), then Baghdad and Egypt. People in the land of Israel *begin to speak Arabic and are called Arabs, but it's more of a linguistic identification*.[6] For a time, Jewish people were granted a measure of protection and freedom if they paid the non-Muslim tax and in **AD 685,** the **Dome of the Rock** mosque was built on the Temple mount. By the 8th century the Jews were heavily restricted and limited in their rights. By the 10th century 300,000 Jews lived in the land but numbers decreased as restrictions increased.

AD 1099-1291 – The <u>Crusader</u> Period.

This period haunts the Jews. It's no surprise Jews don't want anything to do with Jesus because of the atrocities done to them in the name of Christ. As the Crusaders made their way to the Middle East, they massacred Jewish communities. Crusaders captured the land from the Muslims and massacred many of the non-Christians in the land. When Jewish people attempted to defend their homes, they were often burned to death or sold into slavery. There are stories of Jews being locked in their synagogues and burned alive or slain in the Temple area in the name of Christ. As a result of the Crusaders, the Jewish population decreased. However, in 1187, Muslims recaptured the land. Saladin, a Kurdish officer, called for Jews from all over to resettle the land and granted them a measure of freedom.

AD 1291-1516 – Mamluks rule the land.
Mamluks were an Egyptian and Muslim military class. They would rule from Egypt. Fearing Crusader reprisals, they destroyed the sea ports and thus trade with Europe was hindered. It was during this time that the land became a desolate province. The cities became ruins and Jerusalem was deserted. A small Jewish community lived in abject poverty. There were plagues, infestations, and earthquakes, but no one to rebuild.

AD 1517-1917 – Ottomans rule the land.
The Turkish Empire rose to power and attached the land of Israel to the province of Damascus and governed from Istanbul. They were tolerant towards the Jews, and many returned to the land after the expulsion from Spain.[7] But like the Mamluks, the Ottomans would view Israel mainly as a source of revenue and impose oppressive taxes, making the land languish again. This is when many trees were cut down due to a stout tree tax. Rather than pay taxes for trees on your land, they cut them down. The land became a swamp or desert, depending on the region. Only 7,000 Jews were left in the land by the end of the 17th century. In the 18th century, the land was owned by many absentee landlords living in places like Beirut, Damascus, and Cairo. They would lease it to destitute tenant farmers.

This is when Mark Twain, in a visit to the holy land, described its condition. Riding on horseback through the now-beautiful Jezreel Valley, he observed, "There is not a solitary village throughout its whole extent – not for 30 miles in either direction. There are two or three small clusters of Bedouin tents, but not a single permanent habitation. One may ride 10 miles, hereabouts, and not see 10 human beings…. Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince… Renowned Jerusalem itself, the stateliest name in history, has lost all its ancient grandeur, and is become a pauper village; the riches of Solomon are no longer there … the wonderful temple which was the pride and the glory of Israel, is gone… Palestine is desolate and unlovely. And why should it be otherwise?… Palestine is no more of this work-day world. It is sacred to poetry and tradition — it is dream-land"…. "Can the curse of the Deity beautify a land?"[8] Mark Twain didn't know how prophetic his statement was. God would beautify it as Jews returned in the 19th century.

With the Ottoman Empire weakening, Europeans became interested in the land. Archaeology started to take off and the Suez Canal was built. People wanted to visit the holy land. Many Jews at this time grew concerned about the condition of the land. They wanted it to be the land of milk and honey again. The British recognized that the land's greatest need was a body of people to take

care of it! Who better than the Jewish people who had ancient rights to the land and were persecuted throughout the world anyway?! There was also a growing resurgence of the historical-grammatical (plain or literal) interpretation of Scriptures, including prophecy. People began to see that prophecy talks a lot about a future national Israel. So that definitely had some influence and by 1856, there were 17,000 Jews in the land and by 1880, 25,000, most of which were agrarians. They bought the worthless land at exorbitant prices and made it flourish again. They started draining the swamps, irrigating the deserts, planting trees, building cities and villages known as *kibbutzim*. The city of Jerusalem would have a Jewish majority once again.

AD 1881-1921 – Pogroms in Russia motivate more Jewish people to return.
Jewish hopes of restoration were growing stronger and state-sponsored attacks (pogroms) on Jews were amplifying it, corroborating biblical prophecy that they would be regathered through persecution. Governments from Russia, Germany, Morocco, to Persia went door to door looting, raping, and murdering Jews—hundreds of thousands of Jews—just because they were Jewish.

AD 1882-1903 – we call this the first ***aliyah*** (means "ascent"), or immigration wave; 25,000 more Jews settle in Israel and we begin to see the resurgence of the Hebrew language. Also, during this period, Israel became an ethnic melting pot. *Among those who were being counted as Palestinian Arabs* (again, mostly a linguistic identification) *were*: Balkans, Greeks, Syrians, Latins, Egyptians, Turks, Armenians, Italians, Persians, Kurds, Germans, Afghans, Circassians, Bosnians, Sudanese, Samaritans, Algerians, Motiwala, and Tartars. The population contained no less than 50 languages. They were not "Arabs" but "Arab speaking." There never was an ancient Palestinian culture in the land. These are people who moved there once the Jews started to make it flourish again.

AD 1894-95 – Antisemitism erupts in France.
This leads a key figure, **Theodore Herzl** (the modern state's George Washington), published ***The Jewish State*** in 1896. He put **Zionism**—the idea of supporting the restoration of the Jews to their ancient homeland—on the map. His name is everywhere in modern Israelite culture.

AD 1897 – The *First International Zionist Congress* convenes in Basel, Switzerland.
AD 1904-14 – Second *aliyah* (40,000); more Jews from Russia arrive, provoked by pogroms.

AD 1917 – British control of the land; The Balfour Declaration
The British take control of the land during WWI and issue the **Balfour Declaration** favoring the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. It reads, "His Majesty's Government view with favour 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 existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in another country." What this meant was that for the first time in 2,000 years the Jewish people would determine their destiny and not have to be dependent on host countries! Many of these British leaders who put this out were influenced by their own faith in the Scriptures and their desire to alleviate the suffering the Jewish people. The way I see it, this Balfour Declaration is not much different than when King Cyrus took over Babylon and issued the decree that all Jews could return home from the first exile

in 539 BC (Ezra 1). Both were Gentile rulers who with control of the land, declared that all Jews could return home. It's God's **providence** in the times of the Gentiles.
AD 1919-23 – Third *aliyah*; 40,000 more Jews from Russia arrive provoked by communism. These Jews move mostly to the cities rather than agricultural settlements. It's here that Arabs begin to strongly oppose Jewish settlement, proposing immigration restrictions and inciting violence. As a result, Winston Churchill issued a White Paper in 1922 *recognizing the rights of Jews to the land* but at the same time *limiting/slowing immigration traffic*. This couldn't have come at a worse time with WWII around the corner. In 1921 **Haj Amin al-Husseini was appointed as Grand Mufti of Jerusalem.** Husseini, the uncle of **Yasser Arafat**, would eventually collaborate and become friends with Hitler during the 30's and 40's. He is the primary source and instigator of so many of the problems we see today. He encouraged and advised Hitler on killing Jews and recruited 100,000 European Muslims to fight for Nazi Germany.

AD 1922 – The League of Nations accepts the Balfour Declaration, ratifying the British mandate for Palestine with the intentions of facilitating a Jewish national home.

AD 1924-32 – **Fourth *aliyah***; Jews arrive mainly from Poland; This time there is many artisans and shopkeepers among them so the Jewish national home is taking shape. The Hebrew University had become a world-class academic institution. They developed a self-governing national council and a self-defense organization that would eventually become the IDF (formed in response to Arab attacks on Jewish communities). Rydelnik notes that "Between the two world wars, the Jewish population of Palestine increased by 375,000, while the Arab population increased by 380,000. Even though the British consistently attempted to appease the Arabs by restricting Jewish immigration, they permitted unrestricted Arab immigration from neighboring states."[9] Arabs moved there for a better, freer life and benefited from Jews' restoration of the land.

AD 1933 – the fifth *aliyah*; 250,000 Jews primarily from Germany, industrialists and professionals (lawyers, physicians, etc), flee Hitler's torrent of fiery anti-Semitic legislation. Many more would have come had Churchill not issue the **White Paper of 1922**. The White Paper doomed to Hitler's death camps those who did not enter Palestine.

AD 1939 – War between Great Britian and Germany was inevitable. With the League of Nations collapsed and Britian seeking allies in the Arab world, the British issue the **White Paper of 1939 repudiating the Balfour Declaration** and **limiting Jewish immigration** to 75,000 over the course of 5 years and then ceasing altogether. Again, the worst time ever to limit immigration.

AD 1939-45 – WWII leaves six million Jews dead—2/3's of European Jews—in the Holocaust. Adolf Hitler's "final solution" to the "Jewish problem" is to exterminate them completely.[10] Economic, political, and social problems were blamed on the "parasitic" Jews. They were killed in shooting operations and gas chambers or worked and starved to death. What is more stunning—the number of Jews killed or the fact that men were capable of such genocidal lunacy—is hard to say. The word **genocide** was invented as a result of this unconceivable moment in history. I believe that through Hitler, Satan tried to end the Jewish story because God still has plans for them, but God had different plans. He would use the Holocaust to precipitate the modern state of

Israel. The world recognized the suffering of the Jews and the Jews longed *more than ever* for a place they could call home—in Israel. Out of the ashes of the Holocaust, national Israel was reborn. **AD 1947** – **The United Nations** was created to prevent such atrocities from happening ever again. With the British at a loss on how to govern Palestine, they submitted the question to the UN. They **partitioned Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state**. **Jews** would get the Coastal Plain, eastern Galilee, and the Negev, while the **Arabs** would get western Galilee, the central part of the country on the West Bank of the Jordan, and the Gaza Strip. **Jerusalem was to become an international city.** The Jews accepted their rejoicing heard around the world. The Arabs rejected the proposal and began to wage terror.

AD 1948 – The British end their mandate in Palestine and the Jewish people declared statehood/independence on May 15, 1948. The Declaration of Independence was read by David Ben Gurion, the first Israeli prime minister. It reads, "It is the natural right of the Jewish people, like any other people, to control their own destiny in their sovereign state. Accordingly, we the members of the People's Council of the Jewish people of Eretz-Israel and of the Zionist movement, are here assembled on the day of the termination of the British mandate over Eretz-Israel, and, by virtue of our natural and historic right and United Nations, we hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel. The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and the ingathering of the exiles. It will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants. It will be based on the principles of freedom, justice and peace, as envisioned by the Prophets of Israel…. Placing our trust in the Almighty, we affix our signatures to this proclamation at this session of the Provisional Council of State, on the soil of the homeland, in the city of Tel Aviv, on this Sabbath Eve, the fifth day of Iyar, 5708 (May 14, 1948)." With those words, the state of Israel was reborn after 2,000 years!

But, on that very day, **The War of Independence** also began. The surrounding 6 Arab nations of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt all attacked Israel with genocidal intentions. The Jews came out of the Holocaust only to enter *another attempted Holocaust* after saying, "Never again." They are fighting for their existence again: 80,000 Arab troops surrounding a nascent nation with 60,000 Israeli troops, with only 19,000 fully armed or prepared for war. Arabs had controlled of the skies and attacked from all sides with better weaponry. Somehow, as if by divine providence, Israel won. She expected to sign a peace agreement with her neighbors, but it never came. Between 1948-1949, 650,000 Arabs fled to neighboring Arab countries with hopes to return when the war is over, and 820,000 Jews were forced to flee Arab countries with 586,000 settling in the new state of Israel. Jews who had lived in Arab nations for hundreds or thousands of years were no longer welcome and had to give up all their assets and citizenship to leave.

AD 1964-65 – The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), now known as the Palestinian Authority, was established in Cairo uniting various Arab terrorist groups under one umbrella with **the purpose of destroying Israel**. They vowed to drive the Jews into the sea.

AD 1967 – constant bombardment from Syria into Galilee provoked another war called the Six Day War. Despite being outgunned and outmanned, Israel defeated Egypt, Syria, and Jordan while acquired Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, the West Bank (Judea and Samaria), the Gaza Strip,

and the Sinai Peninsula—land that they would mostly give back in exchange for peace and to prove they are not colonialists/imperialists. The stories that come out of this war and timing of events point to a higher hand being involved. Israel again, mistakenly believed they would negotiate a peace treaty. Instead, Arab leaders met in Khartoum, Sudan, and resolved three significant "no's": **No peace, no negotiations, and no recognition of Israel.**

AD 1973 – **Yom Kippur War**; On October 6, 1973—50 years prior to the recent massacre by Hamas—on the holiest day of the year for Jews, **Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack** and many Jews lost their lives. No family in Israel was untouched. Israel won once again.

AD 1975 – The United Nations has changed sides; they pass a resolution calling Zionism racist.
AD 1979 – Camp David Peace Agreement; Israel returns the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in exchange for peace.
AD 1987-1993 – **Widespread rioting, called the Intifada** ("uprising") erupts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Thus begins an era of **constant propaganda war, shootings and bombings by terrorists**.
AD 1993 – **Oslo Accords** signed by Israel and PLO and are implemented in 1994.
AD 1994 – **Israel and Jordan** sign a peace treaty.
AD 1998 – **Israel gives more land back to terrorists**. Netanyahu and Arafat conclude the Wye River Plantation Agreement, resulting in another 13% of disputed land placed under Palestinian Authority.
AD 2000 – **Israel withdraws from security zone in Lebanon**; Arafat rejects the significant offer at Camp David II revealing he has zero plans to coexist with Israel.

AD 2005 – **complete disengagement of Israel from the Gaza Strip**. Israeli settlers are forced out, leaving everything behind. At this point, much of the land won in the wars has been given back to the Arabs in exchange for peace that would never come.

AD 2006 – **Hamas won a large-scale victory in Palestinian Legislative Council elections**; Hamas, along with Hezbollah and others, refuse to renounce terror and continually barrage Israel with rockets and attacks up to this day. They still operate with genocidal intentions. The Gaza Strip became a nest of terrorists that is being dealt with today after the worst attack since the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and anti-Semitism is on the rise again. And that's where we end it.

From this we can conclude number one, that it's a myth to say that there was always some Palestinian or Muslim nation in the land of Israel. It's a lie. Propaganda. Second, we can conclude that God isn't done with the Jewish people. Luther said, "If the Jews are Abraham's descendants, then we would expect them back in their own land. We would expect them to have a state of their own. But what do we see? We see them living among us scattered and despised."[11] That was 500 years ago. To him, the idea that God would literally fulfill his promises to Israel and return them to the land was unthinkable. But here they are. Historians and anthropologists have long bent their minds trying to explain the Jewish people. Like Mark Twain, they can't! "How do you explain a people that has survived systemic vilification, persecution, and genocide while scattered around the world?"[12] The only logical answer is: **Jeremiah 31:35-37**. God keeps His Word. He is faithful

in covenant to them. That's the secret of Jewish immortality. As Charles Feinberg said, "The survival of Israel through the centuries can be explained only on supernatural grounds."[13]

The existence of the Jewish people and reestablishment of Israel as a national state proves the <u>veracity</u> of Scripture and the <u>existence</u> of God. We can <u>trust</u> God's Word.

Frederick the Great was said to have asked his chaplain for one clear and compelling evidence for the existence of God. The chaplain replied, "The amazing Jew, your Majesty." After reading these Scriptures, my challenge to you that you take sometime this week and read or reread Ezekiel 36-39. Ezekiel talks about the house of Israel regathered in stages, and in unbelief, in preparation for end times events (Ezek. 36:37). For these prophecies to take place, Israel had to be back in the land. All that's left is their spiritual regeneration, which is something we'll discuss next time.

---

[1] As cited in Michael Rydelnik, "The Jewish People: Evidence for the Truth of Scripture," in *The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2014), 254.

[2] Elwood McQuaid, *It Is No Dream*, 42.

[3] AD 135-636 is known as the Rabbinic Period; Jewish life moved to Galilee. Galilee became the center of Jewish life. The Sanhedrin would convene in the city of Tiberias in Galilee. Archaeology reveals a Jewish presence in the land. This is when rabbinic Law developed.

[4] A museum at Tel Aviv University is dedicated to describing what Jewish life was like in the diaspora.

[5] Christopher J. Katulka, *Israel Always* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2022*)*, 72; see also Thommy Ice, "Are Modern Jews Descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?" in *The Case for Zionism: Why Christians Should Support Israel* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 2017), 127-147.

[6] See Rydelnik, *Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 69.

[7] Jews were blamed for the Black Death plague that swept through Europe from 1348 to 1350. They were accused of poisoning wells and other sources of water and as a result were massacred and banished from Spain, France, Germany, And Austria. While Americans celebrate 1492 as the year Chrsitopher Columbus discovered America, it is enshrined in the Jewish mind as the year that all Jews were expelled from Spain which held the largest Jewish population at the time.

[8] As cited in Michael Rydelnik, *Understanding the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007), 72-73.

[9] Ibid., 90.

[10] Jews have been forced to wear hats or badges or other garb to identify themselves as Jews in various places for extended periods of time. During the Holocaust it was a yellow Star of David.

[11] Rydelnik, *The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2014), 261.

[12] McQuaid, *It Is No Dream*, 63.

[13] Rydelnik, *The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel*, 258.