

AN OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY:

From Abraham to Modern Israel

Lesson 12

Today we'll conclude our 12 week Biblical survey from Abraham to modern Israel. Let's jump right in.

SECULARISM ENTERS JEWISH LIFE

By the start of the 18th century, the Jewish people were dispersed all over eastern and western Europe. But the nature of this dispersion was unlike earlier centuries when they tended to stay clustered in communities or ghettos of sufficient size to maintain their unique Jewish lifestyle and traditions and at the same time pass down Torah and Talmud teachings. By now a single Jewish family might migrate to a typical European Christian village and be the only Jewish presence there. The Jews were now spread thin throughout Europe: a mile wide, and an inch deep. The lack of Talmud scholars caused a severe weakening of Jewish religious education. Many Jews were less interested, now, in being separate and more in being accepted into mainstream European societies.

Judaism was in disarray. Positions of Jewish religious authority could be bought and sold. Formal training was no longer required to be a Rabbi; a man simply needed to be at least 20 years of age and decide that would be his vocation. Into this weakened religious structure walked a Jewish man that wished to restore the piousness, and separateness, to Judaism; his name was Israel Ben Eliezer. This mystical faith healer brought a new vision to Polish Jewry and formed the Hasidic Jewish movement, first seen as a radical sect. His stated intent was to restore purity to Judaism; of course it was a purity that reflected his definition of what purity embodied. Whatever unity remained among the scattered Jews was now destroyed, as was the Rabbinical authority that had been the religious governing body and the rudder of the Jewish society for more than 1500 years.

By the start of the 19th century ¾ million Jews lived in Poland, making up at least 10% of its

population. It was about this time that we see European Jews moving towards a more secular culture. That is to say, up to this time their God, their religion, their culture, even the long lost land of Israel, were all fused as one... inseparable... to define their identity. Over the past centuries, even before the birth and death of Christ, millions of Jews had been martyred rather than give up any element of their faith. In 19th century Europe this was no longer the case, as the continent was deep into a period we know as the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment began early in the 18th century, brought about by a wave of philosophers, academics and intellectuals that sought to take away the underlying religious foundation of European life and government that they viewed as oppressive and too restrictive; and replace it with their view of the rational and logical. It was basically warmed over Roman (Hellenistic) pagan philosophy, but with all sense of spirituality and the supernatural removed. Voltaire, Kant, Hume, and Rousseau were the vanguard of this movement.

Enlightenment philosophy has evolved into the secular humanism that pervades our planet. It is called secular because it abandons the notion that there is anything of supernatural origin or any being greater than man himself; and humanism because all of mankind's hopes and progress is based on scientific knowledge, new technologies and the power of our minds to define morality for ourselves, as societies and as individuals. Without doubt it is the Jews who have suffered under the philosophy of secular humanism more than any other identifiable group of people.

Europe rapidly embraced the mantras of the Enlightenment philosophers. But none, perhaps, had as much lasting influence on Jews and the world in general, than Voltaire. He was the most virulent sort of anti-Semite; he also detested the Christian Church as much as he despised the Jews. His grand vision was to bring about a world society that was Greek culture brought back to life. He saw Jews as inherently evil, a freak of nature that polluted all of Europe with their irrational beliefs, moral absolutism and antiquated traditions. To Voltaire they were sub-human; alien beings incapable of rehabilitation. His views became the primary lens through which Europeans viewed the Jews all through the period of the Enlightenment. These feelings were not universal, however, and many in Europe questioned whether Jews were without human worth. Somehow the ideas of humanity's inherent right to individual freedom and anti-Jewish beliefs coexisted during the Enlightenment in such a way that the Jews actually gained emancipation; first in France, then Spain, and eventually in Poland. This inclusion into mainstream European society was sufficient cause in itself for the Jews to embrace the path of the Enlightenment and secular humanism. But the price for their newfound freedoms and societal acceptance was high.

Jews were, by now, emigrating to North and South America, and England. They became bankers, lawyers, and business leaders. Their Jewishness came with them incognito, not to be displayed or revealed until they were well entrenched in their social, political, and business lives. They often changed their names to hide their identities. Their goal was to blend in with

the wealthy and the aristocrats, almost all of Christian persuasion. In time they would provide as incubators for more traditional Jewish life to reemerge and as a source of welcome for other Jewish wanderers. Jews no longer looked upon Christianity as an enemy religion, but rather as an acceptable and understandable faith, but only for gentiles. The Jews had willingly given up their Messiah to the gentiles in exchange for societal acceptance and economic freedoms. Remarkably, even the deep desire that had burned in every Jew's heart for an eventual return to their homeland waned.

JEWS IN RUSSIA

By 1850 nearly 2 ½ million Jews had relocated to Russia. Within 50 years that number would double. For the Russians the Jews were an uncomfortable enigma. They had no idea what to do with these strange foreigners. The Russians were historically suspicious of strangers. They were afraid of these Jews' western ways and alien traditions. The paranoid Russia we see today had its roots 200 years ago.

The history of the Jews in Russia is one of segregation, alienation, and persecution. Early in the 1800's the Czars and noblemen of Russia saw the Jews as a problem. Their preference was Jewish expulsion because they feared if they tried to assimilate the Jews they might try to take over the Motherland. Yet the Jews had come to represent such a sizeable portion of the Russian economy that expulsion would mean serious degradation of their society (kind of the Egypt scenario all over again). The first solution, therefore, was not to allow them to scatter; rather it was decided to restrict their movement. They were confined to an area near the Baltic Sea. The Jews were issued permits to live in other areas, should the Russian Royals find a reason that was favorable to them.

In 1812 the French Monarch Napoleon attacked Russia with 500,000 troops. France had emancipated her Jews and so the Russian Jews welcomed Napoleon, hoping for liberation. Early on in the war it appeared Russia was well on its way to becoming a French territory. Napoleon's troops burned Moscow to the ground. But, courageously, the Russians responded by burning all the grain fields that the French army was relying on for food for their troops, who were so very far from home. The French Army was then caught in a brutal Russian winter without shelter or food, far beyond their supply lines. They retreated; but only 20% of the French army survived the march back to France. Russia remained sovereign.

But now Russia reacted with vengeful bitterness toward the treasonous Jews who had welcomed Napoleon. Beginning about 1825 Jewish men and boys from the ages of 12 to 25 were drafted to rebuild the Russian Army that had been decimated by the French. The term of mandatory service was 25 years! In 1844 the Russian government instituted a Candle Tax and it was applied only to candles used by Jews for religious purposes, such as Shabbat candles.

Next was a tax on kosher meats. In 1855 under a new Czar, these taxes and restrictions were eased somewhat. There was a desperate need throughout Russia for scholars, teachers, accountants, and the Jews had many of these in their own communities. Jews that held these occupations were suddenly allowed to live wherever they pleased.

In 1861 the Russian feudal system, whereby the peasants belonged to the land, was dismantled throughout Czarist Russia. Western Enlightenment philosophy, science, and culture were introduced. The Russian Army service term was trimmed from 25 years to 4. Jews were allowed to join the mainstream society and become writers, painters, sculptors, journalists and poets; and their works were surprisingly acceptable to the native Russians. But all was not well. Many within Russia were alarmed and disgusted at this new era of tolerance for Jews. Among them was Karl Marx who led open literary attacks against the Jews. In 1881 Czar Alexander II was blown up with a bomb. The new Czar blamed the Jews; a complete fabrication. A tidal wave of anti-Semitism swept over Russia. All of the old restrictions and persecutions reappeared. It culminated with the words of the head of the Russian Orthodox Christian Church, who, delighted, predicted that “one-third of the Jews will die, one-third will be converted (to Christianity), and one-third will flee”. He wasn’t far off the mark.

THE JEWISH PROBLEM

About 1880 a book was published that purported to examine the problem of worldwide Jewry, and proposed a solution. In short the author, Leon Pinsker, stated that the gentile world would never accept Jews into their existing societies. Jews were too different, too difficult, to assimilate. As too many Jews wandered in to another country, there is a natural point at which the nation becomes alarmed and the persecution begins. The only viable and permanent solution was the establishment of a Jewish homeland. It didn’t have to be the former Holy Land; anywhere would do.

Zionist movements had already begun to spring up. Zionists were groups with the grand vision of returning the Jews to their homeland, and re-establishing the nation of Israel (the Bible uses the term Zion many times in reference to Israel). The Holy Land, called Palestine since the end of the 2nd Jewish Rebellion in 135 AD, was now under the control of the Turkish Ottoman Empire: Muslims. The several Zionist movements were grassroots and had no political connections and no idea how to achieve permission from proper channels to set up trial Jewish settlements in Palestine. So with the backing of Baron Rothschild, a wealthy Jew, they attempted to establish some Jewish agricultural villages in unpopulated and barren parts of Palestine without permission.

Near the dawn of the 20th century a Paris newspaper journalist name Theodore Herzl, a Viennese Jew, covered a story about a French Jewish army officer name Dreyfus who was tried for treason, convicted and sent to Devil’s Island. Herzl was convinced that it was all a

sham, and it was simply the continuation of a subliminal anti-Semitism that pervaded Europe. It set him off on a mission that would change the face of the world forever.

Herzl was convinced that the only solution to what was now termed the world-over as “the Jewish problem” was a political one. Jews had never been, and never would be, accepted as equals in whatever nation that attempted to assimilate them. No, the Jews needed their own land and the logical place was ancient Israel (Palestine), which they had not occupied for almost 2000 years. He worked diligently on what he believed was more than just a dream; rather, it was a practical plan to create a nation of Jews.

This was not religious fervor; Herzl was not a religious man, so he was not thinking in terms of God’s “promised land” or a fulfillment of Biblical prophecies. Rather this was a pragmatic plan, brought about by sheer geo-political reality. He planned and wrote until he had a good outline of what he thought needed to be done and then he approached a fabulously wealthy French Jew named Baron Maurice de Hirsch to ask for support. He was sent away disappointed, but was not side-tracked from his vision. Herzl began making speeches to small groups of Jewish businessmen and civic leaders. They were skeptical, bordering on the uninterested. It was when he took his message to the common working Jew that he realized the passionate hope they lay deep in the hearts of the Jewish masses that they might someday return to their ancient homeland, the land God gave to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob nearly 4000 years earlier: Israel.

In 1898 Herzl, with the help of several of the now stalled Zionist movements, convened a conference in Switzerland to unite the Jews in an effort to create political power for their cause. The World Zionist Organization was created with Herzl as its president, and he became the political spokesman for the Jews. He fearlessly predicted that within 50 years the Jews would have a nation of their own, back in the land of Israel. The Jewish masses cheered him, and the wealthy Jews rejected him.

Undeterred, Herzl went to the leaders of the Ottoman Empire with a proposal: give the Jews Palestine in return for a large sum of money that would help the Ottoman’s with their severe financial crisis. The Ottomans counter-offered with Mesopotamia. Herzl refused.

Herzl approached the British government, thinking that perhaps a different land might have to be accepted. The British generously offered Uganda in Africa. He took the offer to the Zionist Organization and after a bitter debate, the offer was rejected. He next went to the Pope for help, but there was no support found at all for a Jewish homeland. Within a few months Herzl was dead of heart failure; but his vision did not die. Jewish families began immigrating to Palestine on their own, one by one, primarily from Russia and Romania. They started farms, as there was no other way to make a living, although most had little knowledge of agriculture. Baron Rothschild continued supporting these efforts. In 1882 immigration increased enough to

worry the Ottoman Turks and they closed the door. Twelve years later another wave of immigration began, resulting from renewed organized Russian persecution of the Jews. This time it was the Arab inhabitants of Palestine that protested the Jews' arrival.

In 1906 the French government reported that the total population of western Palestine (the former Holy Lands area) was 60,000. It consisted of 40,000 Jews, 15,000 Christians of various ethnic backgrounds, and 5,000 Muslims of various Middle Eastern extractions. The Arabs began raiding Jewish settlements. The Jews fought back. The Turks armed the Arabs. The attacks increased. By 1914 over 85,000 Jews had found their way into Palestine and were giving their lives to stay there. Then World War I broke out, and conditions changed again.

During the First World War the Jews living in Palestine found themselves under viscous attack from the Muslim Turks. Working with the British, the Jews established a spy network. Though the network was eventually uncovered and destroyed, the British had found an ally in the Jews and openly asked for Jewish help in the war effort. The Jews responded favorably but time was not on the side of the British. Unknown to the citizens of England the British were running out of ammunition to prosecute the war. Specifically they could not produce sufficient gunpowder; and this was due to their inability to produce enough quantities of a chemical needed for its manufacture: acetone.

The British government secretly enlisted the help of a brilliant English Jew named Weitzman. He developed a method to synthesize acetone from horse manure, gave it to the British, and the rest as they say is history. After the war the British government approached Weitzman and asked what they might do to repay him. He replied, "Give my people a homeland in Palestine". The result was the Balfour Declaration in which the British government officially stated that it looked favorably upon the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

In October 1917 the British attacked Palestine and a year later all of Palestine came under British control. At the end of the war England was awarded Palestine by their war allies as a share of war booty. England kept its promise to Weitzman and re-opened the doors to Jewish immigration to Palestine.

During the 1920's the Jewish population of Palestine grew steadily, fueled primary by Jews emigrating from Poland. The Muslim Arab leaders, both in Palestine and in the surrounding nations, were very much against the steady increase in Jewish immigration. Tempers flared; scattered incidents ranging from vandalism to street altercations and isolated killings began occurring more frequently. In August of 1929 in Hebron, the burial place of Avraham (*Abraham*) and Sarai (*Sarah*) (in an area we now call the West Bank), large bands of Arabs began indiscriminately killing Jews. When it was over 67 of the town's population of 800 Jews lay dead. The remaining Jews were relocated to safety in Yerushalayim (*Jerusalem*) by England.

In 1933 Adolph Hitler came to power in Germany, which was in the midst of a devastating depression, and the Jews were promptly blamed for the country's economic disaster. More than 100,000 German Jews fled to Palestine, fearing that the centuries old cycle of their bearing the brunt of a gentile nation's problems, and forfeiting their lives as a result, was occurring yet again. Then in April of 1936 various Arab factions put aside their differences and led by a Muslim Mufti began a boycott against Jewish merchants and Jewish made goods. Within a few days the boycott escalated into riots and killings. The British, still the rulers of the vast majority of the Middle East, came to the aid of the Jews and this further escalated the situation whereby Arab terrorists began attacking British and Jewish settlements, schools, and military facilities. By November of that year the "Arab Rebellion" was under control. But in 1937 the Peel Commission officially recommended partitioning Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states and the Arabs again revolted. They were subdued in about 6 months and all remained relatively quiet for the next several years.

In 1939 Germany invaded Poland and Britain slammed shut the door of Palestinian immigration by Jews at the demands of Muslim Arabs who were now going to be important allies in WWII. Over the next 5 years Jewish blood overflowed the gutters of Europe, and the ashes of millions of Jewish bodies filled the air of Germany and Poland, in an event we now call the Holocaust.

Jews from all over the world looked on in horror. Jews from Canada, the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Northern Africa, South Africa, Australia, and almost every nation on earth worried if their extinction was finally at hand. But in fact it was not so. The war ended, the atrocities even worse than imagined; the stunned European Jewish survivors boarded steamships to any nation that would accept them. Most nations, including the US, were unprepared to take the enormous wave of Jewish immigrants that sought sanctuary in a new home, and turned them away. Nearly 40% of the entire world's Jewish population died at the hands of the German madman, Adolf Hitler.

ISRAEL IS RE-BORN IN A DAY

In 1947 the British gave up their control over Palestine that they had obtained almost 30 years earlier and gladly turned it over to the UN. Almost immediately the UN officially partitioned the land. 80% of the land went to the Arabs, and it became the territory of Trans-Jordan (some of which later became the Kingdom of Jordan). The remaining 20% of Palestine went to the Jews. The Arabs, infuriated, wanted not one square inch of Jewish territory to exist anywhere in the Middle East.

It is key to understand why the Arabs were so determined NOT to allow a Jewish State in a

nearly unpopulated, completely desolate, largely deserted piece of land. The reason is Islam, the religion of the majority of the population of the Middle East. One of the primary commands of Allah in the Muslim holy book, the Koran, is that once a Muslim has stepped foot on a piece of land, it is claimed as Muslim territory... for all time. It matters not whether Muslims have ever been a majority, nor set up permanent settlements, nor whether Muslim leaders have governed the region. Simply the presence of a single Muslim is enough. Therefore it is unthinkable to the Muslim mind that Jews or Christians could have a nation anywhere in the Middle East.

On May 14, 1948 with a vote of the UN, Israel was officially reborn as a nation; one of the most important prophecies in Bible history was fulfilled.

^{CJB} **Isaiah 66:8 *Who ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Is a country born in one day? Is a nation brought forth all at once? For as soon as Tziyon went into labor, she brought forth her children.***

Mind boggling: on May 13th Israel didn't exist; on May 14th it did. Minutes after Israel announced their independence and statehood, the US became the first nation to recognize Israel's sovereignty; interestingly, within 2 days, the Soviet Union followed suit.

But Satan was not about to stand idly by and allow the reappearance of the land of Yeshua's birth. According to the Bible, not long after Israel returned to their land would also come the return of Messiah resulting in that Old Serpent's demise. This time Jesus will not come as a peaceful, sacrificial lamb. This time Christ is coming to redeem the title deed to planet Earth; and to do it He will have to forcefully take it from Satan. Yeshua will execute judgment as the Warrior-King the Jews had always expected of a Messiah; but the terror that He shall rain down upon the enemies of God will have had no equal in times past.

Israel, warned by the Muslim Arabs that if Israel declared statehood a bloodbath would ensue, was attacked within 24 hours after the UN vote to recognize them as a sovereign nation. Five Arab armies swept into Israel but not before the Arab League appealed to thousands of Arabs living in the newly formed Jewish state to relocate temporarily out of harms way. They were promised that as soon as their Muslim brothers quickly decimated the woefully inadequate Jewish army (that was really a small militia), they could return and claim their Jewish neighbors' homes and land as their own. Approximately half of the Arabs living in Israel complied, packed-up a few of their most precious possessions and hurried into the westernmost part of the Kingdom of Jordan, on the west bank of the Jordan River. As the 5 armies of Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq sat ready to annihilate Israel, the Secretary General of the Arab League got on the radio and ordered the war to begin with these chilling words: "This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre (of the Jews), which will be spoken of like the Mongolian Massacres and the Crusades."

The UN convened and condemned the attacks. Israel fought back with what few weapons were at its disposal, and hung on tenuously while the UN debated its fate. In early 1949 the Arabs were warned that if they did not stop the war and withdraw the UN would take action. By the end of February 1949 hostilities ceased and the Arab armies left Israel. However here marks the beginning of what the world in our time calls the Palestinian problem. The war had ended but thousands of Arab men, women, and children that had left their homes, jobs, and possessions so that the Arab League's armed forces could attack Israel freely; now they were left homeless and people without a country. History has conveniently forgotten that Israel actually offered amnesty to these Arabs, and was ready to allow them to return to their homes in Israel but the Arab League told Israel that they must not just accept those Arabs who left, but also all the Arabs in the Palestine region who wanted to relocate to Israel. But the other untold part of the story is that no Arab nation would take-in these "West Bank" Arabs! Jordan, with great reluctance, allowed them to remain in their West Bank territory but only as refugees and they could not cross the Jordan to enter Jordan proper. By design the Arab League made these former Israeli-Arabs permanent refugees, because they wanted sympathetic figures to use as pawns to move world opinion against Israel. So these "West Bank" Arabs found themselves living in a tent city: people without a nation, without a means to earn a living, without running water or sanitary facilities, and without hope.

In Ezekiel chapter 37 God had promised His chosen people that they would come back to the Land that He gave to them, never again to be removed. But Yeshua added another prophecy to that one: it was that Yerushalayim (*Jerusalem*) would also become theirs once again, and when that happened, it would signal the coming of the end of the age. Or, as Yeshua says in Luke 21:24: "**Jerusalem will be trampled on by the**

Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled". Although Israel was a nation, their capital was Tel Aviv because Jerusalem had never been liberated; the Holy City was still in the hands of Jordan and it remained so for another 20 years.

In 1967 the Arab League again informed the Arabs living in Israel that they wanted them to leave Israel and temporarily relocate. Why? Because the Arab nations were again going to attack Israel! Further these Israeli Arabs were *again* told that if they would leave their homes temporarily, when the war was over (which would be just a matter of a few weeks) they could go back and take their Jewish neighbor's home from them and make it their own. Several thousand more Israeli Arabs joined their now hopeful brothers on the west bank of the Jordan River.

A few days later on June 1, 1967 the Arab nations surrounding Israel mounted a coordinated all out attack using several battalions of tanks, infantry, and their combined Air Forces. The world watched as the tiny nation of Israel not only repulsed its attackers but pushed them back so far and so rapidly that Israel captured a tiny piece of land from Egypt called the Gaza Strip; a hilly area at the northern tip of Israel belonging to Syria called the Golan Heights (from which the Syrians had for years shelled Israeli settlements); and land on the west side of the Jordan

River that belonged to the nation of Jordan (now called the West Bank).

Perhaps most astounding, on June 7, 1967 at the culmination of the miraculous and infamous Six Day War, Israeli military commander Mordechai Ben Gurion stunned the world when he radioed to Israel's Command Headquarters these 5 precious words: "We are at the Wall". Israel had taken Jerusalem and their troops were standing at the Western Wall of the Temple Mount. The Holy City, Jerusalem, in the hands of gentiles since 70 AD was now once again controlled by the Jews.....just as Christ prophesied.

Please take notice; the Bible, which has proved its trustworthiness time and again, is abundantly clear that when that day happened (as it did), the countdown to the end had begun in earnest and there is no stopping it. Again, what did Yeshua say in Luke 21? He said "Jerusalem will be trampled on (occupied and controlled) by Gentiles (non-Jews) UNTIL the times (the era or age) of the Gentiles are fulfilled (the purpose for gentiles is brought to pass)". Let us not dismiss this momentous event without being clear of its significance: the Jews regained control of Jerusalem in 1967 as God's sign that the era of the Gentiles was fulfilled. Let me repeat this: the Biblical sign that the time of the Gentiles has fulfilled its purpose is the retaking of Jerusalem by the Jews. It has happened; it happened in June of 1967.

Now listen to this further warning in Matthew 24: 32-35: "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: as soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it (the Kingdom of God) is near, right at the door. ***I tell you the truth, THIS generation (the generation that exists when Jews regained control of Jerusalem) will certainly not pass (will not die out) until all these things (the rapture, tribulation, and 2nd coming) have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away***".

The message for us is that the Kingdom of God is at hand, Satan is about to be bound up, and we are entering a time which the Bible describes as bittersweet. Bitter because the powers of Hell are responding now as never before to the prospect of their end, primarily in the form of world-wide terror and violence. Sweet, because true peace is at hand. Our Savior is coming back, soon! Centuries of waiting is almost over. However the bitterness must first be traversed before we come to the sweet; so prepare.

But after the Six-Day War of 1967 another problem remained. What of the nearly one million Arabs, still sitting in despair in the West Bank, now Israeli occupied territory (formerly Jordan), in a wilderness, in a shanty town with their hopes of destroying Israel in a shambles; no homes, no jobs, and no services?

It was a little before this time that we begin to hear of a terrorist leader named Yasser Arafat

and a small terrorist organization called Black September. This was the group who pulled off the infamous 1972 massacre of 11 Israeli Olympians at the Munich Olympic Games. This high profile attack was an attempt to recruit more members to its terrorist gang. Interestingly although their primary objective was the extermination of Israel, their immediate goal was to overthrow the Jordanian government. This would give them both influence and a platform from which to annihilate Israel. After several years of terrorist bombings, shootings and killings in Jordan by Arafat's terror organization, the Jordanian government was able to expel Arafat and his mob of murderers. But in reality they were simply "exiled" to the West Bank where through extortion and terror they were able to become the War Lords over the helpless Arab refugees left languishing in the West Bank. In time Arab nations worked together and realized they could use the refugee situation to their advantage, and so began using their inexhaustible petrodollars in a misinformation campaign designed to gain sympathy for these refugees, and to place the blame for their plight on Israel.

Their plan has worked to near perfection. The history of the Middle East has been re-written. A group of terrorist thugs became legitimized as the government over the refugee encampments of the West Bank Arabs. Black September changed its name to the PLO: the Palestine Liberation Organization. Perhaps the most viscous terrorist leader of our time was deemed a statesman and given a lofty and legitimate title: Chairman Arafat. These same refugees, a generation later, are now appealing to the world to help them get back their nation of Palestine; a fictional nation that has never, in all the history of the world, existed. This group of Arab refugees gave themselves a name: the Palestinians. Prior to 1967 they were known and considered to be just what they are: a collection of immigrants and wanderers from various Arab and Muslim nations that came to Israel to find work in Jewish factories and fields but stepped aside in hopes that their Arab brothers would kill all the Jews and take their country from them.

Take note that prior to the Six Day War, had mention been made of a 'Palestinian', a common expression, it would have been only referring to a Jew living in the Land. Yet, after 1967 these Arab Muslim refugees are suddenly deemed a nationality; a homogeneous people group who claims to have had a nation in that spot since time immemorial. It was the Roman Emperor Hadrian in the later part of the 1st century AD that renamed the Holy Land "Palestine" to insult and discourage the remaining Jews living there; and right up until 1967 no one would have ever dared to call the few scattered Arabs, Persians, Egyptians, Bedouins and other Middle Easterners living in the former Holy Lands, Palestinians. That would have been a terrible insult. For, every Arab and Muslim knew that a Palestinian was just another name for a hated Jew.

In our time these counterfeit "Palestinians" are demanding that Israel give them the West Bank and Gaza as their own autonomous territories, and give back the Golan Heights to the Syrians. Even more they want Israel to give them Yerushalayim (*Jerusalem*) as the Palestinian capital! Why do they want Jerusalem? Because Israel wants it. What is their claim to Jerusalem? That they have a mosque built there and it is supposedly a very holy Islamic city. Curious that Jerusalem is never ONCE mentioned in their Holy Book the Koran.

Today, 7 million people live in Israel (not counting the disputed territories of Gaza, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank). More than 80% are Jewish, the remainder Arabs who are welcome to remain in Israel. These Israeli Arabs are granted full citizenship and have full representation in the Israeli Knesset (the Israeli Congress), with elected Arab representatives. But we must understand: the goal of the Arab and Muslim world... the goal of the Palestinians...has nothing to do with peace. Their goal is nothing short of the extermination of the Jewish People, and the destruction of the State of Israel. Sadly the Arab and Muslim world, the Palestinians and their leaders and homicide bombers, are nothing more than expendable pawns in the hand of the Great Adversary... Satan. Satan failed to stop the Messiah from being born in the Holy Land. He failed to stop Yeshua HaMashiach from his glory on the Cross in Jerusalem. He failed to keep Our Savior from rising from dead in that rocky Tomb. And he has failed in keeping literally billions of fallen humans from turning to the One True God, Yehoveh, Adonai Elohim, through the saving Grace of God's one and only Son, Yeshua.

The Serpent's one last hope before the game is ended for all time is being played out right before our eyes; it is the determined destruction of Israel and the Jewish people. It is God's plan that the Lion of Judah will come back for His people, descending from the clouds, His scarred feet touching down on the Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem from whence He left. The Bible makes it clear that at the end of the present age the Lord will gather His chosen people from the 4 corners of the Earth, and place them back in Israel; it has happened. We are eyewitnesses to the FINAL ingathering of the people that God calls His "precious treasure". But harbor no illusions; Israel will endure much. They will be murdered, the world will be against them, and I'm quite positive that a Palestinian State will happen any month, now. But the ultimate outcome is certain: the Jews will survive, God will restore them to purity, and they will not be leaving the Holy Land, ever again.

As Believers in the Jewish Messiah we have two duties before us: to bring the same Good News that saved us to the Jewish people, and to comfort God's people in real and tangible ways while standing with them no matter what. For essentially as we conclude our OT survey we have come full circle, right back to God's stated imperative and warning in His Covenant with Abraham given nearly 4000 years ago:

^{CJB} **Genesis 12:3** I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed."