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# THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

## (In A Nutshell)

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### Questions:

- 1) When Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70, what was kept inside the temple that was also destroyed?
- 2) What were the crusades of the Middle Ages all about?
- 3) What happened on May 14, 1948?
- 4) In what sense were Jews God's "*chosen people*"?
- 5) Who are God's chosen people today?
- 6) What does the Bible say about the land of Palestine being promised to the Jews?
- 7) What does the Bible mean when it speaks of Jews being restored to the land of Palestine?
- 8) When God spoke of Jesus sitting on the throne of David and ruling, what was He speaking about?

### INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered what the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is all about?

- Why are Arabs (Muslims) so angry with all the world?
- Why is there so much unrest in the Middle-East?

This study will (hopefully) explain **in a nutshell** what is going on and we will examine some scripture that pertain to this subject.

## **THE ROMANS AND ISRAEL**

The Roman Empire was in control of Palestine at the time Jesus was born.

### **Luke 2:1**

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from **Caesar Augustus** that all the world should be registered.

This registration is what caused Joseph and Mary to leave Nazareth and travel down to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. (The OT prophet Micah (5:2) had predicted Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the Messiah.)

So the Romans controlled Palestine at this time.

## **DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM**

The Jews hated the Roman occupation of their land. They wanted their independence. They kept resisting Rome's rule.

Jesus predicted Rome would come and destroy Jerusalem and the Jewish nation.

### **Luke 21:20-22**

<sup>20</sup> "But when you see **Jerusalem surrounded by armies**, then know that its desolation is near.

<sup>21</sup> Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her.

<sup>22</sup> For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

This is exactly what happened. In AD 70, Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the nation.

The temple was completely destroyed:

### **Luke 21:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Then, as **some spoke of the temple**, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said,

<sup>6</sup> "These things which you see — the days will come in which **not one stone shall be left upon another** that shall not be thrown down."

## **THE SIGNIFICANCE**

The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple were significant for several reasons:

### **1) The Jewish sacrifices ceased and have never resumed.**

This is significant because those animal sacrifices were symbolic of Jesus coming and dying on the cross (Heb 10:1-10). It was fitting that after Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice on the cross, those animal sacrifices should stop ... and they did when Jerusalem was destroyed.

### **2) The genealogical records were destroyed.**

The Jewish genealogical records were kept in the temple. These records kept track of which tribe each family was from. These records were important because:

- The priests must come only from the tribe of Levi (Num 17).
- The Messiah was to come from the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10).

When the genealogical records were destroyed, all future hopes of the Messiah coming were crushed. If Jesus is not the true Messiah, there never will be a Messiah.

### **3) Jerusalem's destruction brought a clear separation between Jews and Christians.**

Many people thought Christians and the church were just a sect of Judaism. But when the temple was destroyed and the sacrifices ceased, it became clear the church and Christians were a separate entity.

**SUMMARY:** So Rome destroyed Jerusalem and from that time onward the land of Palestine was controlled by Gentiles (non-Jewish people).

The few Jews who survived the destruction of Jerusalem were scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Eventually Arabs settled into Palestine and occupied the vacated land.

## **THE CRUSADES**

The Arabs dwelling in Palestine eventually converted to the Islam religion.

There they were ... Muslims ... occupying Jerusalem and the territory which once belonged to Israel.

**The Catholic Church** was very strong during the Middle Ages. The Catholic Church was so strong and so prominent that many referred to it as simply "**The Church**" – as though it were the only church in all the world.

The true church of the Lord was still in existence, but it was so small and so insignificant compared to the Catholic Church that it was unnoticed by historians.

I believe it existed nonetheless.

### **Daniel 2:44**

<sup>44</sup> And in the days of [the Roman] kings the God of heaven will set up **a kingdom which shall never be destroyed**; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and **it shall stand forever**.

As we noticed ... the Catholic Church was very strong during the Middle Ages. The Pope and church leaders became concerned that Jerusalem and Palestine (the "holy land") was occupied by Muslims and the Islamic religion. They wanted that land to be occupied and controlled by Christians. So the famous Crusades began.

There were 9 Crusades fought over a period of nearly 200 years, between AD 1095 and AD 1291. The purpose of these Crusades were to restore Christian control to the land of Palestine.

- The 6<sup>th</sup> Crusade was the first which set out without the official blessing of the Pope.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> Crusade was the last one.

These Crusades were unsuccessful for the purpose of gaining control of the "Holy Land."

- For the most part the Muslims won.
- These "Christian" knights were rowdy.
- The knights had a reputation of pillaging and looting the land and were not so concerned about Christian control of anything.
- They raped women and killed innocent people.
- *They were knights.*
- *They were not Christians.*

So the "Holy Land" continued in the control of Arabs who were Muslims.

- The Muslims built a mosque in the very spot where the Jewish temple once stood.
- That mosque is called **Dome of the Rock**.
- Muslims control Jerusalem even to this day.

## **THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT**

(I am about to say more than I really know. If someone knows these details better than I do, please inform me later.)

In the late 1800s a movement in Britain started called **The Zionist Movement**. This was a movement which believed Palestine belonged to the Jews. Efforts were made by the British Parliament to eventually give Palestine to Jewish people.

## **THE HOLOCAUST**

During WWII Nazi Germany murdered 6 million Jews. This mass-murder was called "The Holocaust."

- Jews had been starved.
- Gassed in gas chambers.
- Mass graves dug, lined up on edge of grave, machine-gunned and covered up.

When the war ended there were homeless Jews all over the world.

The United Nations felt sorry for the surviving Jews, but they didn't know what to do with them.

- The Zionist Movement was still around.
- The U.N. was influenced by the Zionist Movement to award the Jews the land of Palestine.
- Wealthy Jews were helping finance this movement.

**On May 14, 1948 Israel became an official nation recognized by the U.N.**

- About 726,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled their homes in 1948.
- The Arabs who had lived there for generations and owned the land were relocated by force.
- They were pushed out of their homes to make room for the survivors of the Holocaust.

**Q:** How would you feel if this happened to you?

**ILL:** Think about how landowners feel when the highway department decides to put a highway right thru the middle of their land. These landowners have no recourse. They lose their land.

These Arabs felt just like landowners who have their land forcibly removed.

## **THE BOTTOM LINE**

**Here's the bottom line: The Palestinians are angry with everyone involved in this situation.**

- They are angry with the Jews for occupying their land.
- They are angry with the U.N. for forcing them off their land.
- They are angry with the U.S. for supporting the U.N. and for supporting Israel.

Terrorists organizations formed:

- PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization)
- al-Qu'ida
- Hezbollah

All of these organizations were formed to terrorize those who support the Jews and took their land away.

Churches and so-called "Christians" who believe the Jews are still God's special chosen people are behind this entire problem.

## **THE DOCTRINE OF DISPENSATIONALISM**

**The doctrine of dispensational-premillennialism** is a big part of the problem.

Many churches and so-called "Christians" believe some form of the doctrine of dispensationalism. This doctrine teaches:

- The Jews are still God's special chosen people.
- Jerusalem is still a holy city to God.
- Jesus will return to Jerusalem one day and rule the world from there.
- The Jewish temple will be rebuilt right where the **Dome of the Rock** mosque is located.
- The animal sacrifices will be re-instituted again.

This is not an innocent doctrine.

As you can see ... this doctrine is tied to the Zionist Movement and has political consequences. It provokes terrorism from angry Arabs who want their land back.

**Q: What does the Bible have to say about all of this?**

- Are the Jews still God's special-chosen people?
- Does the land of Palestine truly belong to the Jews?
- Is the doctrine of dispensationalism true?
- Will Jesus return to Jerusalem and reign from that city over the world?
- Will the Jewish temple be rebuilt?
- Will animal sacrifices be re-instituted?

These are very complicated questions and much could be said regarding each item. I will give a brief answer to each one.

## **THE JEWISH PEOPLE**

**Q:** Are the Jews still God's special-chosen people?

**A:** No. Not according to the Bible.

**NOTE:** This is not anti-Semitism. This is not a Jew-bashing sermon. We're asking what the Bible says about the Jews.

The Bible teaches Jews and Gentiles are both welcome to obey the gospel, but it also teaches that both Jews and Gentiles are lost without obeying the gospel.

No Jew will be saved in heaven just because he is a Jew. If a Jew is in heaven, it is because he obeyed the gospel and became a Christian.



### **John 14:6**

<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Jews have a problem thinking they are saved simply because they are Jews.

John the Baptist warned:

### **Matthew 3:9**

<sup>9</sup> and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

Again:

### **John 3:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

<sup>2</sup> This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

## **1) Jews were God's chosen people, but:**

- They were chosen **to perform a service** (bring the Messiah into the world).
- They were **not chosen for salvation**.

Just because God chose someone to perform a service does not mean God owes them salvation.

- Rom 9:17 – **God chose Pharaoh** to perform a service.
- After Pharaoh performed that service, he was destroyed.

God is so sovereign that:

- He can use even unsaved people
- Without their knowledge

- To perform a service
- Then punish them for their disobedience

## 2) **Today: God's chosen people are Christians – members of the church of Christ.**

Members of the church have been chosen for two purposes:

- **To perform a service** (upholding the truth – 1 Tim 3:15).
- **For salvation** (Eph 1:3-8).

### **Acts 2**

<sup>38</sup> Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>41</sup> Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

<sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

When one obeys the gospel and becomes saved from his sins, he is, at the very same moment, made a member of the church of Christ.

What matters today is not one's 1<sup>st</sup> birth ... but rather his re-birth:

### **Romans 10:10-13**

<sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

<sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

<sup>12</sup> For **there is no distinction between Jew and Greek**, for the same Lord over all is rich **to all** who call upon Him.

<sup>13</sup> For "**whoever** calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

### **Galatians 3:26-29**

<sup>26</sup> For you are **all** sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

<sup>27</sup> For **as many** of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

<sup>28</sup> There is **neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are **all** one in Christ Jesus.

<sup>29</sup> And **if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise.

**SUMMARY**: So Jews are not God's special-chosen people any more.

- **They performed the service** God chose them for and that job is finished.
- They were **never chosen for salvation** simply because of their race.

## **THE LAND OF PALESTINE**

**Q**: Does the land of Palestine rightfully belong to the Jews?

**A**: No. Not according to the Bible.

- That land was promised to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:8).
- God fulfilled that promise in the days of Joshua.

### **Joshua 21:43-45**

<sup>43</sup> So **the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it.**

<sup>44</sup> The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

<sup>45</sup> **Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.**

No one can rightfully argue God failed to give them the land.

But keeping the land was conditional. They were required to obey God's law.

### **Deuteronomy 28:1**

<sup>1</sup> "Now it shall come to pass, **if you diligently obey** the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.

The **next 13 verses** describe all the blessings which will come upon the Jewish nation **IF** they obey the Lord. But now watch what happens:

### **Deuteronomy 28:15**

<sup>15</sup> "But it shall come to pass, **if you do not obey** the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

The **next 53 verses** describe all the curses that will come upon the Jews **IF** they disobey the Lord. Listen to some of these curses:

### **Deuteronomy 28:63-66**

<sup>63</sup> And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and **you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess.**

<sup>64</sup> "Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known — wood and stone.

<sup>65</sup> And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul.

<sup>66</sup> Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life.

Retaining the land of Palestine was conditional.

When the Jews rejected Jesus, they themselves sealed their own fate:

### **Matthew 27:22-25**

<sup>22</sup> Pilate said to them, "**What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?**"

They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

<sup>23</sup> Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

<sup>24</sup> When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."

<sup>25</sup> And all the people answered and said, "**His blood be on us and on our children.**"

The Holocaust, as terrible as it was, is the fulfillment of prophecy. God promised the Jews they would be punished for rejecting His Son.

Israel as a nation continues to reject the Lord.

**NOTE:** Today the modern nation of Israel has a law enacted by its parliament forbidding evangelism in the name of Jesus Christ. (Paul Butler, *Approaching the New Millennium*, p. 21).

Their rejection of the Lord is the reason God disinherited them and took the land away from them.

- Modern-day Israel (established on May 14, 1948) is not a special nation to God.
- They have no God-given right to the land of Palestine.

## **RESTORATION OF THE LAND**

**Q:** Doesn't the Bible prophesy of a restoration of the land to Israel?

**A:** Yes. But these promises were fulfilled after the Babylonian exile (536 BC).

### **Jeremiah 27:22**

<sup>22</sup> 'They shall be carried to Babylon, and there they shall be until the day that I visit them,' says the LORD. 'Then I will bring them up and restore them to this place.'"

### **Jeremiah 29:10**

<sup>10</sup> For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

Here's what happened:

- The **nation of Israel divided** into two nations (Israel, Judah)
- Israel and Judah both forsook God.
- They worshipped idols.
- They killed the prophets sent to her.
- God threatened to destroy both nations.
- They continued rebelling.
- Eventually God sent **the Assyrian army** to destroy Israel.
- Judah watched this, but did not learn a lesson.
- Eventually God sent **the Babylonian army** to destroy Judah.
- Judah stayed in Babylonian captivity 70 years.
- In the days of Cyrus (Persia) the Jews were released and allowed to return to Palestine (**536 BC**).

The promise of restoration to their land (Jer 27-29) was fulfilled.

- There is no future promise of restoration.
- Furthermore, all promises given were conditional.

### **Jeremiah 18:7-10**

<sup>7</sup> The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it,

<sup>8</sup> **IF** that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

<sup>9</sup> And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it,

<sup>10</sup> **IF** it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.

Notice the conditional nature of God's promises to all nations.

**SUMMARY:** God does not owe the Jews anything.

- He has not promised them the land of Palestine unconditionally.
- When Israel rejected Jesus and put Him to death, that was the last straw.
- Even then God graciously gave Israel 40 years to accept the gospel.

**Romans 1:16**

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, **for the Jew first** and also for the Greek.

But after having the first opportunity to obey the gospel, Israel continued to reject the Lord. God destroyed that nation in AD 70.

**DISPENSATIONALISM**

**Q:** Is dispensationalism true? Will Jesus come back to the earth and reign in the city of Jerusalem? Will the temple be rebuilt and will animal sacrifices resume in Jerusalem?

**A:** No. None of these things will occur.

**Jesus is already reigning as king.**

- Jesus has "all authority in heaven and earth" (Mt 28:18).
- He cannot have more authority in the future if He has it all right now.
- Jesus began reigning from the throne of David on the Day Of Pentecost.

**Acts 2:29-31**

<sup>29</sup> "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

<sup>30</sup> Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, **He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,**

<sup>31</sup> **he**, foreseeing this, **spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ**, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

When God promised to "raise up Christ to sit on David's throne," He was speaking "concerning the resurrection of Christ."

That's Bible.

It doesn't get any plainer than that.

Jesus has been sitting on the throne of David ruling since the Day Of Pentecost.

## **WHY DOES EVIL EXIST?**

**Q:** If Christ is ruling, then why are bad things happening? Why are there wars, death, violence? Doesn't the reign of Christ mean peace and utopia on earth?

**A:** This is the argument of the atheist. The atheist says there is no God because there is evil in the world. If there were really a God, there would be no evil.

Dispensationalism is making atheistic arguments!

**NOTE:** God has always been in total control of the world. Evil exists because God has made man with a free-will (Josh 24:15). Since man has free-will, he may choose to do evil ... and he does. This does not mean God has relinquished His control of the world.

### **1 Corinthians 15:24-26**

<sup>24</sup> Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

<sup>25</sup> For **He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.**

<sup>26</sup> The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.



From this we learn several things:

- Christ is reigning.
- While He reigns there are enemies out there.
- The last enemy to be destroyed is death.
- When the Lord returns and destroys death, He will not begin to reign; His reign will end.
- He will then deliver the kingdom back to the Father.

## **CONCLUSION**

Dispensational-premillennialism is a dangerous doctrine. It carries with it dangerous political ramifications.

- God destroyed Jerusalem and the temple because Israel rejected His Son.
- By destroying the temple **God forever closed the door on the question of the Messiah.** If Jesus was not the Messiah, there never will be one. The genealogical records were destroyed with the temple.
- By allowing the Muslims to erect **the Dome of the Rock mosque on the temple's site**, God forever closed the door on a Jewish temple being rebuilt. World War III would break out if that mosque were destroyed to build a temple.
- By destroying the temple **God forever closed the door on animal sacrifices.** His Son was the final sacrifice which those animals were pointing to.
- **There is no priest from the tribe of Levi** left on earth who could properly offer an animal sacrifice according to the law. No Jew on earth today can prove he is from the tribe of Levi. The genealogical records were destroyed (remember).

To reject Jesus and His church is to commit all over again the same mistake which the Jews made in the days of Christ and His apostles.

Do not commit the same mistake. Accept Christ and His church.