

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE TOWN OF TONAWANDA, NY

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“Israel, Palestine, and the Coming of Christ”*(understanding our present and future in light of the past and the witness of God's Word)****“The Rebirth and Revival of a Nation”***

I. Review – Covenants, Chosen People, Judgement and Restoration! History of the Jewish People has been one of persecution. But God's Word has affirmed and confirmed His promises through the prophetic witness of Scriptures.

II. How Did the Modern State of Israel Come into Existence**A. The Birth of a Nation unlike any before – the United States**

The significance of 1776 cannot be overstated! For the first time in human history a government was to be established upon the rights of its citizens derived from the law of God and therefore accountable to God. Since our rights are granted by God, government cannot take them away. This was a complete departure from what had been the norm for most societies. Simply put, if the ruler or ruling class has the authority to grant rights, they also have the right to take them away. The problem with this form of government is that it means that ultimately, *“might makes right.”* In other words, whoever has the power can make the rules. It removes the power to govern from the right of authority. All authority comes from God. Therefore, government is instituted by God for the common good. His authority provides for the well-being of all people. Thus, government is to serve the people for the common good and in order to do this must be under the laws of God and therefore ultimately accountable to God. These ideas were cultivated during the Protestant Reformation and following centuries, culminating in its fundamental expression in our Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights in the US Constitution.

In the *Declaration* we hear such ideas expressed in the words, *“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, -- That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness...We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions,*

In the *US Constitution's Bill of Rights*, the First Amendment states, *“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”*

The Second Amendment says, *“A well- regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”*

B. Founding Fathers support of the Jewish people

What is often forgotten is that our Founding Fathers had a deep respect for the Jewish people. Both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson originally wanted a depiction of God's deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt to highlight America's dependence on Divine Providence. The Motto above the seal would read: "*Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God.*" The Continental Congress agreed to the final design which included a pyramid (Egypt), eagle (protection) and rays of fire and a cloud (divine leadership).

When American troops were starving, lacking clothing and needed weapons, a Jewish Banker from Philadelphia, Hyman Salomon went to Jews in America and Europe and raised \$1 million for Washington's army. Washington was moved by this act of generosity. Legend has it, though it has not been historically corroborated, that Washington had the engravers of the US \$1 bill place 13 stars in the form of the Star of David over the head of the American Eagle. Around the star there was included a cloudburst representing the glory of the tabernacle in Jerusalem. It is still on our \$1 bills today! President Washington specified that this was to be a lasting memorial to the Jewish people for their help in winning the war. Even if this is not totally true, it is certain that Washington remembered this act of generosity and only confirmed his support for the Jewish people. Moreover, what a coincidence that those images are on the US \$1 bill!

In 1790, while President, Washington wrote these words to the Jewish community (the Touro Synagogue, built in 1759) of Newport, Rhode Island, "*For happily the Government of the United States, which gives bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens...May the Children of the stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while everyone shall sit under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid.*"

Our second president, John Adams, also supported the Jewish people. To Jefferson, he wrote, "*I will insist that the Hebrews has done more to civilize man than any other nation.*" Near the end of his life Adams said, "*For I really wish the Jews again in Judea independent nation.*" The Founding Fathers respected the Jewish people. Where else did you find this respect? The only other place was in Great Britain. But you would not find it in continental Europe, in the Middle East, or in Russia.

C. A Movement begun in the Church and spread to the world

The respect of our Founding Fathers and others for the Jewish people grew into something more during the coming decades of the 19th century. In the American Church, a growing movement to help the Jews return to their homeland spread across the country. **During the 1800's many Jews came to the United States and saw it as their new promised land.** At that time Palestine, was under the control of the Ottoman Empire (by Turks who were and still are Moslem today). It was a desert wasteland and Jews were not welcome there.

One man did more to raise the issue than other in American during this time. His name was **William Eugene Blackstone**. Blackstone was born in 1841 in upstate New York Methodist home. While not an ordained minister (he was founder of a construction and investment company), he was an ardent student of Scripture. He wrote a book in **1878** called ***Jesus Is Coming***. It sold more than one million copies (the US population was 50 million at the time) and was eventually translated into 48 languages, including Hebrew, and is still in print today. Well known Christian leaders at the time, Dwight L. Moody and Cyrus I. Scofield, both welcomed the book's approach to Bible prophecy. As Blackstone's popularity rose, he and his daughter Flora visited Palestine in 1888 and then went to London to promote the his ideas.

In his book, Blackstone **looked at hundreds of Bible passages and showed how the restoration of Israel is necessary before Christ's return.** He wrote, *"Perhaps you say, "I don't believe the Israelites are to be restored to Canaan, and Jerusalem to be rebuilt." Have you read the declarations in God's Word about it? Surely nothing is more plainly stated in the Scriptures."*

He likened Israel to God's sundial and asserted, *"If anyone desires to know our place in God's chronology, our position in the march of events, look at Israel."* **This one book and Blackstone's efforts did more than any other to move American religious and political leaders to begin to consider the reality of helping the Jews return to their homeland.** He initiated a conference in 1890, November 24-25, bringing Jewish and Christian leaders together. Held at the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Chicago, the theme of the conference was *"The Past, Present, and Future of Israel."*

The conference passed resolutions supporting Jews who were being oppressed in Czarist Russia and copies were forwarded to the Czar and leaders in Europe. But more important Blackstone wanted world leaders **to grant Jews permission to return to Palestine so they could establish their own state.**

As a result of the conference, there came forth a document that became known as **the Blackstone Memorial**, the first paragraph simply began with *"What shall be done for the Russian Jews? and the second, "Why not give Palestine back to them again?"*

Filled with the prophecies pertaining to the return of the Jews to Israel it was signed by 413 prominent Americans including John D. Rockefeller, J. P. Morgan, Cyrus McCormick (Harvesting Machine Co that became International Harvester), the chief justice of the Supreme Court, heads of several major newspapers, the Speaker of the House, members of Congress, the mayors of Chicago and Philadelphia, and other prominent businessmen, clergy and ministers. It was sent to every European head of state at the time and then to presented to every US President from President Benjamin Harrison through FDR.

The document ended with these words: *"That there seem to be many evidences to show that we have reached the period in the great roll of the centuries, when the ever-living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is lifting up His hand to the Gentiles, to bring His sons and His daughters from far, that he may plant them again in their own land. Not for twenty-four centuries, since the days of Cyrus, King of Persia, has there been offered to any mortal such a privileged opportunity to further the purposes of God concerning His ancient people. May it be the high privilege of your excellency, and the honorable secretary, to take a personal interest in this great matter, and secure through the Conference, a home for these wandering millions of Israel, and thereby receive to yourselves the promise of Him, who said to Abraham, "I will bless them that bless thee."*

D. Jewish longing for their own homeland - Zionism

While momentum was building among Gentiles, the Jews themselves were contemplating the possibility of returning to the land promised to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Three of the most significant Jews in this endeavor were Theodor Herzl, Louis Dembitz Brandeis, and Henry Morgenthau Jr. Surprising, none of the three were religious Jews!

1. Theodor Herzl (1860-1904)– a German Jew of Austro-Hungary. Hezel was born and raised Jewish in Pest, Hungary. However, he rarely practiced his faith. Herzl was a journalist who came to believe a Jewish state was necessary in light of the anti-Semitism of his day. He became a "Zionist," a term for Jews who wanted their own homeland. **His 1896 book, "Der Judenstaat,"** first written in German and then translated into the English, *"The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Problem"*

argued for the establishment of a Jewish State based on secular reasons. He ended the book with these words, *“The Jews who wish for a state will have it. We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and die peacefully in our own homes. The world will be freed by our liberty, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness. And whatever we attempt will react powerfully and beneficially for the good of humanity.”* This book found considerable support among Christians of the day. The Rev. William Hechler, chaplain of the British embassy in Vienna helped Herzl in his efforts. He even wrote a pamphlet titled, *“The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine According to the Prophets.”* **Soon, Herzl organized the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland August 29 - 31, 1897.** It had 197 delegates including Rev. Hechler and representatives from the press from all over the world. At the end of the congress, Herzl wrote in his diary, *“At Basel I founded the Jewish State...Perhaps in five years, and certainly fifty, everyone will know it.”* Amazingly, fifty years later in November of 1947 the UN authorized the organization of the Jewish state in Palestine. Zionism now was a movement, though Herzl would die only seven years later. The movement continued raising funds and promoting the idea that the Jews deserved to have a nation of their own.

2. Louis Dembitz Brandeis (1856 – 1941) - an American Jew who became a US Supreme Court Justice and whose influence on President Woodrow Wilson helped secure US support of the 1917 *Balfour Declaration*, giving approval for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. He became active in the Federation of American Zionists in 1912, and its leading spokesman from 1914 to 1918. He embarked on a speaking tour in the fall and winter of 1914–1915 to garner support for the Zionist cause, emphasizing the goal of self-determination and freedom for Jews through the development of a Jewish homeland. He said in a speech given to American rabbis in 1915: *“Let no American imagine that Zionism is inconsistent with Patriotism. Multiple loyalties are objectionable only if they are inconsistent. A man is a better citizen of the United States for being also a loyal citizen of his state, and of his city; or for being loyal to his college. ... Every American Jew who aids in advancing the Jewish settlement in Palestine, though he feels that neither he nor his descendants will ever live there, will likewise be a better man and a better American for doing so. There is no inconsistency between loyalty to America and loyalty to Jewry.”*

3. Henry Morgenthau Jr. (1891-1967) - another American Jew who was not a practicing Jew but became convinced of the need to support and protect Jews from persecution and genocide. He became the Secretary of the Treasury under FDR’s presidency. As a member of the president’s cabinet, he was able to influence the State Department through his relationship with FDR. Sadly, before and during WW2 the US State Department was filled with many officials who did nothing to help the Jews who were fleeing the Nazis. Fed up with the lack of effort, Morgenthau had a report written entitled *“Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews”* and gave it to the president on January 16, 1944. That title alone speaks volumes! Already, four million Jews had been murdered, and FDR had yet to mention this publicly. While FDR tried to defend his State Department in light of the accusations, he realized something had to be done. Six days later the *War Refugee Board* was formed. It ended up saving as many as 200,000 Jewish lives. Moreover, the US government began to publicly refer to the issue of Nazi atrocities against the Jews the need to hold them accountable as war crimes. In addition, FDR became more convinced that a homeland for the Jews was necessary.

E. The Struggle to become a nation and survive

Despite such positive developments among Gentiles (Church and other sympathetic to Jews) and Jews, all was not well. As you might expect, not everyone thought allowing Jews to return to their original homeland was a good thing. **Alvey Adee, assistant secretary of state from 1886-1924, the US State Department did little to help the Jews. The United States was afraid to offend the Ottoman Turks!**

But that **changed in World War 1 when the Turks were driven out of Jerusalem and Palestine by the British. British General Allenby** defeated the Turkish Army in the Holy Land and took Jerusalem out of their control. For the first time in Jerusalem was no longer under the control of the Muslims. This defeat is known as the “Great Catastrophe” by Muslims.

As a result of British rule over this area, in what is known as the **Balfour Declaration in 1917**, Foreign Secretary and former Prime Minister Arthur Balfour declared in 1917 that **Jews could return to Palestine as Palestine would now be a national home for the Jewish people.** But two forces conspired against the return of the Jewish people to Palestine – Arab Muslims and the Nazis. The Arab Palestinians often attacked Jews during the 20’s and 30’s. We all know what happened in Germany. At the same time, the Brits became sympathetic to Arab demands due to oil needs and to stop the Nazis in the Middle East. They put limits on Jewish immigration to Palestine.

In the 1930's President Roosevelt did little to help Jews being persecuted in Nazi Germany and in the later Nazi controlled nations. In one infamous example, the US turned away the Jewish refugee boat *St. Louis* in 1939 after it sought refuge there for three weeks. It wasn't until 1944 that something he finally started to acknowledge publicly that there was a problem and created the War Refugee Board. When American GIs finally saw the Nazi death camps, the reality of the Holocaust reached the entire world. General Eisenhower made sure to document the reality by taking film of the camps. He did not want the world to forget.

As a result of World War 2, and with the aftermath of the Holocaust, enough good will was found in the world to support the creation of a Jewish state within Palestine. On November 29, 1947, the United Nations formally approved of a Jewish and Arab partition of two states in Palestine with an international trusteeship for Jerusalem. While the Jews welcomed this the Arabs rejected it out of hand and vowed to destroy any attempt at a Jewish self-governing state. Intermittent fighting ensued between the two sides. On May 14, 1948, as British rule was formally coming to an end and they had pulled out most of their forces, David Ben-Gurion, who was the principal leader of the Jewish governing body – *the People's Directorate* – and who was to become Israel's first prime minister declared the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel in Palestine. **This declaration led to a full-scale war between Jews and Muslims.** Five Arab nations (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq) united and attacked Israeli settlements and areas with their forces. Miraculously, the Jews were able to defeat the numerically superior and better equipped Arab armies. President Truman was the first head of state to recognize Israel as a nation after May 14, 1948 and quoted from the Blackstone Memorial as he affirmed America's official support for a Jewish homeland. *(NOTE: Due to his work, Blackstone is the most famous American in Israel today. A forest is named after him and his name is mentioned in history textbooks in Israeli schools.)*

Since that time three more major wars were fought between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Why? **The Arabs refused to recognize Israel's right to exist and wanted Israel wiped off the map.** During the Six-day Arab-Israeli War in 1967, Israel beat off an impending attack by Arab armies by destroying their air forces on the ground and striking first with infantry and tanks. The Israelis took over East Jerusalem from Arab control making their holy city under full Jewish control for the first time in over 2500 years! It should be noted that when the Muslims controlled East Jerusalem, Jewish holy sites were desecrated, and Christians could not visit Christian holy sites. This completely changed when the Israelis gained control. They also took the Suez Peninsula and Gaza strip from Egypt, the West Bank from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria. This takeover only continued tensions between the two sides. Six years later in October of 1973, on Yom Kippur – Israel's holiest day of the year, the Arab armies this time attacked Israel by surprise. While they initially inflicted serious defeats with the Suez being recaptured by the Egyptians and the Golan Heights being taken over by the Syrians, US military aid helped Israel retake their lost territory. Having surrounded

the Egyptian Third Army and now threatening both Cairo and Damascus, and the US pressured Israel to pull back, concerned that the Soviets would intervene on behalf of their Arab allies. In return, Prime Minister Golda Meir of Israel and President Anwar Sadat met for peace talks and Egypt formally recognized Israel's right to exist. This paved the way for future peace talks that culminated in the Camp David Accords in 1977 hosted by President Jimmy Carter where peace between Israel and Egypt was formally established in return for the Suez peninsula going back to Egypt. Sadly, only a few years later in on October 6, 1981, Anwar Sadat was assassinated by members of the Muslim brotherhood – a fundamentalist Islamic group during a military parade celebrated the Yom Kippur War, because of his making peace with Israel. Israel and Lebanon (to the north) came to peace terms on May 17, 1983. On October 26, 1994, Israel came to an agreement with Jordan (to the east); the Jordan–Israel Peace Treaty defined the international border between Israel and Jordan and normalized relations between the two countries.

However, the most persistent struggle Israel has faced, has been with the Palestinians. **We will look at this issue in more detail next study as it will possibly be the trigger for the Battle of Armageddon described in both Ezekiel and the book of Revelation.** For those of us who were alive, one can remember the numerous times the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) employed terrorist tactics in the 1960s and 70s to achieve Palestinian “liberation” which really was Palestinian autonomy over all Israel. One can think back to the killing of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics or the hijacking of airliners like the Israeli airline El-Al in Entebbe, Uganda in 1976. The Lebanese Civil War created other radical Islamic factions also wanting to see Israel's demise. Even Sadaam Hussien of Iraq was notorious for constantly threatening Israel and even fired SCUDS at their cities during the first Gulf War. Today, Iran is the most serious threat to Israel's existence supporting Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, and working on the ability to produce nuclear weapons. The problem in Iran is that the leadership are Shia Muslims who have an apocalyptic view of the future. They believe a messiah-like figure will come to earth and usher in an Islamic kingdom after a worldwide war. They have an Islamic worldview that is diametrically opposed to Biblical Christianity and the ideals of Western democracy. It is why Israel and the United States are both seen as enemies. Moreover, there are many at the UN, on college campuses, and throughout the world who are either antisemitic or anti-Israel. Why? It is the result of ignorance, personal vendettas, and demonic influence! Recall our previous discussions on antisemitism throughout history.

Regardless of all this opposition, the nation of Israel will prevail! Why? Because Israel is God's creation! As we have already seen in numerous prophecies (see study #3) God said it would be so! Today Israel is surrounded by nations who have fought against its existence time and time again both on political and religious grounds. And yet Israel remains strong and the closest ally of the United States. It is the only Western style democracy, it is an exporter of multiple types of beneficial technology, considered the second largest tech center in the world only after Silicon Valley. It is an exporter of food and is considered an agricultural wonder. God has blessed Israel and will continue to do so despite the attacks of those who want it destroyed. **The fig tree has come back to life.** If it hasn't produced leaves yet, but the buds appear to be forming! It is one more sign that everything in our world is moving towards the return of Christ.

F. The Resilience of Israel

In their thought provoking book, *The Genius of Israel: The Surprising Resilience of a Divided Nation in a Turbulent World*, Dan Senor and Saul Singer document a number of remarkable facts about Jews living in Israel today. For example, they point to the World Happiness Report, which ranks the happiest countries in the world based on GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity, and perceptions of corruption. The report ranks Israel No. 9 in the world.

Consider the other nations, in order: Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg Sweden, Norway, and New Zealand. **Do any of them face anything like the terror and geopolitical challenges Israel faces?** By contrast, according to Senor and Singer, more than half of Israeli adults surveyed during periods over the past twenty-five years said they had been victims of terror attacks or had family or friends who had experienced one.

The authors also note that Israel's teen suicide rates are among the lowest in the world, less than a quarter that of the United States, Australia, Finland, and Canada.

Their book highlights **four societal characteristics** among contemporary Jews in Israel as explaining their unique resilience and overall happiness.

The first is *hevre*, which refers to **relational connections** that function as almost a “**supra-family**.” These social circles include lasting relationships formed in high school, university, youth groups, the army, and work.

The second is *gibush*, which is “*the act of bringing people together with the goal of deepening the bond uniting them.*” *Gibush* is founded in Israel's belief that they were forged as a community at Mount Sinai and in the wilderness on their way to their promised land. Schools, mandatory military service, and youth movements (somewhat akin to Scouting in the US) have forged a collective commitment to serving one another and the nation of Israel.

The third is a **foundational commitment to children and family**. Israel's fertility rate remains nearly double the rate of the US and Europe and triple that of wealthy Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. Children are welcome at the workplace; maintaining a healthy balance between life and work is paramount; Israelis help each other, including families and children, on a level that promotes a remarkable sense of safety and community.

The fourth is **rituals**, from **Shabbat (Sabbath)** on Friday night to the other traditions of Judaism. Even highly secular Jews keep their forms of these rituals as a way of staying connected with their families and society. **More than 70 percent of Jewish Israelis have a traditional Friday night dinner with friends and family each week.** One essayist noted, “*More than the Jewish people have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews.*”

A recent *Jerusalem Post* article offers a fifth explanation, noting that “*classical Rabbinic Judaism promoted four values more than other Western religions did: respect for human autonomy; belief in freedom of thought and expression; the conviction that life in this world is inherently good; and respect for education.*”

The Jews can rightly be called a “people of the Book.” Their identity is found first in Scripture. For religious Jews, their home is their first synagogue, and their father is their first rabbi. Theirs is an intense commitment to preserving and continuing the beliefs and traditions of their faith and culture. Israel holds a unique geopolitical position in the world. Theirs is the only true democracy in their part of the globe and one of the most advanced militaries and economies on the planet.

III. Important Questions to Consider

A. Did the Jews steal the land from the Palestinians?

1. The first reason for opposition to Israel is the claim that the Jewish state is an “occupier” and “colonizer” of land it stole in 1948 from its rightful Palestinian owners. Russia’s ambassador to the United Nations claimed that Israel is an “occupying power” and thus does not have the right to self-defense. The International Court of Justice issued an opinion in 2004 that Israel is in fact an “occupier” of Palestinian lands in Gaza and the West Bank. We continue to hear this claim in the news and at pro-Palestinian rallies.

So, did Israel steal its land from its rightful Palestinian owners? Well, let’s have a quick review of history

a. First, the original “owners” of the land were the Canaanites from whom the Jews conquered the land under Joshua. Their descendants now live in Lebanon and bear no genealogical relationship to the current-day Palestinians.

b. Second, present-day Palestinians are descendants of the Arabs who first conquered the land in AD 640, not the Philistines for whom the region is named. They took the land from the Jews and Christians who lived there prior to their conquest.

c. Third, the Jews never abandoned the land and repopulated it alongside Arab Palestinians across recent centuries.

d. Fourth, an autonomous nation called Palestine would have been created by the United Nations Partition Plan in 1947, an arrangement Jewish leaders accepted but Arab leaders rejected it and as noted above the armies of five Arab nations attacked the Jewish communities to expel and/or expel the Jews from the land.

Therefore, the premise that Israel stole the land from its rightful Palestinian owners is false. If anything, the Palestinians’ ancestors stole it from the Jews who were there prior to AD 640.

What about the current situation in Gaza? Before October 7, 2023 Israel maintained no presence in Gaza. Israel gave Gazans the right of self-rule in 2007 after which its residents elected Hamas to power. In 1993, Israel granted the Palestinian Authority limited autonomy of the West Bank in 1993. Certainly, the growth of Jewish settlements in that area and the mistreatment of Palestinians greatly complicate the Palestinian ability to govern the land. **Regardless, the accusation on college campuses and in many places that Israel is an “occupying colonizer,” is also false.**

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks observed: *“It is so ironic that Israel should be called an imperialist power. Israel is the only nation to have ruled the land in the past four thousand years that has not been an empire and never sought to become one. Israel has been ruled by many empires: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, the Ptolemies, Seleucids, and Romans, the Byzantines, Umayyahds, Abbasids, Fatimids, Crusaders, Mamlukes, and Ottomans. The only non-imperial power to rule the land was and is Israel.”*

B. Is Israel oppressing the Palestinians?

Another major accusation made against Israel is that the Jews are oppressing the Palestinian people. This charge is currently being fueled by two destructive philosophies.

1. Critical theory - the first is known as “critical theory” (CT) a Marxist construct that interprets life within sociological and economic realities. It claims that majorities achieve their status by oppressing minorities. The wealthy gain their wealth by oppressing the poor.

This approach, when applied to race relations, is known as *Critical Race Theory* (CRT). CRT became much more widely known after the murder of George Floyd in 2020 and resulting “*Black Lives Matter*” marches. Ibram X. Kendi and others have popularized the “anti-racist” ideology that we are either racists or “anti-racists” who actively work to defeat racism. If we are not the latter, we must be the former.

Thus, when CT is applied to the Middle East, the assertion is that the majority Jews are oppressors of the minority Palestinians. CT advocates point to Jewish financial status in the region and claim that such progress is the result of the victimization of Palestinians.

2. Israel’s treatment of Palestinians - this sociological claim has been amplified enormously by Israel’s military response to Hamas’s October 7 invasion and deserves further exploration in that context. We will look at the issue of Hama and their claims that Israel is committing genocide and are the real aggressors, *next study*.

C. Why should America support Israel?

1. A long presidential tradition – the presidents of the United States have long supported the Jewish people. Prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, we find these public statements of support:

President John Adams: *“I will insist that the Hebrews have done more to civilize man than any other people.”*

President John Quincy Adams: *“[I believe in the] rebuilding of Judea as an independent nation.”*

President Theodore Roosevelt: *“There can be no peace worth having unless . . . the Jews [are] given control of Palestine”*

President Woodrow Wilson: *“The allied nations with the fullest concurrence of our government and people are agreed that in Palestine should be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth”*

President Calvin Coolidge: *“The Jewish faith is predominantly the faith of liberty.”*

President Franklin D. Roosevelt: *“The American people, ever zealous in the cause of human freedom, have watched with sympathetic interest the effort of the Jews to renew in Palestine the ties of their ancient homeland and to reestablish Jewish culture in the place where for centuries it flourished and whence it was carried to the far corners of the world.”*

When Israel was declared a nation on May 14, 1948, President Harry Truman officially recognized it as a legitimate Jewish state only eleven minutes after its creation. He was the first world leader to do so. He stated, *“I had faith in Israel before it was established. I have faith in it now.”*

Following the rebirth of Israel, US presidents continued to voice their support for the Jewish state.

President Eisenhower (1953-1960): *“The teaching of their ancient belief is filled with truth for the present day. Its profound sense of justice, nation to nation, man to man, is an essential part of every religious and social order. The health of our society depends upon a deep and abiding respect for the basic commandments of the God of Israel”*

President John Kennedy (1960-63): *“Israel was not created in order to disappear—Israel will endure and flourish. It is the child of hope and home of the brave. It can neither be broken by adversity nor demoralized by success. It carries the shield of democracy and it honors the sword of freedom”*

President Lyndon Johnson (1963-68): *“The Bible stories are woven into my childhood memories as the gallant struggle of modern Jews to be free of persecution is also woven into our souls.”*

President Richard Nixon (1969-74): *“Americans admire a people who can scratch a desert and produce a garden. The Israelis have shown qualities that Americans identify with: guts, patriotism, idealism, a passion for freedom. I have seen it. I know. I believe that.”*

President Gerald Ford (1974-76): *“A strong Israel is essential to a stable peace in the Middle East. . . . My commitment to the security and future of Israel is based upon basic morality as well as enlightened self-interest. Our role in supporting Israel honors our own heritage.”*

President Jimmy Carter (1977-1980): *“We have a special relationship with Israel. It’s absolutely crucial that no one in our country or around the world ever doubt that our number one commitment in the Middle East is to protect the right of Israel to exist, to exist permanently, and to exist in peace. It’s a special relationship.”*

President Ronald Reagan (1981-1988): *“Back in 1948 when Israel was founded, pundits claimed the new country could never survive. Today, no one questions that Israel is a land of stability and democracy in a region of tyranny and unrest...America has never flinched from its commitment to the State of Israel—a commitment which remains unshakable.”*

President George H. W. Bush (1989-1992): *“The friendship, the alliance between the United States and Israel is strong and solid—built upon a foundation of shared democratic values, of shared history and heritage that sustain the moral life of our two countries.”*

President Bill Clinton (1993-2000): *“Israel’s democracy is the bedrock on which our relationship stands. It’s a shining example for people around the world who are on the frontline of the struggle for democracy in their own lands. Our relationship is also based on our common interest in a more stable and peaceful Middle East” (Bill Clinton).*

President George W. Bush (2001-2008): *“For more than a generation, the United States and Israel have been steadfast allies. Our nations are bound by our shared values and a strong commitment to freedom. These ties that have made us natural allies will never be broken”*

President Barack Obama (2009-2016) *“The American people and the Israeli peoples share a faith in the future and believe that democracies can shape their own destinies and that opportunities should be available to all. Throughout its own extraordinary history, Israel has given life to that promise.”*

President Donald Trump (2017-2020): *“Israel is a light unto the world. The hearts and history of our people are woven together. The Land of Israel is an ancient home, a sacred place of worship, and a solemn promise to the Jewish people that we will never again repeat history’s darkest hour.”*

President Joe Biden (2021-present): *“The connection between the Israeli people and the American people is bone deep. . . .We’re united in our shared values and our shared vision.”*

2. the witness of God’s Word

If one views the modern State of Israel as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy then it means that supporting Israel aligns us with God’s prophetic and providential purposes for the world.

It is why the well-known Bible teacher and scholar Derek Prince said, *“One major factor in God’s judgment of all other nations will be their treatment of the Jews.”* He cites **Matthew 25:31–46** as evidence that *“the nations who show mercy to the Jews will receive mercy from God; the nations who deny mercy to the Jews will be denied mercy from God.”*

Prince uses Spain and Great Britain as examples: after the former expelled the Jews and the latter opposed the rebirth of Israel as a sovereign nation, both declined to become a *“struggling, second-rate power.”* He points to **Isaiah 60:12** as God’s warning to those who oppose Israel: *“The nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste.”*

3. The witness of Israel itself

Of course, even if one does not share this interpretation of Holy Scripture, there are many other reasons why Christians and Americans should support the State of Israel today. Here are four to think about:

- 1. Israel is the only true democracy in the Middle East.** As such, it shares the same democratic values and principles of freedom that we do. A successful Israel offers hope and direction for other nations in their quest for self-governance and democratic freedom.
- 2. Israel is the strongest military power in the Middle East.** It provides a bulwark and strong deterrence to those who would harm both Israel and the West.
- 3. Christians share a common worldview with the Jewish people grounded in the Holy Scriptures.** Jews worship the same God as we do, even though they do not recognize Jesus as their Messiah. One day many will as the Bible prophecies. In the meantime, many Jews support the sanctity of all life and the value of biblical morality. They are the original recipients of God’s moral law and code. As many US presidents have noted, such spiritual, moral and cultural alignment draws us together in a shared vision for human rights and free enterprise.

4. Israel exists as a homeland for the Jewish people and a guarantee of their future. The invasion of October 7 and the subsequent support for Hamas's atrocities are proof that such a homeland must exist in the face of virulent antisemitism around the world. The philosopher Eric Hoffer perceptively wrote in 1968, *"I have a premonition that will not leave me. As it goes with Israel, so will it go with all of us. Should Israel perish, the Holocaust will be upon us."*

A FINAL IMPORTANT WORD: Notice the pattern of how God works in and throughout history. It is the same way he works in our hearts and lives. First, He reveals His Word to His prophets through their experience with Him. That word is then shared with God's people. God's people respond by faith through prayer and obedience. This then influences the affairs of others who, in turn, make decisions in line with God's will and His will is then accomplished and fulfilled. All of the above is a testament to this pattern!