

The Chosen People

MAY 1988 ISSN 0164-5323

WHOSE LAND?



**HE FILLED THE HOLE
IN MY HEART**
BY AKIVA COHEN

See Israel THROUGH Jewish Eyes



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From the President

The Chosen People

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One of the many problems in being a Jew (one of the chosen people) is that a Jew is expected to act differently from other people. Jews are supposed to have greater moral values, more compassion, a more sensitive nature to justice, greater religious zeal, and more knowledge and practice. Few can really live up to what the world expects. Only one Jew ever did—Jesus. And He was crucified.

Because the Jews in Israel have not lived up to the "chosen people image," they are now being accused and condemned. It is not surprising, only sad, that the same media do not spotlight the shortcomings of other nations.

For example, consider the religious and political war going on in Northern Ireland. The media are certainly not anti-British or anti-Irish (Protestant/Catholic) in their coverage. Nor is the press anti-Soviet because of the civil war in Afghanistan or because of the inhumane treatment of Jews and others trapped within Soviet borders. Nor is the media really anti-South Africa or anti-Latin America.

It is only the Jew (the Israeli) who is spotlighted for his failure to live up to the "chosen people image." A letter I received from a very close Israeli friend expresses well this point. Please read this excerpt very carefully.

There is a very upsetting mood in Israel, especially among those who think that we should conduct ourselves by a code that no one else in the world, either in the past or now, took upon himself. This in itself is not a criticism of what has been done, or is being done, for in the heat of events we still react and conduct ourselves in a way which is better than any other nation would have done under the same circumstances.

But on the other hand, throughout history we have been put through trials and tests that no other nation was required to undergo, and therefore we should be more prepared and more willing to accept a code of morals and conduct that no one in the world would accept under the circumstances.

I fear it is too soon for us to say we are a "normal" nation. We are like everybody else in the world and draw comparisons with things that others did. Maybe the bottom line of all this is that until the "Mashiach" comes, we can never regard ourselves as a "normal" nation among nations. The problem is not only knowing all this, but maybe more important is how to apply it.

Such words express the inner frustration and desire of the Israeli, who wants to do what is right, but is often unable to do so. And when the Jew fails, it seems the world uses it to justify its attacking Israel's right to exist.

As Israel celebrates its fortieth anniversary, let us continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, a peace that can come through a living and abiding faith in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus.

In Messiah,

Harold A. Sevener

HAROLD A. SEVENER



**HE FILLED
THE HOLE IN
MY HEART**

BY AKIVA COHEN

Akiva Cohen set out to see the world and discovered he was really searching for himself.

Overlooking Jerusalem at sundown was a deeply spiritual sight. Something about the golden glow permeating the atmosphere, the hills shimmering, the sense of belonging to a nation of Jewish people made me yearn for a God I had never known.

I was visiting Jerusalem to see my grandmother, but in the process, it stirred up a deep sense of being a Jew and finding a much more extended family and identity.

I began to ask, perhaps for the first time in my life, "Just what does it mean to be Jewish?"

I first became aware of this wonder and spiritual curiosity while I was camping in the Sinai. Perhaps it was the vastness or perhaps the awesome antiquity all around that made me feel what I perceived to be a deep spirituality.

I felt the same yearning when a religious girl I met invited me to spend the Sabbath with her family. Seeing their love and reverence for God showed me that Judaism was more than my Reform upbringing had taught.

A Hole in My Heart

I had gone to Israel for a visit—as part of a trip to "see the world." I was leaving with a hole in my heart.

The taxi driver who took me to the airport kept prodding me to stay. He reminded me several times, "I can pull into an absorption center, and you can forget your plane and stay here."

The offer was appealing, but I was 19 years old. More than anything I wanted to see the world and "discover myself." So I got on my plane as scheduled.

From Israel I went to Europe, where I spent several months hitchhiking around the countryside.



I was visiting Jerusalem to see my grandmother, but in the process, it stirred up a deep sense of being a Jew and finding a much more extended family and identity.

I was especially captivated by the Renaissance artwork I saw in Europe, especially that of Michelangelo. His *Pieta* of Christ in St. Peters and his *The Last Judgement* in the Sistine Chapel had a profound effect on me.

Although I had not felt open hostility toward Jesus Christ before this time, the paintings were depicting a Man whom I understood to be holy. I was certain He would understand the deep spiritual hunger that I felt.

Had I thought about it, I would have said that Jesus could have no meaning for me, as a Jew. But I never actually sat down and considered it. I

continued on next page

was too busy trying to understand how I could get closer to *my* God, the God of the Jews.

Attracted to the Rabbinic Life

When I returned home to Canada, my spiritual hunger continued to gnaw at me. I began studying with an Orthodox rabbi and was deeply attracted to the rabbinic life.

A certain reverence about the rabbi and his teachings, a certain beauty in the traditions and rituals he followed brought me closer to the God I was seeking. Inner stirrings reminded me how I used to feel when I said the *Sh'ma* at bedtime.

Still, something undefinable was missing from my life, something that made me realize that this form of Judaism mastered only the mechanics of religion, not the relationship I was seeking.

The next step in my search seemed natural—Eastern religions. Soon I was meditating and practicing techniques to alter my consciousness. This seemed to free me to discover God. My soul felt like it was liberated and expanded.

In Need of a Soul Guide

A certain sense of loss came over me. I thought I needed a guide for my soul, so I sought out a guru who was wise in the ways of these mystical rituals and devoted myself to him.

For many months I dogged his footsteps and listened to his words, trying to attain to his wisdom and put his advice into practice.

Then, at long last, I began having "spiritual" experiences and out-of-the-body travels. I felt that I was approaching God because I was beginning to find the peace that the guru told me would be mine.

I was on the right path at last, or so I thought. Still, something within me kept whispering that what I was doing was only a counterfeit of the

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"God, Show Me the Way."

I longed to know God and to fulfill the spiritual desires that my visit to Israel had awakened. Daily I asked God to show me the way.

He answered by placing a belief in my heart, like a dim light at the end of a tunnel, that He greatly desired to reveal Himself to me. Somehow I knew that His desire for me far exceeded my desire for Him.

I decided to take a trip to South Africa, to the place of my birth and the home of many of my family members. I took a tent and hitchhiked from Durban to Cape Town along the beautiful beaches of South Africa's East Coast.

"God, Find Me."

Each day I would meditate. Each day I would cry out a little louder for God to find me. During this time I felt more separated from my Creator than ever before.

The sheer beauty around me was witness to His presence; the vacuum in my heart was proof of His absence.

I arrived in Cape Town, still yearning to know God. Watching those red sunsets, my deep loneliness turned to futility. I was further away from God than I had ever been.

The loveliness of the area haunted me like a silent accusation, saying that I would never, could never, know the One who created all of it.

"God, Help Me."

One day I fell on my knees and cried out, "Help me." I could not even articulate what I wanted help for. I only knew I was lost.

During the next week, everywhere I went people would tell me about Jesus. Some fellow even walked up to me on the beach and said that God had directed him to me and told him

to tell me about Jesus. I began to get the message—loud and clear.

When a friend invited me to church, I was eager to go. As soon as I entered, I sensed a sincere presence of God among the people. I started to attend regularly.

Dark Places Within

The holiness and love of God were evident in each meeting. His love was almost overwhelming. To my surprise, I discovered dark places within me that shrieked out against the holiness of God.

More than once I was literally compelled to run out of the services when these feelings of struggle and oppression came over me. It was evident that the Eastern religions I had so faithfully followed were not going to release me so easily.

One evening someone spoke about victory in death and how Jesus had conquered our final enemy. I knew this message was meant for me.

Victory Over Death

Death had always seemed like a dark and evil subject to me, but at that meeting I saw the miraculous victory of the resurrection of Jesus over death. Jesus conquered this enemy! He arose and can give us new life!

Slowly I began to find strength to deny these spirits of doubt and darkness. The evidence of His power was staggering! The evidence of His love was overwhelming! I reached out in my heart and said yes to God.

Over the next month I struggled with the new life Jesus offered. My struggles were with Satan because of my involvement with Eastern religions and also with my own stubborn self-will. I decided that I needed to study the Scriptures.

My studies, along with several Jewish believers God brought into my life, helped me recognize that I was in contact with the God of Israel, the

God of my fathers for whom I had longed so ardently. My search for God had come full circle!

One day a friend in church asked me if I wanted to pray to receive the Lord, which I had already done in my heart. That day, as a testimony to what He was doing in my life, I formally invited Jesus into my heart and life.

I stayed in South Africa for a couple of years, working at a job that brought me into contact with many other believers. During those years the Lord strengthened my desire to return to Israel, which He eventually allowed me to do.

I am now back in Canada for a while, where I hope to obtain Bible training so I can serve Him better.



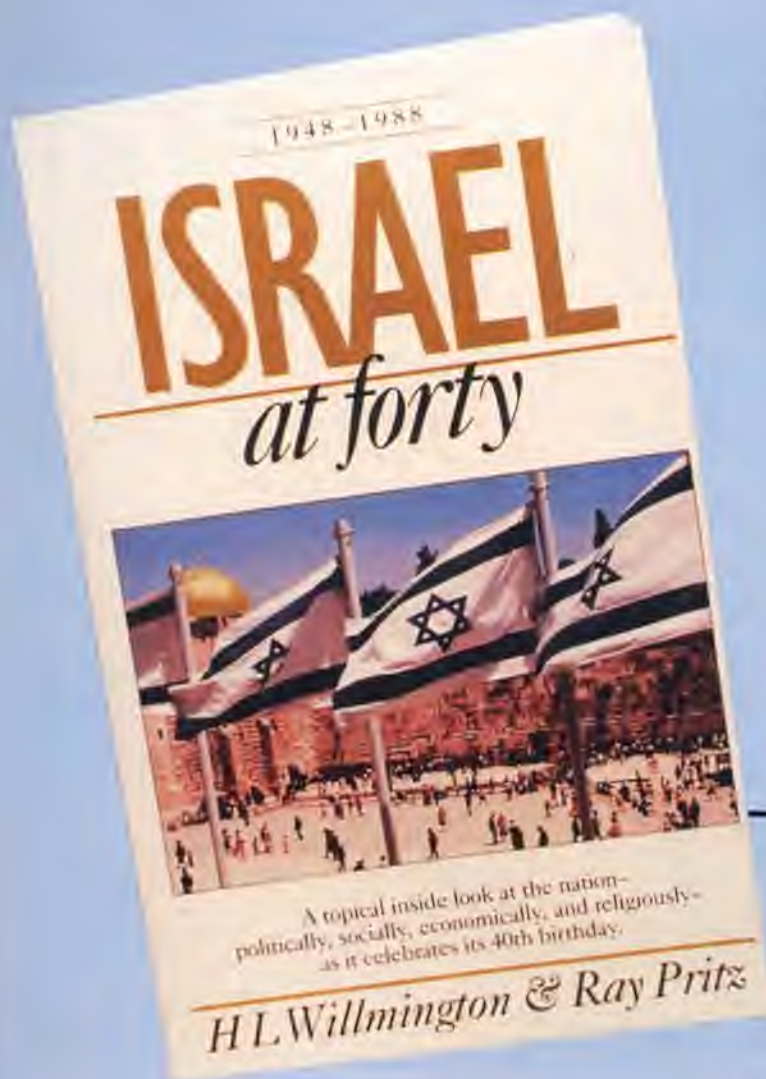
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When I look back on my life and search for God, I am reminded of something God promised in Ezekiel 36:24-25:

“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.” ☺



Akiva Cohen and his wife, Susan, live in Canada with their new-born son, Yishai Abraham.



"Many important dates have marked history since Jesus ascended back into heaven. In 324 Constantine came into full power and made Christianity a legal religion. In 476 the Roman Empire fell. In 1054 the eastern and western branches of the Christian church split. On August 3, 1492, Columbus set sail. On July 4, 1776, the American Declaration of Independence was signed. On August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan. On July 20, 1969, man first walked on the moon. But the most important date of the past twenty centuries is May 14, 1948. It was on that day, at 4:30 P.M., that Israel officially became a nation again."

—from the introduction

ISRAEL

at forty

A topical inside look at the nation—
politically, socially, economically, and religiously—
as it celebrates its 40th birthday.

The number forty has always been highly significant in biblical language: Israel was forty years in the wilderness. Jesus fasted in the wilderness forty days. From the day of its seemingly miraculous birth forty years ago, the nation of Israel has undergone testings of all kinds. Still, despite threats by Arab neighbors to "push them into the sea," citizens of the proud nation of Israel thrive, causing the desert wasteland to literally bloom. What in Israel has changed in these last forty years? What is it like today? Is the restored Israel anything like the Israel of David's or Jesus' day? Authors Harold Willmington and Ray Pritz answer these and other questions in dozens of fascinating topic areas. *Israel at Forty* is an up-to-date picture of life in Israel on the fortieth birthday of that nation.

Harold L. Willmington is vice president of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Ray Pritz is a teacher, speaker, and lecturer at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

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The Wanderer Returns

By BEN VOLMAN
Toronto, Canada

Sometimes our ministry is one of reclaiming those within the body of Messiah who have wandered off. This incident from the ministry of Ben Volman, our worker in Toronto and pastor of the Olive Tree Congregation, is just such an instance.

Steve is a Messianic Jew, an old friend of mine. A few years ago the fellowship he attended underwent some difficulties, and as often happens in those cases, Steve and his wife were not directly hurt, but they were disappointed in what they saw taking place. After they stopped attending services, the two of them slipped out of fellowship.

It wasn't that they tried to deny the Lord, but they were less and less part of activities with believers. When we'd talk from time to time, they remarked that they doubted they could ever really be part of a fellowship again.

Barrier Grew

Over the years their barrier grew and they enjoyed their relationship with the Lord less. It was an unhappy situation for me, as a friend and a minister, but much more unhappy I would guess for them.

Then several months ago, on my way home from one of our services, a friend and I were driving by Steve's house. Almost on impulse, we glanced at the driveway and we both noticed Steve's car was there. It seemed natural to stop in, which is just what we did.

There we were in our Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. And there was Steve, in time-to-clean-house clothes.

Genuinely Happy

He was genuinely happy to see us, though, and soon we were talk-

ing about what was going on in our lives. Without any pressure from me, the conversation moved toward that of fellowship.

Over the next several days, I wondered if he would come to services. I prayed and hoped, and thought a lot about all the good times he and I had shared.

I really did not want to press him, but I couldn't help saying what was on my heart. "Steve, I'd give my eye teeth to see you come to services next week. I know it's your decision, but I think you'd really like it."

It was odd, seeing him struggle. It was as if he was unable to respond, unable to move forward. I knew he liked me and wanted to please me, but he just couldn't overcome his reluctance.

"I can't repair the past," I said, "but it would be a great time to make a new start."

He agreed, as much with his eyes as with his words.

We'd been friends since we were young in the Lord, seen each other get married. I'd watched him grow professionally and he'd watched me enter the ministry.

Out of Fellowship

I found myself worried about his



uninvolvement in a fellowship and felt that he would languish without the support of a body of believers. Yet even though I was a friend, there was only so much I could do, and it seemed to be at that point right now.

All I could do was hope and pray God would bring him to the services and minister to him once there.

Some stories in the ministry seem to have sad endings, but this time it is a happy story... at our next service, the worship started on time, and as usual, some of our people were late. But one person was there early and has stayed ever since. Steve.

An Active Part

He has now become an active part of the congregation, sharing his gift of music to help us worship and grow. He's also brought friends to services and encouraged them to become active in the body.

It's a great joy to all of us—to Steve and me and the others in the congregation. Because sometimes, we need to reclaim God's people, bringing back to the body those who have already come to faith, so they can enjoy the joy of God's salvation. ☺



In the last issue of *Chosen People*, we established Israel's right to the land it occupies, both by divine decree and by the fact that the Jews have continually occupied the land.

We also established that the occupied territories—the West Bank and the Gaza Strip—were territories usurped by Jordan and Egypt after the War of Independence in 1948.

According to international law, we discovered that Israel even has the right to claim these territories as a legal part of the modern State of Israel.

WHOSE LAND?

The Palestinian problem is not something that Israel created all by itself. Part and parcel of the dilemma is the Arab world's indifference to the Palestinian people.

BY HAROLD A. SEVENER

The Palestinian problem is not something that Israel created all by itself. It is a problem forced upon it by the original usurpation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Jordan when Israel was established as a nation in 1948.

However, since its capture of these territories in 1967, Israel has continued to treat them as occupied territories rather than include them within the boundaries of the modern nation of Israel.

Why hasn't Israel included them as



a part of the nation? One of the main reasons is that such an action would cause the Arab nations to claim that Israel is an expansionist nation that takes territory not given to it by U.N. mandate.

The Problem of Nonrecognition

Israel was willing to abide by the U.N. Partition Plan. The Arab States, including Jordan, were not. The latter refused to recognize Israel as a sovereign, legitimate state, even though the majority of the nations comprising the United Nations recognized Israel's statehood.

Herein lies the problem: The Arab States, with the exception of Egypt, continue to refuse to recognize Israel's legitimate right to be a nation in the Middle East.

Israel, on the other hand, feels that it cannot recognize the legitimate right of the Palestinians to have land that was never theirs historically, but that

The Arab States, with the exception of Egypt, continue to refuse to recognize Israel's right to be a nation in the Middle East.

was taken illegally by Jordan. For Israel to do this would be to invalidate its own legitimacy and existence.

The Problem of the Growing Palestinian Population

Now, after 40 years of Israeli statehood and after 21 years of Israeli

continued on next page



occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the problem is exacerbated by the growing Palestinian population.

By the end of 1985, the Palestinian population in the two territories reached 1,338,000 inhabitants: 813,000 Palestinians in the West Bank (not including the 125,000 Palestinians living in East Jerusalem) and 525,000 in the Gaza Strip.

The Jews living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip only number 65,000 and 2,700, respectively. Also the birthrate among the Israelis is almost three times smaller than that of the Palestinians.

Thus, within a few short years, it is conceivable that the Arabs and Palestinians living in Israel could easily outnumber the Jewish inhabitants, thus creating even greater problems for Israel.

The Problem of Palestinian Political Rights

Since Israel has never officially annexed the occupied territories, they have remained under military occupation since 1967. Thus, the Defense Ministry in Israel is, in effect, the military governor over the occupied territories.

The Knesset has said, "Anyone empowered to act in Israel according to Israeli law may act in the territories."

As a result, the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are deprived of all political rights and are not given Israeli citizenship.

This problem is further compounded by the fact that there are at least an additional 500,000 Palestinian Israeli citizens who are not living in the occupied territories. These Palestinians remained in Israel after the War of Independence in 1948.

Even though these Palestinians are citizens, they are not assured full equality under Israeli law. For example, they are not allowed to serve in the military, and they are often treated as second-class citizens.

Jordan is, in effect, a Palestinian State and should be recognized as such. Palestinians living in Israel should be free to return to Jordan.

The Japanese were confronted with a similar situation in the United States during World War II. Many of them were deprived of their rights as citizens and were even placed in restricted camps under military guard simply because the United States was at war with Japan.

The Problem of Prosperity

Both the Palestinian Israelis and those living in the occupied territories have benefited from the economic

prosperity and the higher standard of living, results of the establishment of the Israeli government.

This economic prosperity has, however, served to further aggravate the situation. The Palestinian is exposed to the advantages of modernization and to an open and free society in which he is not fully free to participate. He sees his future as hopeless.

Thus, as the Palestinian population grows and benefits economically from the Israeli occupation, young Palestinians born in the occupied territory see that they are not really free. They become frustrated and they rebel.

The Problem of Divergent Israeli Viewpoints

On the other hand, young Israeli soldiers who are a part of the defense forces are seeking to maintain peace in the occupied territories. They believe in their right to the land. They see the Palestinian revolt as a threat to their own survival.

Then there are the very religious Jewish zealots who feel that the land is theirs by divine right and that it should be occupied only by Jews. They see the Palestinians as a threat to the very Jewishness of the State of Israel.

The Problem of Satanic Hatred

Finally, the problem is further compounded by Satanic hatred. The Bible teaches that the nation of Israel will be in existence when the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, returns. If Satan could destroy the Jewish



nation, the Word of God would be invalidated, thus making a mockery of God's promises.

Satanic hatred of the Jew has found its expression in international terrorism, which uses organizations like the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to stir up hatred and conflict against the Jewish people.

THE SOLUTION

Is there a solution to the Palestinian problem? Can a seemingly impossible situation ever be resolved?

The only present-day, political solution is for the Arab States to recognize that Jordan was created by the British in the creation of Transjordan.

Jordan is, in effect, a Palestinian State and should be recognized as such. Palestinians living in Israel should be free to return to Jordan.

If new boundaries need to be drawn in order to secure safe borders for both Israel and Jordan, this should be done in a face-to-face meeting between Israel and all the Arab States.

Until the Arab States recognize Israel and until the Arab States provide a homeland for the Palestinians, there can be no immediate political solution to the Palestinian problem.

The Ultimate Solution

The Bible teaches that *there is an ultimate solution to the problem*. I believe it also teaches that the modern State of Israel is the stage upon which future Biblical prophecy will be fulfilled.

Biblical Promises About the Land:

The Bible does state that God made promises to Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar. (Ishmael is the father of the modern Arab nations.)

Prior to the birth of Ishmael and prior to the conception of Isaac—long before either of the brothers was born—God made a promise to Hagar. He said, "And he [Ishmael] will live in hostility with" (or, as some translations say, "to the east of") all his brothers" (Gen. 16:12).

After the birth of Isaac, God told Abraham concerning Ishmael, "I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring" (Gen. 21:13).

The Bible indicates that the territories given to the Jews would also be occupied by the Arabs or Palestinians.

Notice that no land boundaries are given in this promise as they were to Isaac (compare Gen. 17:20-22 to Gen. 15:18-21).

Not only did God tell Abraham that Ishmael would be a great nation, but He also told him that from Ishmael would come 12 nations (cf. Gen. 17:20-22). Again, note that no land boundaries were included here.

In contrast, God's promise to Isaac included specific land boundaries (cf.

Gen. 15:18-21; 17:19-22).

Thus no land boundaries were given to Ishmael except that Hagar was told that Ishmael and his descendants would dwell in the midst of or to the east of their brethren (cf. Gen. 16:12).

As we can see, the Bible indicates that the territories given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (the Jews) would also be occupied by the descendants of Ishmael, the modern Arab or Palestinian.

Interestingly, paralleling the rise of the modern State of Israel has been the rise of the Arab States. I do not believe this is a coincidence. I believe it is a part of the prophetic program of God.

Thus, Biblically, we see that the Jews would hold the title deed to the land but would not exclusively occupy it. Historically, this has always been the case.

The Bible further teaches that when the Lord does return to establish His kingdom, His kingdom and land will include a place for the descendants of Ishmael (cf. Isa. 19:18-25).

Biblical End-Time Prophecies: I believe there is ample evidence in Scripture to indicate that modern Israel and the current Arab-Israeli struggle mark the beginning of the fulfillment of end-time prophecies.

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The Bible states that before the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, returns to establish His kingdom, the nation of Israel will be struggling and suffering at the hands of the Gentile nations (cf. Zech. 12; Lk. 21:24).

The nation will also have internal struggles. It will not be at peace, but it will be forced to sign covenants of peace (cf. Dan. 9:27).

The Scripture further indicates that during this time of struggle and conflict, the Jewish people will rebuild the fallen cities, reclaim the land and reforest the mountains (cf. Ezek. 36-38).

The rabbis recognize this struggle. They call it the beginning of the Messianic Woes. They believe it will finally conclude with the battle of Gog and Magog, which will usher in the Messianic era.

But in order for any of these events to take place, there must be a modern nation of Israel in existence.

Biblical Significance of Israel: There are Christians and Jews who feel that modern Israel has no significance in Biblical prophecy today. They point to the same Scriptures to show that the Jewish nation will only be established when the Messiah comes or returns.

They point out that only then can the Old Testament and the New Testament prophecies speaking of Israel be fulfilled.

This position is held by some of the very strict Orthodox Jews in Israel. They do not recognize the modern State of Israel. They believe it has no legitimate right to exist because the Messiah has not established it.

These same Jews claim that the State was established by Zionist Jews for political purposes rather than by devout Jews for divine purposes. These opinions further complicate the Palestinian problem.

This position, however, fails to recognize that in order for the prophecies to be fulfilled, there must be a

Jewish nation occupying the land and there must be a basis for the conflict that ultimately ushers in Armageddon and the Day of the Lord.

Then there are those who say, "How can God use secular Jews, Zionist Jews, to fulfill His prophetic Word?" Yet we see that God has often used unrighteous, unbelieving nations to judge Israel.

Assyria, Babylon, Greece and Rome were all nations far more sinful and wicked than Israel. The prophets of Israel had a problem understanding this too. They asked the same question: How could God use such unrighteous nations to judge Israel (cf. Lamentations and Jeremiah)?

The very strict Orthodox Jews in Israel do not recognize the modern State of Israel. They believe it has no right to exist because the Messiah has not established it.

It appears from Scripture that in the latter days God will raise up the nation of Israel and, even in unbelief, He will use them as an instrument of His justice and judgment against the nations (cf. Zech. 12). God will hold all nations accountable for their treatment of one another (cf. Mt. 25:31-46).

The Christian Solution

Biblical Attitude: What, then, should our attitude be toward modern Israel and the Palestinians? How can we pray for the peace of Jerusalem? We must recognize the following:

1. Israel has a divine right as well as an historic right to the land which it occupies.

2. The Palestinians and the Arabs also have a divine right to dwell in the land.

3. Israel is in the land, not under Messianic rule, but existing as any other nation. Its people can be just as morally and politically corrupt and as spiritually bankrupt as those of any other country.

4. Israel's existence in the land is preparatory to the return of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus. Therefore, the Israelis, like every other people, need to hear the Gospel.

Biblical Action: As believers, we are commanded of God to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Here are some guidelines:


1. Pray for our Messiah's coming, for He is the only One who will be able to give full and complete national peace to Israel as well as the Arab States.

2. Pray for the salvation of the Jewish, Arab and Palestinian peoples. It is only through faith in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, that individual hearts can be changed, hatred dissipated and brotherly love extended.

3. Pray for divine wisdom for the leaders in Israel as they seek to find ways for peaceful coexistence with the Palestinians.

4. Pray that the Arab and Israeli leaders will give mutual recognition of the legitimate right for each to exist as a nation, with Jerusalem as a unified and recognized capital.

I believe that if we, as Christians, begin to pray for the peace of Jerusalem in this way, many Jewish people and many Arabs and Palestinians will come to faith in Jesus.

Out of the conflict and violence, we will then see the hand of God shaping world events for the soon return of our Messiah, the Lord Jesus. 

Please Pray for...

Special events being held around our missions commemorating Israel's 40th birthday — that this would provide overwhelming opportunities to share the Truth about Messiah and God's Plan for Israel. ...

Particularly, please pray for our Shepherd of Israel Congregation in Canoga Park, California, as they prepare their Israel's 40th Outreach. ...

Our Northeastern Regional Director, Rev. Sam Nadler, has asked prayer for six more workers — in the areas of missionary service, administration, musical gifts, office help. ...

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Part-Time Worker Rich Freeman in the Houston area recently injured his foot ... for the Lord's healing touch. ...

WE KNOW MANY OF YOU DON'T like to cut up your copy of the Chosen People to order materials or request information. We're flattered that you want to save your copies for future reference. But we would also like to give you the opportunity to communicate with us, order materials and share your prayer requests with us without defacing your magazine. Please remove this entire page along the dotted line and use the envelope between pages 12 and 13.

For Chosen People Ministries' Camp Simchat Yeladim ("Joy of the Children") this August... that the Lord will prepare young hearts even now to receive Messiah Jesus. ...

For our upcoming Simcha! Messianic training/fellowship this May 19-22... that the Lord will raise up many strong leaders as a result of this conference.

Gary Derechinsky and his wife, Marilou, our congregational leaders in the Boston area... for the Lord to heal Marilou of M.S. ... for His continued direction and blessing upon Beth El Shaddai congregation. ...

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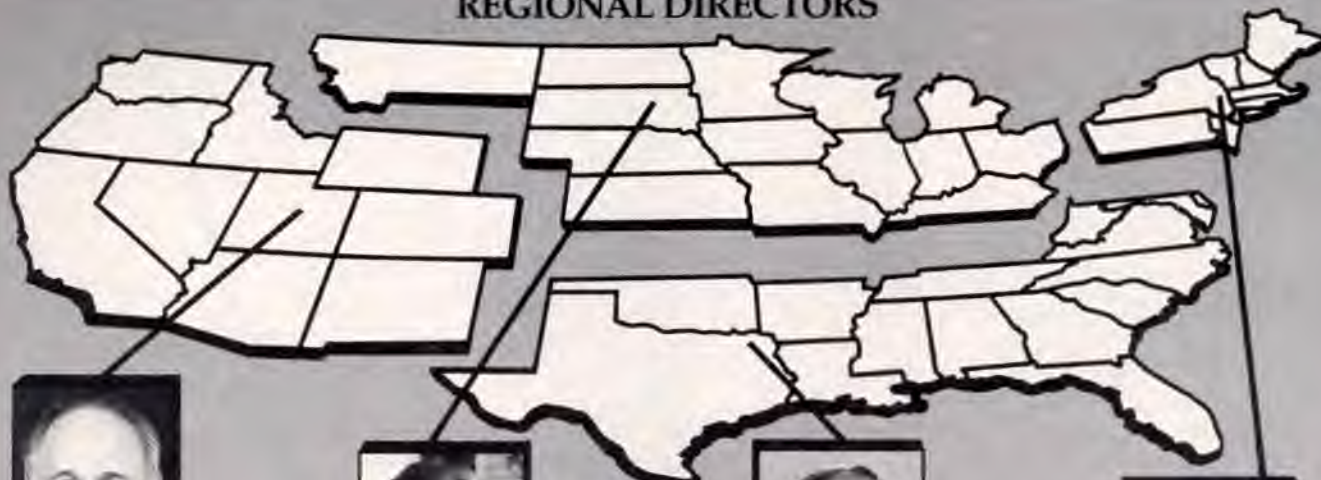
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Meet Your Chosen People Ministries' National Ministries Representatives

Any one of these Jewish believers would be happy to bring the gospel to the Jewish people in your area as well as share with your church or bible study the Jewish roots of Christianity. For more information on a program or presentation to fit your needs please contact Frank Potter (914) 359-8535 or write Frank Potter, Coordinator National Field Services, Chosen People Ministries, Box 2000, Orangeburg, NY 10962.





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WLP 8

Ben Alpert: *Why do you feel it is important to visit Israel?*

Mony Ravid: Well, Israel is the land of the Bible, of course. It's the Holy Land. It is also a very unique country. Israel is probably the only place in the world where you can see snow in one place (say, in Jerusalem) and drive 15 or 20 minutes (say, to Jericho and the Dead Sea) and swim in the desert.

Furthermore, there is no other way to really understand the Bible but by learning about Israel. This is best done by visiting the country to . . . understand its topography and geography since the Bible was written about the people of this land.

Every description there is in the Bible is of this land. Many of Jesus' parables are very strongly tied to the land.

Ben: *There is a wide and varied group of people who live in Israel. Share with our readers something about the different kinds of people who live in Israel and something about these people.*

Mony: Well, in Israel today we have almost 4.5 million people. Over 3 million of these are Jews who come from practically 130 different nations. Besides the Jews, there are people from many other nationalities living in Israel.

We have the Druses, for instance, who have their own secret religion which started about 800 to 1,000 years ago. There are about 50,000 of them living in the Galilee in the north of the country. They are very loyal and faithful to the State of Israel, and they serve in the Israeli army.

We have Christians and Arabs. The Israeli Arabs are invited to vote—Christian Arabs and Moslem Arabs. The great majority are, of course, Moslem Arabs. All the Israeli Arabs in Israel are citizens of the State of Israel.

Besides all the Israeli Arabs, we have another 1.3 million Arabs who live in the areas of Samaria, Judea,

and the Gaza Strip (the so-called occupied or liberated areas) who are not Israeli citizens.

These Arabs cannot become Israeli citizens simply because Israel has not annexed those territories as yet; they are still officially considered to be occupied territories.

Ben: *Are these the people who are referred to in the media as the Palestinians? What is the so-called Palestinian problem in Israel?*

Mony: Well, before I answer that, I would like to clarify the concept of Palestine.

Palestine is a name which most Israelis don't like to hear. It is the Roman name given to the country by the Roman Caesar, Hadrian Caesar, when he conquered the country after the second Jewish revolt—the Bar Kochba revolt between the years A.D. 132–135.

When Hadrian Caesar conquered the country, he decided to wipe out any connection between Jews and their country, which was known as Judea. (Judea is where the name *Jews* comes from.)

Hadrian named it Palestine after a small minority of people who lived there 1,000 years earlier at the time of the Philistines. So the name *Palestine* actually comes from the Philistines, and it was coined in order to cut out any connection between the country and us.

Now, who are the Palestinians? They are the people who lived in this country before the establishment of the State of Israel (during the British occupation and before that—during the British Mandate and the Turkish period).

Mind you, it was not always called Palestine. For instance, in the Turkish period, it was called the *Region of Damascus*.

You might ask me, "Why do you emphasize this?" It is because the so-called Palestinians today—this awakening of the Palestinian nationality—is actually a relatively

new thing that only started two decades ago and has intensified only in the last 40 or 50 years.

Perhaps this [sense of nationalism] has come about because of the Arab world's rejection of the Palestinians. The Arab world, after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, rejected most of the Palestinians who escaped from the country before the war.

When the war was over, the Palestinians found themselves as refugees in Arab territories such as Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. These Arab lands used the Palestinians as pawns in their continuing cold (and not so cold) war with Israel.



As a result, the Palestinians have very deep feelings of hate toward those Arab countries down to this day, just as they have against Israel, because these countries used them and didn't offer them a home. Since they were forced in this way to be secluded, they developed their own nationalism, and they call themselves Palestinians.

Ben: *We in America see a lot in the media about the Palestinian and the terrorism problem. As an Israeli and as a husband and a father in Israel, do you think it is safe to visit Israel?*

Mony: Let me first say, without any hesitation, positively, definitely, absolutely yes! There is no question

about it. It is safe in Israel. But I'd like to explain how we reached the point where we have to even ask that question.

First, we have to understand that by the War of Liberation, as a result of that war, a Palestinian problem was created. That problem was refugees. Those refugees are living in the so-called West Bank, which is Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.

These territories were not in Israeli hands after 1948. They became Jordanian territories or Egyptian territories, and were ruled by them for 19 years, from 1948 to 1967. In those 19 years, no one demanded that

that the world is demanding of us what they didn't do themselves. The Arabs are demanding of us (and the world is supporting them) that we do what they didn't want to do when they had those territories for 19 years.

If we have a PLO State within our midst, it would mean that we would have the Soviets right at our threshold. We would have all of Russia in the West Bank.

Do you remember how in recent history one of your own Presidents wouldn't allow another sovereign country next to you to bring missiles into their country? And they were

million people are expected to visit Israel.

The Arabs are trying to break Israel economically by making it appear that everything in Israel is in flames, that we are actually being blasted with bombs everywhere. People begin to think that when they land at the Ben Gurion, they are given a helmet and a bullet-proof vest.

Just being here in the United States (as I have watched American T.V.), I have begun to wonder at times if I shouldn't bring my family here so they can be secure.

I only think this ridiculous thought because the way the media cover these events makes one think this is happening all around Israel and that one cannot travel in Israel without being in danger.

I want you to understand that Israel is probably safer than New York. My children run around the streets as free as one can be—at any time of the night. I have a 13-year-old boy who goes to the movies by himself at night, and I have no hesitation about letting him go.

Yet I have a friend who is a diplomat here in New York. He won't let his children even go across the street to the grocery store at night!

Israel is definitely safe! Yes, there are problems, and sometimes serious problems. But those problem incidents have been blown out of proportion. So much so that one thinks all the country is in flames.

All the terrorist incidents happen in territories where we don't even go with tour groups. These incidents happen in places where there is nothing to see. Our tours, and especially the Chosen People Ministries tours, don't even go into those areas.

If the terrorists can intimidate and put fear into the hearts of people, they have accomplished their goal.

At a time like this, the fortieth anniversary of Israel, who should you support more if not the Israelis? Don't be intimidated. Come to Israel!

Israel From the Inside

Just reading the headlines, it's hard to know what's really happening in Israel. That's why we asked our National Ministries Representative Ben Alpert to interview Mony Ravid. Mony (pron. monny ra-vit) lives with his family in Tel Aviv and has worked as a tour guide in Israel for the last 20 years. Since 1986, Mony has led several tours of Israel for Chosen People Ministries.

they create a Palestinian State. No one ever thought that there should be a Palestinian State there.

But you should understand that 80 percent of the people living in Jordan today are Palestinian. The fact is, nobody in the world demanded Hussein to establish a Palestinian State, nor did the Palestinians living there, nor did the PLO when they were established in 1965.

The PLO did not demand from King Hussein the establishment of a Palestinian State in the West Bank. Most people don't realize that what the PLO did demand, and what it's still demanding, is the liquidation of the State of Israel.

So when we talk about the Palestinian problem, we must understand

such a tiny little country.

So even if we want to come to a compromise about it, the question is "With whom are we compromising, and to whom are we talking?"

This brings us to current events. This is the fortieth anniversary of the State of Israel, and this is a year which Israel is really celebrating! We are rejoicing!

The Israelis look upon this year with a special fondness, because the age of 40 in the Jewish tradition is the age of maturity. Because of this, the PLO is working very hard to disrupt and spoil this anniversary of Israel.

One of the tactics being used is terrorism, which affects the tourist industry in Israel. This year, 1.5

Israel At Forty: Facing a War of Propaganda, Half-truths and Deceits

Most Evangelical Christians saw the return of the Jews to Israel as the fulfillment of prophecy. We also believe this to be true.

By DR. DANIEL FUCHS

Forty years ago, on Sunday, May 16, 1948, *The Palestine Post*, Israel's distinguished English newspaper, headlined one of the most startling events of the twentieth century (see photo):

STATE OF ISRAEL IS BORN

"The first independent Jewish State in 19 centuries was born in Tel Aviv as the British Mandate over Palestine came to an end at midnight on Friday, and it was immediately subjected to the test of fire. As 'Medinat Yisrael' (State of Israel) was proclaimed, the battle for Jerusalem raged, with most of the city falling to the Jews.

"At the same time, President Truman announced that the United States would accord recognition to the new State. A few hours later, Palestine was invaded by Moslem armies from the south, east and north, and Tel Aviv was raided from the air."

The Palestine Post, vol. 23, no. 6714, p. 1.

War of Independence

Most Evangelical Christians saw the return of the Jews to Israel as the fulfillment of prophecy. We also believe this to be true. The events of the next few years clearly indicated that God was defending His unbelieving people from destruction.

Look at a map of Israel. At its birth, Israel was smaller than the State of New Jersey and was surrounded on the north, east, south and southwest by Arab nations. Israel sat behind indefensible borders surrounded by the armies of seven nations whose combined populations outnumbered Israel's 100 to 1. These "neighbors" were determined to drive the Jews into the Mediterranean Sea.

Yitzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister of Israel, recently wrote the following on Israel at 40:

"Yet in its first years Israel successfully repelled the military onslaught, defended itself against a continuous terrorist campaign, and absorbed and integrated 1.2 million Jews, twice the number of its original Jewish population.

"Contrary to common perceptions, most of these immigrants were not the surviving remnants of the holocaust, but Jews from Arab countries, indigenous to the region, whose lives had become intolerable after World War II, and who were often in danger of annihilation.

"Almost 800,000 of them came to Israel, and now more than half of Israel's population is of Middle Eastern and North African origin."

Although the Arabs and most of the nations of the world were amazed at the success of Israel's defense of its "indefensible" borders, many believe that it was God's hand. We still know it was!

Since 1948 the Arab nations have become wealthy. They have invested not only in economic areas but in propaganda. As we pray for Israel on its fortieth birthday, it is facing a war of propaganda, half-truths and deceits.

A review of the facts is necessary. The Arabs are fatalists; they play a waiting game. Over the past 40 years, they appear to have followed one policy, a policy based on the fact that they now outnumber Israel 100 to 1. They can afford to lose many wars. Israel cannot afford to lose one.

The War of 1948, which established the nation of

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The first independent Jewish State in 19 centuries was born in Tel Aviv as the British Mandate over Palestine came to an end at midnight on Friday, and it was immediately subjected to the test of fire. As "Medinat Yisrael" (State of Israel) was proclaimed, the battle for Jerusalem raged, with most of the city falling to the Jews. At the

same time, President Truman announced that the United States would accord recognition to the new State. A few hours later, Palestine was invaded by Moslem armies from the south, east and north, and Tel Aviv was raided from the air. On Friday the United States

Most Crowded Hours in Palestine's History

Between Thursday night and this morning Palestine was through what by all standards must be among the most crowded hours in its history.

For the Jewish population there was the anguish over the fate of the few hundred Hagannah men and women in the Kfar Etzion bloc of settlements near Hebron. Their surrender to a fully equipped superior foreign force desperately in need of a victory was a foregone conclusion. What could not be known, with no communication since Thursday morning, was whether and to what extent the Red Cross and the Truce Council would secure certified conditions for prisoners and wounded, and proper respect for the dead. Doubts as to some of these crucial questions

JEWIS TAKE OVER SECURITY ZONES

The Battle for Jerusalem, which began when the British forces withdrew on Friday morning, continued all day Friday and yesterday. The crackle of small-arms fire and explosions of mortar shells were still being heard in the early hours of the morning as the battle entered its 18th day.

Egyptian Air Bomb Tel Aviv

In the first raid, four bombs were dropped from a single plane. Two dropped on the city, while the others struck the sea. Little damage was done, but the second attack, which occurred about an hour later, was more serious.

Israel, created two problems in Arab-Israel relations: One is the problem of refugees; the other the problem of frontiers.

War of Extermination and the Refugees

The refugee problem is deeply disturbing to every Christian. We understand their suffering. But the Israeli forces did not compel the refugees to leave their homes. The Arab leaders did. They intended to fight a war of extermination, and they were sure of victory.

The Arabs wanted a clear field of operations to destroy the land, so they compelled the peasants to abandon their homes, promising them a sure and quick

The Arab nations have used the misery of the Palestinian refugees as a political ploy to destroy Israel. Americans who visit Jordan see the refugee camps and hear the horror stories. The refugees do have horror stories to tell, but Israel did not cause them.

return. According to U.N. estimates, 656,000 Arabs fled from Israeli territory to Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan and Syria. They have never returned.

Ever since, the Arab nations have used the misery of the Palestinian refugees as a political ploy to destroy Israel. Americans who visit Jordan see the refugee camps and hear the horror stories. The refugees do have horror stories to tell, but Israel did not cause them. Non-Jewish historians agree that the Arabs have manipulated the refugees.

"Israel has continually held out the hand of peace to

the Arab States, but it has been contemptuously rejected. In August 1949, as a conciliatory gesture, Israel offered to permit 100,000 Arab refugees to be settled in Israel. But the Arab States refused.

"In 1952 Israel, though desperately short of dollars and sterling, offered to pay one million pounds sterling (\$2,800,000) against frozen bank accounts held in Israel of Arab refugees, and the Jordan Government tried in every way to hinder Palestine refugees from claiming payment."

William L. Hull, *The Fall and Rise of Israel*, p. 380.

A Conquering Race

"The Arabs, by contrast, were a conquering race whose sacred writings both inspired and reflected a maximalist position towards other peoples, the despised *dhimmi*. The very concept of negotiation towards a final settlement was to them a betrayal of principle. A truce, an armistice might be necessary and was acceptable because it preserved the option of force for use later.

"A treaty, on the other hand, appeared to them a kind of surrender. That was why they did not want the refugees resettled because it meant the final disposal of a moral asset. As Cairo Radio put it: 'The refugees are the cornerstone in the Arab struggle against Israel. The refugees are the armaments of the Arabs and Arab nationalism.'

"Hence they rejected the 1950 U.N. plan for resettlement without discussion. Over the subsequent quarter century they refused even to receive repeated Israeli proposals for compensation. The result was disastrous for the refugees themselves and their progeny. It was a source of instability for the Arab States also. It came near to destroying Jordan in the 1960s. It did destroy the finely balanced structure of Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s."

Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 530.

Why is it that nobody ever hears about the Jewish refugees from the Arab nations? In many Arab lands there were Jewish communities, some of which had existed for 2,500 years. There were as many Jewish refugees who were forced to leave Arab countries as there were refugees who left Israel. These refugees, however, were accepted and integrated into Israel's economy. They were not left in refugee camps.

Israel's treatment of the refugees from the Arab States is a significant factor in the development of recent Middle East history. The refugees now living in Israel are today a part of that nation's effective growth, whereas the refugees living in the Arab States are a terrific burden.

A Defensive Maneuver

During its 40-year existence, Israel has had a constant

continued on next page

PALESTINE ST

ISRAEL IS BORN

announced that the United States would recognize the new State. A few days later, the Jewish State was proclaimed. The United Nations Special Assembly had voted to appoint a mediator but without taking any action on the Partition Resolution of November 29.

Yesterday the battle for the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road was still under way, and two Arab villages were taken. In the north, Acre town was captured, and the Jewish Army consolidated its positions in Western Galilee.

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U.S. RECOGNIZES JEWISH STATE

WASHINGTON, Sunday.—The message after the termination of the British Mandate in Palestine, the White House issued a formal statement by President Truman that the U.S. Government decided to recognize the Provisional Jewish Government as the de facto authority representing the Jewish State.

The U.S. is also considering lifting the arms embargo but it is not known whether in Palestine only or the entire Middle East, and the establishment of diplom-

Proclamation by Head Of Government

The creation of "Mamluk Yisrael", the State of Israel, was proclaimed at midnight on Friday by Mr. David Ben-Gurion, until then Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive and now head of the State's Provisional Council of Government.

The first act of the Council of Government, as announced by its head, was to abolish all legislation of the 1948 White Paper of the late Mandatory Power, particularly the Ordinances and Orders relating to immigration and land transfer.

In the declaration of independence, Mr. Ben-Gurion called on the Arabs of Palestine to restore peace, assuring them full civic rights and full

U.S. Spittires Shot Down

...the Jewish army ...

struggle for its survival. Since 1948 there have been three wars intended to wipe out the Jews. As a result of losing the second of these wars in the 1967, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank of the Jordan were occupied in defensive maneuvers by Israeli troops. They never expected to keep, nor did they intend to keep these territories.

When Jimmy Carter was President of the United States, he worked hard for peace in the Middle East. He was eminently fair to both sides. He wrote as follows:

"Within Israel itself there was considerable opposition to retaining the captured territories, but the prevailing attitude among the Israeli leaders was that the occupied lands, excluding some still undefined parts of the West Bank, should be kept and traded for a secure peace with the Arabs."

Jimmy Carter, *The Blood of Abraham*, p. 38.

Rejected Peace Overtures

But even though they were humiliatingly defeated, the Arabs would have no part in Israel's Territory for Peace plan. Later in August 1967, according to the chronology in President Carter's book, "At a summit conference in Khartoum, Sudan, the Arab leaders commit themselves to no peace with, no recognition of, and no negotiation with Israel. Full support is pledged to return all of Palestine to the control of non-Jewish Palestinians" (p. xv).

What is the PLO? It is *not* a Palestinian organization, nor does it have anything to do with the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It was organized in June 1964, three years *before* Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It is *not* dedicated to liberating the Palestinians.

Thus we see the absurd paradox of the present situation in Israel. For 20 years Israel has been eager to trade territory for peace. Israel showed how eager it was for peace when it signed the Camp David Accord, which included in Part A a section called "West Bank and Gaza." This section of the Accord reads in part as follows:

"Egypt and Israel agree that, in order to ensure a peaceful and orderly transfer of authority, and taking into account the security concerns of all the parties, there should be transitional arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza for a period not exceeding five years.

"In order to provide full autonomy to the inhabitants, under these arrangements the Israeli military govern-

ment and its civilian administration will be withdrawn as soon as a self-governing authority has been freely elected by the inhabitants of these areas to replace the existing military government.

"To negotiate the details of a transitional arrangement, the Government of Jordan will be invited to join the negotiations on the basis of this framework."

Ibid., p. 218.

PLO Mission: Not to Liberate But to Destroy

It's obvious that Israel has agreed to negotiate both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for peace, but at present Jordan won't negotiate. The United Nations has therefore accepted the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the proper representative of the Palestinians.

What is the PLO? It is *not* a Palestinian organization, nor does it have anything to do with the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It was organized in June 1964, three years *before* Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It is *not* dedicated to liberating the Palestinians.

The PLO has only one purpose—to destroy Israel. To attain its goal of destroying Israel, the PLO has become the greatest terrorist organization in modern history. They not only terrorize Jews, they terrorize Arabs to keep them from cooperating with the Jews in any manner.

For instance, before 1967 when Gaza was held by the Egyptians, the Gazans were virtually kept behind barbed wire. They lived and died and many starved in Gaza. After Israel assumed authority in 1967, the inhabitants of Gaza entered Israel's economy. Both Israel and Gaza benefited.

This arrangement between Israel and Gaza obviously did not please the PLO. In 1969 and 1970, numbers of Gazan bodies were found impaled on meat hooks. The PLO evidently did not want them to prosper.

This same fear is motivating the Arab youths of Gaza and the West Bank to rebel. They think their plight is caused by Israel. They don't realize that they are being sacrificed on the altar of a modern Molech by their own people. Our hearts rise up in prayer for the Palestinians and for their need of a political as well as spiritual peace, which the Lord Jesus can give.

Israel too needs our prayers. Enemies are surrounding its borders. The nation has internal struggles. It needs the wisdom and comfort of the Lord in this hour.

The Bible promises that the nation will look up: "On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem. And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son" (Zech. 12:9, 10). ☪

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