



Spirit & Truth

Israel Through The Eyes Of Scripture

SESSION 1: THE MYSTERY OF THE JEWS

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Transcript of recording

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THE MYSTERY OF THE JEWS

I. Introduction

This is recording #2003010401 recorded on January 4, 2003 at Camano Chapel (www.CamanoChapel.org). Our subject is *Israel Through The Eyes Of Scripture*. This is session 1 entitled *The Mystery Of The Jews*.

Let's start by asking the Lord in prayer to be with us. "Father, we come to you tonight as we embark upon the study of your chosen nation Israel. Father, there are a lot of different views about Israel. We ask You to show us in Your Scriptures and through Your Holy Spirit what you would have us know as believers in Jesus what our heart attitude should be toward Israel and what You are doing with Israel in history that we might not inadvertently oppose Your plan and what You are doing, Father. But that we would be aware of what You are doing on the earth and that we will be able to use that knowledge to glorify You and to reach others in Your Name. We pray these things in Jesus' Name. Amen."

II. Purpose

The purpose of today's class is to establish the importance and relevance of the study of Israel to Christians—why a Christian should know about Israel as a nation and then setting forth a road map for the remainder of the course. So, tonight we will be talking about "the mystery of the Jews."

I have called this first class *The Mystery Of The Jews* because if you go out and talk to people who aren't Christians or don't know the Bible or even some Christians that do know the Bible, and especially if you go out and look at secular writings and the media, you will see people puzzled about the Jews. And they recognize historically that the Jews are an oddity and they are not really sure how to explain it. They think it is unusual. And we know, as those who are familiar with the Bible, that we can explain this oddity because God has made promises to that nation such that what we see in the unusual things surrounding the Jews and the nation have a lot to do with the fact that God in the Bible has chosen to use that nation as a witness to Himself in various ways. So this is the mystery we will look at.

Then, there is a lack of Christian understanding both historically and currently today, people who are Christians that do have a Bible, who might have some confusion or lack of understanding on how we understand Israel in Scriptures. There is a battle over Biblical revelation. What I mean by that is that everybody has the same Bible. We can open and read the same things in it, but you will find

different people will interpret things differently. And we will talk about why, through this course, is it that certain people say that God is through with Israel and that the Church replaces Israel.

There are different views about what it means to be a Christian. What it means to be a Jew in the nation of Israel. How they relate. And so that is what we are going to look at. How do we understand promises that God made and what are we free to do with those promises? Can we reinterpret them? Change them? And those are some things we will look at having to do with Biblical revelation. We'll touch on that tonight.

Then, at the end, we will talk about understanding God's purpose for Israel, that is to say, that God has a purpose for everything He does and for someone who studies the Bible, you would know that the purpose of God is to glorify Himself. And so, He has decided to glorify Himself in numerous ways, right? And one of those ways has to do with the nation of Israel and we will look at that in more detail.

III. Schedule [see companion document]

This handout lays out the intended sequence of topics that we will go through in this 13-week course. It is a tremendous amount of material to cover in 13 weeks, so really all we will be able to do in each of those weeks is touch on the topic to help make you aware of it and give you some of the key scriptures on it so you will know where to go, what God thinks of those topics, and what we are to understand.

So you see we have in Week 1 - *The Mystery Of The Jews*.

And the next week, we will look at *The Calling Of Abraham* who is considered the Father of the Jews. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—who was renamed Israel—all the descendants that come from Israel would become the nation of Israel. We will look at his calling—when God reached down and tapped him on the shoulder and said, "You, Abraham, I want to deal with you."

Then we will look at *Out Of Egypt* which defines the birth of the nation Israel. God initially called Abraham, Abraham had offspring, but then they went into Egypt and while they were in Egypt in slavery, God built up the nation and He called them out of Egypt, He said, "Out of Egypt I have called My firstborn." In the original context of Genesis, that is talking about the nation Israel. God says, "That is My firstborn, that nation."

We will look at *The Promised Land*, which is very controversial today.

Hopefully, looking at that along with some of these other topics in the Millennial Kingdom at the end, we will get a handle on, as a Christian, how do we look at the land over in the Middle East today?

We will look at *The Promise Of Spiritual Regeneration*. And here I am not just talking about the regeneration of believers, those who are “born again,” but the Scripture has quite a bit to say about the nation Israel itself, that God is going to regenerate the nation itself. We will look at the New Covenant which we participate in as believers—who are not Jews, but who are born of the Spirit, God’s Spirit within us—and we’ll see that the New covenant was originally given to the nation Israel. How do we understand that today and how does that work out? What does it have to do with everything that follows from here?

We will look at *Daniel’s Seventy Sevens*. That particular passage in the book of Daniel is where Gabriel gives a prophecy to Daniel who is in Babylon and it sets forth a road map of Jewish history from that point forward. We want to try and understand that.

We want to look at *The Presentation And Rejection Of Messiah Jesus*. Notice that I said *Messiah* Jesus. You will see as we go through this course that I am going to purposely emphasize the Jewishness of the Scriptures because part of what I’m trying to offset in this course is that we have a Western bias for—lack of a better word—when we come to Christ. Most of our teaching about Israel or about the Scriptures comes from westernized sources, so we lack some of the Jewish background. So here is a presentation and rejection of Messiah Jesus. He comes to His own and His own receive Him not, John said, right? So, we are going to look at that. What did He present? How did they reject Him? What were the implications?

And then what follows from that is that *Salvation Comes To The Gentiles*, those of us who are not Jewish in background. We are the seed of Abraham by faith through Jesus Christ. We will look at why this happened and what did God accomplished with it.

We will look at *The Relationship Of The Church and Israel*—how the two relate to one another.

We will look at *Gog Of The Land Of Magog*. That may sound like a bunch of gobbledygook depending on what you have read, but it is basically one of the passages of Scripture that talks about a future war where different nations attack Israel—which has not occurred yet. We will look at who some of those nations are and the characteristics of that battle. We are not going to look at it

so much from a point of view of trying to fit it into today's news or the newspaper. We are going to look at it to see what God does with this war and why He allows it to occur and what is His purpose because the emphasis on this course again is not newspaper prophecy. The emphasis on this course is to say, Why is God using Israel? What does He still want to do with the nation and what is His purpose?

Then there is the *Time Of Jacob's Trouble* which we will talk about which is the Tribulation or Great Tribulation, different aspects of God's dealings in that period which includes dealings with the nation Israel.

And finally, *The Millennial Kingdom* if you haven't looked at that before. It is basically looking at history in three stages. The first stage is the stage we are in which is the earth as we know it today. Then there is the stage three which is a "new heavens and earth" which in Christianity we call heaven but it is actually heaven and earth. It has earthly aspects to it, but it is a re-created heaven and earth that is perfect and in-between those two is this period of time when God's kingdom comes on earth to the current earth and Jesus reigns as Messiah. So when you pray the Lord's Prayer, you say, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This is what you are praying for partly. There is a spiritual aspect of our belief as Christians, but there are earthly promises God has made that He is going to bring to pass too. So, when we pray, "Your will be done on earth" we are not just saying something abstract, we are saying, "God bring Your rule directly to earth." We will be looking at that in the Millennial Kingdom.

IV. Resources [see companion schedule document]

A. Computer-Based Bible Study

If you are looking for additional information as we go along, there is a web site www.e-sword.net where you can find a really nice free electronic Bible that has the equivalent of hundreds of dollars of study aids and they are all the standard things you would think of, Strong's Concordance, the Treasury Of Scripture Knowledge, different Bible versions. And if you are into Bible Study, that is a great resource to get you started for computer Bible Study. [Also see www.SwordSearcher.com and www.Logos.com.]

B. Internet Sites

On the internet, there is also a web site that my wife and I run that is www.SpiritAndTruth.org. If you go there under teaching, you can find audio recordings of this class. That is where I'll be putting them so if you miss any of the notes, you can download them from there too. Also, www.SpiritAndTruth.org/sites/sites.htm#israel on our site has links that take you

to other Jewish-related web sites if you want to look at aspects of Israel in Scripture.

C. Recommended Books

Then, I've listed a bunch of books here, some in particular I've highlighted which are here on the table. Basically, the three examples I've brought are:

1. *An Historical Atlas Of The Jewish People* by Eli Barnavi.

It is a somewhat expensive book, but a very beautiful book. It mixes a lot of graphics and maps and charts with a timeline as well as text. This is done by Jewish scholars and it is a really good resource for general reading.

2. *Israelology: The Missing Link In Systematic Theology* by Arnold Fruchtenbaum.

This next book I wouldn't recommend unless you are really hard-core. This is his doctoral thesis and it goes through the Scriptures in great detail looking at different ways that people have interpreted Scriptures related to Israel. It looks at Covenant Theology, Premillennial, Postmillennial, all these theological terms and this one will take a long time to work through, but I brought it just in case you are really interested and want to go deep.

3. *There Really Is A Difference* by Renald Showers.

It is a comparison between Covenant and Dispensational Theology. If you don't know what that means, it doesn't matter, but it is easy reading for someone who has never come across the idea that the majority of Christians do not believe that God is working with Israel today. They believe that when Jesus Christ was rejected as Messiah, that the promises that were given to Israel have been transferred to the Church. And the Church, people who believe in Jesus, are "spiritual Israel," the "new Israel," so what is going on in the Middle East doesn't really have much relevance to what God might be doing. It is just a big distraction. This book talks about that in more detail and gets at what the essential differences are that cause people to interpret the Bible that way as opposed to the way we will be teaching here which all the elders at Camano Chapel believe.

4. *God's Word*

Obviously, the number one resource is the Bible. We don't want to be getting off on a lot of other things if we don't look at the Bible.

V. Historical Timeline of Israel [see companion document]

This is an amalgamation that puts together information from different sources I've drawn from. One of the things you'll find when you start looking at the history of Israel is that it is kind of humorous—it would be humorous if it wasn't sad—is that a lot of scholars are very critical of the Bible, they don't trust the Bible and so the problem they have is that when they want to study the history of Israel, you can only go so far back before your only source is the Bible. And then you are kind of stuck [you have to trust God's Word!] The early dates come from some conservative sources that are based on the Bible, and then we carry it further and I've highlighted or put in bold some of the main events that are particularly significant.

A. Abraham enters Canaan.

Abrahamic Covenant initiated. This is basically the creation of Israel. It starts around 1921 B.C..

B. The Exodus out of Egypt.

This is where the nation itself is born as opposed to kind of an individual set of promises.

C. The Mosaic Covenant is given.

This would be what we call the Ten Commandments. The laws of Moses were given about this time to the nation of Israel.

D. Divided Kingdom to the Fall of Jerusalem

We go through a lot of other things here. After Solomon and King David, Israel has a Civil War, splits in two. It splits into a northern and southern kingdom. The Northern Kingdom eventually gets dispersed or taken to Assyria and the Southern Kingdom eventually gets taken to Babylon in 586 B.C.

E. Return From Babylon

We go on from there where the Southern Kingdom returns and builds the temple and so on.

F. Birth of Jesus

You can see that Jesus unfortunately wasn't born at zero. Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. and was alive at the time that the star comes, right? The wise men come looking for the star, so you have a problem. If Herod died in 4 B.C. and Jesus is born when Herod is alive then Jesus was born before zero. So, somewhere around 6-4 B.C., you will get different opinions from different people, that Jesus was born. Of

course, as a believer, the birth of Jesus and the crucifixion of Jesus were the two most important events in all of history. And I would say that the crucifixion is the most important historical event ever for anybody, including God.

G. Destruction of Herod's Temple

Then we go on to 70 A.D. where the destruction of the temple, this is after Jesus is gone and the early church is operating. This is a very key event because it leads to the dispersion of the Jews throughout the earth and a lot of things are happening. But this is a very key one, 70 A.D. and after this, after the second Jewish revolt, the Bar Kokhba revolt, you'll see that the dispersion of the Jews really takes off after that and this is all related to prophecy in the Scripture which we will look at where God says, "I'm going to do these thing if you don't [obey]." And one of the things He said He would do is "I will make you a by-word among the nations. I'm going to scatter you all over the world and I'm going to make you a wonder. People are going to look at you and go 'What in the world is it with these Jews?'" We'll look at some of those passages.

H. Crusades

Then I included some things that are very sad commentaries in history and they have a lot to do with the topic of Christian misunderstanding of the topic of I srael, the Crusades (99-1244 A.D.). The Crusades set out, there were a series of crusades, but basically they set out to liberate the Holy Land from the infidels which in this case were Islamic Muslims. But before they get very far, they start slaughtering Jews along the way because they are on their way to Jerusalem to kill people who don't believe in our Lord—that have control of Jerusalem. Here we have these people living in our midst in medieval Europe, right? We have these Jews, "these Christ-killers," and I'll share a letter today where people are still saying that, but we have these people who "crucified our Lord" and on our way, let's take care of them, so the crusades damaged the Jewish culture tremendously.

I. Inquisition

Then we have the Inquisition which was under the Roman Catholic Church which was to get rid of heretics including the Jews. There were similar to what we would call Protestant today, but this was before the Reformation so you can't really say they were Protestants at the time, but they were people like you and me who read the Bible and believe the Bible is the ultimate authority. They ran afoul of the Roman Catholic Church too, so during the Inquisition, we have as a minority group—we have people like you and me. If we were serious about our faith and we were really serious about the Bible, we would have been in trouble at the time of

the Inquisition too. But it was a very big negative for the Jew and that went on for almost 300 years. The last recorded death from the Inquisition judgment was in 1765 A.D.. It went on for a long time. Now notice, from both of these, from the point of view of a Jewish person, these were perpetrated by Christians. Now, you and I look at it and say, That was "Christendom—those were people who weren't reading their Bible closely and so misunderstood what it said." But the sad fact is that the largest persecution of Jews in the history of the world [the holocaust excepted] was instituted by Christian influences, however you want to look at it. And this is one of the strategies I believe that Satan has to keep the Bible divided. To keep the Jews so that they hate the cross so they can't come to their Messiah and to keep the Christians so they don't have a clue what the Old Testament is about in some cases. They don't understand the Jewishness of the foundation of their faith so they are likely to misinterpret some of the things Jesus says and does. But basically if you can keep those two apart, you are going to keep from having the nation of Israel come to where it's going to be in God's plan. He'll bring it there anyway, but I'm just saying that that is part of what is going on here in this historic situation.

J. The Black Death

I listed, not because it is specifically Jewish, but because the Jews were blamed in many cases for the Black Death. That's where we had the rats with the fleas and the fleas carried the disease. Many Jews were blamed.

K. Kicked out of Spain

Notice here that Columbus set sail for America in the same year the Jews were kicked out of Spain. There is a lot here but if you go down, I'll just pick out a few other ones.

L. Jew as English Prime Minister

In 1874 A.D. England had a Jewish Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. That is significant because Herzl who was a key player in the beginning of Zionism which is where the Jews decided we need...the Jews were...when they dispersed into different countries, the idea was that they were going to be able to assimilate there. We will see that there are passages in Scripture where God says, "When I send you out to these countries and you are going to try and fit in, I'm not going to let you fit in. I'm going to keep you a unique people. You are not going to be able to fit in." We will see that during this time when the Jews were in Europe, you had some very fine literary works and theatrical works and so on. The Jews were in upper academics and so on, and so it was looking like they were going to fit in in the

very countries that ended up being the very worst for them in the holocaust: Germany, Poland, and so forth.

M. The Balfour Declaration

The Balfour Declaration eventually leads to the British having the Middle East and the British Mandate. All of this leads up to the establishment of the state of Israel, but in-between, of course, we have one of the most sordid—if you don't believe that man is depraved, if you are in church and you think that if we just get our social act together and if we just get rid of hatred and we can educate people the proper way, and if we raise our kids in a way where we don't mar their psyche, then we'll have perfection and a great time on earth—well, this should take care of that problem. In the holocaust, 34% of the Jews were exterminated—six million. Sad to say, but there are French academics today denying the holocaust ever occurred. Can you believe it?!

N. Modern Period

Then I have a list of all the different things that go forward after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 up to 2001. Now this is just to give you a flavor for Jewish history. We'll talk about certain of these events, but this is not a political class which is to say, our focus is not going to be looking at the tail end of this and trying to fit it into prophecy. Our focus is going to be looking at the Scriptures and what do they say and what are the things we can know for sure that it says about Israel rather than some of the speculative things that are more associated with what you will hear some people teach.

VI. The Diaspora

Also, on the chart here I have a small table of Jews in the Diaspora. Diaspora means "scattering of seed" and it is a term that means the dispersion of the Jews among the nations. In 700 B.C. 80% of the Jews were in Israel and 20% were outside at that point. By 200 A.D. there were only 20% in Israel and 80% out, so you see through that during this period of history there was an exchange, the complete opposite. You get to 1600 A.D. and 1% of the Jews are in Israel in the land and the other 99% are wandering Jews, which is a proverb, and it is what God predicted. Then, here I have in 1991 that 32% are back in Israel and still 68% out. I don't have more current data on those available, but this is from the *Historical Atlas Of The Jewish People* which has a really nice page which shows their population and all sorts of things. But this part from a Biblical point of view, this Diaspora, we will be looking at when we talk about the Promised Land because it relates to whether or not the Jews are allowed to live in the Promised Land and

God basically said that if they would follow the Mosaic Covenant, then He would give them possession of the land. I have to be careful what I say. They own the land, it's a matter of whether or not He lets them.... Like if I said to you, "Son, you are 16 years old. Here's your car. I gave you this car, but if you behave well, I'll give you the keys to drive it. I'll let you drive it, but if you don't behave well, the keys are going to stay in my pocket. But it is still your car. It's your car. It's just whether or not you will be driving it." So that is something we will be looking at. This is God saying, "You are not driving your car."

A. Question asked:

"What is the normal average for people who have left other countries like Hawaii?"
Answer: I don't know. What would the average be for a typical nation where people are not all in the nation? I think you have to say that when 99% or 68% of people are out there that it is a very high number because this isn't just any nation, this is a people who open their Old Testament, the Torah [Tanakh], it tells them that they are supposed to be in the Promised Land, the land of Israel. Every year they say, "Next year in Jerusalem" at their Passover. So, this isn't just a people that is scattered. This is a people that absolutely have a very strong cultural separation to be Jewish, to be in the land although still most of them are out. And of the 68% who are out, there is a huge number of them that want to assimilate in the population but they don't know their own Scriptures. They can't assimilate and God will not allow them to totally assimilate in the nations.

VII. The Mystery of the Jews (the world's perspective)

Now I want to share a couple of things that different people have written about the Jews that state some of this mystery.

"The great Prussian Emperor Frederick often would test his chaplain with theological questions. Frederick, however, said he did not have time for long answers and explanations. He wanted simple answers that he could comprehend quickly. One day he asked his chaplain if he could provide simple and succinct evidence for the truth of the Bible. Frederick asked if the chaplain could provide evidence in just one word. The wise chaplain responded that he could do just that. 'What is the magical word?' Frederick asked. The chaplain replied, 'Israel, your majesty. The people of Israel.'"

Mark Twain wrote:

"If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one quarter of one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be heard of; but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of

his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine and abstruse learning re also way out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers.... The Egyptian, the Babylonians, and the Persians rose, filled the planet with sound and spender, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they were gone.... The Jew saw them all, survived them all, and is now what he always was.... All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

To that we answer, one word: 'God.' Or four words: "the promises of God." Nicholas Berdyaev said:

"I remember how the materialist interpretation of history (*looking at the physical, using your logic, and what your eyes see*), when I attempted in my youth to verify it by applying it to the destinies of the people, broke down in the case of the Jews, where destiny seemed absolutely inexplicable from the materialistic standpoint ... According to the materialistic ... criterion, this people ought long ago to have perished. Its survival is a mysterious and wonderful phenomenon demonstrating that the life of this people is governed by a special predetermination, transcending the processes of adaptation expounded by the materialistic interpretation of history. The survival of the Jews ... their endurance under absolutely peculiar conditions and the fateful role played by them in history; all these point to the peculiar and mysterious foundations of their destiny."

Right! The Abrahamic Covenant! Historian Heinrich Groetz said:

"a nation (Israel) which has witnessed the rise and decay of the most ancient empires, and which still continues to hold its place in the present day, deserves the closest attention."

VIII. Mystery of the Jews (the Biblical perspective)

Let's open our Bibles now. If you can bring a Bible every time that's great, because we are going to be going into the Bible a lot and we'll be spending a lot of time in the Old Testament, partly because we are weaker generally as Christians because we have less exposure to the Old Testament.

And one of the things I want to try and establish in this course is that when God makes promises, He means what He says and as Christians, we may not be familiar with a portion of His promises that are in the Old Testament and/or not as familiar with them as we could be.

And so, when we are always in the New Testament, while we believe the Old Testament is inspired and inerrant like the New Testament and we see Jesus quoting it all the time, we see Matthew quoting it all the time, but when we go back and look in the Old Testament, we find out that there are things that God said that we need to be aware of that have to do with this topic Israel.

We are going to flip to Jeremiah 31 and we are going to find instructions from God on how to destroy the Jews. It turns out it is a little bit difficult. Jeremiah 31:35 is where I'm going. The other thing I wanted to say is that we will be touching on a lot of scriptures that I'll be presenting saying, "This is what this is about," but they will be out of context because we don't have time to establish the context so your job is as Paul says in Acts 17:11—if you are a good Berean—is to "check the Scriptures daily to see if these things be so." So, one of the challenges in the Old Testament is that there are a lot of promises and prophecies there and it is easy for someone like myself to go back there, grab a Scripture out of context, and say this is a prophecy about one thing or the other and for all you know, it might have been fulfilled already—say in 550 B.C.—or some other time when certain political things happened with the Jews. So, you are going to have to take my word for it here in the class, but on your own time, check these things out.

But starting in Jeremiah 31, verse 35, this is right after God has mentioned the New Covenant in an explicit way where God is going to give a New Covenant starting in verse 31 but we will pick up in 35.

"Thus says the Lord who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for light by night. He disturbs the sea and its waves roar. The Lord of hosts is His Name. If those ordinances, that is the sun and moon depart from before me says the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever."

So this is what the nations who want to destroy Israel need to do, they need to read Jeremiah 31 and start sending their scud missiles toward the moon or the sun.

It continues in verse 37,

"Thus says the Lord, If heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the Lord."

So, when you start looking at Israel, these passages have to come forward in your mind. You have to say to yourself, what more could God have said here and elsewhere we'll look at to get us to understand the experience about this nation although they have been disobedient, they crucified their king, or we and they crucified their king.?

We will talk about that too, but ultimately He says the nation of Israel is going to continue to exist and we will see when we look at the Old Testament what this is. If you get a concordance and you look up the word "remnant," you will find all through history even within Israel there have always been a group of people who knew God and who were called the believing remnant. Such as when He says to Elijah, "I have 7,000 that have not bowed the knee to Baal." Remember Elijah

says, "I am the only one left." And God says, "No, I've got 7,000." And you'll see that this remnant within the wide stream of the nation Israel. There is the "Israel of God," a group of Jews that always know God and today they are Christian Jews which we call Messianic Jews. Those are the remnant. I'm getting off on a tangent, but anyway, this is this business that God promises that He is going to keep the nation existing.

IX. Christian Misunderstanding

Now we get to the sad fact of a lack of understanding by Christians about the nation. When Jesus came to the nation Israel, remember in John 5:39 that He said to the Pharisees, the religious leaders, "You search the scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me." Here we have people who have God's written Word, who were studying His Word, but they did not know Who Jesus was or they wouldn't agree with Who He was. You can debate how much they knew, but they rejected their own Messiah and yet, they had the Scriptures. And I wonder today that if Jesus was here today, if He wouldn't go to some of the areas of Christianity and say, "You search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they which testify of My promises and plan for Israel." You know, God has a plan that He said He is going to do whether it is the First Coming of Jesus, the Second Coming of Jesus, the creation of the Church—all these things He set forth and it is our job as Christians, believers in Jesus, to find out what God has said.

We can't walk around with an idea about Israel that isn't God's and then expect God to honor our idea. No no! He's God! We have to find out what did He say and let's do it the way He says. So, this is one of those things that we can be in the same spot as the Pharisees when it comes to our modern understanding of the nation Israel. When we get our source of information about what we think about Israel all the time from the media and we are not looking at God's Word, we're going to end up more like those Pharisees. We're going to end up in a position where we are in here worshipping the King of the Jews who said to Jerusalem, "You will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord.'" He's going to come back and they are going to say He is blessed.

What I am saying is, we are worshipping Jesus and at the same time, many of us in the larger realm of Christianity are out-of-step with the heart of God when it comes to the nation Israel and that's my concern which is one of the reasons we are doing this class.

Now remember though at the time Jesus came, even though the Pharisees and the Sadducees did not either recognize Him or refused to recognize Him, do you remember in the beginning of the book of Luke, 2:28 when Jesus is brought as a baby to the temple to be circumcised, there are a couple of people there who seem to know a lot more than the disciples about what is going to happen to Jesus, right? Do you remember? This guy Simeon is in the temple and God had to reveal by His Holy Spirit that He would see the Messiah before he dies and he takes Jesus up in His arms in verse 28 and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting Your servant depart in peace according to Your Word for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You prepared before the face of all people, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel." And notice what He says in verse 34 when He says to Mary. He says, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel and for a sign which will be spoken again, yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." What is He doing there? He is implicitly prophesying the crucifixion of Jesus to Mary!

Now, contrast him with the Pharisees and Sadducees that Jesus is always saying, "Woe to you snakes, vipers..." Now some of the Pharisees came to Christ, but the ones that wouldn't—He is constantly telling them, "You have got the Scriptures. You've got the law. You've got Abraham, your Father, but you are the sons of the devil." He's saying that you need to understand and embrace what God has said and as Christians, we need to be careful too. Not that it is as a salvation issue, but it is an issue of knowing and agreeing with God's will in history.

We don't want to be in the future from now looking back and saying, "Well there was the crusades, there was the holocaust, and then "whatever comes next, and Christianity played a part in the "whatever came next" too just like it did in the crusades." So that is one of my concerns, so we need to understand the aspect of the Bible that talks about Israel.

The sad fact of history is that Jews through history have had a better time under Muslims than under Christians. Lately that is not the case or in the United States and Britain. Of course, what is going on in the Middle East right now, the Jews wouldn't necessarily say that, but back in history, A.D. 600-800 around in there when they were in Spain and also at times when they have been under Persian rule, they have had a much better time than they have had historically under Christians.

And part of this is the idea that Christians are always going—and they are doing it today—that they are going to blame the Jews as a *nation specifically alone* for the crucifixion of Jesus and yet, Scripture says that He was crucified for our sins and

that the Gentiles were involved in His crucifixion too. But that's part of what you hear the blame for on Israel and why in some realms of Christianity, they've had such a hard time.

So today I'm just going to touch on some of the modern things that are going on that are a reflection of that in our own day. Again, this class is not primarily about politics—this is going to be the main part where we talk about politics, per se, because we are going to be looking at Biblical material.

But it is interesting to see the stance for instance of the Vatican, the official representation of Christendom and for many who don't know the Bible that well, the Roman Catholic Church, that's their definition of Christianity. I mean, before I was a believer (I've been a believer for about 10 years), I thought Christianity was what Roman Catholicism was. Everything I saw about it, I thought was Christianity. Well, they've refused to recognize the State of Israel since its establishment all the way until June of 1994 and they've opposed Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem the entire time. Now, they've stopped that opposition at the moment because they are in support of the PLO desire for Jerusalem.

And we've really not talked about this, but if you were to go into the Old Testament and look at all the promises made about Jerusalem as well, you will see that there are a ton of promises that God has made concerning the actual town of Jerusalem as well and that many of these cannot be spiritualized away and it is clear from the context that they are not talking about the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven because it talks about Jerusalem mourning and being in a mess and, "I will put watchman on your walls," etc. God does not need to put watchmen on the walls if it is the heavenly Jerusalem. It's perfect. It's in heaven. There is no sin there. Ok, so this struggle over Jerusalem is an echo of the struggle over the Promised Land as well. Pope John Paul is continuing to urge for a Palestinian state.

Our presidents, former President Bill Clinton and President Bush, both campaigned on a promise to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem but have avoided doing so by invoking a special security waiver every six months. There is a foreign relation's authorization act that was also recently signed into law by George Bush, but the State Department refuses to recognize Jerusalem rather than Tel Aviv as the capitol of Israel and relocate the embassy there. So, because of the political situation—it is a hot potato, right?—so the president keeps saying, "It is too strategic, we can't do this." And congress is saying, "Look, we want Jerusalem to be the capitol of Israel because Israel says it is her capital." So, I'm just giving you an example of how this is working out in political history, geo-political history.

Christianity is not all “pie in the sky.” There are political ramifications that come about from it and some of them are going to be unavoidable as we will see as the Kingdom of God is going to intervene on earth in a geo-political way.

Then we have Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat. He signed into law a nearly two year old bill naming Jerusalem as the Palestinian capitol and he took this action in response to this new U.S. law.

That doesn't surprise me so much, but what I do want to share tiny snippets from is a couple of letters. These letters were written by the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem—by a man by the name of Irineos I. He is currently being considered for appointment as the head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem. This first letter is to the “President of Palestine, Mr. Yasser Arafat” and in it here is one of the things he says,

“We pray to the almighty God of love to give you success and victory in this holy struggle and also help to establish an everlasting peace in the Holy Land. We hope that soon a great and independent Palestinian State will be established in the beloved sacred land of your fathers with Jerusalem as its sovereign capitol.”

He is not saying “divided” or “shared” even. He is saying that Jerusalem should be entirely the capitol of non-Israel. And this is a Bible believing Christian. I mean, I don't know if he is or not, but I am just saying from someone else's point of view this is a guy who is really supposed to know the Bible and he is saying that Jerusalem is not Israel's capitol or should not be Israel's capitol.

Here's what he goes on to say in another letter,

“You are aware of my multiple interventions both toward the late Patriarch Diodoros and the Greek government in the international forum for the right of the Palestinians to have their independent state with its capitol as Jerusalem.”

Now listen to this next paragraph,

“You are finally aware of the sentiments of disgust and disrespect that all the Holy Sepulchre Fathers are feeling for the descendants of the crucifiers of our Lord Jesus Christ, actual crucifiers of your people, Zionists, conquerors of the Holy Land of Palestine.”

Now, that to me, I don't know the man, but he is very dangerously close to being in opposition to God in history. That's all I'll say about it, is that he here is calling the Jews *alone* the crucifiers of Jesus. He is equating the crucifixion of Jesus with the Jews treatment of the Palestinians today and he is saying that the Palestinians should have Jerusalem all to themselves.

And, at the end of it, he says,

"In the eventuality that with your help and the help of God, I would be elected as the Patriarch, rest assured Mr. President Arafat that the rights of the most beloved Palestinian people of the Holy City of Jerusalem will find the most hot supporter."

I just offer that as an observation to think about. I don't know how everybody feels about that whole business. It is not my intent to really comment on it other than to say that these things do have political ramifications. You'd never get me to say, "Give Jerusalem to another nation." I couldn't say it out of my mouth, because I just see so many Scriptures about it, but he doesn't have any trouble with it.

X. God's Heart for Jerusalem and the Promised Land

So, we see in Scripture, I'll just touch on a couple of these. If you look at Isaiah 49:14. These were written at times during Israel's past, but they set forth God's attitude about Jerusalem and Israel. Isaiah 49:14 says,

"But Zion said (Zion is a term that refers to a hill, part of Jerusalem. It is used to refer to Jerusalem in many cases like here), the Lord has forsaken me and my Lord has forgotten me. Can a woman forget her nursing child and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palm of my hands. Your walls are continually before Me."

You have to remember that Jesus when He left He said that "Your house is left to you desolate" which is at the end of Matthew 23, Jesus was filling the same place as the glory of God in the temple. So He goes to the temple which is His Father's House and when He leaves there, He says "Your house is left to you desolate." And the reason it is left desolate is because the glory of God, Jesus, is leaving again just like it did before the Babylonian captivity which we might look at, but He says though, "You will not see Me again until you say 'Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord.'"

If you go and read that passage, you will see He is talking to the city, Jerusalem. He is talking to Jerusalem and that's where He is going to come back. His feet will touch the Mount of Olives, the same way He left and that is what the angels say in Acts 1:9 or so. They say that Jesus will come back is the same way He was taken up, so there again, not having forgotten Jerusalem, He says in many passages—in 1 Kings 11:36 He chose Jerusalem and He has put His Name there.

One of the best passages to look at is Isaiah 62. Take a look there. This is the passage that when I first heard this passage it was on a music CD. I had a music CD with some Jewish Christian music, written by Messianic Jews, and these lyrics were in the song. And I heard these words and I was a pretty new Christian and I

thought, "That's incredibly political and that is over-the-top Zionism!" I was kind of like—wow—I don't know about this CD that I got. It might be a little too far out and then I ran across Isaiah 62 and I realized all they did was read Isaiah 62! And, like oh!

"For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace and for Jerusalem's sake, I will not rest until her righteousness goes forth as brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burns. The Gentiles shall see your righteousness and all kings your glory (*talking about the city of Jerusalem*)."

Notice in verse 6:

"I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem, that shall never hold their peace day or not. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silence and give Him no rest until He establishes, until He makes Jerusalem a praise (*where?*) in the earth."

So He is talking about having watchmen on the walls and in here, you will see that He says you shall no longer be termed forsaken. That is not the heavenly Jerusalem, this is like we looked at in our schedule [the earthly Jerusalem]. He is talking about the Jerusalem of the Millennial Kingdom, the rule of Jesus on the earth which we will get to later. But these are just a sampling of some of the passages you will see.

Let's look at one more, Zechariah 12. Zechariah is just before Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament. This is the passage that you would have to spend a lot more time to look at, but it has not been fulfilled. But in verse 2, God says,

Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples when they siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all people, for all who heave it away will surely be cut in pieces though all nations of the earth are gathered against it."

There is a lot more to this passage, like I say, that you want to look at, but you can see here what happens is that God intervenes on the side of Israel and Jerusalem in this conflict. It's not a light thing as a Christian to oppose Israel—having Jerusalem and Israel dwelling in the Promised Land.

This has been the viewpoint of America for quite awhile and one of the reasons the Jews have done well in America and why we are their ally is because we have a foundation of Protestant Biblical Christianity. And that foundation is eroding rapidly and as it erodes, our support for Israel, not because of who it is, but because of what God has said is eroding with that.

Now the other thing having to do not just with Jerusalem but the land, is that this is not an issue about native rights. Let's get that clear. If we applied native rights here, we'd have to kick off a lot of us who came in from Europe or our

forefathers came from there. I was born in Liverpool, England. A lot of us came in from Europe and so “stole the land from the Indians.” So, if you get into the native rights thing, you have to find out who was there before you were and by the way, there was probably someone there before they were there and that is how this whole thing goes and so it is very clear from the Bible that Israel didn't have the Promised Land. That is why it was promised. There were other people living in there, the seven different nations, the Canaanites and so forth.

So when people started getting back to who was there first, that is an interesting discussion, but for a Christian who believes in what God says, it is irrelevant. Because what is important to the Christian is God's sovereignty. What is God doing? What has God said? I don't care about anything else. I just want to know what has God said and what is He doing and that's where I'm going to align myself with because of Who He is.

So, again, God gave the land to Israel. We'll look in the rest of this course about what were the conditions for the giving of the land. Like we talked about, what were the conditions for giving the car? Is the car still Israel's and when do they get the keys? And we'll see how there are some complications there about having to be obedient, but there are some verses that should make us pause and be careful.

Let's look in Joel 3, another passage. It's the second of the minor prophets—Hosea, Joel, Amos. Joel 3:2. Again this is a passage you'll have to spend time looking at the context yourself, but some of what is in this passage is clearly not yet fulfilled. Verse 2,

“I will gather all nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehosephat (“jehu sephat” means “God judges”, so He is going to bring them down to the valley of God judges*) and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations. They have also divided up (*whose land?*) My land.”*

When I read those verses, I get afraid. It makes me nervous because when you look at how this goes, this whole passage, there are aspects about this that have to do with great judgment upon all nations and many people believe this is tied in with Armageddon situation in Revelation and it is yet future. He's talking about My people, My heritage, My land and He says the nations have scattered the Jews and divided up their land.

So, I'm not trying to say that Israel or the Jews are perfect—that we should unconditionally support them—but what I *am* saying is that we need to see what God has said about the nation and we need to be careful to understand that they

have certain promises and purposes that God has and it is not about us, it's about God.

One thing I didn't bring along. I wanted to bring my Koran. I'll have to bring it tomorrow when I do this class, but in the Koran, the Koran recognizes that the Promised Land was given to Israel. Isn't that surprising? Sura 5:20 reads:

"Remember, Moses said to his people, 'Oh my people! Call in remembrance the favour of Allah unto you, when He produced prophets among you, made you kings, and gave You what He had not given to any other among the peoples. O my people! Enter the Holy Land which Allah hath assigned unto you, And turn not back ignominiously, for then will ye be overthrown, to your own ruin.'"

So there is in the Koran—you'll see if you ever spend some time in it—that it has snippets of Old Testament truth, some of it very clear, some of it different and twisted. There is a section here where it is quoting Moses talking to the Jews entering the Promised Land and it says right there, the Promised Land is Israel's, so it is pretty confusing.

XI. The Battle Over Biblical Interpretation

That brings me to my third topic, what I call the battle over Biblical interpretation. This has to do with several things, the nature of promises and the nature of interpretation. If I came to one of you here and I said, "At the end of the class, I'm going to give you a brand new red truck." And you knew that I was a person of my word—so all through the class you are sitting there thinking, "Wow! He is going to give me a brand new...there's no way He is going to give me a brand new red truck but he said he is and he is a man of his word!"

Then at the end of class, I walk over to you and I give you a little H. O. toy, a little red truck and I say, "There you go, I fulfilled my promises." How are you going to feel about that? Let's switch it around and say that it is God and that is how He deals with His promises. He comes to you, this is the same God who created man and so one of the things He gave man that the animals don't have is language. And He gave man language to communicate and He also created a brain, our brain. So He gave us the ability to communicate. He gave us sufficient intelligence to understand and He created language and our ability to use language, so He comes and communicates to us and He says, "This is what I'm going to do, A-B-C. Now, when we hear that promise, part of the promise is our understanding of it, right? You have to assume that God understands and uses language that is sufficient. Otherwise the whole thing falls apart.

What is the point of Him making a promise if He knows you don't understand it, right? So, God has made these promises and He has said certain things. He has said things about the city called Jerusalem and a land and a nation. And when He uses the term in the Old Testament when He says Jacob and Israel, the people who are listening to those promises, they know who Jacob and Israel is.

When Gabriel shows up to Mary to announce that she is going to be pregnant, he says that Jesus will sit on the throne of David. She knows what the throne of David is. She's a Jewess. She has that whole cultural background and she knows what Gabriel is saying. So when we go into the Old Testament and look at the promises God made, We have to look at who did He make them to? How did they understand the promise? And is it fair for God to switch—bait and switch?

It's one thing for God to come and say, "I'm going to give you a truck at the end of class" and you are like "Wow!" And then at the end of the class, He gives you a whole auto lot. That's a shift! I mean He gives you way more than what He promised you. That is one thing, but if I promised "Son, we're going fishing on Saturday" and then Saturday comes and I do something that is not really fishing. Where is the trust? Where's my character?

Well, this is what we have to look at in God's promises so He can't fundamentally change the promise after the fact and redefine what it means. But many Christians do that that way when they read Old Testament. They see "daughter of Zion" and they think He is talking about female Christians. He's talking about a city, Jerusalem, right? And when it says Zion, it's talking about a hunk of dirt in Jerusalem. Now, it is used at times in ways to teach spiritual truth, but when it talks about things like "I'm going to give you this Promised Land, these are the borders, etc. etc.", it's not an abstract thing that is going to be mystical later—that is going to be replaced.

That is one of the problems that has happened in Christianity and that is why there is so much misunderstanding and here's Camano Chapel's position (overhead) on Israel. This is one of their statements that they have in their teaching doctrines.

"We believe that God's Word teaches that the church is a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ made up of all 'born again' believers in this present age. The church is distinct from Israel."

Now some of you will look at this and will go why is he spending so much time on this? It seems obvious, but maybe others of you have had a different background where you have been taught that the church replaces Israel and that we are the "New Israel." That is not the position that the elders here hold.

"The promises given to Israel in accordance with the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New Covenants remain in effect."

The idea there is that God made these promises and that not all the aspects of the promises have been fulfilled yet and we're just saying that we believe in the basic promises, the way they were given, and that God will fulfill them eventually.

So, down here in summary, the church—that is Christians who believe in Jesus at this time—is distinct from Israel. When we read in Scripture, everywhere in Scripture, the word Israel, in both the New Testament and the Old Testament, it means the physical offspring of Jacob. We are called the "seed of Abraham" but we are never called Israel. Believers are never called Israel and Israel itself refers to a man, Jacob, who was renamed Israel and all his physical offspring. So, we are different from Israel. The Old Testament promises to Israel still remain in effect.

XII. Promises Which Remain In Effect

There are promises that are made to Abraham that we will look at next week, promises having to do with the Promised Land, Promises having to do with a King that comes from David, of course that is Jesus, but along with this is the Davidic throne itself. We will talk about the question, Is Jesus sitting on David's throne? And so the next question: Is David's throne in heaven? And the answer is "No, David's throne isn't in heaven. It's God's throne." He is seated at the right hand of God and He will take the Davidic throne when He comes back at His Second Coming. So, this is an earthly throne in Jerusalem.

We'll talk about that more and then there is a New Covenant which is what we're plugged into which has to do with being the seed of Abraham and being in Christ and so forth.

XIII. Summary

It's been kind of a whirlwind. I usually like a little more interaction, but there is a lot of material to cover the first night so are there any questions, comments, or concerns that you might have?

My biggest concern is that people come from a lot of different backgrounds and I'm sure some of the things I'm going to say will step on some people's toes. But there is not much I can do but I just have to teach what I see in Scripture and if you feel I'm wrong, come up after class and talk about it with me and I can share where I'm coming from and maybe you can illuminate me and set me straight on some of these things.