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## **Discerning the Land and Its Promises**

### **Series: The Biblical Roots of the Middle East Crisis**

#### **The Village Church at Shell Point**

#### **Evening Service**

**May 12, 2024**

#### I. **The Odyssey of Orde Wingate**

##### A. Summer 1995

1. Jean and I – Israel
2. Dual purposes
  - a. Spend time with Bob and Nancy Martin; medical directors of the Nazareth Hospital
  - b. Conference – l'Association Internationale des Ecoles Superieur d'Education Physique
3. Conference held at **Wingate Institute**, Netanya
  - a. National sport training institute for Israel
    - (1) Israeli national teams train there
    - (2) Other cold-weather countries also use their facilities to train
    - (3) Also houses their national college of physical education
4. Eitan and father
  - a. Father – one of the founders of the Wingate Institute

##### B. Became curious

1. Strange name for an Israeli institution
  - a. Not an Israeli name, like Shamir, Meir, Ben Gurion, Begin
  - b. Not even a Jewish name, like Greenberg or Cohen
2. Wingate is an English name
  - a. Why did the Israelis name their sport training institute for an Englishman?
  - b. Eitan's father: "**The Friend**"
    - (1) **HaY'Did (Heb)**
3. Name was **Orde Wingate (Pic)**
  - a. Other things named for Wingate
    - (1) **Wingate Square** – Talbiya neighborhood of Jerusalem **(Pic)**
    - (2) Yemin Orde Youth Village – Haifa
    - (3) Jewish football club in London – Wingate Football Club
4. But why?

##### C. The answer dates back to the 1930's

1. There had been Jewish settlements in Palestine dating back well into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century
  - a. In many ways, Jews and Arabs lived alongside each other in relative peacefulness
  - b. Strong Christian presence in the region among Arabs as well

- (1) CMA and other missions organizations have been in the region since the late 1800's
  2. Jewish immigration into Palestine began in earnest after WWI
    - a. In response to **Balfour Declaration** favoring Palestine as a "Jewish national home"
  3. This was also a time in which the British were overseeing the region
    - a. Result of a League of Nations Mandate
  4. As Jews began to move to Palestine and acquire land, tensions began to build
    - a. From time to time, the tensions would escalate into violent exchanges
      - (1) Not only between Jews and Arabs, but also between both groups and the British
  5. One of the early episodes occurred in 1929
    - a. Arabs attacked a non-Zionist religious Jewish community in Hebron and massacred dozens of Jews
    - b. The British were having a difficult time controlling the tension
      - (1) As time went on, the British found themselves with even more limited resources due to severe economic pressures
      - (2) Pressures which would eventually peak in WWII and precipitate the general collapse of the British Empire
  6. Later in the 1930's
    - a. General rebellion by Arabs against the British
    - b. Much more evident that Palestine was turning into a Jewish homeland
    - c. Arabs were by no means united in this effort
      - (1) Internal divisions and infighting led to the deaths of hundreds of Arabs over and above those deaths which resulted from fighting against the Jews and British
    - d. There were bands of Arabs who would attack Jewish settlements in Palestine at night
      - (1) Hundreds of Jews were killed by the bands of terrorists (freedom fighters?)
  7. British posture during this time was largely defensive
    - a. They would try vainly to protect vulnerable settlements when they were attacked
    - b. Really impossible, given their diminishing resources in Palestine
    - c. Their methods of protection didn't seem to be effective
    - d. There was a Jewish agency, the **Haganah**
      - (1) Sort of a police and intelligence agency
      - (2) They were not armed; official position was non-aggression toward the Arabs
    - e. Official position of the British was not to have an armed Jewish resistance in the region
- D. Enter **Orde Wingate**

1. Assigned to Palestine in September of 1936
  - a. Intelligence officer; stationed in Haifa, then in the General Headquarters in Jerusalem
  - b. Spent time studying the tactics of the Arab bands
    - (1) Clandestinely survey the movement of groups and arms as they crossed back and forth across the borders in northern Palestine
  - c. Also spent time studying the ineffective British and Jewish response to these guerrillas
2. Finally met with Jewish leaders of Haganah
  - a. “Enough is enough. You people are in a war. And you’re acting like wimps”
  - b. “The Arabs are controlling the day. They’ve put you on the defensive”
  - c. “It’s time to go on the offensive”
3. His plan called for the development of small bands of paramilitary forces, staffed with British leadership and with well trained Jewish personnel
  - a. He was able to gain the tacit approval of his immediate superior and was able as well to circumvent the official headquarters analysis of the plan
    - (1) A plan which would, in fact, violate all official British policies in the region
4. Wingate established a secret training camp in the hills of Galilee
  - a. Recruited carefully selected Jews from Haganah and from elsewhere
  - b. Character of his training would radically change the nature of warfare in the region
  - c. Principles of operation involved speed, mobility and surprise
    - (1) (First special forces tactician)
  - d. Trained these squads to operate at night
    - (1) “Special Night Squads”
  - e. Among the people trained were Moshe Dayan, Menachim Begin
    - (1) Others benefitting from this training after Wingate left the region included Ariel Sharon
- E. Israelis trained comprised three main groups
  1. Haganah – the official police or defense agency
    - a. Palmach – the strike force of the Haganah (quasi-legal)
  2. Two Zionist groups (illegal)
    - a. Irgun – National Military Organization
    - b. Lehi – Fighters for the Freedom of Israel (The Stern Gang)
- F. Wingate’s policies and practices were very controversial
  1. Personally, he was controversial
    - a. Brash, arrogant, dictatorial with colleagues
      - (1) Made enemies as easily as friends

- b. Charismatic with the troops he directed; deeply loved by the Israelis
    - 2. Eventually he was reassigned, left Palestine
      - a. In fact, passport was stamped “The holder of this passport is not allowed to enter Palestine or Trans-Jordan”
        - (1) Sure that he had every intention of returning, by hook or by crook
      - b. Killed in a plane crash in Burma in 1944 while directing a special clandestine operation
      - c. Missed the establishment of the state of Israel
        - (1) Missed being the leader of the Israeli army which was his fundamental desire
      - d. He is known by the Israelis as “Hayedid”, “the friend”
        - (1) Buried in **Arlington National Cemetery (Pic)**
  - G. Why was the Sport Training Institute named for Wingate?
    - 1. Wingate’s training involved a lot of physical fitness training
      - a. Proponent of fitness training
    - 2. On one occasion he took a group of SNS on a 30 mile hike, at night, across a northern border, in order to avoid an ambush which he had discovered had been set up by the Arabs
    - 3. Then, after the hike, they engaged the enemy and defeated them

## II. **1948 – The Birth of the Nation**

- A. The Jewish nation was about to be born
  - 1. Everyone was bracing for war
  - 2. Haganah and the other militias were preparing according to the training they had received
  - 3. **Arab Liberation Army**, made up mostly of Arabs outside Palestine, including Syria and Lebanon, were escalating their activities
- B. The Israelis set their sights on a little Arab village just outside Jerusalem, called **Deir Yassin**
  - 1. Deir Yassin was not in the Israeli zone as the UN partition had called for; it was in the international zone along with Jerusalem
  - 2. It was also close to an important roadway which, if controlled, would enable the construction of an air strip thought to be important to Israelis
  - 3. Deir Yassin had entered into an agreement with Haganah to refrain from hostilities in exchange for Israeli protection
    - a. Had worked hard in the preceding months honoring that agreement
    - b. Had fed Haganah with intelligence information regarding movements of ALA
    - c. Had even resisted attempts by ALA to infiltrate Deir Yassin with their own troops; some villagers even lost their lives
    - d. This village nurtured its peaceful position
- C. The Zionist militias began to push Haganah for the right to take over the village
  - 1. Haganah resisted for some time
  - 2. Eventually, the strategic case became convincing to Haganah

- a. Gave Irgun and Lehi the green light
    - 3. Early morning hours on April 9, Irgun and Lehi approached the village with 132 men, including teenagers and some women
    - 4. Loudspeaker warning system failed when its truck got stuck in a ditch
    - 5. When militias encountered an Arab guard who saw them and called out something in Arabic (which was almost certainly misunderstood)
      - a. Militia began shooting
      - b. Chaos reigned
  - D. When it was all over, more than 110 of the 750 villagers were dead
    - 1. Most of the dead were women and children
    - 2. Typical of what happened
      - a. Family hiding in a house, was discovered taken outside
      - b. Wounded man in the street was executed; his daughter screamed, and she was killed
      - c. Little 12 year old girl watched as they called out her older brother and shot him; their mother, still carrying a nursing infant, rushed over to him wailing as he lay dying on the ground, and the Israelis shot and killed her as well
      - d. The rest of the children were rounded up, placed against a wall with other adults and sprayed with gunshot; some children were wounded; many died
    - 3. Others who died were fleeing, or were tending to the wounded
    - 4. On one occasion, a number of captives from Deir Yassin were paraded through Jerusalem, then returned to the village and executed
    - 5. By every account, this was a massacre, perpetrated on an Arab village which was carefully fulfilling its responsibilities for peace
    - 6. Documents show that the massacre was not something resulting from the heat of the battle, but that the intention of Irgun and Lehi was to create such an event as to strike fear in the hearts of Arab villages everywhere
      - a. Even went to the extent themselves to escalate the casualty information
  - E. Today there is no Deir Yassin
    - 1. By September of that year was settled by Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe
    - 2. Today, it has been incorporated in the Jewish section of Jerusalem
- III. An isolated incident?
  - A. Perhaps
    - 1. The degree of brutality was not typical of Israelis
    - 2. Haven't been many massacres
  - B. In terms of the armed confiscation of whole villages, not at all an isolated incident
    - 1. 1948 – **over 350 Arab villages were destroyed**; 750,000 Arabs left homeless; impossible to return to the villages – they had been bulldozed
    - 2. Sometimes those confiscations took place through deception
      - a. Israelis would enter a town, tell the people there was going to be a battle between them and the ALA, the people would flee

- b. When they would return they would not be let in the village, or the village would have been bulldozed
  - c. Eventually they would be settled by Jews
  - d. Even when Arabs had deeds to their property and showed them to Israelis, they were not allowed to occupy their own land
- C. Was this just a society out of control?
- 1. Actually, many Israeli leaders in those days had every intention of expelling Arabs from their land
  - 2. Joseph Weitz, director of the Jewish National Land Fund, 1940: It must be clear that there is no room for both people in this country. If the Arabs leave the country, it will be broad and wide open for us. If the Arabs stay, the country will remain narrow and miserable. The only solution is Israel without Arabs. There is no room for compromise on this point.
  - 3. David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, letter to his son, 1937: We will expel the Arabs and take their place.
  - 4. Ben-Gurion, diary, 1947, re: approaching Arab villages: In each attack, a decisive blow should be struck, resulting in the destruction of homes and the expulsion of the population.
  - 5. Within two months of Deir Yassin, 50,000 Arabs fled from Haifa and Jaffa
    - a. Ben-Gurion, June 1948: I do not accept that we should encourage their return. I believe we should prevent their return. We must settle Jaffa. Jaffa will become a Jewish city. We must prevent at all costs their return.

#### IV. **The Forgotten Christian**

- A. Can't we simply say that these Arabs needed to be removed?
  - 1. Aren't they all terrorists?
- B. A lot of them were Christians – your brothers and sisters in Christ
  - 1. After WWI the population of Christians in Palestine was 19%; today it is about 2%
- C. **Beisan**
  - 1. Arab town in Galilee with a thriving Christian community
    - a. Data – 5,180 Arabs; 20 Jews in 1948
  - 2. **Na'im Stifan Ateek** – 11 years old in 1948
    - a. He and his family were Anglicans
    - b. Held Bible studies in their home
    - c. Entertained visiting missionaries
    - d. Taught Sunday School classes in their home
    - e. Father helped build the Anglican Church in the town, substituted for the pastor as the lay leader when the pastor was away
  - 3. May 12, 1948 – 2 days before Israel was declared a nation
    - a. Without a fight, the Israeli army took over the village
    - b. Searched all the homes for arms
    - c. Rounded up all the men and told them they had a few hours and then they would have to leave

- (1) If they didn't they would be killed
- d. Time to leave, gathered in the center of town
  - (1) Separated Christians and Muslims
  - (2) Sent the Muslims to Jordan
  - (3) Dropped the Christians off on the outskirts of Nazareth
- e. Na'im, father, mother, seven sisters, two brothers left with only what they could carry
- f. Ended up staying with friends in Nazareth
  - (1) 17 of them in two rooms near "Mary's well" not far from the Church of the Annunciation
- 4. 1958 – Israeli government gave a number of Palestinian families an opportunity to travel for one day without restriction
  - a. Na'im's father took his children to Beisan to see their home
  - b. Anglican church had become a storehouse
  - c. Greek Orthodox church was in ruins
  - d. Na'im's father went up to the door of his home, the one he had built with his own hands; asked simply if he could see it one last time
    - (1) Reply of the Israeli occupant: This is not your house. It is ours.

D. **Nora Kort**

- 1. Nora Kort was not born until after the war of independence in 1948
  - a. She grew up hearing about her family
- 2. Old Jerusalem family, dating back into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century
- 3. Lived on famous hill just west of the old city
  - a. Owned 40 acres of orchard
  - b. Hill overlooked the famed Jaffa Gate
- 4. Family was thoroughly Christian
  - a. Grandfather was convinced that God wanted him to build a church for the area
  - b. He used all his savings, raised money from friends in Russia, built it in the lowest level of his home
  - c. Entrusted it to the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem
  - d. Christians outside the city walls worshiped there at "St. George's Church"
- 5. 1948 war erupted
  - a. Haganah and the Stern Gang militias charged over the hill
  - b. Family fled inside the city walls
  - c. Hill became a no-man's land; many were killed in fighting there
  - d. An aunt hid precious belongings inside a cave in the area; Jewish neighbors who had always been friends promised to look after the things
  - e. Eventually settled in a single room in the Old City
  - f. But the family's home slipped out of their reach
  - g. Became occupied by Jewish settlers

6. 1948-1967
  - a. Family was unable to walk the half mile from the Jaffa Gate to the front door of their home
  - b. After 1967, when the boundaries of Jerusalem expanded, Nora's father went to the home for the first time
    - (1) He opened the front door with his own key
    - (2) He met a Jewish family from Yemin
    - (3) They refused him entry, even to look at his old home
    - (4) The caves where their precious family belongings were located had all been bulldozed
  - c. He made that trip to the home every day for the next 25 years
    - (1) When he died in 1994 he made his daughter, Nora, promise never to forget
7. Today the house belongs to the "Zionist Confederation House"
  - a. A brochure gives its history
  - b. St. George's House it's called
  - c. It had been a base for Arab terrorists
  - d. Conquered by Israeli freedom fighters
  - e. One of the cases where the winners get to write the history

V. **Christian Confusion**

- A. Purpose – to understand some things about the biblical basis for the middle east crisis
  1. My objective today is to confuse you
  2. Mark Twain: "Our problem is not what we don't know. Our problem is what we know that ain't so."
  3. My objective is to strip away what you thought you knew about this subject
    - a. I want you to leave with a lot of question marks
- B. Started with Orde Wingate
  1. British army officer
    - a. Almost singlehandedly trained the militias that eventually became the **Israeli Defense Force (IDF)**
    - b. He did it to empower these militias to root out and destroy Arab terrorists
    - c. He never intended to see these tactics used to kill innocent people or to confiscate legitimate Arab property
      - (1) Unfortunately, the people he trained did a lot of that
  2. Why would this officer, who was loyal to the crown, nevertheless operate in a clandestine way, ignoring the stated policies and regulations of his own government, in order to empower Israelis militarily?
  3. He did it because he was a Christian
    - a. Wingate grew up in a Christian home
      - (1) Family studied the Bible vigorously
      - (2) Belonged to a group that was devoted to the theology that made a clear distinction between Israel and the Church



- (3) Believed that God's program for the church and God's program for Israel were altogether separate
  - (4) Believed that in the end times Israel would be reestablished in the land God gave them under the Abrahamic Covenant
  - (5) Now it looked like that time had come
  - b. Orde Wingate was devoted to the establishment of the modern state of Israel for what he thought were biblical reasons
    - (1) He decided he would give God a little extra help in order to fulfill those dreams
- C. Ended with families of Na'im Ateek and Nora Kort
1. **Palestinian Christians**
    - a. Also studied their Bibles vigorously
  2. **Romans 4:9–17 (ESV)** —
    - a. 9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.
    - b. 10 How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised.
    - c. 11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,
    - d. 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.
    - e. 13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.
    - f. 14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.
    - g. 15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.
    - h. 16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,
    - i. 17 as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.
  3. **Galatians 3:6–9 (ESV)** —
    - a. 6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?
    - b. 7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

- c. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”
  - d. 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.
4. **Galatians 3:15–18** (ESV) —
- a. 15 To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.
  - b. 16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ.
  - c. 17 This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.
  - d. 18 For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.
5. **Galatians 3:26–29** (ESV) —
- a. 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.
  - b. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
  - c. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
  - d. 29 And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.
6. **Ephesians 2:11–22** (ESV) —
- a. 11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—
  - b. 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
  - c. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
  - d. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility
  - e. 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,
  - f. 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.
  - g. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.
  - h. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

- i. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
      - j. 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
      - k. 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
      - l. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
- 7. **Galatians 6:14–16** (ESV) —
  - a. 14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
  - b. 15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.
  - c. 16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.
- 8. **1 Peter 2:9–10** (ESV) —
  - a. 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
  - b. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
  - c. (Peter uses OT expressions for the nation of Israel – applies them all to Christians)
- 9. Same Bible Na’im Ateek’s family and Nora Kort’s family read and studied
  - a. Same Bible you read and study
- D. The Na’im Ateek’s and Nora Kort’s of Palestine cry out
  - 1. I am a child of Abraham
  - 2. I am no longer an alien and stranger to the covenant of promise
  - 3. I am an heir of the promises of the covenant
  - 4. The dividing wall has been broken down in Christ
  - 5. There is now no more Jew nor Greek as far as God is concerned
  - 6. Why are you stealing the land of my inheritance?
- VI. Fundamental Convictions
  - A. I am willing to grant that God may establish his people in the land of Israel/Palestine during the end times
    - 1. That perhaps there may in fact be such a nation in Palestine right now
  - B. I am not willing to grant that this nation would establish itself under a biblical covenant without regard to its covenant responsibilities
  - C. I am not willing to grant that this nation should be supported blindly by Christians who are encouraged by our own particular theology to ignore the desperate cries of our own brothers and sisters

- D. I am not willing to grant that our own convictions about the end times cause us to set aside Jesus' explicit teaching to love our neighbors as ourselves
  - 1. Even our Arab neighbors
- VII. **Israel and Covenantal Responsibility Today**
  - A. So how does the modern state of Israel stack up to its covenantal obligations?
    - 1. Why we spent so much time in recent messages examining the covenant obligations of Israel in the land
    - 2. While God gave Israel the land – in trust; God owns the land – He gave Israel obligations in order to remain in the land
      - a. They would keep the statutes and ordinances of the Law
      - b. They would not follow the pagan customs of the surrounding nations
      - c. They would not covet fields and seize them
      - d. They would not covet houses and take them
      - e. They would not rob man and house, take their inheritance
      - f. That they would not oppress the poor, crush the needy
      - g. They would be a people holy to the Lord
  - B. Still issues to be raised with Israel and their covenant responsibilities
    - 1. Still politically discriminatory practices which prevent the full political participation of Arab Israelis in the government
    - 2. Still issues related to water rights and how Israel manages its water infrastructure which are the object of great contention in Gaza and West Bank
      - a. Very difficult to find objective information about water
      - b. Much of it seems to be a clash of cultures
      - c. Israel using the best of Western European engineering in transport, irrigation techniques, and in the development of desalination plants; Palestinian communities still functioning with archaic wells, aquifers and cisterns
      - d. Palestinian communities tend to be in relatively arid areas, tend to be agriculturally oriented, yet tend not have adequate water resources
    - 3. Still issues of racism that exist in Israel; racially divided society
      - a. Some of it is institutional – license plates distinguish Palestinian from Israelis
      - b. Jean and I saw this first hand; driver to the airport was Palestinian; stopped by Israeli police in early morning hours as we drove to Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv; only reason – Palestinian license plate
    - 4. Already seen examples of confiscation of land – a clear violation of biblical injunctions, the object of severe warnings by OT prophets
      - a. Other examples could easily be multiplied
      - b. Even recent examples
    - 5. Manner in which some of this land confiscation has been done reflects the clash of cultures

- a. Many Arab villages were traditionally surrounded by common lands; used by the village for agricultural and other purposes
  - (1) Didn't belong to any particular family; used by all
- b. Ottomans and British recognized these practices
  - (1) As does the Bible; the Levitical cities that were established in the OT had common lands associated with them
  - (2) Common practice in that kind of tribal culture
  - (3) Ottomans even had maps drawn up for some villages showing these common lands; village elders always knew exactly where the boundaries were
- c. Israelis confiscated such common lands; included them in the National Land Fund; settled them with Israelis
  - (1) They essentially bound the Arabs within the borders of the villages
  - (2) As the Arab population grew they had no room to expand
- 6. Perhaps most significant is the obligation for Israel to be a people "holy to the Lord" (against religious compromise)
  - a. That every OT covenant calls for these to be the people of God
  - b. That the covenant language, formulae: I will be their God and they will be My people
  - c. But in the final analysis – this is a secular state
  - d. Israel is a state which makes a biblical claim to the land but operates in a secular fashion
  - e. To immigrate to Israel requires an ethnic and racial documentation – not a religious one
  - f. Most recent surveys reveal that 44% of Israeli Jews categorize themselves as "secular" in terms of religious preference
- 7. Even the orthodox rabbinic community is divided on the issue of the legitimacy of the existence of the state of Israel
  - a. Growing number of orthodox rabbis are calling for the dissolution of the state of Israel
  - b. Why? Because of the deplorable state of its spirituality
  - c. Believe that when the true Israel is reconstituted, it will be a nation devoted to Yahweh
  - d. What they're witnessing now is a human attempt to do what only God can do
    - (1) Something akin to Abraham having Ishmael through Sarah's concubine
    - (2) We all know how that turned out – the original, primordial biblical root of the middle east crisis!
- C. As you think about the Middle East – keep these issues in mind
  - 1. They are biblical issues
  - 2. They may not be the kinds of things you've heard over the years from TV preachers

## VIII. **Objections**

- A. This is the Palestinian perspective
    - 1. No
    - 2. Haven't glossed over the fact that Arab aggression, before 1948 and since, was a deadly violation of legitimate Jewish villages
    - 3. At times, the Arab attacks have included atrocities
    - 4. Until the wall separating the West Bank from Israel proper – nearly constant threat of suicide bombings at bus stations or markets
  - B. Israel has lived in fear
    - 1. Nearly daily or weekly occurrences of rockets launched by Hamas from Gaza into southern Israel
    - 2. Some coming very close to Beersheva – perhaps the most significant city in the Negev
    - 3. Hamas launches those rockets from populated, residential areas – so that if Israel seeks to take out those sites, there would be collateral loss of human life
      - a. Paraded on the world stage as Israeli aggression
      - b. In actuality – Hamas using human shields for its political and terroristic purposes
  - C. There is plenty of sin to go around
  - D. Everything I have said can be verified by multiple objective sources
    - 1. Groups like the Nazareth Hospital, Commission on International Religious Freedom of the US State Department
    - 2. Groups with no political stake and no ideological axe to grind
  - E. Nothing I have said is in any way intended to justify Palestinian attacks on civilians by suicide bombings
    - 1. Or any other attack for that matter (rocket attacks from Hamas or Hezbollah)
  - F. I am not in any way arguing for a particular political approach to the crisis
    - 1. No such political approach could possibly work
    - 2. Politics will not solve this problem; see that next week
- IX. Closing
- A. I hope I have challenged you today
    - 1. I hope maybe some of what you thought you knew, ain't so
  - B. Good news
    - 1. By doing this it sets the stage for next week
    - 2. Next week you will learn that you are the only people in the world who have real answers to this quagmire
  - C. The only solution to any of this is spiritual
    - 1. There are stories to tell that will blow you away next week