

Introduction

Welcome to Christians United for Israel's *The Israel Course*. Thank you for your interest in learning more about Israel and the Jewish people, as well as why and how Christians should support Israel. We are thrilled you are going to study with us.

How To Use This Study

This book is designed with YOU in mind. There are several ways you can use this study. You can go through the lessons alone and keep a journal to record what you learn. You can go through the course with a study buddy and complete assignments together as well as compare notes. You can organize a small group study with friends, family, or co-workers and complete the course as a group. Or you may be using this booklet in a classroom as a student (please see our note to students if this is the case).

Whichever way you choose to study, the lessons may be completed in increments. While the lessons have been ordered strategically and thoughtfully, feel free to pause during a lesson if you need to and pick it back up during another session. It is important that you and those participating with you take time to process and reflect on the information you are learning. Take the time to think through and pray about what you are learning. Learning about God's heart for Israel can be life-transforming.

If you are an educator, please note that *The Israel Course: Teacher Edition* is available for use in a classroom or homeschool setting.

Specific Guidelines for CUFI Small Groups

CUFI Small Groups require no homework or prior preparation to participate. The study is designed so that participants complete the lesson and its activities together in one sitting. As you learn about Israel together, you will be edified by the insights of others.

While you will complete each lesson and its activities as a group, you will need someone to facilitate and lead the study. The leader's role does not involve lecturing or teaching; instead, leaders should guide discussion and keep the time together flowing smoothly. However, if a CUFI Small Group is being used in a Sunday school class or a church setting, leaders may choose to lead with a lecture style approach and prepare outside notes to supplement the lesson, if desired.

Here are some helpful tips if you are the facilitator/leader of your group

- Review the lesson thoroughly before you lead the group meeting. The more familiar you are with the material, the easier it will be for you to guide the discussion.
- Discussion questions are always suggestions that should help, not hinder, open discussion within the group. Don't feel obligated to ask every question or even to ask them in order. Be mindful of the way the meeting is flowing and use the discussion questions accordingly.
- Make sure that every participant gets a chance to speak during a meeting. It is important for members to verbalize their findings, discoveries, and thoughts on the material. Do not allow any one person to take up too much time talking at others' expense.
- Keep discussion moving smoothly. You may need to cover one section of the study more in-depth, while skipping another or saving a certain topic for another time. You don't need to complete one full lesson per meeting; you can break a lesson into two parts or more if needed. Remember not to move through the study too slowly, but don't rush over important material if participants need more time to grasp it.

A Note to High School Students

At Christians United for Israel (CUFI), our mission is to educate and empower millions of Christians to speak and act with one voice in support of Israel and the Jewish people.

To ensure that the next generation carries the torch of our critical work, we developed a training program over ten years ago that equips Christian students with the truth about Israel called "CUFI on Campus." This initiative is unmatched in excellence and unparalleled in its capacity to teach and encourage students, just like you, to be effective advocates for the Jewish people and the nation of Israel.

We are thrilled you will be completing this course as part of your high school experience. We believe it will be not only informative but transformative.

CUFI on Campus has trained over 4,000 students. We have introduced them to Israel as the vehicle of abundant blessings to the nations of the world, as the fulfillment of biblical promises, and the only beacon of democracy in the Middle East. Our CUFI on Campus alumni have been shown to steadfastly support Israel long after they graduate. They have gone on to become ministry leaders, journalists, attorneys, pastors, mothers, fathers—all impressive frontrunners, guiding their peers into love for and support of Israel.

We also offer scholarships each year for high school and college students to attend our annual CUFI Summit in Washington, D.C. The scholarship includes airfare, hotel stay, most meals, a four-day intensive training, and registration to the D.C. Summit. For more information and to find out how you can get involved, visit cufioncampus.org.

This course will serve as an in-depth introduction to the biblical reasons to support Israel as a Christian, the history of the modern Jewish state, the trials Israel has faced as a modern nation, and how to prepare for pro-Israel advocacy on a college campus or an online forum.

We hope you will grow in your knowledge of and love for Israel through this course. You were born “for such a time as this,” and the Lord God will use you mightily in support of His Chosen People (Esther 4:14 ; Genesis 12:3; Zechariah 8:2).

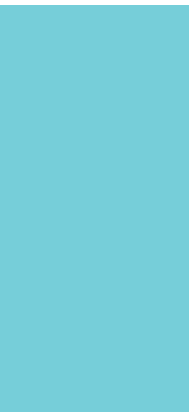
Mission and Vision

As the largest pro-Israel organization in the United States, with over 10 million members, Christians United for Israel (CUFI) is the foremost Christian organization educating and empowering millions of Americans to speak and act with one voice in defense of Israel and the Jewish people. CUFI’s diversity across political, ethnic, generational, and denominational lines maximizes our impact in communities, the media, on campus, and in our nation’s capital. CUFI is committed to confronting indifference and combating antisemitism in all its forms wherever it may be found.

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- LESSON ONE -

Christian Connection to Israel

LESSON ONE:

Christian Connection to Israel

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Articulate the relationship between Israel and the church as outlined by Paul in Romans 11.
- Explain the biblical and historical Jewish roots of your faith and Judaism's connection to Christianity.
- Describe the nature, history, and implications of replacement theology and its impact on Jewish-Christian relations.

Before You Begin:

- Ask God to open your heart to the truth in His Word regarding Israel and the church. Pray that as you read the historical accounts contained in this lesson, your heart will be open to receive whatever God has for you to learn.

PART I: Christianity's Jewish Roots

Though both Christianity and Islam are considered Abrahamic religions in that they have their roots in Judaism, the Christian connection to Israel is especially strong. Christians cherish both the Old and New Testament, in which God has made promises to the Jewish people that He still plans to fulfill. The Bible says He has graciously included (grafted) the church into His covenants with Israel. Judaism is the foundation from which Christianity began. Jesus Himself was Jewish. The Bible is clear that God is still very much concerned with Israel, cares about Israel, and is faithful to His promises to the Jewish people today.

Let's go all the way back to the very beginnings of Christianity: Jesus.



Jesus teaching His disciples.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

In the New Testament we learn that Jesus is the promised Messiah foretold in Scripture. He began His earthly ministry when He was around 30 years old, a Jewish rabbi (teacher) teaching in Judea and Galilee. For three years, He traveled the Land of Israel preaching repentance and the arrival of the kingdom of God. He chose twelve disciples, all Jewish, who followed Him wherever He went. After He died, was resurrected, and ascended into heaven, the disciples received the Holy Spirit and began to preach the “Good News” that Jesus is, in fact, the promised Messiah foretold in the Old Testament.

Thousands of people came to faith in Jesus. At first, Christianity was seen as more of a Jewish sect, or an offshoot of Judaism (see Acts 11:26, 22:4). However, as more and more Gentile (non-Jewish) believers came to faith in Jesus as the Christ, they were themselves persecuted locally and, eventually, in most places they went.

The church began to break away from its Jewish roots and eventually even began to persecute Jews in many cases. The apostle Paul warned about the potential for Christians to forget their Jewish roots in Romans 9–11. Over time, Christians would entirely forget their Jewish beginnings. History now shows a checkered past between the church and the Jewish people.

The Early Church

Several historical events played a role in the church losing touch with its relationship and responsibility to the Jewish people. These events brought with them not only a physical distancing, but more importantly, a failing to understand scriptural teachings that the Church was always meant to love and honor the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

The first followers of Jesus were Jewish people living in the Jewish homeland of Israel. They heard Jesus teach in the temple in Jerusalem, on the hills of Judea and Samaria, on the shores of Galilee, and on the banks of the Jordan River.

Originally called “Followers of The Way,” these early believers were seen as a sect of Judaism and still worshiped in the temple in Jerusalem (see Acts 3:1). These first believers in Jesus began relocating throughout the region in response to persecution. As a result, the teachings of Jesus were shared with Gentiles, and Christianity quickly spread throughout the Greek-speaking world.

In 70 A.D., following the First Jewish Revolt, future Roman Emperor Titus besieged Jerusalem, destroying both the city and the temple. Later,



during Emperor Hadrian's reign between 117 and 138 A.D., he renamed Judea (from which the word "Jew" is derived) to **Syria Palaestina** after the ancient enemy of the Israelites, the Philistines. The renaming of the Jewish homeland was meant as a final insult to the now forcibly expelled Jewish people.

In Jerusalem, Christians, as believers were now called, did not join in either of the two Jewish revolts against the Roman Empire. After the Second Jewish Revolt in 132–135 A.D., Christians were seen as disloyal to the Jewish community for evacuating Jerusalem before its destruction. This led to a physical parting of ways between early believers in Jesus and the Jewish community.

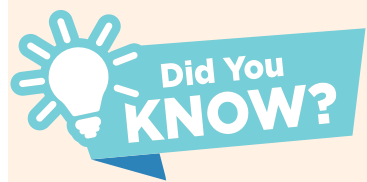
In 313 A.D., Roman Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan that ended the persecution of Christians, paving the way for the acceptance of Christianity and, later, the declaration of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire by Emperor Theodosius I in 380 A.D. Gradually, Christianity, though viewed as a sect of Judaism in its beginnings, was now considered a Gentile religion. With little experiential knowledge of or connection to the Jewish roots of their faith, and with false doctrine regarding the Jewish people creeping into the church, each new generation of Christians grew further away from an understanding of their relationship and responsibility to the Jewish people as outlined by Paul in his letter to Roman Gentile believers.

ACTIVITY ONE: Text Study

Read Excerpt One: Romans 11:1–21 (located in OPTIONAL: FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION)



- What is Paul's first question (his main topic), and what is his answer?
- What analogy does Paul use to explain the relationship between Jews and the church?
- According to Paul, why did salvation come to the Gentiles (see verse 11)?



Christians were not called "Christians" (which means "little Christs") until a few decades after Jesus's death and resurrection. Acts 11:26 says, *"And the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch"* (NKJV). Before that, Christians were called followers of "the Way" (see Acts 9:2).

In Romans 11, Paul tells a group of Roman Christians—Gentiles—that God is not done with the Jewish people. He writes how God did not cast off



An ancient olive tree in the Garden of Gethsemane.
Photo credit: CUFI

His people, how God is still faithful to the Jewish people, and how God still has a plan for Israel.

Throughout history, God has always preserved a “remnant” of Jews who are faithful to the covenant, including Paul himself.

He explains that even though Jews were not coming to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, multitudes of Gentiles have become believers in Jesus and make up the church.

This is by design, not by accident, Paul explains. Gentile believers have become branches in a tree which was originally only made up of Jewish believers. God did not replace the Jewish people with the church. Instead, God was sovereignly and graciously providing Gentiles with the opportunity to be included in God’s covenants with Israel—and He was spreading this salvation through Jews, like Paul!



- What kind of attitudes does Paul warn against Christians having toward Jews in these verses?
- What ways can you think of that show how Judaism is the root of Christianity?
- What should be our attitude toward the Jewish people, based on these verses?

Paul anticipated the problem of Christians becoming arrogant toward Jews, even in those early days. Perhaps Gentile Christians had already begun to look down on the Jews with an air of superiority. But Paul is clear that Christians must not be arrogant. Instead, we must examine ourselves to make sure we are walking according to the Bible.

Paul says that Judaism is the root which supports Christianity. Romans 11:18 says “...remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you” (NKJV). In line with Romans 11, Pastor John Hagee, founder and Chairman of Christians United for Israel (CUFI), says that Christianity cannot explain itself without Judaism.

The Jewish people have blessed us spiritually, medically, scientifically, artistically, and beyond. Later in his letter to the Romans, Paul refers to the Jewish people’s contribution to our Christian faith and reinforces the response that Gentile Christians should have toward our Jewish brothers and sisters.

“It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things” (Romans 15:27, NKJV).

Because of the Jewish roots of our faith, Christians are to view the Jews with an attitude of gratitude, mutual respect, understanding, and love.

ACTIVITY TWO: Text Study

Read Excerpt Two: Hebrews 6:9–20 (located in OPTIONAL: FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION)



- When God made a promise to Abraham, who did He swear by?
- What did He swear to do? Who did He make His oath to?
- Based on these verses, do you think God's promises to the Jewish people made in the Old Testament still applies today? Why?

When God promised blessing, land, and descendants to Abraham, He swore by Himself. In the ancient world, it was a common practice to swear by someone greater than yourself. But God swore by Himself because it is impossible for Him to lie and He also made an oath to the “heirs of what was promised,” the Jewish people, to keep His word. God’s faithfulness to His promise is the reason why replacement theology (the teaching that God replaced Israel with the church) is unbiblical. It calls into question God’s character—His faithfulness to His people. If God forsakes the Jewish people, to whom He said, *“The LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you”* (Deuteronomy 31:6, NKJV). How could we trust Him when He says to His disciples, *“I am with you always, even to the end of the age”* (Matthew 28:20, NKJV)?

The Christian faith rests on the solid foundation of God’s faithfulness to His word, His promises, and His people.

PART II: Grafted In

Even though God’s promises to Abraham and his descendants, the Jewish people, are very clear in Scripture, there are still some who reject this teaching. They believe that the church has replaced Israel as those who will inherit God’s promises. Replacement theology rejects what we read in Romans 11, that the church has been grafted into God’s covenants with Israel. Many teach that there is no longer any spiritual significance to the Jewish people, the Land of Israel, or the nation of Israel today and that God removed His promises from Israel entirely. Replacement theology is not biblical and is, in fact, extremely harmful.

ACTIVITY THREE: Text Study and Discussion

You will need a Bible for this activity. Look up the following passages to better understand the Lord's covenant with Abraham and the Jewish people, and how it applies today.

Genesis 12:1-3

- What promises does God make to Abraham if he will obey God's command to leave his home country?
- What promise does God make to everyone who blesses Abraham and his descendants, the Jewish people?

Genesis 17:1-22

- Count how many times the word "everlasting" appears in the text.
- What do you think this means about God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants?

Ezekiel 36

- Count how many times God says, "I will..." in the text.
- What do you think this means about God's commitment to the Jewish people?

Psalms 122

- What command does David give all believers in verse 6?
- What do you think it means to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem"? Is Jerusalem at peace today? Do you think this still applies to believers today?



- What do these passages teach us about the character of God?
- What do these passages indicate about God's purpose and intention for the people of Israel?
- What is the significance of these passages for the people of Israel today?
- What can you take away from these passages to apply to your own life?

These passages of Scripture teach us that God is unfailing in His faithfulness. He never revoked His covenant with the Jewish people, even when confronted with their disobedience. Instead, He has confirmed His covenant is still in place (Ezekiel 36). Because these promises have not been completely fulfilled yet, there remains *"a hope and a future"* for Israel and the Jewish people (Jeremiah 29:11). We can be confident that our God is faithful even to all generations (see Psalm 100:5).

Unfortunately, despite this clear teaching in Scripture and Paul's warning in Romans 11, replacement theology still developed and flourished within the church. Many of the early church fathers blamed the Jewish people for "killing" Jesus and argued that because Jews in their day rejected Jesus, God has now rejected the Jews forever.



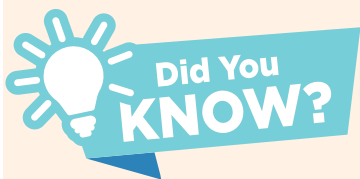
Is the claim that the Jews killed Jesus an accurate one?

Jesus said, *"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father"* (John 10:17-18, NKJV). The Bible says that it was God's own "predetermined plan" that brought about the death of Jesus (Acts 2:23). Christians cling to the cross because it represents the death of Jesus as a substitute for sin, a perfect sacrifice, that all people everywhere might repent and be saved.

So why would so many Christians choose to place the full blame of the death of Jesus on the Jews? Without Jesus' death and resurrection, we would be without a Savior, without forgiveness, and without a King. Jesus had an assignment and He fulfilled it on the third day. He said, *"Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal"* (Luke 13:32, NASB).



- Have you ever heard of replacement theology? Have you ever heard its teachings from a pastor, your church, or somewhere else?



Replacement theology goes by different names. It is also known as "supersessionism" to express the belief that the church "supersedes" or "replaces" Israel. It has also been called "fulfillment theology" to express the belief that the Church fulfills God's

promises to Israel, and Old Testament promises about the Land of Israel, her descendants, and blessings no longer apply to ethnic, national Israel.

Replacement theology did not go away when Paul warned the Romans about it, nor did it go away after the early church fathers died. It lives on in churches today. Yet its effects are startling and can even be deadly. Replacement theology played an important role in the persecution of Jews during the Crusades as well as in Hitler's Nazi Germany leading to the tragedy known as the Holocaust. Hitler himself claimed to be a Christian and justified his crazed mass murder of the Jews with a distorted, twisted form of Christianity.

Read the following excerpt from *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler* by Norman H. Baynes.

"My feeling as a Christian points me to my Lord and Savior as a fighter. It points me to the man [Jesus] who once in loneliness, surrounded only by a few followers, recognized these Jews for what they were and summoned men to fight against them and who, God's truth! was greatest not as a sufferer but as a fighter. In boundless love as a Christian and as a man I read through the passage which tells us how the Lord at last rose in His might and seized the scourge to drive out of the Temple the brood of vipers and adders. How terrific was his fight against the Jewish poison.



Adolf Hitler (1937).
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

"Today, after two thousand years, with deepest emotion I recognize more profoundly than ever before the fact that it was for this that He had to shed his blood upon the cross. As a Christian I have no duty to allow myself to be cheated, but I have the duty to be a fighter for truth and justice. And as a man I have the duty to see to it that human society does not suffer the same catastrophic collapse as did the civilization of the ancient world some two thousand years ago—a civilization which was driven to its ruin through this same Jewish people."¹

¹ Norman H. Baynes, ed. *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler: April 1922-August 1939* (NY: Oxford), 19-20.



- Based on the reality of replacement theology's effects on Christians' view of Jews, what do you think needs to be done to reverse the centuries of hostility by Christians toward Jews?
- What are practical ways that Christians can bless Israel, based on Genesis 12:3, today?

PART III: Christians United for Israel

Play: "Pastor John Hagee Explains Why CUFI Exists" cufi.org/learnisrael

Discuss:

- Did anything in the video surprise you?
- Based on this video, what inspired you the most about CUFI?



On February 6, 2006, 400 pastors meet with Pastor Hagee for the first CUFI Meeting.
Photo credit: CUFI

Pastor Hagee visited Israel in 1978 as a tourist and came back an avid Zionist. In 2006, Pastor Hagee and his wife, Diana, founded Christians United for Israel with just 400 pastors and ministry leaders, holding CUFI's first ever Night to Honor Israel at Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas. It was a grassroots church movement designed to unify Christians across all denominational and cultural boundaries in support of Israel and the Jewish people. Within six years, the organization reached one million members. As CUFI's message resonated with Christians and empowered them to become educated political advocates, they grew exponentially. After just 15 years, CUFI grew to over ten million members.

CUFI was founded on the promise of Genesis 12:3, to be studied in the next lesson, in which God says to Abraham: *"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse"* (NIV). CUFI believes that it is our God-given mandate to bless Israel and the Jewish people.



"I ask these questions—where are the Medes and the Persians? Where are Haman and his sons? Where are the Babylonians? Where is the pharaoh that murdered Jewish babies in the Nile? Where are the Amalekites? Where is the Grecian Empire? Where is the Roman Empire? Where is the Ottoman Empire? Where are Mussolini, Stalin and Adolf Hitler, and his murdering Nazis? Each are footnotes in the boneyard of human history, because they all made a common mistake—they attacked the Jewish people, and God Almighty brought them to judgment as

promised in Genesis 12:3.”

- Pastor John Hagee

Israel and the Jewish people still face daily opposition from every side. Throughout this booklet, we will unpack Israel's history and the many hardships that the Jewish people face today. We will see that God's command to bless Israel, how to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and why we are called to love the Jews into whose “tree” we have been grafted, still applies to Christians today. So, let's study the Word together.



Based on God's exhortation from Psalm 122:6, pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Put Your Faith Into Action.

CUFI'S FACT SHEET: **THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN ZIONISM**

“Christian support for Israel starts with the Bible, is strengthened by an understanding of history, and endures because of our commitment to Judeo-Christian values.”

*-Pastor John Hagee, CUFI
Founder and Chairman*



Pastor Speaking at the CUFI Washington Summit.

The first part of Pastor Hagee's remark, that Christian Zionism “starts with the Bible,” reflects the Christian Zionist's understanding that the Jewish people have an eternal and irrevocable place in the heart of God. This is not just a commentary about God's attitude toward the modern state of Israel. Rather, it is an understanding of God's character, faithfulness, and immutability as an unchanging, covenant-keeping God.

Is He a God who keeps His promises to His people? Or is He a God who changes His plan at will regardless of His word? Christians who support Israel believe that the God of the Bible is a promise-keeping, covenant-keeping God. They believe He never fails nor forsakes His people, be they Jew or Gentile. They believe that God is faithful, even when people flounder in their faithfulness to Him (2 Timothy 2:13).

Debt of Gratitude

Christians who support Israel do so because they acknowledge this truth: God loves Israel. As a faith expression, Judaism did not come to an end with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—nor was it displaced by the birth of Christianity. Without Jesus, a Jewish Rabbi, the apostles who were Jewish disciples of Jesus, and the writings which God’s Spirit inspired and wrote through Jewish men which became the Bible, Christians would have no foundation for their faith at all.



Saint Paul writing his Epistles
by Valentin de Boulogne.

Indeed, Christians who support Israel recognize that they owe a debt of gratitude to the Jewish people for their contributions, which gave birth to the Christian faith. Regardless of nationality or people group, every Christian owes their thanks to the Jews for their spiritual inheritance (see Romans 9:3–5). The apostle Paul told Christians thousands of years ago that they were like wild branches that were grafted into the tree of faith, which was the Jewish people, God’s people, Israel. Paul warned Christians, even then:

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, **do not be arrogant** toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you (Romans 11:17–18, NASB).

God’s Biblical Mandate

Just as Christians are called to worship God based on many Psalms, so too are they called and exhorted to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6).

Christians are called to love and bless all people, but there are specific blessings in the Bible promised to believers that are tied to blessing the Jewish people. The apostle Paul recorded in Romans:

“For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their [the Jews] spiritual things, their [the Gentiles] duty is also to minister to them in material things” (Romans 15:27, NKJV).



Tower of David, Jerusalem.

Time and time again, Scripture chronicles the principle that God blesses those who bless the Jewish people. Christians who support Israel take God at His word when He says that blessings will follow those who are kind to His people, the Jewish people. They also remember the flip side of the coin: God opposes those who oppose the nation and people of Israel.

In the Book of Matthew, Jesus describes the Judgment of the Nations:

...‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me’ (Matthew 25:37–40, NKJV).

The term, “My brethren” refers to the Jewish people. Every man and nation will be judged in part on how they have treated the Jewish people and the nation of Israel.

God sums it up best in Genesis 12:3 when He calls Abraham to follow Him and promises,

“And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all of the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (NASB)

Promise-Based, Not Prophecy-Based

Christian support of Israel is based on the promises of God in Scripture that affirm God’s covenant with the Jewish people, a future for the Jewish people, and God’s continued faithfulness to the Jewish people. Support for Israel is not based on prophecies regarding the end times or hastening the return of Christ.



| Torah Being Read.

Jesus Himself said *“But that day or hour no one knows”* (Mark 13:32, NASB 1995). Even after teaching His disciples for 40 days about the kingdom of God after His resurrection, Jesus does not answer about when future things will take place (Acts 1:6–7). Notably, He also does not deny that God still has a plan that includes the Jewish people—as a blessed nation and a blessing to all nations.

Christians do not believe they can speed up the end of days by even one second. On the contrary, Christians acknowledge that only God is in control of the timetable of future events. He alone is responsible for the future of the nation, land, and people of Israel, as well as that of the Church.



Light Unto the Nations

God promised in the Bible that Israel would be a light unto the nations (Isaiah 49:6). Today, modern Israel's medical and technological breakthroughs are blessing all of humanity.

As a leading innovation destination for an increasing number of multinational corporations utilizing Israel's over 6,000 startups for new ideas, Israel is a hub of innovation. The creativity flowing out of Israel has led to breakthroughs such as the flashdrive, iPhone hardware components, the critical ability to generate water out of the atmospheric humidity in the air (Watergen), and the world's first ever 3D-printed heart with human tissue and vessels.

In addition, Israel is a frontrunner in humanitarian aid, consistently being one of the first responders to disasters all over the world such as deadly storms in Mozambique, record flooding in Kerala, and earthquakes and tsunamis in Sulawesi, Haiti, Japan, and Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina. Israel consistently responds with international aid all over the world to disasters, floods, earthquakes, and regions of distress. Israel also creates "streams in the desert" and contributes major medical breakthroughs to the world stage. Israel truly is a light unto the nations and continues to make new discoveries that are brightening the world as we know it for the better every single day.

Faith to Action

Christians who support Israel acknowledge the sins of the past including the complicity of churches and Christians during centuries of persecution of Jews in the name of Christ. Instead of merely mourning the past, Christians who support Israel demonstrate true repentance by making a 180-degree turn to defending the State of Israel and protecting the Jewish people.



CUFI Founder and Chairman Pastor John Hagee, center, leads Christians in a solidarity march in Jerusalem in 2008.

They take Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor and theologian who lost his life resisting Nazi Germany, and his words to heart: *"Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."*



- What are some ways that the Lord is calling you to follow His heart and the biblical mandate to bless and love Israel and the Jewish people?

OPTIONAL: FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

OPTION #1: Read excerpts from *On the Jews and their Lies* by Martin Luther (1545) and create bullet points of the accusations that Luther makes against the Jews. Next, answer the following questions:

- What do you think of the way Luther speaks about the Jews?
- This pamphlet by Martin Luther was distributed by the Nazis under Hitler's regime. What does this say about the influence of replacement theology on the Church at that time?

OPTION #2: Read CUFI's Primer "The Dangerous Doctrine of Replacement Theology" (found at cufi.org/learnisrael). Reflect on the following questions and write your own paragraph in response to each:

- After reading John 10:18 and Acts 2:23, what do you think about the claim that the Jews "killed" Jesus?
- How is the sin of antisemitism "a denial of Christian faith, a failure of Christian hope, and a malady of Christian love"?
- How is Dietrich Bonhoeffer an inspiring example for Christians today?

OPTION #3: Write a short response to the following prompt.

Using the passages studied in this lesson, explain replacement theology and why it is unbiblical. Describe what the relationship between Jews and Christians should be like, and what this means for you as a Christian today.

To enhance your understanding of replacement theology, read Romans 9–11 and Hebrews 6:9–20.

EXCERPT ONE: Romans 11:1–21

¹I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.² God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel:³ "Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me"?⁴ And what was God's answer to him? "I have



Portrait of Martin Luther (Lutherhaus Wittenberg) by Lucas Cranach the Elder.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Paul writing letters to the church.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”⁵ So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.⁶ And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

⁷What then? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain. The elect among them did, but the others were hardened,⁸ as it is written:

“God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear, to this very day.”

⁹And David says:

“May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them.

¹⁰May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.”

¹¹Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. ¹²But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!

¹³I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.¹⁵ For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?¹⁶ If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.



Olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

¹⁷If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root,¹⁸ do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.¹⁹ You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.”²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble.²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. (New International Version, Romans 11:1–21).

EXCERPT TWO: Hebrews 6:9–20

⁹Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation.¹⁰ God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as

you have helped his people and continue to help them.¹¹ We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized.¹² We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

¹³When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself,¹⁴ saying, “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.”¹⁵ And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

¹⁶People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument.¹⁷ Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.¹⁸ God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.¹⁹ We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,²⁰ where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. (New International Version, Hebrews 6:9–20).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

CUFI’s Study Series – Nehemiah Generation, “The Church and Israel.”

Why Christians Should Support Israel, Vol. 1 by Pastor John Hagee.

Why Israel? Dispelling the Notion of Replacement Theology.

CUFI’s Fact Sheet: the Dangerous Doctrine of Replacement Theology

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON TWO -

Who Are the Jews?

LESSON TWO:

Who Are the Jews?

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Articulate the special bond between God and the Jewish people
- Explain Jewish peoplehood
- Express your understanding of the uniqueness of the Jewish people

Before You Begin:

- Pray for a deepened understanding of what makes the Jewish people important to God and unique in the world.

PART I: The Covenant

In this chapter, we are going to learn about the Jewish people: how they entered into a covenant with God and how they became a unique people with a shared destiny. We're going to begin where we always should: Scripture.

ACTIVITY: Text Study

- [Read Genesis 12:1-4.](#)

¹The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

²“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

⁴So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran.
(New International Version, Genesis 12:1-4)



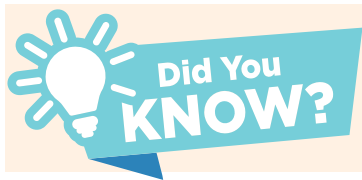
Abraham's journey
from Ur to Canaan.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



- What happens in these verses?
- What does the Lord promise Abram?
- What must Abram do in return?

By engaging in this vital act of faith, by leaving his home, his family, his idols, and all that he has ever known to follow God's will, Abram and his descendants enter into a completely singular relationship with God. They become His chosen people through whom He initiates a covenant relationship, thereby demonstrating His faithfulness and character to the world. In following God's command and demonstrating his faith, Abram becomes the father of the Jewish people.

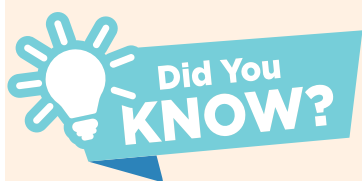


In Joshua 24:2, we read that Joshua tells the Israelites this exact story!

A covenant is a solemn agreement between parties. In this case, the covenant is not just between God and Abram, but between God, Abram, and all of Abram's descendants.

In the ancient Near East, it was common for two people to make a covenant by cutting animals in half, splitting the halves, and then walking in between the pieces to make an oath. By walking between the split animals, each person was swearing that if they broke their part of the agreement, they would meet the same end as the sacrificed animal. However, in Genesis 15, only one party walks through the pieces: God Himself, in the form of a *"smoking oven and a flaming torch"* (Genesis 15:17, NASB).

What does this mean? It signifies that God alone took responsibility for fulfilling both sides of the covenant. It was as if God made a contract in which He promised certain benefits to Abraham—namely, a land, blessing, and descendants—without any stipulations to be upheld by Abraham. In other words, God made an unconditional and irrevocable covenant with Himself concerning the Jewish people (review Hebrews 6:13-18, studied in Lesson One).



Modern-day covenants abound. For example, companies make financial covenants, or agreements, in exchange for loans, and the recipients agree to certain terms to receive a loan. When two people get married, they enter into a marriage covenant, promising to love and care for each other. Countries can even make covenants with

each other, pledging to be at peace and to maintain certain geographical boundaries.

The covenant, while first expressed in the verses we just read in Genesis 15, becomes actualized in Genesis 17, when Abram and the men of his household agree to and perform ritual circumcision on their household. Let's review the Scripture.

ACTIVITY: Text Study

Read Excerpt One: (New International Version, Genesis 17:1-27), located in OPTIONAL: FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION.



- What promises does God make to Abram?
- What must Abram do to fulfill God's commandment?
- Who is Sarai? What is her role in the covenant?
- Who is Isaac? What is his role in the covenant?
- What is Ishmael's role?

By entering into a covenant with God, Abram, Sarai, and their descendants are set apart. Abram becomes Abraham, "father of many." Sarai becomes Sarah, "princess." The two have a son of promise in their old age, Isaac. By doing God's will, Abraham and his family are promised many blessings: they will become a great and fruitful nation, and God will give them the Land of Canaan (Israel), a land to be their own forever. Ishmael, Abraham's son by Sarah's maidservant, and his descendants will be blessed as well, but they are not to inherit Canaan or receive the special status that God gives to Isaac's line. Instead, the covenant is to be passed down from Isaac to his son Jacob.

It is from Jacob that we first see the name "Israel." In Genesis 32, Jacob wrestles with an angel from God. He becomes known as "Israel, one who wrestles with God." His descendants become known as the "Children of Israel," and the land of their inheritance, Canaan, becomes known as the Land of Israel.



ISHMAEL: Genesis says that Ishmael, after settling in Paran, took a wife and became the father of twelve sons who became twelve nations (21:20-21; 25:12-18). Interestingly, later in Genesis, we learn that the Ishmaelites are those to whom Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery (37:25-36). Today, since the birth of Islam through Mohammed in 600 A.D., some Muslims believe that it was

Ishmael not Isaac whom Abraham offered on the altar (see Genesis 22, although the child is not mentioned by name in the Qur'an) and that Ishmael was the child of the promise.

PART II: The People

We've just learned that the Children of Israel—the Jewish people—are set apart by God, with a special covenant and relationship to Him.

Jeremiah 31:35–37 says that the Jewish people will not cease being a nation before God unless the sun, moon, and stars cease—in other words, forever! While the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, and many other nations of the Bible have long since assimilated into the milieu of modern nations, the Jewish people remain, speaking the same language, following many of the same customs, and worshipping the same God as in the biblical record.

Notably, the covenant was made not just with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but with their descendants. **This is unique in the world:** the Jewish people as a group have been set apart to receive God's blessings and called to keep His commandments. The covenant between God and Israel, and its expression, is communal. For instance, in order to pray at certain times in the synagogue, there must be a minyan (quorum), a specific number of Jewish adults, present. Additionally, almost all Jewish prayer is said in plural language, reflecting the nature of the communal covenant with God.



Minyan of Jewish men on Yom Kippur in South Africa (1900).
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

In the Christian faith, individuals form a distinct, personal relationship with Jesus. Christians join together in corporate prayer and worship at church, but the expression of faith in Jesus is a personal one, incorporating communal elements.

Since the Abrahamic covenant was made not just with Abram but with all his descendants, who today are known as the Jewish people, we should take time to learn what it means to be a part of that “people.”

Categorizing Jewish Peoplehood

Play: What is the Jewish Fam? cufi.org/learnisrael

Let's Discuss IT

- What are some of the words that the people in the video use to describe belonging to the “Jewish fam”?
- After watching this video, how would you describe Jewish peoplehood?

Being Jewish means much more than belonging to a religious group. In fact, you can be religious or secular and still be Jewish. Essentially, the Jewish people are made up of a group of individuals who share a common identity as a people. That identity is made up of key aspects, including the Jewish religion, the collective memory of the history of the Jewish people, a connection to the Land of Israel, and the Hebrew language.

The Exodus from Egypt is an example of the collective memory of the Jewish people, and it is commemorated each year on the holiday of Passover, or Pesach in Hebrew. Scripture tells us that when the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt, God orchestrated ten plagues through the prophet Moses upon the Egyptians for refusing to let His people—the Jews—leave to worship Him. The last plague, and the most severe, was the death of every firstborn in Egypt—except the Israelites, to whom God gave special instructions to place the blood of a lamb on their doorposts to protect them from being smitten (see Exodus 12).

Passover is one of three ancient festivals in which Jews were commanded to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem: it has been centered in the home since the destruction of the Second Temple. Jewish families gather to take a core ritual meal, called the Seder, the Passover meal, laden with religious symbolism.

The Haggadah, one of the key elements of the Jewish Passover Seder, includes as one of the last prayers “*L’shana haba’ah b’Yerushalayim*,” or “Next year in Jerusalem.” These words have resonated with meaning throughout the exile and hold even more meaning now that the Jewish people have a State of their own.



- What types of shared experiences do Jews have?
- What is different between being Jewish and not from your experience as a Christian? What is the same?



- Religion: the way that someone expresses or worships God.
- Collective memory: how certain groups express or identify with the events that make up their narrative.

- Connection to land: having a distinct place that a group belongs to or thinks of as their own.
- Language: having a shared way of speaking to each other, unique to the group.

In modern times, Jewish identity is often fused with other identities people develop based on where they live, the social groups with which they associate, and more. There are Irish Jews, Mexican Jews, South African Jews, and American Jews, yet all Jews have a shared membership in the people, with a shared destiny that was initiated in Abraham's covenant with God. This covenant forms the basis of the Jewish people. It gave them a homeland, Israel, and kept the Jewish people together through 2,000 years of exile from that land. The Jewish people are unique in the world, across the stage of history, and in God's eyes.

OPTIONAL: FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

Read “Abraham: Our Father” (found in the Additional Resources section) and respond to the writing prompts at the end.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

EXCERPT ONE: GENESIS 17:1-27

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless.² Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.”³ Abram fell facedown, and God said to him,⁴ “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations.⁵ No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.⁶ I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you.⁷ I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.⁸ The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”⁹ Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come.¹⁰ This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised.¹¹ You are to undergo circumcision, and it will

be the sign of the covenant between me and you.¹² For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring.¹³ Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant.¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

¹⁵God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah.¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

¹⁷Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?”¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!”

¹⁹Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.²⁰ And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation.²¹ But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.”²² When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him.

²³On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him.²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised,²⁵ and his son Ishmael was thirteen;²⁶ Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that very day.²⁷ And every male in Abraham’s household, including those born in his household or bought from a foreigner, was circumcised with him (New International Version, Genesis 17:1–27).

ABRAHAM OUR FATHER

In Jewish tradition, Abraham is often referred to as Avraham Aveinu, “Abraham our Father.” Abraham is the first of the three patriarchs of the Jewish people, followed by his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. It is Abraham who makes and seals the covenant between the Jewish people and God, securing the destiny of the Children of Israel for all time. Furthermore, God reaffirmed His covenant with Isaac (Genesis 26:2–5), and Jacob (Genesis 28:10–15), leaving no doubt of His faithfulness to His word and promise to Abraham.

The Bible leaves readers in the dark regarding much of Abraham’s life, encountering him in Scripture when he is already well into middle age. Over the

course of Genesis, Abraham goes from obscurity to greatness, building a new life with Sarah, his wife, as his faith in God takes him on a desert trek, bringing him away from the idol-worshiping community of his past to establish the beginnings of the Jewish people and, ultimately, the Western world's foundational values.

Abraham's story is marked by danger; he and his family face hunger, abduction, and threats of violence as they travel throughout the ancient Middle East. And yet, over more than 100 years of traveling, Abraham keeps faith with the covenant he made with the Lord. Abraham's faith and desire to serve God are tested again and again. Jewish tradition says that God tested Abraham ten times.² His final test was the commandment to sacrifice Isaac, his beloved heir, on an altar³ where the Lord then sent an angel to stop him, as Abraham passed that test of obedience. In keeping faith with God and fulfilling his commandments, Abraham becomes an exemplar of core Jewish values, including love of God, love of one's fellow man, commitment to family, and hospitality.

Abraham is an important figure in Christianity. Many Christians point to Romans 4:2-5, in which Paul lauds Abraham and emphasizes that it is Abraham's faith in God, above even his actions, which set him apart as an example for all Christians. As Christians, we are grafted into this faith history (Romans 11:17).



Hebrews 11:1 describes faith as *“the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”* (NASB 1995). In other words, to have faith is to be confident in something or someone, even if you haven't received what was promised. Thus, we learn in Genesis 15 that Abraham had faith in God's promise to make him a great nation, even though he was childless at the time.



“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through

² Pirkei Avot 5:4.
³ Genesis 22:1-19.

unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. (Romans 4:18–25, NIV)



Write a short response to the following prompt:

Abraham was a man of faith and action whose belief in God shaped the entire Western world. Think of a time when you had to keep faith in God. What did you do? How did you face your test? How could the story of Abraham inspire you in the future?

To enhance your understanding of Abraham and his story, you can review the following passages: Genesis 12–13, Genesis 15, Genesis 17, Genesis 22, Genesis 26, Genesis 28, and Romans 4.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

“The Challenge of Pluralism and Diversity to Jewish Peoplehood,” The Center for Jewish Peoplehood Education, YouTube. cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON THREE -

Connection to the Land

LESSON THREE:

Connection to the Land

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain why the Land of Israel is central to the Jewish people
- Give examples of how connection to the Land is expressed in the Jewish religion
- Articulate the ways in which the Land of Israel influenced Jews living in the Diaspora

Before You Begin:

- Scripture says the Lord's eyes are "always" on the Land of Israel (Deuteronomy 11:12). Pray for a heightened awareness of the importance of the Land of Israel to the Jews, to Christians, and, most importantly to God.

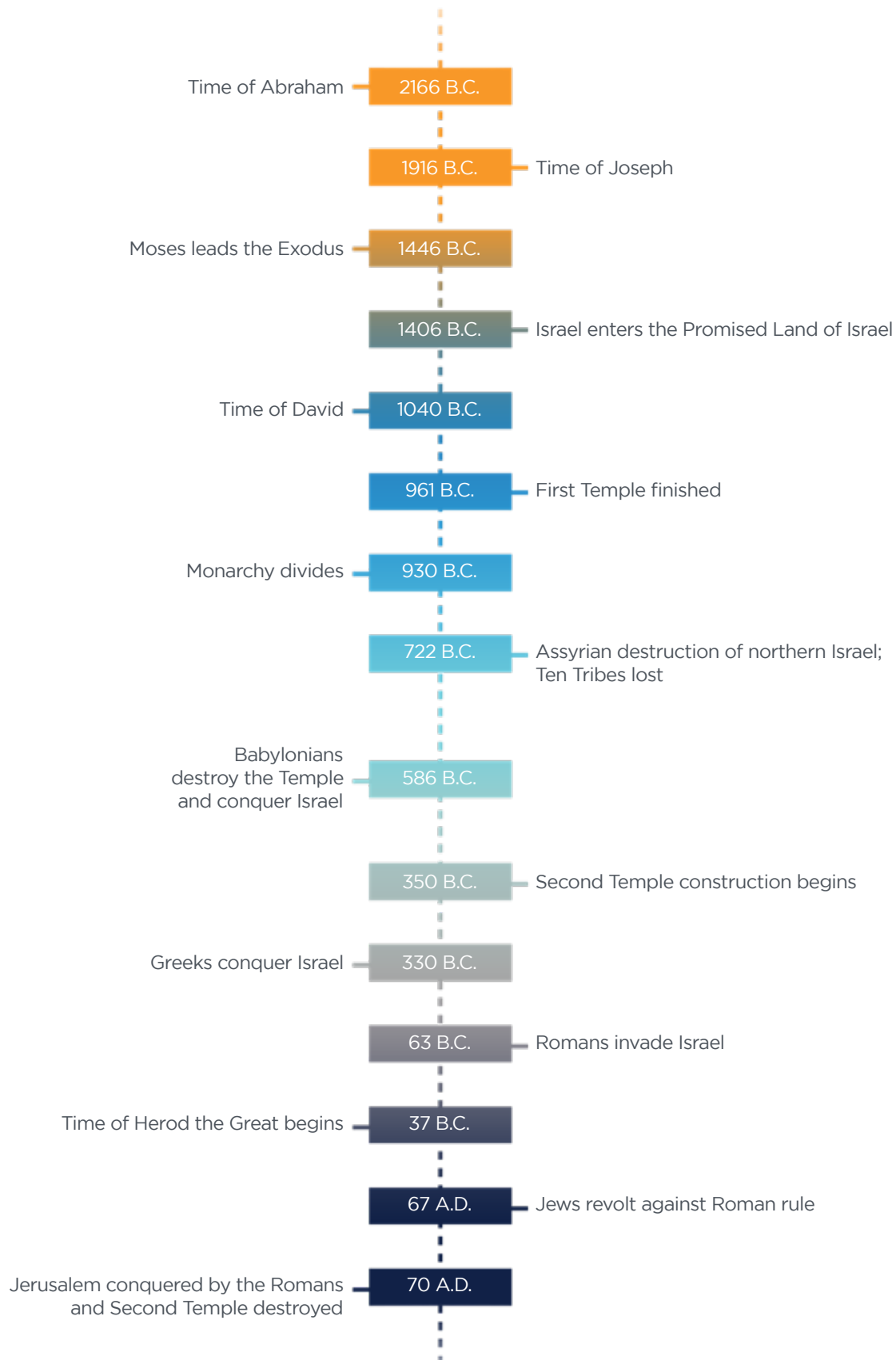
In the last lesson, we unpacked how the covenant between God and the Jewish people came to be, and how the Jews became a people through this covenant. We learned what Jewish peoplehood means, came to understand different aspects of the Jewish identity, and studied how the Jews are set apart by God. In this lesson, our focus is on two key topics: the history of ancient Israel and the Jewish people's connection to the Land of Israel.

PART I: Getting to Know Ancient Israel

Note to the Reader: This is not a Jewish history course or course on ancient history, so this booklet does not cover in-depth Joseph, Moses, the Exodus from Egypt, the Roman conquest of Jerusalem, etc. However, it is important to be generally familiar with certain key events in Israel's history in order to understand the biblical and historic connection of Jews to the Land of Israel. Review the timeline below. It will provide you with an overview of key events in the Old Testament. If there are any events that are unfamiliar to you, we recommend you spend some time researching them further. As you observe the events listed on the timeline, consider how they may have affected the Jewish people.

TIMELINE: Ancient Israel

(Abraham through the destruction of the Second Temple)



PART II: Jewish Connection to Israel

We know from our previous study of Genesis that God promised the land of Canaan, known today as Israel, to Abraham and his descendants as *“an everlasting possession”* (see Genesis 17:8).

Israel is the only nation in the history of the world that was created by a sovereign act of God. Israel is the only nation in the world that has its borders recorded in the sacred text of Scripture. And most importantly—the Jewish people are the only people that have ever been given a specific piece of real-estate on earth as an eternal and everlasting possession through a blood covenant with God Almighty. Simply stated, God gave Israel the title deed to the land (see Genesis 17:7–8 and Genesis 13:14–18).



“I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”

Genesis 17:7–8, NIV

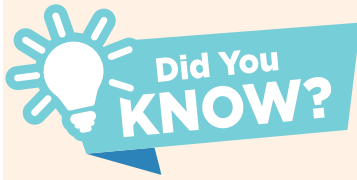
Thus, the Jewish connection to Israel dates back 4,000 years; Abraham journeyed to Canaan based on God’s command and lived with his family in Shechem. After the Exodus from Egypt, Joshua took on Moses’ role as leader of the Jewish people and led the Jews to victory over the Canaanites at Jericho, following God’s command to conquer the land and take possession of it (see Joshua 1:1–9). The land, as the fulfillment of God’s promise to the Jewish people, naturally was a key influence on the development of Judaism and Jewish peoplehood.

Key aspects of Jewish law are directly related to Israel and can only be fulfilled by Jews living in the land. For example, if Jews are in control of the land, they must observe certain agricultural practices. If they are not in control, then they follow another set of rules. As part of their liturgy, Jews pray three times a day for a return to Israel and Jerusalem; Jews face Jerusalem when they pray. Many Jewish holiday observances are uniquely tied to the land. As we mentioned before, the Haggadah, the book that is read during the Jewish



Portrait of Passover Seder in Manila, Philippines.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Passover Seder, features as one of the last prayers “*L’shana haba b’Yerushalayim*,” or “Next year in Jerusalem.” (Pronounced: le-sha-nah hah-baah-ah beh-yer-u-sha-lie-im.) This prayer is repeated on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.



The Passover Seder is a core ritual to Jews around the world. The words “next year in Jerusalem” have resonated with meaning throughout the exile and hold even more meaning now that the Jewish people have a State of their own.

Play: “The Way of Israel: The Jewish Land,” cufi.org/learnisrael.



- What are your initial reactions to the video?
- What did you learn that was new?
- Was anything challenging or exciting about what Rabbi Sacks discussed?

The connection to the Land of Israel is woven into the fabric of Jewish life. It is foundational to how the Jewish people express not only their devotion to God, but their very identity as a people. Even after the Romans destroyed the Temple and expelled most of the Jews from ancient Israel, the Jewish connection to Israel was maintained and nurtured, passed down from generation to generation. While small communities of Jews remained in the land, many others became part of the Jewish Diaspora and were scattered throughout the world.

Diaspora is most often used to describe the Jewish people in the wake of the Roman conquest of Israel. The Hebrew word that describes the Jewish Diaspora, “*galut*,” means “exile from the land.” There is a long Jewish tradition of believing that Jews who do not live in Israel live in an unnatural state, because they are separated from the land given to them by God.



The book of Lamentations, which many believe was written by the “weeping” prophet Jeremiah after the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in 586 B.C., describes in stunning poetry the profound sense of loss experienced by the Jews while in exile. He writes:

'How deserted lies the city,
once so full of people!

How like a widow is she,
who once was great among the nations!
She who was queen among the provinces
has now become a slave.

²Bitterly she weeps at night,
tears are on her cheeks.

Among all her lovers
there is no one to comfort her.
All her friends have betrayed her;
they have become her enemies.

³After affliction and harsh labor,
Judah has gone into exile.
She dwells among the nations;
she finds no resting place.
All who pursue her have overtaken her
in the midst of her distress.

⁴The roads to Zion mourn,
for no one comes to her appointed festivals.
All her gateways are desolate,
her priests groan,
her young women grieve,
and she is in bitter anguish.

⁵Her foes have become her masters;
her enemies are at ease.
The Lord has brought her grief
because of her many sins.
Her children have gone into exile,
captive before the foe.

⁶All the splendor has departed
from Daughter Zion.
Her princes are like deer
that find no pasture;
in weakness they have fled
before the pursuer.

⁷In the days of her affliction and wandering
Jerusalem remembers all the treasures
that were hers in days of old.
When her people fell into enemy hands,
there was no one to help her.
Her enemies looked at her
and laughed at her destruction.

Lamentations 1:1–7, NIV

The Jews in the Diaspora, while they did adopt some local customs, lived in their own communities, which enabled them to follow their religious traditions. More often than not, Jews had no choice but to live apart, due to the virulent antisemitism which characterized many, if not most, of the countries in which they lived.



Antisemitism, at its most basic, can be defined as:

- Hatred toward Jews.
- Discrimination against or hostility toward the Jewish people.

The Jewish people, despite a 2,000-year exile from their homeland and a history marked by violent attacks against them, maintained their connection to Israel, and their devotion to God. For example, this longing for Israel and hope for a return characterized the Jewish communities living in exile throughout the world. Israel represented the land of their ancestors, a place where they were in more perfect connection to God and themselves. This longing would eventually inspire one of the most miraculous events of recent history: the miraculous establishment of a modern Jewish state in the Land of Israel in 1948.



Zionist leader, Theodor Herzl.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Theodor Herzl, whom many consider the founder of modern Zionism, said:

*"I believe that I understand antisemitism, which is really a highly complex movement. I consider it from a Jewish standpoint, yet without fear or hatred...I think the Jewish question is no more a social than a religious one...It is a national question, which can only be solved by making it a political world-question to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council. We are a people—one people. We want to lay the foundation stone, for the house which will become the refuge of the Jewish nation. Zionism is the return to Judaism even before the return to the Land of Israel."*⁴

⁴ Theodor Herzl, *Der Judenstaat* (1896), trans. by Sylvie D'Avigdor, 5.

OPTIONAL: FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

Many anti-Israel advocates claim that Jews only came to Israel after the Holocaust. But there is extensive biblical, archaeological, and historical evidence to prove that there has always been a continuous presence of Jews in the Land of Israel for approximately 4,000 years.

CUFI'S FACT SHEET: CONTINUOUS JEWISH PRESENCE IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL: FROM ABRAHAM TO 1948

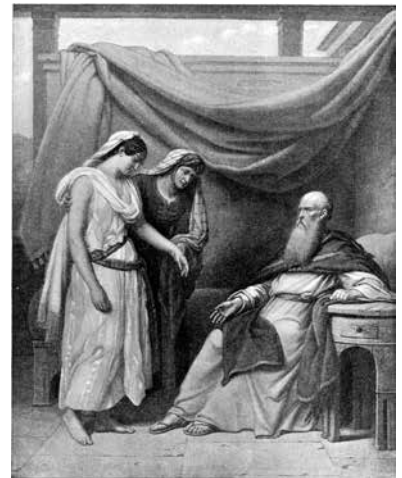
Israel's story begins with one man and his obedience to a faithful God: Abraham. Genesis 12 describes God's call to Abraham to leave his family and country, Ur, and travel to a land which God would show him. In return, God promises Abraham blessings, innumerable descendants, and land. As Abraham's story develops, God reveals the boundaries of this Promised Land, Israel (Genesis 13:14-18). Miraculously, Abraham and Sarah have a son, Isaac, and their line continues through his son, Jacob. From Jacob emerge twelve sons which become the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

1800 B.C.

Abraham migrates to Israel, which is then called Canaan. His family thrives and grows in this Promised Land, not yet enjoying possession of it, for several generations. Genesis 37-50 describes the family's migration to Egypt during a famine under Pharaoh Ramses II.

As the tribes of Israel grow in Egypt, and God's promise of blessing Abraham with numerous descendants is being fulfilled, a new Pharaoh arises who does not trust the Hebrew people. For the first, and not the last time, a ruler orders the execution of Jews, in this case, male Jewish babies. Through a series of events known as the Exodus, God uses Moses, a Hebrew raised by the Pharaoh's daughter, to bring His people out of Egypt. Where does God tell Moses to go?

Abraham, Sarah and Hagar by Charles Foster published 1897.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Israel's Escape from Egypt, published 1907 by the Provident.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



1300–1200 B.C.

The Land of Israel. The Jewish people conquer the peoples of Canaan at the command of God and begin to settle in the land that God has bequeathed them. Soon, Israel develops from a group of tribes to a nation led by a king. The second king appointed by God, David, makes Jerusalem the capital of the kingdom of Israel, a reality that has remained unchanged throughout history.

David Composing the Psalms,
Paris Psalter, 10th century
Lithograph Company.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



960 B.C.

Solomon, David's son, leads Israel into a Golden Age of success, prosperity, and might. The kingdom of Israel flourishes under his leadership for many years. In fulfillment of David's dream of building a permanent place for the Lord to dwell, King Solomon builds the First Temple in Jerusalem according to God's instructions and design. Eventually, however, the kingdom is split into two—the Northern Kingdom, called Israel, and the Southern Kingdom called Judah.

722–721 B.C.

The Assyrian kingdom had been gaining dominance throughout the ancient world during the reign of Solomon. In 721 B.C., the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, and many Israelites were taken into captivity. But a number of Jews from the Southern Kingdom of Judah remained in the land (see 2 Kings 17:6–18).

The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, 9th
century B.C. a limestone Assyrian sculpture.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



586 B.C.–515 B.C.

A new empire, Babylon, arose and conquered the Southern Kingdom of Judah, destroying the First Temple and dragging many Jews into exile in Babylon (today's Iraq). During this period, some Jews remained in the Land of Israel (see Daniel 9:7).

Bas relief of the Babylonian
King Hammurabi, housed
in the Louvre, France.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



537–332 B.C.

After Persia conquered Babylon, some Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem to rebuild its walls and the Temple (see Nehemiah and Ezra). During this time, synagogues emerged as centers for Jewish life and worship.

Nehemiah rebuilding Jerusalem, illustration by Adolf Hult, 1919.
Photo credit: bibleencyclopedia.com



332–166 B.C.

Alexander the Great conquered the Holy Land, which came under Greek control, but the land passes into the hands of numerous rulers over a short period of time, including the Ptolemies and Seleucids. Under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, during the Seleucid period, Jews are viciously persecuted.

Coin depicting Antiochus IV, Greek inscription reads King Antiochus, god manifest, bearer of victory.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



166–163 B.C.

In 167 B.C., Judah Maccabeus leads a Jewish revolt against the Greek empire which had arisen in place of Persia, obtaining Jewish sovereignty and independence in the Land of Israel for the first time since King Solomon. This victory is commemorated by the Jews every year in the holiday of Hanukkah. The Jewish state, ruled by the Hasmonean Dynasty, lasts three years until it is defeated by Rome.

Depiction of Judah Maccabeus from a 1860 woodcutting.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



63 B.C.

The Roman Empire appointed governors for conquered regions, including Judea and Samaria which they had annexed to their empire. King Herod rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem to gain favor with the Jewish people, making it one of the wonders of the ancient world.

4 B.C.–30 A.D.

A Jewish rabbi by the name of Yeshua—Jesus—began to preach a gospel of repentance and forgiveness of sins. After His crucifixion and resurrection, a new religion emerges from Judaism called Christianity.

Flevit super illam (He wept over it); by Enrique Simonet, 1892. A depiction of the story from Luke 19:41, as Jesus approaches Jerusalem, he looks at the city and weeps over it.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



70 A.D.

Depicted in the Arch of Titus, the Roman Empire destroys the Second Temple in Jerusalem and decimates the Holy City.

Carrying off the Menorah and other spoils from the Temple in Jerusalem depicted on a relief on the Arch of Titus in Rome.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



132–135 A.D.

A second Jewish revolt led by Simon Bar Kokhba, who is popularly known as Bar Kokhba, is repressed by the Roman Empire. After the defeat of the Bar Kokhba rebellion, no Jews are permitted to enter Jerusalem. The Roman Emperor Hadrian merges the province of Roman Syria with Judea and calls it *Syria Palaestina*, after Israel's ancient enemy the Philistines. He builds the city, *Aelia Capitolina*, on the ruins of the Jews' beloved city, Jerusalem. In the centuries to follow, the Mishnah will be completed, and the Talmud compiled. Jewish life will be centered in Galilee. This is the first time the term *Palestina*—or *Palestine*—is used to reference the Holy Land.

Depiction of Bar Kokhba by Arthur Szyk, 1927.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



313–637 A.D.

After Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the official religion of the Empire, Jews lost the relative autonomy they had and are subject to severe taxes and persecution. They are only allowed to enter Jerusalem once a year, on Tisha B'av, the ninth of Av, to mourn the Temple's destruction.

637–1095 A.D.

Four years after Mohammed’s death, Muslim forces capture Jerusalem and rule over what is now called Palestine. Under Muslim rule, Jews are “*Dhimmis*” (second-class citizens). They are permitted to worship freely and own property, provided they pay additional taxes.

Taking of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, 15th July 1099 by Emile Signol 1847.
Photo credit: nantes-histoire.org



1095–1187 A.D.

The Crusaders conquer Jerusalem and establish the Latin Kingdom of the Crusaders. Mobs march under the sign of the cross, sweeping through Jewish communities, looting, raping, and massacring tens of thousands of Jews on the road to Jerusalem. However, Jewish communities grow in Rafah, Gaza, Ashkelon, Jaffa, and Caesarea.

1290

Jews in England and France are robbed and expelled from their countries.

1348

Jews, blamed for a bubonic plague known as the Black Death which lasts until 1351, are persecuted and massacred throughout Europe.

1481–1492

During the Spanish Inquisition, Jews are persecuted, killed, and forced to convert. Many Jews flee Spain to the Land of Israel.

The Inquisition Tribunal as illustrated by Francisco de Goya.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



1520–1625

Jews continue to arrive in Israel, although they are harshly treated by the Ottoman Empire ruling at the time. Burgeoning Jewish communities in Safed and Jerusalem flourish.

1834

A pogrom by Muslim Arabs against the Jewish communities in Safed and Hebron results in the massacre of Jews.

1882–1903

Waves of Jews emigrate to Israel in the First Aliyah. Hebrew, the ancient language of the Jewish people, is revived as a spoken language.

Jewish immigrants
arrive in British
Mandate
Palestine, 1947.
Photo credit: Wikimedia
Commons



1897

Theodor Herzl, considered by many to be the founder of Zionism—a nationalist and political movement of Jews and Jewish culture that supports the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland as a modern nation-state in the historical homeland of the Jewish people—organizes the First Zionist Congress. He works alongside Reverend William Henry Hechler to advocate for the establishment of the State of Israel as the place promised by God to belong to the Jewish people forever as their rightful homeland.

Theodor Herzl, 1860–1904.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



1800s–1900s

Pogroms, violent attacks against Jews, increase in Russia and Eastern Europe. Many Jews flee their home countries to return to the Land of Israel. By the beginning of the 19th century, there are at least 10,000 Jews living in their ancient homeland under the rule of the Ottoman Turks. By the mid-20th century, over 17,000 Jews lived in then-Palestine.

1901–1909

Jewish immigrants began to flood into then-Palestine, and purchase land from wealthy Arab landholders at exorbitant costs through the Jewish National Fund. The land had been mostly barren and sparsely populated for centuries and to most it seemed worthless except to the Jews who dreamt of coming home. In 1907, the first kibbutz, an agricultural community in which all property is shared, is established.

Lottery for the first lots after
the land to found Tel Aviv
was purchased, April 1909.
Photo credit: jewishvirtuallibrary.org



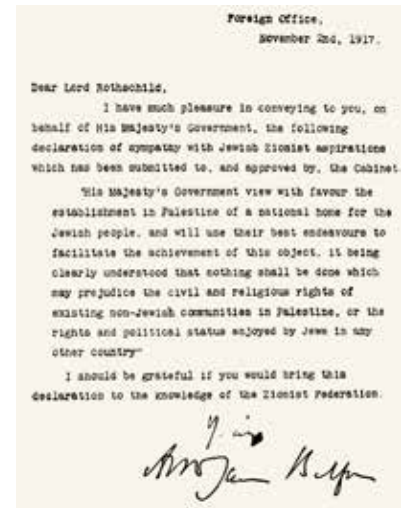
In 1909, many Jews band together to purchase twelve acres of sand dunes, leaving the crowded city of Jaffa and founded Tel Aviv.

1917

Christian Zionists within the British government, including the Prime Minister and his Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, help rally support for the Zionist cause. Finally, in 1917, Lord Arthur Balfour sends a letter to Jewish leaders pledging Britain's commitment to establishing the Jewish state. The Balfour Declaration becomes Israel's first modern miracle on the path to independence and rebirth.

The Balfour Declaration.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



1920

During World War I, Britain and the Allied powers defeat the Ottoman Turks and divide its Middle Eastern empire into territories set aside for future states. The British promise Palestine to the Jewish people and assume responsibility for guarding it through the process of Jewish statehood. This temporary stewardship was entrusted to Britain by the League of Nations in 1920 at the San Remo Conference and is called the Mandate for Palestine, it rendered the Jewish people's right to a homeland of over 46,000 sq. mi. binding under international law.

Delegates to the San Remo conference in Italy, 25 April 1920.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



1920-1939

Despite Jewish attempts to build bridges of dialogue and respect with the Arabs - focusing on the Zionist hope to live in peace - violence breaks out against the Jews. Local Arabs massacre the Jews living in the world's oldest Jewish community, Hebron.

This violence is encouraged by Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who tells the Arabs of Palestine that the Jews intended to conquer Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem. The first major Arab riots against the Jews of Palestine occurred in 1920, with

The Baltimore News reports of the massacre in Hebron.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



violent attacks in Jerusalem and Galilee that continued sporadically for years. Nazi Germany gives aid to the riots by providing weapons and funds.

1937

The Arab riots of the 1920s and 1930s prompt Britain in 1937 to partition the land once again in the British Peel Commission with 80% for an Arab state and 20% for a Jewish state. But Palestinian Arab leaders refuse to accept this partition, and it did not materialize.

1939-1945

During World War II, six million Jews are exterminated by Nazi Germany and its allies. Entire Jewish communities throughout Europe are decimated. From the ashes of the Holocaust, systematic annihilation of Jewish cities, and mass expulsion from their lands and countries, the Jewish community looks to the Promised Land for a place to have as their own to live in peace.

"Selection" of Hungarian Jews on the ramp at Auschwitz II-Birkenau.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



1947

The United Nations adopts a partition plan for Palestine that divides the land west of the Jordan River into two states roughly equal in size but distinctly unequal in value. Arab leaders had already made clear they would not accept any plan that included a Jewish state, and almost immediately make good on their threat to launch large-scale attacks on Jewish communities. Hundreds of Jews, of the 650,000 living under the Palestine Mandate in Israel at the time, are killed in riots and other terror attacks between November 29, 1947, and the date Israel officially declares its independence on May 14, 1948.

February, 1956. Map of UN Partition Plan for Palestine, adopted 29 Nov 1947.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



1948

The Jewish desire for an independent homeland in their own country was finally realized in 1948, after nearly 2,000 years of exile and foreign domination. As a nation-state for the Jewish people, modern Israel becomes a country specifically dedicated to preserving the Jewish culture, language, and religion since the Diaspora. As a unique ethnic group with strong ties to the Land of Israel, the Jews are finally able to come home.

David Ben-Gurion (First Prime Minister of Israel) publicly pronouncing the Declaration of the State of Israel, May 14, 1948.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Reflect on the CUFI primer and write a response to the following prompt:

- Is it important to support the Jewish people's right to a state of their own in their ancestral homeland?
- How can we as Christians articulate the importance of the Land of Israel to the Jews, to Christians, to the world, and to God?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"What these Ancient Artifacts Reveal about Biblical Israel," Israel Collective.

CUFI Webinar with Ze'ev Orenstein: Christians United for Israel YouTube Channel - CUFI Virtual Experience Playlist - Ze'ev Orenstein.

"The City of David's Ze'ev Orenstein on Real Meaning Behind Jerusalem Discoveries," The Watchman, YouTube.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON FOUR -

A Light Unto the Nations

LESSON FOUR:

A Light Unto the Nations

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Highlight how Judaism and democracy merge in modern Israel
- Discuss how the concept of Jewish peoplehood is exhibited in Israeli society today
- Explain what it means to live as a minority in Israel

Before You Begin:

- Ask God for a greater understanding of how Israel is fulfilling her God-given mandate to be a “light to the nations” (Isaiah 49:6, AMP) and how this role is impacting the world.

Note to the Reader: This lesson does not cover the Israeli political system or Israeli elections. However, if you are interested in learning more about how Israeli democracy works, please consult CUFI’s fact sheet: “The Israeli Government,” included in Additional Resources at the end of this lesson.

So far, we’ve learned about God’s covenant with the Jewish people and the deep connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. Now we can develop our understanding of Jewish peoplehood in the modern era.

The Jewish people were exiled from their homeland for 2,000 years until the modern State of Israel was founded in 1948. (Remember, as we covered in the last lesson, while there were always Jewish communities in the land, they did not have sovereignty.)

In this lesson, we will answer the following questions:

- What impact did Israel’s founding have on a people whose identity had been so defined by a longing for their homeland?
- What do you do when you finally get what you’ve been praying for?

PART I: A Jewish and Democratic State

To answer these questions, we are going to closely examine one of the State of Israel's foundational texts: the Declaration of Independence. We will delve deeper into the history surrounding Israel's founding in later lessons; for now, we are going to look at Israel's Declaration of Independence to understand how Jewish peoplehood and connection to the land was integrated into a modern-day vision of Israel. We will also explore the founders' vision of a democratic state with a decidedly Jewish character.

ACTIVITY ONE: Text Study of Israel's Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel

- Review the Declaration found in Additional Resources at the end of this lesson. You may choose to highlight key points that show Israel's Jewish character as well as its approach to democracy.



- What stood out to you about the document you just read?
- Was anything surprising or challenging?
- What do the founders say about the Jewish connection to Israel? What is the vision for the State of Israel regarding its relationship to the global Jewish people?
- What does the Declaration say about Israel's relationship to the other communities sharing its land, i.e., the Arabs?

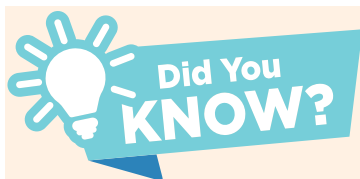
Israel's Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel refers to Israel as the ancient homeland of the Jews, for which Jews always longed for during exile, and notes that this right was recognized by other nations such as Britain, and the United Nations. The founders envisioned a State that would be open for Jewish immigration (the "Ingathering of the Exiles") and articulated their hope that Diaspora Jews would support and immigrate to Israel to help build up the State.

The founders envisioned a State that would guarantee complete equality (social and political rights) to all inhabitants, whether Jewish or not; guarantee freedom of religion, language, conscience, education, and culture; safeguard the holy places of all religions; appeal to Arab citizens to help build the state on the "basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation"; and commit to peace.

Modern Israel outlines its values and a vision of what it wants to become in the Declaration of Independence. In looking to its past, highlighting the Jewish connection to Israel and the centrality of the land to the development of Jewish peoplehood, the State of Israel affirms its future as the homeland for all Jews. Israel's commitment to Jewish peoplehood means that Jews from all walks of life, across the globe—from Ethiopia to America, Venezuela to Iraq, religious and secular—have a place in Israel and can immigrate to the State.



IDF Officer helping Ethiopian immigrants out of the Hercules Jet. Air Force Base, Operation Solomon.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



The term for Jewish immigration to Israel is *aliyah*, (ah-lee-yah) and means “elevation, going up.” It references the idea that relocation to the Holy Land puts the individual on a higher spiritual level and allows one to connect more closely with God. Jewish immigrants to Israel are known as *olim* (oh-leem). To learn more about what the experience is like for Jews making *aliyah*, watch this short video: cufi.org/learnisrael.



At its highest point, Jerusalem is 2,500 ft. above sea level, located on the Judean plateau. For this reason, many Psalms, called the Psalms of Ascent, describe pilgrims going “up” to Jerusalem for feasts such as Passover and Pentecost (Psalms 120–134). In the Gospel of John, Jesus goes “up” to Jerusalem several times to celebrate Jewish feasts such as Hanukkah and Passover (John 5:1, 7:10). This is also why Jews who immigrate to Israel are said to be “going up” or making *aliyah* (which means “elevation or going up”).

¹I rejoiced with those who said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”

²Our feet are standing
in your gates, Jerusalem.

³Jerusalem is built like a city

that is closely compacted together.
⁴That is where the tribes go up—
the tribes of the LORD—
to praise the name of the LORD
according to the statute given to Israel.
⁵There stand the thrones for judgment,
the thrones of the house of David.
⁶Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May those who love you be secure.
⁷May there be peace within your walls
and security within your citadels.”
⁸For the sake of my family and friends,
I will say, “Peace be within you.”
⁹For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your prosperity.
Psalm 122, NIV

Israel also commits to a democracy defined by equality for all, irrespective of national origin; this democracy will be “based on freedom, justice, and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel.” In other words, Israel will be a Jewish and democratic state, the first and only in the modern world. Certain elements of Israel’s society are defined by its Jewish identity: the Israeli flag, for example, features a “*Magen David*,” or Star of David, a decidedly Jewish symbol. *Hatikvah*, “The Hope,” Israel’s national anthem, also highlights Jewish themes and the Jewish connection to Israel. With distinctly Jewish overtones, Israel today is a thriving society with a vibrant civil society and social movements. As the Declaration of Independence promised, there is enfranchisement for all citizens, and all citizens are equal under the law, regardless of their faith. Israel has five courts as part of its independent Judicial branch and a lively political discourse perpetuated by its independent media.



The Jewish symbol,
The Star of David.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Shadi Khalloul showing an ancient Aramean Bible to CUFI on Campus Bonhoeffer fellows in Israel.
Photo credit: CUFI

SHADI: Captain (Res.) Shadi Khalloul is an Aramean Christian Israeli whose goal is to preserve the historic Aramean language and culture within Israel. When Shadi took a “Bible as Literature” course at a university in the U.S., his professor referred to Aramaic as a “dead” language. But Shadi and his family still speak Aramaic, the language that Jesus most likely spoke. Since then, Shadi has worked to preserve Aramean culture in Israel. He has said:

“Aramaic is common for both [Jews and Christians]... This is something that can strengthen Israel as a Jewish state and show the world that we Israelis are building and preserving [the Aramaean community] as the only country for the persecuted Christians in the Middle East. We as a minority want to live as indigenous Aramaic Christians and to be able to have one sole Aramaic town that can preserve our Christian faith, Aramaic language, ethnic identity, and our heritage and explain more about our common roots with the Jews.”⁵

PART II: Safeguarding Minority Rights

We’re now going to focus on what it means to be outside the majority in Israel, i.e., a minority citizen. As indicated in the Declaration of Independence, Israel is home to more than just the Jewish people. Israeli Arabs, Arameans, Bahá’í, Druze, Muslim, Bedouin, and Christians are among its citizens. Together, these minority communities make up approximately one quarter of Israel’s population.



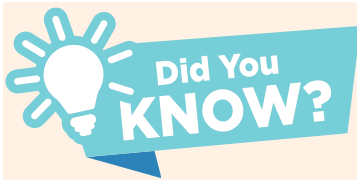
The Bible prophesies a time when the Land of Israel will be a melting pot of many nations. Isaiah 2:1–3, (NASB) says:

¹“The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

²Now it will come about that
In the last days

⁵ Kassy Dillon, “Meet The Christian Israeli Who Is On A Mission To Create The First Aramaean Christian Town In Israel” (28 August 2018), Daily Wire, www.dailywire.com/news/meet-christian-israeli-who-mission-create-first-kassy-dillon.

The mountain of the house of the LORD
Will be established as the chief of the mountains,
And will be raised above the hills;
And all the nations will stream to it.
³And many peoples will come and say,
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
That He may teach us concerning His ways
And that we may walk in His paths.”
For the law will go forth from Zion
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”



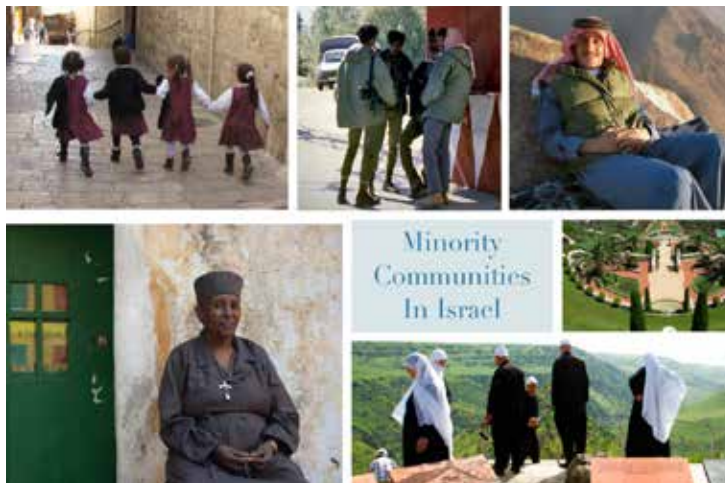
Even though Israel was established as a state for the Jews, it formally recognizes 15 religions, including Islam, the Bahá'í, and Druze faiths, as well as many Christian denominations. Each religious community is permitted to freely exercise their faith and observe their own holy days and weekly day of rest. Additionally, Israel protects the holy sites of all religions.

ACTIVITY TWO: Personal Research

Take a few moments to learn about some of the different minorities who call Israel home. Share what you learn with a friend.

Explore the following minority communities in Israel:

- Israeli Arabs
- Arameans
- Bahá'í
- Druze
- Bedouin
- Christians



Different minority communities in Israel.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Please note, “Christians” in Israel can be broken down even further to facilitate the differences and nuances between faith communities. Additional categories

may include: the Orthodox Churches, the Non-Chalcedonian Churches, the Latin & Uniate Churches, and the Protestant and Evangelical Churches.

- We have provided relevant links to helpful websites in the Additional Resources section to assist with your research on Israel's minority communities. You may prefer to use your own. Take note of: founding of group, connection to Israel, number of practitioners (if a religion), and what their relationship is with the State of Israel.
- Spend a few minutes explaining what you learned with someone. Journal your thoughts or talk about it with a friend!

Israel is more of a mosaic than a melting pot. The State of Israel is fully committed to equality under the law for all citizens, regardless of religion, race, or nationality.

Moreover, Israel is the only state in the Middle East where Christians and their holy sites are protected. Since the Arab Spring beginning in 2010, there has been an overall exodus of Christians from the Middle East due to violence, oppression, and threats of extermination, especially in Egypt, Palestinian-controlled territories, Lebanon, and Syria. However, the numbers of Christians in Israel have grown over the past few decades; Israel continues to be a safe haven for minorities in the Middle East who wish to live their lives without oppression.



Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, addressing the Christians United for Israel Washington DC Summit.

Photo credit: CUFI

In July 2014, Israel's then Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, addressed the Christians United for Israel Washington D.C. Summit, declaring that:

"Throughout our region and this turbulence with the rise of Islamic militancy, all these fanatic groups attack Israel. They want to destroy Israel without a doubt. But they also want to destroy Christians. They persecute Christians, they burn churches, they drive Christian communities away. There's only one place in the Middle East where Christians are free – absolutely free. Their freedom of worship, their rights are guaranteed, and that's the State of Israel. And I know you know that bond, this civilizational bond, between us and our common heritage, is what's at stake here."

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

View the following video about Christian persecution in the Middle East which can be found at the link below.

- “The Truth About Christian Persecution,” cufi.org/learnisrael.
- Create a small work of art (vlog, poem, art piece, etc.) focused on your feelings regarding what you learned in the video, both about Christian persecution and Israel’s commitment to Christians.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Excerpts from Israel’s Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel

ERETZ-ISRAEL (the Land of Israel) was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious, and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance, and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, *ma’pilim* (immigrants coming to Eretz-Israel in defiance of restrictive legislation) and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country’s inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood...

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people—the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe—was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the community of nations...

On the 29th of November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the

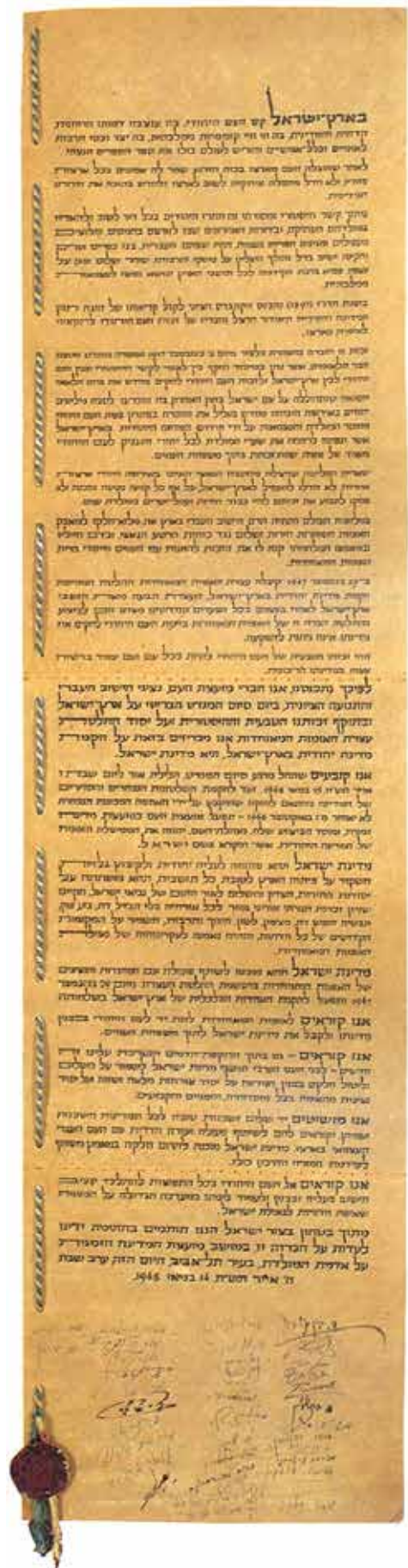
General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

ACCORDINGLY, WE, MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ERETZ-ISRAEL AND OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ARE HERE ASSEMBLED ON THE DAY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER ERETZ-ISRAEL AND, BY VIRTUE OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORIC RIGHT AND ON THE STRENGTH OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HEREBY DECLARE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH STATE IN ERETZ-ISRAEL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

WE DECLARE that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October 1948, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel."

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom,



justice, and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture; it will safeguard the holy places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations...

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the comity of nations.

WE APPEAL—in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months—to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream—the redemption of Israel.⁶

ACTIVITY TWO: Personal Research and Suggested Resources

For Personal Research Activity:

Jewish Virtual Library
My Jewish Learning
YouTube

“Being a Christian in the Middle East,” Israel Collective.

“I fled Darfur, escaped to Israel,” Israel Collective.

“Meet the Ahmadiyya Muslims of Israel,” Israel Collective.

CUFI.ORG – RESOURCES – CUFI Fact Sheets

CUFI Fact Sheet—Israeli Government

CUFI Fact Sheet—Christian Persecution in the Middle East

⁶ “Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx.

THE WATCHMAN: Israel a Safe Place for Middle East Christians

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON FIVE -

A Vibrant and Thriving Society

LESSON FIVE:

A Vibrant and Thriving Society

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe different segments of Israeli society
- Articulate the varied religious practices in Israel today
- Discuss different examples of life in Israel's multifaceted society

Before You Begin:

- Pray for your eyes to be opened to new things you haven't seen before regarding Israel. Pray for your ability to embrace Israel more deeply in all her diversity.

In the last lesson, we learned about the unique characteristics of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, including what it looks like to safeguard minority rights. We also spoke about the different minority groups in Israel, what it looks like to be a Christian in the region, and how Israel is a safe haven for Christians in the Middle East. Now, let's go deeper and learn more about Israeli culture and society. What does it look like to be part of a country with so much history, where so many cultures and ways of life converge?

PART I: Zooming out on Israeli Society

Let's begin by discussing what we know—or think we know—about modern Israeli society.



- What do you know about Israeli society and culture?
- Why do you think/believe these things? Where did you hear or learn them?

Now, observe the following pictures.



Next, play: “This is Israel 2018,” cufi.org/learnisrael.

Let's Discuss IT

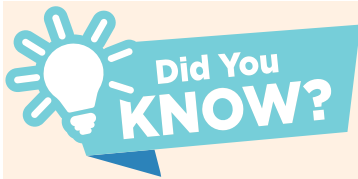
Take a few minutes to think or talk about the similarities and/or differences regarding what you thought of Israel initially, as well as what your observations are after observing the picture collage and video.

- What types of people and places did you see in the video?
- Was anything surprising?
- What aspects of Israeli culture and society did the video highlight?
- Did you learn or see anything new?
- How does this portrayal of Israel compare with the understanding you had before watching the video? What is similar? What is different?

Many people, based on how Israel is portrayed in the media, believe that Israel is a dangerous country. As you may have noticed by observing the collage, there's a whole other side to Israel that is not often highlighted. While Israeli towns have certainly suffered from Hamas rocket attacks from Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and acts of terrorism. Israel remains incredibly safe, overall, with diverse groups of people from different backgrounds coming together to work, play, and live.

In our last lesson, we learned that the majority of the country is Jewish. There is incredible diversity within that statistic. Approximately 20% of Israeli Jews are Torah-observant, which means they seek to follow the Hebrew Bible's commands precisely. An additional 20% are secular Jews; they identify as "Jewish," but they do not engage with religious practice.

The remainder of the Jewish majority engages with Jewish religious observance to varying degrees; their practice exists along a spectrum, neither as religious as the "ultra-Orthodox" nor as unreligious as the secular. Israel, as a young country that encourages Jewish immigration, has become home to many different Jewish groups from around the world. The majority of Jews in Israel are actually the descendants of Jewish immigrants from Arab countries; these "*Mizrahi*" Jews have influenced music, food, and culture in Israel. Approximately one million Jews immigrated to Israel from the Soviet Union, bringing with them their own traditions. Sixty thousand Jews in Israel are of Ethiopian descent; these immigrants and their descendants have traditionally practiced their own unique style of Judaism. There are also Jewish immigrants from England, America, South Africa, France, Germany, and elsewhere, all of whom add to the cultural diversity that has become a hallmark of Israel.



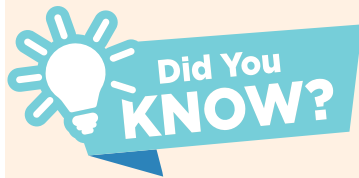
Jewish diversity in Israel reflects the myriad experiences the Jewish Diaspora has had throughout the Jews' years of expulsion from their ancestral home.



As we've already discussed, Israel has a significant Arab minority. Arab-Israelis, Muslims, and Christians are full members of Israel's society. Arab political parties in the Knesset (Israel's parliament). Arab citizens have held elected office. Furthermore, many have served in the military—including high ranking officers—and in diplomatic posts representing the Israeli government abroad. The Arabic language holds a “special status” in Israel, in recognition of its importance to the community. Religious life among Israel's minorities is thriving; there are over 400 mosques in Israel, with a tenfold increase since 1988. The Israeli government provides salaries to more than 300 Islamic leaders, as well as Korans to schools and mosques. The Christian community in Israel is thriving; as we already know, Israel is the only country in the region where the Christian population has increased in the last several decades.



Israeli Arab, Ahmad Tibi, Former Deputy Speaker of the Knesset.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



The Plenum Hall in Israel's Knesset, shaped like a 7-branched menorah.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

- The Knesset is a one-house parliament that consists of 120 members from a diverse range of political parties. Each member serves a four-year term, unless earlier elections are called.
- 29 current members of the 25th Knesset are women, 24% of the total members.
- As of 2023, 10 members representing Arab parties serve in the Knesset.



FATHER GABRIEL NADDAF: Father Gabriel Naddaf is an Israeli Greek Orthodox priest living in Nazareth who is a co-founder of the Israeli Recruitment Forum. Father Naddaf has been outspoken and active in encouraging Arab Christians to enlist in the Israel Defense Force. He has also been a strong advocate for Israel, amid fierce opposition, pointing

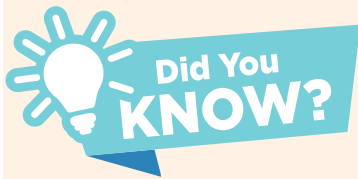


Father Gabriel Naddaf and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

out that Israel is the safest place for Christians in the Middle East and is a place where Christians' freedom of religion is protected. He is also an avid Christian Zionist. For this stance, he and his family have suffered death threats from those who wish harm to Israel and the Jewish people. He has said, "I believe the Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people. If you are truly a Christian and read the Bible you have to believe this."⁷

Part II: Zooming in on a Multifaceted Society

We're going to take a few moments to dig a little bit deeper into Israeli culture and society to learn about aspects of the country that don't always make the news cycle.



The Jewish population makes up 76.3% of Israel's population as of 2026.

Approximately 21% of the population is of Arab heritage

Those identified as "others" (non-Arab Christians, Baha'i, etc.) make up nearly 5.4% of the population.

In 2026, the population by religion was 76.3% Jewish, 18% Muslim, 1.9% Christian, and 1.6% Druze. (*Israeli Central Bureau of statistics*)

ACTIVITY TWO: Videos and Discussions

- Refer to the list of YouTube channels listed under Additional Resources at the end of this lesson.
- Choose two to three videos from the list to watch.
- Take notes in response to the questions below (they are repeated under Activity Two: Additional Resources).

⁷ "Father Gabriel Naddaf: The Courage to Encourage" Christian Friends of Israeli Communities Heartland, cfoic.com/meet-christian-zionists/father-gabriel-naddaf.



- What does the video show about Israel? What are its main points and highlights?
- What new information did you learn?
- What does the video tell you about Israeli society?

As we have just seen, Israel's society is dynamic, culturally diverse, and reflective of the groups and people who make up the country. People from all walks of life, including native Israelis (Jews, Arabs, and Christians) and more, come together to create an environment that is open, ever-changing, and multifaceted.

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

- Visit cufi.org/learnisrael.
- Choose one article or video that highlights an aspect of Israeli society that speaks to you and journal a reflection about why.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FOR ACTIVITY TWO: Videos and Discussions

Instructions: Choose two or three videos to watch from one of the following YouTube channels. Take notes on each, using the questions below as prompts. Share your thoughts with your study buddy, your study group, family, and friends, or journal your responses.

The Israel Collective, especially:

- "The Diversity I Found in Israel"
- "Tour Jerusalem's Famous Mahane Yehuda Market!"

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael



- What do the videos show about Israel? What are their main points and highlights?
- What new information did you learn?
- What do the videos tell you about Israeli society?

- LESSON SIX -

Values in Play

LESSON SIX:

Values in Play

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of how Jewish values are expressed in Israeli society
- Recognize how Israelis are inspired by Jewish values to give back globally through the ideal of tikkun olam
- Give examples of Israeli NGOs working around the world

Before You Begin:

- Pray for a better grasp of Israel's heart for the world—and eyes to see how modern Israel is fulfilling her calling to be a “light to the nations” (Isaiah 49:6, AMP).

As we learned previously, Israeli society is multifaceted, a product of the many different cultures and traditions reflected in the country today. As we've discovered, this vibrant social framework exists within a state that embraces both Jewish and democratic values. Jewish values are a key component of how Israelis engage with their life in Israel, and are, in many ways, the basis for how Israeli citizens engage with global society.

PART I: Jewish Values and Israeli Innovation

Let's learn how Jewish values have influenced Israeli society and what that means for the world at large.

ACTIVITY ONE: Primer and Discussion

- Read CUFI's primer: “Tikkun Olam,” found on the next page.



- What did the primer highlight?
- What new information did you learn from the primer?
- What did you think of the primer?

- What are your impressions of Israeli society after reading the primer?

CUFI'S FACT SHEET: WHAT IS TIKKUN OLAM?

The phrase literally means to repair the world, but what does that mean in the modern context and how does it relate to Israel?

Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and thus may the LORD God of hosts be with you, just as you have said! Hate evil, love good, and establish justice in the gate! "But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." (Amos 5:14-15a, 24, NASB 1995)

The Talmud, a central text of Rabbinical Judaism, says "If you save one life, it is as if you have saved the world." The concept of *tikkun olam* within Judaism originated as the instruction to behave and act constructively and beneficially. In the modern era, the principle of *tikkun olam* carries the idea that Jews bear responsibility not only for their own moral, spiritual, and material welfare, but also for the welfare of society at large. Contemporary rabbis view the term as meaning "the establishment of Godly qualities throughout the world."



Flag of Israel.

Tikkun Olam in Practice

Let's look at Tikkun Olam in the context of world health. Israel was ranked as the 9th healthiest country in the world in the 2017 Bloomberg's Global Health Index. Israel was the only Middle-Eastern country to appear in the top 10. The United States, Germany, Canada, the Netherlands, and the U.K., were all ranked lower than Israel. But Israel never keeps the amazing medical breakthroughs that her citizens come up with to herself. Because of Tikkun Olam, Israel's spirit of innovation helps people overcome challenges all over the world. Here are some examples:

- Israel is always among the first on the scene at international disaster sites. The IDF medical and rescue teams have responded to earthquakes in all corners of the globe including Mexico, Armenia, Turkey, El Salvador, India, and Nepal.



Israeli Aid to Nepal.

- In 1994 during the Rwandan genocide, Israel initiated Operation Interns for Hope that established a field hospital in Zaire to bring medical aid to the refugees.
- In 2013 when Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines, Israel sent humanitarian and medical aid.
- When hurricanes Irma and Harvey ravaged Florida and Texas alike, Israel was one of the first responders on the ground.
- Israel developed Babysense – a breathing monitor that has helped protect over 600,000 infants from sudden infant death syndrome.
- Israel developed the PillCam, a disposable miniature video camera that patients can swallow and doctors in more than 70 countries worldwide now use.
- Israeli researchers have discovered a way to use skin cells to regenerate heart tissue! And Israeli scientists created a DNA Nano computer that detects cancer and releases drugs to treat it.
- Israeli company OrCam developed eyeglasses that help the visually impaired see. The device has a camera and “reads” aloud what it sees to the user.
- Israel’s Emergency Bandage has been used by American soldiers in Iraq and has saved countless lives by preventing hemorrhaging.
- Israeli doctors travel to countries throughout the developing world to treat preventable blindness and ocular disease, using high-tech treatments that are otherwise unavailable.
- Save A Child’s Heart is an Israeli non-profit organization that performs heart surgeries for free to children from developing countries. As part of the process, Save a Child’s Heart also brings in medical personnel from the patients’ countries and trains them in lifesaving pediatric cardiac care. This organization is also training up the first pediatric heart surgeons from these developing countries so that they can go back home and perform surgeries on their own people.



Israeli rescue team in Surfside, Florida.



IDF Humanitarian mission in Haiti.

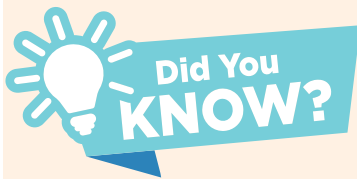
Bottom Line: THIS is the heart of Israel. For such a small country, Israel does a lot of good in the world. From being one of the first responders whenever a natural disaster strikes across the globe, to giving asylum to refugees, to sharing life-saving medical technologies with communities all over the world. The Judeo principle of *tikkun olam* has instilled in Israel a heart for life that no other country in the Middle East comes close to emulating.

Play: “Israel Inside: Official Film,” cufi.org/learnisrael.

Let's Discuss IT

- What did the video highlight?
- What new information did you learn from the video?
- What did you think of the video?
- What are your impressions of Israeli society after watching the video?

Israel sees part of its purpose as looking out for other people. Israeli corporate and military innovation, social entrepreneurship, and its third sector (non-governmental organizations) are influenced and informed by the core tenets of Judaism, joined with the ideals of democracy. The Jewish concept of *tikkun olam*, Hebrew for “repairing the world,” inspires Israelis of all backgrounds to engage with the world around them and to make it a better place. This keeps with Jewish tradition, which holds that within the definition of *tikkun olam*, is the implication that the world should be improved upon, and that each human being has a role in bringing the world back to the way that God intended it to be.



The Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* is also one embraced by Christians. Jesus tells us how to take care of our communities, as well as how to give back to others. There are many examples of this in the New Testament, including Galatians 6:9-10, *“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith”* (NASB 1995).



The Torah, the Jewish Holy Book.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Tikkun olam originates in the Tanakh, the Hebrew Scriptures which Christians know as the Old Testament. For example, in the second giving of the law, Moses commands Israel, *“Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you”* (Deuteronomy 16:20, NASB). The Old Testament prophets repeatedly commanded Israel to do justice to the orphan, the poor, widows, and strangers and aliens (see Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 7:4-6; Ezekiel 45:9; Hosea 12:6; Amos 5:15-24; Micah 6:8).



With just four peace treaties with countries in the region, Israel is surrounded by hostile states throughout the Middle East, all of which have actively worked for its destruction at one time or another. The history of war and aggression in the region, in addition to the constant threat of Hamas in Gaza as well as potential terrorists in the West Bank, has directly influenced the development of Israeli technology both in the military and private sector. For example, one company in Israel, RT Aerostats Systems, was initially founded to provide cost-effective reconnaissance balloons for the Israeli military. Fusing Jewish values with the more practical consequences of Israel's position in the region, the company expanded its products to the civilian sector.

RT Aerostats Systems' surveillance balloons were used in Mexico to search for survivors immediately following that country's deadly earthquake in 2017.

Israel's shortage of natural resources also contributes to a culture of innovation. Despite its location in the oil-rich Middle East, Israel has yet to discover oil. The country itself is almost entirely desert. The Leviathan Gas Field was discovered off the Israeli coast. It is one of the largest deepwater gas discoveries of the century. Today, Israel ranks at the top or near the top of foreign countries with companies listed on the Nasdaq and has outranked



IDF observation balloon being raised over the Gaza Strip
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Drip irrigation pipeline parts, Shefa Farm, Rishpon, Israel.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Wadi el-Makkukh, Judean Desert.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

the United States on the Bloomberg Innovation Index. Typically, successful countries have a plethora of resources, strategic significance, or size to help them develop. Israel is limited in these things. Instead, Israel's smaller size has forced its population to be innovative, strategic, and forward-thinking. Agricultural developments, like Netafim's drip irrigation system, have helped to feed Israel's growing population and create a sustainable food supply. These technologies have also helped people across the globe, from Benin to Senegal.

Israelis seek to solve problems for the greater good of their society as well as globally. Israelis of all backgrounds, including secular Jews, religious Jews, and the non-Jewish minority, are influenced by this dynamic and spirit of engagement.

12 NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS SINCE 1966

Decades of Innovation:

- 1950s** Invents the modern solar water heater
- 1960s** Patents drip irrigation method
- 1970s** Produces first electronic milk meter for dairy farms
- 1980s** Pioneers first antivirus computer software
- 1990s** Invents instant messaging technology
- 2000s** Creates the USB flash drive stick
- 2010s** Invents robotic exoskeleton for paraplegics
- 2020s** Creates a headset that uses 3-D visualization to help guide a spinal surgeon through operations.

A World Leader

- Highest ratio of college degrees, museums, and startup companies per capita
- Highest rate of entrepreneurship among women
- Only Middle Eastern country where Christian population is increasing
- Extended international humanitarian aid to over 140 countries since the 1950s

PART II: Taking Action

Let's learn about different Israeli humanitarian organizations.

ACTIVITY TWO: Videos and Discussion

- Refer to the list of organizations found in the Additional Resources at the end of this lesson.

- Choose an organization and watch a short informational video about it on YouTube.
- Discuss the video with your study buddy, or family and friends, using the questions on the handout as prompts.

IsraAID is just one example of the many different Israeli organizations and companies working to make the world a better place. As we've learned, Israel's unique circumstances of being a small country, limited in resources and under constant threat, have not stopped the country from living out its mission to be a beacon of Jewish and democratic values. Israel is characterized by innovation and social entrepreneurship, where startups, individual entrepreneurs, and citizens at large focus on the greater good.



"Israel was not created in order to disappear—Israel will endure and flourish. It is the child of hope and the home of the brave. It can neither be broken by adversity nor demoralized by success. It carries the shield of democracy and it honors the sword of freedom."

- John F. Kennedy



John F. Kennedy, former President of the United States (1961).

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

OPTION #1: Book Club

- Read, *"Thou Shalt Innovate: How Israeli Ingenuity Repairs the World,"* by Avi Jorisch (available via Amazon and in public libraries).
- Write a blog post, journal entry, or Social Media post reviewing the book; or share what you learned with others.

OPTION #2: Newsworthy

- Visit the website cufi.org/learnisrael.
- Select one story from the site.
- Write a summary of the article (bullet points are fine!) to share with your friends, family, or study buddies!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For Activity Two: Videos and Questions

Please choose an organization from the list below. After visiting the organization's website, watch a short (under 20 minute) informational video about the organization on YouTube. After you view the video, discuss the questions below with your study buddies or friends and family.

- Innovation Africa
- Save a Child's Heart
- IsraAID
- Made in Israel: Medicine



- What did the video highlight?
- What new information did you learn from the video?
- What are your impressions of Israel and/or Israeli society after watching the video?
- What are your key takeaways from the video?

Further Resources

"How Wounded Syrians are Being Saved in Israel," Israel Collective.

"Exposing the Surprising Heart of Israel," Israel Collective.

"School for Syrian Refugees Built By, Israelis?" Israel Collective.

"Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze Saving Lives in Israel," Israel Collective.

No Camels: Israeli Tech and Innovation News.

Senor, Dan & Saul Singer, Start Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle; Hachette Book Group, NY NY: 2009.

Jorisch, Avi, Thou Shalt Innovate: How Israeli Ingenuity Repairs the World; Gefen Publishing House, NY NY: 2018.

Siegel, Seth M., Let There Be Water: Israel's Solution for a Water Starved World; Griffin, NY NY: 2017.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON SEVEN -

The Development of Modern Zionism

LESSON SEVEN:

The Development of Modern Zionism

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Summarize the Dreyfus Affair and its influence on Theodor Herzl
- Speak about the development of Zionism as a major political movement
- Express your understanding of the waves of aliyah to Israel

Before You Begin:

- Prepare your mind and heart to absorb important historical information and be determined to see the deeper significance: the beginning stages of the greatest miracle of our time, and the rebirth of Israel as a modern nation.

Over the past few lessons, we've learned a lot: we've discussed the origins of the Jewish people, their covenant with God, and their deep connection to the Land of Israel. We've also learned about modern Israeli society: its values, its commitment to minority rights, as well as its social innovation and impact on the world. We also learned that the vast majority of Jews were exiled from the Land of Israel for thousands of years, and that the modern State of Israel is only a few decades old. We've learned that Israel has fought wars and terrorism over the course of its brief existence.

We know you have questions about how Israel came into being, what those conflicts look like, and how they impact you as a Christian with a heart for Israel. Over the course of the next several lessons, we're going to learn about modern Israel's history, and we'll discover together why it's so important that we know this story.

PART I: Zionism Ascendant

As we know, the Jewish people's dream to return to Israel was kept alive throughout thousands of years of exile. Even though the Jewish people were dispersed around the globe, returning to Israel was in their thoughts constantly, exhibited in their prayers, liturgy, and celebrations. While there were always Jewish enclaves in what is now known as Israel, and Jews did

move to Israel throughout the centuries, the ability for Jews to think seriously about returning to their land in mass did not arise until the 1800s.

By the beginning of the 19th century, there were at least 10,000 Jews living in their ancient homeland under the rule of the Ottoman Turks.⁸

The 19th century was a time of incredible upheaval in Europe. New political ideals regarding nationalism and liberalism emerged, changing the status of Jews in European lands. For centuries, Jews in Europe had been at the mercy of each nation's majority; often they were forced into ghettos and shunned by society. Jews' ability to work freely was restricted, and their lives were often at risk due to rampant antisemitism fueled by unjust suspicion as Jewish communities developed tight-knit communities in an effort to preserve their way of life and religious practices.

The ideals of "liberty, equality, fraternity," popularized in the American and French revolutions, freed Jews from their ghettos; in this new era, Jews could live freely as members of their states, assimilating into society and entering professions previously forbidden. However, liberalism was soon followed by the development of nationalism, which demanded support and adherence to the interests of one's own nation. In this viewpoint, Jews were seen as "other" and not able to be part of, for instance, the "German" nation, as their Jewishness precluded "Germanness." Some Jews decided that if they rejected their Jewishness, they would be able to join their host societies. However, despite the arc of history bending towards additional freedom, antisemitism remained a major factor governing life for Jews in Europe.

And yet, the development of nationalism raised the consciousness of many Jews throughout Europe, who, after thousands of years of being a "people without a land," began thinking about ways to realize their own right to a homeland. These ideas began to crystalize in the wake of the "Dreyfus Affair" of 1894, in which a French Jewish army officer was wrongly accused and convicted of selling French military secrets.

Play: "The Dreyfus Affair," cufi.org/learnisrael.



A child tries to sell her wares in an open market in the Litzmannstadt Ghetto.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Let's Discuss IT

- Who was Alfred Dreyfus? What made him unique?
- What happened to Dreyfus?
- What did the Dreyfus Affair show?

⁸ Mitchell Bard, "Pre-State Israel: Jewish Claim To The Land Of Israel," Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-claim-to-the-land-of-israel.

- Who was Theodor Herzl? What was the impact of the Dreyfus Affair on him?
- What was “*Der Judenstaat*” and what was its core point?

This event rattled a young man named Theodor Herzl. He became convinced that antisemitism was always going to threaten Jews and keep them from being fully protected citizens. Thus, Herzl wrote on the need for a Jewish state in *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State). He envisioned a homeland that was similar to the state of Sweden: multilingual and multinational, but where Jews could live their lives and practice Judaism without constant fear.

To make this dream a reality, Herzl organized the First Zionist Congress in Switzerland in 1897. The Congress had 200 participants from 17 different countries vigorously debating various strands within what had come to be known as Zionism. The Congress concluded with the establishment of the World Zionist Organization and the articulation of the Basel Program: “That Zionism seeks for the Jewish people a publicly recognized legally secured homeland in Palestine.”



Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935).
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Theodor Herzl, 1860–1904.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



The delegates at the First Zionist Congress in 1897.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Scan of historical document published in 1896.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



REVEREND HECHLER: Herzl's friend, a Christian pastor named Reverend William Henry Hechler, played an influential role in supporting the vision of a modern Jewish nation-state in the Land of Israel. Hechler wrote a pamphlet advocating for the establishment of the State of Israel as the place promised by God to belong to the Jewish people forever as their rightful homeland. He used his social connections to introduce Herzl to members of the German Royal Society and the Sultan of Turkey during the late 1800s and helping lift Herzl's idea of a Jewish national homeland from obscurity into the political discourse among world leaders.

Note: You can learn more about the relationship between Reverend Hechler and Theodor Herzl, as well as their influence on Zionism, in CUF's Primer: "Reverend Hechler, Theodor Herzl, and Modern Zionism," found at the end of the lesson.

PART II: Jews under Threat

While Jews in Western Europe experienced some of the benefits of emerging liberalism, the Jews of Eastern Europe began to experience more restrictions. By the late 1800s, there were approximately five million Jews living in poverty in Eastern Europe. These Ashkenazi Jews, who spoke Yiddish, first came to the then Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, also known as the Kingdom of Poland, for shelter from persecution in the 13th century. They prospered initially, until the kingdom was carved out between Prussia, Austria, and Russia.

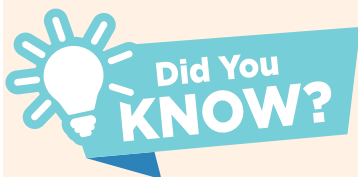
The Jews fell under Russian rule and were unwanted. They were expelled from the cities with major populations into settlements. They lived in shtetls, communities made up entirely of Jews. Shtetl life was, despite its constraints, rich and vibrant; communities were structured around Jewish values, containing a synagogue,



Jewish family in 1909, from a shtetl community in Siedlce, Poland.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

schools, social welfare associations, as well as a market where people could sell crops and wares and trade with non-Jews.

These relatively small market towns in Russia and Poland, ranging in size from a few hundred to several thousand residents, were not composed of individualists. The Yiddish word “*kahal*” well represents the outlook and priorities of most Jews living in shtetls at that time: community.



“Shtetl” is a Yiddish word for a small town. It’s pronounced “sh-TET-el.” Yiddish was the main language of the Jews of Eastern Europe and is a combination of German, Russian, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Slavic languages. As with all languages, Yiddish has its own unique rhythms, nuance, and history. Primarily spoken by Ashkenazi Jews, Yiddish is still spoken by a few million Jews around the world today.

Watch: “What is Yiddish?” cufi.org/learnisrael.



- Why were Jews living in shtetls?
- What was life like for shtetl Jews in Eastern Europe?
- What were the Jewish values exhibited in shtetl life?
- What dangers for Jews existed during this time frame?

The liberal reforms of western Europe did not reach Eastern Europe. However, there were some minimal gains in rights under the reign of Alexander II, with serfs being freed from bondage and anti-Jewish laws going relatively unenforced. This changed in 1881; Alexander II was assassinated and his successor, Alexander III, took power. Alexander III enacted the May Laws, which restricted where Jews could live. Forced conscription of Jewish boys at age 12 into the military for 25-year terms became common. Simultaneously, Jews faced frequent violent attacks on shtetls and communities that were silently supported by the Russian authorities.



Ashkenazi Jews residing in the “American colony” in Jerusalem in the early 1900s.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

In response, Jews began to flee Russia. Over a period of thirty years, nearly 2.25 million Jews left Russia for

America. Zionism also began to take hold; societies sprang up throughout Russia to foster the establishment of, and immigration to, the Jewish homeland. Leon Pinsker, a Jewish physician who had previously believed that Jews would achieve social parity if they assimilated, authored a pamphlet called “Auto-Emancipation” in 1882, arguing that “Judeophobia” would only be vanquished if the Jews had their own state. Thousands of idealistic young Jews set sail for the historic Land of Israel from Eastern Europe. Joining other Jewish immigrants from Yemen they began purchasing land from the Ottoman Empire and setting up farming collectives known as “*moshavot*” in harsh and demanding conditions. This period, from 1883–1903, is known as the “First Aliyah.”

The following decade, from 1904 to 1914, saw an additional 40,000 Jews emigrate from Eastern Europe in the wake of escalating discrimination and deadly pogroms. Life was challenging; the effects of climate, disease, Arab resistance to immigration, Turkish taxation, and the inexperience of many of the immigrants themselves contributed to the failure of many of the new collectives. One of the communal success stories of this period was the founding and development of Tel Aviv, the first all-Jewish city in modern memory.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed the emergence of a Jewish nationalist consciousness and the beginnings of the establishment of modern Israel. Jewish communities were galvanized by the larger forces at work in the world, including antisemitism, nationalism, and liberalism; Herzl’s *Der Judenstaat*, the World Zionist Congress, and the waves of *aliyah* from Eastern Europe set the stage for what was to come: the modern rebirth of the Jewish nation in its ancestral homeland.



The first German Youth-Aliyah group walking to Kibbutz Ein Harod, Israel.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Tel Aviv was founded on land purchased from Bedouins. This photograph is of a 1909 auction of the first lots.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

Read CUFI’s Fact Sheet, “Reverend Hechler, Theodor Herzl, and Zionism,” cufi.org/learnisrael.

Reflect on the following questions and journal your responses.



- How did Reverend Hechler's theological beliefs influence his view of the Jews and Zionism?
- What does Reverend Hechler's persistence say about his beliefs? How is he an example for Christians today?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CUFI's Micro-History Video: The Dreyfus Affair and Theodor Herzl,
cufi.org/micro-history.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON EIGHT -

Encountering Palestine

LESSON EIGHT:

Encountering Palestine

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Discuss Palestine within the context of the Ottoman Empire
- Understand the relationship between World War I, Zionism, and the Balfour Declaration
- Explain how the British Mandate for Palestine evolved

Before You Begin:

- Pray for a better understanding of the events that led up to the establishment of the State of Israel and a deeper conviction of why an independent state in their ancestral homeland was so critical for the continued survival of the Jewish people.

In our last lesson, we learned about the development of Zionism and the movement for a “publicly recognized legally secured homeland [for the Jewish people] in Palestine.” We learned about the Dreyfus Affair, and how that particularly egregious example of antisemitism in a supposedly liberal country was a galvanizing force for Theodor Herzl. We also learned about *aliyah* from Eastern Europe, which occurred during the decades of pogroms, conscriptions, and other policies of harassment toward Russian Jews. As we have seen, Jewish immigrants to Palestine faced harsh conditions and hostility from some of the Arabs living there, even as they purchased land for their new communities from the Ottoman Empire.

Now, we’re going to explore Palestine in the age of the Ottoman Empire in greater depth, learning more about the people who were living there, the Ottoman Empire itself, and the development of the British Mandate for Palestine.

PART I: Palestine in the Age of the Ottoman Empire

Under the Ottoman Empire, Palestine was a backwater territory with a small population. The land was underdeveloped, and there was a decided lack of infrastructure. However, there was space and room to grow, making it attractive to Zionists who wished to redeem their ancestral homeland, and who had been

subject to thousands of years of antisemitism. At the turn of the century, the population of Palestine was predominantly Arab with significant Christian and Jewish minorities. The nationalist ideals of the West had not yet reached the Middle East. The Arabs living in Palestine during the Ottoman Empire period did not have a cohesive identity in the way the Jews did; they did not think of themselves as “Palestinian” or as “Ottomans.” They identified as Arabs in ethnic and cultural terms, and their allegiances lay along tribal and familial lines.

The Ottoman Empire (1517–1917 A.D.) controlled large areas of land in Palestine. However, there was a weak central government and a lack of regional authority within Palestine itself. Combined with significant corruption and high land-ownership taxes, people living in Palestine existed essentially as part of a feudal system. The system was characterized by wealthy and absentee landlords who used “fellaheen,” or Arab Muslim tenant farmers, to work the land. Modern agricultural practices were discouraged, and the vast majority of the population was uneducated and impoverished. Fellaheen were conscripted to work, and their pay was also subject to high rates of taxation. Even those who could afford to own land chose to operate outside the realm of the Empire system, choosing not to register property to avoid the complicated Ottoman laws regarding taxation and land development. These practices often resulted in high debts to moneylenders, further impoverishing the fellaheen.

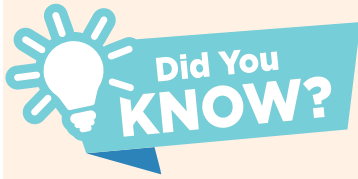
As we’ve learned previously, there have always been Jews in Palestine. Their population centers were clustered primarily in cities with religious significance, including Jerusalem and Tzfat, where Jews were the majority. With the arrival of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe during the first and second waves of *aliyah*, new towns, farms, and communities were built. Jews purchased land from absentee landlords, operating within the Ottoman system.



Men raising water from a well in west Jerusalem (1917).
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Unfortunately, many fellaheen lost their jobs as Jews took on the new work of farming the lands. However, Jewish immigration also brought new economic opportunities. New cities and towns, like Tel Aviv, were established. Jewish immigrants brought modern agricultural advances to Palestine, facilitating the draining of swamps, the agricultural development of deserts, and the planting of trees. Jewish immigrants also began developing industry and infrastructure in Palestine, including the establishment of an electrical company.

These advancements presented new economic opportunities for the former fellaheen, even as their way of life changed dramatically. Word spread throughout the region, and Arabs from throughout the greater Ottoman Empire moved to Palestine in search of a greater economic opportunity. The Arab population of Palestine doubled between 1917–1946.



Christians constituted the largest minority within the Ottoman Empire. They, along with the Jews, were known as “dhimmis”, non-Muslims under Muslim rule. Dhimmis held a protected status under Islam and are able to practice their religion, but are also subject to harsh rules and regulations regarding their dress, behavior, and employment. Men also have to pay an additional jizya tax.

Observe the photos of pre-state Israel.



Tel Aviv (1909).
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Herzl Street in Tel Aviv (1913).
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



- What are your impressions of these photos?
- What was the result of Jewish immigration to the land?
- How do these photos compare to modern-day Tel Aviv? What does that progression indicate?

Note The advancements that came with Jewish immigration to Palestine. Tel Aviv was only a few years old during this time period, yet today, it is a modern, economically thriving city in terms of the opportunities offered to those living in the land, Jew and Arab, due to Jewish innovation and cultivation.

To learn more, **watch** “Jerusalem,” which contains the oldest known footage of Palestine, filmed in 1913. The film is in Hebrew, and the ten-minute segment highlights include a train ride from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, religious Jews at the Western Wall, as well as children in a Jewish school, and classes at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design at Hebrew University in Jerusalem: cufi.org/learnisrael.



“The Egyptian, the Babylonian and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and Roman followed and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished.

The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jews; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?”

- Mark Twain, *Concerning the Jews*, September 1899

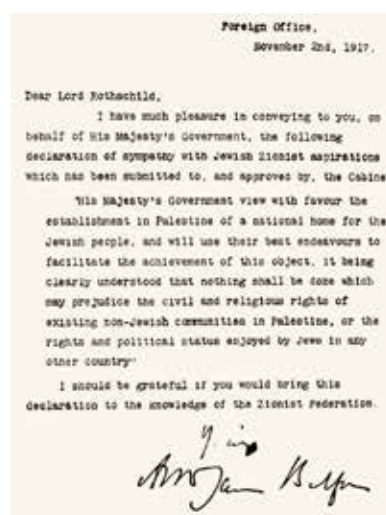
PART II: The Spoils of War

As the Jews in Palestine were building up the territory, World War I waged (1914–1918). Jewish Zionists abroad, as well as Jews in Palestine, played a role in the war. Their work, coupled with the shifting alliances and realpolitik of the era, would lead the world closer to the establishment of a Jewish state.

As Britain fought the Ottoman Empire in the midst of World War I, shifting alliances in the Middle East and the prospect of ending Ottoman dominance in the region prompted Jewish leaders to seek support for the Zionist movement from the British government.

The World Zionist Organization, under the leadership of Chaim Weizmann, began to work toward gaining British support of a national home for the Jewish people in their native land.

On November 2, 1917, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour wrote a letter to the Jewish community, declaring: “His Majesty’s government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”



Balfour Declaration, 2 November 1917.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

This statement was a huge victory for Jewish Zionists, despite the Declaration not being as strongly worded as Weizmann would have liked. Given the situation of Jews throughout Europe, and especially in Russia, where they were subject to terrifying and deadly pogroms, the Balfour Declaration had rendered Palestine both a viable refuge for Jews and a promise of creating Jewish life anew.

At the same time as they promised the Jews a national home in Palestine, the British were also extending promises to the Arabs about their own national independence. The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, a secret accord between France and Great Britain, had divided up the Ottoman Empire between their two spheres of influence. The British encouraged the Arabs living under Ottoman rule to revolt against the Ottomans, thereby tying up Ottoman energy and resources. In return, the British promised an Arab national state or confederation of states. The Sykes-Picot agreement and the Balfour Declaration did not necessarily negate each other.

Indeed, in 1919, Emir Faisal, the emergent leader of the Arabs who had revolted against the Ottomans, signed an agreement with Chaim Weizmann. Recognizing that Zionist and Arab wishes for self-determination were not mutually exclusive, Faisal stated that, “Mindful of the racial kinship and ancient bonds existing between the Arabs and the Jewish people, and realizing that the surest means of working out the consummation of their national aspirations through the closest possible collaboration in the development of the Arab State and Palestine.” The agreement stated that it would fulfill the Balfour Declaration and sought “...to encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale, and as quickly as possible to settle Jewish immigrants upon the land through closer settlement and intensive cultivation of the soil.” The Faisal-Weizmann Agreement was not fulfilled, as Faisal had stated that his acceptance of the



Emir Faisal I (later King of Syria, and then Iraq) in 1919.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Emir Faisal I (right) and Chaim Weizmann (also wearing Arab dress as a sign of friendship) in Syria. At this time, Faisal was living in Syria, not Iraq.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Division of the British Mandate of Palestine.
Photo credit: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Balfour Declaration would be based on the British fulfilling their promises of an independent Arab state. Unfortunately, this never happened.

In 1922, the League of Nations granted Great Britain a Mandate for Palestine. Recognizing “the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine,” the League of Nations tasked Great Britain with the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Shortly afterwards, in September 1922, the League of Nations and Great Britain decided that the Jewish national home would not apply to the area east of the Jordan River, which constituted the vast majority of the territory included in the Mandate and which eventually became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. We’ll learn more in our next lesson about the British Mandate for Palestine and its impact on the region.



- What was the Balfour Declaration and what did it promise?
- What was problematic about British promises during this time?

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

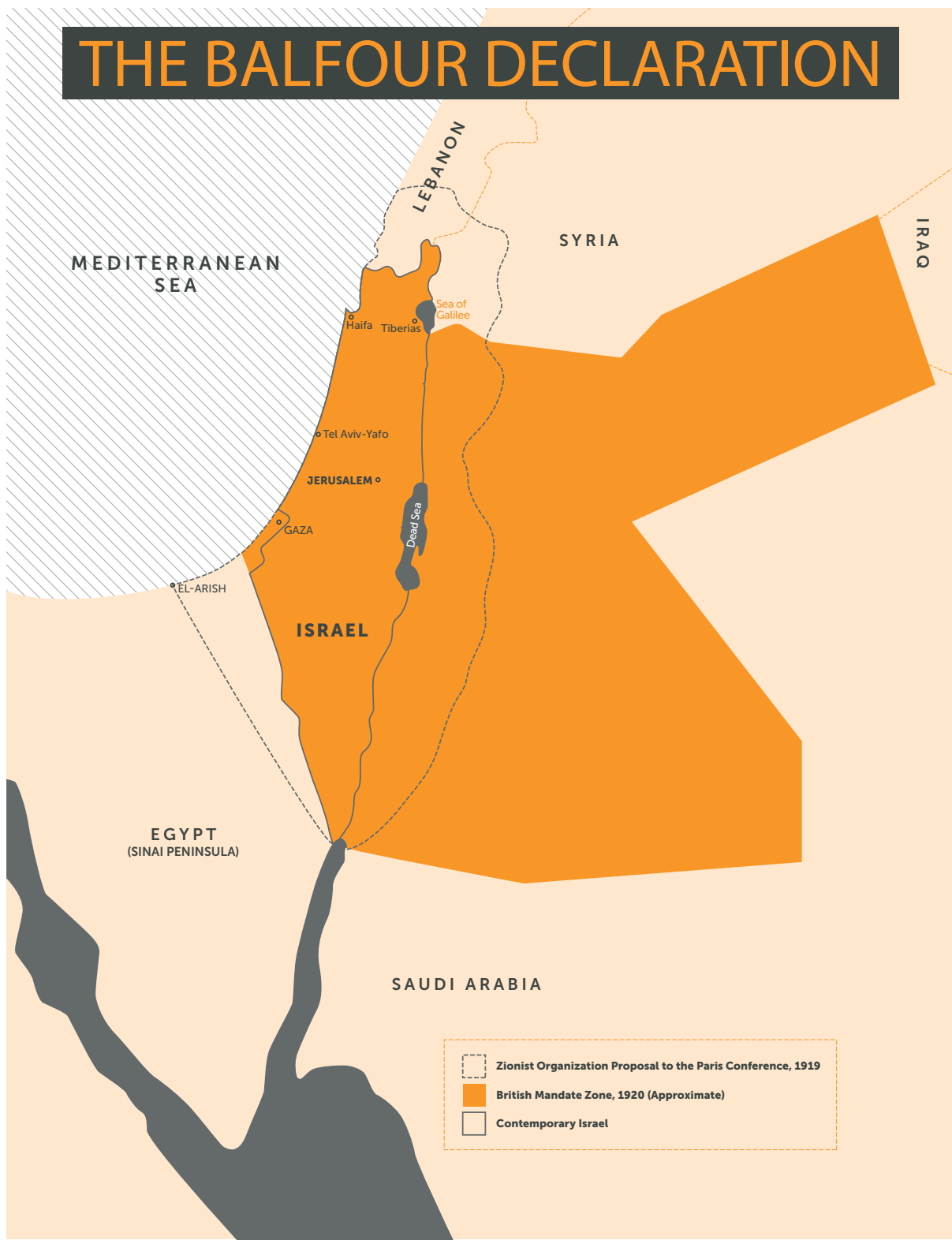
Below is a list of some key players in pre-state Israel. Choose a person/group from the list, and create a piece of art (painting, video, song, dance, etc.) that reflects the hopes, fears, and challenges encountered by the group or individual during this era. Share your project with a study buddy, family member, or friend!

- Christians living in pre-state Israel
- Arab fellaheen
- Jews living in Jerusalem
- Chaim Weizmann
- Emir Faisal
- The British

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

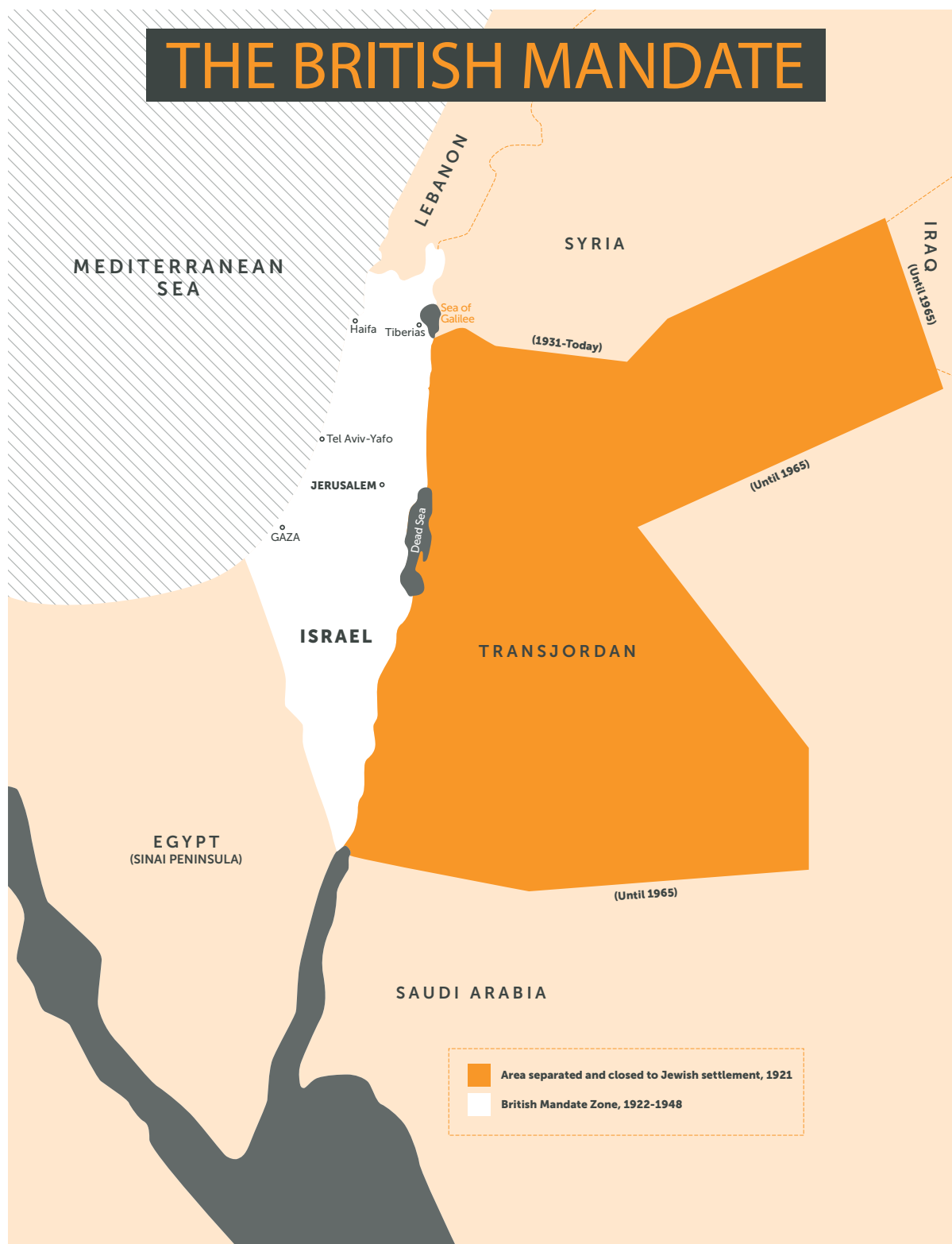
CUFI Micro-History Video: The Balfour Declaration, cufi.org/learnisrael.

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION



THE SYKES-PICOT AGREEMENT





- LESSON NINE -

The Interwar Period

LESSON NINE:

The Interwar Period

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Summarize the impact of Jewish immigration to Palestine
- Discuss the development of a Palestinian national identity
- Explain the role of the British Empire in the region during this timeframe

Before You Begin:

- Prepare your mind to absorb new information through prayer. Scripture promises that God “stores up sound wisdom for the upright” (Proverbs 2:7, NKJV); we only need to ask for wisdom and He will give it to us generously! (James 1:5)

During our last lesson, we learned about Jewish immigration to Palestine and its impact on society and the territory itself. We also learned about the Balfour Declaration and the Faisal-Weizmann correspondence, as well as the development of the British Mandate for Palestine in response to World War I. Now, we’re going to learn more about Jewish life under the British Mandate, as well as the beginnings of a Palestinian national identity and the development of conflict between the Arab and Jewish communities of Palestine.

PART I: Jewish Life in Palestine under the British

As you will remember from our last lesson, the British Balfour Declaration was essentially an endorsement of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Following the Declaration, Jewish immigration to Palestine continued to increase, with approximately 120,000 Jews arriving between 1919 and 1929. Most of these immigrants, like



Pioneers in Kibbutz Ein Harod.
Picture taken between 1920-1925.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Women working at Kibbutz
Givat HaShlosha in the 1920s.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

those who came before, left the pogroms and terror of Eastern Europe behind for a new life.

Trained in agriculture by the Zionist societies of Eastern Europe in preparation for their move to Palestine, many of these immigrants joined and founded their own kibbutzim and moshavim. These “communal settlements” were unique hallmarks not just of pre-state Israel, but were also, in many ways, the foundation of Israeli society. The kibbutz merged Jewish and socialist values; work itself had intrinsic importance, with the pioneers who joined the kibbutz movement believed that throughout their work, they were fulfilling the Zionist mandate to redeem the Land for the Jewish people. Consequently, many of the initial kibbutzim focused on agriculture, and developing the crops for the growing communities of Palestine.

On the kibbutz, women were equal members of the labor force, with all jobs open to them. Everything was shared in common; meals were eaten in communal dining halls. There was no private property; even undergarments were allocated to each individual on the basis of communal equality.

The kibbutz, just as it was at the time of the British Mandate, continues to be a key facet of Israeli life today, although much has shifted over the past several decades with the advancement of modern technology and the advent of a more global economy.



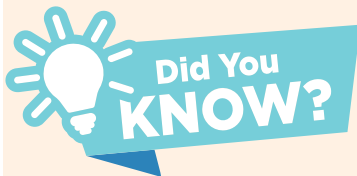
First pioneers in Kibbutz Gan Shmuel. (1921)
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



A settler plowing the land of Kibbutz Kiryat Anavim in 1920.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



A Bedouin family near the gate of Kibbutz Urim in the Negev.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



קיבוץ - KIBBUTZ

A COMMUNITY IN ISRAEL, COLLECTIVELY OWNED AND RUN. TRADITIONALLY BASED ON AGRICULTURE

The word “*kibbutz*” is a Hebrew word that means “gathering” or “clustering.” A kibbutz is a community in Israel that is collectively owned and run. When they first began, kibbutzim worked primarily in agriculture. By 1950, just two years after Israel declared its independence in 1948, Israelis living on kibbutzim made up almost 8% of the population. After the 80s and 90s, kibbutzim began to suffer economically, and in the early 2000s many kibbutzim became privatized. Today, there are over 270 thriving kibbutzim in Israel.

Let's Discuss IT

- What were the values of the kibbutz movement?
- What were the key aspects of life on a kibbutz?
- What do you think were the rewards of kibbutz life? What were the challenges?
- In your opinion, how did the early kibbutz help pre-state Palestine develop into modern Israel?

Even though the kibbutz movement has changed since they were first founded over a hundred years ago, kibbutzim are still a significant part of Israeli society.



Kibbutz Gesher, Israel.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Apartments at
Kibbutz Shamir, Israel.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Play: “What is a Kibbutz?” cufi.org/learnisrael.

Let's Discuss IT

- What are your impressions of the modern kibbutz movement?
- How has the kibbutz changed over time?
- Think back to our earlier lessons about modern Israel. How does the kibbutz reflect your understanding of modern Israeli society?

PART II: The British and Arab Response

As Nazism gained a foothold in Europe in the 1930s, Jewish immigration became more urgent. In the early 1930s, nearly 175,000 European Jews arrived in Palestine. The ideal of Zionism—the belief that the Jewish people had a right to national independence and sovereignty as natives of their ancestral homeland—began to flourish. Jewish immigrants began to flood into then-Palestine and purchase land from wealthy Arab landholders at exorbitant costs. The land had been mostly barren and sparsely populated for centuries, and to most, it seemed worthless, except to the Jews, who dreamt of coming home and living in peace. Palestine began to prosper as Jewish returnees cultivated the land, eliminated disease-infested swamps, and brought a higher standard of living and more economic opportunity to the area.⁹

⁹ David Brog, *Reclaiming Israel's History: Roots, Rights and the Struggle for Peace* (Regnery Publishing: 2017), 61–81.

A beautiful thing was taking place—the Arab population grew and flourished alongside their Jewish neighbors, and for a time, the two groups co-existed peacefully.

But as the Jewish population continued to rise, the Arabs of Mandatory Palestine became violent. Many Arabs saw the Jews as a threat to their way of life, despite the increased economic prosperity and technological advancements that the Jews had brought to the region. Despite Jewish attempts to build bridges of dialogue and respect with the Arabs, focusing on the Zionist hope to live in peace with the Arabs, violence broke out against the Jews. This violence was encouraged by Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who told the Arabs of Palestine that the Jews intended to conquer Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem. The first major Arab riots against the Jews of Palestine occurred in 1920, with violent attacks against Jews in Jerusalem and in the Galilee.



The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Avraham Kiryati, last known Jewish survivor from the Hebron massacre in 1929.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

AVRAHAM: As of 2021, Avraham Kiryati was the last known survivor of the 1929 Hebron massacre. He recalls being an eight-year-old boy from Jerusalem, a descendant of Jews who escaped the Spanish Inquisition, was staying with his grandparents in Hebron when Arab rioters forced their way into his grandfather's home and brutally stabbed him in the side. Avraham and his 18-year-old uncle managed to escape to the family's chicken coop and hide there. After that fateful and fatal day, Avraham settled in Jerusalem, eventually joining the army and fighting in the War of Independence, The Six-Day War, and the Yom Kippur War. Although he likens the Hebron massacre to the horror of the Holocaust, Avraham did not allow the experience to rob him of hope. He said, "We do not have any choice but to remain strong."¹⁰

¹⁰ Tovah Lazaroff, "90 years later, last-known Jewish survivor recalls Hebron massacre," Jerusalem Post (23 August 2019), jpost.com/israel-news/90-years-later-last-known-jewish-survivor-recalls-hebron-massacre-599438#google_vignette.

Anti-Jewish sentiment among the Arab population in Palestine continued to intensify throughout the 1930s. Husseini began to organize the Arabs. Groups of Arabs were encouraged to attack Jewish communities, eventually escalating into an all-out Arab war against the Jews of Palestine and an Arab revolt against the British Mandate. This “Great Revolt” lasted three years, from 1936–1939. As part of their attempt to end the revolt, the British disbanded the

Arab Higher Committee. In response, the Mufti fled to Nazi Germany, where he pledged to help Hitler with his “Final Solution” of exterminating all Jews from the world. It’s important to note that this is the era where we first see the beginnings of Arab Palestinian nationalism. As we’ve already learned, the Arabs of Palestine, like the Arabs of the rest of the region, were organized and allied along familial and tribal lines. While they undoubtedly had a history in and ties to the region, the Arabs of Palestine did not, up to that point, have an understanding of themselves as separate from the rest of the Arab world. This newfound “Palestinian Arab” identity resulted from their antipathy toward and opposition to the Jewish people. We will continue to explore these ideas in greater depth in further lessons.



Haj Amin al-Husseini
meeting with Adolf Hitler.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

The Arab revolts created a problem for the British. They had a responsibility, as part of the Mandate, to steward the creation of a Jewish national home. At the same time, the British government also wanted access to oil reserves throughout the Middle East. Consequently, the British needed to maintain positive relationships with the Arabs. When confronted with the Arab riots and revolts of the 1930s, the British began to limit Jewish immigration to Palestine. As the 1930s moved forward, the British restricted land sales to Jews in Palestine. Meanwhile, the shadow of Hitler and his plans for the Jews began to alarmingly loom across Europe.

By 1921, the British had partitioned the land set aside for a Jewish national home by the Mandate for Palestine into two prospective states. The partition gave 77% of the land to an Arab state called Transjordan and left 23% for the Jewish people.

Eventually, the British decided that the initial Mandate was no longer tenable. The Arab riots of the 1920s and 1930s prompted Britain to draft the Peel Commission in 1937, which once again recommended partitioning the land, this time with 80% going to an Arab state and 20% to a Jewish state. Under the Partition Plan, the British would have control over the central area of Palestine (Tel Aviv to Jerusalem), with the remaining land divided among the Jews and Arabs. Limits on Jewish immigration were to be strictly enforced. While the Jews of Palestine were, on the whole, not pleased with the recommendations, they accepted the Plan. However, the Arabs violently opposed partition.

The Arab revolt against the British intensified, as did the attacks on Jewish communities and individuals. The partition plan did not materialize.



You have just learned a significant amount of important historical information. Process through the following discussion prompts:

- Imagine that you are a Jewish immigrant from Eastern Europe to Palestine. What does it feel like to be faced with Arab attacks against your new community?
- Why do you think the Arabs reacted with such violence to Jewish immigration? Were there other options? What would you have done?
- Think about the British solution to limit Jewish immigration to Palestine. Does this make sense to you? What do you think the British should have done to address the Arab revolt and the war against the Jews?

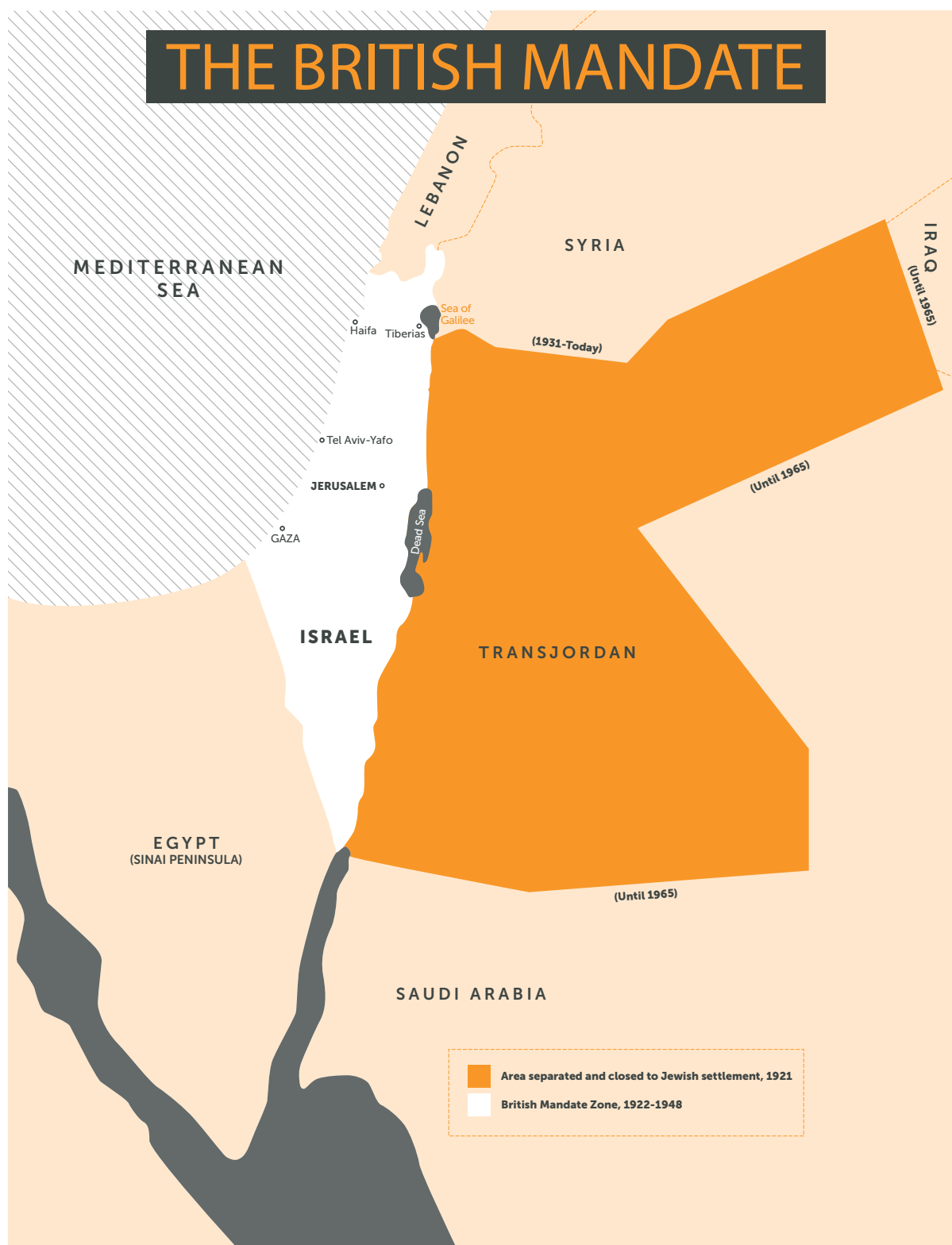
OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

Consider reading the article by Edy Cohen: “How the Mufti of Jerusalem Created the Permanent Problem of Palestinian Violence,” The Tower; November 2015: cufi.org/learnisrael.



- Did you learn anything that surprised or disturbed you?
- Al-Husseini was an outspoken antisemite. What do you think about the concept of Palestinian national identity, knowing that it was first articulated by someone who wanted to murder all Jews?

THE BRITISH MANDATE



UN PARTITION PLAN RESOLUTION 181



- LESSON TEN -

The Holocaust and World War II

LESSON TEN:

The Holocaust and World War II

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Articulate an understanding of the Holocaust and its global impact
- Point to specific ways Righteous Gentiles worked to protect the Jewish people
- Discuss the implications of the Holocaust and World War II on the founding of Israel

Before You Begin:

- Pray for your heart to be prepared to accept the past, as horrific as it was, and the role that replacement theology played in enabling the Holocaust. Pray for a heart of repentance over the sins of our fathers and an increased sense of responsibility to reverse old wounds between Jews and Christians through our respect, gratitude, and love.

Note to Reader: Learning about the Holocaust can be challenging. This is not a Holocaust course; depending on what your background is, you may already be familiar with this era in world history, or you may have only a general understanding. This lesson is meant to provide context and understanding for a major event in the history of the Jewish people and the world. This is not comprehensive of the history of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. Students who are being introduced to these concepts for the first time may need additional time to study, understand, and process the material. As always, it may be worthwhile to break this lesson into two or more parts to ensure maximum interaction with the material.

In our last lesson, we learned about Jewish life in Palestine and how Jewish immigrants worked to build up Palestine through Jewish values. We also learned about how the Arabs of Palestine rejected the Jewish people and used violence as a way of removing the Jews from their ancestral homeland. We also touched briefly upon the emerging threat of Nazism, which resulted in an increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine. Now, we're

going to learn more about Hitler and the Nazis and their effect on world Jewry, as well as Israel's founding following the worst genocide in history.

PART I: Hitler and Nazi Germany

While the Jews of Palestine grappled with Arab attacks and struggled to create the basis for a national home, Jews in Europe were under siege. As you probably know from your history class, the rise of Hitler in Germany, and the spread of Nazi ideology began in the 1930s, ultimately leading to the genocide of the Holocaust in the early 1940s. Hitler's hatred had its basis in the persecution and "othering" of Jews in European history; the terrible history of murders, exclusion, and discrimination against Jews made them, in Hitler's mind, a natural scapegoat for the challenges that confronted Germans in the wake of World War I.

As we learned in Lesson One, Hitler's twisted form of so-called Christianity played a role in his depraved actions in the Holocaust.



Adolf Hitler.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



What are your thoughts on the role that Christianity has played in the history of antisemitism?

Play: "European Antisemitism From its Origins to the Holocaust," cufi.org/learnisrael.



- What are your initial impressions and understandings from the video?
- Are you familiar with any of these antisemitic tropes?
- What are your thoughts on the role that Christianity has played in the history of antisemitism?

Adolf Hitler's vision for the triumph of the master "Aryan" race led to the calculated murder of approximately 11 million people during his dictatorship. Hitler targeted those incompatible with his worldview, including people with physical disabilities, people with Down Syndrome, the Romani ("Gypsies"), homosexuals,

non-whites, Slavic peoples, clergy who opposed his murderous regime, artists, and politicians. The Nazis murdered five million of these “undesirables.”

While he and his henchmen eliminated those groups he found to be substandard, Hitler focused especially on eradicating Judaism from the world. His soldiers rounded up Jews across Europe and imprisoned, tortured, starved, beat, and murdered them. The Nazis put Jews into concentration camps, gassing them to death. He destroyed families, homes, towns, and communities. Hitler murdered **six million Jews in Europe**. This genocide is known as the Holocaust and remains the worst tragedy to befall the Jewish people in their long history.



Please consider watching The Watchman Episodes 51 and 52, “Holocaust Survivor Irving Roth Shares His Miraculous Story,” to better understand this terrible period in world history, available on YouTube. Part I: cufi.org/learnisrael.

Play: “The Deportation of Jews from Hungary and Lodz to Auschwitz,” cufi.org/learnisrael.



- Have you seen or learned about this before?
- What surprised you, disturbed you, or otherwise affected you?
- As Christians, how can we work against antisemitism in our communities?

One of the most tragic aspects of the Holocaust was the world’s silence as millions of people were murdered. The Nazis were aided by collaborators throughout Europe—people who hated Jews and others and who volunteered information on their neighbors, helping the Nazis rise to power. There were also the silent bystanders, the people who did nothing to stop the violence and murder that spread throughout Europe. Governments around the world, understanding the Nazi threat, were also culpable in the deaths of the 11 million. Initially, following the passing of the racist Nuremberg Laws, Germany still permitted Jews to leave the country. While some did aid the Jewish refugees to a small degree, many states refused to open their borders to the refugees and would not increase the number of visas available. This refusal was a death sentence for the majority of the Jews in Germany.



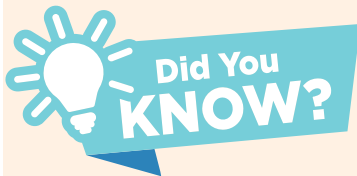
Hitler speaks at the Hero's Square in Vienna, Austria, March 1938.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

For many Jews, Palestine seemed like a natural option for immigration. Mindful of their larger goals in the region, the British hosted a conference with Jewish and Arab leadership in 1939 to discuss the situation. The Arabs demanded that Jewish immigration to Palestine be stopped immediately. The Jews of Germany pleaded with the British government to save them. The British eventually limited Jewish immigration to 75,000 over a period of five years and forbade land sales to Jews. The Arabs rejected this, as it still allowed Jews into the territory. In response, the Jews of Palestine issued an indictment of the British government, saying that they were denying the Jewish people a safe haven “in the darkest hour of their history.” The Jews attempted to smuggle in as many refugees as they could, a perilous process over land and sea in war-torn Europe known as “Aliyah Bet.” Approximately 66 ships carrying Jewish refugees from Europe attempted to enter Palestine, but only a handful were able to pass the British blockade of the coast. Many died at sea or were sent back to Europe. Jews from Middle Eastern countries were smuggled over land, with approximately 9,000 entering the territory illegally during the war period.



People of “Yishuv” watching refugees from the Tiger Hill Ship at Tel Aviv beach, September 1939.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

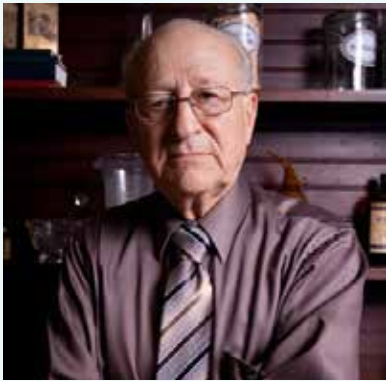


Today, there are approximately 100,000 Holocaust survivors left to tell their stories. The youngest Holocaust survivors today are already about 81 years old. In a world where we are seeing increasing amounts of antisemitism, it is important to make sure that everyone, young and old, understands this painful time in our history so that it does not repeat itself.



Holocaust Survivors, (from left to right, starting from the top), Halina Silber, Nate Leipziger, Mala Tribich, Dr. Walter Ziffer, Ida Gants.

Photo credits: Wikimedia Commons and CUFI



Holocaust survivor, the late Irving Roth (1929-2021).
Photo credit: CUFI

IRVING: Born in 1929 in Czechoslovakia, Irving Roth grew up like other children of the time: he went to school, played soccer, and had a crush on a girl. But in 1939, following the German Occupation of Czechoslovakia, Irving's life changed dramatically. His father's business was immediately placed in jeopardy; Jews were given a curfew; Irving's sheepskin coat had to be turned over to the police; and finally, Jews were forced to wear yellow stars on their clothing. When he was 14 years old, after moving to Hungary and hiding wherever they could, Irving Roth and his brother, parents, grandparents, and aunt's family, were packed into cattle cars and taken on a three-day trip to Auschwitz. Irving spent over a year in the extermination camp, endured several death marches, and grew ill and frail. By the time American forces liberated Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, Irving had lost many dear members of his family. Turning his pain into purpose, until his death in 2021, Irving dedicated his life to telling his story so that the horrors of the Holocaust never happen again.

On February 16, 2021, Irving passed away, but his legacy lives on through CUFI.

PART II: Resistance and Righteous Gentiles

While many seemed to have lost their moral compass in this dark period of history, there were those who risked their own lives to save Jews and the other targets of the Nazi's murders. People banded together in "resistance" cells and underground armies throughout Europe, fighting the Nazis both covertly and overtly in conjunction with the Allied Forces. Others worked against the evil on their own terms. Called "Righteous Gentiles," these individuals and families faced danger, imprisonment, and death to save the



Dietrich Bonhoeffer.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

lives of colleagues, friends, neighbors, and complete strangers. Let's read about the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor and theologian who staunchly resisted the Nazis—and it cost him everything.

Note: The stories of many Righteous Gentiles are recorded and available to the public through Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center's website. The link to the "Righteous Gentiles" section of the website is contained in the Additional Resources section.

Read cufi.org/learnisrael.



- What thoughts and feelings do you have after reading about Bonhoeffer?
- Imagine you are Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and you decide to risk your life every day for the Jewish people. What are your motivations? Why do you do this?
- Do you think your Christian faith would give you the strength you need to risk your life for someone else?
- As Christians, how can we stand up against bigotry, racism, and antisemitism?

In the Holocaust, **six out of every seven Jews** in Europe died. When the war ended and the Allies were victorious, those liberated from the concentration camps were faced with a terrible reality: most of their families, friends, and loved ones had been killed. They had no homes to return to, as many had either been destroyed or taken over by others during the war. Many were placed into Displaced Persons camps (DP camps). Governments refused to allow unrestricted immigration. Many survivors demanded that they be allowed to immigrate to Palestine. An emergency Anglo-American Committee was convened, which concluded that immigration to Palestine must issue 100,000 visas to begin to address the Jewish refugee problem, and that British restrictions on land sales to Jews should be terminated. Once again, the Arabs rejected this decision and took to violence, but immigration began to move forward.



New immigrants wash their clothes at the immigrant camp near Kibbutz Na'an in Israel.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

In the meantime, there was a growing resistance to British rule by the Jews of Palestine. Many believed the British had not done enough to thwart Arab attacks against them or to rescue the Jews of Europe during Hitler's regime. Two new organizations emerged among the Jews. One, the *Irgun*, believed that violent resistance was the key to overthrowing British rule of Palestine.

Secondly, the *Haganah*, on the other hand, focused on bringing Jews into Palestine through illegal immigration and attempted to avoid escalating the conflict among the Jews, Arabs, and British. With the situation growing increasingly tense and violent, the British concluded that they could no longer control the area. The British returned Palestine to the United Nations. In 1947, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, after a lengthy exploratory and interview process, recommended “partition,” dividing the area of Mandatory Palestine into a state for the Arabs and a state for the Jews, with an internationalized Jerusalem. The Arabs rejected the plan, demanding a unitary Arab state.

The disjointed pieces of land reserved for the Jewish people consisted of mostly arid desert without defensible borders. Despite being offered a small territory and losing the hope of sovereignty over Jerusalem, their historic capital, the Jews of Palestine accepted the plan desperate to establish a national home and provide a refuge for the survivors of the Holocaust. Arab leaders had already made clear they would not accept any plan that included a Jewish state, and almost immediately made good on their threat to launch large-scale attacks on Jewish communities. Hundreds of Jews were killed in riots and other terror attacks between November 29, 1947, and the date Israel officially declared its independence on **May 14, 1948**. Yet, overruling Arab objections, on November 29, 1947, the United Nations formally adopted the partition plan, 33–13 with ten abstentions.

After 2,000 years of exile, discrimination, murder, and genocide, the Jewish people would finally have sovereignty in their ancient homeland of Israel.

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION:

Yad Vashem is the World Holocaust Remembrance Center and Museum, based in Jerusalem. Visit the Righteous Among the Nations page and read over some of the remarkable stories of courage: cufi.org/learnisrael.

Take your time as you explore the stories and testimonies of the Righteous Gentiles and those that they saved. Then, choose one story to read and view, and share a summary of what you learned with a study buddy, friends, or family.



Yad Vashem—The World Holocaust Remembrance Center
Photo credit: Unsplash, Photo by Yang Jing

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Facing History and Ourselves (Resources for Teaching about the Holocaust).

Eva Stories on Instagram.

 This social media account tells the story of the Holocaust, experienced through a young girl, via the popular “stories” feature on Instagram. Watch the story @eva.stories on Instagram.

Bondi’s Brother by Edward and Irving Roth (2013), available on Amazon.

Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

CUFI Micro-History Video: The Night of Broken Glass.

CUFI Micro-History Video: The Rescue of Denmark’s Jews.

Never Again?, a CUFI original film (2020).

The Watchman Episode 51: Part One, Holocaust Survivor
Irving Roth Shares His Miraculous Story.

The Watchman Episode 52: Part Two, Holocaust Survivor
Irving Roth Shares His Miraculous Story.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON ELEVEN -

Founding a State

LESSON ELEVEN:

Founding a State

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Discuss the founding of the modern State of Israel
- Explain the resulting War of Independence
- Summarize the impact of the 1948 War on the region

Before You Begin:

- Reflect on Isaiah 66:8 (NASB 1995) throughout the lesson:

“Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons.”

The God of Israel brought about the miraculous rebirth of the nation of Israel in His perfect timing, just as He promised. What promises has He made to you that you believe Him to be able to accomplish?

As we learned over the last several lessons, world Jewry faced significant challenges during the first half of the 20th century. Virulent antisemitism, even in supposedly “liberal” countries, exposed how vulnerable Jews were in Europe. Vicious pogroms across Eastern Europe killed many Jews and spurred immigration to Palestine. Hitler’s genocide of six million Jews decimated the Jewish population of Europe. The aftermath of World War II provided a reckoning for the world, as Jewish war refugees, many of whom had been liberated from concentration camps, demanded that they be allowed to immigrate to their historic homeland to live in dignity. The members of the United Nations formally agreed that a Jewish state needed to exist in the world and voted to partition what had been British Mandatory Palestine into two separate states: one for the Jews and one for the Arabs. Having accepted the ruling of the United Nations, the Jews of Palestine prepared to declare statehood. The Arabs prepared for war.

PART I: The War Begins

Play: “How the State of Israel was Born,” cufi.org/learnisrael.



- What stands out to you about this video?
- What is inspiring or disconcerting?

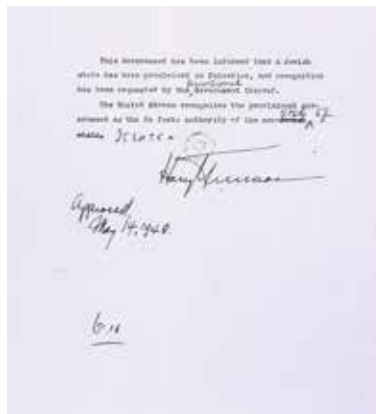
The Arabs of Palestine refused to acknowledge the Jewish connection to Palestine and a Jewish right to sovereignty. Accepting their own state from the UN's recommendations would have implied a recognition of Jewish rights. Instead, the Arabs escalated their violence against the Jewish communities of Palestine.

There was a general Arab strike throughout Palestine, and groups of Arabs attacked Jewish towns, Jewish sections of cities, and civilians on buses. An arms embargo was imposed upon Palestine by Great Britain and the United States; however, Great Britain continued to supply weapons to Iraq and Trans-Jordan, and thereby access to arms for Arab forces and militias. An Arab army moved into Palestine, from Lebanon and many Arabs began to flee cities and towns. There was a public call for the Arabs of Palestine to make way for the conquering Arab armies, with the reassurance that Arabs would be able to return to their homes once the war against the Jews was won. The Jewish leadership pleaded with many of their Arab neighbors to stay, hoping for peace between the two peoples and the building of a tolerant society.

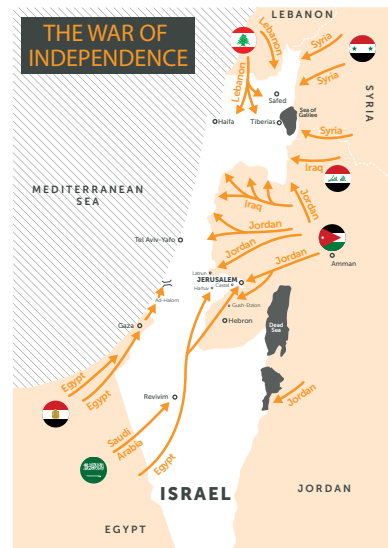
The British Mandate for Palestine ended on May 14, 1948. That same day, despite increasing acts of violence and aggression against them by the Arab world, the Jews of Palestine declared the creation of an independent Jewish and democratic



The first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, publicly pronouncing the Declaration of the State of Israel, May 14, 1948, in Tel Aviv, Israel.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Press Release from President Harry Truman of the United States recognizing the State of Israel.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



state. Eleven minutes later, the president of the United States was the first world leader to officially recognize the newborn State of Israel. Jews the world over rejoiced; a historic wrong had finally been made right. There were celebrations in the streets of London, Philadelphia, Vienna, and Warsaw.

Over the next several days, many other countries would recognize Israel as an independent, Jewish state. The celebrations were short lived, however, as the Syrian, Egyptian, Jordanian, Lebanese, and Iraqi armies invaded Israel that same day. The Secretary General of the Arab League announced that the war against Israel would be "...a war of annihilation. It will be a momentous massacre in history that will be talked about like the massacres of the Mongols or the Crusades."



In Psalm 83:1-4 (NASB 1995), Asaph prays for God's judgment on Israel's enemies. He cries out:

¹O God, do not remain quiet;
Do not be silent and, O God, do not be still.
²For behold, Your enemies make an uproar,
And those who hate You have exalted themselves.
³They make shrewd plans against Your people,
And conspire together against Your treasured ones.
⁴They have said, **"Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, That the name of Israel be remembered no more."**
¹⁸*"that they may know that You alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth."*

Have you ever cried out for God's intervention on your behalf? How did God answer?

Even though the United States and other countries condemned Arab aggression, the Israelis received little support in their war of survival. They had very few weapons. They had no cannons, no tanks, and only 60 outdated planes. The total population of Israel was 650,000, with an army of only 60,000, even though just 18,900 were fully armed. The Israelis smuggled weapons from Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, as the Western powers still maintained an arms embargo on the fledgling Jewish state. Outmanned and outgunned, fighting a war of survival, the Israelis, nonetheless, triumphed over the



War of Independence; Haganah troops training (1948).
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

invading armies. Four of the five Arab countries that had invaded Israel signed armistice agreements with the Jewish state in 1949; Iraq, rather than signing an agreement, withdrew its troops and handed over its territory to Jordan.



- What do you think about how the war began?
- What do you think about the United States' and other countries' decisions to maintain weapons' boycotts?
- What do you think was in the minds of the Jews and Arabs of Palestine while the fighting was going on?

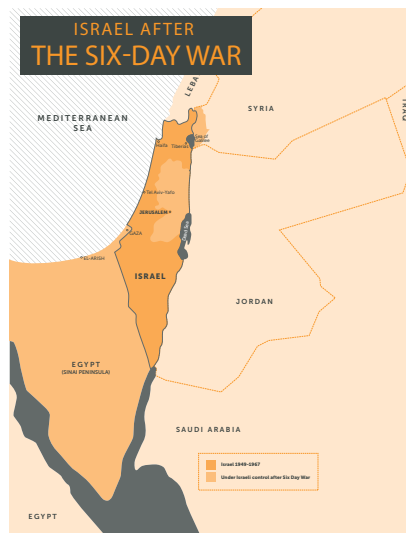


Isaiah 66:8 prophesies the regathering of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland, even after a long period of dispersion and exile: *"Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons"* (NASB 1995).

PART II: The Impact of War

Israel won its War of Independence at great cost. One percent of its population was killed, and much of its economy was destroyed. Under the 1949 armistice agreements, Israel's borders were redrawn, along what became commonly known as the "Green lines." While Egypt, Jordan, and Syria ended their military campaign to destroy the new Jewish state. Israel gained more territory than initially been awarded under the UN Partition Plan. This included half of Jerusalem (the other part of the city, home to the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and the Dome of the Rock, the holy places sacred to three major religions, remained under Jordanian administration). Jordan also gained control of the "West Bank" of the Jordan River, also known as Judea and Samaria, the biblical heartland of Israel.

It's important to note that the Green Line was never formalized into permanent borders and was never recognized by the United Nations as binding international law; it simply represented the facts on the ground between 1949 and 1967.



The Palestinian Arabs (whom we will begin to refer to as “Palestinians”) refer to Israel’s founding and the War of Independence as “*the nakba*,” or “catastrophe.” One of the results of the war was the displacement of Arabs from towns and villages throughout what used to be known as Palestine. As we already know, many chose to leave their homes to “make way” for invading Arab armies, believing that they would return when Israel was vanquished. Still, some were displaced due to the many battles that occurred throughout the land. Some of the Arab refugees chose to remain in the new Jewish state. Jordan absorbed many Palestinian Arab refugees, offering full citizenship and individual rights. Other countries such as Egypt and Syria, refused to accommodate the Palestinian Arabs, not granting citizenship and keeping them in refugee camps. This Arab refugee crisis, a foundation of the identity of Arab Palestinians, and a major issue of contention with the State of Israel, has significant consequences for the region today.



“Since 1948 it is we who demanded the return of the refugees...while it is we who made them leave. We brought disaster upon...Arab refugees, by inviting them and bringing pressure to bear upon them to leave...We have rendered them dispossessed... We have accustomed them to begging...We have participated in lowering their moral and social level...Then we exploited them in executing crimes of murder, arson, and throwing bombs upon... men, women, and children—all this in the service of political purposes...”

- Khaled al-Azm, Syria’s Prime Minister after the 1948 war¹¹

UNRWA

When the State of Israel was born, over 850,000 Jews were forced to flee all over the Middle East and North Africa. Many were expelled from their homes. However, they did not remain refugees.

By contrast, after Israel gained its independence in 1948, surrounding Arab nations attacked the fledgling Jewish state. As a result, about 700,000 Arabs living in Israel fled. As we’ve discussed, many left because of the war, and many left because they were told by Arab leaders to leave the Jewish areas of Israel. The idea was that they would return once the Jews and their state had been destroyed. That’s how the Arab (later renamed Palestinian) refugee crisis was created.

¹¹ The Memoirs of Haled al Azm, (Beirut, 1973), Part 1, pp. 386-387. For more information, see also jewishvirtuallibrary.org/myths-and-facts-the-refugees.

In 1949, the United Nations formed UNRWA, the United Nations Relief & Works Agency for the Palestinian refugees, the largest and only long-term UN agency that was ever formed to deal with just one group of refugees.

Seventy years later, it still exists and calls the Palestinians—and their children—and their grandchildren—refugees.

Play: “Why Are There Still Palestinian Refugees?” cufi.org/learnisrael.



- What are the different types of Palestinian refugees?
- Why are there more Palestinian refugees today than in 1948?
- What does UNRWA stand for? What do they do?
- What is the current status of Palestinian refugees in the Middle East today?

Israel's War of Independence was won at great cost to the newly forming state and with little help from other nations. Despite Arab aggression, Israel was able to make territorial gains and begin developing the infrastructure for a secure nation-state.

For more than 70 years, the Arab nations have refused to allow the refugees of the 1948 war to find new homes and be given citizenship in Arab countries. For this reason, there are now millions of Palestinian Arabs living in refugee camps, and they are rightly angry about their situation. However, it is not Israel that has held them back.

The “Right of Return” has become a stumbling block in the quest for peace between Israel and the Palestinians, as Arab leaders and many in the international community insist that all of the original refugees of the 1948 war, plus all of their descendants, be given citizenship in Israel. This right of return has never been granted to any other displaced people group on earth in history, and it certainly has never applied to the descendants of refugees born after the initial displacement. Because Israel is a democratic country and its Arab citizens have full and equal rights and participation in government, to allow millions of Palestinians to become Israeli citizens would effectively destroy Israel's identity as a Jewish state. It is important to note that the Right of Return is demanded, in addition to the creation of a Palestinian state, which would mean both Israel and a newly created Palestine would be Arab-majority countries.



Protester with “Right of Return” poster in Washington, D.C.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Mark Halawa ("Am I The Enemy?"/Israel Collective)
Photo credit: CUFI

MARK HALAWA: Mark Halawa's father was born in 1945 under the British Mandate of Palestine as a Palestinian refugee. Although Mark's family were Jordanian citizens, Mark grew up being told that he was a refugee and was taught to hate Israel by his family, his school, and his Imam (teacher of Islam). Mark had grown up knowing that his grandmother was a Jew who had grown up in Jerusalem and converted to Islam, which made her a Muslim according to Islamic law. But after having a conversation with a Jewish doctor one day, Mark discovered that, according to Jewish law and matrilineal descent, this actually made him Jewish! This shocking discovery changed Mark's life for the better as his thinking about Jews, Christians, and the West—all people he had been taught to hate—transformed dramatically. You can hear more of his story at cufi.org/learnisrael: "Am I The Enemy?"



Joe & Remy Pessah,
expelled from Egypt.
Photo credit: CUFI

When the modern State of Israel was formed, the Mizrahi Jewish communities of the Middle East and North Africa were evicted from their homes.

For nearly 70 years, the stories of 850,000 Jewish refugees have not been told. Expelled from their homes and communities across the Middle East and North Africa, where Jews had lived for over 2,000 years, these families lost everything. Their homes, their possessions, their ancestral heritage, and their religious artifacts—everything had to be left behind.



Gina Waldman fled the country of Libya with her family in 1967 to save their lives.
Photo credit: CUFI

Beginning in 1948, hundreds of thousands of these refugees fled to the newly formed State of Israel. Some went to the United States or Europe, but it was Israel that opened its doors without hesitation to welcome home the Jewish refugees. Families poured in from Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yemen.



Joseph Shamash was a Jewish refugee from Iraq.
Photo credit: CUFI



Rachel Wahba, an Egyptian-Iraqi Jew.
Photo credit: CUFI

The Jewish community in Algeria traced its roots back 2,600 years to the destruction of the First Temple. Before World War II, over 120,000 Jews lived in Algeria. Today, less than 200 Jews remain in the country.

In Iraq, the Jewish community had remained in the land since their exile from Israel at the hands of ancient Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar. Prior to World War II, there were 130,000 Jews living in Iraq. But when Iraq attacked Israel in 1948 and was humiliated by the Jewish State's victory, Zionism became a crime punishable by death, and Jews were forced to flee for their lives. Today there are less than five Jews in the entire country.

Over 50% of Israeli Jews trace their roots back to these refugees from the Mizrahi Jewish community. This Jewish community is often referred to as the "forgotten refugees."



The prophet Jeremiah foretold that though the Jewish people would be scattered among the nations in exile, the Lord their God would be faithful to regather them to the land He had bequeathed them and would restore their fortunes.

Jeremiah 31:10 says, *"Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare in the coastlands afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock'"* (NASB 1995).

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION:

Explore “The Mizrahi Project” at: cufi.org/learnisrael. Choose a few videos to watch. Then, write a brief response focusing on what you learned in this lesson about the Jewish refugees. Share your thoughts and feelings, and how this compares to the situation of the Palestinian refugees.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CUFI Micro-History Video: Israel’s 1948 Independence.

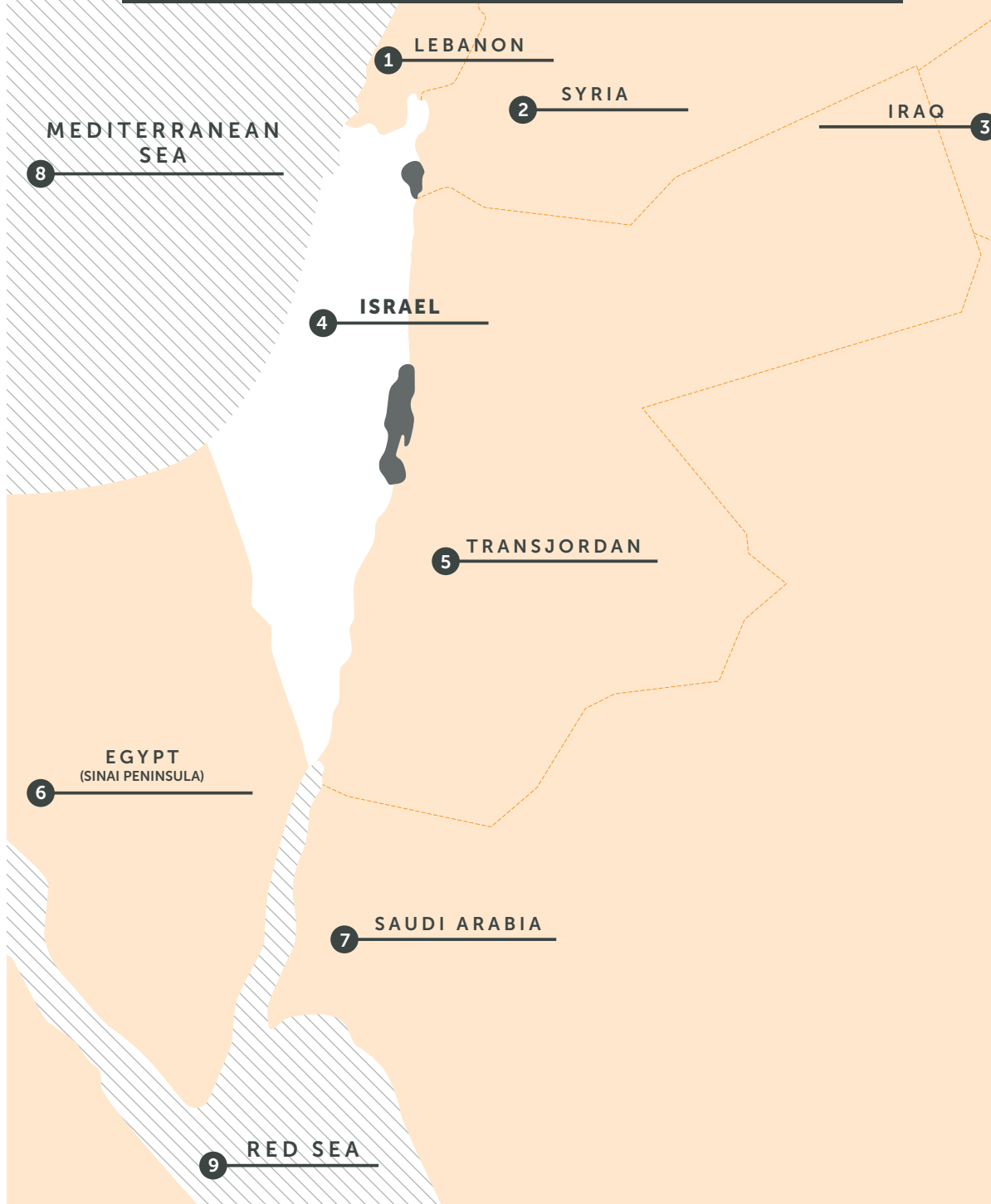
JIMENA: Preserve and Protect the Heritage of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews.

The Mizrahi Project: Telling Stories of Healing and Freedom.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

ISRAEL

AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES





JEWISH COMMUNITIES LOST IN THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE



- LESSON TWELVE -

A Newly- Forming State

LESSON TWELVE:

A Newly-Forming State

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Recognize the challenges Israel faced as a newly-forming state
- Summarize the causes and events of the 1956 War
- Discuss the development of Palestinian nationalism and its results

Before You Begin:

- During Passover, a passage now called “Vehi Sheamda” is often recited:

“And is this (the Torah) what has stood by our ancestors and for us: for not only one (enemy) has risen up against us to destroy us, but in every generation they rise up against us to destroy us; and the Holy One, Blessed be He, delivers us from their hands.”

During this lesson, meditate on those words and pray for eyes to see the miraculous deliverances of God in Israel’s history.

Previously, we discussed Israel’s founding as a modern, Jewish, and democratic state. We also learned about the War of Independence that followed Israel’s Declaration of Independence, where Israel fought against five Arab states and secured a remarkable victory. We studied the consequences of the War of Independence, including the persecution of Middle Eastern Jews that followed, as well as the creation of the Palestinian refugee crisis. Now, we’re going to look more closely at the period immediately following Israel’s founding and a key conflict that arose during this time. We’ll also explore the ramifications of the Palestinian refugee issue and discuss how those events impacted the rise of Palestinian nationalism.

PART I: A Decade of Turmoil

Immediately after its founding, Israel struggled as it began state building. Following independence



Jewish Immigrants from Iraq leaving Lod Airport, 1951.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

in May 1948, Israel accepted nearly 700,000 immigrants to the new state. The vast majority of these individuals were survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, most of whom were living in displaced persons (DP) camps following the end of World War II. Israel passed the Law of Return in 1950, formally opening its borders to Jewish immigration, as it had promised in its Declaration of Independence. As we learned previously, there was an influx of Jews from the Middle East into Israel who had been persecuted or driven out of their home countries in the wake of Israel's founding. Nearly 125,000 Jews were airlifted from Iraq to Israel. The Iraqi government forced Jews to leave behind their property and valuables in return for permission to safely leave the country. They were joined by 250,000 more Jewish immigrants from Middle Eastern states, including Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen.



Joseph Shamash, born in Baghdad, Iraq. He and his family made the decision to leave their home country, Iraq, renounce their citizenship, and forfeit their possessions in 1957.

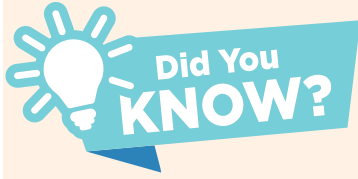
Photo credit: CUFJ

JOSEPH: Joseph's family lived in Iraq for 2,600 years. Although they were considered "dhimmis," or second-class citizens because they were Jewish, Joseph's family had a comfortable life in Iraq. But in 1941, a violent pogrom—a mass attack against Jews—called *Farhud* was carried out against the Jews living in Baghdad. Hundreds died, and more were injured. One day shortly after, while a young Joseph was walking down the street, a boy not much older than himself asked him, 'Are you a Jew?' and Joseph, afraid, took off running. The boy threw a stick with a nail in it and hit Joseph in the head, leaving him bloodied. Over 90% of Iraq's Jews chose to leave over the next few years, taking very few of their belongings and giving up their citizenship. Many took refuge in Israel after its rebirth in 1948.



Group of young Iraqi Jews who fled Iraq for Israel following the 1941 Farhud pogrom in Baghdad.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Israel, as a Jewish and democratic state, is unique in the world. At the same time, many of the aspects that reflect this uniqueness, like its Law of Return, put Israel in the company of many other nation-states around the world, like Germany, Italy, and Ireland. To learn more about Israel's place in the world as a nation state, check out the book *Israel and the Family of Nations* by Alexander Yakobson (Routledge, 2008).

As we learned in the last lesson, the War of Independence decimated the Israeli economy. Many immigrants lived in tent cities as the government struggled to keep up with demands for housing. Food and clothing were rationed; adults were given an allotment of 1,600 calories a day. It was a time of stress, austerity, and excitement, as the new citizens of Israel worked together to build up the fledgling economy and civil society of the Jewish state. Within a few short years, infrastructure developed, including the construction of new power plants, roads and highways, and communication systems. The government's legislature worked on creating a system of laws governing employment, insurance, and maternity leave. By 1959, Israel was able to end its austerity program. The State was developing.

And yet, even as Israel worked to secure its future, it had to contend with threats of annihilation. Egypt, under President Gamal Nasser, vowed to destroy Israel. In 1955, Nasser stated that, "Egypt has decided to dispatch her heroes, the disciples of Pharaoh, and the sons of Islam, and they will cleanse the land of Palestine. There will be no peace on Israel's border because we demand vengeance, and vengeance is Israel's death." By this, Nasser meant that the Egyptian *fedayeen*, or "one who sacrifices himself," had been sent to Israel to stage attacks against the Israeli people, to sabotage military and civilian facilities, and to otherwise make life in the Jewish state untenable. This was in direct violation of the armistice agreements of 1948. Despite the rash of attacks, it was Israel, not Egypt, who was condemned in the United Nations when it defended itself against the attacks.



New Year's Eve in the Great Yard 1959.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Guy Mollet, former PM of France, his wife, and Golda Meir, watching Israel's Independence Day Parade in Tel Aviv, May 13, 1959.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Fedayeen attacks were only one aspect of Egypt's aggression. Nasser's state-sponsored terrorism against Israel would ultimately be one of a series of acts that would launch the 1956 War, or Sinai-Suez Campaign. Sometimes called Israel's "Second War of Independence," the 1956 War solidified Israel's position as a power to be reckoned with on the global stage.

At this time, the secular nationalist movement **Pan-Arabism** was beginning to take hold. This ideology sought the unification of Arabs against the former colonial powers of Britain and France. Its central idea is that Arabic speakers, stretching all the way from North Africa to the Persian Gulf, constitute one people with a shared national consciousness. Egypt's President, Gamal Nasser, sought to be the world leader for this movement and wanted Pan-Arabism to be a state policy.

Israel, in Nasser's view, was just the most recent expression of Western colonialism, a foreign project that the U.S. and other foreign powers had established in the Middle East and which did not belong there—therefore needing to be destroyed.

Trafficking in antisemitic tropes and Holocaust denial, Nasser garnered great support from the Arabs who had been humiliated by the "*nakba*," or "catastrophe," of the 1948 War of Independence. In 1956, Nasser announced that Egypt would take over the Suez Canal, which was then under British and French control.

A delegation from Israel met with their British and French counterparts in a secret meeting in France. A plan was proposed by France and agreed upon: Israel would attack the Egyptian army in the Sinai and pose a threat to the Suez Canal. Britain and France would invade to "separate" the combatants as neutral referees and take over the Suez Canal.

The three countries agreed to the plan, but all did not go as planned. Within a week, Israel had routed the Egyptian military, targeted fedayeen terrorist infrastructure in Gaza successfully, and taken control of the Straits of Tehran and the eastern Sinai coast. Britain and France chose not to step in with their own armies for an entire week, by which time Israel had essentially secured a victory. At that point, the U.S. called on all countries to withdraw and pressured Israel specifically to withdraw from the areas it had conquered, threatening to discontinue U.S. assistance and impose UN sanctions.



A decorated Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1955.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Israeli soldiers in the Sinai Campaign, circa 1956.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Israel complied, and the war temporarily ended fedayeen activities, though it would be resumed with the rise of the Palestinian Liberation Organization in subsequent years.



- What was Pan-Arabism?
- Why and how were Britain, France, and the United States involved in this conflict?
- What were the results of the 1956 War?
- What are your thoughts on the conflict itself and the geopolitical situation that led up to it?

PART II: Who Are the Palestinians?

While Israel was developing its state infrastructure and fighting off more threats to its existence, the Palestinian nationalist ideology continued to be established. There are those who claim that Palestinian nationalism has its roots deep in the past, even before the development of the idea of nationalism, to the Jebusites and Canaanites of biblical times. Yet, as we learned previously, the idea of “Palestinian national identity” actually emerged in the relatively recent past. Indeed, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine found through their investigations and interviews that this idea developed in direct opposition to the idea of Zionism and British policy in the region.



Arab heads of state in a meeting during the 1964 Arab League Summit in Cairo, where the Palestine Liberation Organization was founded.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



As we mentioned in Lesson One, the word “Palestine” comes from the renaming of biblical Judea (from which the word “Jew” is derived) as “Syria Palaestina” after Israel’s ancient enemy, the Philistines. The word “Palestine” fell out of administrative use after Roman times until after World War I. When the Ottoman Empire fell, the name was adopted to designate a region given to Great Britain, which was then comprised of modern-day Israel, the West Bank, and parts of Jordan.

The development of Pan-Arabism, the ideology that espouses unification and solidarity across the Arab world, allowed the concept of a Palestinian national identity to grow and take root. The events of 1948 and 1949, with

Israel's founding and her defeat of five Arab armies, were an embarrassment for the Arabs of the Middle East, further complicated by the Palestinian refugee issue. The core of Palestinian identity lies in this "catastrophe" of the founding of the modern State of Israel in 1948. Palestinian national thought views this as the moment in which the Palestinians lost everything to the Jews. As we learned, Palestinian refugees left Israel and sought help in other Arab countries. Arab states who discriminated against Palestinian refugees in terms of employment, housing, and education sharpened the Palestinian national identity and the collective sense of victimhood and oppression.

In the 1950s, a resistance movement, coupled with guerrilla warfare, developed under the leadership of an Egyptian engineer named Yasser Arafat. Arafat founded *Fatah*, which sponsored acts of terrorism against Israel, in 1959; Fatah would become the largest political faction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Both Fatah and the PLO were aimed at destroying Israel. Despite being Egyptian, Arafat claimed to be a Palestinian and became the face of the Palestinian nationalist movement, encouraging and sponsoring violence and acts of terrorism against Israelis for decades. Arafat would eventually become chairman of the PLO and president of the Palestinian National Authority.



Yasser Arafat.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



- What defines your national identity?
- Generally, what are the characteristics of a national identity?
- What are the defining characteristics of the Palestinian national identity?
- Would there be a Palestinian national identity without an "enemy" in Israel?

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

Some in the international community have suggested that Israel was founded illegally. Is this the case? Review the short video *Israel's Legal Founding*, produced by Prager U and available at cufi.org/learnisrael. Then, write a response in which you compare the ideas of Israel's founding to Professor Dershowitz's assessment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CUFI Coffee Break Lesson 8: Over 40 Years of Peace with Egypt at cufi.org/learnisrael.

The Sinai Campaign (1956)

War between Israel and Egypt in the Sinai Peninsula (29 October–5 November 1956) broke out as a result of mounting tension emanating from Egyptian policies and rhetoric. Egypt under President Nasser was systematically encouraging terror attacks (by Palestinian Fedayeen) from the Gaza Strip against Israeli civilian targets, blocking the Straits of Tiran and preventing Israeli shipping from utilizing the Red Sea. Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal brought Britain and France to ally with Israel.

Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip within a week, but withdrew by March 1957. Nevertheless, Israel fulfilled some of its objectives, such as attaining freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran and reducing Fedayeen attacks from the Gaza Strip significantly for a number of years.¹²

¹² Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Sinai Campaign (1956)," gov.il/en/pages/the-sinai-campaign-1956.

THE SINAI CAMPAIGN



- LESSON THIRTEEN -

The Six-Day War

LESSON THIRTEEN:

The Six-Day War

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Summarize the key details of the 1967 War, including causes
- Explain “Land for Peace” in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Discuss the outcomes of The Six-Day War for Israelis and Arabs in the region

Before You Begin:

- Pray for eyes to see the many miraculous victories Israel won in The Six-Day War. Reflect on how the God of Israel sovereignly protected His people and pray for increased faith that He can do the same for you.

In our last lesson, we learned about Israel’s work to establish itself as a Jewish and democratic state, including its early years of hardship, deprivation, and innovation. We also discussed a key event in Israel’s short history: the Sinai-Suez Campaign, also called the 1956 War. We also learned about the Palestinian national identity in relation to larger ideas about Pan-Arabism, and the Palestinian nationalist groups’ focus on destroying Israel. Now, we’re going to continue our study of modern Israel by learning about a seminal campaign in Israeli military history: The Six-Day War.

PART I: Play-by-Play of the Six-Day War

In 1967, Israel faced an invasion of nearly half a million Arab troops positioned along every border. Increasing terrorism and attacks along Israel’s borders had plagued Israelis for years. Arab leaders spoke openly of their desire to “wipe Israel off the map,” and to massacre every Jewish man, woman, and child. Israel’s allies in Europe and the United States refused to intervene and warned Israel not to start a war.

By June 1st, though, it was clear that if Israel did nothing, the Arab armies on its borders would indeed wipe out the Jewish state. Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq joined Syria and Egypt in preparations to invade Israel. In the early

morning of June 5th, Israel's air force launched a surprise attack on Egypt's planes while they were still on the ground. Israel would continue to fight and win miraculous victories over the enemy armies for five more days.

By the end of The Six-Day War, Israel had captured enough land to triple in size. The land Israel captured during The Six-Day War included the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the ancient biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria. And finally, after thousands of years of waiting, they liberated the Old City of Jerusalem. Most of the land Israel won would eventually be willingly exchanged for promises of peace, but Jerusalem was too precious to give up. After 19 years of painful separation, the Jewish people again had access to their holiest sites. Under Israeli authority, Jerusalem was made safe for people of all religions to reside and freely worship according to their own faith traditions.

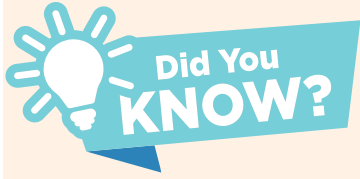


As a result of The Six-Day War, Israel gained control of Jerusalem, allowing Jews to enter the holy city unrestricted for the first time in 2,000 years. Jerusalem has always been in the hearts of Jews everywhere, even in biblical times.

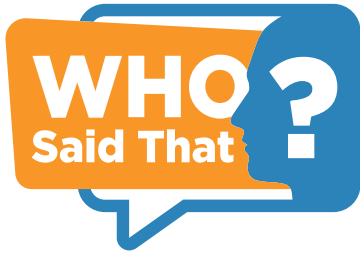
How can we sing the LORD's song
In a foreign land?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
May my right hand forget its skill.
May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth
If I do not remember you,
If I do not exalt Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.
Psalm 137:4–6 (NASB 1995)



- Imagine that you are an Israeli general in 1967 and are charged with deciding what to do about the looming Arab threat. Do you go to war? Why or why not?
- If you were an Israeli, what would it have felt like for your people to gain control of the Temple Mount for the first time in 2,000 years? How do you think this news impacted Jews worldwide?
- As a Christian, what are your thoughts on how peace could have been achieved following The Six-Day War?



In 1967, the Israeli military had very few military transport vehicles. In order to meet its needs, the military commissioned civilian vehicles, including taxis and firetrucks. The paratrooper brigade that captured the Old City of Jerusalem was brought into battle via tourist buses!



For the first time in 2,000 years, entering through the Jaffa Gate, the Jewish people were in control of Jerusalem and able to freely access their holiest site. Upon the IDF's recapture of this historic and significant site, Commander Mordechai (Motta) Gur said to his men:



Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem, 1967.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Western Wall, Jerusalem, present day
Photo credit: CUFI

“The Western Wall, for which every heart beats, is ours once again. Many Jews have taken their lives into their hands throughout their long history, in order to reach Jerusalem and live here. Endless words of longing have expressed the deep yearning for Jerusalem that beats within the Jewish heart...You have been given the great privilege of completing the circle, of returning to the nation its capital and its holy center...Jerusalem is yours forever.”



Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem, present day.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Jerusalem has been the most treasured city of the Jewish people for centuries. Joshua 12:10 reveals that during the conquest of Canaan, the Jews defeated the king of Jerusalem and lived peaceably with the Jebusites previously living there for some time (see Joshua 15:63, Judges 1:21). Jerusalem was the place where David brought

Goliath's head after he defeated him (1 Samuel 17:54) and the city from which he later reigned for 33 years (2 Samuel 5:5). Eventually, Jerusalem came to be known as the "City of David" (see 2 Samuel 6:12, 1 Kings 8:1). God told King Solomon that because of his disobedience, he would tear the kingdom from his son but he promised that David's descendant would still reign over one tribe, Judah, so that *"My servant David may have a lamp always before Me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen for Myself to put My name"* (1 Kings 11:36, NASB 1995). All in all, Jerusalem is mentioned in the Tanakh—the Hebrew Bible—over 800 times.

PART II: The Aftermath

Victory in The Six-Day War was a watershed moment for Israel. The war resulted in the internationally recognized establishment of Israel as a formidable state, able to preserve the safety of its citizens. Israel gained an immense amount of territory, including capturing East Jerusalem and the Western Wall, or Temple Mount, the holiest place in Judaism. Unfortunately, the war also resulted in many challenges, including the Arab world's refusal to make peace with Israel, as well as Israel's administration of the "West Bank" and its Arab inhabitants. In our next lesson, we'll learn more about the impact of the Arab states' refusal to make peace with Israel.



OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

OPTION #1: Watch the four-minute video, “50 Years after Six-Day War, ‘God’s on the Move’” (cufi.org/learnisrael) and read the corresponding article. Write a short response answering the following question:

Do you think that Israel’s victory in the 1967 War and the subsequent development of the State means that, as Moshe Kempinski says, ‘God is on the move?’ Why or why not?

OPTION #2: Watch the two-minute video (cufi.org/learnisrael) and/or read the corresponding article. If you’d like to dig deeper, watch the Netflix original series *The Spy* and compare the two accounts of Eli Cohen’s life. Reflect on the following questions and write a short response:

What were some differences? Similarities? Why is Eli Cohen remembered today?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

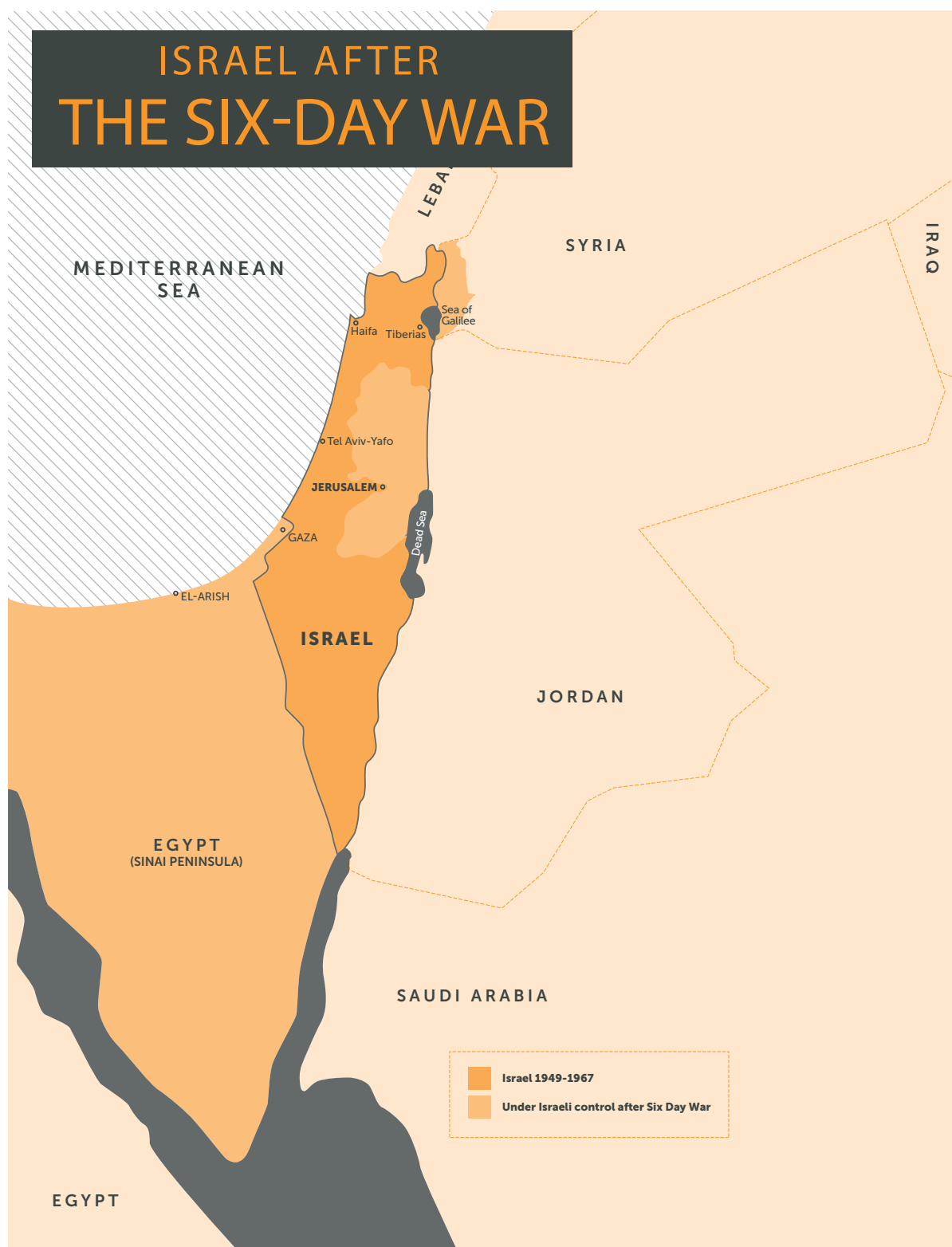
CUFI Micro-History Video: The Three Nos of Khartoum.

CUFI Micro-History Video: Eli Cohen.

Please read CUFI’s Fact Sheet: “Eli Cohen: Israel’s Greatest Spy.”

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

ISRAEL AFTER THE SIX-DAY WAR



CUFI'S FACT SHEET: ELI COHEN: ISRAEL'S GREATEST SPY

Introduction

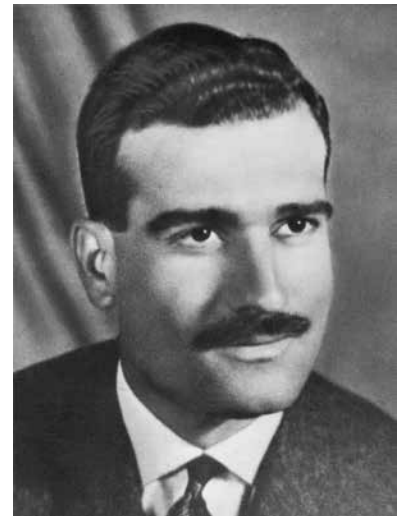
From Israel's rebirth as a modern state to the present day, enemies pledged to its destruction have surrounded the Jewish State. In the decades after Israel gained independence, Syria wreaked havoc on the lives, property, and security of Israeli civilians. From their vantage point atop the Golan Heights, from 1948 to 1967, Syrian troops terrorized Israelis in the upper Galilee by raining mortar shells down upon homes, farms, and communities. For 19 long years, those in Israel's northern region lived under the threatening shadow of the strategically elevated positions of Syrian mortar fire. When the IDF captured the Golan Heights in 1967, the threat to Israeli communities was removed. Much credit for Israel's defeat of Syria and the capture of the Golan Heights must go to Eli Cohen, Israel's greatest spy.

Early Life

Eliyahu Ben-Shaul Cohen, or Eli Cohen, was born in Alexandria, Egypt to a devout Jewish family in 1924. His father had emigrated to Egypt from Aleppo, Syria in 1914. From a young age, Cohen's parents instilled in their son the traditions of the Jewish people, Zionism, and the culture of Syria's Jewish community, where his father originated.

In 1949, when his parents and three brothers left for Israel, Cohen chose to remain in Syria to complete his degree in electronics and to play a part in "Operation Goshen." As hostility increased toward Jewish communities all over the Arab world, Israel launched an operation to secretly smuggle Jews out of Egypt to be resettled in Israel. A military coup in Egypt in 1951 was followed by a state-initiated anti-Zionist campaign during which Cohen would be arrested and interrogated. While he took part in various Israeli covert operations in the country during the 1950s, the Egyptian government could never provide evidence of his actions, and he was released.

He would go on to play a minor role in the ill-fated Israeli espionage network that was uncovered by the Egyptian authorities in 1954. Authorities uncovered the spy ring, arresting and sentencing two of the members to death. Cohen had aided the unit and was implicated, but they found no direct link between him and those convicted.



Eli Cohen
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

At the outbreak of the 1956 Suez War, wherein Israel reached the Suez Canal, Cohen was detained once again by Egyptian authorities, but this time he would be expelled from Egypt along with the remainder of the Jews of Alexandria. He would arrive in Israel in early 1957.

As Cohen was fluent in Arabic, French, and Hebrew, the IDF recruited him to a military intelligence unit where he worked as an analyst, but he found this role unfulfilling and applied to the Mossad, Israel's top secret foreign intelligence service, which rejected him. He would eventually resign from his job at military intelligence and go on to work in a Tel Aviv insurance office as a filing clerk.

In 1959, Cohen married Nadia Majald, and they had three children together, settling in Bat Yam, Israel.



Eli Cohen and Nadia on their Wedding Day.
Photo credit: pbs.twimg.com

Life in the Mossad

As the border with Syria began to heat up, the Syrian army began using their elevated position atop the Golan Heights to fire mortars at Israeli communities below, Mossad Director General Meir Amit began the search for a special agent to infiltrate the Syrian government.

After it was decided that none of the current agents were suitable, Amit came across Cohen's name while looking through files of applicants the agency had rejected. Cohen was born in an Arab country, was known for his fierce and selfless commitment to the cause, and had knowledge of Arabic, French, English, and Hebrew.

In 1960, Cohen was recruited to the Mossad and underwent six months of intensive training, covering weapons proficiency, topography, map reading, sabotage, evasion techniques, radio transmission, and cryptography. His graduation report from the course would state he had all the qualities necessary for a field agent.

Kamal Amin Thabet

Cohen was given a completely new identity that was crafted by Israeli intelligence. Eli Cohen became Kamal Amin Thabet, born in Beirut to Syrian parents. The backstory that had been constructed for the agent stated that in 1948, Thabet had moved to Argentina with his family where they began a successful textile business. According to the cover story, Kamal Amin Thabet's desire to return to Syria was motivated by a patriotic dream to support his homeland. To establish his cover, Cohen moved to Buenos Aires

in 1961 to assume his new identity. When Cohen left for his mission, Nadia, his wife, saw him off at the airport. She had been told he would be working for the Ministry of Defense, but she didn't know where or in what capacity.

Cohen quickly built up strategic Syrian contacts in Argentina by throwing lavish dinner parties, attending social occasions, and nurturing friendships with Syrian officials.

Syria

In February 1962, Cohen (under his alias Kamal Amin Thabet) moved to Damascus. Late the previous year, Syria had dissolved its three-year-old union with Egypt. As a result, the Ba'ath party was in the ascendancy in Syria, and Cohen saw an opportunity to gain influence among Syria's political elite if he was in Syria when they actually took power. He strategically cultivated contacts with the Ba'athist leadership, which included the Syrian military attaché in Argentina, General Amin al-Hafez.



This undated photo shows Israeli spy Eli Cohen in Syria, wearing a wristwatch recovered by the Mossad in 2018.
Photo credit: timesofisrael.com

In Damascus he was instantly welcomed after receiving glowing recommendations from prominent figures in the Syrian community in Buenos Aires. While in Syria, Cohen picked up where he left off in Buenos Aires, spending time frequenting local cafes, listening to political gossip, and gauging the atmosphere on the street.

Cohen ran a thriving import/export business that allowed him to further expand his political contacts. He began hosting lavish parties in his home, inviting senior military officers, Syrian ministers, business leaders, and others in senior positions of power in Syria. At these parties, highly placed officials would openly discuss their work and military plans. Cohen would pretend to be drunk to encourage such conversations, to which he paid close attention. He also acted as an unofficial advisor to government ministers, who would call on him for advice and the occasional financial loan.

Having ingratiated himself to the ruling elite in Damascus, Cohen was invited to military facilities with Syrian military officers, including tours of the Syrian-controlled Golan Heights, where he looked down on the farms, villages, and roads of Israel that had been frequent targets of Syrian mortars.



Eli Cohen (middle) with his friends from the Syrian army on the Golan Heights overlooking Israel.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Cohen's visits to the southern Syrian frontier zone allowed him to provide Israel with photographs and sketches of Syrian positions. He memorized the location of all the Syrian bunkers and

artillery pieces. He was able to describe to Israel troop deployments along the border in minute detail, and he focused on the tank traps that could prevent Israeli forces from climbing the Golan Heights if war were to break out. In addition, Cohen was able to provide lists of some of the Syrian pilots as well as accurate sketches of the weapons mounted on their warplanes.

While touring the Golan Heights, an opportunity afforded to few during this time, Cohen collected intelligence on hidden Syrian fortifications. Feigning concern with Syrian soldiers being exposed to the sun, he suggested that trees be planted at every fortification to provide shade. Additionally, Cohen convinced the Syrians that trees would trick the Israelis into thinking there were no fortifications in the area. During The Six-Day War, the Israel Defense Forces would use these trees as target markers. Cohen's valiance, quick-thinking, and the intelligence he gathered were vital to Israel's successful capture of the Golan Heights in just two days during the 1967 Six-Day War.

Cohen provided vast amounts of valuable intelligence to Israel by Morse code, secret letters, and even in-person when he infrequently and covertly travelled back to Israel. His intelligence-gathering gave Israel an exclusive look into an enemy country long-thought to be impenetrable.

Due to the highly sensitive nature of his work, the entire time Cohen had been away from Israel his family believed that he was traveling abroad procuring goods for the Defense Ministry and that he was not in any danger. By sheer coincidence, one of the communications officers who handled the coded messages to and from Damascus was Cohen's own brother, Maurice. Each brother did not know that the other was working for Israeli intelligence. Maurice would eventually conclude it was his brother's messages he was deciphering. During one of Cohen's visits home, Maurice hinted that he knew what line of work Cohen was in.



Tel Faher, former Syrian bunker with an excellent view of upper Galilee. Used in the 1960's to shell the farmers working in their fields.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Discovery

Late in 1964, Cohen secretly returned home to Israel on leave, yet on his return to Syria he continued transmitting messages back to Israel. In January 1965, efforts led by Syrian Intelligence Colonel Ahmed Suidani to find a high-level spy in Syria began.

Enlisting Soviet experts with Soviet-made tracking equipment, the Syrians would observe periods of radio silence, hoping that they would be able to track any unauthorized transmissions.

Cohen often broadcasted messages back to Israel at the same time each day, an error that would make it easier for Syrian counterintelligence to trace his transmitter. Detecting large amounts of radio interference, they traced the source back to Cohen's apartment. In late January 1965 Syrian security services broke into Cohen's apartment where he was caught in the middle of a transmission to Israel.

Trial and Execution

Upon news of his arrest, the State of Israel worked tirelessly, hoping to get Cohen out of Syria or at least to keep him alive.

Cohen was repeatedly interrogated and tortured but did not give away any incriminating information about Israel.

Syria ignored pleas from Israel, world leaders, and even the Pope. After a largely show trial for domestic consumption, Cohen was found guilty of espionage by a military tribunal and sentenced to death.

On May 18, 1965, Eli Cohen was hanged in Marjeh Square in Damascus, and the execution was broadcast on Syrian television. After his execution, a white parchment filled with anti-Zionist statements was put on his body, and his remains were left hanging for six hours.

Burial

After the execution, Syria refused to return Cohen's body to his family in Israel, ignoring repeated pleas from Cohen's wife, Nadia. In 2008, a Syrian official said that the Syrians had buried him three times to prevent his remains from being brought back to Israel via a special operation. Bashar al-Assad's regime had declared privately that no one in Syria knew where Cohen was buried.

In 2016, a Syrian group calling itself "Syrian art treasures" posted on Facebook a previously unseen video showing Cohen's body after his execution, before which it was thought that no video existed of the execution and its aftermath.

In 2018, it was announced that Cohen's wristwatch had been retrieved from Syria. His widow noted that the watch was up for sale months earlier, and the Mossad managed to retrieve the timepiece, bringing it back to Israel.



Picture dated May 1965 shows Eli Cohen during his trial in Damascus.
Photo credit: timesofisrael.com



The watch reportedly worn by Eli Cohen until the day he was captured.
Photo credit: timesofisrael.com

Mossad director Yossi Cohen presented the watch to Eli Cohen's family in a ceremony. The watch is currently on display at Mossad headquarters.

Legacy

Eli Cohen is a national hero in Israel, with many neighborhoods and streets named after him. A memorial stone for Cohen was erected on Mount Herzl, Jerusalem, in the Garden of the Missing in Action. There have been a few adaptations of Cohen's story, the most recent being the Netflix series *The Spy*.

Former Mossad Director Meir Amit said Cohen "succeeded far beyond the capabilities of most other men." His work provided Israel with information that would prove crucial in 1967, during The Six-Day War when Israel successfully captured the Golan Heights, silencing the constant barrage of Syrian mortars, and bringing peace to the Israeli communities in the Galilee.



Memorial stone reading Eliahu (Eli) Cohen, in the "Garden of the Missing Soldiers" on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

- LESSON FOURTEEN -

The Yom Kippur War & Its Aftermath

LESSON FOURTEEN:

The Yom Kippur War & Its Aftermath

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Summarize the key details of the Yom Kippur War
- Discuss Sadat's visit to Jerusalem
- Outline the core details of the Camp David Accords

Before You Begin:

- Pray for the peace of Jerusalem before beginning this lesson (Psalm 122:6).

In our last lesson, we learned about The Six-Day War, a war of aggression against Israel by neighboring Arab states that resulted in a miraculous victory for Israel. The 1967 War was a seminal conflict in the history of modern Israel: Jerusalem was united under Jewish sovereignty for the first time since the Roman conquest of the Holy Land. Israel gained control over numerous key areas in the region, including the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, and the area known commonly as the West Bank, or Judea and Samaria—the biblical heartland and historic home of the Jewish people. In refusing to recognize Israel, make peace with Israel, or negotiate with Israel, the Arab states fostered Israel's administration of approximately 1.1 million Palestinian Arabs. The war was a humiliating defeat for the Arab armies, who had once again sworn to annihilate Israel. Egyptian leadership especially continued to nurse their resentment against the Jewish state. Israel, which had initially been lifted in spirit by their victory, was subject to terrorist attacks and continued threats of annihilation by Egypt.

In this chapter, we will cover the results of these threats of aggression by Egypt in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, which almost resulted in Israel's destruction.

PART I: The Surprise War

Buoyed by the miraculous victories won during The Six-Day War, Israel's leaders were affected by a sense of invincibility and a false sense of security. Israel had technically been at war with Egypt and Syria, whose leaders had been present at the infamous Arab League conference in Khartoum, Sudan at

which the “Three Nos” were agreed upon: no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with Israel. Yet Israel’s leaders did not anticipate the countries humiliated in The Six-Day War would attempt another altercation with the Jewish state so soon (just six years) after their stunning defeat.

Meanwhile, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat cleverly put forward two ruses prior to the attack on Yom Kippur in 1973: he sent emissaries to the U.S., feigning interest in peace with Israel, while simultaneously holding threatening military exercises near the Egypt-Israel border without actually attacking.

Israel’s Prime Minister, Golda Meir, though directly warned multiple times of an impending Egyptian attack against Israel by a formerly close confidante of Sadat, who became an Israeli spy, and even by King Hussein of Jordan, did not heed the warnings. Troops were not mobilized.

On Saturday, October 6th, 1973, the entire nation of Israel was quietly observing its holiest day of the year, as were most of its soldiers. Catching the IDF (Israel Defense Force) unprepared, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel simultaneously on two fronts. Less than 500 Israeli soldiers faced an overwhelming force of 600,000 Egyptians in the south, while in the north, 180 Israeli tanks defended against 1,400 Syrian tanks.

Motivated by fears of an Arab victory backed by the Soviet Union, on October 12th, U.S. President Richard Nixon authorized a massive emergency airlift of weapons to Israel. Though vastly outnumbered, Israel shocked the world by surviving the initial attacks and rallying to push the invaders back across the borders. Eighteen days after Egypt and Syria first attacked Israel, the Arab leaders agreed to a ceasefire rather than suffer further losses.

Israel won the Yom Kippur War, but 2,688 Israeli soldiers sacrificed their lives to protect the Jewish homeland.



- What was the status of the relationships between Israel, Egypt, and Syria after 1967?
- What did President Sadat do to confuse world leaders about his intentions?
- Why did Prime Minister Meir decide not to mobilize Israel’s troops?
- How did the Yom Kippur War begin? Why was this so challenging for Israel?

Play: “The Yom Kippur War: How Israel Turned the Tide,” cufi.org/learnisrael.



- **How did Golda Meir exhibit leadership during the Yom Kippur War?**
- **What was Jordan’s role in the War?**
- **What were Kissinger’s goals?**

- What did the Arab states do when the United States started supplying arms to Israel?
- Why did the U.S. want Israel to stop its advance on Cairo?
- What did Israel learn as a result of the War?
- What happened to Golda Meir? As Christians, how can we work against antisemitism in our communities?

PART II: Peace with Egypt

One of the core results of the 1973 Yom Kippur War was the peace agreement that was signed between Egypt and Israel several years later. But how did the two states, which had feuded for more than 20 years, reach an agreement? Let's find out.

On November 19th, 1977, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat landed in Israel, the first-ever official visit to the Jewish state by an Arab leader. Amazingly, the trip had been arranged less than one week prior. At this time, the U.S. had been trying—without success—to arrange a peace conference in Switzerland.

But Sadat shocked the world when he told American anchor Walter Cronkite publicly that he'd like to head to Israel as early as possible when invited formally. For years, he had been making small gestures indicating he might be interested in peace with the Jewish state. Even more surprisingly, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin took the statement seriously and said he would personally go meet Sadat at the airport, inviting Sadat over a radio interview with Cronkite, and making an appeal for peace to the Egyptian people.

The rest is history. Sadat's famous speech to the Knesset served as the beginning of a 16-month long process leading to the signing of a peace treaty. Israel and Egypt have now enjoyed over 40 years of peace. As the first Arab leader to publicly acknowledge Israel's sovereignty and to engage with it in serious dialogue, Sadat was a trailblazer who forever changed the face of the Middle East. Let's take a few moments to look at the text of his landmark address.

Activity: Document Analysis: Sadat in Jerusalem

Refer to the excerpts from "Address by President Anwar Sadat to the Knesset," found at the end of this lesson. Review the document, and pick one of the following questions to discuss with a study buddy or reflect on in a journal entry:



Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat at Camp David in 1978.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

- Does anything resonate with you about Sadat's speech? What?
- What is different in this speech from other Arab statements about Israel? Is there anything similar?
- Imagine you're an Israeli, and you are hearing Sadat's speech broadcast live. What would you think?
- Imagine you're an Egyptian, and your leader has gone to visit a country that you've been taught to hate. What would you think?

The peace that was achieved between Israel and Egypt, brokered by President Jimmy Carter at Camp David, was at once challenging, complex, and historic.



"My colleagues and I have gone in the footsteps of our predecessors since the very first day we were called by our people to care for their future. We went any place, we looked for any avenue, we made any effort to bring about negotiations between Israel and its neighbors, negotiations without which peace remains an abstract desire."

- Menachem Begin, sixth Prime Minister of Israel

Let's briefly outline the peace process.

During The Six-Day War of 1967, Egyptian President Nasser lost sovereignty over the Sinai Peninsula. His successor, President Anwar Sadat, was determined to regain it. In an effort to negotiate with Israel, he flew to Jerusalem and met with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. The negotiations looked promising but fizzled out due to outstanding issues. U.S. President Jimmy Carter wrote to Prime Minister Begin and encouraged him to continue pursuing peace with Sadat, whom he also believed to truly desire peace. In September 1978, President Carter invited both leaders to Camp David, a presidential retreat in Maryland.

After the U.S., Egyptian, and Israeli delegations arrived, Sadat provided Carter with a list of extensive and extreme demands which he expected Begin to reject outright. Three days into negotiations, both Sadat and Begin allowed Carter to control the flow of information and did not meet together again until the last day of negotiations at Camp David.

Finally, after 22 revisions of the initial U.S. draft, two documents were drafted, one dealing with the West Bank/Gaza and Palestinian rights, and the other dealing with an Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. Thirteen days later, both parties signed the Camp David Accords. Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat won the Nobel Peace Prize as a result. Six months after, both sides signed the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979.

Egypt regained the Sinai Peninsula, while Israel normalized diplomatic relations with an Arab country, a significant and historic breakthrough.

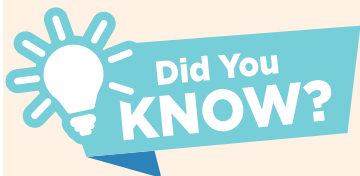


- What did Sadat give Carter during the first part of the negotiation?
- What was the United States' role during the negotiations? Why?
- What were the on-the-ground results of the Camp David Accords?
- Who won the Nobel Peace Prize as a result of the Camp David Accords?

The Camp David Accords were a watershed moment in Israeli history, in which an Arab country acknowledged Israel and came to the table to agree on a solid framework for peace. Unfortunately, as a result of the peace process, Egypt was ostracized by other Arab countries for nearly a decade, branded as “traitors” to the Arab cause. Sadat was assassinated in 1981, three years after winning the Nobel Peace Prize. Sadat’s successor, Hosni Mubarak, vowed to maintain the peace agreement. The agreement between Israel and Egypt has now been maintained for over 40 years.



Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian president Anwar Sadat with U.S. president Jimmy Carter at Camp David in September 1978.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Fifteen years after the peace treaty with Egypt, Israel achieved another peace treaty with an Arab country. In 1994, Jordan and Israel signed a historic agreement, normalizing relations between the two states. You can learn more by watching CUFI’s Micro History video: “Peace with Jordan,” available on CUFI’s website.

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

This assignment seeks to provide a more holistic portrayal of Golda Meir. Research Golda Meir. Jewish Virtual Library is a good resource, as is YouTube. Consider watching Golda Meir: Iron Lady of the Middle East, available on the YouTube channel



Israel's Prime Minister, Golda Meir, 1973.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

“Unpacked,” or reading the article “Golda Meir,” available through the Jewish Women’s Archive. Then, write a short response to the following question:

Golda Meir was a complicated individual with a challenging personal life. She was also beloved by the Israel people. In your opinion, was Prime Minister Meir a strong leader? Why or why not?

Video Link: cufi.org/learnisrael.

Article Link: cufi.org/learnisrael.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Excerpts from Address by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to the Israeli Knesset, November 20, 1977

In the name of God, the Gracious and Merciful.
Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen...

I come to you today on solid ground, to shape a new life, to establish peace. We all, on this land, the land of God; we all, Muslims, Christians, and Jews, worship God and no one but God. God’s teachings and commandments are love, sincerity, purity, and peace.

I do not blame all those who received my decision—when I announced it to the entire world before the Egyptian People’s Assembly—with surprise and amazement. Some, gripped by the violent surprise, believed that my decision was no more than verbal juggling to cater for world public opinion. Others, still, interpreted it as political tactics to camouflage my intention of launching a new war. I would go as far as to tell you that one of my aides at the Presidential Office contacted me at a late hour following my return home from the People’s Assembly and sounded worried as he asked me: “Mr. President, what would be our reaction if Israel should actually extend an invitation to you?” I replied calmly, I will accept it immediately. I have declared that I will go to the end of the world; I will go to Israel, for I want to put before the People of Israel all the facts.

I can see the point of all those who were astounded by my decision or those who had any doubts as to the sincerity of the intentions behind the declaration of my decision. No one would have ever conceived that the President of the biggest Arab State, which bears the heaviest burden and the top responsibility pertaining to the cause of war and peace in the Middle East, could declare his readiness to go to the land of the adversary while we were still in a state of war. Rather, we all are still bearing the consequences of four fierce wars waged within thirty years. The families of the 1973 October War are still moaning under the cruel pains of widowhood and bereavement of sons, fathers, and brothers.

As I have already declared, I have not consulted, as far as this decision is concerned, with any of my colleagues and brothers, the Arab Heads of State or the confrontation States. Those of them who contacted me, following the declaration of this decision, expressed their objection, because the feeling of utter suspicion and absolute lack of confidence between the Arab States and the Palestinian People on the one hand, and Israel on the other, still surges in us all. It is sufficient to say that many months in which peace could have been brought about had been wasted over differences and fruitless discussions on the procedure for the convocation of the Geneva Conference, all showing utter suspicion and absolute lack of confidence.

But, to be absolutely frank with you, I took this decision after long thinking, knowing that it constitutes a grave risk for, if God Almighty has made it my fate to assume the responsibility on behalf of the Egyptian People and to share in the fate-determining responsibility of the Arab Nation and the Palestinian People, the main duty dictated by this responsibility is to exhaust all and every means in a bid to save my Egyptian Arab People and the entire Arab Nation the horrors of new, shocking and destructive wars, the dimensions of which are foreseen by no other than God himself.

After long thinking, I was convinced that the obligation of responsibility before God, and before the people, make it incumbent on me that I should go to the farthest corner of the world, even to Jerusalem, to address Members of the Knesset, the representatives of the People of Israel, and acquaint them with all the facts surging in me. Then, I would leave you to decide for yourselves. Following this, may God Almighty determine our fate...

If I said that I wanted to save all the Arab People the horrors of shocking and destructive wars, I most sincerely declare before you that I have the same feelings and bear the same responsibility towards all and every man on earth, and certainly towards the Israeli People.

Any life lost in war is a human life, irrespective of its being that of an Israeli or an Arab. A wife who becomes a widow is a human being entitled to a happy family life, whether she be an Arab or an Israeli. Innocent children who are deprived of the care and compassion of their parents are ours, be they living on Arab or Israeli land. They command our top responsibility to afford them a comfortable life today and tomorrow.

For the sake of them all, for the safeguard of the lives of all our sons and brothers, for affording our communities the opportunity to work for the progress and happiness of man and his right to a dignified life, for our responsibilities before the generations to come, for a smile on the face of every child born on our land—for all that, I have taken my decision to come to you, despite all hazards, to deliver my address.

I have shouldered the prerequisites of the historical responsibility and, therefore, I declared—on 4 February 1971, to be precise—that I was willing to sign a peace agreement with Israel. This was the first declaration made by a responsible Arab official since the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Motivated by all these factors dictated by the responsibilities of leadership, I called, on 16 October 1973, before the Egyptian People's Assembly, for an international conference to establish permanent peace based on justice. I was not in the position of he who was pleading for peace or asking for a ceasefire.

Motivated by all these factors dictated by duties of history and leadership, we signed the first disengagement agreement, followed by the second disengagement agreement in Sinai. Then we proceeded trying both open and closed doors in a bid to find a certain path leading to a durable and just peace. We opened our hearts to the peoples of the entire world to make them understand our motivations and objectives, and to leave them actually convinced of the fact that we are advocates of justice and peacemakers.

Motivated by all these factors, I decided to come to you with an open mind and an open heart, and with a conscious determination, so that we might establish permanent peace based on justice...

In the light of these facts which I meant to place before you the way I see them, I would also wish to warn you in all sincerity; I warn you against some thoughts that could cross your minds; frankness makes it incumbent upon me to tell you the following:

First: I have not come here for a separate agreement between Egypt and Israel. This is not part of the policy of Egypt. The problem is not that of Egypt and Israel. Any separate peace between Egypt and Israel, or between any Arab confrontation State and Israel, will not bring permanent peace based on justice in the entire region. Rather, even if peace between all the confrontation States and Israel were achieved, in the absence of a just solution to the Palestinian problem, never will there be that durable and just peace upon which the entire world insists today.

Second: I have not come to you to seek a partial peace, namely, to terminate the state of belligerency at this stage, and put off the entire problem to a subsequent stage. This is not the radical solution that would steer us to permanent peace.

Equally, I have not come to you for a third disengagement agreement in Sinai, or in the Golan and the West Bank. For this would mean that we are merely delaying the ignition of the fuse; it would mean that we are lacking the courage to confront peace, that we are too weak to shoulder the burdens and responsibilities of a durable peace based on justice.

I have come to you so that together we might build a durable peace based on justice, to avoid the shedding of one single drop of blood from an Arab or an Israeli. It is for this reason that I have proclaimed my readiness to go to the farthest corner of the world.

Here, I would go back to the answer to the big question: how can we achieve a durable peace based on justice?

In my opinion, and I declare it to the whole world from this forum, the answer is neither difficult nor impossible, despite long years of feud, blood vengeance, spite and hatred, and breeding generations on concepts of total rift and deep-rooted animosity. The answer is not difficult, nor is it impossible, if we sincerely and faithfully follow a straight line.

You want to live with us in this part of the world. In all sincerity, I tell you, we welcome you among us, with full security and safety. This, in itself, is a tremendous turning point; one of the landmarks of a decisive historical change.

We used to reject you. We had our reasons and our claims, yes. We used to brand you as “so-called” Israel, yes. We were together in international conferences and organizations and our representatives did not, and still do not, exchange greetings, yes. This has happened and is still happening.

It is also true that we used to set, as a precondition for any negotiations with you, a mediator who would meet separately with each party. Through this procedure, the talks of the first and second disengagement agreements took place.

Our delegates met in the first Geneva Conference without exchanging a direct word. Yes, this has happened.

Yet, today I tell you, and declare it to the whole world, that we accept to live with you in permanent peace based on justice. We do not want to encircle you or be encircled ourselves by destructive missiles ready for launching, nor by the shells of grudges and hatred. I have announced on more than one occasion that Israel has become a *fait accompli*, recognized by the world, and that the two superpowers have undertaken the responsibility of its security and the defense of its existence.

As we really and truly seek peace, we really and truly welcome you to live among us in peace and security...

Allow me to address my call from this rostrum to the People of Israel. I address myself with true and sincere words to every man, woman, and child in Israel.

From the Egyptian People who bless this sacred mission of peace, I convey to you the message of peace, the message of the Egyptian People who do not know fanaticism, and whose sons, Muslims, Christians, and Jews, live together in a spirit of cordiality, love, and tolerance. This is Egypt whose people have entrusted me with that sacred message, the message of security, safety, and peace. To every man, woman, and child in Israel, I say: encourage your leadership to struggle

for peace. Let all endeavors be channeled towards building a huge edifice for peace, instead of strongholds and hideouts defended by destructive rockets. Introduce to the entire world the image of the new man in this area, so that he might set an example to the man of our age, the man of peace everywhere.

Be the heralds to your sons. Tell them that past wars were the last of wars and the end of sorrows. Tell them that we are in for a new beginning to a new life—the life of love, prosperity, freedom, and peace.

You, bewailing mother; you, widowed wife; you, the son who lost a brother or a father; you, all victims of wars—fill the earth and space with recitals of peace. Fill bosoms and hearts with the aspirations of peace. Turn the song into a reality that blossoms and lives. Make hope a code of conduct and endeavor. The will of peoples is part of the will of God...

And I have chosen this difficult road which is considered, in the opinion of many, the most difficult road. I have chosen to come to you with an open heart and an open mind. I have chosen to give this great impetus to all international efforts exerted for peace. I have chosen to present to you, and in your own home, the realities devoid of any schemes or whims, not to maneuver or to win a round, but for us to win together, the most dangerous of rounds and battles in modern history—the battle of permanent peace based on justice.

It is not my battle alone, nor is it the battle of the leadership in Israel alone. It is the battle of all and every citizen in all our territories whose right it is to live in peace. It is the commitment of conscience and responsibility in the hearts of millions.

When I put forward this initiative, many asked what is it that I conceived as possible to achieve during this visit, and what my expectations were. And, as I answered the questioners, I announce before you that I have not thought of carrying out this initiative from the concept of what could be achieved during this visit, but I have come here to deliver a message. I have delivered the message, and may God be my witness.

I repeat with Zechariah, “Love right and justice.”¹³

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

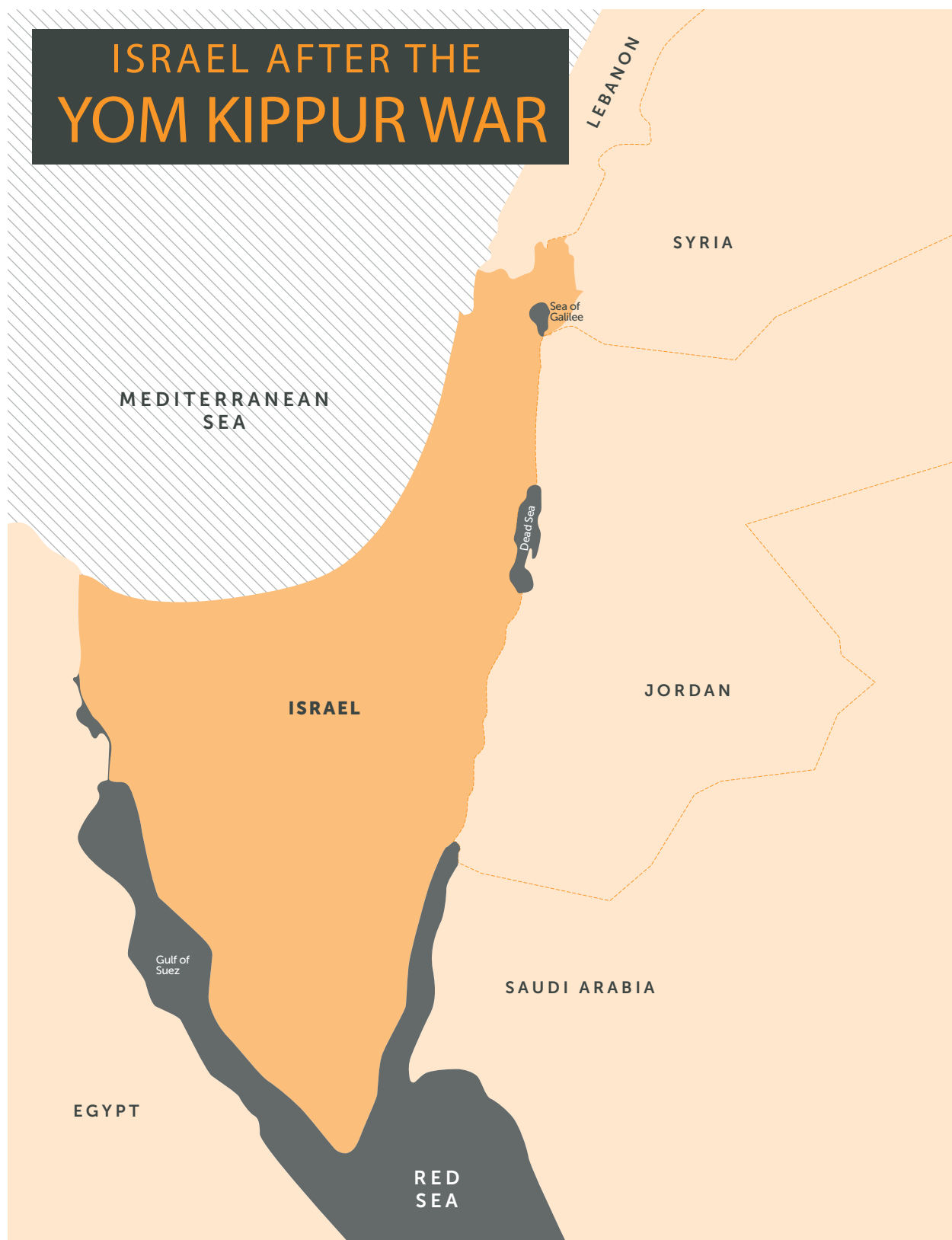
CUFI Micro-History Video: Yom Kippur War.

CUFI Micro-History Video: Camp David Accords.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

¹³ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “73 Statement to the Knesset by President Sadat—20 November 1977,” MFA, November 20, 1977.

ISRAEL AFTER THE YOM KIPPUR WAR



- LESSON FIFTEEN -

New Conflict

LESSON FIFTEEN:

New Conflict

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain the implications of the PLO's rise in Lebanon
- Discuss Israel's invasions of Lebanon in 1978 and 1982
- Summarize Hezbollah's rise in the region

Before You Begin:

- As you read about some of the threats Israel has faced, and still faces, pray for a deeper commitment to Paul's exhortation in Romans: "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9, NKJV).

In our last lesson, we learned about the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the risks and challenges it brought to the State of Israel. We also learned about Egyptian President Sadat's unprecedented visit to Jerusalem and the resulting landmark peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, the first such agreement between an Arab country and the modern Jewish state. Now, we're going to look at another defining conflict for the State of Israel: the Lebanon War. This war, complicated by Palestinian terrorists and the shifting sands of Middle East politics, would prove to be a watershed moment for the Israeli populace in many ways.

PART I: The First Lebanon War

In order to have a basic overview of the conflict, watch this short video:

Play: "CUFI's Micro History 1982 First Lebanon War" cufi.org/learnisrael.

1982-1985

During the 1970s and 80s, the violent terrorist group known as the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), led by Yasser Arafat, used their position within the villages of southern Lebanon to launch multiple deadly attacks on Israel's northern towns. After several years, Israel could no longer tolerate these endless attacks on its civilian population.

Yasser Arafat's terrorist army was growing larger and more dangerous inside Lebanon as the death toll from the PLO's terrorism steadily rose. The situation reached a crisis when a Palestinian terrorist cell tried to assassinate Israel's Ambassador to Great Britain. On June 6, 1982, Israel sent the IDF into southern Lebanon to drive the PLO out of its hiding place and destroy the threat against Israeli citizens in *Operation Peace for Galilee*.

American officials supported Israel's war against the PLO in Lebanon. President Ronald Reagan publicly supported Israel's right to defend its citizens from the intolerable threat of ongoing terrorism that violated Israel's sovereignty.

The war was difficult. The Palestinian terrorists were deeply entrenched in southern Lebanon's villages, and just like today, the terrorists hid behind civilian human shields. For three years, Israel was forced to keep the IDF in Lebanon to prevent the PLO from regaining control of the area along Israel's northern border. Ultimately, Israel lost 1,216 soldiers in Lebanon before withdrawing in 1985 and leaving behind a small buffer force to maintain order along the border. Israel did not fully withdraw from southern Lebanon until May 24, 2000.



- What was the Palestinian Liberation Organization doing to Israel in the 1970s and early 1980s?
- Whom did the PLO try to assassinate?
- What was Israel's response?
- What is the official Israeli name of the first Lebanon War?
- Why was the war so challenging?
- What did Israel's defeat of the PLO in Lebanon accomplish?

To explore the Lebanon War from a different perspective, we're going to read a short essay by an Israeli soldier who fought as part of *Operation Peace for the Galilee*.

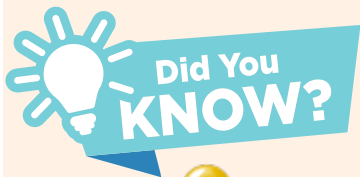
ACTIVITY ONE: Paired Discussion

We recommend reading the article, "My Forgotten War in Lebanon," published in Tablet Magazine (link in Additional Resources and available online) for this activity. The article is a personalized account of the author's time as a soldier in the IDF during the first Lebanon War. (You may also use a different article or resource, if you prefer.)

Read the article silently or aloud with a friend, then discuss.



- What is striking or challenging to you about this essay? Is there a particular aspect that resonates with you?
- Most Israeli teens go into the army at 18. Understanding the broad strokes of the Lebanon War, how do you think you would feel if you were a soldier in that kind of situation?



Emblem of the Israel Defense Forces.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

The IDF is one of the key institutions of Israeli society. While some exemptions are issued, most individuals will serve their country as either servicemen and women, or through a parallel community service program. The mandatory draft contributes not only to the strength and security of Israel, but also to a heightened sense of civic responsibility for the country and its citizens. The IDF's commitment to enabling as many individuals as possible to serve in its ranks is highlighted by Unit 9900, which was created to allow teens with autism to serve.

PART II: Sabra, Shatila, and Indirect Responsibility

The asymmetrical nature of the 1982 Lebanon War was challenging for the Israeli forces. Initially, the war's goal was to destroy the PLO bases in southern Lebanon that had been responsible for rocket and artillery barrages into Israel. The Israeli military quickly dispatched the PLO bases. Once Israel had control of a significant portion of Lebanon, the Israeli Minister of Defense, Ariel Sharon, and Army Chief of Staff, Rafael Eitan, permitted the Lebanese Phalangists, a Christian militia, and Israel's allies to enter two Palestinian refugee camps as part of the transfer of power back to the Lebanese.

The Phalangists were themselves at war with the Palestinian terrorist groups that had infiltrated the country; the fighting with Arafat and the Palestinians destabilized the Christian Lebanese government and its infrastructure. Further complicating the situation was Syria, which had invaded Lebanon in the late 1970s and which partnered with the Palestinians to contribute to

the instability of the Lebanese Christian government. In early September 1982, Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel was assassinated by these allied forces. The following week, the Phalangists asked permission from the Israeli military to enter the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps to search for Palestinian militants. The Phalangists massacred the Palestinian civilians in the camps, with estimates of 460–800 people killed.

While the Arab world was quiet about the deaths, the Israeli public was outraged. Four hundred thousand Israelis demonstrated in Tel Aviv against the war and the massacre. The Israeli government opened an inquiry into the events around the deaths at Sabra and Shatila; according to the report, Defense Minister Sharon was found “indirectly responsible” for the massacre. The report chastised Sharon, saying that, given the relationship between the Phalangists and the Palestinians, Sharon should have realized that there was potential for brutality. Sharon resigned, and Eitan was dismissed.

ACTIVITY TWO: Reflection

Choose one of the following prompts, then reflect on it. Write a short journal entry as a response.

- Henry Kissinger, the U.S. Secretary of State, said that the Israeli investigation into the Sabra and Shatila massacre was “a great tribute to Israeli democracy...There are very few governments in the world that one can imagine making such a public investigation of such a difficult and shameful episode.” What do you think of Kissinger’s statement? Do you agree or disagree with it? Why?
- The Phalangists actually committed the massacre against the Palestinian civilians, yet Israeli society decided that its own military had some culpability. What does this say about the Israeli people? In your opinion, was Israel right to hold its military leaders accountable? Why or why not?
- What do you think “indirect responsibility” means? Do you think that this should be a factor in making military decisions? Why or why not?
- As a Christian, what are your thoughts on the Phalangist massacre at Sabra and Shatila? How do your Christian values inform your understanding of complicated political and military situations?

The Lebanon War was a complicated conflict for Israel. In seeking to defend its civilians against terror and rockets, the Israeli military was confronted with its first asymmetrical war and found itself managing its operations in city streets, against armed militants and terrorists. Becoming embroiled in the local Lebanese conflict between the government, the Palestinians, and the Syrians, the Israeli military also became involved in the Sabra and Shatila massacre. Israeli society’s outrage highlighted the populace’s strong moral center, and their focus on holding

their army to a high standard. Due to Israel's victory, the PLO was weakened and eradicated from Lebanon, paving the way for the Oslo Accords several years later.

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

OPTION #1: Israeli military service is a core value in modern Israeli society with young people putting their lives on the line every day to maintain the safety and security of the Jewish state. The documentary *Beneath the Helmet: From High School to the Home Front*, produced by Imagination Productions (available for free through Amazon, Google Play, iTunes, and other streaming services) tells the story of five young Israelis who are drafted into the military at age 18. It highlights the challenges and rewards of not only military service, but larger social messages of peace, friendship, tolerance, and respect.

View the documentary and then discuss with your study buddy or family and friends. The film is available here: cufi.org/learnisrael.

OPTION #2: Read CUFI's Briefing, "Hezbollah: Party of Allah" to understand how Iran trained Hezbollah fighters leveraging Lebanese anger at Israel's presence in the country to create an army intent on destroying Israel. Then discuss with your study buddy or family and friends. The link can be found below, under Additional Resources.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CUFI Briefing: Hezbollah.

Seaman, Daniel, "My Forgotten War in Lebanon," (6 June 2017), Tablet Magazine.

"First Lebanon War: Massacres at Sabra and Shatila," Jewish Virtual Library.

"First Lebanon War: The Kahan Commission of Inquiry," Jewish Virtual Library.

"The Lebanon War, 1982," Anti-Defamation League.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON SIXTEEN -

The Peace Process and Intifadas

LESSON SIXTEEN:

The Peace Process and Intifadas

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Discuss the First and Second Intifada
- Explain the peace processes of the 1990s and early 2000s
- Articulate the special status of the settlements

Before You Begin:

- Pray to have a heart that loves both Israel and the Palestinian people—coupled with a love for truth and what is good.

We have already learned about the Lebanon War and the toll it took on Israel's military and civilian populace as Israel's first asymmetrical war. Now, let's explore Israel's struggles during the 1990s and early 2000s, including two serious conflicts, known as the *First and Second Intifadas*, as well as various attempts at peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

To recap Israel's history and provide a brief overview of what is to be discussed, consider watching the CUFI Micro History Video: *Israel's Sacrifice for Peace*, available on CUFI's website and YouTube. cufi.org/learnisrael.

Part I: 1987–1999

1987–1993 First Palestinian Intifada

A four-year period of violence and terrorism broke out in December 1987 after rumors spread in Gaza that Israel had killed four Palestinians in retaliation for an Israeli who had been stabbed to death. Huge riots soon broke out among the Palestinians, and each additional retaliatory death added fuel to the fire. In the eyes of the international community, Israel deserved all the blame and was harshly condemned for the force it used to try to quell the terrorism.



The IDF rabbinite choir singing before soldiers in Jabalia, in the Gaza Strip, during first the intifada.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Rumors and lies circulated that Israel was murdering Palestinians. The UN investigated and determined the stories were false; but the damage had already been done. The uprising continued to grow, and the IDF reported thousands of Molotov cocktail and grenade attacks along with shootings. The terrorism targeted both Israeli soldiers and civilians. Thousands of people were injured or killed over the duration of those four years. What had started as spontaneous mob violence was soon orchestrated and encouraged by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), led by Yasser Arafat.

Many of the Palestinian victims were targeted by their own people based on accusations of collaborating with Israel. The murder among their own people grew so out of control that the Palestinian leadership in the PLO began to try to put out the fire it had helped spread.

Let's Discuss IT

- How did bias against Israel and lies perpetrated by the international community contribute to the reality on the ground in Israel? What are ways to counteract these negative consequences for the sake of blessing Israel?

The Madrid Conference

In 1991, the United States, together with Russia, convened an Arab-Israeli peace conference in Madrid—the first of its kind. For the first time, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and a Palestinian delegation (officially part of the Jordanian delegation) met together for negotiations. Over the course of 18 months, a series of bilateral negotiations took place between Israel and Syria, Israel and Lebanon, and Israel and the Palestinian delegation. While symbolically significant, very few practical outcomes resulted from the conference. These negotiations fizzled out when Israel and the PLO reached an agreement in 1993.

1993–1995 Oslo Accords I and II

The world had high hopes for a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict when President Clinton brought Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to the negotiating table in Oslo in September 1993.

Beginning in 1992, a team of Israelis and a team of Palestinians met secretly in Oslo, Norway, for nearly a year to discuss a peace agreement. In 1993, the two sides went public in a historic announcement now known as The Oslo Accords. The goal was not to provide a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian



Israel's Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin with President Clinton, and Yasser Arafat during the signing of the Oslo I Accord in 1993.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

conflict, but to take steps toward establishing trust between the two sides. On September 13, 1993, Prime Minister Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat signed the agreement on the lawn of the White House with President Bill Clinton present.

Israel agreed to recognize the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which had been founded in 1964 and terrorized Israelis with violent attacks for nearly 30 years—as the official representative of the Palestinian people. The signing of The Oslo Accords committed the Palestinians to recognizing Israel’s right to exist in peace and security and laid out a plan for continued negotiations and some Palestinian autonomy.

The agreement was meant to establish trust between Israel and the PLO in hopes that it would translate into peace on the ground – but that did not occur.



42nd President of the United States, Bill Clinton.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

“There have been a lot of positive things, and I think it’s worth remembering that there have been positive developments along the way. But this is heartbreaking, what we’ve been through these last few months, for all of you who have believed for eight years in the Oslo process; all of you whose hearts soared on September 19, 1993, when Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin signed that agreement.

“For over three months we have lived through a tragic cycle of violence that has cost hundreds of lives. It has shattered the confidence in the peace process. It has raised questions in some people’s minds about whether Palestinians and Israelis could ever really live and work together, support each other’s peace and prosperity and security. It’s been a heartbreaking time for me, too. But we have done our best to work with the parties to restore calm, to end the bloodshed and to get back to working on an agreement to address the underlying causes that continuously erupt in conflicts...

“Now, what are we going to do now? The first priority, obviously, has got to be to drastically reduce the current cycle of violence. But beyond that, on the Palestinian side, there must be an end to the culture of violence and the culture of incitement that, since Oslo, has not gone unchecked. Young children still are being educated to believe in confrontation with Israel, and multiple militia-like groups carry and use weapons with impunity.

“Voices of reason in that kind of environment will be drowned out too often by voices of revenge.

“Such conduct is inconsistent with the Palestinian leadership’s commitment to Oslo’s nonviolent path to peace and its persistence sends the wrong message to the Israeli people and makes it much more difficult for them to support their leaders in making the compromises necessary to get a lasting agreement.”

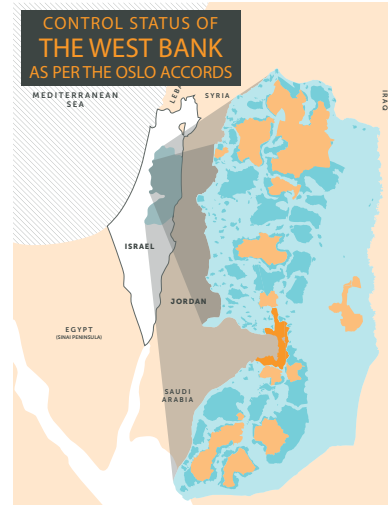
- President Bill Clinton¹⁴

In the weeks following the Oslo I Accord, Palestinian terror attacks against Israelis increased, mostly carried out by Hamas. The surge of violence in 1994 and 1995, with eight separate bombing attacks culminating in the deaths of 77 people across the country, made many Israelis skeptical about the peace agreement. Nonetheless, Israel continued to pursue peace.

On September 28, 1995, the Oslo II Accord was released. It delineated Israel’s withdrawal from major Palestinian population centers, what areas would share joint-cooperation between Israel and the newly-established Palestinian Authority (PA), and what the PA’s responsibilities would be to their people. Israel upheld its end of the agreement and withdrew from all the cities agreed upon. By 1996, the Palestinian Authority was governing 95% of Palestinians.

Tragically, on November 4, 1995, as he was leaving a peace rally in support of the Oslo Accords, Prime Minister Rabin was assassinated by an Israeli, Yigal Amir, who fiercely opposed the Oslo Accords. Following the assassination, Amir was sentenced to life in prison.

In the years after the Oslo Accords, the PA demonstrated that it would not be the partner for peace that Israel hoped. Just one month after the PA held its first ever democratic election on



Control status of the West Bank as per the Oslo Accords.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on June 6, 1993.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



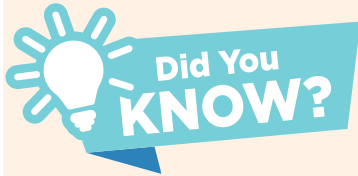
Wreaths on Prime Minister Rabin’s memorial site.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

¹⁴ Transcript of Clinton’s remarks to the Israel Policy Forum gala (8 January 2001), clintonwhitehouse6.archives.gov/2001/01/2001-01-07-remarks-by-the-president-at-the-israel-forum-gala-dinner.html.

January 20, 1996, Hamas suicide bombers carried out four deadly attacks in a span of two weeks in which 63 Israelis were killed and hundreds more were wounded. These acts of terror were not denounced by the PA; rather, the PA applauded terror and continues to incite violence to this day.

The vision of peace hoped for by Yitzhak Rabin and President Clinton during the Oslo negotiations failed to materialize, and the Palestinian Authority has failed to live up to its promises to renounce violence and terrorism against Israel.



The Palestinian Authority has not held parliamentary elections since 2006, and presidential elections have not been held since 2005. In November 2019, PA President Mahmoud Abbas announced that elections would be held in early 2020. Elections have been indefinitely postponed since April 29, 2021. At the time of this writing, the elections have still not been held.

Part II: 2000–2005

2000 Camp David Summit

In July 2000, President Bill Clinton invited Prime Minister Ehud Barak and PA Chairman Yasser Arafat back to the negotiating table at Camp David to negotiate a final peace plan in accordance with the 1993 Oslo Accords. After 13 days at the summit, no agreement was reached. In December 2000, the parties met again at the White House to negotiate. Again, no agreement was reached.



Left to Right: Prime Minister Ehud Barak, President Bill Clinton, and PA Chairman Yasser Arafat at Camp David.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

At the initial summit in July, the Israelis and the Americans suggested ideas for compromise surrounding Jerusalem, land for peace, and the borders of a Palestinian state. Ambassador Dennis Ross reported that Arafat rejected every suggestion while putting forward none of his own.

After the failure of the first summit, Arafat requested another meeting. The Israelis generously **offered the Palestinians 97% of the West Bank, a capital in East Jerusalem, full control of the Gaza Strip, and the right of return for Palestinians to the new Palestinian state.** But Arafat rejected the incredible offer and made no counteroffer of his own.

THE FIVE TIMES ISRAEL HAS OFFERED PEACE ...AND IT WAS REJECTED

1

1937—PEEL COMMISSION

- Proposal to divide the land into two states
- 20% for Jews
- 80% for Arabs
- Jews voted yes
- Arabs rejected

2

1947—UNITED NATIONS PARTITION PLAN

- Voted to divide land into two states
- Jews accepted
- Multiple Arab armies attack, Israel wins the War of Independence
- Israel is established in 1948

3

1967

- Land won in The Six-Day War offered to Egypt and Syria for peace
- Arab leaders said no
- A conference of Arab leaders in Khartoum, Sudan decides:
NO peace with Israel
NO recognition of Israel
NO negotiation

4

2000—CAMP DAVID

- Prime Minister Ehud Barak and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat
- Offered a Palestinian State in Gaza, over 90% of the West Bank, capital in East Jerusalem, right of return to the Palestinian State, \$30 billion international assistance fund
- Second Intifada is launched, and over 1,000 Israelis are killed

5

2008

- Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offers generous deal
- Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said no
- Abbas made no counteroffer

Let's Discuss IT

- What does the Palestinian leadership's rejection of multiple offers for a state of their own reveal? How has this affected the peace process?

2000–2005 Second Palestinian Intifada and the Security Barrier

This second intifada was more deadly than the first. Suicide bombings became a regular occurrence in Israel. No one was safe from terrorists, not even innocent Arab bystanders. Over 1,000 Israelis were murdered in terrorist attacks during this period.

In one deadly episode, two IDF soldiers accidentally entered the Palestinian town of Ramallah, where they were arrested by Palestinian police and attacked by an angry mob that stormed the Palestinian police station in Ramallah. On October 12, 2000, First Corporal Yosef Avrahami and First Sergeant Vadim Norzhich—both 33-year-old reservists—were severely beaten, mutilated, and ultimately lynched.

As a response to Palestinian terrorism, the Israeli government made the decision to erect a security barrier to protect all Israeli citizens—Jewish and non-Jewish alike—from the violence.

The security barrier was built largely along the Green Line and natural landscapes that were conducive to security. The security barrier is 440 miles long. Ninety-five percent of it is made of a multi-fence system, which incorporates ditches, barbed wire, patrol roads, and observation systems.

There is also a smooth strip of sand to keep track of intrusions. While the barrier was being built, it was rerouted several times due to Israeli court rulings that it might infringe on Palestinian rights. Thus, it was built to cause the **LEAST** inconvenience to Palestinians.



Israeli Security Barrier in the West Bank.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Col. (res.) Dr. Danny Tirza
Photo credit: CUFI

DANNY: Col. (res.) Dr. Danny Tirza is the former head of the Strategic Planning Unit of the Judea and Samaria Division, IDF Central Command (1994–2009). He was a senior security adviser and negotiator in diplomatic talks with the Palestinian leadership, and he was the chief person responsible for plotting out the path of the security barrier. He has served as an adviser to prime ministers, the president of Israel, defense ministers, the National Security Council, the Counter-Terrorism Bureau, the IDF Planning Branch, and senior IDF commanders. He currently serves as chairman of the Local Council of Kfar Adumim, in close proximity to the Mishor Adumim industrial zone. Many CUFI tours of students, pastors, and millennial influencers have had the opportunity of meeting with Dr. Tirza and receiving a tour and overview of the security barrier.

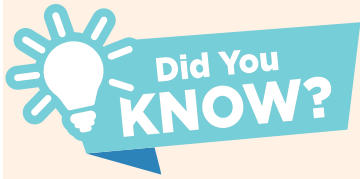
Of course, there are some inconveniences. Israelis and Palestinians living on the eastern side of the Green Line did not love the idea of the barrier. As mentioned, most of the security barrier is wired fence; in fact, 95% of it is fence. Five percent of it is a concrete wall that protects civilian homes and roads. The security barrier, along with other security routines, slows down traffic, especially in times of rush hour in the morning and afternoon.

However, it was NOT built to inconvenience, separate, or shut out anyone—except terrorists. It was built because Israel has an obligation to keep its citizens safe. The effectiveness of the security barrier is tangible. In the future, when peace is achieved, the fence can be taken down. It is reversible. What is not reversible is the murder of innocent people.

Each year the barrier was being built, the number of attacks and casualties dropped by nearly 50% year after year! The results were immediate. In 2002, the climax of the Second Intifada, there were more than 45 suicide bombings. By 2003, the very next year, that number dropped to about 23.

With the construction of the security border, the number of suicide bombings lessened significantly, and today they are far less common.

Another consequence of the Second Intifada was the establishment of checkpoints as a security measure against the daily threat of terrorism.



Tens of thousands of Palestinians cross into the Jewish state every week. Many work in Israel where they receive higher pay than in the Palestinian Authority—controlled West Bank.



Hizma Checkpoint, Jerusalem.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

A common misconception is that Israeli checkpoints are designed to punish the Palestinian people and make their transit between areas controlled by Israelis and Palestinians more difficult. In fact, Israel's military and border police follow strict codes of conduct in order to be as respectful as possible while keeping the process as efficient and smooth as can safely be allowed. IDF commanders work hard to instill in their soldiers stationed at the checkpoints that they are not to demonize or stereotype all Palestinians as terrorists and do their best to emphasize that the vast majority of Palestinians they will encounter are peaceful.

Israel also goes out of its way to be as respectful as possible to the Islamic customs of Palestinians. For example, they keep bomb-sniffing dogs as far away as possible. Israeli soldiers have been asked not to eat, smoke, or drink in front of Palestinians during the Muslim fast of Ramadan.

Unfortunately, Israel routinely discovers Palestinians attempting to smuggle weapons through checkpoints, hidden in things as seemingly innocuous as a container of potato chips. Many times, soldiers or police officers manning the checkpoints find themselves attacked with knives, rocks, or rammings by motor vehicles. Yet they are under strict instructions not to respond with lethal force unless absolutely necessary.

In recent years, Israel reduced the number of checkpoints and tried to streamline the process even more to accommodate the large numbers of Palestinians who enter Israel every day for work or medical care. On average, 70,000 Palestinians enter Israel through border crossings every week. Contrary to popular misconception, Israel is not keeping the Palestinian people trapped, and border crossings are only closed temporarily during times of heightened risk.

For most Palestinians, the process of going through a checkpoint is less invasive than it is for an average American citizen to go through airport security screening. Since the beginning of the modern concept of national borders, every country in the world has imposed restrictions and screen who is allowed in and out of their country. Israel is no different.



A settlement is a Jewish community in the West Bank (biblical Judea and Samaria). Settlements are a controversial issue in Israel as well as in the international community; however, the suggestion that they are illegal or are the main obstacle to peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unfounded. When Israel gained large new territories in the defensive Six-Day War, the Jewish state immediately offered land for peace. Yet the Arab leaders of eight countries responded by meeting together in Khartoum, Sudan, and agreeing to three resolutions: **no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel.**

Since 1967, Israeli communities—called settlements—have been established in the West Bank for a variety of reasons, including strategic, historical, and religious. Many have argued that these settlements are the greatest obstacle to peace in the region because many Jewish settlements exist on what would likely be part of a future Palestinian state. Yet, as was demonstrated when Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza in 2005, the simple removal of Israeli settlements from land that could become part of a Palestinian state has not caused the Palestinian leadership in either Gaza or the West Bank to be willing to negotiate with Israel.

Settlements can be removed. When Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula, which it had captured during The Six-Day War, all settlements were removed to achieve peace with Egypt which remains to this day. The greatest obstacle to peace between Israel and the Palestinians has been Palestinian unwillingness to negotiate with Israel and a refusal to have a state alongside a Jewish state. To understand this issue further, please refer to the Additional Resources at the end of this chapter.

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Psalm 122:6 (NKJV) says, “*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*” Write a short prayer, poem, or song that expresses your prayer asking God to work peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. Take heart that the God of peace promises to prosper those who love and bless the Jewish people (Psalm 122:6, Genesis 12:3).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Suggested Resources: The First Intifada

“The Intifada 1987–1994: The Palestinian Uprising and the Israeli Response,” Israel and Judaism Studies.

“Israel’s Wars and Operations: The First Intifada,” Jewish Virtual Library.

“The Intifada: 1987–1990,” Anti-Defamation League.

CUFI Micro-History Video: First Intifada.

Suggested Resources: The Madrid Conference

“Madrid Conference,” Anti-Defamation League.

“The Madrid Conference,” Howard Sachar; My Jewish Learning.

Suggested Resources: The Oslo Accords

“The Oslo Accords,” YNet News.

“The Oslo Accords,” Howard Sachar; My Jewish Learning.

Suggested Resources: The Settlements

“The Illegal Settlements Myth,” David M. Phillips; December 2009: Commentary Magazine.

*Please note that, while this guide is slightly dated, it provides a strong overview of the core questions surrounding Israeli settlements.

Suggested Resources: Camp David Summit (2000)

“Camp David Summit 2000,” Anti-Defamation League.

2000 Camp David Summit: Background and Overview, David Shyovitz; Jewish Virtual Library.

“Clinton to Arafat: It’s All Your Fault,” Michael Hirsh; *Newsweek*, 6/26/01.

Suggested Resources: The Second Intifada

“The Second Intifada Begins,” Ziv Hellman; My Jewish Learning.

“The Second Intifada 2000,” Anti-Defamation League.

“The Situation on the Eve of the Second Intifada (2000),” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“Al-Aqsa Intifada: Background and Overview (September 2000-September 2005),” Jewish Virtual Library.

CUFI Micro-History Video: Second Intifada.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON SEVENTEEN -

Recent Challenges

LESSON SEVENTEEN:

Recent Challenges

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain various conflicts in which Israel has engaged with Gaza
- Discuss the ongoing threat of terrorism
- Articulate your understanding of the need for peace based on the partnership

Before You Begin:

- Pray for a deepened understanding of the difficult position in which Israel finds itself in the face of numerous nations and terrorist groups that seek its destruction. Reflect on Psalm 83:2-4, NASB:

²For behold, Your enemies make an uproar,
And those who hate You have exalted themselves.

³They make shrewd plans against Your people,
And conspire together against Your treasured ones.

⁴They have said, “Come, and let’s wipe them out as a nation,
So that the name of Israel will no longer be remembered.”

We have already covered the First and Second Intifadas, the Madrid Conference, The Oslo Accords, the Israeli settlements, and the Camp David Summit. We learned about Israeli attempts at peace and the Palestinians unwillingness to cooperate. Now, we’re going to learn about some of the key events and conflicts in Israel from 2004 to the present day.

PART I: 2005-2023

2005-2006 Gaza Disengagement

In June 2004, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced plans to unilaterally disengage from Gaza. Gaza was a territory that Israel had won during

The Six-Day War in 1967. Israel hoped that withdrawing from Gaza would be an important step toward lasting peace with the Palestinians.

In 2005, Israel left Gaza, uprooting 1,700 families and 21 Jewish communities. Schools and synagogues were closed and graves and military bases relocated. Greenhouses and other structures from previous Israeli communities were left behind for Palestinians' use and benefit. Yet upon Israel's withdrawal, Palestinians instead entered these previously Israeli-owned buildings and destroyed them, along with several synagogues.

Following Israel's withdrawal, the Palestinian Authority failed to transition smoothly into full control of Gaza. This leadership vacuum led to the terrorist group Hamas's rise to power. To this day, Hamas diverts humanitarian resources away from the people in Gaza to buy weapons and dig tunnels for their war against Israel. Since 2005, approximately 20,000 rockets, mortars, missiles, and incendiary IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices), including anti-tank missiles, Qassam rockets, and Grad rockets, have been launched at Israel by Gaza-based terrorist groups. In 2021 alone, over 4,000 rockets were fired at Israel.



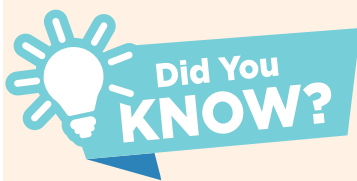
Israelis leaving the Gaza Strip through the Kissufim Crossing in the summer of 2005.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



The evacuation of the Israeli community Morag, a settlement that was part of the Gaza Disengagement, which occurred during the summer of 2005.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Entrance of public bomb shelter in Sderot, Israel

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

- Sderot is a city located in southern Israel less than a mile from Gaza. As a result, residents of Sderot have 15 seconds to reach a bomb shelter if a siren goes off, alerting residents of a rocket from Gaza.
- Since 2005, Sderot has been the target of well over 9,000 rockets.
- To date, Sderot has over 6,000 bomb shelters, and some have even called it the “bomb shelter capital of the world.” Its residents live under constant threat of rocket fire. Hundreds have been wounded from these rocket attacks, and some, including a two-year-old and two four-year-olds, have been killed.



Sheltered school in Sderot, Israel.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

- When soon-to-be President Barack Obama visited Sderot in 2007, he said that he would not allow citizens in his own country to live like those in Sderot.

2006 Lebanon War

On July 12, 2006, Hezbollah crossed the Lebanese-Israeli border and ambushed an IDF patrol. They killed eight soldiers and kidnapped two others. In the ensuing conflict, Israel bombed known Hezbollah strongholds while the terrorists launched rockets at population centers in Northern Israel. For nearly five weeks, Hezbollah launched more than 100 rockets per day into Israel. Families slept in their bomb shelters.

To make matters more complicated, the IDF faced an enemy that purposely hid among the civilian population in Lebanon. The terrorists stored their weapons in private homes and fired their rockets from neighborhoods filled with women and children. Knowing that Israel values human life, Hezbollah used the Arab people as human shields. Israel was under intense international pressure and criticism for the unavoidable civilian deaths.

The war ended with a ceasefire on August 11, 2006. Israel withdrew without destroying Hezbollah, but the IDF was able to severely cripple their operations in Lebanon. Two years later, Hezbollah released the bodies of the two kidnapped IDF soldiers.



Hezbollah at a parade in South Beirut, Lebanon, in the late 2000s.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

2008 Operation Cast Lead

After three years of sustained rocket fire from Gaza, and the ongoing uncertainty surrounding captured soldier, Gilad Shalit, Israel's people could take no more. The IDF entered Gaza on December 27, 2008. Israel's objective during the operation was to stop the smuggling of weapons into Gaza and to stop indiscriminate rocket fire into Israel.

First, Israel initiated air strikes, striking 100 targets within 220 seconds. Hamas's



IDF forces discover weapons in a mosque during Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

headquarters, terrorists' houses, rocket launcher and missile stockpiles were targeted. Approximately 140 terrorists were killed on the first day.

Hindered by Gaza's population density and the fact that Hamas terrorists hide among civilians, the IDF faced a huge challenge. Hamas launched many of its rockets from schools, mosques, hospitals, and buildings owned by the United Nations. When Israel retaliated, the international media focused on stories about Israel bombing schools instead of blaming the terrorists for using human shields.

To save as many innocent lives as possible, Israel voluntarily gave up the strategic advantage of surprise. The IDF sent voicemail messages in Arabic to thousands of Gazan residents before sending in airstrikes. This gave civilians time to evacuate, but also warned the terrorists to escape. Twenty-two days later, Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire. Rockets continue to be launched into Israel by Hamas to this day.

2012 Operation Pillar of Defense

On November 14, 2012, Israel launched Operation Pillar of Defense in response to a barrage of more than 150 rockets fired into Israel by terrorist organizations in Gaza in one day. Israel's main goal for the operation was to decrease the number of rocket attacks on Israeli civilians.

The operation began with the elimination of the head of Hamas's military branch in Gaza, Ahmed Jabari. During the eight days that the operation lasted, Israel targeted more than 1,500 terrorist sites, including major Hamas command headquarters, control rooms, and bases.

Meanwhile, terrorist groups fired more than 1,500 rockets into Israel, **reaching into Tel Aviv and Jerusalem for the first time**. Six Israeli civilians were killed, and more than 200 others were wounded from these rockets. Many more civilians had to be treated for anxiety, PTSD, and shock following the attacks. Hours before a ceasefire an Arab-Israeli detonated a bus bomb wounding 28.

Nonetheless, Israel managed to significantly damage the launching capabilities and missile arsenals of terrorist organizations in Gaza. A ceasefire was reached eight days later, after days of negotiations.

2014 Operation Protective Edge

For eight years, Israelis along the border with Gaza had endured daily rocket fire from Hamas. But in the summer of 2014, while Israel was searching for three kidnapped teenagers, the rocket attacks suddenly escalated. For weeks, Israel's government sought to negotiate a ceasefire with Hamas without success. Then



Israeli teenagers Eyal Yifrach (age 19), Gilad Shaar (age 16), and Naftali Fraenkel (age 16), kidnapped and killed in 2014.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

on July 7th, Hamas fired over 100 rockets into Israeli neighborhoods in one day. This situation had become untenable. Israel had to act.

The next day, Israel responded with a ground invasion of Gaza. Sending in soldiers to fight in the cramped streets and booby trapped buildings of the Gaza Strip was not an easy decision. It put Israeli soldiers in extreme danger, but it also minimized the chances of accidental civilian casualties.

As Israel entered Gaza, they discovered an even more dangerous threat. Hamas had secretly built a network of underground tunnels beneath the border with Israel. The terrorists intended to use these tunnels to infiltrate Israel's towns and kidnap and murder Israeli citizens. Several times during the war, Hamas sent groups of terrorists into Israel through these tunnels, sometimes disguised in IDF uniforms. Thankfully, none of their planned massacres succeeded, but the discovery of this new threat alarmed Israel. The tunnels had to be destroyed.



Tombs of three Israeli teenagers.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Hamas finally accepted a ceasefire agreement. Israel had successfully destroyed the tunnels beneath the border and dealt a crippling blow to the terrorist infrastructure in Gaza. Israel's actions during the war were exonerated and praised by an independent assessment of NATO's military leaders, who stated in their 2015 report that the IDF had conducted itself by the highest possible moral standards.

Great March of Return

In March 2018, Hamas declared the Great March of Return demanding that "Palestinian refugees" must be allowed to return to lands they were displaced from during Israel's fight for survival in 1948. From March 2018 to December 2019, protesters gathered consistently on the Gaza-Israel border, rioting, and engaging in acts of violence and destruction against Israel. Hamas leaders shamefully put civilians in harm's way by hiding among them and carrying out various terror attacks against the IDF border patrol.

Moreover, various incendiary devices, concocted mainly using balloons, some even disguised as toys for children, have been launched into Israel since 2018—causing millions of dollars in damage to southern Israel's agriculture and infrastructure.

In November 2019, the PIJ (Palestine Islamic Jihad) launched close to 400 rockets into Israel over the course of three days, wounding over 50 Israeli civilians. The attack was sparked by the Israeli military eliminating the terrorist leader in a surgical strike conducted by the Israeli Air Force—having previously obtained credible intelligence on the whereabouts of PIJ commander Baha Abu al-Ata.

Abu al-Ata was responsible for the vast majority of PIJ terror activity emanating from the Gaza Strip. He was directly connected to numerous rocket, sniper, and drone attacks, the sole aim of which was the murder of innocent Israelis. According to the IDF, Abu al-Ata was in the latter stages of preparing terror attacks designed to murder a large number of civilians. With this looming threat and actionable intelligence, Israel acted in defense of its citizens launching a justified and necessary operation to remove the direct threat to its safety and security while minimizing civilian casualties.

Operation Guardian of the Walls

On May 10, 2021, Israel was attacked by a barrage of thousands of rockets fired at Israeli civilians by Palestinian terrorists in Gaza. As a result of Hamas's relentless attacks, Israel was forced to engage in a significant military campaign called "Operation Guardian of the Walls" to defend her citizens as they raced to bomb shelters amidst the hail of rockets and the near-constant shriek of air-raid sirens.

After Israel destroyed huge chunks of Hamas's terrorist infrastructure, a ceasefire was reached. During the conflict, over 4,300 rockets were fired at the Jewish state; of these, several hundred misfired and landed in Gaza. As a result, 13 innocent Israelis lost their lives, including an IDF soldier and a five-year-old boy. Hundreds more, Israeli and Palestinian alike, were wounded in the attacks at the hands of Hamas terrorists.

Operation Shield and Arrow

On May 2, 2023, early in the morning, Palestinian Islamic Jihad launched over 21 rockets from Gaza toward Israel; this would be followed by more later in the day with more sirens sounding in southern Israel and continuing late into the night and the next day.

On May 9, 2023, the IDF was forced to act, targeting three senior Islamic Jihad operatives responsible for launching rockets toward Israel and were in the process of planning future terrorist attacks against Israelis. This strike marked the beginning of Operation "Shield and Arrow."

During the five-day operation, 1,469 rockets were fired from Gaza toward Israel, with 1,139 rockets crossing into Israeli territory. Two hundred ninety-one of those rockets misfired and landed in Gaza, and the Iron Dome intercepted 437 rockets.

By the end of the fighting on May 13, 2023, one Israeli woman and one Gazan working in Israel were killed. Additionally, nine Israeli civilians and one Gazan working in Israel were injured.

PART II: Fast Forward to Today

In 2023, Israel saw a significant uptick in violence from Judea and Samaria. By June, over 20 Israelis had been murdered in terror attacks. This escalation in terrorism led to the Israeli military conducting a significant operation in Jenin. The goal of the operation, named “Operation Home and Garden,” was to target terrorists using the area as a hub to train, finance, and plan attacks against Israeli targets.

Israel continues to suffer constant threats of terror from Hamas and PIJ in Gaza and a growing terror threat in Judea and Samaria. The situation between the terror groups and Israel has been described as a “ticking time bomb” that could explode into a full-fledged war at any moment. It is only a matter of time before Israel cannot tolerate this devastation much longer, so long as terrorist groups continue in their vendetta to destroy Israel and its citizens even while putting their own people—the Palestinian people—in jeopardy.



- What was Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s reasoning for disengaging from Gaza in 2005? In light of all you have learned, in your opinion, did this help or hurt Israel? Did it help or hurt Hamas? Why?

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

One of the central figures in Israel in the early 2000s was Ariel Sharon, a former Israeli Prime Minister. One of his most controversial decisions as Prime Minister was the unilateral withdrawal of Israeli communities from Gaza in 2005. Review the suggested articles below. Journal a short reflection piece discussing your understanding of Sharon’s leadership and legacy. If you prefer to do your own research using different articles or resources, you may do so.

Ethan Bronner, “Ariel Sharon, Israeli Hawk Who Sought Peace on His Terms, Dies at 85” (11 January 2014), *The New York Times*.

Glenn Frankel, “Ariel Sharon Dies at 85” (11 January 2014), *The Washington Post*.

Michael Widlanski, “Ariel Sharon: The End of the Romance (Obituary)” (11 January 2014), *The Algemeiner*.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SUGGESTED RESOURCES: ISRAEL'S DISENGAGEMENT

"Disengagement," Anti-Defamation League.

"Understanding the Gaza Disengagement," Noah M. Levine; My Jewish Learning.

CUFI Micro-History Video: Gaza Disengagement.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES: SECURITY BARRIER

"West Bank, Gaza and Lebanon Security Barriers: Background and Overview," Mitchell Bard; Jewish Virtual Library.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES: 2006 LEBANON WAR

"Second Lebanon War: Background & Overview," Jewish Virtual Library.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES: OPERATION CAST LEAD

"Operation Cast Lead (Gaza)," Anti-Defamation League.

CUFI Micro-History Video: Operation Cast Lead.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES: OPERATION PILLAR OF DEFENSE

"Operation Pillar of Defense Objectives and Implications," Michael Herzog; Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

CUFI Micro-History Video: Operation Pillar of Defense.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES: OPERATION PROTECTIVE EDGE

"Operation Protective Edge."

CUFI Micro-History Video: Operation Protective Edge.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON EIGHTEEN -

Israel Today

LESSON EIGHTEEN:

Israel Today

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Articulate what threats Israel currently faces
- Understand the importance of the U.S.-Israel relationship for the safety and security of both nations
- Express CUFI's impact on keeping Israel strong and her people safe

Before You Begin:

- Pause for a moment to remember why you began this study. What did you want to learn? What did you hope to accomplish? How did you hope this study would change you? Recommit yourself to be even more engaged in these last lessons, and know that with equipping comes empowerment for action. You will finish this study more ready than ever before to effectively defend Israel and the Jewish people!

So far, we have discussed the challenges Israel has faced in Gaza regarding terrorism at the hands of Hamas in the 21st century. Now, we will tackle other important challenges that Israel is currently facing: Palestinian human rights abuse at the hands of their own leadership, the Palestinian leadership's consistent incitement to terror, and the generational indoctrination of Palestinian children to embrace hatred of Israel, as well as terrorism funded by Iran and its proxies.

We will also discuss the U.S.-Israel relationship and how our two countries have been steadfast allies, as well as the work of Christians United for Israel, founded by Pastor John Hagee in 2006, to educate and empower millions of Christians to speak and act with one voice in support of Israel and the Jewish people.

PART I: Current Threats

The Palestinian people have suffered far too long at the hands of their own selfish leaders, who prioritizes their vendetta against Israel over the wellbeing of the Palestinian people. As pro-Israel Christians, we also desire the safety

and prosperity of the Palestinians and long for the day they will live peaceful, normal lives. Just like everyone else on earth, the Palestinians are created in the image of our loving God whose desire is to give them a better future.

Read CUFI's Fact Sheet: “The Palestinians’ Plight: Their True Oppressors” in Additional Resources.

Watch: “The Tragic Plight of Palestinians,” cufi.org/learnisrael.



- What are some core beliefs instilled in Palestinians about their identity? How does anti-Israel rhetoric play a part in the shaping of their identity today?
- What are some ways that the Palestinian leadership which claims to support Palestinians actually exploits them?



Arab journalist, Khaled Abu Toameh.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

KHALED ABU TOAMEH: Khaled is an Israeli Arab journalist, documentary filmmaker, and lecturer. Although he identifies himself as at least nominally Muslim and as a Palestinian, Khaled writes about the corruption of the Palestinian leadership and the human rights abuse of the Palestinian people by their own leaders. Khaled highlights the profound dichotomy between the freedoms as an Israeli, though he is an Arab journalist, and the Palestinian Authority’s sabotaging of their own people and stifling of their freedoms. You can read his work at The Jerusalem Post or Gatestone Institute where he is a fellow.

Incitement to Terror

The single-minded obsession with destroying Israel among Palestinian leaders has created a culture of hate and indoctrinated antisemitism that prevents peace and traps the Palestinian people in an endless cycle of poverty, oppression, anger, and terrorism. It has been said that in both

the Palestinian territories, there currently exists a “cult of martyrdom.” From a very young age, children are socialized into a group consciousness that honors “martyrs,” including human bombers. Young children are told stories of “martyrs.” Many young people wear necklaces venerating particular

“martyrs.” Posters decorate the walls of towns, and rock and music videos extol the virtues of bombers.¹⁵

This brainwashing even permeates children’s television programming, such as the weekly children’s television show which featured a Mickey Mouse-like character named Farfour, who taught Palestinian children to fight Israelis with violence. Farfour was eventually killed off by an actor portraying an Israeli official, a “terrorist,” according to Farfour. The audience was told Farfour was “martyred” and killed “by the killers of children.”¹⁶



Farfour, a character on Tomorrow’s Pioneers, a TV show produced by Hamas.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Play: “Abbas’ Children: A Culture of Hate,” bit.ly/CultureOfHate.

This “Saturday Morning Indoctrination” was funded and officially sanctioned by both Hamas and the Palestinian Authority’s ruling party, Fatah. With children as young as two years old being brainwashed with images of terrorists as heroes, taught to hate Jews, and trained in actual tactics for murder, the Palestinian leaders of today are doing everything possible to ensure the conflict continues for generations—including paying terrorists and their families to kill Israelis.



President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Lion’s Den

This incitement to terror has had significant and direct strategic implications for Israel’s efforts to defend her citizens. For example, in August 2022, a new armed terror group emerged from the Palestinian city of Nablus following the death of notorious terrorist Ibrahim al-Nabulsi in a firefight with Israeli forces. Nabulsi was nicknamed The Lion of Nablus, and the group derives its name, Lion’s Den, from this nickname.

Since its establishment, it has regularly engaged in armed clashes with Israeli security forces and shootings against Israeli soldiers and civilians. Its membership is believed to be drawn from those Palestinian terror

¹⁵ Speckhard, Anne (2005). “Understanding Suicide Terrorism: Countering Human Bombs and Their Senders.” In Jason S. Purcell; Joshua D. Weintraub. “Topics in Terrorism: Toward a Transatlantic Consensus on the Nature of the Threat.” Atlantic Council Publication, July 2005.

¹⁶ “No Way to Treat a Child,” Stand With Us, standwithus.com/booklets/NoWaytoTreatAChild/files/no-way-to-treat-a-child.pdf.

organizations traditionally opposed by Fatah, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and disaffected or younger members of Fatah.

The group has experienced a rapid rise in popularity among Palestinians in the West Bank, as it has used modern social media strategies, regularly sharing videos of its attacks on TikTok and Telegram, drawing in many young supporters. Their TikTok account was suspended in October 2022, leading the group to publish the rest of their videos to their Telegram account, which holds 238,000 subscribers as of February 24, 2023.

Israeli sources believe Adham al-Shishani, Mohammad al-Dakhil, Ashraf Mubaslat, and Ibrahim al-Nabulsi, co-founded Lion's Den. Significantly, they were all under 25 years old. They have since been killed in fighting with Israeli forces. Currently, one of the group's senior leaders is reportedly Musab Shtayyeh, who was arrested by Palestinian Authority security forces in September 2022.

Lion's Den highlights the challenges within Palestinian society. With a median age of 22, many young Palestinians have become tired of the corruption of the Palestinian Authority and are embracing a more extreme path.

Watch: "Palestinian, Israeli Explain the Holy Land conflict," cufi.org/learnisrael.

Let's Discuss IT

- What do you think about the reaction of the man whose father was murdered by a Palestinian terrorist?
- How did the Palestinian man, who referred to himself as a refugee, describe the culture in which he grew up?

Dig Deeper

One of Israel's harshest critics is the United Nations. When Israel is attacked and forced to defend itself, the United Nations is quick to condemn Israel, and almost always ignores the role of Hamas or other terrorists in the violence.



A representative summary of countries with one or no resolutions against them in the UN General Assembly (2018-2019).

Photo credit: CUFİ

Examples of anti-Israel bias at the United Nations abound. But numbers speak louder than a case-by-case presentation. For example, UN Watch reported that:

In 2022, EU member states voted for one resolution each to criticize Iran, Syria, North Korea, Myanmar, and the U.S. for its embargo on Cuba, and six resolutions on Russia's war in Ukraine. See table later in this lesson, showing resolution texts and votes. By contrast, EU states voted for about 10 resolutions on Israel.

These same EU states failed to introduce a single UNGA resolution this year on the human rights situation in China, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Turkey, Pakistan, Vietnam, Algeria, or on 175 other countries.¹⁷

Rather than address head-on the many gross human rights violators in the world at any given moment, the UN has historically and consistently chosen instead to focus on Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, and single it out for condemnation.

Terrorism

The Arab extremists, bent on destroying Israel, learned the power of terrorism during the British Mandate period. Later, terrorism was not only an effective political tool against the Jewish state by affecting its people internally; it also produced external pressure against the nation from the international community.

The desire to eradicate Israel in the 20th and 21st century fueled the rise of several Islamic extremist factions. Fundamental to each of these terrorist groups was an antisemitic interpretation of Islamic theology that left no room for acceptance of the State of Israel, the Jewish people, and consequently, the possibility for peace.

Sadly, since Israel's first days as a fledgling nation, terrorism has been, and still is, one of Israel's major challenges.



RAZ: While CUFI on Campus toured Israel in 2019, their tour guide, Raz, took them on a tour of his hometown, Netiv HaAsara. He described the experience of terror in the rocket-torn town and the extremely personal and damaging impact this reality has on its residents, including Raz's own children.

Gathering the college students around picnic tables, Raz placed two rockets the size of his 11-year-old son on top of the tables. Oftentimes, the tour guide explained, the news announces, "No damage

¹⁷ unwatch.org/2022-2023-unga-resolutions-on-israel-vs-rest-of-the-world

reported” following a rocket attack from Gaza. However, these attacks happen so often that Raz’s children can guess the size and type of missiles by their sound as they approach their home. As a result of living in this gruesome reality, his children now suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Iran

Iran’s obsession with destroying Israel began in 1979 after the violent Islamic Revolution empowered radical fundamentalists committed to dominating the Middle East. Iran’s hatred of Israel and America has been the foundation of its foreign policy ever since.

With Iran’s patronage of Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza on Israel’s southwest border, its support for Hezbollah in Lebanon along Israel’s northern border, and its military entrenchment in Syria on Israel’s northeast border, a regime that repeatedly calls for the destruction of Israel and spreads terror globally looms on three of Israel’s borders.

The U.S. State Department recognizes Iran as the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism. In the Middle East, Europe, Latin America, and even on U.S. soil, Iran’s fingerprints of terror can easily be traced. From hostage taking and kidnapping, to assassination attempts and bombings, Iran is a force for evil in the world and must be confronted with strength.

For decades, the world sought to isolate Iran and curb its terrorist activities and nuclear weapons ambitions through economic sanctions. But while President Obama was in office, world leaders decided to lift those sanctions in exchange for promises that Iran would halt its nuclear development. When the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran Deal, was signed and implemented, Iran’s aggression against Israel and America only increased. Under the Trump administration, the United States withdrew from the deal and began a “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran by imposing harsh sanctions on that regime. Iran responded with resistance, ramping up its aggression against the West and Israel, as well as its support for terror.

President Biden entered office in 2021 in a position of strength, with the opportunity to leverage that strength in negotiations with Tehran that were available to him. The Biden administration has claimed it wants a “longer and stronger” deal. Indeed, the only viable option to protect America, Israel, and the world from Iran’s tentacles of terror is to confront the tyrants of Tehran with strength, not weakness. The misguided “diplomacy first” approach has only failed in the past. Indeed, negotiation with terrorism has never proved a viable course of action leading to peace.

Iran repeatedly demonstrates that it is the preeminent force for evil in the Middle East, and any agreement with Tehran should be made in consultation with American allies, including Israel, and Arab states in the region. Moreover, any agreement with Iran must address and acknowledge Iran's rampant human rights violations of its own people and its history of global support for terror.

The State Department's 2020 Country Report on Terrorism reported:

Iran continued to support acts of terrorism regionally and globally during 2020. Regionally, Iran supported proxies and partner groups in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, including Hizballah and Hamas. Senior AQ (al-Qa'ida) leaders continued to reside in Iran and facilitate terrorist operations from there. Globally, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force remained the primary Iranian actors involved in supporting terrorist recruitment, financing, and plots across Europe, Africa, and Asia, and both Americas.¹⁸

With Iran's patronage of Hamas in Gaza, its support for Hezbollah in Lebanon, and its military entrenchment in Syria, a regime that has repeatedly called for the destruction of Israel and is the largest state sponsor of terror in the world is now on three of Israel's borders.

Hezbollah

Hezbollah is one of the deadliest terror groups in the world. They are responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Americans since the 1980s. They were founded, trained, and armed by Iran's government and are commissioned with the destruction of Israel. Based in Lebanon along Israel's northern border, Hezbollah has become the dominant political force in Lebanon and launches attacks against Israel from deep within civilian population centers. The terrorist organization has grown in size and sophistication, gaining experience in warfare through its involvement in the Syrian civil war, and is now more threatening to Israel than it has ever been.

Responsible for multiple deadly terror attacks, as early as 1983, Hezbollah—directed by Iran—carried out two suicide bombings in Beirut, striking buildings that housed both American and French service members of the MNF (Multinational



Hezbollah fighters at a ceremony.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons



Aftermath of AMIA (Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina) attack, Buenos Aires, July 18, 1994.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

¹⁸ "Country Reports on Terrorism 2020," U.S. Department of State, [state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2020](https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2020).

Force), an international peacekeeping force. Three hundred and seven people were killed in the attack, including 299 service personnel (241 American, 58 French), along with six civilians and the two suicide bombers.

At Iran's direction, Hezbollah also led an attack on the Jewish community center, Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) building in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1994, an attack which killed 85 people and injured hundreds more.



- What does it mean that Iran is the largest state sponsor of terrorism?
- What is the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah?
- How has the Palestinian leadership used terrorism as an effective tool against Israel?

Pay for Slay

The Palestinian Authority continues to offer a “Pay for Slay” pension fund program for anyone killed or captured by the IDF for terrorism that results in the murder of Israeli citizens. The life-long salary is paid to the terrorist if he or she goes to prison, or to their surviving family if the terrorist is killed. This monthly stipend far exceeds the amount of money an average Palestinian could hope to earn with a legitimate job, and thus creates a highly appealing incentive for murder.

From this culture, a dramatic increase in random, spontaneous attacks arose against Israelis by Palestinians with no formal affiliation with a known terror cell. Beginning on Rosh Hashanah in September 2015, Israel began experiencing what became known as the “Stabbing Intifada” in which average Palestinians—around 50% of them teenagers and even some pre-adolescent children—launched kamikaze attacks on nearby Israelis with whatever weapon was at hand. The Stabbing Intifada largely lasted until early 2018, but Palestinian terror, including stabbing attacks, sadly continues.

To dig deeper, consider watching CUFI’s Micro History video, “Stabbing Intifada,” available on YouTube and CUFI’s website. cufi.org/learnisrael.

One of the victims of the Stabbing Intifada was Taylor Force, a young American citizen on a study abroad trip in Israel. Taylor, who had served his country in Iraq and Afghanistan, was stabbed and killed by a Palestinian terrorist near Tel Aviv on March 8, 2016.



U.S. Army Veteran and West Point Graduate Taylor Force.
Photo credit: Everipedia

His death led to the Taylor Force Act in the United States, a piece of legislation designed to cut off the flow of American tax dollars to the Palestinian Authority until the PA stopped all payments to terrorists. This incentive to commit terror was funded by international foreign aid, and when Americans discovered their tax dollars were being used to reward terrorism, they were outraged. The Taylor Force Act was passed into law in March 2018.



Stuart Force, the father of U.S. Army Capt. Taylor Force, speaking at the Christians United for Israel Summit in July 2018, just a few months after the Taylor Force Act was passed by Senate.

Photo credit: CUFI

Play: “CUFI Action Alert generates more than 1 million emails to Congress,” cufi.org/learnisrael.



- In general, how has the Palestinian Authority contributed to the rise in spontaneous terror attacks against Israelis?
- How did Mahmoud Abbas incite Palestinians to terror before the Second Intifada?
- What is the purpose of the Taylor Force Act?

PART II: The U.S.-Israel Relationship

The U.S.-Israel relationship has been special from the beginning. From the founding of our country, when the Framers decided to build a new nation on the Judeo-Christian values of the Bible, America has been a safe haven for Jews who have been violently persecuted everywhere else in the world. American Christians were among the earliest believers in Zionism, based on their belief in the Bible as the Word of God.

Our two nations have always stood shoulder-to-shoulder against the tyrants and despots of the world, and our mutual love of freedom and equality for all men is rooted in our Judeo-Christian heritage. In the age of terrorism, our strategic partnership has been critically important for both countries. With the military aid that the U.S. provides Israel to develop its qualitative edge over its enemies, Israel then provides the U.S. with cutting-edge technology and the best foreign intelligence partnership in the world. In every instance, the terrorists who hate Israel and want to destroy the Jewish people also hate America and want to kill Christians. Israel’s enemies are our enemies, and their fight is our fight.

TIMELINE OF U.S. - ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP	
September 21, 1922	U.S. Congress passes joint resolution approving the “establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people,” the day the League of Nations approves the Mandate for Palestine.
November 29, 1947	U.S. votes for UN Resolution 181 approving the partition plan to create a Jewish state.

TIMELINE OF U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP	
May 14, 1948	President Truman is the first world leader to officially recognize the State of Israel minutes after David Ben-Gurion declared independence.
1950s	U.S. provides Israel with economic aid for food.
1960s	U.S. sells Israel advanced defensive weaponry. U.S. and Israel share military intelligence.
October 14, 1973 – November 14, 1973	President Nixon authorizes ongoing emergency airlifts of weapons to Israel during the Yom Kippur War.
March 26, 1979	President Carter facilitates the Camp David Accords in which Egypt and Israel sign a lasting peace treaty.
1981	U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Israeli Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon sign the Strategic Cooperation Agreement for national security.
1983	U.S. and Israel form a Joint Political Military Group.
1984	U.S. and Israel established annual joint military exercises, and the U.S. constructs weapons caches in Israel to support U.S. military troops in the Middle East and serve as an emergency resource for Israel.
1987	U.S. grants Israel “major non-NATO ally” status as a strategic partner.
September 13, 1993	President Clinton facilitates the Oslo I Accords between Israel and the PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.
October 26, 1994	President Clinton facilitates the signing of a lasting peace treaty between Jordan and Israel.
September 28, 1995	President Clinton facilitates the signing of the Oslo II Accords between Israel and the PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.
2003	U.S. Congress passes an aid bill for Israel's economic and military development totaling \$9 billion over eight years.
2006	President Bush's administration maintained steady military and political support for Israel during the Second Lebanon War.
2009	President Obama authorizes the sale of bunker-busting bombs to Israel.
2010	Israeli exports to the U.S. become its top foreign business relationship that year.
September 20, 2011	President Obama promises to veto any UN resolution granting unilateral recognition to a Palestinian state and reiterates support for the bilateral peace process with Israel.
2012	Again, Israeli exports to the U.S. become its top foreign business relationship that year.
2014	Congress passes the U.S.–Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014 and elevated Israel's ally-status above its previous designation.

TIMELINE OF U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP	
December 23, 2016	President Obama instructs his UN Ambassador not to veto a resolution condemning Israeli settlements in contradiction to previous U.S. foreign policy.
January 2017	President Trump appoints the strongest ever pro-Israel Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley.
April 2017	President Trump appoints a strong pro-Israel Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman.
December 6, 2017	President Trump formally announces recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and his intention to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
March 2018	Congress passes the Taylor Force Act to restrict the flow of U.S. tax dollars to the Palestinian Authority until it ceases its Pay for Slay program.
March 2018	President Trump appoints a strong pro-Israel Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo.
May 14, 2018	Ambassador Friedman presides at the official opening of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem on the 70 th anniversary of Israel's independence.
August 2018	President Trump cuts off all U.S. funding for the anti-Israel agency UNRWA.
October 2018	Congress passes the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018.
December 2018	Congress passes the Stop Using Human Shields Act to target Hezbollah and Hamas and their international financiers.
February 2019	The Israel Air Force Air Defense Division and the United States European Command hold a joint exercise, the largest-ever directorate exercise performed by the IDF in cooperation with the U.S. Military, during Juniper Falcon 2019. Juniper Falcon is a "biannual U.S.-Israel rapid deployment and contingency response exercise designed to enhance interoperability between the U.S. and Israeli militaries." ¹⁹
March 2019	Under the Trump Administration, the U.S. recognizes Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights after CUF's month-long lobbying campaign and just one week after CUF released a statement backing associated legislation.
July 2019	The IAF (Israeli Air Force) takes delivery of two additional F-35 fighter jets, reflecting the longstanding military cooperation between Israel and the United States.
October 2019	The Trump Administration intensifies sanctions against Iranian proxy and terrorist army, Hezbollah, to unprecedented levels.
November 2019	The Trump Administration revoke the Hansell Memorandum of 1978 which held civilian settlements in Israel were not legal under international law.

¹⁹ Defense Visual Information Distribution Service, "Juniper Falcon 2019," dvidshub.net/feature/juniperfalcon19.

TIMELINE OF U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

December 2019	President Trump issues an executive order adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism for the purposes of government agencies tasked with enforcing Title VI. This move, which expands upon and mirrors the antisemitism Awareness Act of 2019 fiercely supported by CUFI, will protect those among the most vulnerable in our nation: Jewish students.
January 3, 2020	General Qasem Soleimani, Iranian commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force, is assassinated in a U.S. drone strike, approved by President Trump. Terrorist Qasem Soleimani was personally responsible for the deaths of thousands, including U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.
January 28, 2020	The Trump Administration unveils a peace proposal for the Middle East, the best set forth by any American administration to date, that ensures Israel's defensible borders, a united Jerusalem, sovereignty over biblical holy sites, and provides an opportunity for the Palestinians to choose peace.
April 2020	The Never Again Education Act is passed which will provide teachers around the country with federal support in their efforts to stamp out antisemitism by teaching about its abhorrent consequences.
September 2020	Israel signs agreements (called the Abraham Accords) brokered by the U.S., with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, establishing diplomatic relations and promising the full normalization of ties between the three countries. The ceremony took place at the White House on September 14, 2020, with CUFI's leadership in attendance.

PART III: Christians United for Israel

The movement, known as Christians United for Israel, that Pastor John Hagee and his wife Diana began with only 400 ministry leaders and pastors, has grown to over 10 million members.

CUFI has cultivated a national network of dedicated activists in all 50 states, equipped with the tools and resources to respond rapidly and effectively to the many different challenges Israel faces. When thousands of Hamas rockets prompted the 2014 war in Gaza, CUFI brought a pastor from every state to Israel during Operation Protective Edge. When the foreign policy establishment opposed moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, CUFI activists sent the administration over 135,000 emails in support of the move. When Israel was under attack by terrorism subsidized with American tax dollars, CUFI rallied over one million emails to Congress to help pass the Taylor Force Act.

With Jewish students increasingly under attack on college campuses, CUFI backed bill S.852, the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act of 2019, and CUFI team members were in regular communication with key individuals and offices within the administration and allies from both sides of the political spectrum who wanted to see an executive order come to fruition—and it did in December 2019.



Pastor John & Diana Hagee
Photo credit: CUFI

In recent years, CUFI has also been engaged in state-level efforts aimed at moving three policy initiatives forward: advancing anti-BDS legislation, advancing the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, and enhancing/developing state Holocaust education standards. Thirty-six states now have anti-BDS measures in the books, and a majority of states have acknowledged the IHRA definition. CUFI's efforts to enhance Holocaust education standards began only recently, but several states have already advanced laws or enacted standards that will enhance Holocaust education in public schools.

Directly before the 2023 Washington Summit, CUFI successfully saw the Countering Hate Against Israel (CHAI) in Federal Contracting Act introduced in Congress. When passed, this legislation will see the federal government follow the lead of the vast majority of states by ensuring American taxpayer dollars are not used to subsidize the movement to boycott Israel out of existence.

Meanwhile, CUFI on Campus has been revolutionizing its efforts to curb anti-Israel movements on college campuses, and the result of our work with millennial Christian leaders through the Israel Collective Initiative has been groundbreaking.

Play: "The Story Behind the President's Executive Order," cufi.org/learnisrael.



Udi Merioz, Owner of Blue and White Art Gallery in Jerusalem.
Photo credit: CUFI

UDI: The people of Israel recognize the tangible and very real impact that CUFI is making in the halls of Congress as well as across the country as we combat indifference, battle antisemitism, and defend Israel with the truth. When hundreds of rockets soared into Israel from Gaza in late 2019, at the hands of the terrorist group Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), a CUFI friend in Jerusalem said,

"I started my day by listening to the news of rockets falling on different parts of Israel and discussed with my wife whether we explained to our children well enough what to do if a siren went off and they had to run to a bomb shelter. Then I came to the Gallery and found your letter of support and kindness. Thank you so much. Please tell all of your friends and followers that letters and support like this are sometimes better than physical bomb shelters. Any time you or your friends are in Israel please come and say hello. It will be an honor to see you and thank you in person."

- Udi from the Blue and White Art Gallery in Jerusalem.

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

Go through the Nehemiah Generation Prezi on the CUFI on Campus website (available under cufihighschool.org under presentations), then answer the following questions in a paragraph or two:

- How is Nehemiah and his passion for Israel and the Jewish people an example for Christians today?
- In what ways can you personally follow the example of Nehemiah on behalf of Israel and the Jewish people?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Prager U Video, “Why Does America Spend So Much on Israel?”

Country Reports on Terrorism, State Department

“Am I The Enemy?” Israel Collective video, available on YouTube.

CUFI’s Fact Sheet: “U.S. Aid to the Lebanese Armed Forces”

CUFI’s Fact Sheet: “The Palestinian’s Plight: Their True Oppressors”

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON NINETEEN -

The October 7 Massacre

LESSON NINETEEN:

The October 7 Massacre

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Summarize the key events of the October 7 Massacre as well as its impact on Israel and the region
- Recognize the emotional, psychological, and spiritual impact of the massacre on Israeli society, Jewish communities worldwide, and survivors
- Analyze global reactions to the massacre and evaluate them critically

Before You Begin:

- We encourage prayer before learning about the many gruesome facts surrounding the evil that befell the Israeli people. Our purpose is to provide the truth, no matter how difficult, so that you are not only equipped to defend God's Chosen but also to offer comfort as the entire Jewish nation mourns the victims of this tragedy.

As the Sabbath's early morning sun gently kissed the rolling farmland and small towns of southern Israel, the peace and tranquility were shattered by the wail of incoming rocket fire. Families suddenly awoke, believing they had seconds to grab their little ones and dive into the bomb shelter. They believed that once inside, they would be safe. They believed that Israel's hi-tech missile defense shield would intercept the rockets.

And they believed they would see the sunset.

For more than 1,200 innocent people, including more than 30 Americans, the evening's dusk never came. They were slaughtered. Men, women, and children were brutalized, raped, tortured, burned, shot, and murdered. Among them, 260 young adults were massacred at a peace festival in the countryside; and over 230 innocent people, young and old, were kidnapped and whisked away to a Hamas-built underground hellscape.

The October 7 Massacre was the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust—it changed everything.

PART I: The Attack

In this lesson, we will remember—and mourn. But we will also commit to more than just mourning. We will renew our vow that Never Again will Christians remain silent while the Jewish people are slaughtered.

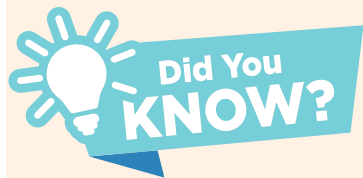
The unprecedented October 7 attack will forever mark the State of Israel and her people, but as always, Am Yisrael Chai—the people of Israel live!

Play: Kfar Aza: A Living Nightmare cufi.org/learnisrael



- What emotions did you experience when hearing the IDF officer describe what he saw at Kfar Aza?
- Why do you believe it's essential to listen to these kinds of stories, even disturbing ones?
- Imagine someone you love living in Kfar Aza. How would that alter how you view or respond to this event?

As the sun rose on the Sabbath morning over the peaceful communities and kibbutzim of southern Israel, with families celebrating the holiday of Simchat Torah, the tranquil stillness of that day was suddenly broken. That date would be remembered forever: October 7, 2023.



Simchat Torah, which means “Rejoicing in the Torah,” is the Jewish holiday that signals the end and beginning of the year’s Torah readings. During the celebration at the synagogue, the readings include finishing Deuteronomy and starting Genesis, keeping the annual Torah reading cycle ongoing. Simchat Torah is a day to celebrate and give thanks for God’s blessings, especially the gift of Torah.

Suddenly, on this holiday morning, sirens blared, warning of incoming rockets from Gaza. Sadly, this was not uncommon for the people of southern Israel. They have dealt with missiles fired from Gaza for nearly twenty years, so, as they have many times before, parents quickly gathered their children and rushed to bomb shelters. And as always, they waited, confident they would be safe with the shelters protecting them until the incoming projectiles were intercepted.



IDF soldier surveils aftermath of Nova Festival massacre.
Photo credit: BBC

Meanwhile, in Re'im in the Negev Desert, the Nova music festival that had gone on all night was interrupted by sirens. Festivalgoers scrambled to find shelter, expecting—like those in the kibbutzim—that rockets would be intercepted and their celebration would soon continue.



AMIT: On October 7, 2023, 24-year-old Amit Ganish ran for her life when she heard gunfire at the Nova Music Festival. A law school student, Amit, was getting ready to sleep when Hamas terrorists attacked at the crack of dawn. She and several others escaped into a nearby forest, where they hid for nine hours until an Israeli news crew found them. “I heard a lot of things, and I saw a lot of terrorists in my eyes,” Amit remembers. “At some point, I promised to myself that I would stay alive and I would do what I need to do.”

Today, she shares her story worldwide “I feel that I’m the voice of a lot of people. I am the voice because they can’t speak, so I will speak for them, because I survived this. I don’t know how, but God saved me.”

Source: Donlon, Joe. “Survivor of Oct. 7 attack at Nova Music Festival shares her story of survival one year later.” *CBS News*. 7 October 2024. [cbsnews.com/news/oct-7-survivor-amit-ganish/](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/oct-7-survivor-amit-ganish/)

Around 4:30 a.m., Hamas launched a massive barrage of rockets from Gaza, triggering sirens from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Reports say that in the first 20 minutes of the attack, Hamas and its allies fired up to 5,000 rockets at southern Israel, aiming to overwhelm Israeli missile defenses. This huge rocket attack served as a distraction from what was to come.

By 5 a.m., Hamas terrorists had begun infiltrating Israel by land, sea, and air. Using bulldozers, they tore down multiple sections of the security fence between Gaza and southern Israel. Once breached, thousands of heavily armed terrorists streamed into Israel on motorcycles and trucks. At the same time, other fighters made amphibious landings on Israel’s coast via motorboats. Meanwhile, even more militants infiltrated from the sky by paragliding over the border fence.

Hamas terrorists launched attacks on IDF bases near the Gaza border, overrunning them, while killing and capturing soldiers. They also disrupted security communications through cyberattacks. The assailants destroyed cellphone towers

and jammed radio frequencies, causing a near-total communications blackout in Southern Israel, which ultimately slowed the IDF's response to the attack.

No one could have predicted the horror that was to unfold in the following hours as Hamas terrorists infiltrated peaceful farms and communities. Hamas terrorists engaged in barbarity akin to the pogroms of decades past. Going from house to house, murdering families in cold blood, taking hostages, and committing horrific abuses, Hamas proudly recorded its indiscriminate murders of Israeli civilians, celebrating the heinous crimes it was committing.

Simultaneously, the Nova music and peace festival was attacked by Hamas terrorists, who massacred 260 young adults, committing the worst types of human rights abuses in the process.



Hamas terrorists paraglided from Gaza to attack Israelis.
Photo credit: Inside Edition



“Hamas’ heinous attack was part of its genocidal goal to destroy Israel and murder Jews in Israel and around the world. Since that day, 1,152 courageous Israeli soldiers and security personnel, including U.S. citizens, have fallen as Israel has fought a multi-front war of survival. May October 7, 2023, forever remind us that evil and antisemitism are not mere metaphors – but brutal realities that God and Holy Scripture enjoin us to combat with all our might.”

- Ambassador Mike Huckabee

“It was two years ago on Saturday, October 7, 2023 during Shabbat and on the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah when Iran-backed Hamas terrorists perpetrated the deadliest attack against the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Hamas shattered a peaceful morning by massacring 1200”

- Ambassador Mike Huckabee / X [@USAmblsrael]

After the initial chaos, the IDF was able to regain control, flushing out the last of the Hamas terrorists. Only then did the full picture become clear. The horror and overwhelming extent of the atrocities committed were staggering; massacres had occurred at Kibbutz Be’eri and Kibbutz Kfar Aza, with entire families wiped out, while others were taken to Gaza. Hamas showed no mercy; not even infants were spared. By the end of the day, Hamas terrorists had also murdered 260 young adults at the Nova Music and Peace Festival, committing some of the worst human rights abuses.

Play: Micro History: October 7 Denial youtube.com/watch?v=ns7O7r4-TpQ



- When referring to the October 7 attack, what does “false flag” imply?
- Why do you believe some individuals or groups choose to deny or downplay well-documented events like the October 7 massacre, despite clear evidence?

Over 1,200 innocent people, including more than 30 Americans, had been slaughtered that day. Men, women, and children were brutalized, raped, tortured, burned, shot, and murdered. Over 230 innocent people, young and old, were kidnapped and whisked away to a Hamas-built underground hellscape. October 7 would mark the worst single-day mass murder of Jews since the Holocaust.



Mourners commemorate the first anniversary of the October 7 massacre in a synagogue in Berlin, Germany.
Photo credit: New York Post

Additionally, it is the third-deadliest terror attack in recent history based on the number of fatalities²⁰. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), “The October 7 attack is the deadliest per capita terrorist attack since the Global Terrorism Database started data collection in 1970, with a rate of slightly over one person killed per every 10,000 Israelis. This metric adds context for the national impact of the attack and sense of loss for Israel. As President Biden invoked in his reaction to the attack, it is as if 40,000 to 50,000 Americans had died on 9/11.”²¹



The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.
He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me

²⁰ “Hamas’s October 7 Attack: Visualizing the Data,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, (Dec. 19, 2023): csis.org/analysis/hamass-october-7-attack-visualizing-data.

²¹ Ibid.

in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.
Surely goodness and lovingkindness will
follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
Psalm 23 (NASB95)

By 8 a.m., the Israel Defense Forces declared a state of war and called in the subsequent hours and days an unprecedented 360,000 Israeli military reservists reported for active duty. This was the most rapid mobilization in Israel's history, and at 12:30 p.m., for the first time since the Yom Kippur War, Israel declared it was at war.

In a statement, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said:

“Citizens of Israel, we are at war. This is not an operation or a round of fighting. This is a war. We will win.”

With approval from its Security Cabinet, Jerusalem launched Operation Swords of Iron to destroy Hamas and bring the hostages home.

And at the time of this writing, Israel is still fighting—against Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, the regime in Tehran, international media bias, rising antisemitism . . . and the list goes on. But every day, the Children of Israel continue to join hands and choose love over hate and compassion over revenge—even as the world demonizes and delegitimizes the Jewish state.

PART II: The World Responds

On October 7 in Times Square—as Israeli forces were still vigilantly working to secure the communities infiltrated by Hamas terrorists—a pro-Palestinian rally of over 1,000 praised Hamas, chanting, “Resistance is justified when people are occupied.”

Appalling as it was, the rally in New York was no isolated occurrence. The Crowd Counting Consortium, a project of Harvard Kennedy University and the University of Connecticut, recorded nearly 200 pro-Palestinian demonstrations in the 10 days following the October 7 attack.



Israelis line up outside of a mobile blood donation unit.
Photo credit: Magen David Adom in Israel



Pro-Palestinian protesters rally in Times Square on October 5, 2024 in New York City.
Photo credit: Stephanie Keith/Getty Images

As early as October 8, the Washington Post reported that authorities in cities all over the world—from London to Los Angeles—were tightening security in an effort to protect their Jewish communities as people gathered to celebrate Hamas’ attack. In Berlin, for example, people rejoiced over Hamas’ brutality by distributing baked goods.

Painfully obvious as it is, it must be stated: Vicious attacks on innocent civilians should be mourned, not celebrated. And as believers reflect on the events of October 7, we will undoubtedly mark those who rejoiced at the deaths of innocents as having been on the wrong side of history.

Play: Micro History: October 7 Global Reaction. cufi.org/learnisrael



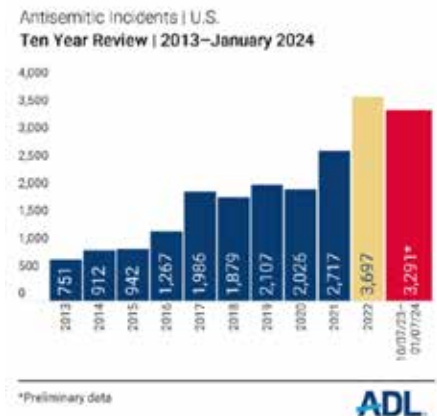
- How does it make you feel to hear that, while innocent people were being murdered, others around the world were celebrating the attack?
- What do we lose as a society when we stay silent or make excuses for terror?
- When you look back on this period in history, what kind of voice do you want to be remembered as in times of injustice or suffering?

In the months following the October 7 attack, antisemitism skyrocketed. In 2024, the UK experienced its second-worst year on record for antisemitism, and in the US, more than 10,000 antisemitic incidents were recorded by the Anti-Defamation League between October 7, 2023, and September 24, 2024.

From vandalism to verbal harassment and physical assault, Jews around the world are under constant attack—and the age-old hatred of Jews has risen to alarmingly high levels since 10/7.

The Jewish people’s response? Love. Compassion. Unwavering courage.

As news of the massacre spread, Jews around the world came together as one. Massive rallies filled streets from New York to London, while synagogues overflowed with constant prayer vigils. Communities raised hundreds of millions of dollars to aid victims, support soldiers, and care for the displaced. Volunteers flew to Israel, organized blood drives, and



In the three months since Oct. 7, ADL tracked 56 antisemitic assaults, 500 incidents on college campuses.
Photo credit: ADL



March for Israel participants stand on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. one month after the October 7 Massacre.
Photo credit: AP

sent vital supplies. Online, Jews and their allies fought disinformation and antisemitism, launching advocacy campaigns and boldly sharing the truth.

In the face of darkness, the global Jewish community stood as one—grieving yet declaring with resilient defiance: Am Yisrael Chai.

Play: How Did October 7 Change Israel? cufi.org/learnisrael



Consider the following questions and journal your responses.

- What aspect of this video touched you the most? Why?
- Why is remembering an important part of processing grief?
- How can you honor the lives of those murdered on October 7, as well as the lives of those lost fighting Hamas?

ACTIVITY

STEP 1: Consider the following quotes, headlines, images, and statistics. Next to each, write one sentence describing your heart's response—this could be a prayer, a lament, a Bible verse, or a question for God.

- "Israel brought this on itself."
- [Photo: Nova music festival devastation]
- "Why 10/7 Was Worse for Israel Than 9/11 Was for America" (Article in *The Washington Institute* by Robert Satloff)
- "Globalize the intifada."
- [Photo: Kfar Aza devastation]
- "'That people are still there haunts me in the night': Former Hamas hostage says ordeal won't truly end until everyone is home" (Article in CNN by Jeremy Diamond)
- "Resistance by any means necessary."

STEP 2: Break into groups or reflect on your own.

- What response or reaction troubled you the most? Why?
- Where do you see injustice being celebrated or ignored in our world today?
- How do you think Jesus would respond to the suffering of innocent people in a moment like this?

STEP 3: Write a letter to your future self, reflecting on this moment in history and what you hope your voice and actions will stand for.

As you write, consider: What does it mean to be “on the wrong side of history”? How do you want to be remembered when your generation faces moral crossroads?

OPTIONAL: FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

- Visit the website cufi.org/learnisrael.
- Choose one survivor testimony to watch and write about the impact it has on you—as well as how it informs your commitment to be a voice for Israel today.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

“How did Hamas’ Attack Change Israel?,” Unpacked (2024), YouTube.

“How Did October 7 Change Israel?,” Unpacked (2024), YouTube.

“October 7 Attack – Survivor Testimonies Collection,” USC Shoah Foundation (2023–2025).

“Remember. Reclaim. Rally,” CUFI, YouTube.

“A Hostage Family’s Story: Ronen and Orna Neutra, Parents of Omer Neutra,” CUFI, YouTube.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON TWENTY -

After October 7: A Nation at War

LESSON TWENTY:

After October 7 | A Nation at War

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain the aftermath of October 7, including the multi-front war in which Israel was engaged and its response to attacks from all sides.
- Describe the nature and scope of U.S. support for Israel after October 7.
- Understand the complex challenges Israel faced after October 7.

Before You Begin:

- Pray for justice for the hostages still in Gaza, victory for Israel over the evil forces against her, and a heart that is willing to enter the fight in whatever way you can.

For the first time since 1973, Israel was at war.

The aftermath of October 7 was brutal for Israel—from fighting a multi-front war to facing the world’s scrutiny during a complex and difficult conflict. The Jewish state engaged every trial head-on with decisiveness, precision, and moral clarity. As new challenges arose and pressure built, the United States backed its ally and stood with Israel against our shared enemies.

The result? One hard-won victory after another, a reminder to the world that Israel has a right to defend itself against any threat—and will do so in strength and courage.



“Had it not been the Lord who was on our side,”
Let Israel now say,
“Had it not been the Lord who was on our side
When men rose up against us,
Then they would have swallowed us alive,
When their anger was kindled against us;
Then the waters would have engulfed us,

The stream would have swept over our soul;
Then the raging waters would have swept over our soul.”
Blessed be the Lord,
Who has not given us to be torn by their teeth.
Our soul has escaped as a bird out of the snare of the trapper;
The snare is broken and we have escaped.
Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.
Psalm 124:1-8 (NASB95)

PART I: October 8 and Beyond

Following the initial chaotic hours upon hours of the Hamas invasion, the Israelis managed to vanquish the terrorists inside Israeli communities in the south.

The next day, in solidarity with the terror onslaught launched by Hamas in the south, Iranian regime proxy Hezbollah began launching rockets at Israel’s northern communities. Meanwhile, the Iranian regime-supported Ansar Allah, known colloquially as the Houthis, started to fire missiles and drones at Israel from Yemen.

In Israel’s darkest moment, it was battling multiple foes on multiple fronts.

Operation Swords of Iron

On October 8, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared war on Hamas, commencing Operation Swords of Iron. In the subsequent hours, an unprecedented 360,000 Israeli military reservists reported for active duty, marking the most rapid mobilization in Israel’s history. Meanwhile, in a signal to the Global powers that America stands with its ally, the U.S. Navy sent carrier strike groups to the eastern Mediterranean, while the U.S. Air Force deployed F-15 and F-16 fighter jets, alongside A-10 attack aircraft.

On October 13, Israel began ground operations in Gaza to return the hostages home and dismantle Hamas. Then, on October 27, the IDF launched a full-scale ground invasion.

Israeli troops fought in the urban sprawl of Gaza with Hamas using hospitals, schools, and family homes as hiding places for its terrorists, weapons, and IEDs. Every mission was replete with danger as the IDF sought to achieve operational objectives while minimizing harm to innocent Gazans, whom Hamas used as human shields.

ISRAELI OPERATIONS IN LEBANON (AS OF JANUARY 2025)



Pursuing a Gaza Ceasefire

As IDF operations in Gaza intensified, a four-day temporary ceasefire was agreed to between Israel and Hamas via Egyptian and Qatari intermediaries. The ceasefire saw more than 100 hostages were released in exchange for three times that number of terrorists set free and a multi-day pause in the Israeli offensive. During those four days, Hamas committed multiple violations, from delaying transfers, failing to provide names of those to

be released, and grotesque displays of parading hostages onstage in front of hysterically violent audiences prior to the innocents' release.

Despite international pressure to extend the ceasefire once more, Hamas resumed its rocket attacks against Israel, and fighting continued.

On February 12, 2024, the IDF heroically rescued two hostages from Hamas's captivity. And a few months later, on June 8, the IDF launched Operation Arnon, rescuing four hostages from the Nuseirat refugee camp, including Noa Argamani, whose haunting video of her kidnapping into Gaza was circulated on international media. During the operation, Israeli police officer Arnon Zamora was killed; and the operation was named in his memory. On August 27, 2024, the IDF rescued Qaid Farhan al-Qadi, an Israeli-Bedouin, from tunnels in Gaza.

Play: Helmet Cam Footage from Operation 'Arnon' cufi.org/learnisrael



- As you watch this video, what do you notice?
- How do you think you would have felt that day if you were an IDF soldier?
- How do you think you would have felt that day if you were an Israeli?

Between January 19 and February 22, 2025, 25 Israelis and five Thai nationals were released in accordance with the hostage release outline to which Israel and Hamas agreed in November 2023.

The bodies of Shiri, Ariel (4-years-old when abducted), and Kfir (10-months-old when abducted) Bibas were among those returned to Israel during this time. Among the plethora of heart-wrenching images from October 7 was that of Shiri Bibas being abducted into Gaza with her red-headed babies, Kfir and Ariel. For months, people all around the world hoped and prayed for the return of the mother and her children.

Tragically, this hope was shattered when, on February 20, 2025, Hamas purportedly returned the bodies of Shiri, Ariel, and Kfir Bibas, as well as Oded Lifshitz. Hamas paraded the caskets in another grotesque display before handing them over to the Red Cross to transfer to Israel. As Israeli forensic teams worked to positively identify the bodies, they announced the remains of the female were not Shiri Bibas nor indeed any of the hostages.



Shiri, Kfir, and Ariel Bibas before Hamas terrorists brutally kidnapped them from their home in Kibbutz Nir Oz
Photo credit: Times of Israel

Even as the bodies of the Bibas babies were returned, the family could not even mourn as, due to Hamas's sick mind games, they had no idea where Shiri was.

Shiri's body was finally returned to Israel a few days later, and Israeli forensic teams then revealed evidence that Ariel and Kfir were brutally murdered with bare hands soon after their kidnapping.

ACTIVITY: Creative Reflection: Drawing Hope

Spend time in silence honoring the memories of Shiri, Ariel, and Kfir Bibas.

Draw an image that shows hope and God's comfort for the family of Shiri, Kfir, and Ariel Bibas. How can your drawing honor their memory and reflect the belief that light can overcome even the deepest darkness?

When you're finished drawing, pray for God's blessing on the Bibas family that Shiri, Ariel, and Kfir left behind. May their memories be a blessing.



Exhibits and tributes to hostages in Tel Aviv's Hostage Square.
Photo credit: Israel Sites and Sights

In June, following a deal between the United States and Hamas, Edan Alexander — an American-Israeli citizen taken hostage on 10/7— was released after over 19 months in captivity. That same month, the bodies of several hostages — Yonatan Samerano, Ofra Kedar, and Shay Levinson (of blessed memory) — were discovered by Israeli forces.

At the time of this writing, 50 hostages—including two Americans—remain in Hamas captivity; nearly half are believed by the Israeli government to be alive.

Israel is committed to ensuring Hamas can never again engage in such evil, and the bulk of Hamas's fighters and leadership have been killed since the start of the war. Top terrorist leader Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas's Political Bureau, was assassinated in Tehran, Iran, and mastermind of the 10/7 attack Yahya Sinwar, was killed in a firefight with Israeli forces on October 16, 2024.

Yet while Israel has achieved significant military successes, all war is hell. The heart-wrenching eulogy for Shiri, Ariel, and Kfir, delivered by Yarden Bibas (Shiri's husband, who was released on February 1, 2025 as part of a hostage deal), sums up the devastating toll:

“Shiri, I love you and will always love you! Shiri, you are everything to me! You are the best wife and mother there could be. Shiri, you are my best friend.

Mishmish, who will help me make decisions now? How am I supposed to make decisions without you?

Do you remember our last decision together? In the safe room, I asked if we should ‘fight or surrender’. You said fight, so I fought. Shiri, I’m sorry I couldn’t protect you all. If only I had known what would happen, I wouldn’t have fired . . .

I want to tell you about everything that’s happening in the world and here in Israel. Shiri, everyone knows and loves us — you can’t imagine how surreal all this madness is. Shiri, people tell me they’ll always be by my side, but they’re not you. So please stay close to me and don’t go far!

I have so many more things to tell you all, but I’ll save them for when we’re alone.”

Source: “Yarden Bibas eulogizes his family: ‘I’m sorry I couldn’t protect you all... Shiri, guard me so I don’t sink into darkness,’” (26 February 2025). The Jerusalem Post.

OCTOBER 7, 2023 HAMAS-LED ATTACK ON ISRAEL

(ALL NUMBERS ARE APPROXIMATE)

1,200

BRUTALLY MURDERED ON 10/7

+

251

TAKEN
HOSTAGE



43

infants, children
& youth under 18
(25 boys & 18 girls)

1,157

Adults

183

Died in
Captivity

48

Still
Captive

ONLY

20

Believed
Still Alive

Death toll from: State of Israel Ministry of Justice Report
Hostage numbers from: The Times of Israel

The Northern Front: Israel vs. Hezbollah

Hezbollah began incessant rocket attacks on Israel on October 8, 2023, in support of the Hamas massacre the day prior. As a result of Hezbollah’s

aggression, there were tens of thousands of internally displaced Israeli refugees. Hezbollah rockets damaged property, killed civilians and soldiers, and set thousands of acres ablaze. For months, Israel responded to rocket fire with limited air strikes on Hezbollah positions in Lebanon.

In July 2024, a Hezbollah rocket hit a soccer field in the Israeli Druze town of Majdal Shams, murdering 12 children aged between 10 and 16 and injuring dozens more. The terrorists had crossed a red line, and Israel was determined to bring peace to the north.

On September 17 and 18, thousands of communication devices, primarily pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah members across Lebanon and Syria, simultaneously detonated, killing at least 40 Hezbollah terrorists and significantly injuring over 5,000. While the terror group reeled in shock, just a week and a half later, Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah, among the world's most wanted and deadly terrorists, was killed in a targeted Israeli air strike.

Play: Micro History: The Pager Operation cufi.org/learnisrael



- How does the Pager Operation show Israel's commitment to keeping its people safe?
- Can you think of any biblical principles or stories when you think of strategic wisdom being used to protect God's people?

Play: Micro History: The Rise and Demise of Hassan Nasrallah cufi.org/learnisrael



- What biblical principles can we apply when thinking about justice for those who commit acts of terror? How can we pray for peace even when justice requires hard decisions?
- The video shows celebrations in several countries after Nasrallah's death. What does this tell us about the way many communities around the world view Hezbollah and its actions?

Days later, Israeli troops entered Lebanon to push Hezbollah back from the border and dismantle its terror infrastructure. Lebanese troops retreated from the border, emphasizing this was a conflict between Hezbollah and Israel.

By the end of November 2024, Hezbollah was largely a shell of its former self. A US-brokered ceasefire was agreed to. The agreement stipulated that Hezbollah would retreat north of the Litani River, and Israeli forces would withdraw from southern Lebanon. Despite the ceasefire, tensions remain high, with Israel pointing out multiple violations by the Iranian proxy.

Syria: The Fall of the Assad Regime

In 1970, Hafez al-Assad seized control of Syria in a coup d'état. For the next 30 years he brutally repressed any dissent against his leadership. When he died in 2000, his son Bashar took power—and he was no better than his father.

Barbaric and cruel, Bashar inherited his father's hatred for the Jewish state and instituted hardline policies that set that hatred in stone.

During Syria's civil war, Russia and Iran (through its terrorist proxy Hezbollah) ensured the Assad dictatorship continued. Though Israel shares a border with Syria, the Jewish state's involvement in the war was limited to the interception of Iranian arms shipments and the treatment of wounded civilians who reached the Golan Heights.

But everything shifted when Israel routed Hezbollah at the end of 2024. Just days after Israel's surprise offensive, a coalition of opposition groups—including radical Sunni Islamist factions, some supported by Turkey—swiftly overran Assad's depleted military with little to no resistance.

In a twist of irony, Bashar became a Syrian refugee, cowardly escaping to Moscow. Meanwhile, both the United States and Israel took steps to ensure Syrian weapons wouldn't end up in the hands of terrorists by bombing weapons caches. Israel also moved troops to the buffer zone on the Syrian side of Mt. Hermon in the Golan Heights to ensure no Syrian guns were fired at Israel.

Though the takedown of Bashar al-Assad was relatively quick, rebels sympathetic to his regime (and Hezbollah) continued to attack, leaving innocents caught in the crossfire. This included Syria's Druze population near Israel's Syrian border, which was under intense pressure from radical Islamist extremists.

Just as it did through Operation Good Neighbor, Israel did its part to step in and demonstrate *tikkun olam* to the needy. Israeli forces on the border were told to defend the Druze communities should they be attacked by terrorists, and the Jewish state also allowed members of this community to enter Israel to find work.

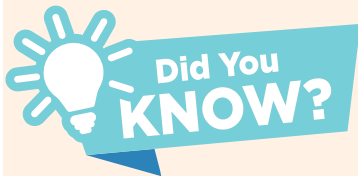
Israel vs. the Houthis: Operation Outstretched Arm

After October 7, the Houthis in Yemen, keeping in lockstep with the Iranian regime's proxy terrorist network in the Middle East, continued firing projectiles at Israel. Israel's sophisticated anti-missile systems were proficient in preventing any significant damage from these projectiles.

It was only in July 2024, after nine months of dealing with the Houthi threat, that Israel struck Houthi targets in Yemen. The operation, codenamed "Operation Outstretched Arm," aimed at weapon storage facilities used by the Houthis.

In May 2025, after a Houthi missile struck Ben Gurion Airport, Israel carried out significant airstrikes on Yemen's Hodeida port in response. During the strike, Israel also put the Houthi-controlled international airport in Sana out of commission. The strike was coordinated with the United States.

While Yemen grapples with famine, the terror regime in the country is more concerned with trying to murder Israelis.



The Houthis are a terrorist army funded, trained, and armed by Iran—an extremist Shia-Islamist movement that has aligned itself with Hamas in the war. Its flag bears the slogan: “Allah is great, death to the USA, death to Israel, curse the Jews, victory to Islam.” A powerful force in Yemen and a major player in the conflict between Hamas and Israel, the Houthis not only persecute the few remaining Jews in Yemen but other minorities, including Christians and the Baha’i community, as well. The group was designated by President Trump as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in January 2025.

Confrontation with the Islamic Republic

It's clear the regime in Tehran was no less responsible for the atrocities committed on October 7 than were the war criminals who physically committed those heinous acts. With Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was deeply entrenched in Syria, supporting the Assad regime and using the country to transfer weapons to Hezbollah, Israel struck IRGC targets in Damascus, eliminating senior Quds Force members.

Iran, in retaliation, launched over 300 projectiles—including ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones—toward Israel. This operation, dubbed Operation True Promise, was the first direct attack by Iran on Israeli territory. The majority of the projectiles were intercepted by Israel's air defenses, with assistance from the U.S., U.K., France, and Jordan. In the end, the Iranian regime's assault was a monumental failure.

On October 1, 2024, with the Islamic regime in Iran reeling at its clients' (Hamas and Hezbollah's) decimation, Tehran launched a massive ballistic missile attack at Israel, firing over 180 projectiles. Thankfully, Israel's air defense systems once again ruled the day, the one fatality being a Palestinian man killed by falling rocket debris.

The regime in Iran sought to murder millions of Israelis in its attacks, which were only prevented due to Israeli technology and bomb shelters.



The Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully, and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Deuteronomy 28:13-14 (NASB95)

On October 26, 2024, Israel launched Operation Days of Repentance, a series of airstrikes against military targets in Iran, in retaliation for Iran's ballistic missile barrage on Israel earlier that month. The result was the crippling of Iran's integrated air defense system, which left vulnerable both Tehran's prized nuclear facilities as well as sites integral to Iran's terrorist-sponsoring economy.

Israel vs. Iran: Operation Rising Lion

On June 13, 2025, as reports revealed Iran was days away from creating nuclear devices, Israel launched Operation Rising Lion. In less than a week, Israel managed to undo years of Iranian nuclear advancement.

Over the course of a few days, Israel created an air corridor to Iran, gained control over Tehran's airspace, attacked dozens of Iranian nuclear facilities, destroyed half of Iran's ballistic missile launchers, and eliminated numerous senior military officials (including the Chief of Staff, his successor, and his successor). In total, Israel hit over 1,000 targets—effectively crippling the head of the serpent in Tehran.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic responded by targeting innocent civilians, and firing ballistic missiles and drones at Israeli population centers, killing 28 Israelis (27 of whom were civilians) and injuring more than 3,000 innocents.

Although Iran was significantly weakened by Israel's efforts in Operation Rising Lion, by the effort's conclusion its most protected nuclear site remained a threat—Fordow. Buried deep in a mountain, Fordow's destruction would require either a strategic ground operation involving Israeli soldiers in Iran or a powerful MOP (Massive Ordnance Penetrator) capable of destroying the facility from the air.



Devastation following the Iranian attack against Israel.
Photo credit: AP

Enter the United States.

Play: “Operation Rising Lion: Precision in Action.” cufi.org/learnisrael



Reflect on the following questions and journal your responses.

- After watching this video, how do you see God’s hand at work in protecting Israel?
- What does this teach you about trusting Him in difficult times?

U.S. Involvement: Operation Midnight Hammer

On the evening of June 21, after the Israelis destroyed specific surface-to-air missile systems to keep American pilots safe, the U.S. struck the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant, Natanz Enrichment Complex, and an “unspecified” nuclear site in Esfahan.

Cut off at the knees, with its leadership and military infrastructure in shambles and smoke still rising from its nuclear sites, Iran responded by firing missiles at U.S. facilities in the region—yet it did so half-heartedly. All the projectiles were intercepted, and no Americans were harmed.



“For 40 years, Iran has been saying. ‘Death to America, death to Israel.’ They have been killing our people, blowing off their arms, blowing off their legs with roadside bombs. That was their specialty. We lost over 1,000 people and hundreds of thousands throughout the Middle East, and around the world, have died as a direct result of their hate in particular. So many were killed by their general, Qassim Soleimani. I decided a long time ago that I would not let this happen. It will not continue.”

- President Donald Trump, Address to the Nation on U.S. Strikes in Iran: cufi.org/learnisrael.

On June 23, 2025, a ceasefire was announced by President Trump. While Iranian officials denied a truce, the missile strikes from Iran and airstrikes from Israel ceased on June 24 and have since held. (The Houthis, however, have continued sporadic missile fire.)

Though American and Israeli efforts have successfully and significantly set back Tehran’s nuclear program and ability to build up terrorist proxies, the Iranian threat remains. The bloodthirsty regime wasted no time in reengaging in its efforts to lock down control over the Iranian people with one goal in mind—destroying the Jewish state.

Looking to the Future

The events of October 7, 2023, have changed the region in ways that will leave us feeling the repercussions for many years to come. The single worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust has left an indelible mark on the region. Israel's subsequent operations have decimated Hamas and Hezbollah, as the Iranian regime grossly miscalculated the Israeli response to the brutal massacre committed against its people.

At the time of this writing, Israel is still fighting to bring its hostages home and continues to fight terror in Judea and Samaria. Israel is determined to never allow a situation to prevail on any of its borders that will allow a repeat of the evil witnessed on October 7.

As Christians, we can stand with Israel by continuing to pray—and by speaking up in defense of Israel and the Jewish people in our spheres of influence.

Read: The American Jewish Committee's article "Humanitarian Aid in Gaza: What's Really Happening" [cufi.org/learnisrael](https://www.cufi.org/learnisrael) or by searching the article name on [ajc.org](https://www.ajc.org).



The Truth About Humanitarian Aid in Gaza

In June 2025, images of a supposedly starving Gazan boy began circulating on the Internet. Though the image was proven to be of a boy with a genetic disorder who had not been in Gaza for weeks and was being treated for his illness, the result was widespread misinformation: a so-called "famine" was occurring in Gaza.

The truth? Between the beginning of the conflict and June 2025, nearly 1.9 million tons of aid was delivered into the Gaza Strip. But it was being intercepted, hoarded, and mismanaged. In fact, the UN acknowledged in August of 2025 that nearly 90% of the aid the international body had brought into the Strip had been seized by terrorists.

Nonetheless, due to UN incompetence and cowardice, Israel began airdropping more aid directly to the Gazan people.

While life in Gaza since the war is not easy, which is to be expected, the blame can be laid squarely at Hamas' feet. The group abuses its own people in favor of doing everything

in its power to harm innocent Israelis and destroy the world's only Jewish state.

After reading the article by the AJC, think over the following questions. Discuss with your study buddy or a friend if you have time.

- Given the fact that Hamas controls and diverts aid entering Gaza, what challenges does this raise for aid organizations trying to deliver genuine relief to civilians?
- How can we, as people of faith committed to both truth and love, respond to the realities on the ground in Gaza?

OPTIONAL: FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION

Read: Psalm 23. After reading each line, say a prayer of intercession for Israel and the Jewish people. Ask God to guide, guard, and direct His Chosen People as they grapple with sorrow and loss—and to give them strength, victory, and courage as they face continued attacks. For example...

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”
- Verse 1 (NASB95)

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thank you that You are the Shepherd of Israel. From the time You called Your servant, Abraham, until today, you walk before, behind, and beside Your people. Guide them now as they face seemingly insurmountable challenges. Provide for them so that they lack nothing.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Micro History: The Rise and Demise of Yahya Sinwar.

“What every American should know about U.S. aid to Israel,” American Jewish Committee (May 2024).

“Operation Rising Lion: Update,” (September 2024).

“5 key reasons behind Israel’s defensive strike on Iran’s imminent nuclear threat,” AJC, (Sept. 2024), American Jewish Committee.

“Humanitarian Aid in Gaza: What’s Really Happening,” American Jewish Committee (July 17, 2024).

“CUFI Weekly: Self-serving activists ignore true threat,” CUFI (July 17, 2025), YouTube.

“CUFI Weekly: Assad flees Syria as rebels take control,” CUFI (December 12, 2024), YouTube.

CUFI Houthis Fact Sheet

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

- LESSON
TWENTY-ONE -

The Campus Climate

LESSON TWENTY-ONE:

The Campus Climate

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Discuss key movements & accusations against Israel and highlight their main goals
- Recognize that narrative needs to be placed in historical context
- Identify when criticism of Israel crosses the line into antisemitism

Before You Begin:

- Pray that your heart would be broken over what breaks God's heart. Sadly, rising antisemitism is a reality in our nation and our world today. Pray for a deeper conviction over how you as a Christian can respond to this age-old, hateful phenomenon.

In our last two lessons, we learned about many of Israel's recent conflicts as well as Israel's attempts to bring peace to its own people and to the Palestinians.

Throughout our study of Israel and the Jewish people, we've learned about both the biblical and historical connection of Jews to their homeland in Israel, as well as the longing for that homeland that was manifested in Jewish liturgy and in Jewish communities around the world. When Israel was founded in 1948, the Jewish nation-state was reborn. Since then, Israel has given much to the world, both in terms of technological advances as well as humanitarian aid. In this lesson, we're going to learn about a dark and disturbing trend on college campuses: the demonization of Israel.



A political cartoon by Carlos Latuff falsely depicting "apartheid then and now."

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

PART I: The Campus Climate

Recent years have seen a steady increase in antisemitism on college campuses. While Jewish students are often targeted for pro-Israel activity, some are subject to blatant antisemitism. For instance, many Jewish students are subject to antisemitic graffiti in their dorms, such as swastikas drawn on their lockers or on Hillel houses. Hillel International is a foundation for Jewish student life on college campuses.

Non-Jewish, pro-Israel students have described similar experiences, including those involved with CUFI on Campus, a national initiative of Christians United for Israel founded in 2007 to provide Christian student leaders with the skills, resources, relationships, and biblical teachings they need in order to speak up on behalf of Israel and the Jewish people at this crucial time.

Studies increasingly show that the increase in antisemitism on campus is often masked by anti-Israel activity or sentiment.



Photo caption: Anti-Semitism on college campuses.
Photo credit: CUFI

Please read CUFI's Fact Sheet: The Rising Tide of antisemitism to learn more.
cufi.org/learnisrael



Israeli politician Natan Sharansky suggests using the “Three Ds” as a criteria to distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from antisemitism masked as anti-Zionism. The three Ds are: demonization, delegitimization, and double standards. For example, when Israel’s very founding is questioned, and Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state is decried, that qualifies as **delegitimization**—and it is antisemitic. Anti-Israel activists on campus often demand a Palestinian state “from the river to the sea,” which is the Mediterranean coast to the Jordan River. With those borders, Israel would not even exist.



Voting in the Israeli-Arab town of Jaffa, a mixed city of Christians, Muslims and Jews.

The United Nations Human Rights Council is guilty of employing **double standards** when it comes to Israel. Instead of focusing resolutions on any number of the human rights violators in the world today, the UNHRC focuses obsessively on the world’s only Jewish state, a beacon of democracy in the Middle East. In its first year, the UNHRC condemned Israel on 27 separate occasions but did not criticize even one other country for human rights violations. Since 2006, Israel has been a permanent item on the UNHRC’s agenda, Item 7.

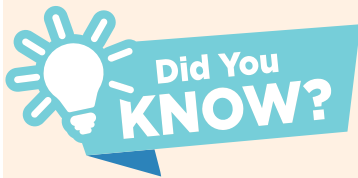
In 2017, the UNHRC condemned Israel on multiple occasions that year while not passing a single resolution against Venezuela, for example, where reportedly, during a period of political unrest, dozens of protestors had been killed.

Demonization involves attributing evil intentions to Israelis, including comparing Israel to Nazi Germany, portraying Israel as a bully, and the employing of classic antisemitic tropes to describe Israel. Furthermore, the apartheid allegation is demonization of Israel and absolutely false. In Israel, unlike apartheid South Africa, both Arab and Jewish Israeli citizens enjoy full and equal rights.



- How are antisemitism and anti-Zionism related?
- What are the “Three D’s?”
- Why are comparisons of Israel and Jews to Nazis so offensive?
- What is the apartheid allegation?
- What is the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement?

PART II: Understanding the Issues



The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement claims to be a non-violent, peaceful movement focused on Palestinian rights. In reality, according to the AMCHA Initiative, which fights antisemitism on college campuses, “[t]he Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement aims to demonize, delegitimize, and destroy the Jewish nature of Israel, with the result of denying to Jews their right of national self-determination.”

Read CUFI's Fact Sheet, "Explaining the BDS Movement," available in Additional Resources.



Choose one of the following questions and respond in a journal entry:

- Do you think it is appropriate for college faculty to be open about their biases for or against a group of people or a country, and to take an active role in student politics? Why or why not?
- Given what we've learned about Israel's history, founding, and attempts to bring peace to the region, what do you think of the claims leveled against Israel by the faculty and students highlighted in this film?
- What did you think about the students who stood up for Israel, even when faced with hatred, aggression, and arrest? How do their actions resonate with Christian values?

The Palestinian story engenders much sympathy, especially in liberal communities and on college campuses. People are moved by the idea of individuals and families living in refugee camps and are often motivated to "do the right thing," listening with their hearts instead of exploring narratives more deeply. As we know, in the case of the Palestinians, the truth about their plight is much more complicated than the narrative we saw presented on campus by anti-Israel students and faculty.

This story of Palestinian displacement, exile, and Israeli aggression leaves out the historical truths: that Israel has attempted to make peace with the Palestinians multiple times; that Israel provides valuable humanitarian services to Palestinians, including medical care; that Palestinian terrorists attack innocent Israeli citizens, whether through bombings, stabbings, or rockets; and that the Palestinian leadership itself has failed to help its own people by not directly engaging with Israel, instead choosing to serve a larger ideal of the complete destruction of the Jewish state.



KASIM: Kasim Hafeez is a British citizen of Pakistani Muslim heritage who grew up exposed to radical anti-Western, antisemitic, and anti-Israel ideas on a daily basis. During his teenage years, Kasim embraced a radical Islamist ideology and became very active in the anti-Israel movement. However,



Kasim Hafeez, Deputy
Communications Director
for Messaging.
Photo credit: CUFI

Alan Dershowitz's book *The Case for Israel* challenged Kasim's fundamental beliefs and caused him to undertake a period of research and reflection that led him to Israel in 2007. Witnessing the true nature of the Jewish state and experiencing Israel firsthand irrevocably changed Kasim's perception of Israel. He felt a moral obligation to publicly speak out for Israel and against the dangers of radical Islam. Since then, he has spoken all over the world, including at the 2013 Global Forum on Combating Anti-Semitism and a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva in March 2019.

The challenges to Jewish students and Israel on college campuses across America, and indeed the world, are real. We have an obligation as Christians to stand up for what's right and support the State of Israel. In our next lesson, we'll find out more about how you can take practical steps to stand up for Israel and help.

OPTIONAL: FOR FURTHER STUDY AND REFLECTION:

OPTION #1: Take time to explore the Anti-Defamation League's website: cufi.org/learnisrael. Aim to learn at least three new recent statistics or facts about antisemitism in the U.S. and record them to share with your study buddy or friends and family.

OPTION #2: Read the book of Esther. Note how much Haman hated Mordecai and the Jewish people, using his position to attempt to destroy the Jews. Also note that although God is not mentioned in this book, He orchestrates all its events. Reflect on your reading by journaling a response to the following prompt:

What are some ways God's protection of Israel is evident in this book?
How does this relate to God's covenants with the Jewish people?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"The Truth about Israel and South African Apartheid," Israel Collective.

CUFI on Campus Prezi.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

CUFI'S FACT SHEET: EXPLAINING THE BDS MOVEMENT

What Is BDS?

BDS is an acronym for the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, which targets Israel's political and economic stability. To accomplish their destructive goal, this movement employs thinly veiled antisemitic rhetoric and the well-coordinated presentation of false narratives about Israel. BDS is a global propaganda campaign designed to single out Israel as an outcast among nations and deteriorate support for Israel, especially among the upcoming generations. The primary aim of the BDS movement is to bring about the economic destruction of the state of Israel by gradually defaming the Jewish state until the international community is convinced that Israel has no right to exist or defend herself from her enemies. In short, the strategy of the BDS movement follows the same pattern of the demonization of the Jewish people as the Nazi propaganda of the 1930s.



BDS Activists in Germany.
Photo credit: sueddeutsche.de

Where Is BDS?

BDS is well-funded and highly organized. Its strategies are implemented in communities, including churches and on college campuses, to infiltrate the masses slowly but surely. BDS advocates distort the meaning of civil rights and social justice with the goal to poison the minds of young people, our future lawmakers and voters, without regard for the truth. Frequent jargon used by BDS activists includes referring to Israel as an “apartheid state,” comparing it falsely to apartheid-South Africa, and citing Israeli so-called human rights abuses. Several BDS campus organizations, among them, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), host an Israel Apartheid Week, complete with a so-called apartheid wall and the spreading of antisemitic lies about Israel, in an effort to accomplish their malicious goal.



Demonstrators carry signs and Palestinian flags during a “Chicago Coalition for Justice in Palestine” protest in Chicago 2018.
Photo credit: haarets.co.il



Protesters hold “From the River to the Sea” signs during a march in midtown Manhattan, New York, 2014.
Photo credit: ibtimes.co.uk

Even some churches, such as the Presbyterian Church of America PC (USA), have become supporters of the BDS movement as a denomination. While other

denominations have flirted with the BDS movement, millions of Christians across America recognize our biblical mandate and moral responsibility to support the Jewish people with our prayers (Psalm 122:6) and stand with the state of Israel (Genesis 12:3).

Why is BDS antisemitic and a barrier to peace?

While not all criticism of the State of Israel is antisemitic, the BDS movement inherently is. It demonizes the Jewish state and singles out Israel as undeserving of the right to exist. BDS advocates not only advance traditional antisemitic myths about the Jewish people, they also deceitfully blame Israel alone for the regional conflict without acknowledging the Palestinian leadership's paramount role in the plight of their own people.

The BDS movement has never helped any Palestinian, nor will it ever. Instead, it has served to drive a deeper wedge between Israelis and Palestinians by perpetuating the conflict. Pro-BDS organizations like Students for Justice in Palestine, support a Palestinian state “from the river to the sea,” (the Jordan River on Israel’s eastern border, to the Mediterranean Sea on Israel’s western border) calling for the elimination of the Jewish state.

Disguising its destructive intentions as concern for “human rights,” the BDS movement ignores real human rights abuses in Palestinian controlled territories and throughout the Middle East. Moreover, BDS advocates turn a blind eye to the way their movement harms Palestinians and Israelis alike. By using rhetoric like “genocide,” “oppression,” and “apartheid,” the BDS movement creates a threatening political environment in which all who desire justice may only support BDS.

For example, thousands of Palestinians work in Israel with legal work permits to provide for their families in the West Bank; BDS threatens these families’ security and source of income. Likewise, numerous Palestinians find employment working alongside Israelis in Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria. Consequently, boycotting disputed territories under Israel’s control harms both Israelis and Palestinians and diminishes the positive on-the-ground interactions



Members of the Presbyterian Church USA's Israel Palestine Mission Network pose in front of Israel's security barrier during one of their trips to the Holy Land. The graffiti on the barrier reads: "PC (USA) stands with Palestine."

Photo credit: ibtimes.co.uk



Anti-Israel protesters in Edinburgh, Scotland propagating the myth of a genocide in Gaza.

Photo credit: inminds.com



SodaStream promo video promoting peace and coexistence.

Photo credit: YouTube screenshot

these two peoples have when working side-by-side. Boycotting Israel and its territories is not pro-Palestinian; it's anti-peace and anti-humanitarian.

What is CUFI doing to combat BDS

Since our inception, CUFI has been fiercely fighting back against the BDS movement in the US. Each year, CUFI trains hundreds of college students and equips them with the truth about Israel and the tools to share it with others on their campuses. In April 2019, CUFI engaged in public relations and lobbying efforts to see Airbnb reverse its 2018 policy of delisting Israeli properties in the West Bank, which the company did shortly thereafter. Additionally, CUFI works across the country to advocate in support of anti-BDS legislation and has seen it advanced in 30 states around the country.



CUFI on Campus students at the 2025 CUFI Washington Summit
Photo credit: CUFI

- LESSON
TWENTY-TWO -

Educate
Motivate
Activate

LESSON TWENTY-TWO:

Educate, Motivate, Activate

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate your understanding that being pro-Israel does not make you anti-Palestinian
- Recognize that you have a chance to be a peacemaker for Christ
- Refer to different opportunities that exist for activism in the Christian Zionist world

Before You Begin:

- In Psalm 122, David commands believers to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. But he doesn't stop there. He also sets an example for us when he promises Jerusalem (and, by extension, all Israel, and the Jewish people) that he will "seek [its] good" (verse 9). Pray for a willingness to see the part you are exhorted to play to live out this biblical mandate.

Introduction and Discussion

During our last lesson, we learned about disturbing trends of antisemitism and anti-Zionism that are becoming more and more prevalent on campuses across the United States, and how pro-Israel students have come under attack by professors and their fellow students for outwardly supporting the State of Israel. We also saw how some students have chosen to exhibit strong leadership in the face of hate, and have maintained their values, their beliefs, and their integrity. Now, we're going to learn more about how you—soon-to-be college students, college graduates, moms, dads, employees, and leaders—can be forerunners and Christian leaders in your sphere of influence.

Matthew 5:9 (NIV) proclaims, "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*" Over the course of this study, we learned much about Israel, including its value system, its citizens' focus on giving back to the world, and its efforts to make peace with both its neighbors and with the Palestinians. We've also seen how Israel is unfairly maligned, particularly in the campus space. We've learned about how many Jewish

students choose to stand up for Israel in the public sphere, whether that is on their college campus, in their communities, or both.

ACTIVITY ONE: Discussion and Reflection

Pair off with a study buddy, break into small groups with friends, or journal your responses to the following questions:

- Before this study, what was your relationship, as a Christian, to the State of Israel? What is your relationship like now?
- What do you think is most important for people to know and understand about Israel and the Jewish people? How do you think you can share that with your community?
- What do you think your Christian obligation is to Israel? How do you think you can best fulfill your obligation and be a “peacemaker” for Israel?

Fulfilling Our Christian Mission

Our Christian faith means that we have an obligation to stand up for the State of Israel. In addition to our obligation, we also have an unparalleled opportunity as Christians to make a difference for Israel and to help preserve it as a Jewish and democratic state that protects the rights of all faiths within its borders. We want to make sure that all those suffering in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, from Palestinian families suffering under Hamas’s rule in Gaza to the Israelis under threat of constant terrorist attacks, have advocates for justice and truth.

It’s important to remember that this is not a zero-sum game; supporting the Jewish state does not mean that you don’t have sympathy for the Palestinians. Supporting Israel means that you recognize that the State of Israel is a sovereign nation with a responsibility to protect and defend all its citizens. In order to do that, Israel needs a strong partner for peace, who is willing to put both politics and violence aside and come to the table for meaningful, direct negotiations.

All Christians, young or old, can step up and make a difference for the people of Israel. You can partner with God’s eternal covenants with the Jewish people. If you are a student, know that your time in college will be short, but, through right action, you absolutely have the potential to make a meaningful change. Let’s learn about what opportunities exist and how you can get involved.



CALEB: Caleb Parke joined CUFI on Campus as a freshman in college. Going to Israel with CUFI on Campus changed the way he read the Bible and saw the world. It opened up a lot of opportunities for Caleb, from friendships across the country to internships in Washington, D.C., but most



Caleb Parke, founder of CUFI on Campus chapter at Grove City College in Grove City, PA.
Photo credit: CUFI

importantly, it deepened his faith. At each CUFI event, Caleb's knowledge and understanding of the Holy Land grew deeper and more personal. Today, Caleb is a correspondent for Newsmax.. He has had the opportunity to cover several stories involving Israel, from President Trump's actions in the White House to BDS campaigns on college campuses.

PART I: CUFI On Campus

Play: "Pro-Israel Students in America-CUFI On Campus" cufi.org/learnisrael.

Take time to explore the CUFI on Campus website, cufioncampus.org, as well as its Instagram and Facebook pages. Note your first impressions and how the Lord may be calling you to participate in this vital movement.

As we mentioned, CUFI on Campus exists to provide Christian student leaders with the skills, resources, relationships, and biblical teachings they need to speak up on behalf of Israel and the Jewish people at this crucial time.

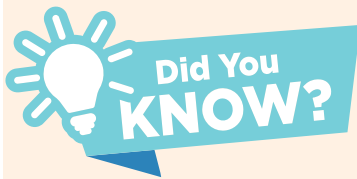
Founded in 2007, CUFI on Campus is a national initiative of Christians United for Israel. As antisemitic activity on American college campuses has steadily increased, CUFI recognizes that Christian students have a responsibility to speak up on behalf of Israel and the Jewish people. CUFI's Field Organizers travel the country actively developing student leaders to ensure they have the skills, resources, and guidance they need to do this successfully on their campuses. Students form official CUFI on Campus chapters and hold educational and inspiring events to raise awareness of Israel among fellow students, faculty, and community members.

Students who join CUFI on Campus chapters have the opportunity to take an active part in shaping their campus' dialogue on Israel. Through learning, leadership conferences, and activism opportunities, students help



Students from college campuses across the country, speaking at the 2018 CUFI Summit.
Photo credit: CUFI

to combat the plague of antisemitism and anti-Zionism that is threatening to overwhelm campus communities. **CUFI on Campus chapters can help you directly impact Israel** and the lives of Jewish students around the country.



Christians United for Israel is the largest pro-Israel organization in the United States. Pastor Hagee and his team work tirelessly every day with Christians to make sure that Israel and her people remain strong and secure. Each month, around 50 CUFI events are held in churches, communities, and college campuses across the U.S.

PART II: Combating Campus Antisemitism After Graduation

Antisemitism, and the need to speak up for Israel and the Jewish people, is not limited to college campuses, nor is pro-Israel advocacy limited to our college years. Even those who have graduated can stand up for Israel and the Jewish people on American college campuses. Here are some ways you can do just that:

Attending CUFI's annual Washington Summit is one of the most important ways you can unite with a growing movement of Christians in support of Israel. Each year, thousands of Christians gather in our nation's capital to hear from top U.S. and Israeli officials and to lobby our members of Congress on behalf of Israel. This is an opportunity to make your voice heard on the Hill on issues pertaining to Israel, the Jewish people, antisemitism, and the current campus climate. You don't want to miss it. Learn more at: cufi.org/learnisrael.

Another significant way you can stand up for Israel on college campuses, even after graduation, is to help sponsor a student to attend the D.C. Summit. As we have seen, antisemitism is a growing trend on college campuses.

Becoming a CUFI Congressional Liaison is another way to take your support for Israel to the next level. CUFI's flagship Washington, D.C. Summit, coupled with the effectiveness of our Rapid Response Action Alerts, have allowed us to play a critical role in advancing vitally important legislation in support of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

CUFI Congressional Liaisons (CLs) bring that same impact home to the grassroots level in our states and Congressional Districts. CUFI Congressional Liaisons are our most committed members, refusing to be bystanders as antisemitism spills from our universities into other institutions, social media, Capitol Hill, and beyond. Learn more at: cufi.org/learnisrael.

You can also host a CUFI speaker in your community. This can be a powerful introduction to pro-Israel advocacy for students in your church, school, or group of acquaintances. As students become interested in Israel through attending the DC Summit and participating in CUFI on Campus chapters, they will catch fire for Israel and turn the tide of antisemitism on their campuses. Learn more about hosting a CUFI event at: cufi.org/learnisrael.

Conclusion

The rise in antisemitism globally, but specifically on American college campuses, should be concerning to every American, every Christian, and every person. It is imperative to stay apprised of the state of antisemitism in our nation today, to understand what is being done to make sure campuses are safe for students who support Israel, and to do our part to ensure the U.S.-Israel relationship continues to thrive.

WRAPPING IT ALL UP:

As this is the concluding lesson of the course, now is a great time to reflect on your study.

- What was most meaningful to you during this study?
- What do you still have questions about?
- What was most challenging to you?
- How will you continue your learning?
- How do you, as a Christian, feel after learning about the Jewish people and their connection to Israel?

Thank you for your hard work and dedication in completing The Israel Course. You are now more equipped than ever to defend Israel and support the Jewish people. The role you play in Israel's story is critical, and the effects of your advocacy for Israel and love for the Jewish people are tangible. To learn more about how you can get involved in support of Israel, please visit: cufi.org.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"Israel Revealed by Millennial Christians from Portland," Israel Collective.

"American Christians from Nashville Experience Israel," Israel Collective.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

GET INVOLVED WITH CUFI

Attend a CUFI Event

Learn the facts you need to defend and support Israel. We hold over 50 events across the nation each month. When a CUFI event comes to your city, church, or campus, join us, and bring your friends.

Follow us on Social

Follow us on Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and LinkedIn, for breaking news and engaging educational content. We share Israel's story in real-time with millions of Christians across multiple platforms.

 @ChristiansUnitedforIsrael

 OfficialCUFI

 @CUFI

 @CUFIOfficial

 ChristiansUnitedforIsrael

 Christians United for Israel.

Sign the Israel Pledge

Every signature demonstrates Christians are committed to Israel's security. Every signature makes Israel safer.

Bring CUFI to Your Community

Educate your community by bringing a CUFI speaker to your city. CUFI speakers provide dynamic presentations that will open your community's eyes to the current situation in the Middle East and why and how they should stand with Israel.

Attend the CUFI Washington Summit

Join thousands of pro-Israel Christians to our nation's capital at our premier annual event to stand up and speak up for Israel and the Jewish people. CUFI members learn from national and international leaders and visit Capitol Hill to encourage every member of Congress to support policies that strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Sign the Shine the Light Pledge

As members of CUFI we will not simply curse the darkness, we are committed to shining the light on antisemitism in all its forms, wherever it may be found. Please join us in pledging to Shine the Light and commit to combating this scourge.

Support CUFI's Film on Antisemitism

CUFI's full-length documentary, *Never Again?* is a one-of-a-kind film that features the journeys of two men—late Holocaust survivor Irving Roth and transformed radical anti-Israel activist Kasim Hafeez. The film follows them throughout Slovakia, Poland, the United Kingdom, Israel, and the U.S.. Their personal accounts vividly depict the parallels between the hatred of Jews preceding the Holocaust, which culminated in the slaughter of six million Jews, and examines today's widespread antisemitism.



Host a Small Group Study

CUFI's small group curriculum using CUFI's **The Israel Course** enables our members to gather together and learn about Israel.



CUFI Daily Briefing

CUFI provides a daily briefing via email to keep you up-to-date on the latest Israel and Middle East news. Monday through Friday, you will receive a snapshot of current events surrounding Israel in your inbox. Sign up to receive CUFI's Daily Briefings to ensure you never miss an important development.

CUFI on Campus

CUFI on Campus equips Christian students from across the country with biblical principles and knowledge of the Middle East to be effective voices for Israel on their college campuses. To date, CUFI on Campus has trained over 4,200 students, has a presence on over 230 campuses throughout the United States and has taken over 700 students to Israel.

CUFI High School

CUFI High School educates high school student leaders to prepare them to combat antisemitism and stand up for Israel in their high schools and on their future college campuses.

The Israel Collective

The Israel Collective (IC), a national initiative of Christians United for Israel has taken 1,000 millennial influencers to Israel. The IC communicates the truth about Israel and the Middle East to the next generation through social media and films that highlight the heart and the people of Israel.

Daughters For Zion Prayer

Network (DFZ) is an initiative of Christians United for Israel whose purpose is to organize intercessory prayer groups in America to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, the wellbeing of the state of Israel and her people, the growth and development of Christians United for Israel, and specific prayer alerts that arise through the year. To date, Daughters for Zion has thousands of members throughout the nation and the world.

View resources here: cufi.org/learnisrael

Terms to Know

Abrahamic covenant: Biblical scholars refer to the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 12, 15, and 17 as the “Abrahamic covenant.” In this covenant, God promised to bless Abraham and his descendants with land—the Land of Israel—and innumerable descendants, as well as a great name and great blessings.

Advocacy: The act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy; active support.

Antisemitism: Hostility, prejudice, or discrimination against Jews based on their ethnic identity. A person who holds such positions is called an anti-Semite or antisemitic. According to the Anti-Defamation League, “Antisemitism is widely considered to be a form of racism. It may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, for instance, or political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them.”

Anti-Zionism: An effort to thwart the self-determination of the Jewish people, anti-Zionism involves “Three Ds”: demonization, delegitimization, and double standards. The three Ds were put forward by Israeli politician Natan Sharansky who suggests using these criteria to distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from antisemitism masked as anti-Zionism.

Apartheid: A former social system in South Africa in which black people and people from other racial groups did not have the same political and economic rights as white people and were forced to live separately from white people.²² Anti-Israel movements often try to paint the democratic State of Israel as an apartheid state. This is a false representation. Arab and Jewish citizens (and indeed all minorities in Israel) have full and equal rights.

Arab League: Organization of Arab states founded in 1945 with the goal of uniting all Arab nations (Pan-Arabism) and destroying Israel.

Arab Spring: Series of revolutions throughout the Middle East in which several major regimes were overthrown.

²² “Apartheid,” Merriam-Webster Dictionary, [merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apartheid](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apartheid).

Assyrian exile: Also called the Assyrian captivity. In 721 B.C., the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, and many Israelites were taken into captivity.

Babylonian exile: Also called the Babylonian captivity. In 597 B.C., Babylon—under King Nebuchadnezzar—conquered the kingdom of Judah and deported most Jews from Judah. By 586 B.C., Judah ceased to be an independent kingdom. During the exile, some Jews remained in the Land of Israel. Before and during the exile, prophets such as Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah prophesied about the future return of the Jewish people to their land.

BDS movement: A movement designed to target Israel's political and economic stability with boycotts, divestment, and sanctions (BDS). The BDS movement seeks to manipulate world opinion of Israel through thinly veiled antisemitic rhetoric. This movement is especially active on college campuses, where young people are presented with a false narrative by individuals appropriating the lexicon of the civil rights and social justice movements. They claim Israel's government oppresses Palestinians with the same kind of racial discrimination that white South Africans once used against black South Africans under apartheid. This vicious lie has spread throughout academia and infected the United Nations. The old antisemitism of blatant hatred of Jews has been repackaged as anti-Zionism and hatred of Israel.

Bedouin: An ethnic group of nomadic Arabs. The English word Bedouin comes from the Arabic *badaw*, which means “desert dweller.” While the majority are Arab Sunni Muslims, there are Arab Christian Bedouins in the Fertile Crescent. Some Bedouins serve as volunteers in the Israel Defense Forces, many as trackers in elite IDF tracking units. Bedouin shepherds were the first to discover the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Judean caves of Qumran.

Biblical Basis: Israel's biblical roots have been validated through archaeological discoveries dating back over 4,000 years. Nearly every month, another piece of history is found that proves the continuous Jewish connection to this land from ancient times until the modern era. This growing wealth of archaeological evidence validates Israel's biblically mandated right to exist as a Jewish state.

Checkpoints: Places along a road, border, airport screening area, etc. where travelers are stopped for inspection for security purposes. After the Second Intifada, Israel established checkpoints for the security of both Israeli and Palestinian civilians amid the daily threat of terrorism.

Christian Persecution: The Middle East is one of the most dangerous places for Christians to live. The ancient Christian communities in that region have been decimated by terrorism and persecution. Israel is the only safe place for Christians in the Middle East. In other places, Christians face daily threats of

imprisonment, torture, and execution. We pray for the protection of Christians throughout the Middle East and want to raise awareness of the dangers they face.

Christian Zionism: “Also known as biblical Zionism, [Christian Zionism] supports the right of the Jewish people to return to their homeland on scriptural grounds. The biblical foundation for Christian Zionism is found in God’s [everlasting] covenant with Abraham. It was in this covenant that God chose Abraham to birth a nation through which He could redeem the world, and to do this He bequeathed them a land on which to exist as this chosen nation.”²³

Covenant: Literally, a contract. In the Bible, an agreement between God and His people, in which God makes promises to His people and usually requires certain conduct from them. In the Old Testament, God made agreements with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David.

CUFI: Stands for Christians United for Israel. Every day, CUFI works to make Israel stronger and its people safer. We do this because the Bible makes it clear that God’s covenant with the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, established in the book of Genesis, is everlasting and unbreakable. This belief in God’s love for the Jewish people and their biblical and historical right to sovereignty in their ancient homeland crosses denominational and ethnic boundaries to unite Christians of many different backgrounds. Our rapid growth from just 400 members to over 10 million members has made CUFI not only the largest pro-Israel organization in America, but also one of the largest and most influential grassroots organizations in the nation.

Diaspora: Most often used to describe the Jews exiled from their homeland in the wake of the Roman conquest of Israel. The Hebrew word that describes the Jewish Diaspora, “*galut*,” means “exile from the land.” There is a long held Jewish tradition believing that Jews who do not live in Israel live in an unnatural state because they are divorced from the land given to them by God.

Druze: The Druze religion has its roots in Isma’ilism, dating back to the 10th century. Historically, Druze have suffered persecution in the Middle East as a religious minority. Druze are monotheistic and believe in reincarnation, revering prophets in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Israeli Druze hold prominent positions in the Israeli government and serve in the military. Israeli Druze make up roughly 2% of the country’s population.

East Jerusalem: Predominantly Arab section of Jerusalem which includes the Old City of Jerusalem, it was held under Jordanian control from 1948–1967, and officially annexed to Israel in 1980.²⁴

²³ Malcolm Hedding, “CHRISTIAN ZIONISM 101: Giving definition to the movement,” icej.org/understand-israel/biblical-teachings/christian-zionism-101.

²⁴ See “Jerusalem: An Introduction,” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jerusalem-an-introduction.

Eretz Israel: Meaning “the Land of Israel” in Hebrew, this is the traditional Jewish name for the Promised Land.

Fatah: (Arabic: “conquest”). A Palestinian organization that has carried out numerous attacks against Israel in the name of Palestinian nationalism. It was founded in secret during the late 1950s. Appearing publicly in 1965, Fatah soon became the largest and most important of the organizations of the Palestine Liberation Organization, taking full control in 1968 under the leadership of Yasser Arafat. Fatah remained in control of the PLO until Hamas was elected to power in 2006.²⁵

Gaza: A narrow, 25-mile-long strip of land along the Mediterranean Sea that Israel captured from Egypt in the 1967 War. The Cairo Agreement of May 4, 1994, led to civil autonomy for the Gaza Strip’s Palestinian residents within the framework of an Israeli military withdrawal from the region. Israel later dismantled all Israeli settlements and withdrew fully from the Gaza Strip in August 2005 as part of Israeli Prime Minister Sharon’s unilateral disengagement plan. Since then, there have been close to 30,000 rockets fired from Gaza into Israel by Hamas.²⁶

Ghetto: This term may have originated from the name of the Jewish quarter in Venice, Italy where Jews were forced to live. By the 13th century, Jews were systematically removed from their homes and required to live in designated communities. By the 16th and 17th centuries, Jewish ghettos existed in Frankfurt, Rome, Prague, and other cities throughout Europe. Jews were forced into ghettos after Nazi Germany took power, including the Warsaw Ghetto in Nazi-occupied Poland in which nearly 500,000 Jews were segregated and confined.

Golan Heights: An upland region on the Israeli-Syrian border, from which Syria launched attacks against Israel prior to 1967. During The Six-Day War in 1967, Israel captured this strategic high ground and continues to hold it today to ensure the safety of Israeli citizens in the Jordan River valley and upper Galilee.

Grafted: To join or unite as if by grafting. This is a reference to the act of uniting new olive branches to an existing older olive tree. This is the image Paul uses in Romans 11 to explain to Christians that they are like the new olive branches, while the existing tree is God’s everlasting covenant with Abraham and his descendants, the children of Israel.

Hamas: (Arabic: acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement). Hamas is a terrorist organization that primarily targets Israeli civilians. According to their charter, their goal is to destroy Israel and replace Jewish sovereignty over any part of the land with radical Islamist rule from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

²⁵ See “Fatah: History & Overview,” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/fatah-history-and-overview.

²⁶ See “Palestinian Authority: The Gaza Strip,” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-gaza-strip.

After Israel voluntarily withdrew from the Gaza Strip, Hamas won control of the territory. Since 2006, Hamas has consistently used Gaza as a launching pad for rocket and mortar attacks against Israel. In 2006, Israel discovered Hamas was digging tunnels beneath the Gazan border. Hamas uses the Palestinian people living in Gaza as human shields, stealing money and resources from them in order to support terror. Hamas is continually preparing for the next war with Israel by stockpiling thousands of rockets and digging new tunnels in Gaza.

Hezbollah: (Literal translation: Party of God). Hezbollah is one of the deadliest terror groups in the world. They are responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Americans since the 1980s. They were founded, trained, and armed by Iran's government and are commissioned with the destruction of Israel. Based in Lebanon along Israel's northern border, Hezbollah has become the dominant political force in Lebanon and frequently launches attacks against Israel from deep within civilian population centers. The terrorist organization has grown in size and sophistication, gaining experience in warfare through its involvement in the Syrian civil war, and poses an extreme threat to Israel's security.

IDF: The Israel Defense Force (IDF) upholds the highest moral standards. The IDF's commitment to protecting innocent human life during combat is upheld even when it makes winning more difficult and more dangerous for its own soldiers. The IDF is also one of the most inclusive militaries in the world, and provides opportunities for women, minorities, and people with disabilities to serve their country with honor and respect. Although they serve the State of Israel, the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces make the whole world safer by fighting the same enemies that want to destroy America and all other free societies.

Incitement: The Palestinian Authority regularly incites violence against Israelis, and then rewards terrorists and their families with a lifetime salary worth more than most Palestinians could ever hope to earn. In 2017, this "Pay to Slay" program handed out over \$350 million in payments for terrorism. In 2018, the Palestinian Authority increased its budget for this program to \$405 million. For many years, American tax dollars given to the Palestinian Authority as foreign aid intended for humanitarian services and civil government programs were redirected into this slush fund for terrorists. CUFI was the first major pro-Israel organization to strongly support the Taylor Force Act (passed into law in October 2018) in the United States, which cut off most American foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority until our State Department can certify that the Pay to Slay program has been shut down.

Indigenous: Native to a particular place. The Jewish people are considered indigenous to the Land of Israel, as there has been a continued Jewish presence in Israel for over 4,000 years.

Intifada: (Arabic: “rebellion, uprising,” literally: “shaking off”). A wave of deadly violence launched by Palestinian leadership against Israel and Jews. The First Intifada lasted from December 1987 to September 1993. The Second Intifada began in September 2000 and lasted to February 2005. Additionally, the more recent Stabbing Intifada began in September 2015. The wave of terror has continued to present day.

Intrafada: Cycle of violence coinciding with the intifada in which over 2,000 Palestinians were killed by other Palestinians on suspicion of collaborating with Israel.²⁷

Iran: Iran’s obsession with destroying Israel began in 1979 after the violent Islamic Revolution empowered radical fundamentalists committed to dominating the Middle East. Iran’s hatred of Israel and America has been the foundation of its foreign policy ever since. The U.S. State Department recognizes Iran as the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism.

ISIS (The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria): ISIS seeks to re-establish an Islamic caliphate, or empire, across the entire Middle East. Over the last several years, these brutal terrorists have murdered thousands of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East. Despite defeats in Iraq and Syria, their radical ideology continues to inspire deadly terror attacks around the world. At the same time ISIS has set its sights on Israel and wants to destroy the Jewish state.

Israel: Israel is the name given to the Jewish patriarch Jacob according to Genesis 32:28. Jacob’s descendants are the 12 tribes of Israel which make up the biblical nation of Israel. Today, Israel is the name of the modern Jewish state which exists in its historical homeland.

Israeli Arab: Those Arabs who chose to stay in the area that became the State of Israel during the War of Independence. They include Muslim Arabs, Christian Arabs, Druze, and Bedouins. They enjoy equality and full citizenship in Israel and participate actively in its politics.²⁸

Israeli Technology: The Bible describes Israel as a light unto the nations, and modern Israel has lived up to that description. The innovative discoveries and technologies coming out of Israel continue to revolutionize our world. In nearly every scientific field, Israel’s inventors and entrepreneurs are on the cutting edge. These technological advancements are saving lives and transforming the way nations address critical challenges. From fighting

²⁷ “Palestinian Authority: Statistics on the ‘Intrafada’ (1987–2009)” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/statistics-on-the-palestinian-quot-intrafada-quot-1989-2009.

²⁸ Mitchell Bard, “Israeli Arabs: Status of Arabs in Israel,” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-status-of-arabs-in-israel.

cancer to eliminating hunger, Israel's technology is one of the primary ways the nations of the world are blessed through the Jewish state.

Jerusalem: Jerusalem has been the political, cultural, and spiritual center of Jewish life since the time of King David. The Jewish people have an unbroken connection to Jerusalem dating back over 4,000 years. Even while persecuted and scattered around the world, Jerusalem has always been home to a resilient Jewish community. When Israel established its independence and modern rebirth in 1948, it lost East Jerusalem and the Old City to Jordanian occupation for 19 years. During that time, Jewish holy places were desecrated, Jewish inhabitants were kicked out of their homes, and Christians living in the Holy City had many of their rights restricted. But in 1967, Israel won a miraculous victory against five Arab armies who failed in their plan to wipe Israel off the map. As a result, Israel won control of East Jerusalem and reunited the city under Jewish sovereignty for the first time in thousands of years. For decades, the international community refused to recognize Israel's legal and historical right to Jerusalem as its capital city and continues to pressure Israel to divide Jerusalem as part of a peace deal with the Palestinians. CUFI worked with President Trump to aid him in fulfilling his campaign pledge to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem and recognize the Holy City as Israel's capital. This announcement led several other countries to reconsider their foreign policy and announce plans to also move their embassies to Jerusalem including Guatemala, Honduras, and Kosovo.

Jewish Diaspora: Refers to the dispersion of Jews out of their ancestral homeland (the Land of Israel) and the communities they established and built across the world.

Judaism: The world's oldest monotheistic religion. Abraham and Sarah were called by God, as recorded in Genesis 12, and are considered the ancestors of the Jewish people. Some consider Judaism a culture, a religion, or a nationality, but in reality, it encompasses all three.²⁹

Judea and Samaria: The biblical names of the land west of the Jordan River. The [alternative] term, West Bank, was not utilized by Israel until the 1993 Declaration of Principles (the Oslo I Accord).³⁰

Kibbutz: A Jewish rural community, originally with all property shared. Prominent before and after the founding of the modern State of Israel. Many still exist and thrive throughout Israel today.

Knesset: The Israeli parliament or legislature, consisting of 120 representatives of different political parties. The name is derived from the

²⁹ MJL, "Judaism," My Jewish Learning, myjewishlearning.com/article/judaism.

³⁰ See "The West Bank: Judea and Samaria," Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-west-bank-2.

“Knesset HaGadolah” (large assembly), the representative Jewish council created in Jerusalem by Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century B.C.³¹

Land for Peace: A term which developed as a buzzword following The Six-Day War, Israel has demonstrated itself willing to offer land for peace, most notably in the agreement made with Egypt in which Israel returned the entire Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, which Israel captured in a defensive war in exchange for peace.

Law of Return: On July 5, 1950, Israel passed the “Law of Return” which mandates, on a basic level, that Jews may come and live in Israel and gain Israeli citizenship if they desire to do so. Essentially, anyone who would have been targeted by the Nazis’ Nuremberg Laws for being Jewish is considered welcome to live safely in Israel.

Minorities in Israel: Israel is home to many minorities, including Israeli Arabs, Arameans, Baha’i, Druze, Bedouin, and Christians (many denominations).

Mizrahi Jews: Descendants of Jews who lived in local communities in the Middle East and North Africa, such as Iraq, Kurdistan, Libya, Egypt, etc. Many Mizrahi Jews were forced to flee their homelands after the establishment of the State of Israel. Today, about 50% of Jews living in Israel are Mizrahi.

Muslim Brotherhood: A Salafi inspired organization seeking a return to what they feel is the “authentic” faith of the first Muslims. A Sunni sect of Islam. The Muslim Brotherhood is the parent company, so to speak, of organizations such as Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and Hamas.

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): The PLO was founded in 1964 after an Arab League decision with the purpose of destroying Israel through armed violence and establishing a new state called Palestine. The PLO is now recognized by Israel as the official representative of the Palestinian people, but only after officially renouncing violence and terrorism. However, PLO-sponsored violence against Israel continues to this day.

Palestine: Historically, the name given to the region of Judea and Samaria by the Romans, after they destroyed Jerusalem and sought to expel the Jewish presence in the Land of Israel. Until recent decades, the term has referred only to a region and never to a nation.

Palestinian Authority (PA): The Palestinian autonomous government in the West Bank and Gaza areas from which the Israeli Defense Forces have redeployed since the 1994 Gaza-Jericho agreement and the 1995 Interim Agreement (“Oslo II”).³²

³¹ See “The Knesset: History & Overview,” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-and-overview-of-the-knesset.

³² See “The Palestinian Authority: History & Overview,” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/palestinian-authority-history-and-overview.

Pan-Arabism: Developed during the late 1800s and early 1900s, the ideology that espouses unification and solidarity of all Arabs across the Arab world.

Pogrom: Derived from a Russian word meaning “to destroy, to wreak havoc, or to demolish violently,” pogrom is used to describe an attack on Jews. The first pogrom occurred in 1241 in Frankfurt, Germany. After a debate regarding interfaith marriages between Jews and Christians, 180 Jews were killed and 24 were forcibly baptized; this is known as the “Slaughter of the Jews” or *Judenschlacht*. By the 1800s, pogroms were commonplace in Russia. More than 200 anti-Jewish events occurred during this time in Kiev, Warsaw, and Odessa. On November 9 and 10, 1938, in what has come to be known as *Kristallnacht*, mobs ran amuck in the streets of Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland, attacking Jews in their homes, workplaces, and houses of worship. In two nights, more than 90 Jews were killed and hundreds more were injured. More than 1,000 synagogues were burned, over 7,000 Jewish businesses were destroyed, and tens of thousands of Jews were sent to concentration camps. *Kristallnacht* is known as “the night of broken glass.” This pogrom, while gruesome, must be remembered so that such an atrocious act of hatred will never happen again.

Replacement Theology: Also called supersessionism or fulfillment theology. Replacement theology is a destructive and false theology that teaches that Christians have replaced the Jewish people as the chosen people of God. This is counter to Paul’s specific teaching in Romans 11 that Christians are “grafted in” to God’s promise to Israel but have not replaced Israel.

Right of Return: The “Right of Return” has become a stumbling block on the quest for peace between Israel and the Palestinians, as Arab leaders and many in the international community insist that all of the original refugees of the 1948 war *and all of their descendants* be given citizenship in Israel. This right of return has never applied to any other displaced people group on earth in history, and it certainly has never applied to the descendants of refugees born after the initial displacement. Because Israel is a democratic country and its Arab citizens have full and equal rights and participation in government, to allow millions of Palestinians to become Israeli citizens would effectively destroy Israel’s identity as a Jewish state. It is important to note that the Right of Return is demanded in addition to the creation of a Palestinian state, which would mean both Israel and a newly created Palestine would be Arab-majority countries.

Righteous Gentiles: Non-Jewish people who, during the Holocaust, risked their lives to save Jewish people from Nazi persecution. Today, a commemorative “The Righteous Among the Nations” garden is maintained in their honor at Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, Israel, commemorating their courage and compassion, as well as a virtual database that keeps their stories alive.

Security Barrier: The Security Barrier is a (potentially temporary) defensive measure constructed by the Israeli government in response to a wave of Palestinian terror attacks including suicide bombings and shootings of innocent Israelis during the Second Intifada.

Settlements: The term “settlements” usually refers to the towns and villages that Jews have established in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and the Gaza Strip since Israel captured the area in The Six-Day War of 1967. In many cases, the settlements are in the same area which flourishing Jewish communities have lived for thousands of years.³³

Shi’ah and Sunnis: Two main branches of Islam, rival groups. Sunni is the largest group in Islam.

Shoah/Holocaust: A term used to refer to the genocidal Nazi policy of exterminating six million Jews during World War II. “Shoah” is the Hebrew word, meaning “catastrophe.”

Six-Day War: War fought in June 1967 when Israel reacted to Arab threats and the blockade of the Straits of Tiran, resulting in a stunning victory over the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian armies.³⁴

Syria: The Syrian civil war between President Bashar al-Assad and rebel forces, including ISIS, has been ongoing since 2011. Iran, Hezbollah, and Russia are all on the ground in Syria fighting to support the Syrian regime against ISIS and many other rebels. This confluence of several different enemies, some religious radicals and others secular, has produced a muddy conflict with no good possible outcomes. Israel, on Syria’s southern border, has stayed out of the war except for occasional targeted strikes when Israel’s security is threatened, and humanely treating those wounded in the conflict. On February 10, 2018, Iranian forces stationed in Syria invaded Israel’s air space with a drone, provoking Israel to respond by shooting the UAV out of the sky and attacking the vehicle on the ground in Syria operating the drone. During Israel’s counterattack, Syrian anti-aircraft missiles shot down an Israeli F-16 and injured two pilots. The IDF responded by destroying four Syrian command posts and eight Iranian command posts in Syria. This incident showed that Iran and its allies in Syria are spoiling for a fight with Israel.

Tanakh: Also known as the Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh is the canonical collection of Jewish texts, known as the Old Testament to Christians.

33 Mitchell G. Bard, “Facts About Jewish Settlements in the West Bank,” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/facts-about-jewish-settlements-in-the-west-bank.

34 See “The Six-Day War: Background and Overview,” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-six-day-war.

Temple Mount: The platform on Mt. Moriah where both Jewish Temples once stood and where the Dome of the Rock now stands.

Terrorism: Intentional targeting of innocent civilians with violence or intimidation to achieve a political goal.

Three Nos of Khartoum: Following their defeat in The Six-Day War, Arab leaders gathered for the Arab League's Khartoum conference in Sudan and adopted an official position against Israel that included three infamous Nos: no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with Israel.

Tikkun Olam: The Jewish idea of repairing the world; an action promoting social justice, usually taking the form of community service and humanitarian aid.

Torah: Refers to the Five Books of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

UNRWA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a relief and human development agency founded specifically to bring aid to Palestinian refugees. The Palestinian refugee problem was created when the Arab League refused to recognize Israel and instead started a war in 1948. The conflict led to many displaced Jews and Palestinians. Israel absorbed and assimilated the Jewish refugees while Arab countries never did the same for Palestinian refugees or their descendants, creating the current Palestinian refugee crisis.

U.S.-Israel Relationship: The United States was the first country to recognize Israel's independence in 1948, and the first country to recognize Israel's right to claim Jerusalem as its capital. Israel's close relationship with the United States has benefited both countries tremendously. Both countries strengthen each other through: national security cooperation, joint military training, shared military technology, mutual economic investment, and scientific research and development. More than a pragmatic alliance, the close friendship between our countries is based on shared democratic values. The Judeo-Christian worldview emphasizes personal freedom, universal civil rights, and places a deep value on all human life. This is the value system upon which America was founded, and it is reflected in Israel's vibrant society. Support for Israel has historically been one of the only issues that generates consistent bipartisan agreement among elected officials.

West Bank: Territory west of the Jordan River that Israel captured from Jordan in its defensive 1967 War. Often referred to by its biblical name, Judea and Samaria, this land is home to a Palestinian population of over two million, as well as about 200,000 Jewish residents. Under the terms of the Israeli-

PLO Declaration of Principles (Oslo I Accord), Palestinian autonomy has been extended from the Gaza Strip and Jericho to other areas of the West Bank.³⁵

Western Wall/Kotel/Wailing Wall: The only remaining structure from the Second Temple left standing after the Roman destruction in 70 A.D.

Yom Kippur War: In October 1973, Syrian and Egyptian forces, assisted by other Arab nations, launched a surprise attack on Israel on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year. Although placed on the defensive for the first two days, Israel eventually was able to counter-attack and repulse the Arab invaders. An internationally brokered ceasefire was established after three days of fighting.³⁶

Zionism: A nationalist and political movement of Jews and Jewish culture that supports the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland as a modern nation-state in the historical homeland of the Jewish people.

³⁵ See “The West Bank: Judea and Samaria,” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-west-bank-2.

³⁶ See “The Yom Kippur War: Background & Overview,” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-yom-kippur-war.

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