

The Land of Israel

To whom does it belong?



By [Dr. David R. Reagan](#)

The answer is really very simple. God gave the land of Israel to Abraham ([Genesis 17:8](#)) and to his descendants through Isaac ([Genesis 26:2-5](#)) and Jacob ([Genesis 28:1-4,13-14](#)).

That means the land belongs to the descendants of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. In other words, the land belongs to the children of Israel, referred to in the New Testament as the Jews ([Romans 1:16](#)).

Some immediately protest this claim by arguing that the Abrahamic Covenant has been abrogated either by the Cross or by the disobedience of the Jews. But the Bible clearly teaches that the Abrahamic Covenant is an everlasting one that is still in effect ([Genesis 17:7](#); [1 Chronicles 16:17-18](#); [Psalm 105:8-11](#); and [Romans 9:4](#)).

As to the effect of the Jew's rejection of Jesus, Paul specifically addresses this question in Romans 3. He asks a rhetorical question: "What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?" For almost two thousand years the Church has answered this question with a resounding, Yes! But Paul answers it differently. He says, "May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar..." ([Romans 3:1-4](#)).

Further, Paul states in Romans 11 that the disobedience of the Jews has not nullified the promises of God to them, "for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" ([Romans 11:29](#)). God's promises are going to be fulfilled to a believing remnant ([Romans 9: 27](#)). In fact, in [Romans 9:4](#), Paul specifically states that God's promises to the Jews are still valid.

Two Land Covenants

What most people do not know is that there are two Old Testament covenants pertaining to the land of Israel. The Abrahamic Covenant gives the title of the land to the Jews in perpetuity. A later covenant, the Mosaic Land Covenant — or Canaan Covenant — of Deuteronomy 28-30 defines the conditions for possession and enjoyment of the land.

This latter covenant is often referred to as the "Palestinian Covenant," but that is a misnomer, for the land was never called Palestine until after the second Jewish revolt in 132-135 A.D. At that time the Romans dubbed it "Palestine" to erase the memory of its Jewish heritage and to insult the Jews, for Palestine is the Latin word for Philistine, the ancient enemy of Israel.

Let me illustrate the role and relationship of these two covenants with a modern day example. Let's say you buy a car for a child of yours and put the title in the child's name. But you explain to the child that there are conditions for using the car — such as no speeding. And you warn your child that a speeding ticket will result in the loss of the privilege of driving the car for a period of two weeks. If the child gets a ticket and you lock the car up in the garage for two weeks, the car still belongs to the child because the child's name is on the title. But the child has temporarily lost possession of the vehicle.

In like manner, the Abrahamic Covenant (about 2,000 B.C.) gave the title of the land to the Jews for eternity. The Canaan Covenant (about 1,250 B.C.) defined the terms for possession and use of the land. Title and possession are not the same thing. The Jews have lost possession of the land from time to time, but they have never lost their God-given title.

The Canaan Covenant

The Land Covenant promised that Israel would become the prime nation of the world if the Jews were obedient to God ([Deuteronomy 28:1,13](#)). But the covenant warned that many curses would befall the people if they were disobedient ([Deuteronomy 28:15-37](#)), including exile from the land ([Deuteronomy 28:38-57](#)). The covenant warned further that if temporary exile did not restore the Jews to obedience, they would suffer worldwide dispersion and persecution ([Deuteronomy 28:58-68](#)). But nowhere are they told that their disobedience would lead to a loss of their title to the land.

In fact, the Land Covenant ends in chapter 30 with a prophecy and a promise that a day will come — after the Jews have experienced the curses of the covenant — when the Lord will restore them to their land once again: "The Lord will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. And the Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it" ([Deuteronomy 30:3-5](#)).

For almost 1,900 years the Jews wandered among the nations and suffered severe persecution, just as prophesied in Deuteronomy 28. During that time, their land became desolate as prophesied in Deuteronomy 29. But in this century, God has regathered them from the four corners of the earth, re-established them in their land, and transformed their land from wilderness to milk and honey — as prophesied in Deuteronomy 30.

The only prophecy left to be fulfilled in the Land Covenant is the spiritual salvation of the gathered remnant ([Deuteronomy 30:6-8](#)). That will occur soon when they repent and accept Yeshua as their Messiah.

The Abrahamic and Land Covenants make it clear that the Jewish people have both the right to the land of Israel and the right to be back in it today.

The Arab Covenant

Where does this leave the Arabs? As descendants of Abraham's son, Ishmael, they too have a promise, but it is not a land promise. The covenant God made with Ishmael had to do with the number of his descendants. Ishmael was promised that his descendants would be "multiplied exceedingly" ([Genesis 17:20](#)).

God has faithfully kept His promise to the descendants of Ishmael. Today there are 21 Arab states with a combined population of 175 million Arabs. There is only one Jewish state with a population of nearly 6 million. The Arab states contain 5.3 million square miles of oil rich land. Israel has only 8 thousand square miles of land with no major oil reserves that have been discovered, though plenty of natural gas off of the coast. That's a population ratio of 43 to 1 and a land ratio of 662 to 1!

The Palestinian Claim

But what about the Palestinian people? Don't they deserve a state? Keep in mind first of all that a Palestinian state never existed prior to this century. From 70 A.D. to 1948 the geographical area known as Palestine was never an independent state nor did the Arabs residing there have any consciousness of themselves as a separate nation of people. They regarded themselves as Syrians. Also, keep in mind that Jerusalem has never served as the capital of any Arab nation, whereas it has been considered the capital of the Jewish people since 1,000 B.C.

Also noteworthy is the fact that when the West Bank and Gaza were under Jordanian autonomy from 1948 to 1967, there was not any effort to create a separate Palestinian state. The PLO was formed during that time, not for the purpose of creating a Palestinian State, but rather for the purpose of exterminating the Jewish state.

Equally important is the fact that a Palestinian state already exists — and it is four times larger than Israel! The Palestinian state is Jordan. In the Balfour Declaration of 1917, the British originally promised all the Palestinian Mandate to the Jews as a national homeland. But in 1922 they broke that promise by using 77% of the Mandate to create the Arab state of Jordan. Today that state's population is 75% Palestinian.

The True Arab Goal

Then why do the Arabs demand the creation of a Palestinian state within the boundaries of current day Israel? The answer is simple. The real Arab goal is not the establishment of another Palestinian state. The true goal is the destruction of Israel.

In fact, now deceased former PLO leader Yasser Arafat originally spelled out his strategy to the Arab world, and the strategy was adopted officially by the PLO in 1974. It is called "the phased plan." Realizing that he could not defeat Israel with war or terrorism, he decided that the road to victory was deceptive diplomacy. He would talk about peace in return for land, while rallying the anti-Israeli Western powers to put pressure on the Israeli government to capitulate. Once he got a toe-hold in the land, he would then use that as a

base for renewed attacks on Israel. In short, he would take Israel in phases. It is a clever strategy that he spelled out in detail in many public speeches, just as Hitler outlined his strategy in detail in *Mein Kampf*.

The World's Demand

The world insists that the Jews must trade land for peace. But trading land for peace only whets the appetite of the aggressor. Israel has returned the Sinai to Egypt twice, and the Egyptians are still bristling with hostility toward Israel, even moreso since President Hosni Mubarak was taken out of power.

Furthermore, Israel doesn't have any territory to give away. It is one of the world's smallest nations. Turning the West Bank over to hostile Arabs would put the enemy of Israel within 11 miles of Tel Aviv. No government in its right mind would agree to such insanity.

Why then did the government of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (who is now Israel's President) agree to the initiation of the current peace process? The answer is deception. They were deceived by the PLO and the Western nations. Worst of all, they had deceived themselves.

Their self-deception was rooted in their Humanistic view of the world. Keep in mind that there was not a single believer in God among the top circle of Israeli leaders in the Rabin government. They were all either atheists or agnostics. Politically, they were either socialists or liberal humanists. This means that they believed in the basic goodness of Man. Translated into foreign policy, it means that they believed that if they treated their enemies with fairness and trust, their enemies would reciprocate. They simply could not bring themselves to believe that their enemies are determined to destroy them.

Imbecilic Policy

Ignoring all the harsh lessons of history, Rabin and Peres embarked on a policy of appeasement, hoping that they could satisfy the appetite of their enemies by giving them land for peace. History proves conclusively that appeasement always has the opposite effect — namely, it encourages the aggressor to want more.

Chamberlain found that out when he tried to satisfy Hitler by trading him the Sudetenland for peace. Chamberlain turned out to be a fool. But Rabin and Peres made Chamberlain look good. After all, he at least was not foolish enough to trade some of the territory of Britain for peace! No, he gave away another nation's land. Rabin and Peres sought to trade their own land, land that would put their sworn enemy in the very heart of their nation.

Implacable Enemies

What makes all this particularly ludicrous is the fact that Yasser Arafat and his successor Mahmoud Abbas did not even attempt to hide their true intentions. Arafat promised that in return for receiving autonomy over Gaza and Jericho he would have the PLO rescind the clauses in its covenant that call for the destruction of Israel. They got control over both

Gaza and Jericho, but to this day the Fatah/Hamas government still has not even attempted to get the PLO to amend its charter.

Even worse, Arafat continued to speak openly about his intention to take Jerusalem. The ink was hardly dry on the "peace" accord when he gave a speech in South Africa advocating a jihad to "liberate" Jerusalem. A jihad is a holy war! Again, Rabin and Peres made excuses for him, as did the U.S. State Department. They explained that Arafat was just saying what he had to say to placate his Arab enemies, and that he really didn't mean what he was saying. That's exactly what the Western European leaders kept saying about Hitler — "He doesn't really mean it." Well, he meant it, and so did Arafat and now Abbas today.

Insolent Allies

The Israeli leaders have also been deceived by the West. The United States and its Western allies have talked the government of Israel into doing something that every Israeli leader in the past said the nation would never do, and that is to place the survival of the country in the hands of foreigners. The Western nations keep whispering soothing assurances that they will "guarantee" the peace. But when the "peace" evaporates into all out war, Israel will discover that the Western world will back off and leave the nation to fend for itself. The bottom line is that Israel is no Kuwait. Israel has no oil, and Israel is full of Jews whom the world hates.

The current "peace" process is a prescription for war, and it will be the bloodiest war in the history of the Middle East. I believe it will be a war that will lead up to the climax of the current age, ushering in the Tribulation.

The Jews' Resolve

The Jews must stand firm in their determination to maintain the territorial integrity of the land God gave them. In doing so, they will bring the wrath of the nations upon themselves. The prophet Zechariah says that all the nations of the world will come together against Israel in the end times ([Zechariah 12:3](#)).

But God will sustain the Jewish people, for they are the "apple of His eye" ([Zechariah 2:8](#)). The Word of God says Philistia is finished — "melted away" ([Isaiah 14:29-32](#)). And the Word says that once the Jews are reestablished in their land, "they will never be rooted up again" ([Amos 9:14-15](#)).

Let all the world come together against God's Chosen. The Lord sits in the heavens and laughs ([Psalm 2:4](#)), for He has the wisdom and power to orchestrate all the evil of Man to the fulfillment of His purposes ([Psalm 76:10](#)).

Imminent Scenario

What is likely to happen next? Here is the most likely scenario that I can foresee at the moment. Hamas, the fundamentalist Arab terrorist organization funded by Iran, will take

complete control over the Palestinian autonomous areas. Hamas will then unleash a renewed reign of terror on Israel, continuing their lobbing of rockets from Gaza and Jericho to back up their demand for control of Jerusalem.

Abbas will orchestrate world pressure on Israel through the United Nations and the Vatican. In September of this year he will likely proclaim a Palestinian state and then demand that Jerusalem be "liberated" or internationalized.

Since even the most liberal Israelis take the position that Jerusalem is non-negotiable, the pressure will mount toward an inevitable conflict. If Hamas does not unleash the rockets first, then Abbas will ultimately return to the method he knows best — terror.

This will prompt an Israeli counter attack, which, in turn, will motivate the Arab states to come to the defense of the Palestinians. This could very well lead to Syria launching an all out missile attack on Tel Aviv in order to reclaim the Golan Heights and turn attention away from their civilian upheavals.

If that ominous event should occur, the Israelis will be forced to use their ultimate weapon to survive. They will strike Damascus with nuclear weapons. This will fulfill the prophecies that state that Damascus will cease to exist in the end times ([Isaiah 17:1-3](#) and [Jeremiah 49:23-27](#)).

In panic, the Arab states will then turn to their natural ally for help — the Russians. And the likelihood is that the Russian government will be only too happy to send an army into the Middle East to destroy Israel (and grab the Arab oil fields in the process).

That is when the Lord will step in personally to destroy the Russian hordes on the mountains of Israel in a supernatural way so that even the Israelis will realize that their deliverance came from the Lord and not from their own military might (Ezekiel 38 and 39).

As the whole world panics on the brink of World War III, a dynamic, charismatic political leader from Europe will step into the vacuum and propose an ingenious solution that will result in peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors — a peace that will enable the Jews to rebuild their Temple.

We live in exciting times when we can watch prophecy being fulfilled before our eyes. The events are ominous and overwhelming, but we can stand firm with great hope because we know that God is on His throne and that He is in control.

The events we are currently witnessing point to the imminent return of Yeshua, and when He returns, the world will be flooded with peace and righteousness, and Israel will enjoy the blessings of territorial integrity and peace forevermore ([Zechariah 8:1-8](#)).