



# MISHKAN

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# MISHKAN

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# **The Roots of Jerusalem — Something You Didn't Already Know?**

**Andreas Johansson**

## **Why and how do we get the impression we have about Jerusalem?**

Almost every newspaper and TV channel seem to be eager to give updates about Jerusalem, and the opinions and interpretations of what happens are often emotionally charged, in one direction or the other.

What is it that directs the perspective of the journalists? What kind of background information do each and every one of us use in order to interpret what we hear and see from Israel and the Middle East? This article will try to find some snapshots from the history of Jerusalem and its present time, and let these flashes contribute to a better overview, and a somewhat better understanding of the situation as well. I'm of course aware that my selection of "historical flashes" is due to my own biases and priorities of what is important. I hope these short, and not always fluent "historical flashes" will be an inspiration to search for more information about Jerusalem elsewhere.

## **Jerusalem — a beloved topic**

Jerusalem is mentioned 821 times in the Hebrew Bible and 137 times in the New Testament, and pretty often on TV and in the newspapers. Jerusalem is, however, not mentioned explicitly in the Quran even once, even if the expression "the Farthest Mosque<sup>1</sup>" is recorded in Surah 17:1, assuming Muhammad<sup>2</sup> travelled to this "Farthest Mosque." "The Farthest Mosque" is generally interpreted as referring to one of the two mosques on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

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<sup>1</sup> In Arabic "al-Aqsa".

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad died in 632 CE, while the precursor of the al-Aqsa Mosque was built several years later, in approximately 638, and the al-Aqsa Mosque itself was finished even later, in 705.





The Second Temple is no longer. In the excavation of the Western Wall the lower part of the temple wall still stands, and has been standing since King Herod. The stones are many meters long. Could it be that the workers were injured on the job from the effort of putting them in place?

When the Romans tore down the Temple in 70 CE they did a thorough job. The soldiers must have been standing on top of the Temple Mount pushing down stone after stone from the wall. Now, almost 2,000 years later, the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount is excavated, and the stones are still there just as the Roman soldiers threw them down.

Until the next war, the Bar Kochva war, or The Second Roman-Jewish War 132–135, all the Jesus-believing bishops in Jerusalem were “of the circumcision,” i.e. they were Jews and they identified as Jews. The Romans were not friendly to any Jewish group. They were fed up with the Jewish ambitions of independence. That's why circumcision was forbidden. Jews were threatened under penalty of death not to stay in the city now called Aelia Capitolina, while the province got its name changed from Judea to Syria-Palestine. In this way the Romans wanted to contribute into erasing all Jewish connections from the area. In the city, for a period called Aelia Capitolina, a main street was built, called *Cardo Maximus*. The stones from this street were excavated by the Israelis after the Six Days War.

### **Christian, Jewish, and Moslem rulers in Jerusalem**

The Roman Empire was Christianized in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and thus changed its name to The Byzantine Empire. Jerusalem, and the whole country as well, is full of church ruins from the Byzantine era. In Europe, church buildings from the Medieval Era with an age of 900 years would still be an attraction. The Byzantine buildings and ruins in The Holy













the first Protestant bishop ever in Jerusalem. He served in Christ Church that is situated right at the Jaffa Gate in the Old City.

### **The British Mandate Era**

World War I was about to end. Great Britain conquered Jerusalem in December 1917. In November 1917 the Balfour Declaration had been published, and as a result of this the British Mandate of Palestine was established. It's written a lot about this elsewhere.

Was the territory covered by the British Mandate of Palestine (today's Israel, including the West Bank and Gaza) seen as its own defined territory with its own identity as early as 1920? The fact that the Holy Land (together with Lebanon and great parts of today's Syria) was ruled by Egypt from



1831 to 1849, due to civil war in the Ottoman Empire, contributed to separate a Palestinian Arab identity. Still it's clear as well that The Holy Land all the time up to 1917 was divided into totally three different districts: two districts (The Sanjak of Nablus and of Acre) that were under the Province Government in Damascus (The Vilayet of Damascus), and a district that was directly under Istanbul (The Sanjak of Jerusalem). The area was a part of South Syria.

In 1920, a few years into the British Mandate government, there were Arab demonstrations in Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup> Among other things the demonstrations were against Jewish immigration, but also declarations of loyalty to King Faisal in Damascus (who was later expelled by the French as they took control over their French Mandate), and declarations that "Palestine is part of Syria," i.e. they demonstrated against what was then Syria being split up between the Mandate of Syria (French) and the Mandate of Palestine (British). An independent Palestine was not an issue fought for in 1920; rather the opposite. One of the most important newspapers in Arabic published in Jerusalem during the 1930s was called *Suriya janubiyya* – Southern Syria.<sup>13</sup> The word "nationalism" meant – during the last decades of the Ottoman Era and the first years of

<sup>12</sup> <http://jcpa.org/article/who-are-the-palestinians/>

<sup>13</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Israeli Palestine Conflict One Hundred Years of War*, p.95.

the Mandate Era – first and foremost Arab nationalism (as opposed to Ottomanism and Turkish nationalism). One of the reasons for abandoning the Arab nationalism of “Greater Syria” was that the territory corresponding to the Ottoman area of Greater Syria had become divided into one British and one French mandate, and thus the Arab nationalism of “Greater Syria” was no longer practicable. Another reason for transferring the nationalism of “Greater Syria” into a more regional Palestinian nationalism was the confrontations with Zionism.

On the eve of Yom Kippur in 1928<sup>14</sup> some chairs were set out for elderly Jews who were to pray at the Western Wall, and in addition a small screen was put up to divide men and women worshippers according to Jewish law. This had been done the previous year as well, but this year the Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini protested that the status quo was broken and the next day, on the very day of Yom Kippur, British police raided the Western Wall area during the prayer time and pulled the chairs from under elderly worshippers. The Mufti was jubilant, but warned that the Jews were on their way to take possession of the Mosque of al-Aqsa gradually.

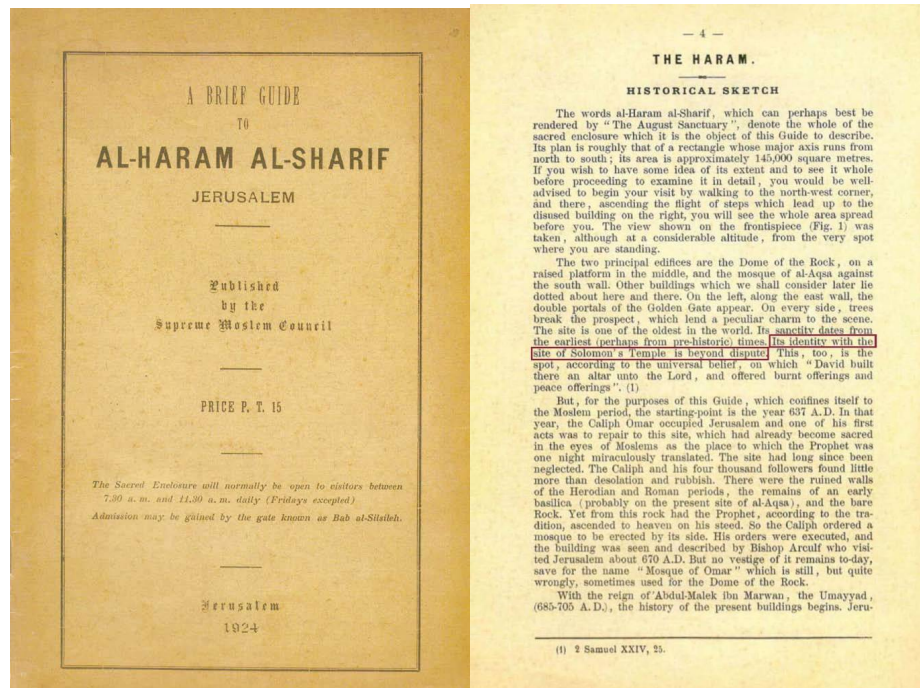
Today it's often claimed by Palestinian Moslems that there has never been a Jewish temple in Jerusalem<sup>15</sup>, while in a guide that The Supreme Moslem Council issued in 1924 while Haj Amin al-Husseini was the leader of the Council, it's stated that it's beyond dispute that the place of the Mosque of the Rock and the al-Aqsa mosque is the same place where the Temple of Solomon stood.

Hilda Andersson, from Scania in Sweden, lived for many years on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (1927–1948). She was a good friend of her neighboring poor Arabs, and she was often invited to weddings and other celebrations. She was a nurse and the neighbors could come to her private clinic and get treatment for free. She had friends among Jews and Arabs, and saw herself as a missionary. She actively attended the congregation of Christ Church.

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<sup>14</sup> S.S. Montefiore; *Jerusalem, The Biography*, p. 524.

<sup>15</sup> <sup>15</sup> See e.g. an interview with the Palestinian ambassador to Great Britain Manuel Hassassian from Oct 25<sup>th</sup> 2017, clip #6285 <https://www.memri.org/tv/palestinian-ambassador-hassassian-hit-israeli-student-claimed-felafel-jewish-national-food>.



The last spring Hilda was alive, the spring of 1948, she tells about much unrest in the city and a lot of rumors. She tells about her bus trips down from Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, where the passengers talked a lot in Arabic about how they were to kill Jews. Hilda was pretty critical of how the British handled the Mandate of Palestine toward the end of its existence. Hilda supported the establishment of a Jewish state and claimed that there was space enough for the Jews all over the world to come back without having to move one single Arab.

For many reasons, both Arabs and Jews had to move and flee in 1948 and the years after, but Hilda Andersson was never able to experience this. On Sunday March 25th, less than two months before the State of Israel was proclaimed, Hilda was on her way home from a church service and was shot in the valley of Kedron. It's not known who was behind these shots.

## **Jerusalem Is Divided and United**

The war in 1948, which the Israelis call the Independence War or Liberation War and the Palestinians call al-Naqba (the Catastrophe) is described by historians as a “dirty war.” Geopolitically it's not very hard to understand why the different active sides, out of their world view and their possibilities, did what they did during that war, and in the same way it's easy to understand why the evaluations afterwards of what happened are so different, all according to world view, ethical system, and perspective among Israelis, Palestinians, and international assessors of the conflict.

The results of a war are still about human beings. Personally I have listened to the story of an Arab family who used to live in western Jerusalem, and then the Israeli soldiers came and told the family they temporarily had to leave their house and go eastwards in the city. After the war was finished and Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan, no Israeli soldier came to tell this Arab family to move back into their house in western Jerusalem. The representative of the family, who told me this, was very critical of the whole project of the “State of Israel”.

I have also met people who used to live in the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem, and their Hebrew accent reveals their origin in the Middle East. The war of 1948 came, and when (Trans)Jordan occupied East Jerusalem, the Jews had to leave the Old City. This Jewish family settled down in some abandoned houses in Tel Aviv.

Jerusalem was divided for 19 years. Walls, barbed wire, and snipers. West Jerusalem was the capital of Israel. Knesset, the Israeli parliament, was localized to Jerusalem in December 1949. No Jews could come to the Western Wall to pray, since the Western Wall back then belonged to Transjordan. Transjordan kept its capital in Amman.

June 1967 was the Six Days War. The part of the war that was fought in Jerusalem started when Jordanian troops started shooting. Israel conquered Jerusalem and the whole of the West Bank and made Jerusalem one city again. There have been many discussions about that unity.

## **Some Encounters with Today's Jerusalemites**

It's easy to think, especially for those not living in the area, that “every Israeli thinks like this” and “every Palestinian reacts like that.” It's too easy when a western journalist would interview a representative for a group that “then everybody would be the same.”













even an infrastructure for the needs of Christian visitors was developed — the pilgrims needed places to sleep and eat.

When Egeria came to the Holy Land, there were already traditions for travelers to follow. They could read and hear from the reports of earlier pilgrims where to go and what to do. From the text of Egeria we can see that in many places, the local priests and monks were accustomed to welcoming visitors.

After Egeria's visit, the development of Jerusalem continued. New roads, new churches, and new monasteries were built. The Madaba map from the 6<sup>th</sup> century illustrates beautifully how Jerusalem looked in the Byzantine period.

### **The Holy Sepulchre as Egeria Saw It**

From a Christian point of view, the center of Jerusalem and the main reason to travel there was Golgotha, with the Holy Sepulchre. In Egeria's times, it was clear for all that this was the true site of the tomb of Jesus. Pilgrims from all over the Empire came there and worshipped together with the local church, and a rich liturgical life flourished there.

The church complex was very different from what can be seen today. The buildings Egeria visited have been demolished and rebuilt several times, in particular by caliph Hakim in 1009 CE, but the site is the same.

Egeria most probably came to the church through the main entrance by the main road, *Cardo*. She came first into a court. The complex she saw next consisted of two main parts: the great Constantinian basilica, called *Martyrium*, and a rotund edifice called *Anastasis*, that is, Resurrection. Egeria writes that *Martyrium* was used for Eucharistic celebrations, but it also was the place where the bishop was teaching the catechumens during Lent. Between them was an open courtyard, which Egeria calls "Before the Cross," and in its corner, there was a chapel called "Behind the Cross." There the veneration of the Cross occurred (37.1). All these places had their own functions in daily worship and special festivities. Why the basilica was called *Martyrium* (*martyrium* is usually a name for a tomb of a martyr) is not clear, but Egeria thinks that it refers to the passion of Jesus on Golgotha (31.1).

Egeria calls the tomb a cave, but in fact, there was a little edifice with a roof. Inside was always a lamp with a light, and from there the light was collected every day at *lucernare*. Before it was a portico with four columns and a screen. Egeria mentions several times how the bishop went alone behind the screen to pray, and when he comes out, he blesses everyone (e.g. 24.2-5). Everywhere were candles and lamps.























































































the gentiles are fulfilled.” The exile endured by Yeshua in his suffering and death was not primarily the exile that began in the distant past when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and that continued to his own day, but the intensified exile which was coming upon his people in the near future at the hands of the Romans. Moreover, Luke portrays Jerusalem as both the enduring capital and international center of the Jewish people, and also as the capital and international center of the community of Yeshua’s disciples — and indeed of the world itself. The agony and humiliation of the city at the hands of the Romans inspired in his work a profound sense of grief rather than exultation.

We find this complex vision of exile and restoration not only in Luke but in the synoptic tradition as a whole. No better witness to this complexity exists than the story of Yeshua’s teaching concerning feasting and fasting. All three synoptic gospels contain this pericope with little significant variation. Here is Luke’s version:

<sup>33</sup>Then they said to him, “John’s disciples, like the disciples of the Pharisees, frequently fast and pray, but your disciples eat and drink.”

<sup>34</sup>Jesus said to them, “You cannot make wedding-guests fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? <sup>35</sup>The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.” (Luke 5:33–35)

N.T. Wright’s comments on this unit are instructive:

Fasting in this period was not, for Jews, simply an ascetic discipline, part of the general practice of piety. It had to do with Israel’s present condition: she was still in exile. More specifically, it had to do with commemorating the destruction of the Temple. Zechariah’s promise that the fasts would turn into feasts could come true only when YHWH restored the fortunes of his people. That, of course, was precisely what Jesus’ cryptic comments implied.<sup>56</sup>

Wright helpfully characterizes the practice of fasting as a corporate Jewish response to exile. He also rightly sees Yeshua’s feasting rather than fasting as a sign that Yeshua is the one who will bring the exile to an end. However, in order to fit this text

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<sup>56</sup> Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 433.



























































































































Jerusalem in support of the Arab Higher Committee's opposition to Zionism. Hajj Amin was able to rally a force of about two thousand Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood volunteers who fought in the Negev against the nascent Israeli state, and to field a Palestinian militia under the leadership of Qassam al-Ahmad, who was killed at Qastel and who has become the eponymous inspiration for the armed brigade of Hamas today.

The Muslim Brotherhood became the channel for Salafist ideas during this time. Outlawed for decades in Egypt and Syria, after 1948 clandestine cells operated in Muslim towns and villages in the West Bank and Gaza under Transjordanian and Jordanian rule, even when the cells in Egypt and Syria were practically wiped out. As a result of the 1948 war, Transjordan took possession of the Temple Mount and the administration of waqf properties and the Islamic courts in the West Bank as protector and guardian of the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem and Haram al-Khalil in Hebron in 1950. The Hashemite dynasty administered the Islamic institutions in Jerusalem until 1988, when King Hussein relinquished his sovereign claim to the Palestinian National Authority.

In 1964, President Gamal Abd Al-Nasser, Egypt, created the Palestinian Liberation Organization to fight a guerilla war against Israel. The PLO's Muslim leadership included members of the Muslim Brotherhood, but the majority were secular nationalists, many of whom were nominal Christians. For the next thirty years, the PLO waged battle ostensibly with the support of the majority of all Palestinians, and, although the corruption and authoritarian nature of Arafat's rule became well-known, they were willing to overlook his flaws in order to present a unified front against Israel, to share in his increasing power and international status, and to hold onto some sense of dignity. Egypt took over the Gaza Strip in 1948 using what Nasser claimed was the "State of Palestine" to infiltrate groups of Palestinian fighters into Israel until his ignominious defeat in 1967. In the 1970s and early 80s, Israel permitted Saudi Arabia to fund an alternative group of Muslim administrators and officials, which eventually led to the establishment of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, as the Gazan branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. For disgruntled Palestinians, Hamas emerged as an alternative to the failed policies of the PLO in the late 1980s. Jordanian employees of the Islamic institutions in the West Bank were sympathetic to, if not members of, the Muslim Brotherhood.

On the eve of WWII, Hajj Amin al-Husseini began organizing jihadist cells throughout the Arab Middle East. The Brotherhood infamously allied with the Nazis during the Second World War, bringing ignominy to Palestinian cause. The British outlawed the Brotherhood and sought the arrest of the mufti, who fled to Syria. He encouraged European Muslims to fight with the Nazis. Among the biggest losers of WWII were the thousands of Palestinians who worked for the British during the war.<sup>67</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood is a modernist movement, inspired not only by Islam, but by revolutionary Marxism.<sup>68</sup> Their greatest critic until his occultation, Palazzi viewed the Muslim Brotherhood as the “main instrument” for what he called the “Wahhabinisation of the Arab milieu.” Its founder, Hassan al-Banna, was, in his view, “uneducated in the Islamic sciences.” He called the Brotherhood the “basic militants of Islam.” The Brotherhood, and the followers of groups that grew out of the Brotherhood, like al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Da’esh, are all “from a religious point of view — laypersons”

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<sup>67</sup> Ofer Aderet, “12,000 Palestinians Fought for U.K. in WWII Alongside Jewish Volunteers, Historian Finds,” Haaretz, May 30, 2019, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-historian-12-000-palestinians-fought-for-u-k-in-wwii-alongside-jewish-volunteers-1.7309369> <accessed June 2, 2019>.

<sup>68</sup> During my doctoral studies in Jerusalem in the Islamic Court from 1985–7 I interviewed Shaykh ‘As’ad al-Imam al-Husseini, the former imam of Al-Aqsa Mosque during the Mandate, about his involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood in that era. He explained that during the Ottoman era, the Muslims of Jerusalem were members of the *Naqshabandiyyah Sufi* movement. When the Young Turks ousted — and executed — Arabs nationalists in Istanbul, they turned to the British who were then supporting them in Arabia. However, they began to oppose British imperialism following the First World War. Disappointed that an Arab State had not been established in Syro-Palestine, and following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Muslims in Mandatory Palestine reorganized themselves into the new Muslim Brotherhood being formulated then by Hassan al-Banna. The connection between Hajj Amin al-Husseini and Hassan al-Bana is poorly understood, but after the abolition of the caliphate in 1924, and the creation of the Supreme Muslim Council and the British appointment of Husseini as the Grand Mufti, the relationship between the Egyptian Brotherhood and the Palestinian branch was close indeed, as was evidenced during the Second World War. British missteps caused by their cold divide and rule policies reified political antagonisms between Jewish Zionists and Palestinian Muslims and Christians. The British established Muslim-Christian Associations in Mandatory Palestine, laying the groundwork of the secular Palestinian Nationalism that took root following the Second World War. The Muslim Brotherhood, condemned for its alliances with the Nazis and for its defeat by the Zionist forces during the Israeli War of Independence, disappeared from view for many decades, surfacing again only in 1987 when Hamas officially took on its mantle.

who lack training in “the basic... Islamic sciences....”<sup>69</sup> Like Hajj Amin Al-Husseini, who was a minor officer in the Ottoman Army, members of the Brotherhood continue to be “appointed as ‘imams’ of important mosques....” Under the Ottomans, the Ministry of *Awqaf* and Religious Affairs issued certificates and diplomas in Islamic Law to regulate the speech and teachings of religious officials; the seminaries in Saudi Arabia and Egypt took over this role in the twentieth century. Whereas in the nineteenth century, the Ottoman reformers had pursued diplomatic relations on the basis of international law and treaties in an effort to end the wars on its frontiers to the West and East, in the twentieth century the Salafist Wahhabis adhered to perpetual holy war against non-Muslims. Ultimately, the Ottoman efforts and modern Turkey was established upon the basis of ethnic nationalism, a basis that led to the expulsion and eradication of the Armenians and Assyrians from its much-reduced territories. A key issue for the Brothers has always ever been its infamously implacable rejection of Zionism.

Paralleling these developments, in 1924, the Supreme Muslim Council accepted the Hashemite King Hussein Bin Ali as the custodian of the *Haram al-Sharif* and Christian sites in Palestine. Under the terms of the mandate, the Hashemites followed British policies carefully, and, in 1951 annexed East Jerusalem and the West Bank.<sup>70</sup> Following the Israeli War of Independence and the Palestinian *Nakba* in 1948, the Transjordanians, who were the allies of the British during the Second World War, occupied the West Bank, including Jerusalem. The restoration of the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque to Hashemite control enhanced their legitimacy as Muslim leaders. Palestinian and Transjordanian families — Christians and Muslims — developed close relationships, and the demographic profile of Jordan became more complex. The Arab tribes who had developed Transjordan were now increasingly in the shadow of the urban professionals who fled to Transjordan following the *Nakba* — as the Palestinians call their catastrophe, which many believed was brought upon them by Hajj Amin al-Husseini. Amman reorganized the Palestinian government under Hashemite administration, transforming the kingdom from an Arabian one to a

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<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Rood, “Diagnosis: Historical Amnesia.”

<sup>70</sup> Philip Mattar. *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 21–3.

compound society blending the Arabian tribes with Palestinian urban and rural elites. Egypt declared Gaza “Palestine” administered by Cairo.

Until the end of the Six Day War, under Jordanian control, the Palestinian Muslims came to understand the “Two Sanctuaries” as Jerusalem and Hebron, rivalling Saudi Arabia’s Mecca and Medina. In 1949, Transjordan was renamed the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Following the armistice, rumors began circulating that Lebanon and Jordan were preparing for impending peace talks.

King ‘Abdullah opposed to the internationalization of the Old City of Jerusalem as a *corpus separatum* — a separate enclave under “international control” — a concept whose roots go back to the idea of a Christian protectorate over Jerusalem in the nineteenth century.<sup>71</sup> He explained:

The demand for the internationalization of the Jerusalem was the strangest and most unbalanced of the Arab national aims. It was one that disregarded Arab rights and interests by handing over to international control and wrenching Jerusalem from the possession of the Arabs. It was my duty to stand resolutely and firmly in the defence of the Arab character of the Holy City and resist internationalization in all its aspects.<sup>72</sup>

On 16 July, 1951, a former Prime Minister of Lebanon was assassinated, and four days later, on 20 July, 1951, King Abdullah of Jordan was assassinated on the stairs of Al-Aqsa Mosque. His grandson, the future King Hussein, was also hit but a medal pinned to his chest at the insistence of his grandfather deflected the shot. The assassin was a Palestinian from the Husseini clan. Media reports asserted that the assassin was from “a secret order based in Jerusalem known only as ‘the Jihad.’”<sup>73</sup> This was a clear signal that the Muslim Brotherhood would kill any Arab leader who entertained notions of making peace with Israel. From that day until the end of the Six Day War, Transjordan’s policies in East Jerusalem were driven by the Salafist agenda. Although the Hashemites and

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<sup>71</sup> Bernard Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) and Ruth Kark, *American Consuls in the Holy Land, 1832–1914* (Detroit: Wayne State, 1994).

<sup>72</sup> Quoted by Michael C. Hudson in ‘Asali, K.J., ed. *Jerusalem in History* (NY: Olive Branch Press, 1990), 261.

<sup>73</sup> Paul Ghali, “Constant Threats on Lives Tie Hands of Arab Leaders,” *Corpus Christi Times*. (4 August 1951).

Israel engaged in secret diplomatic relations during this era, Arab thinking about Jewish sovereignty was framed by resistance. Mamilla was in a No Man's Land, and for many years after the area was nearly abandoned, a potent symbol of the Arab–Israeli War. By 1965, “A Brief Guide to the Dome of the Rock and Haram al-Sharif,” published by the Supreme *Awqaf* Council, completely avoided mentioning the ancient Jewish temples. Despite the fact that Muslim texts and historians had for centuries associated the Temple Mount with David and Solomon, that narrative was expunged in favor of the Salafist position denying its Jewish connections.

### **Palestinian Nationalism**

The Israeli victory in 1967 united Jerusalem and brought the entire West Bank under Jerusalem's control. Transjordan became Jordan, and the *Waqf* administration, was left under Jordanian control with Israeli acquiescence. In 1964, the Palestinian Liberation Organization was created with the support of the Soviet Union. Palestinian nationalism metamorphosed into a secular movement — uniting Palestinian Christians and Muslims against Israel.<sup>74</sup> It also united the Palestinian Resistance against the Hashemites, culminating in the failed rebellion in Jordan in what became known as Black September, 1970. From the point on, the Jordanians opposed the Palestinian Liberation Organization, driving them into Lebanon, which in turn led to the destructive Israeli war against them, a war that drove many of Israel's Maronite allies to emigrate to Israel after 1982.

Israel's relationship with the walled city has been fraught. On the one hand Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the Jewish people, but on the other, it is a real place with possibly the most complex history of all the cities in the world. Reluctant to disturb the historical status quo over Jerusalem's holy sites, the State of Israel and the Jerusalem Municipality have worked at cross-purposes since 1967.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> For a good history of these developments, see Yitzhak Reiter and Jon Seligman, “1917 to the Present: *Al-Haram Al-Sharif*/Temple Mount (*Har HaBayit*) and the Western Wall” in Grabar and Kedar, 231–273, and Nazmi al-Jubei, “1917 to the Present: Basic Changes, But Not Dramatic: *Al-Haram Al-Sharif* in the Aftermath of 1967,” *ibid*, 275–289.

<sup>75</sup> W.C. Harrop, former U.S. Ambassador to Israel, 1992–93, review of Amir S. Chesin, Bill Hutman and Avi Melamed, *Separate and Unequal: The Inside Story of Israeli Rule in East Jerusalem* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999). *Middle East Policy*, 7(June 2000), [http://www.mepc.org/journal\\_vol7/harrop.html](http://www.mepc.org/journal_vol7/harrop.html) <accessed April 24, 2010>. 31 of Jerusalem.

In 1983 *Mufti Sa'ad al-Din Al-'Alami*, the well-trained Muslim official with over fifty years of experience as a teacher, judge, and jurisconsult, published an account of the Supreme Muslim Council's relationship with Israel concerning the Temple Mount. The book includes a collection of documents and photographs pertaining to all events and issues relating to the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa, and Muslim responses to them, since 1967. During this period, Muslims were alarmed that Jewish and Christian groups began to talk about the rebuilding of the Temple on what Al-'Alami called "*Jabal al-Bayt*" "The Mountain of the House" — literally "Temple Mount" where the "buildings of the two mosques, *Al-Aqsa* and *Al-Sakhra* — stand."<sup>76</sup> His work reveals the political tension between the traditional Muslim and the Salafist versions of sacred history and Jerusalem's place in Islam, between recognizing the Jewish history of the Temple Mount and denying it.

In 1987, the Muslim Brotherhood was reborn in Gaza as Hamas. The 1988 Hamas Charter declares that all of Palestinian land is *Waqf* — endowed in perpetuity to the Muslim *ummah* — asserts in Article 11:

The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgment Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or any part of it, should not be given up. Neither a single Arab country nor all Arab countries, neither any king or president, nor all the kings and presidents, neither any organization nor all of them, be they Palestinian or Arab, possess the right to do that. Palestine is an Islamic Waqf land consecrated for Moslem generations until Judgment Day. This being so, who could claim to have the right to represent Moslem generations till Judgment Day? <sup>77</sup>

Palestinian scholar Nur Masalha has characterized Hamas's claim that Palestine is an Islamic *waqf* as "the main innovative idea" that the Islamic Resistance Movement

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<sup>76</sup> Sa'ad Al-Din Al-Alami, *Documents of the Supreme Muslim Council 1967-1984* (In Arabic) (Jerusalem: Dar Al-Taba'ah Al-Arabiyya, 1984), 11.

<sup>77</sup> "Hamas Covenant: The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement, 18 August 1988," The Avalon Project at Yale Law School <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/hamas.htm> <accessed June 4, 2019>.

has contributed to the Arab-Israel Conflict.<sup>78</sup> The Hamas charter refers to the land of Palestine as *waqf*, that is, set aside as an eternal charitable endowment for the Muslim community. However, to the contrary, the claim that all Palestine is *waqf* has been the official position of the Muslim Palestinian political establishment since before the days of the British Mandate. Despite the fact that it does not fit with the theory or practice of Islamic land tenure during any other period in Muslim history. This is exactly the disastrous position of the Palestinian leadership that led to the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948. Hamas reduces Islamic law and history by imagining the Salafist dream:

This is the law governing the land of Palestine in the Islamic Sharia (law) and the same goes for any land the Moslems have conquered by force, because during the times of (Islamic) conquests, the Moslems consecrated these lands to Moslem generations till the Day of Judgment. It happened like this: When the leaders of the Islamic armies conquered Syria and Iraq, they sent to the Caliph of the Moslems, Umar bin-el-Khatab,[sic] asking for his advice concerning the conquered land - whether they should divide it among the soldiers, or leave it for its owners, or what? After consultations and discussions between the Caliph of the Moslems, Omar bin-el-Khatab and companions of the Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, it was decided that the land should be left with its owners who could benefit by its fruit. As for the real ownership of the land and the land itself, it should be consecrated for Moslem generations till Judgment Day. Those who are on the land, are there only to benefit from its fruit.

This position would set into motion the disastrous failure of the Palestinian Authority to negotiate a bilateral treaty of peace with Israel as envisioned by the Oslo Peace Process. Not knowing that Hamas would succeed in scuttling the process, on July 28, 1988, King Hussein of Jordan relinquished the Hashemite claim to Jerusalem, as well as the right to govern the West Bank or the Palestinians. The Islamic court employees were now to be paid by the PLO, preparing the way for the Palestinian National Authority, led by the PLO, to take over the administration of Islamic institutions in

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<sup>78</sup> Nur Masalha, *The Bible and Zionism: Invented Traditions, Archeology, and Post-Colonialism in Palestine-Israel* (London: Zed, 2007), 233.

Jerusalem. Later that year the PLO issued a Declaration of Palestinian Independence. From 1970–1988 Jordan (which many Zionists long considered the “Arab State” originally envisioned in 1920 — an idea that seems to now be permanently repudiated due to Jordanian demands on the Trump administration relative to its “Deal of the Century”) remained deeply involved in Palestinian affairs. Under the terms of the 1994 Israeli-Jordanian Peace Treaty, the Hashemite family remains the Custodian of the Islamic and Christian Holy Places in Palestine, and continues to support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The Oslo Accords recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and allowed the exiled leadership to return to the still-disputed territories in 1993. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan remains the Custodians of the *Haram al-Sharif* to this day, and the *waqf* continues to be administered by it, now in coordination with the Palestinian Authority. Palestinian Christian lands and properties: i.e. the Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Armenian, Syriac, Ethiopian and Copt churches, monasteries, hostels, hospitals, residences, and agricultural lands, continue to be administered as perpetual endowments under Muslim sovereignty — a situation that has lasted since the Crusades and even dating back to Byzantine times. This sheds light on the recent pronouncement that Jordan’s King Abdullah is asserting his control over the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as the protector of the Christians of Palestine is a startling reminder of the persistence of Muslim sovereignty into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an ironic situation in the aftermath of the recent Salafist jihad against Iraqi and Syrian Christians.<sup>79</sup>

To hold onto its legitimacy, the Palestinian Authority, established in 1993, cooperated fitfully with Hamas until civil war that broke out between them in 2005 when the latter took over Gaza, killing and expelling all members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Until the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, The Palestinian Authority has used the term “*Haramayn*” — “the Two Sanctuaries” primarily to refer to the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa, although it sometimes referred also to Hebron and Jerusalem.<sup>80</sup> Suddenly the position of the Supreme Muslim Council overtly adapted the Salafist

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<sup>79</sup> Daoud Kuttab, “King Abdullah Vows to Complete Restoration of Church of Holy Sepulchre,” *Al-Monitor*, May 20, 2019, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/05/jordan-king-donation-restoration-church-jerusalem.html> <accessed June 2, 2019>.

<sup>80</sup> Rood, *Sacred Law in the Holy City*, 24–71. See also Grabar and Kedar, 182.

position. Ikramah Sabri, then *Mufti* of Jerusalem, famously claimed at the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Intifada that, “There is no evidence that Solomon’s Temple was in Jerusalem; probably it was in Bethlehem or in some other place.”<sup>81</sup> At that time, Palazzi castigated the Palestinian Authority for repudiating “... the Jewish heritage [of Islam] as a whole, with the clear attempt to remove it even from historical memory.” Palazzi lamented the sad fact that Muslims are so ignorant of their own history that they are “really inclined to take these words for granted, notwithstanding the fact that they contradict both historical evidence and Islamic sources.”<sup>82</sup> The issue was so provocative that the *Shaykh of Al-Azhar*, the head of Islam’s most venerable and greatest religious university, located in Cairo, in an article entitled “Does Solomon’s Temple Exist Under the Current Al-Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem?” published in *Al-Ahram*, November 2, 2000, felt compelled to explain the connection of *al-Aqsa* to the historical Jewish Temples.

In July 2009, Avi Diskin, head of the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency), told the Israeli cabinet that Egyptian cleric Sheikh Youssef al-Qaradawi of the Muslim Brotherhood “had allocated some \$25 million for the purchase of property and to build Hamas charitable institutions that would expand the group’s reach in Jerusalem.” In addition, Diskin told the Israeli cabinet that although “there has been a drop in terrorist activity both in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank,” foreigners affiliated with the global Islamic jihad movement were trickling into Gaza, and that “ Hamas continued to develop its armament capabilities inside Gaza, even though the organization was not currently carrying out attacks.”<sup>83</sup> This activity points to the importance of properly understanding the evidence in the Islamic law records relating to the historic role of the Islamic institutions in administering Islamic *awaqf* in practical and political terms in order to prove that such claims cannot be substantiated according to Islamic law.

Amid clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police on the Temple Mount in October 2015 the *mufti* of Jerusalem again reiterated the claim that there was never a Jewish temple atop the Temple Mount, and that the site has been home to a mosque

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<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Rood, “Diagnosis: Historical Amnesia.”

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Rood, “Diagnosis: Historical Amnesia,” 2006.

<sup>83</sup> Herb Keinon, “Limits on Settlement Freeze Being Set,” *Jerusalem Post*, July 19, 2009.

“since the creation of the world.”<sup>84</sup> Sheikh Muhammad Ahmad Hussein told Channel 2 that the site was a mosque “3,000 years ago, and 30,000 years ago” and has been “since the creation of the world.” “This is the Al-Aqsa Mosque that Adam, peace be upon him, or during his time, the angels built,” the *mufti* said.

In 2016 Jordan and the Palestinian Authority put forward a UNESCO resolution that ignored Jewish and Christian ties to the Temple Mount and referred to the controversial holy site solely by its Muslim names, “Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif,” and defined it only as “a Muslim holy site of worship.”<sup>85</sup> It will be interesting to see if the Jordanians and Saudis will take up Palazzi’s brave call for a return to the traditional Muslim view of Jerusalem. Before he vanished, he pled with his fellow Muslims:

To remember the historical milieu compels every sincere observer to admit there is no necessary connection between *al-miraj* and sovereign rights over Jerusalem since, in the time when the Prophet... consecrated the place with his footprints on the Stone, the city was not a part of the Islamic State – whose borders were then limited to the Arabian Peninsula – but under Byzantine administration. Moreover, although radical preachers try to remove this from exegesis, the Glorious Quran expressly recognizes that Jerusalem plays for the Jewish people the same role that Mecca has for Muslims. We read in *Surah al-Baqarah*: “... They would not follow thy direction of prayer (*qiblah*), nor art though to follow their direction of prayer; nor indeed will they follow each other’s direction of prayer...” All Quranic annotators explain that “thy *qiblah*” is obviously the Kaabah of Mecca, while “their *qiblah*” refers to the Temple Site of

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<sup>84</sup>Ilan Ben Zion, “Jerusalem mufti: Temple Mount never housed Jewish Temple,” *Times of Israel*, 25 October 2015. [http://www.timesofisrael.com/jerusalem-mufti-denies-temple-mount-ever-housed-jewish-shrine/?fb\\_comment\\_id=1019824818038421\\_2274578679229689](http://www.timesofisrael.com/jerusalem-mufti-denies-temple-mount-ever-housed-jewish-shrine/?fb_comment_id=1019824818038421_2274578679229689) <accessed 22 May 2019>.

<sup>85</sup>Raphael Ahren, “UNESCO adopts another resolution ignoring Jewish link to Temple Mount,” *Times of Israel*, 26 October 2016. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/unesco-adopts-another-resolution-erasing-jewish-link-to-temple-mount/> <accessed 22 May 2019> and “UNESCO adopts controversial resolution on Jerusalem Holy Sites,” *The Guardian*, October 26 2016. [www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/26/unesco-adopts-controversial-resolution-on-jerusalem-holy-sites-israel](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/26/unesco-adopts-controversial-resolution-on-jerusalem-holy-sites-israel) <accessed 22 May 2019>.

Jerusalem. To quote just one of the most important of them we read in Qadi Baydawi's *Commentary*: "Verily, in their prayers Jews orientate themselves toward the Rock (*al-Sakhrah*), while Christians orientate themselves eastward...."

Palazzi reminded Muslims that,

As opposed to what sectarian radicals continuously claim, the Book that is a guide for those who abide by Islam—as we have just shown—recognizes Jerusalem as the Jewish direction of prayer... After... deep reflection about the implications of this approach, it is not difficult to understand that separation in directions of prayer is a mean[s] to decrease possible rivalries in [the] management of [the] Holy Places. For those who receive from Allah the gift of equilibrium and the attitude to reconciliation, it should not be difficult to conclude that, as no one is willing to deny Muslims... complete sovereignty over Mecca, from an Islamic point of view... there is not any sound theological reason to deny an equal right of Jews over Jerusalem.<sup>86</sup>

We have seen that those who resisted the Islamic State paid with their very lives in defense of their museums, artifacts, and historical sites.<sup>87</sup> Inspired by them, we should insist on nothing less than renewed commitment to the appreciation and study of the Jerusalem's legacy. Telling the truth about history in all its complexity will be the strongest antidote to the politicized historical amnesia that prevents us from learning the truth about history. Israelis and Palestinians — as joint heirs to the promises of the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine share a history that has been told in the language of the political rhetoric of toponyms. Only a generous theology of history will enable us to discern the work of redemption taking place in Israel and among her neighbors.

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<sup>86</sup>Quoted in Rood, "Diagnosis: Historical Amnesia."

<sup>87</sup>Khaled Asaad, the 82-year old scholar who had worked for more that 50 years as Palmyra's head of antiquities was tortured and killed by ISIS militants. I dedicate this article to his memory. Mark Strauss, "Archeologist's Execution Highlights Risks to Historian's Guardians," *National Geographic*, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/08/150820-syria-archaeologist-isis-protecting-artifacts/> <accessed June 2, 2019>.

Jerusalem, in the words of an Islamic court document written in the nineteenth century, was once the “desire of all the nations.”<sup>88</sup> The Israeli Supreme Court, in a decision about the excavation of King David’s Palace in the tiny village of Silwan just outside the walls of the Old City in East Jerusalem, ruled in favor of the dig, explaining that

the rich historical past of the country... is folded layer upon layer in its earth. The chronicles of the country and the land, the nations who dwelt there, have been relegated to the pages of history books, buried over the course of years under the earth and have turned into its hidden treasures. ...Though Israel is a young country, it has deep roots in the history of mankind and throughout the length and breadth of the country, the earth is saturated with the remnants of ancient civilizations that lived in and created on this land for thousands of years, both before and after the common era.

Like the City of David, Jerusalem itself

has both national and international importance, and is not only important to the Jewish people, rather it has importance to anyone who wishes to investigate the history of the area which is the cradle of the monotheistic religions. The importance of the archaeological research isn't only to understand the history of the land and to verify the truth of the facts we know from our sources, but ... sheds light on the development of human culture. Therefore, its importance overrides nations and borders.<sup>89</sup>

With Israel’s reunification of Jerusalem, the first redevelopment of the long-neglected neighborhood of Mamilla commenced with the building of its eponymous mall, bringing the toponym back into use. Readers who recognize the place name know that Mamilla is now, ironically, the home of the L.A.-based Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum of Tolerance. When the Jerusalem municipality chose the Mamilla Pool/Cemetery to become the home of the Museum of Tolerance, the Muslim

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<sup>88</sup>Rood, *Sacred*, 4.

<sup>89</sup>Quoted in Rood, “What We Choose to Remember.” Unfortunately, I can no longer find the citation for the Israeli Supreme Court decision cited here. Perhaps someone can help me to track it down.

community in Israel fought the decision. The Israeli Supreme Court ruled that, because the Supreme Muslim Council had closed the ancient cemetery for redevelopment, there were no legal grounds to prevent the construction of the museum. It ruled that the State of Israel, as the custodian of public land, had the right to use it as it chose, despite its dark history. And so, ironically, the site of that infamous massacre is now, we pray, a place to consider the meaning of toleration framed by our faith in the redemptive history of Jerusalem.

As followers of Yeshua, may we see the history of the Church to be just as much our patrimony as the history of the Jewish people. May we have the spiritual insight and courage as believers to recognize that from the vantage point of history, we can see that the children of Abraham are all heirs to a story. The biblical metanarrative is graced with a generous theology of history that beckons all of us to worship. God is working providentially for His purposes. He is Lord of All, and Jerusalem belongs to Him. Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and the return of the Great King, who will restore all things. While He tarries, let us work.

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## Chronology

Note: I use the traditional dating system; the use of B.C.E (Before the Common Era) and B.P. (Before the Present) are not helpful in this context.

**Ancient History: 3200 B.C. to 1000 B.C.** First artifacts found in the City of David from the late Bronze Era.

**The First Temple Period: 1000–586 B.C.**

**The Second Temple Period: 538 B.C.–70 A.D.**

Babylonian/Achaemenid Autonomous Persian Province of *Yehud Medinata* 587 BC–332 B.C.

The Sasanian Period: 224–651 A.D.

Hellenistic/Hasmonean Period: 322 B.C.–70 A.D.

**The Roman Period (Aelia Capitolina): 135–326 A.D.**

**The Byzantine Period: 326–638 A.D.**

**The Early Arab Period: 638–1099 A.D.**

The Umayyads: 638–750 A.D.

The Abbasids: 750–1250 A.D.

The Fatimids: 766–1171 A.D.

The Fatimid Caliph Abu 'Ali al-Mansur al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (996–1021).

Destroys Walls of Jerusalem and Church of the Holy Sepulcher 18 October 1009.

Warfare between the Shi'ites and the Sunnis encompasses Syro-Palestine, leading to the Crusades, launched to recover the Christian holy sites and restore pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

**The Crusader Period: 1099–1187 A.D.**

**The Ayyubid Period: 1187–1250 A.D.**

Establishment of Sunni Islam in Arab Middle East by Salah al-Din al-Ayyubid (Saladin).

Khwarazmian Turks, Allied with the Ayyubids, sack Jerusalem, 1244 A.D.

Baghdad Falls to Mongols/Seljuks 1258 A.D.; repulsed from ME by Mamluks in 1260 A.D.

**The Mamluk Period: 1250–1517 A.D.**

**The Ottoman Period: 1517–1917 A.D.**

The Ottoman Jihad in Palestine: November 14, 1914.

**The British Mandate for Palestine Period: 1922–1948**

The Abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate 3 March 1924.

Founding of the Muslim Brotherhood: 1928 (official date).

**The State of Israel and Transjordanian Period: 1948–1967**

**The Establishment of the PLO and the Palestinian Authority: 1964–2019**

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## **Movie Review: *Patterns of Evidence: The Moses Controversy***

Mahoney, Timothy. Documentary. Fathom Events, 2019.

<https://patternsofevidence.com/moses/>

**Stan Meyer | Jews for Jesus Sr. Staff**

Investigative filmmaker Tim Mahoney takes viewers on a second journey back to the origin of Israel's Exodus. In his sequel, *Patterns of Exodus: The Moses Controversy*, his odyssey leads viewers through the academic halls of England, to the dry wildernesses of Qumran and the Sinai, and concludes in the damp marshes of the lower Nile where the Exodus began. Through this journey he asks leading Near Eastern scholars: Did Moses write the first five books of the Jewish Scriptures? What *patterns of evidence* are necessary to answer this all-important question? According to Mahoney, the central question is: Was there a written Semitic language available to Moses, in the fifteenth century BCE; and were the ancient Hebrews literate in that language? He believes that Mosaic authorship stands or falls on this pattern of evidence.

Mahoney interviews leading scholars William Devers (University of Arizona), Donald Redford (Penn State), Douglas Knight (Vanderbilt), and Orly Goldwasser (Hebrew University), who contend that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch. One reason they offer is that the Hebrews would have been illiterate, and that Proto-Hebrew (pre-Exilic Hebrew) did not emerge until the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Consequently, the Pentateuch as a completed text did not emerge until the fourth century BCE. Drawing on the theory of Douglas Petrovich (The Bible Seminary), Mahoney argues that Hebrews were literate in Proto-Sinaitic (PS), an ancestor of the Northwest Semitic languages, and that there is enough evidence of its use in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the Hebrews dwelt in Egypt.

PS inscriptions were first found at Serabit el-Khadim by archaeologists Hilda and Flinders Petrie (1904), and later at Wadi el-Hol (1999) in the lower Nile Delta, the region where conservative scholars place Goshen. In 1916, Alan Gardiner suggested that PS was an ancestor to Proto-Hebrew, and in fact is the missing link between

Hieroglyphic and the first alphabetical languages. He argued that 24 Hieroglyphic characters became the letters for the ancestor to the Semitic languages. Scholars agree that these inscriptions date to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the time when most Evangelicals place the Exodus. Mahoney argues these inscriptions, their likeness to Hebrew, and their dating, dispel the argument that the Hebrews were illiterate or that Moses did not have access to a written language. Moreover, Mahoney goes on to argue that Proto-Sinaitic was the ancestor of Early Hebrew (Hebrew 1.0), and ultimately the father of all Western languages. From this he leads to the conclusion that this pattern of evidence supports Mosaic authorship, the historicity of the Exodus, and consequently the trustworthiness of the Bible.

The cinematography is masterfully shot with aerial views of Qumran, the Nile, and the Sinai; exotic sweeping scenes of the Nile and the Sinai; and special effects of Mt. Sinai, the Exodus, and the drowning of the Egyptian army. His interviews with mainstream scholars felt natural, as they sympathetically put forward their contentions. I particularly enjoyed Goldwasser's interview, who smirked knowing she was being a foil for Mahoney's theory but played along anyway, poking at his argument. In a heartfelt interview with Dever, the Near Eastern scholar related that he was raised a conservative Christian and was even ordained a minister. But at Harvard, he began to doubt the Biblical authorships and the historicity of the Bible. He related that today he is an agnostic. Mahoney left the interview on that sad note, underscoring for his viewers the centrality of the question of Mosaic authorship and historicity of the Exodus.

Mahoney weaves his personal history into the film, and relates how an academic search for Biblical authorship and historicity is foundational to the question: Can we trust the Bible? He ponders this question in a beautiful ornate Medieval cathedral with towering stained glass windows, as a wide-angle lens leads our eyes up stone pillars to a towering ceiling high above. I felt Mahoney pursued his questions sensitively, without the cheap drama and conspiracy tones in Discovery Channel features and *In Search Of* films.

I was not completely convinced with all of Mahoney's supplementary conclusions including that (1) the Biblical Joseph invented Proto-Sinaitic; and (2) Hebrew is the ancestor of all our Western languages—therefore language is the Gift of the Jews. Moreover, (3) even if Proto-Sinaitic was the language of Moses and the Hebrews, I'm not sure by itself it overwhelmingly convinces skeptics of Mosaic authorship of the

Pentateuch and the historicity of the Exodus. There are a number of other issues that also must be wrestled with.

Still, just as many of us want to know what language Jesus spoke, as a Jewish person it is exciting to discover what language Moses may have written the Torah in. Moreover, for those of us who are Jewish, and began learning Hebrew at twelve in anticipation of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and who continue reading Hebrew in the synagogue throughout our lives, it is fascinating to find out the possible birthplace of our language. Moreover, for those of us who have celebrated Passover every year since childhood, read the drama of Haggadah at the Seder table, and watched the drama of *The Ten Commandments*, this film adds color and sound to the story of Passover around the table each spring. It reminds us that historical and archaeological evidence suggest this Jewish narrative is a real story, that it happened in time and space, when the God of Israel intervened in the course of human events and was recorded in our Torah. *Patterns of Evidence: the Moses Controversy* premiered in theatres March 14 and will be out in DVD this summer (date TBA).

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# **Review: *Israelism and the Place of Christ***

**Rich Robinson**

Steven Paas, ed. *Israelism and the Place of Christ: Christocentric Interpretation of Biblical Prophecy*. Zürich: Lit Verlag, 2018.

This volume of thirteen essays, edited by Steven Paas, presents a number of traditional Reformed viewpoints on the significance of the Jewish people/Israel in light of the coming of Christ. The subjects cover a wide range, and include Old Testament prophecy, New Testament exegetical issues, the Jewish-oriented praxis of some Christians, and the place (or lack thereof) of the modern state of Israel in God's plan.

The focus is explicitly "christocentric" and the question Paas raises in Preface II is, "In the final analysis, is the Bible about Israel *and* Christ or is the Bible about Christ *only*?" (italics original). In addition, "The authors' guiding principle is the assurance that God loves the world. In Christ His salvific promises to Israel have been completely fulfilled and directed to the cosmos." So the two large issues are whether maintaining any ongoing election of Israel and future role in God's plan vitiates the centrality of Christ, and whether it denies the universal in favor of the particular. At the end of the day, the book upholds an either/or approach rather than a both/and.

Some of the essays engage in positive explorations of biblical and theological data; others seems more to be reacting to what an author perceives as the unhealthy directions some Christians have taken. Only two authors are North American; many are Dutch, one is South African, and two are British. Paas himself is from the Netherlands, and the perspectives of the book are therefore often fresh and engaging for North American readers.

One point to note is that several authors distance themselves from "replacement theology," preferring to see the Church as a continuation of, not a replacement for, Israel, which now is "enlarged" with the addition of Gentiles. This is not necessarily mere semantics, and may offer a fruitful approach to the relation of the Church and Israel. Many authors also denounce anti-Semitism, much needed in light of "facts on the ground" and the implications of some forms of supersessionism.

For the purpose of this review, it may be helpful to group the chapters into types of material as follows.









Finally, mention must be made of Stephen Sizer's "The Jewish Temple: Past, Present and Future." It is unfortunate that Sizer was included in this volume, given his numerous controversies over anti-Semitic remarks, and several violations of agreements made with church authorities.<sup>156</sup> The view that a future Temple is not in God's plans is certainly a legitimate one to take; however, the author is given to repeated sensationalism: "many" hold viewpoints that "could very well start World War 3"; "The thousand words painted by this picture is an essay on fundamentalist Christian Zionist fantasies...A fantasy world in which there are no Palestinians..." Rather than address current writings only, an old survey from 1989 and a 1970 book from Hal Lindsey are marshalled in support of the author's contentions.

Working with Jews for Jesus, I was well-placed to fact-check one statement. Quoting a Jews for Jesus article by Zhava Glaser, Sizer writes, "Some Messianic Jews (that is, Jewish believers in Jesus) are also sympathetic to the idea that a Temple is necessary for Jews to atone for their sins." Implying that this represents Glaser's viewpoint, he quotes from her article:

Though some Rabbis might minimize the revealed system of worship and its requirements, can the individual Jew neglect what God says? Can there be a 'proper' Judaism without a priesthood, an altar, a sacrifice and a place on earth where God meets the individual?

Unfortunately he neglects to include the next sentence: "Isn't it ironic that it takes the New Testament to tell of the new altar, the everlasting sacrifice and the new high priest through whom gentiles as well as Jews are made holy?" Glaser is saying the exact opposite of what Sizer implies.

He concludes, "How tragic that, while the good news of Jesus is intended to bring peace and reconciliation with God and healing between nations, some Christians are fuelling religious hatred, causing divisions and seem bent on inciting an apocalyptic war." Whether this essay equally pours fuel on a fire rather than working to reconcile, I leave to the reader to judge.

I have not yet mentioned the introductory essay by the editor, "Introduction: The Bible and Israel." (I was once taught that introductions should be read last!) Steven Paas is a Reformed/Evangelical theologian who has served in both the Netherlands and

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<sup>156</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen\\_Sizer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Sizer)

Malawi. In his wide-ranging chapter, Paas offers a summary of a Reformed viewpoint on the subject. In his view, neither replacement of Israel by the Church (allowing for anti-Semitism to take hold), nor a continuing election for the Jewish people (allowing for “syncretistic judaizing”) are based in Scripture.

Naturally for a reader this will raise the usual hermeneutical questions: is “christocentric” (as opposed to, say, “christotelic”) the best adjective to use in understanding the nature of the Old Testament? What does it mean to move “beyond” the literal meaning? Should terms be employed that are not used in the New Testament (Israel [not Israel’s institutions] as a “shadow”; Christ “absorbs” Old Testament Israel). What does it mean to read the Old Testament “in light of” Christ? Exegetically, who does Romans 2:28–29 say “true Jews” are, and is the “root” in Paul’s olive tree metaphor Christ, Israel, or something/someone else? Who is the “all Israel” of Romans 11:26? But this chapter is the presentation of a position, not a conversation among several viewpoints; and as summary it does well.

One interesting point Paas makes is that for OT Israel the people, land, and religion were inseparably linked. For that reason, one cannot simultaneously claim that modern Israel is not a fulfillment of prophecy and still argue that the Jewish people and religion have a special ongoing place in God’s salvific plans. Nor, vice versa, can one reject Judaism’s religious claims and still affirm that modern Israel fulfills prophecy. People, land, and faith are an inseparable package. It must be noted, though, that many, including a good number of Jewish followers of Jesus, distinguish the *people* from the *modern religion*, believing that God’s election of Israel the people still stands. On the other hand, acceptance of Judaism as a faith that depends on rabbinic authority and tradition is another matter, even in conversations internal to the Jewish community.

A separate section of the introduction on anti-Semitism is welcome, since theological ideas do not occur in a vacuum. One point Paas makes, sure to be debated, is that giving Jewish people a special status, whether positive or negative, “has not worked out for the well-being of the Jews.” Alleged philosemites have turned out to be antisemitic when their hopes for a massive Jewish conversion have been disappointed. And calls to return to “the Jewish identity of Christianity” can be confusing, because which Jewishness is intended? Paas is well aware of the renewal of modern anti-Semitism in Europe along with white nationalism (my term); white ambitions, he says, may clash with ideas of the special place of

Jewish people, considering them a competitor.

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All in all, this is a stimulating volume whether or not one agrees with the authors' positions (and their views are not identical). Its genesis is unclear, but it seems it may be coming in response to what is happening "on the ground" in the Netherlands and elsewhere. The highlights for me were the exegetical essays, which were well crafted, and the essay on practical theology. Sometimes one gets the impression that some authors are arguing against older viewpoints, such as traditional dispensationalism as opposed to the progressive dispensationalism which is now widely held. Recently, some covenant theologians have also argued for a "progressive covenantal view" (see *Perspectives on Israel and the Church: 4 Views*, ed. Chad O. Brand, B&H Academic, 2015). The important book *The New Christian Zionism: Fresh Perspectives on Israel and the Land* (ed. Gerald R. McDermott, InterVarsity Press, 2016), a specifically *non*-dispensational defense of an ongoing and future place in God's plan for Israel the people and the land, is mentioned in passing but not interacted with.

The book is for the most part a robust contribution to a Reformed view on Israel and the Jewish people. Some readers will disagree vigorously with the book's conclusions, while others will seek to find points of agreements along with areas where they diverge. One may hope for future face-to-face interactions between the authors and those of different positions.

**Review: *What Should We Think About Israel?***  
**J. Randall Price, ed. Eugene, OR: Harvest House**  
**Publishers, 2019.**

**Reviewed by Rich Robinson**

We live in a time of increasing hostility toward the state of Israel, often as a cover for an underlying anti-Semitism. Then too, we live in a time when many are simply uninformed (or unconcerned) about the history of modern Israel and the place of the Jewish people in God's plan. These two trends intersect when churches for whom biblical teaching about the Jewish people is simply not on the radar also advocate for justice in the Middle East. With the best of intentions, the result can at times be a heady mix of misinformation and uninformed passions.

This timely collection of eighteen essays (plus introductory matter, afterword, and appendices) can be of help. The authors range from Americans to Europeans and from Jews to Arabs; most come from a dispensational background. They focus largely on modern Israel in its Middle Eastern context but also delve into the larger issues of the Jewish people as a whole. Their audience is "anyone who may feel either uninformed of the biblical teaching concerning Israel or who may feel confused by the negative climate that surrounds Israel's role in the Middle East conflict..."

**Summary**

Mark Bailey's introduction, "Why Should we Think About Israel," sets the tone for the book. Balanced and well-written, it states that "it is important to think about Israel because of why God chose the people, preserved them, and made promises to them" (p. 30).

It would be impossible in the length of a review to describe in detail the eighteen essays. They are divided into three groups. Part One—the largest portion—is "Israel's Politics"; Part Two is "Israel's Problems"; and Part Three concerns "Israel's Prospects." The rationale for this division is not always transparent. For example, the BDS movement is covered in Part Two but could equally fit into part one. Most of parts Two and Three broaden out beyond the state of Israel to matters concerning the entire Jewish people.

Surveying the topics addressed, Part One asks “What Should We Think About” the Zionist movement; the modern State of Israel; Christian support for Israel; Israel’s right to the land; Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; the Temple Mount; relations between Jews and Arabs; Israel’s “occupation”; and the plight of the Palestinians. Moral, exegetical, and historical arguments all figure throughout the essays. Even those who are familiar with the first two kinds of arguments will likely learn something from the historical material; I found Randall Price’s essay on the Temple Mount very instructive in that regard.

Part Two, on “Israel’s Problems,” addresses the Holocaust; contemporary anti-Semitism; the BDS movement; and replacement theology. The middle two essays are especially critical as they address matters currently of great concern to European and American Jewry as well as to students caught up in BDS and Palestinian controversies on their campuses.

Part Three asks about “Israel’s Prospects” and includes the role of the Jews in world history; Israel’s future; the Jews as a chosen people; Jews who become Christians; and Palestinian Christians. Randall Price provides an afterword on “Why We Should Think More About Israel,” asking what the solutions to misinformation and problems will require: namely, a proper biblical interpretation; political action (e.g. standing against BDS); and prayer. The first appendix provides an interview with Meno Kalisher, an Israeli pastor, about relations with Arabs and Arab Christians. The second reprints a 2012 dialogue between David Brickner (executive director of Jews for Jesus) and John Piper (former pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church and founder of [desiringgod.org](http://desiringgod.org)) addressing some of the relevant issues. Both appendices help ground the subject of the book in the human dimension.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The authors come from a variety of ethnic and national backgrounds; some who are not from the Middle East have nevertheless spent time there interacting with people on the ground. This provides a breadth which nevertheless is at times mitigated by the fact that most of the contributors have a dispensational background. That plays out most strongly in Thomas Ice’s essay, in which he talks about the seven-year tribulation and a literal thousand-year millennium, in my opinion unnecessarily bringing in eschatological matters that may put off non-dispensational readers.

What can also become problematic is the insistence on the part of several contributors that theirs is “the biblical” position that is arrived at through a “literal” reading of the text. While we all strive to hold biblical positions, we should be careful of implying that those with whom we disagree (some of whom are friendly towards Jewish evangelism!) are “unbiblical.” Nuance and a healthy humility (“I believe this to be the biblical position...”) would go further. As to the “literal” reading, no cognizance is given to the issue of genre, for example the need to read apocalyptic texts differently than historical ones. (The word “genre” does not even appear in the book.) Clearly the level of scholarship of the assembled authors would indicate their awareness of the issue of genre, so perhaps it is the desire to speak to a certain audience and not complicate matters that leads to oversimplified comments on what is “biblical” and “literal.” At best, this is an attempt to communicate to the man or woman on the street; at worst, it can lead to undue suspicion towards brothers and sisters from other theological traditions.

These shortcomings are nevertheless minor in comparison to the strengths of the essays — each of which, by the way, comes with a response page in which readers can register their agreements *and* disagreements. And so I want to warmly commend the book; no matter their background, everyone will learn something at some point. Among the essays I personally found most helpful were Randall Price on the Temple Mount (some important and enlightening historical information here); Tim Sigler on Jewish–Arab relations (balanced and a helpful overview in a short space); Paul Wilkinson on Israel’s “occupation” (an important historical and documentary chapter); Justin Kron on the plight of the Palestinians (based on his own journey and conversations); Olivier Melnick on the new anti-Semitism; and Tuvya Zaretsky on the BDS movement. I see that most of these concern issues that are current political tinderboxes; and they may prove the most helpful chapters to those caught up in the debates on their campuses and elsewhere.

Twenty years ago a book like this might have been seen as “preaching to the choir.” Today many are not yet in the choir, for they simply don’t know enough to “sing.” And so, just as we have the “four sons” at the Passover seder, this book will prove helpful for several kinds of readers. First, for the son or daughter who asks, “What does it mean that we stand with Israel?” In this case, it will help them further understand what they already believe. It may also prove valuable for the one who asks, “What does it mean that **you** stand with Israel?” — but they may also need to

hear from other, non-dispensational voices (here I recommend Gerald McDermott's *The New Christian Zionism* and his more popularly written *Israel Matters: Why Christians Must Think Differently about the People and the Land*).

There is also benefit for the one who asks, uncertainly, "What's all this about Israel?" and for the one who doesn't know how to ask because, maybe, the whole issue has never been on their radar.

We need more books like this, particularly from a wide swath of Christian theological and ethnic backgrounds. I encourage you to add this to your library today.

## **From the Israeli Scene**

Yom HaShoah 2019

The Holocaust remembrance day in Israel was on the second of May this year. I was invited to a Messianic school in Jerusalem to take part in an event of remembrance. This is the second time in my six years in Israel that I have had this honor. The first time was in my first year, while studying modern Hebrew at the Hebrew University. That remembrance day had been with other students and teachers of the university; this second one was in a local school with primary students and their teachers. Both of these days included some memories from the Holocaust, songs, and speeches. Both of them had a procession of a kind. And the loss could be felt, as it would have been the experience of some present at the events. For one speaker at both events, that was actually the case.

The notable difference between these two days was not the age difference between participants. The greatest difference was that in the school, the hope in Jesus in the middle of unimaginable suffering was clearly present. He was there in words, songs, and prayers – as he had been there beside the suffering eighty years ago. With him there was no room for bitterness, hate, or revenge. There was hope that surpassed the sorrow.

This was my first time experiencing in practice a Jewish approach to the Holocaust through faith in Jesus. Also, this was my first time experiencing this unbelievably hard topic being taught to children. From some others, I had heard of experiences where the teaching didn't go too well. And for that I'm not at all surprised. I do not envy the teachers who have to teach a topic that is hard for themselves, and to which they are also one generation closer than their pupils. It is much easier to transfer a trauma over generations than to put a stop to it – while still remembering and respecting your past. And here I experienced something going right. A delicate and respectful, personal but not bitter approach to the Holocaust. I have no other experiences in this but here the hope and forgiveness in Jesus clearly made it possible.

So remember what happened. And remember those who are teaching their history to future generations.

Terho Kanervikkoaho