

Who's to blame for the crisis in Israel?

TRANSCRIPT

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NOTE: This transcript was AI-generated and has not been fully edited.

[00:00:00] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Welcome back to a special edition of the Denison Forum podcast. We're glad that you're here as we continue to talk about events going on in Israel, the crisis between Israel and Hamas. As we move into day six, we're sitting down again with Dr. Jim Denison, our cultural apologist. And Jim, how are you this morning?

[00:00:24] **Dr. Jim Denison:** I'm okay. Thank you, my friend. Still grieving, obviously, as we all are. I was on air earlier this morning with a couple out of Florida, actually in on the radio station. And we were all just discussing the sense of foreboding. We feel that just this sense of grief that we all feel as we're watching all of this unfold.

And those of us that love Israel and love the Palestinians and are just grieving for what's happening and what is likely to happen in the days to come.

[00:00:47] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah, it is hard to watch. And something that we're working for a possible podcast in the next few days, maybe about how do parents and grandparents talk to their

children, their grandchildren about some of these events. Obviously, there's a lot of news reporting that children need to be protected from because it's so horrific.

And so that might be the first thing that we would say is that there needs to be a lot of wisdom as you try to inform yourselves, watch news and that type of thing. Be aware of who's in the room with you. Be aware that there are some really hard images and some very disturbing things that are a part of this story.

And really Jim, it really is becoming much more clear, I think, in some of the reporting I've seen, that **this is on a scale of what we experienced as a country in 9/ 11.**

[00:01:36] **Dr. Jim Denison:** It is. It really is. On a numeric scale, it absolutely is. In fact, far more than that. As you contrast the number that are dead, more than 1, 100, with the total population of Israel, relative to those that died at 9/ 11 versus the American population. This is on a scope and scale, significantly, magnitude of scale, larger.

Just from that point of view. From the point of view also that almost everyone in Israel knows everybody, or at least it feels that way. As we said, it's such a tiny country. And so everybody is grieving on an existential level that probably would have been more the case if we were having this conversation after 9 11 in New York, or around the Pentagon, or around military people, something like that.

That's how this feels to our friends in Israel that we're communicating with these days, they all know somebody, or know someone that knows somebody who's lost. **In fact, last night, my wife heard a mother being interviewed whose daughter was taken captive who said she was praying that her daughter is dead. She would rather her daughter be dead. than be a captive to Hamas because of what could be happening to her daughter right now. That has to grieve all of our hearts and spirits, and that didn't happen in 9 11. There weren't hostages involved. This wasn't an unfolding tragedy of days and days of the kind of carnage that we're looking at right now.**

So in many ways, it feels like 9 11, if not worse.

[00:02:48] **Dr. Mark Turman:** I saw a another. mother and father who had lived in Chicago, but had recently relocated to Jerusalem. Their 23 year old son had gone to this music festival that was under attack. They had one picture that they found from some of his friends where he was in a bunker, but they'd also received reports that there'd been hand grenades thrown in there, that their son had possibly lost his arm and there had been no communication since that moment. And as she said in her interview, she said, we are every parent's nightmare. We are every parent, every grandparent's nightmare.

And then, Jim, talk about, Israel and the Middle East has always been a very disturbed region of the world and the Israeli people have experienced persecution and terrorism and war from multiple sides, from multiple nations and groups for decades upon decades and even longer.

But there seems to be an indication I saw one of the security experts say that this is just on a level beyond anything at least this generation has seen. There seems to be something different about this. **Speak about that a minute and just how this seems to be different from other levels of conflict, particularly with Hamas.**

[00:04:07] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Yeah, absolutely. It is on two levels. On the one level it's the nature of the horrific kind of images that we're seeing and the brutality that happened previously are their battles with Hamas have been military in nature, soldiers against soldiers on rare occasion, mainly missiles launched one against the other. Hamas didn't have really the ability to attack like they did.

And so they were launching missiles into populations, civilian populations, but it was on that level of scale. So there was nothing like the carnage that we're thinking about right now. So that's part of why this feels different. The other is that there's a sense in Israel from my friends are telling me there, and what I'm reading as well, that this is a place now where we have to do something different, where enough is enough.

Hamas, since they got control of Gaza back in 2005, has launched more than 30 different attacks on Israel. Not be surprised. It's in their charter that Israel must be eradicated, that the nation must be destroyed. Many of them agree with the Quran when it claims that Jews are apes and swine. In their charter, they describe in detail how the Jews, they say, are behind the French Revolution, and World War I, and World War II, and the ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people.

So there's the sense here that we have to do something different. **Now, they've got four options, Mark. They can, number one, just do a prisoner exchange, as has been suggested right now, Palestinian prisoners for the hostage, and then just reset. You'll be right back where you are.**

Number two, they could try to strengthen the blockade. Even right now, they're cutting off supplies that they have that they have been providing in Gaza. That has not changed the status quo.

Number three, they could continue bombing Hamas enclaves and strongholds, but they've done that in the past, and that hasn't changed the status quo.

Number four, they could do a ground war. Which is what it appears that they're preparing to do right now. They've not done this with Hamas. They did this with Hezbollah back in 2005 in southern Lebanon, and it was horrific. It was tragic and brutal. The Israeli government is not set up for this. Their military is not set up for house to house, street to street guerrilla fighting. That's just not what they're made for. That's not what their ethos moves toward. That's not what their culture is about.

Whereas on the Hamas side, they see Palestinians as a means to an end. They see them as martyrs who if they die in a jihad are guaranteed a paradise. It's like Benjamin Netanyahu said, we use missiles to protect our people. They use people to protect their missiles. And so a ground war could be horrific, but what's different is there's just a sense if we don't do that, we're going to be right back where we are. This is going to happen again. We've now seen that Hamas is willing to butcher our children. We can't let this happen. No nation would let this happen. And then market just occurs.

I do need to add a fifth element very quickly. There are elections coming up in the West Bank. And now there's a thought that part of the reason Hamas is doing this is to strengthen its position to get elected rather than Fatah in the West Bank. If those elections actually occur, they've never occurred since 2005 or 2006, but they keep being promised if that were to happen and if they could leverage what's happening right now to get control of the West Bank. Now you've got Hamas on your doorstep. East Jerusalem is in the West Bank. Now you're not 50 miles away like you are with Gaza. Now you're dealing on an existential level of even greater significance. So if they don't deal with Hamas in Gaza, will they be having to deal with Hamas in the West Bank? That's part of what they're asking right now.

[00:07:17] **Dr. Mark Turman:** yeah, so it becomes an internal two front war at that point. If you if you were to think about this in the ways that Americans would think about this, if you imagine Gaza as a state within the country or a county within a state, even from a size standpoint, think of the West Bank in that way much larger area, but a much larger state, just like in the United States, we have states of different sizes.

But if you imagine a state or a county that becomes dominated by terrorists and then rebels against its higher authority, either as the state or as in our case, the federal government, imagine that there's some kind of a rebellion going on within one of our states, that would be what's going on here is just, it helps me to remember that Gaza is a part of Israel and the West Bank is a part of Israel.

Even though there are all of these weird dynamics going on with these other groups, particularly terrorist groups. And this really is, Jim, I know this is really on a personal level for you and for others in our organization. One of our close friends. So many of the reports and the horror that is

being described here is, took place in the kibbutz that is this special kind of communal place where people, some people choose to live. Nobody's forced to live in a kibbutz. You might even define that word. I've visited, I've stayed at a kibbutz, I've visited several. But one of our close friends in Israel was actually raised in a kibbutz right next to the one that was so brutally terrorized.

Just talk about that a minute and then let's, then we'll move to talking about just how people are in some ways blaming Israel for this, but **tell us a little bit about what is a kibbutz most of our people listening to this are probably not familiar.**

[00:09:03] **Dr. Jim Denison:** No, they wouldn't be. There's nothing really like that in our culture, in our country. When Israel was founded in 1948, that wasn't the first time Jews showed up in the Holy Land after 20 centuries old, even though that's the narrative sometimes you'll see in some parts of the press. They've been immigrating there.

A lot of them never left. Even back 2,000 years ago, when the Romans dispersed them to some degree and renamed the area Palestine, which is Latin for the Philistines, there'd always been a Jewish presence there. And then back toward the end of the 19th century, British Zionism under Theodor Herzl began to be a movement where more and more Jews began immigrating back to the land as well and began trying to settle in this land of Palestine.

Well, a number of them adopted a kind of socialistic approach. Communal living. I don't mean socialistic in a Marxist sense at all, but in a sense of commonality, in a sense of doing this together, because there was no nation of Israel to protect them. There was no national government or national military or anything like that.

And so villages began growing up primarily in agrarian areas. It's places where they could support themselves off the land, and they began developing this kind of communal life. That's what is the case with Kfar Aza, which is the kibbutz that was so devastated. It's now in the news close to the Gaza area.

They're farmers, primarily, agrarian, about a thousand, some say twelve hundred, that have come together into this communal life, where everything goes into a common treasury. And the saying that they use there is each gives what he can, each takes what he needs. And out of this community, they do life together.

They do school together. They do their economy together. They have some private property. They have some things they own and others which are shared with the larger community depending on the kibbutz. Some are defined and run in different ways. But it was a way for the Jews to do community together back before the nation of Israel.

When they didn't have external help, so to speak. And these still exist. Kibbutz Genephar is up on the northern edge of the Sea of Galilee. And that's where oftentimes we dock when we get out on the Sea of Galilee. And get out to the place where Jesus walked on the water. It's where the Jesus boat is, as you remember that.

Boat that was discovered in 1986. It goes back to the time of Christ, that museum there and all of that's kibbutz Genephar. So there are these kibbutz or kibbutzim they would say, primarily in Galilee, but also in the South around the Gaza area. Our dear friend grew up in a kibbutz just two miles from the one Kfar Aza that was so horrifically devastated.

And so that's what kibbutz is. That's what the kibbutzim are, that movement that still exists today. No one's required to live there. As you say, you have to be voted in. By the way, you can't just show up and decide to join the kibbutz. You have to be voted in. And then there's a communal kind of a life that follows.

[00:11:32] **Dr. Mark Turman:** And you're free to leave once, once you're voted in, if you stay for three or five or ten years and you decide that you want to leave, there's a process by which you can exit the kibbutz and live

[00:11:44] **Dr. Jim Denison:** get voted out as well. You can get voted off the island as it were. It's a little monastic. You could think of it in a monastic sense, not from the spiritual point of view, so much as, in fact, many of these kibbutz, kibbutzim are very secular in the orientation. Not all, but many of them are. So it's not so much a spiritual monastic life, but a communal monastic life you could think of it as

[00:12:03] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Okay. Yeah. So it's really a very unique kind of thing. If you ever get to travel to Israel, it's something you ought to visit and

[00:12:09] **Dr. Jim Denison:** I've stayed in Kibbutz zim in the past, and it's really a fascinating thing to do. They're very welcoming, typically, of outsiders. And very creative in how they do their life. Mark, quick anecdote, if I could. There was one that wanted to raise pigs. Because they knew that they could make such a profit with that.

The Jewish authorities got upset about that. So they passed a law that you could not allow a pig to touch the soil of Israel. So what they then did was, they built wooden platforms. And they raised the pigs on the wooden platforms. So that they wouldn't touch the soil of Israel. And yeah, it's very creative how they go about their lives there.

[00:12:41] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Let me chase a small rabbit trail right here. Would that be like one possible paradigm that some maybe Rod Dreher who wrote the Benedict Option would say, that's what Christians need to do in because of the way that opposition is rising in our culture, Christians should create those kinds of communities with each other and just, isolate themselves in some ways from the world because of opposition and because of the way the world is trying to force us into accommodation. Would that be a line of

[00:13:12] **Dr. Jim Denison:** That's a movement. That's an absolute movement right now. There are a lot of what are called micro churches that are growing up around this idea that a group of people are going, in fact, have some friends that are doing this in Seattle right now. They've chosen a 10 block area. They're saying, this is our mission field.

They've all moved in there together. They have jobs to support themselves, they come together to church on Sunday in one of their homes, and they try to meet the needs of their community so as to evangelize them effectively. So you can do this as a means to the end of evangelizing your community more effectively without needing a megachurch to do that with all of the issues that can arise up around that.

But then sometimes you can do this the way Rod Dreher would suggest, as a means of preserving your own family and your kids. In the light of what's happening to us in the secularized culture. And so you withdraw from the public schools, of course you withdraw from public culture to some degree. You create an insular rather culture kind of a monastic movement That's why he calls it the Benedict option going back to Benedict to father the monastic movement As a means of preserving the spiritual life and the morality the worldview of your children. Now he would say, you're doing this not to give up on the culture, but to preserve the Christian remnant for the sake one day of again being able to impact the culture.

It was that monastic movement that was what kept learning alive in many ways, and Christian worldview alive. Thomas Cahill says it's that movement that saved civilization. It was that monastic movement in Ireland. He says, how the Irish saved civilization coming out of that monastic tribe. My struggle with the Rod Dreher thesis, Benedict option is it can keep the salt in the salt shaker can keep the light under the basket.

But I do at the same time understand as our culture becomes ever more oppressive as our first graders are being forced to use textbooks that glorify same sex marriage and they're being asked to choose their pronouns and all that's happening inside all of them. I do understand the pressure. To do this sort of kibbutz if that's a word like withdrawal from the culture for the sake of the morality of our kids.

So you could do it for that reason, you could do it to evangelize the culture, as I suggested as well. That's a growing movement we're seeing right now.

[00:15:13] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah we're gonna give you credit for creating the word kibbutzik.

[00:15:17] **Dr. Jim Denison:** There we go. Let's go with that. If it's not a word, it should be.

[00:15:21] **Dr. Mark Turman:** That's right. Jim, let's talk a minute. You've written even today and earlier this week about some of the signs that we're seeing in the United States and other parts of the world where the West is coming out in some ways very strongly in support of Israel and standing with them in the midst of this crisis.

You're seeing that in things like the Eiffel Tower being turned blue in honor of Israel. One of our major league baseball games last night started with a moment of silence and prayer for Israel with the Israeli flag on the big screen. So you're seeing some of those signs in solidarity with Israel, but you're also seeing some really disturbing things relative to blaming Israel for this.

And that this idea that that Hamas and the Palestinian people, they purport to support and to represent. Had no choice that they that Israel had pushed them against the wall so hard that they had no choice but to come out fighting like this. Speak about that a little bit that's a that's a very troubling thing and a real movement that's always with us it seems but rises at times in a big surge of anti semitism you even wrote one on one of your articles yesterday of why do so many people hate the jews? Just describe that for us and what your thoughts are about that phenomenon right now.

[00:16:40] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Yeah, you bet. There's a lot of history in this, as as you would expect, going all the way back nearly to the time of Abraham, and certainly to Moses, and Egypt, and enslaving the Jews there, and then you think about the Assyrians, and the Babylonians, and the Greeks, and the Romans, and up even into the present day.

There's been this strong kind of anti Semitism in our culture, I think for a variety of reasons. One reason that people may not be as aware of is that there has been this jealousy of the Jewish people over the centuries for reasons that are I guess you could say the consequence of what's good about Jewish culture.

The Jewish people are highly literate, enormously literate. They're people of the Book. They're grounded in the Torah. Their first synagogue is the home and the family, their first priest or rabbi, we should say is the father. And so teaching their children is critical. The Jews have never

been more than 2.5 percent of America's population, but they're 37 percent of our Nobel Laureates. They've always been highly literate. They've always been very industrious. They've always been good at keeping and preserving their own culture. And so they've thrived pretty much any place that they've been. And they've been able to adapt as needed.

For instance, when they came back in the 19th century and the early 20th century, they were driven off a good deal of their land. They were forced into cities and they learned to become business people. They learned to work in the diamond industry and in banking and things. And then they were blamed for that, for oppressing people financially.

They would have been farmers that they've been left alone, but they were forced into this kind of new way of life and they adapted to that. And so there's been this sense you get in Hitler, you get it in what the Hamas's creed says about the Jews, that they've always been about controlling the world, that they have been oppressing us financially.

I think in part out of jealousy. Because of, as I said, their enormous success that they have historically been able to experience as a result of their culture and a lot of the values that are inside their culture.

On a second level, I think there's a spiritual warfare going here. Satan hates us, hates our father, he can't attack our father, so he attacks his children.

He especially hates God's chosen people, and the Jews are the chosen people. And so I think we see a satanic attack against the Jewish people that is a result of this kind of spiritual warfare and the hatred of the enemy himself.

But then a third piece marked very quickly is geopolitical. So as the nation we call Israel today is a bit of a land bridge.

You've got Egypt to the south, you've got these superpowers to the north. It might be Assyria, might be Babylon, might be Persia, might be Greece, might be Rome. Egypt was always a superpower to the south. You never want to fight a war on your own land if you can help it. So they're always marching out against each other, and they meet in Israel, they meet at Megiddo. That's why Har Megiddo or Valley of Megiddo Armageddon has been known like a Waterloo as it were is always a place of the town of Megiddo has been torn down 27 times. So the area where Israel lives has always been rife with conflict and with superpower antagonism, that sort of thing.

And they've been caught in the midst of that to some degree. And so a lot of the warfare that they've experienced has been geopolitical as a result of them being a hinge of history, almost in a

geopolitical sense as well. But there's some new things that are happening relative to critical theory and the boycott, divest, and sanctions movements you're seeing on college campuses, which are new iterations. In addition to everything else I've said, but I'll stop there for just a bit.

[00:19:54] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah, it makes me to your first point, it makes me think of Daniel was reading through part of the story of Daniel this morning and how he's forced into this place by exile into the Babylonian superpower of the day and is forced to try to figure out how to live, he and his friends in that environment and they thrive.

God favors them. God gives them a supernatural ability to interpret what's going on in the mind of the king and other things like that. And God favors them and they learn how to lead well in those environments.

[00:20:26] **Dr. Jim Denison:** their rivals are jealous.

[00:20:28] **Dr. Mark Turman:** yeah, not because they chose

[00:20:29] **Dr. Jim Denison:** rivals became jealous. Yeah, that's right.

[00:20:32] **Dr. Mark Turman:** and even though Daniel, in the first two chapters of Daniel, Daniel's looking out for his oppressors. He's looking out for the man who's supposedly forcing him to eat a certain diet. He looks out for the other magicians and soothsayers who can't interpret the king's dream. He protects their lives, but then they turn around and they're jealous of him because of how god favors him and anyway, it's just a long history.

And to your other point, it makes me wonder when God says to Abraham, I'm going to lead you to a new land that he chose this land bridge as a place, but also becomes a place, a platform really through which the chosen Jewish people can represent God in some significant and miraculous ways.

[00:21:16] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Mark, that's a great point because you'd turn that around. It's not just a place of conflict. It's a place of opportunity as well. And when you think in the Christian movement could not have started in a better place than right there for all of those reasons. Because of the trade of the world that comes north to south, east to west, through the very area where Jesus launched his movement, his ministry, it's the hinge of history in so many ways. And that's the good side of the bad side of the location that God assigned them.

[00:21:41] **Dr. Mark Turman:** yeah. And so what, we chase this down in a future podcast. Just what does it mean for Israel to be the chosen people? And what does that mean in terms? So

many people hear that and they think privilege but what's really greater in that is responsibility. If you look at it

[00:21:57] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Genesis 12, through you all nations will be blessed. So not to be a container, but a conduit of blessing. Now, I'm not saying they've always remembered that. I'm not saying that everybody gets that right today, but that's been God's purpose. They were chosen for a reason, chosen for a purpose.

[00:22:10] **Dr. Mark Turman:** yeah, but most, I think most people hear that term chosen and they hear privilege. They hear a claim of superiority, which is part of where this anger and flashback of, anti semitism comes from because they hear that instead of hearing responsibility and the the calling of God upon the Jewish people to be a blessing to the world which they have in so many dramatic ways, not the least of which being the means by which Jesus comes into the world.

But Jim talk about this a bit more from the standpoint of CRT and this idea that we're seeing it not just as it relates to the Jewish people. Sometimes it's applied to Americans, to the Europeans who came and colonized the first 13 colonies. **This idea that all of history operates on this oppressor and oppressed dynamic.**

And that there are some contending that's what's going on here, **that the the Israelis backed by the Americans have been oppressing the Palestinians, and it is the Palestinians right to rise up and now in this case, use any means that they choose to try to defend themselves and to contend for their rights.**

Some thinking seems to go along the idea that's just the way the whole world works and what we need to do is stop all of history and unwind it back to the way it was supposedly when everyone was in their right place. That's my simple interpretation, but could you speak to that a little bit and how that thinking is wrong?

[00:23:46] **Dr. Jim Denison:** No, you're right on both cases. No, the thinking's absolutely wrong, but you're right in describing it on both cases. The first piece, what's called critical theory, is a Marxist idea. It goes back to Karl Marx himself, who did believe that you have everything is based on sociology. It's based on societies and economics.

He was working in the economic context, especially, and you have oppressed and oppressors. If you're in the majority, you got there by oppressing the minority. Now, you and I didn't get that maybe individually there, but those that came before us did, whether it's slaveholders. That were our ancestors, or it's those that oppressed in some other way to give us the opportunities that we now have.

There's this idea that you got to the top of the ladder by climbing on somebody else to get there. And so now to make things right, the oppressed have the opportunity and the right, even the responsibility to oppress their oppressors in order to reset history. And that moves to your second point. You need to decolonize.

We're hearing that word a lot right now. Israel has colonized this area that used to be Palestine and Arab and we need to decolonize it. And that's what Hamas is trying to do.

To the second point, if you want to decolonize an area, you have to ask where you start. Prior to the Arabs and the Palestinians, there were the Jews.

Do we get to decolonize back to the time of Joshua? Do we decolonize to the Canaanites before Joshua? At what point do you want to start your decolonizing process? In the United States, how far back do you want to go in decolonizing? Do you want to go back to the indigenous Americans and all of us that came from Europe go back to Europe?

At what point do you stop decolonizing? Who gets to make that decision? Who gets to declare what's right in that's the illogic of the decolonizing sort of approach Basically what they're saying to put them together is the oppressor Is the one that needs to decolonize and needs to reverse order and go back to where they were, that sort of thing.

That's an idea that some are themselves oppressing on the culture. It's this postmodern idea that says there's no such thing as truth except my truth. You have no right to your beliefs, but I get to enforce my beliefs on you. It's what we're seeing in the midst of all of this. That's a lot of what has been behind the anti semitism of recent years.

That's behind the boycott, divest and sanctions movements on college campuses and in some some companies, some CEOs adopting this as well. It's been this idea that has caused them to embrace Hamas in the midst of this. The pure evil, the unadulterated evil. As President Biden said, it's giving the light of that.

It's demonstrating these are not morally equivalent peoples. This is not a morally equivalent war here. The way that Israel says it that I think makes the most sense is to say, if we, if Hamas laid down their arms today, there would be peace. If we laid down our arms today, there would be war. That's the difference in the two, unfortunately, tragically.

Now, Israel, Mark, let me hasten to say, has been in no sense innocent and perfect in how it's dealt with all of this. There's no question, unfortunately, that many across the years in Israeli

politics have used Palestinian animosity to advance their own careers, to advance their own status, to solidify their own position of power.

There's some thought that some of the right wingers who don't believe there should be a Palestine, have been on some level appeasing Hamas and opposing the Palestinian authority in the West Bank that has recognized Israel's right to exist, that does want to negotiate for peace on some level, but they don't want a two state solution.

Some. Some of the right wing elements in Israel want from from Dan to Be'er Shabbat. They want this to be Israel. Just like Hamas doesn't want there to be a Palestine. They don't want doesn't want there to be an Israel. There's some of the right wing that don't want there to be a Palestine. And so they certainly have used some of what we're saying.

I'm not saying that they are on some level perfect and spotless and how they've dealt with this, but the narrative. Nonetheless, yes, that they're the oppressor, Palestine is the oppressed. That's a Marxist ideology that you have to be very careful where you apply, because it becomes so subjective, so speculative, and so unfair, and is illogical at the heart.

[00:27:43] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. Such a good way to help us think through this deeply, to your first point about where do you decolonize? I have a friend that just puts that in real simple terms. He's look. If you look at the long run of history, we have to understand that there's really not a square inch of the earth that hasn't been taken by blood and bullets in, in some way at some time.

And we, we have a lot that we have to work out because of that, but we have to try to move forward in the most productive ways as we can.

Jim, as we bring this conversation to a close, talk a little bit about what a we can stand with Israel and the, and love the Jewish people without, as you just described, endorsing everything that the Israeli government has at times done. But the same holds true on the other side. We can and should love and care for and pray for the Palestinians without agreeing with what some of their leaders, some of their self appointed leaders like Hamas has done, especially in this horrific thing.

We would want to say today and always unequivocally, we stand with Israel against this kind of terrorism and but talk about this from the civilian standpoint, both Israeli and Palestinian who so many of them are caught in the middle of this when they don't agree with Hamas or they don't agree when the Israeli government has done things that are over the line.

Talk about the biblical call that God loves all of us, as you say, as if we, as if there were only one of us and how we need to prayerfully focus on that and speak to that when we have opportunity on behalf of especially these innocent people who are caught in the middle.

[00:29:27] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Yeah, I'm so glad we're closing there. And that's Augustine's idea. God loves each of us as if there were only one of us. And that's such a biblical point, isn't it? It's Galatians 3: 28. There's neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, or all Abraham seed and heirs according to the covenant.

Jesus died for Palestinians, just as he died for Jews, just as he died for you and for God so loved the world. It's like Peter says, after he had that experience with the sheet let down three times, God shows no partiality. And we have to keep that in mind, have to absolutely keep remembering that in this context.

Relative to the Palestinians and their government Yasser Arafat, back in 1959, started the movement that we call now Fatah. It was Palestinian Authority. At that point in time, it was a terrorist organization. He was on, he was absolutely a terrorist as he was leading the Palestinians against Israel.

But eventually, came to a place where in Oslo in 1993, he was willing to negotiate with Israeli leaders to on some level recognize Israel's right to exist in exchange for limited autonomy of the Palestinian areas of the West Bank. And that was a step toward the two state solution that you often hear it.

And that's under Fatah, the party called Fatah, Yasser Arafat. While Arafat dies, there are other elections. Eventually in 2005, I believe it was, there's an election between Fatah and Hamas. Hamas is a party started out of the Muslim brotherhood. It was started as a radical group. It was started to overthrow Israel.

Like we've been saying, their founding charter makes it very clear. They ran as a protest movement against Fatah. Because of the corruption of Fatah. Because of so much of the financial misdealings of Fatah. Yasser Arafat died a billionaire. Mahmoud Abbas, who is the leader of Fatah, and his sons are worth more than 300 million dollars today.

So back in the elections of 2005, Hamas ran as an opposition party to Fatah, and against all odds, was elected. Mainly because people were upset about the corruption of Fatah and the belief that Hamas would have to be able to do better. So that's how Hamas got in the door, as it were. They primarily won the elections in Gaza, Fatah, and the West Bank.

And so Hamas takes over Gaza. There have been no elections since. They will not allow an election since. And so what started out to be a popular movement among the Palestinians in Gaza has become incredibly oppressive and cruel. And now if you can talk to the Palestinian on the street in Gaza, the vast majority of them are very frustrated with their government, frustrated with Hamas, frustrated with how Hamas is causing them so much carnage, so much suffering by the way it's using them in its militaristic attempts to destroy Israel.

There was a journalist yesterday being interviewed who'd spent a great deal of time in Gaza. And he said he has a hard time finding anyone on the street in Gaza that supports Hamas, but they're so cruel and repressive in putting down any protest movements within Gaza that they've retained their control there.

Well, Fatah has been corrupt as well, and they've been seen as complicit with Israel because they're willing to recognize Israel's right to exist because they've not been able to stop the settler movement in the West Bank. And so on both sides the Palestinians deserve far better leaders than they get.

We could say that to some degree about the Israelis as well. Israel is governed by a parliament, a Knesset. It's not like our system where we have two main parties that run. There can be as many parties as wish to run. They'll have 15 or 16 parties that run. You have to have 61 seats to have a governing coalition of the Knesset.

No one in Israel's history has ever gotten 61 seats. So the party that gets the most seats is given a period of time to build a coalition with other parties to get to 61. And that's how they get these governing coalitions. I bring that up to say parties that only get three or four seats are in this way of doing things often granted outsize authority, because they're necessary to create the coalition.

More specifically, in recent years, there have been parties supporting the settlers. Illegal settlements in the West Bank, many of which do not recognize Palestine's right to exist. They call it Judea and Samaria. Many don't even recognize the secular Israeli authority. They get these tiny parties in the Knesset, but they're necessary for the governing coalition, and that's meant that the larger government has, on some level, been held hostage by this settlement movement in the West Bank.

And even though that would never be the popular movement among the majority of the Israelis. And there have been all sorts of issues in the Israeli government as well. And then most recently, when Netanyahu comes back into power, and he's got the most right wing government ever, and judicial reform, we could talk about all of that.

It's very complex. It's just like America. It's like any place else. We're always frustrated with our leaders. We're always frustrated that they're not who we wish they were. Don't do it the way we would do it. But in the case of the Palestinians, they are in so many ways, Mark, the victim. Of their leaders and we need to bear that in mind and pray for them Especially if a ground assault in gaza unfolds we especially need to be praying for the innocent Palestinians who will be caught in the crossfire.

[00:34:21] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. And that's just so important for us to remember. And such a complex reality. And so hard for us to sometimes comprehend what's going on. And as this continues to play out, we're just going to ask God to give us wisdom, give us clarity and most of all that God would give peace in this situation and that these terrible events would come to a close and that there would somehow be a movement that rises up toward a peaceful solution both on the Palestinian side, as well as the Israeli side very complex.

But Jim, you've helped us today. I appreciate your insight, and we're going to continue as events warrant to come back with additional podcasts to give people understanding.

And we also want to encourage you. You'll see more information. At Denison forum as well as our other ministries, Christian Parenting, Foundations with Janet, as well as First 15, you'll find a prayer guide from our Foundations ministry today about how to pray for Israel and how to pray for this region in this very difficult time you'll find an article from one of our staff members, Steph Thurling on how to talk to your children about what's going on in Israel at Christian Parenting.

We hope you'll check out those resources as well as others. At Denison forum and these other brands that we have. Thank you for being a part of the conversation. If it's been helpful to you today, please rate, review us and share this with family and friends as we all walk together with the people of Israel and the people of Gaza, the Palestinians, as we walk with them and pray for them we'll also be bringing you more information.

Thank you. And God bless.