

How to talk to your kids about the Israel crisis: A conversation with Dr. Jim Denison and Steph Thurling

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TRANSCRIPT



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

[00:00:00] **Steph Thurling:** Hey, everyone. Thank you for joining me today. I am Steph Thurling, host of the Christian Parenting Podcast. And today I am joined by Dr. Jim Denison of Denison Ministries. Dr. Denison, thank you for being here with me today.

[00:00:12] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Oh, happy to be with you today, Steph. Sorry for the topic. But glad to have the conversation with you.

[00:00:17] **Steph Thurling:** Yes, obviously there's a lot going on in the world and we're all talking about the crisis in Israel, watching it unfold, learning more every day. And it's a lot to process. So we're just going to dive into it today, even though it's hard. I've had a lot of

conversations with the people around me about Israel, specifically the people who are in my stage of life, which is very hands on parenting. And from my conversations I've had, I feel like there are a few things that seem to be true and that's parents are overwhelmed by this topic because it's super complex. They feel unprepared to answer questions that their kids may or may not have. They aren't sure how much to tell their kids, and they also don't have like hours to do research and don't even know where to start.

So we are joining forces today to do a short summary of what's happening. A busy parents debrief, if you will, because you are an expert in this area. So I'm grateful for your time to educate me and all of our listeners today. So thank you.

[00:01:13] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Oh, it's my privilege to do it. I love Israel. I've led more than 30 study tours over there.

I've read a number of, written a number of books, articles on the subject, taught world religions at four seminaries. So I do have a lot of personal expertise in this space. I'm especially grieving right now because of so many of my very, very dear friends who live there and are on the front lines of this.

There's literally no person in Israel that's not touched by this, either lost somebody in the invasion or now with 360, 000 reservists called up. Every family has somebody that's probably on the front lines on some level. And so it's just a very personal thing for me, and that's why I'm glad to try to talk about it with you.

[00:01:48] **Steph Thurling:** Yeah, thank you. I know that it's a lot to unpack in a short amount of time, so thank you. I'm just gonna dive in with my questions. Sure. Okay. Okay. So here's the first thing I want to know. Let's get like a background a little bit. Like, what is the history here? **Who are these two people groups, the Israelis and Palestinians, and have they always been in conflict?**

[00:02:09] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Yeah. Well, that's a great question. It really is. And as you know, we could have a very long conversation. We'll try to do as quickly as possible. So you go back to Genesis 12 and the Lord telling Abraham that he would create through him a nation and through that nation all peoples would be blessed. Then you move forward to Moses and you go to Joshua and finally you get to what we call the promised land or what's being called Palestine or Israel today, the Holy Land, so to speak.

You get to Joshua and the 12 tribes, and then you have obviously with Saul and David, the United Monarchy and Solomon. And anyway, the Jews make this their Holy Land. They're in this land, fast forward all the way up until around the second century when the Romans, after the

second Jewish revolt the Bar Kokhba revolt decide they just don't want them to be in Israel anymore.

So they scattered the Jewish people, they renamed the area Palestine, which is Latin for Philistine, because of the Sea Peoples that lived there. They're not the Palestinians today, very different thing. Renamed the whole area and called it Palestine. In the short order, that's been the name of the area till 1948.

If you looked on a map, that area, that part of the world, we call it Palestine. But it wasn't a country. It's never been an autonomous nation. It was ruled by the Romans, and then the Byzantine Christians, and then in 640 AD, the Arabs invade. They drive out the Christian Byzantines, and that leads to the Crusades, and then more Arabs, and then the Ottoman Empire.

Then in 1948, the State of Israel is founded. But from that time, from 640 to the forward, the Arabs have lived there, who we think of as Palestinians, while the Jews have lived there as well. Then toward the end of the 19th century, more and more Jews start coming back. After the Holocaust, the Nation of Israel is created in 1948.

So now you've got the Nation of Israel living on the same land where they used to live back during the time of the Biblical era, all the way until they were driven, some of them, not all of them, off by the Romans. Always been Jews and Arabs there. But from the 7th century forward, the Palestinians would say, this is our land.

The Israelis would say, this is our land. They're both arguing over the exact same plot of ground that's about the size of New Jersey. It's one of the tiniest countries on earth, and both sides want the same land. In fact, both sides think that God gave them that land. And so it's a religious war as well as a territorial war, both sides believing the land should be theirs.

[00:04:21] **Steph Thurling:** So, I feel like there is a lot of tension in that, and especially, I mean, for everyone. There's a lot of tension there, and so... Who's occupying who. Mm-hmm. And how do we balance that as American Christians? I think right now people are really trying to have empathy for both sides and should and Yeah. And show that they can, you know, support the civilians on both sides.

Mm-hmm. . But there's this, there's, it's complicated. So how do we work through that as American Christians?

[00:04:49] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Yeah, great question. 'cause that's one of the charges being made against Israel is that they're the occupiers and need to be driven out. That's a real common thing

you hear. So if you look at a map of Israel in your mind, from north to south, you'd see the Sea of Galilee up to the north, the Dead Sea down there, the Jordan River that runs between the two.

On the west bank of the Jordan River, down to the Dead Sea, is a plot of area called the West Bank. Then if you move over to the far western sides of the Mediterranean, that's that strip of land about 25 miles long called Gaza Strip. After Israel became a nation in 1948, some, not all, but some of the Arabs, fled the area they were told to flee and that they were told by the forces against whom Israel was fighting that this war would be over quickly and they'd be able to come back to their homes and they'd be able to come back where they were fleeing from so they fled to the West Bank because that was under Jordan's control and down to Gaza because that was under Egypt's control about about 20 percent of the Arab population stayed in what we call Israel today. And so that's West Bank and Gaza. Those, obviously, the Jews won the war for independence and so now what you have is refugees from 1948 living in the West Bank and in Gaza. Gaza in 2005 was given over completely by the Israelis to Hamas. They're not occupying Gaza on any level.

They completely turned it over to the people we know as Hamas, that political party we can talk about. And the West Bank, it's shared with the Palestinians. Those that control the West Bank, the party called Fatah, in 1993 recognized Israel's right to exist. And in exchange, Israel gave them limited autonomy of the West Bank.

So now, let me complicate things just a little bit further, and then we'll move on. There's A, B, and C. In the West Bank, Area A is completely under Palestinian control. No occupying of Israel at all. When you go to Bethlehem, that's Palestine. They have their own schools, they have their own police forces, they have their own passport controls, all of that.

B is mutually shared, where Israel provides the security and Palestinians provide all the other infrastructure. C is under Israeli control, areas the Palestinians primarily don't live in. And so, in the West Bank, some people say Israel occupies the West Bank. It's not really true. They gave limited autonomy to the West Bank, to Fatah, in exchange for Fatah's recognizing Israel's right to exist.

But in Gaza, what we're all thinking about right now, they're not occupiers at all. No Jews, to my knowledge, live in Gaza. They completely control Gaza, oh, turned it over to Hamas, which has been a catastrophe for the people in Gaza. But they're not occupiers in that sense. One other thing, the Jews were there before the Arab invaders came in the 7th century.

So if you wanna remove the colonizers as it were, remove the occupiers. How far back do you go? Do you go to 1948? Do you go back to 640? Do you go to when the Crusaders for 200 years

were in control of the area, or the Byzantine Christians from 324 to 640, or back to the original Canaanites? How far back do you go?

It's not as simple as saying that the Jews stole the land from the Palestinians. It's nothing that simple at all, and depending on what part of the land you're talking about, that's categorically untrue. So, they're both occupiers in a sense. And really the tragedy of it all is that the Palestinian people are not the ones that are fighting this battle.

They're not the ones that are at the front of this. It's not Israel's war against Palestinians. Israel is now at War against Hamas, which is the political party that controls Gaza and is pledged to the destruction of Israel. It wants literally to destroy Israel. That's in its charter. You can look it up online.

That's why Hamas exists, is to destroy Israel. And what you saw on October 7th is an expression of that creed.

[00:08:30] **Steph Thurling:** Okay, so let's talk about that, because I think that is important. Like, how did we get to this point, that there is a war going on, and what is the difference between Palestine... The people of Palestine and Hamas. Like, tell us about Hamas. How do we get to this point?

[00:08:46] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Yeah, great question. So Hamas, this party this political party, was started in 1987 as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood out of Egypt. They were one of the two parties along with Fatah, which is, it's kind of like Democrats and Republicans, I guess you could think of a little bit.

There were an opposition party to Fatah that had been started by Yasser Arafat in 1959, Mahmoud Abbas is the president, the leader of the party called Fatah that controls the West Bank. In 2005, there were elections, kind of elections, they were very corrupt, but Hamas essentially won the right and drove Fatah out, won the right to control the Gaza Strip area.

There have been no more elections since. So they're a political party that controls a geography known as the Gaza Strip. They're also present in the West Bank, they're present in Lebanon as well. They're not just in the Gaza Strip. And as I said, they are pledged to the destruction of of Israel. So there have been 30 times from 2005 to the present that Hamas has launched attacks on Israel.

Israel has never preemptively attacked Hamas. Not one time. It's always been Hamas preemptively attacking Israel because they're pledged to the destruction of Israel. They want

there to be no nation of Israel. They want the entire country to belong to Palestine. They want to plant the Palestinian flag on every square inch of Israeli soil, as we say.

Well, before October 7th they've primarily been rocket launches with some tunnels and brief incursions of soldiers but primarily rocket launches. The reason Hamas does this is to incite a response from Israel that it can then use to characterize Israel as the aggressor and the perpetrator so as to get more financial means given to Hamas.

The leaders of Hamas, most of them don't live in the Gaza Strip anymore. Many of them live in Qatar. Many of them are billionaires. The leaders of Hamas are extremely corrupt. 80 percent of the funding comes from Iran. And they launch on Israel so Israel will respond in a way they can characterize as an attack on the entire Palestinian people.

Now they know that Hamas can't destroy Israel. But if Hamas can attack Israel and Israel respond, maybe they could incite an insurrection in the West Bank as well. Maybe they could get Hezbollah to invade from the north. Maybe they could get Syria involved in this as well, and create what Israeli leaders are calling an existential crisis, where Israel is being attacked from all sides.

sides. That's what we're watching right now. As Israel responds by trying to take out Hamas leaders in Gaza, will the other Palestinian parties, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Fatah, Hezbollah, will they see this as an attack on the Palestinian people, and will Israel be fighting a multi front war, not just a front with Gaza?

That's what Hamas's endgame seems to be, to incite a reaction that will bring literally the whole Muslim world, they hope, against Israel. Because they believe they have to destroy Israel. One other thing to say, some involved in this are waiting for the Mahdi, which is their version of a Messiah. And they don't believe that Messiah will come unless they attack and try to annihilate Israel.

They think the reason the Mahdi hasn't come is because Israel exists. So some think that if they attack Israel, the Mahdi will appear to protect them from retribution. That's why we should be so concerned about Iran getting a nuclear weapon. Because Iran's leaders believe what I just said. There's a scenario where they could launch a nuclear attack on Israel and the Mahdi would appear to protect them before there could be retribution.

Now I'm not predicting any of that, but all of that has been said by Supreme Leader Khamenei, Ahmadinejad before him. That's in Iran's ruling coalition. That's in their Supreme Leader's own rhetoric. So that's what Hamas has done, at the very least. They've solidified their position in Gaza by attacking Israel.

They'd like to be in control of the West Bank, and they'd like there to bring a multi front attack against Israel in response to what's going on right now.

[00:12:38] **Steph Thurling:** Why, why is this land so important? Like, why do both of these groups want it?

[00:12:43] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Yeah, great question. It's a land bridge. You've always got Egypt to the south, which was always the superpower of ancient times.

To the north, you had various superpowers. It could be Assyria or Babylon, the Persians the Greeks, the Romans. Well, you never want to fight on your own land. So they'd always march out against each other, and Israel's right in the middle. It's this land bridge. You've got the Mediterranean over there.

You've got mountains and deserts over there. It's this one little tiny place here the size of New Jersey, which is where they always met. That's why Megiddo tell Megiddo Armageddon you've heard of that. The city of Megiddo was torn down and rebuilt 27 times. Because it's an overlook of that Highway No. 1, that Via Maris, that goes through that kind of land bridge there. So geopolitically, everybody wants that land, because it's how you control the superpowers of the world, as it were. That's how you can inflict harm against your enemies. So geopolitically, militarily, it's always been important. But from a theological point of view, the Jews believe, and I believe, that the Bible teaches that this was God's intended land for the Jewish people, through whom the Messiah could come.

The Arabs believe that God intended this land to be part of the Palestinian people's behest. They believe that, um, what we call the Temple Mount is the third holiest site in Islam. They believe that's where Muhammad ascended to heaven and returned one night. And so the Dome of the Rock that you're familiar with and Al Aqsa Mosque there is next to Mecca and Medina, the third holiest site in Islam. And so to the, to the Muslim people, this is a very important site because of what's there at the Temple Mount. To the Jews, they believe it to be the promised land that God intended. them to have. And again, both sides want the same land. They literally want the same rock that the Dome of the Rock is built over.

The Jews believe that's where the Holy of Holies of the Temple stood under Solomon and Herod's Temple. Literally where that Dome of the Rock is now. Muslims believe that's where Muhammad made his ascent to heaven. And so both sides want the same land and even the same rock. And it goes back to theology and sociology as well as the geopolitics of it all.

[00:14:43] **Steph Thurling:** And what does the Bible say about all of this?

[00:14:45] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Yeah. I believe that the Bible clearly teaches that God intended that land of along to the Jewish people, that that was God's intention through Abraham and Moses to the conquest under, under Joshua, and from that point all the way through scripture, this is the homeland of the Jewish people.

Now, that point, Steph, we get into controversy. There's some who believe, they're called dispensationalists, who believe that the creation of 1948 was a fulfillment of prophecy. They believe that every promise made to the literal nation of Israel must be fulfilled by a literal nation of Israel. And so they're reading what's happening right now as possibly an end-time scenario, whereby the nations are going to attack Israel, and this brings about the rapture and the seven year tribulation and thousand year millennium and all that comes on the other side of that.

That's a very popular theology today. Not among theologians so much as more in popular culture, but that's one answer to your question. Is the Bible, you look at Gog and Magog, and passages in Ezekiel, and Zechariah, and you would say the Bible foresaw this very conflict. I'm hearing preachers saying that right now.

And so they would answer your question by saying the Bible predicts this very conflict, maybe as the end of days conflict. Now, that's one of seven ways theologians look at the book of Revelation. The other six don't agree with anything I just said. I myself am not a dispensationalist. I myself, that put me in a minority in some worlds, but popularly, I don't think the creation of Israel in 1948 was a fulfillment of prophecy.

But neither am I a replacement theologian that thinks the church replaced Israel and now the Jews are no different than anybody else. I think the Jews are a special people to God. I think God is still using them as a chosen people. I know that he loves Jews and Palestinians. Augustine said God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.

I believe God cares deeply about what's happening and is grieving about what's happening. But I also believe God's using the Jewish people in a unique way in the world. I can't explain all of that. I don't know how that works in end time scenarios necessarily, but I also don't believe the Jews were replaced by the church, and now Israel doesn't matter on some level.

So, I can tell you what the Bible teaches about that being the land God intended Abraham's descendants, the Jews, what it means today, is a very long theological argument about whether 1948 Israel is a fulfillment of prophecy or not. But whatever we think about that. We can know this. We're one day closer to eternity than we've ever been.

We only have today to be ready, and God is in charge. None of this surprises Him. He is on His throne. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And our most important job is not to speculate about the future, of course, but to be ready in the present.

[00:17:20] **Steph Thurling:** That's super helpful, not just for this crisis, but for any crisis we have in our life, right? Like little to huge worldwide crisis. That is just a good reminder for people. So thank you. That's really helpful. I want to switch gears a little bit to talk since we're primarily talking to parents. **How are we going to talk about this with our kids?** I recently wrote an article for Christian Parenting about talking to your kids about this, um, and I'll link that in the show notes.

People can reference it, but the first step in that article was to get informed, and I think that you helped us to do that a lot. Um, and then for younger kids, I'll give just a summary real quickly of what we shared in that article.

For young kids, I really just suggest if you have little kids in your house, you just ask them if they've heard anything.

Um, it seems impossible that they would have heard anything. But little ears can reach very far places and it's good to let them know that you are aware that something's going on. And if they hear something, they can come to you and you can be a safe place because hearing things that are so unknown can be really scary for little kids.

So just kind of go off of what they say, um, and how interested they are and give a super high level conversation. And I have a very specific script about what you can. Say it a little kids in that article.

For older kids I would suggest that you you can get more specific and ask a lot of questions and follow their lead You know questions like have you heard about what's going on in Israel, or how do you feel about this?

Again, I have a complete list of questions in that article, but I think **One thing I really want to emphasize, if you're talking to your kids about this crisis, especially older kids, is that now is the time to talk about social media and news and warn them about the pictures they're going to see and the stories they're going to hear, um, and set up boundaries because we live in a different media world than we did in previous world conflicts.**

Like there is a lot available that kids do. None of us need to see truly, but kids really don't need to see., So that's a very high level summary of what we wrote over at Christian Parenting, but I

would love your insights as a dad, as a grandfather, as a ministry leader, someone who's very connected to Israel.

What do you think are the most important high level things for kids to know about this crisis?

[00:19:35] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Now, first of all, I agree with everything you just said, and I'm so glad you're talking about the social media pieces of this, because Hamas is actually weaponizing social media. Yes. They took horrible pictures and videos of the atrocities they committed, and they put them online.

Their families have found out about the death of their grandmother on their Facebook page, for instance. And that's Hamas's intention. They're doing everything they can to incite a reaction by the Jewish... Nation, but they can characterize as an attack on Islam and attack on all Muslims surah 2 verse 190 in the Quran requires Muslims to defend Islam and so they're hoping they can get the Muslim world to see this as an attack on all of Islam So don't play into their hands and especially don't let them terrorize your family.

They are terrorists. They are like Isis. They are terrorists and terrorists seek to terrorize So the first thing to do is what you just said don't let yourself and don't let your family be terrorized by this I'm seeing information online right now, right along with what you said about kids. It's encouraging people like you and me to put boundaries up as well.

Be careful how much of this you consume. Watch your own mental health, watch your own social awareness and your own emotional health in the midst of these very difficult, very trying days, because it's just such a horrible story. So I think that's the first thing as we do this and pray about that. Lord, give me wisdom.

Father, show me how I can help my kids, obviously, in the midst and through this. How I can help them with this, so that I help them to know what they need to know, but not more than they need to know. Father, give me wisdom and grace in this. Show me how I can do this. And give me wisdom to know what I wouldn't have known.

To get ahead of some things. God may give you an insight you didn't know you had, or you needed. You may just be led by the Holy Spirit to walk into a room, and find that your kids are getting ready to turn on a computer, or watch a newscast, or something like that. God loves your kids even more than you do.

Hard to imagine, especially with my grandkids, that's really hard for me to imagine. Because my grandkids are perfect, by the way. Of course they are. But yeah, inherited original sin has skipped

them. I didn't know that was possible theologically. Makes sense. That's my story, nonetheless. Their parents don't necessarily agree, but that just makes them wrong.

I mean, you know, obviously. But yeah, God can lead us to be able to protect them in ways we didn't even know we needed to be led. And so that's the first thing, I think. It's exactly what you just said.

And along with that second, I think kids pick up emotively from us on levels we're not even aware that they do.

If we're troubled, if we're upset, they may not know why. They probably won't think it's because of something happening on the other side of the world. They may wonder what they did wrong. They may wonder what's going on in their family, or what aren't you telling me? And if my answer is, well, there's this thing happening in Israel, and they don't know what Israel is, and they're not familiar with all of that, all they know is that I'm upset.

So I'm not going to be disingenuous, I'm not going to be inauthentic with them, but I'm going to be careful emotively around my kids, lest I discourage them and worry them in ways that they pick up emotively that they can't process intellectually, you know, I'm going to want to be careful. I think kind of inside that space and then pivot this word.

I believe God redeems all the allows. One way God could redeem this is by helping us to help our kids trust God. To know you know there's some really tough stuff happening here right now, but none of that surprised God. He knows your name. He knows everything about you. The Bible says he knows how many hairs are on your head.

Can you imagine that? I couldn't count the hairs on your head, but God can do that. God names every one of the stars. You look up at night, could you name all the stars? Well, God does that. He knows. In fact, the Bible says He's got us in His hand. Has the whole universe in the palm of His hand. So He's in charge.

He's in control. We can trust Him. Not only with what's going on over there, but what's going on in here. And what's going on in our own family, or our own lives, or our own situation.

Now, you do want to be careful here, lest we say God's so in control that then they blame God. Well, if God's in control, then why did God allow this?

Or did God cause this? And that's a whole nother conversation. We could come back and talk about that, how to process evil and suffering, but that's a, the issue of theodicy is a very different

thing. So I don't want to go so far down that road that, well, I guess God caused my... pain in my life, whatever that is.

But on a larger level, we can say, you know, we can trust God. And this is a good time to do that. So I guess my last thought would be, let's pray. If they're old enough to be able to do this, let's pray for them. Let's pray for the Jews. Let's pray for the Palestinians. Let's pray for peace. Let's pray for God to protect them.

Let's pray for the mommies and daddies over there. And the grandparents and the grandkids. And let's just ask God to help them. Right now, and just the Bible tells us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. So let's just, let's pray for them and then kind of turn this into a chance to be intercessors as well.

So tough stuff, really hard.

[00:24:10] **Steph Thurling:** No, that's really good. I think those are really good reminders. I think also parents. Everyone feels really helpless in this situation. There's not a lot that we can do, right?

Even families around us in our local communities who have family who are in Israel. You're like, what can we do as families to support?

[00:24:27] **Dr. Jim Denison:** That's a great question. The first thing, obviously, and we all know this, but that doesn't make it any less important, is to be praying as we just said. But then second, ask, alright, who do I know I can help?

Do I live in an area that has a synagogue? Well, reach out to the synagogue. Through social media or internet or call or something and just say, Hey, I don't know if you know anyone personally involved in this, but I just want you to know we're for you. Steph, as an aside, I will tell you that I expect, I'd love to be wrong, but I expect attacks against Jews around the world to continue to escalate because of this.

We're already seeing that. More than 200 anti semitic acts in France since October 7th. Synagogues being attacked in the UK. We're already seeing a lot of that happening right now. We're seeing some of that in the United States as well. We're also seeing attacks on Muslims. A little six year old boy that was stabbed to death because he was a Muslim.

And that was in the news in the last two days. And so, I'd be asking myself, Okay, do I have any Jewish neighbors? Do my kids know anybody at school that happens to be Jewish? Is there a

synagogue in our area that we can be praying for and just offer a word of support to? Is there even something we as a family could do to be helpful to them?

In Dallas, down the street from the church that I pastored for a long time, there was a rally held this past weekend. More than 2,000 people from the community turned out just to say to Temple Emmanuel, We're with you. How can we demonstrate that with them? Jews feel a solidarity to their fellow Jews.

It's hard for us to understand. There's such a small population, only about 16 million Jews in the world. Less than half of whom live in Israel. And so most Jews abroad, they obviously feel some level of connection to Israel anyway, obviously, but many of them have family members who live in Israel.

Extended family that live in Israel. And so, wouldn't it all be unusual to meet a Jewish person wherever you live that knows somebody in Israel directly affected by that. So, I'd be asking the Lord to give me wisdom and direction, build bridges there, help my kids play with their kids, help my family get with their family.

At the very least, just to let you know we're for you. Please don't feel alone in this. We're praying for you, we want to stand with you, we want to help any way we can, and look for practical ways.

And the last thing to say, there are more and more groups, Red Cross being one, Texas Baptists being another, that are doing hands on help in the Middle East that are actually doing refugee support that are providing goods where goods can be provided. And so you could look up online ways that you and your family could actually maybe get involved on a financial level to be supportive. Maybe could help with that a little bit. Janet used to teach our kids to tithe out of their allowance. And then one of the ways they would do that is every year at Christmas she'd get out a toy catalog and they'd circle the toys not only that they wanted but the toys they wanted to pay for that we were going to donate. And then Janet would take them to the store and they would buy toys with their money that we would use in the toy drive for the ministry that we supported in Dallas.

And so there are ways that our kids could even personally feel like they're helping people in this conflict if there's a way that maybe financially they could do something like that as well.

[00:27:25] **Steph Thurling:** That's a great idea. Thank you. Um, can you point us to any other resources if someone's listening and wants to learn more and keep doing a deep dive into this?

What are some of the resources that Denison Ministries has for people?

[00:27:38] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Yeah, thank you. On Denison forum dot org, which is our website that I write on every day. I do a Daily Article each morning based on that day's news. I've been writing on this obviously the last two weeks goes out each morning about six o'clock based on that morning's news.

And here's an update on what's happening here. But also we've collated all of our resources around all of this at denisonforum. org slash, I think, Middle East, if I'm not mistaken. But you can do a Google search there. My name, if you wanted to. You can find the resources that we have compiled over the years in this space.

I wrote a book ten years ago on Radical Islam. Title, Radical Islam, what you need to know. It explains Hamas and Hezbollah and what's going on here. The larger meta narrative at work here as well. They've been doing a lot of podcasts. Mark Turman and I have done a number of podcasts. Last week, every day, a podcast on what's going on right now and how people could kind of understand that a little bit.

Beyond our own resources, the thing to be careful of here is to be looking through partisan eyes at some of this because all of this is getting weaponized already politically as you might expect and so there are some resources the State Department It has some updates that I think are really important, not just for travelers to the Middle East, but those that are interested in the Middle East.

I pay a great deal of attention to the alerts that the State Department is putting out right now in this space. Council on Foreign Relations. It can be a little left if you want to think politically, but they also have some really factual content there. Richard Haass has been writing in this space and others that I think have been helpful there.

Some of the editorials. Recently, New York Times, Wall Street Journal have been, I think, on target. Bret Stephens had an article recently distinguished between Hamas and the Palestinians that I thought was very helpful. Tom Friedman in the New York Times lived in Israel for several years, lived in Beirut for several years, and has been writing two or three times a week on what's happening there. Again, he would be more aligned with the Democratic Party politically, but he's been, I think, very insightful in some ways in terms of what's happening there. Wall Street Journal's had a number of editorials that were really helpful.

Walter Russell Mead. M. E. A. D. is somebody I pay a lot of attention to. I had a recent article that I quoted in my article today that I thought was helpful also. So, it's hard to find, um, non

partisan news these days, isn't it? To find agenda less news, that's part of what we exist as a ministry to do, but those are some sources that might be helpful.

[00:29:54] **Steph Thurling:** Thank you so much. To end our time, Dr. Denison, could you please close us in prayer for our listeners and for the Middle East?

[00:30:01] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Of course. So Lord God, we come into you knowing that you are King of Kings and Lord of Lords, that you call us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. So we're doing that right now, God.

I'm praying, first of all, for those that are innocent civilians on both sides to be protected, Palestinians and Arabs and Israelis. God, that you would somehow protect them. them and guard them and bless and encourage and give peace and strength and comfort to their families in Israel and around the world.

Then, Lord, I'm praying for wisdom for leaders. I pray for Israeli leaders to have wisdom not to exacerbate this and make it worse than it is, but to have wisdom as to what they ought to do. I'm praying for repentance on the part of Hamas leaders, God. I pray that your Holy Spirit would move in their lives.

I thank you for the awakening happening in the Muslim world right now. As Muslims who sing visions and dreams of Jesus all over the world, I pray that for Hamas's leaders. I pray for leaders in Hamas, and in Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad, and Iran, to have the experience of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, Lord, that you would reveal yourself to them, and draw them to Christ as Messiah.

And Father, bring them to repentance from the violence that is so, that is so inflamed that sacred part of the world. I pray God for repentance and wisdom there and direction. God, we ultimately pray for peace. We pray for peace through strength, peace through righteousness. And then I pray for the families that have heard this conversation and part of it today, that you give them wisdom and direction, help them to parent their kids and their grandkids well in this day, help them to teach their kids and grandkids how they can use this to pray and to give and to serve and father, help them to find your peace in a very, very difficult time. We thank you and love you that you are the prince of peace, who offers us a peace that passes understanding in Christ Jesus, we claim that peace in his name. Amen.

[00:31:44] **Steph Thurling:** Thank you so much, Dr. Denison. Thank you. My privilege.