

What college students should know about the war in Israel with Dr. Jim Denison

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TRANSCRIPT



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[00:00:00] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Dr. Jim, welcome back to the Denison Forum Podcast. Must be strange to be a part of a podcast that carries your own last name but we're glad to have you with us.

[00:00:15] **Dr. Jim Denison:** It is strange indeed, it truly is. As you know, Mark, that was never the intention, was to start something that had our name on it. In fact, it didn't have our name on it for the first several years, and kind of got dragged into that through public relations things and that sort of thing. But you're right, it is an odd thing, but glad to be with you today, and glad to be in this conversation as hard as I know it probably will be.

[00:00:34] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Well, we were talking amongst ourselves and in our office about just what we've been able to put together in terms of resources around the war in Israel with Hamas. And I want to thank our audience for their strong and warm reception, a positive

response to so many things that you have written and that we've talked about and other things that are in the works to try to help people understand what's going on in that conflict and how it may be moving forward.

So we're grateful for that and hopeful that we can continue to be a source of clarity a source of encouragement and a source of equipping for believers as we all walk through this together and pray for the peace of Jerusalem and for Israel for just how God might redeem this whole situation so we want to talk about that.

We are today going to talk about this interesting idea of how parents and how families might talk with their older children, college age, high school age, young adults, how might they have conversations around what's going on in Israel and in the world that are helpful and equipping and encouraging rather than combative.

And so we want to talk about that. But as we get into this conversation as kind of an update on Israel today, Jim what would you want us to know in terms of most recent updates? that maybe you have seen in the research and work that you do on a daily basis , that some of us might've missed if we were just simply catching a little bit of news here or there. What might you want us to know and think about that is on your mind today?

[00:02:17] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Well, thank you. First response to that would be the ground offensive in Gaza and the fact that we're only in the very earliest stages of it and as difficult as it is already, as many casualties as we've seen already, it's very likely that that's going to escalate significantly in coming days. In fact, I saw just today, Mark, and some sources that I pay attention to inside Jerusalem and Israel, that they're believing they may have a very short window here before world opinion turns so strongly against them as they see a growth in Palestinian casualties that they may not be able to accomplish what they intend to do relative to removing Hamas essentially from Gaza. They know that they only have that short window. Maybe two weeks are now saying just because they expect casualties to increase so significantly they've done. Hard as it is to say, they've actually done the easy part. So far, they've come into the north of Gaza.

They've been able to move a lot of the population south. So as to expose Hamas and their strongholds, they've been able to identify and and eliminate a number of those strongholds and a number of Hamas leaders. Well, as they move further into the South, it's going to be increasingly dense in the population.

Hamas fighters hide among the population. They hide their armaments in civilian locations, mosques and schools and hospitals, as we've seen. And that's going to become more the case.

Israel's soldiers are going to be doing ground warfare that they're not equipped to do. That's just not how they're trained to do urban warfare.

And they're going to be having to do that more. So we're expecting to see Israeli casualties increase as well. So all that to say, I'd love to be wrong about this, but I'm afraid we're going to see this conflict become even more difficult to watch and even more difficult to see unfold. So that's one piece of it.

A second piece, and this is, I guess, some good news, I suppose, of the sort, it's becoming clearer that Hezbollah, at least at the present moment, is not going to engage in this. On a level that at one time we had thought they might Lebanon is so devastated and Hezbollah is more in control of Lebanon than they've ever been militarily and politically, culturally that they are aware that if they escalate significantly, that Israel has the ability, even while they're in Gaza, to fight back on a level that will decimate Lebanon to a degree that could, on some level, undermine Hezbollah's future.

And so that's why in recent statements that Nasrullah and others have made, it does seem that apart from border skirmishes, which have caused several casualties, they're not going to get into this on a level that we, one time, were afraid that they were going to be able to. It also doesn't appear at present any way that a Palestinian Islamic Jihad has been able to marshal the kind of intifada in the West Bank they were hoping to bring about and that Hamas was hoping to bring about.

I will add that just a couple days ago, some documents were discovered on fallen Hamas fighters, indicating they intended October 7 to ignite a much larger war against Israel. They thought they would bring Hezbollah in and the West Bank in. And so far that appears not to be the case now. I can't predict the future here.

I would again want to be right about this relative to Lebanon and West Bank because Israel could be fighting a three front war if that's the case. But so far that appears at least today to be the good news. Bad news being what's happening in Gaza, which we knew was going to get worse and now it looks like it will.

That's right. That's

[00:05:29] **Dr. Mark Turman:** And such helpful insight to realize that while there is certainly some connection between Hamas and Hezbollah and Islamic jihad, they are far from being deeply united in their interests in their pursuits, their Hamas's desire to create possibly even a three front war from the south, from the north and from the east. Their ability to make that

happen by pulling in these other organizations is very complex and not in any way as simple as just saying we want to do this right

[00:06:03] **Dr. Jim Denison:** That's right. Iran's behind all of this. All of these are proxies of Iran. And so early on, Wall Street Journal and others were reporting that Iran really helped Hamas plan this and that Iran could therefore, and that's still in dispute to this day, and that Iran therefore could make Hezbollah get into this just like they, on some level, helped Hamas get into this.

Well, Iran owns Hezbollah to a degree they don't own Hamas. Hamas wasn't started by Iran. Hamas came out of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. They're actually originally a Sunni organization. They've gotten Iran's support in recent years for sure. 80 percent of Hamas's military support comes from Iran. But Iran doesn't have the same ability to, or plausible deniability with Hezbollah that they would with Hamas.

And they know that if they push Hezbollah into this attack, that they come under fire, that Iran itself could face retribution. In fact, Israel has said that. They've said if Hezbollah gets into this, we're going to blame Iran. We're going to consider Iran to actually be in this war as well. And so perhaps there's been some deterrence there.

Perhaps United States increased military presence in the Red Sea and in the Mediterranean has deterred Iran to some degree. Perhaps, at least we can hope so. So all that to say, we don't know, but right now it's not as bad in the North and in the East as a couple of weeks ago. It looked like it could become

[00:07:22] **Dr. Mark Turman:** now, which is something to be hopeful about.

[00:07:25] **Dr. Jim Denison:** really true.

[00:07:26] **Dr. Mark Turman:** You made a comment just a minute ago that I wanted to pick up on, which is we now live in a global community more than we ever realized before technology and commerce and we know that anything that happens in any part of the world can have significant ramifications for all of us.

And so, we see on a daily basis, the conversation with other countries, our own government weighing in with opinion and sometimes seemingly that people hang on every word that either this or that person or politician says something about. Talk about the difference between the influence of world pressure and influence on, say, the nation, the government of Israel, compared to how Hamas or even these other organizations you've mentioned what's the ability and the

responsiveness of, say, the government of Israel to respond to public and global political pressure compared to how Hamas would respond or not respond to that.

[00:08:27] **Dr. Jim Denison:** That's a great question and it really does demonstrate the stark difference in the two cultures and how they're governed and really how they see the present and the future Hamas has pledged to the destruction of Israel. That's why it exists. That's what its Charter in 1988 made very clear. That's part of why it keeps attacking Israel because if it can't demonstrate to its own supporters that it's making progress and destroying Israel it has no reason to exist And so anybody that wants Hamas not to attack Israel is going to be absolutely dismissed by Hamas's leaders as having any relevance to what they're about because that's what they're about.

Any external pressure from Egypt or from Qatar or from Jordan, from anybody else has only very limited effect and can only have any effect in Hamas to the degree that they provide financial infrastructure to Hamas. Qatar's been able to negotiate perhaps with some of the hostages, for instance, because they supply so much financial aid to the humanitarian side of Hamas, as opposed to the military side of them.

Although they've been using a lot of that for their military purposes as well. Egypt, because they share a border with Gaza, has obviously some geopolitical influence there. But if you want to come along and tell Hamas to make peace with Israel, they're just simply not going to listen. Because they exist to destroy Israel, to be about an actual genocide against the Jewish people.

And it's a very limited ability to influence. Israel, on the other hand, is a democracy. It's a struggling democracy, as so many democracies are these days. It's got its own internal divisions and issues, that sort of thing. But they depend much more greatly on world opinion, and especially America and the West, than is the case with Hamas.

We support Israel militarily, we support them financially, but they need us as trading partners. They need us relative to the degree to which the global Jewish community outside Israel, which outnumbers the Jews in Israel is significant. It's only 16 million people around the world, the Jewish population of which 7 million live in Israel.

And so there's an interconnectedness there. There's an ability to bring about the change of public opinion within Israel that isn't the case in Hamas, which has no kind of democracy at all. So Israel's political leaders. Have to listen to public opinion. They have to listen to external opinion as it influences public opinion as well.

And as a functioning democracy, they have to pay attention to collective values in a way that isn't true of Hamas. Israel is not pledged to the destruction of Palestine. They are now pledged to the

destruction of Hamas after October 7th as an existential threat against Israel, but they do not have the same worldview that Hamas obviously does.

And so the court of public opinion matters far more to Israel than it does to Hamas, or even to Hezbollah, or to Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

[00:11:06] **Dr. Mark Turman:** And that seems to be getting lost in some way in this conversation. You know, there's lots of criticism that we'll talk about in a moment relative to Israel's incursion into Gaza and civilian casualties and that type of thing. But it just doesn't seem like five weeks or so into this conflict, there didn't seem to be, and certainly seems to be very little now, criticism of Hamas and their barbaric actions in terms of what happened on October 7th.

Now all we want to seem to talk about, at least by my own admission, you know, I have my own handful of curated news sources that I follow. So I readily admit that there's more to the conversation than what any one of us can get to. There doesn't seem to be any continuing focus on the barbarism that occurred on October 7th. There's a large outcry relative to Israel's incursion and the involvement of civilians, but you've made this point I think we have to continue to hammer this point home that this is about the Israeli people and the Israeli government. It's also about the Palestinian people and their lack of organized administration in government and the identification of Hamas as a true terrorist group that is not only seeking the destruction of Israel, but is oppressing its own people.

One of the points you made, even in the article that you shared this morning on the day that we're recording this, you made a comment that I think has not been readily recognized, especially in the group we want to talk to today, which is those who are college students and some of the things we're seeing around that.

But the reality, is that the Palestinians are actually represented in the government of Israel. They are actually a part of what we would call their parliament or their government, what they refer to as the Knesset. Could you explain that a little bit that the entire Israeli government and particularly this group of policy makers called the Knesset actually has Palestinian representation in it. Can you

[00:13:12] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Or does it have Arab representation?

[00:13:14] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Or Arab representation? Yeah.

[00:13:16] **Dr. Jim Denison:** And so, yeah, a little bit of background there very quickly. So back in 1948, when Israel declares its existence as a nation, five nations around it begin to attack, to destroy Israel. They thought they'd do that very quickly, they warned the Arabs who were living there and they outnumbered the Jews, probably two to one at that point in time, there were probably 600,000 Jews, 1.2 million Arabs living in the land of what they call Palestine. And they told them to flee to the West Bank, where they'd be protected by Jordan or to the Gaza area where they'd be protected by Egypt while these five armies destroyed the Jewish state. And then they can come back.

Well, about two thirds did. About one third stayed where they were did not heed that warning. Those that stayed where they were are now, their descendants are the Arabs who live in the land. There are about 2 million now. Of the 9 million that live in Israel, 2 million are Arab. And they're descendants of those, you could say, Palestinian Arabs that chose to stay.

As opposed to the Arabs that fled to the West Bank and to Gaza, that we more think of as the Palestinians today, but they're all Arabs. They just live in a different geography, and so we call them Palestinian as opposed to the Arabs who live in Israel. But they're all Arab. The vast majority are Muslims as well.

Of that Arab population in Israel, that two million, they absolutely serve in the Knesset. Knesset is their parliament. It's 120 seats. You have to have 61 seats to have a governing majority in the Knesset. No party's ever gotten 61 seats in an election. So when they have these elections, and they'll have 15 parties, running in any particular election or so, nothing like our two party system.

You vote for a party, not for a specific individual. And the party that gets the most seats has a couple of weeks to develop coalitions with other smaller parties to get to the 61 seats. And that's how you get to the Likud or Labor, whoever it is, that has a governing coalition. And then the leader of that largest party becomes prime minister, which is how Netanyahu's prime minister again.

Well, in that 120 seats, there are definitely parties that represent the Arab population in Israel, they're a governing part of the governance of the larger state of Israel at the Arabs that live in Israel are citizens. They participate in the healthcare system. They participate in the educational system.

They have the same rights as the Jewish citizens living in Israel, many of them participate in the military as well. They're not required to participate in military as the Jews are, for the simple reason that the Jewish government doesn't want Arabs to have to fight fellow Arabs, if they have

to fight Palestinian Arabs as opposed to Israeli Arabs, but many of them volunteer in the Jewish military as well.

I saw just the other day that there's a very large Druze population in the north of Israel on the border with Lebanon. Saw the other day that they have volunteered to fight and are now in Gaza on behalf of Israel relative to Hamas as well. So it's nothing like Jews against Arabs in a very simple sense as you might think of it in the way media is absolutely reporting this.

One last thing I'll say relative to the Palestinian Arabs there have been by some calculation six or seven different attempts to create a two state solution in which the West Bank and Gaza would be an autonomous Palestinian nation each of which was accepted by Israel's leaders each of which was rejected by Palestinian leaders, going all the way back to 1947, when the two state solution, the United Nations partition plan was accepted by the Jews and rejected by the Arabs.

So there have been numerous attempts on the behalf of Jewish leaders to create a two state solution, all of which have been rejected by Palestinian Arab leaders. So it's very complex. To your point, it's nothing as simple as the Jews against the Arabs, or anything like that, or that all Jews are oppressing all Arabs. That's just categorically untrue as you understand the geopolitics of the area.

[00:17:06] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. And like I said, very complex, but one thing we can say is that while there are, as you explained, Arab Palestinians in the Israeli government, there would be nothing anywhere like that in the organization of Hamas. There are no Jews in the infrastructure of Hamas, not in any shape, form or fashion.

[00:17:27] **Dr. Jim Denison:** If I could add very quickly, a lot of the groups, and I know we'll talk about this in a moment, but a lot of the groups in the West that are so supporting Palestinians, LGBTQ activists, people like that, represent people who would be murdered by Hamas. Hamas would murder homosexuals. They would murder LGBTQ individuals. They consider them to be abhorrent. They not only would have no standing within their government, their lives would be at risk if Hamas was controlling America the way they want Hamas to control Gaza. It's true. It's ironic. And in fact, tragic,

[00:18:00] **Dr. Mark Turman:** yeah, which is an interesting phenomenon. We may not want to go down this rabbit hole too far, but the idea that if I feel like that I am oppressed in some sense as a person I typically maybe it's just human nature to look for a group that feels the way I do. And then you start looking for other groups that also have at least the commonality of they think they're oppressed or they sense that they're oppressed the way we're oppressed.

And so we become friends, we become united in some way, simply because we share this perspective this perception of being oppressed. And then you end up, like you said, with groups that have completely different interests and even one would want to get rid of the other, but they start advocating for each other just around this idea of oppression. Where does that come from? Is that somehow rooted in critical theory or other things? Where do you think that phenomenon comes from?

[00:18:56] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Yeah, it absolutely isn't. It's one of the answers to the question. Why are so many college students anti Semitic, or at least opposed to the state of Israel? One of the two answers to that question is exactly what you just said. So as you know, Mark, and I know we've talked about this in the past, there's the thing called Critical Theory.

It goes back to the 1970s. It was originally a legal theory. It got applied to race, especially after George Floyd's tragic murder and became known as Critical Race Theory, more in public. I, it was existed prior to that, of course, but it essentially says what you've just suggested. It's a Marxist construct that looks at life sociologically and it says you have majorities of minorities.

The majority got to be the majority by oppressing the minority someplace along the way. Whites got to be the majority in America by oppressing racial minorities, specifically Blacks, specifically African slaves. You and I might not have participated in that personally. We haven't owned slaves, but we live and profit from an economy built on slaves, especially in the South.

If you've ridden on a railroad, you've ridden on something that was built by slaves. If you've been to the White House, you've been to a building built in part by slaves. And so a generation now of college students have been taught that if somebody's a minority, they are by definition oppressed by the majority.

And now the only way to solve that is for the oppressed to oppress the oppressors. A lot of that's what in critical race theory that we saw in the riots on the streets after the George Floyd, the demand for reparations, stealing things from stores and claiming that it's reparations, things like that.

Well, a lot of that was what was already positioning on a lot of college campuses, anger against Israel, there was a boycott divestment sanctions movement going on since 2005, claiming that Israel is the apartheid of the day, the South Africa of the day, that they're the oppressors of the minority Palestinian people.

And so when Hamas invaded, it was a short step to say that Hamas was doing what it had to do. That these were fighters, liberation fighters, who were simply forced by Israel to oppress the oppressors on behalf of their oppressed peoples. That's why you saw paratroopers being used as

logos, and you saw them defending the actions of the Palestinian terrorists coming out of Hamas, even recently.

Well, in fact, one of the reasons Israel has released this video that's out now about 45 minutes of footage of the atrocities of October 7 is to battle this growing narrative that the Hamas actually didn't commit these atrocities. Some of Hamas's leaders are claiming they didn't. They're claiming the only attacked Israeli soldiers, that they didn't behead babies, that they didn't rape women, that they didn't slaughter families.

And so a lot of this evidence that's having to be brought forward by Israel right now is to combat that narrative. But back to your point on the college campuses, not just there, but a lot of America now this Critical Theory idea says if you're in the majority, you oppress the minority, makes Israel the oppressors of the Palestinians by definition, and now the Palestinians have to oppress Israel in order to level the playing field.

[00:21:59] **Dr. Mark Turman:** And even in the minds of some really a surprising number of people on college campuses these days that any means to do that is legitimate is another aspect that we may want to chase out in a moment. But before we move on, just, it just seems like we've lost this. that I remember from my college days where America had this founding idea that we've never lived out perfectly, but that we aspire to, which is majority rule with minority rights. And we've seemingly replaced that with this Critical Theory of oppressor and oppressed. Am I on the right track with you in

[00:22:39] **Dr. Jim Denison:** You are, you really are. In fact, and that's for two reasons. There's a Howard Zinn and others have for years now made popular on college campuses, the idea that America was founded as a racist project, that the language you just referred to was a veneer. That hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal certainly didn't apply to slaves, which it tragically didn't.

They would say it didn't apply to minorities of any kind, that America was created by wealthy White landowners to perpetuate and to advance their ability to be wealthy landowners. And so America was a racist discriminatory project from the very beginning. And looking back to it for wisdom for today is the wrong thing to do.

That in fact, we need to redo the entire project. Need to realign American society, not along the lines that you just suggested of majority government with minority voice with minority representation, but in the claim that the minority is being oppressed by the majority. And it's not enough for the minority to have a voice.

The minority have to oppress the majority in order to level the playing field and to create an anti racist future, an anti racist world. And so the founders are more disparaged than ever. You've seen the toppling of statues. You've seen the the disparagement of a founding leaders relative to their legacies and their significance and all of that in recent years out of this move.

That's been taught very intentionally on many campuses for even decades now that would undermine the whole American project and replace it with this Marxist socialist viewpoint that would oppress the oppressor for the sake of the minorities that we've given a voice to, but they would say continue to oppress by virtue of how America's governance is constructed.

[00:24:20] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Which is a large scale revision of history on a massive, massive level. So,

[00:24:27] **Dr. Jim Denison:** a 1619 project that the New York Times has made popular, Howard Zinn's book as well. It's been very much debunked. Even objective historians from other countries have looked at so much of what I just said and demonstrated how untrue so many of these claims are just on the merits themselves. Just objectively. But nonetheless, that's a prevailing narrative in many minds.

[00:24:49] **Dr. Mark Turman:** yeah, so this came up in a lunch conversation that I was having just a few days ago. So I'll put the question that was put to me, I'll put it to you and see how you respond as we've watched as you've written several. that connect to this idea, particularly what's going on on college campuses.

And we're preparing for this holiday season. We can pretty confidently say that issues involving Israel in this war will persist most likely into the first of the year and beyond. So families will be gathering, college kids will be coming home for Thanksgiving break, and then for Christmas break there's going to be a lot of conversation.

And we've had people specifically write in to ask us. How do I talk to my college student about what's going on? They've gotten this idea or they've gotten involved in this or their friends have help us to know how to have this conversation. So the conversation at lunch over a few days ago, the question was, has anything surprised you?

Speaking to me, the question came, has anything surprised you about what you've seen on college campuses relative to, The Israeli war, how would you answer that? What has surprised you, alarmed you so much so that you and your wife, Janet, we're having a conversation and she said, you probably need to create some kind of resource to help families with this. What's surprised you or the two of you that really kind of triggered today's conversation.

[00:26:18] **Dr. Jim Denison:** It's on two levels. Yeah, the first level is why is it that so many college students are responding as they are just in general here? You know, that was a real surprise to her. It is to a lot of people. Why are we seeing these rallies? Why are we seeing posters of hostages being torn down? Why this anger toward Israel just to begin with?

And so we wanted to respond to that and explain all of that. We've done that with one piece of it already with the idea that Israel is an oppressor of the Palestinian minority and in a moment I'm sure we'll get to the second part of it, which is that they're an occupier, occupying colonizer. That's the other reason why college students are being told to be opposed to Israel in this current conflict. So that's one piece of it is just why are college students responding as they are?

The thing that's more surprised me, I think in the midst of all of this is the degree to which those that are opposed to Israel in this conflict, including those on college campuses have blended anti Zionism with anti Semitism. Those don't have to be necessarily the same thing. A Zionist is somebody who believes that Israel ought to exist as a nation. I'm a Zionist. I very definitely believe the creation of 1948 of the State of Israel was essential. That the Holocaust demonstrated that the Jews must have a nation of their own to protect themselves, to protect the Jewish race and its future.

That would make me a Zionist. But you can be an anti Zionist in saying that Israel as a state should not exist. That it stole its land from the Palestinians, that it is an unfair incursion on the Arabs in the world. You can say that without necessarily thinking the Jews ought to be obliterated, that Jews ought not to exist, that in fact there shouldn't be a homeland for the Jews someplace else perhaps, or that there ought to be some other way of protecting the Jewish people in the world today.

So you can make that distinction at least before this. You could make that distinction that the Jewish project of the State of Israel ought not exist while supporting Jews. In fact, some have even said that the State of Israel is part of the reason there is so much anti Semitism in the world. That if it weren't for the state of Israel existing and stealing the land from the Palestinians, the Palestinians wouldn't be so angry at the Jews as people.

That Hamas wouldn't have come together to destroy Jews as a people if there weren't a Jewish state. If it was the state of Palestine. And so you can even make that argument that state of Israel actually advances anti Semitism. And so, what has surprised me is the degree to which so many on college campuses don't understand that.

They've seen opposing the state of Israel means they have to hate the Jews.

[00:28:48] **Dr. Mark Turman:** so

[00:28:48] **Dr. Jim Denison:** they have to be for the oppression of the Jews. They have to be for October 7th. They have to be for the slaughter of babies and the rape of women and the destruction of families and the wholesale horrific atrocities of October 7th, which Hamas would have made even worse if they could have that somehow they have to do that to destroy the state of Israel itself.

Those two things, nowadays, almost have to go together now. Now to be an anti Zionist is to be an anti Semite. Because now we understand, even more than ever, we must have the state of Israel to protect the Jewish people themselves. Now, I would say, to be an anti Zionist is to be an anti Semite. I think that's been proven by October 7. Prior to that, didn't have to be the case. And I've been surprised by how that distinction hasn't been better understood than it was.

[00:29:34] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Hmm. And it's maybe a place where people in conversations, families in conversation might be able to pursue common ground which is could you look for the common ground of saying every person in every people group ought to be valued and honored? Can we start at that place? Which is an immediate confrontation with antisemitism and every other form of racism and prejudice.

Can we start at that thing that, that the American founders tried to articulate in that statement you made a moment ago, that every person is created equal and is valuable, not only every individual, but every people group. So whether we're talking about the Uyghurs or any other group or tribe that we would hopefully as people that value life, that we would say all people in all people groups are valuable, are made in the image of God and are worthy of being protected and honored and respected.

That might be a place to have common ground before you move into the conversation about place. Because when I hear you say being a Zionist is advocating the idea that the people of Israel have a right to be a nation, to be an identified group of people with not only a political structure, but with a piece of ground where that can happen.

That's part of the definition that we're getting to here. Which is why the rejection, the repeated rejections of a two state solution where the Palestinians would have not only an organized government that could advocate for them in all the ways that governments do, that they would actually have had a piece of identified ground. But that's, as you're helping us understand that's a completely separate category of conversation that needs to be distinguished, right?

[00:31:30] **Dr. Jim Denison:** it really is. And that's really true. There's never been an autonomous nation of Palestine. As we've talked about in the past, the Jews renamed the area Palestine for the Philistines, the Sea Peoples back in the second century. Palestinian Syria as they

called it. But it was under the Romans and the Byzantines and the Muslims and Crusaders and Muslims and Ottomans and British.

There's never been a thing called Palestine as a state. Would have been in 1947. With the United Nations two state partition plan, if the Arabs hadn't rejected that plan, there would have been an autonomous nation of Palestine.

I believe the Palestinians absolutely deserve a homeland, just as I believe the Jews absolutely deserve a homeland. Now for somewhat different reasons. Nobody is about a pogrom against the Palestinians. Nobody's trying to annihilate Palestinians just because they're Palestinians, the way so many are trying to annihilate Jews and have over all the centuries and millennia. I think the Jews need a homeland to defend the Jewish race in a way.

I don't think Palestine needs a homeland to defend Palestinian Arabs per se, the Jews are not trying to annihilate the Palestinians. They're trying to destroy Hamas and that's a major distinction relative to the claim of genocide these days, that sort of thing. But having said that, I also believe that the Arab Palestinian people do deserve a homeland as well. And the vast majority of Israelis do too.

That's what's so frustrating about a lack of a two state solution is that the majority, large majority in the surveys over this, over the decades have believed that the Palestinians deserve a homeland as well. That's why there have been so many attempts to bring about a peace solution between the two sides that would create a two state solution. That's why it's so frustrating that we're not there now, as we could be and as we should be.

But I should add this, Hamas does not want a two state solution. Hezbollah does not want a two state solution. Palestinian Islamic Jihad does not want a two state solution. That's a lot of the reason there isn't a two state solution.

Fatah, which is the governing party in the West Bank, does. They've recognized Israel's right to exist back in 93 in the Oslo Accords. They would be in support of a two state solution. Mahmoud Abbas, that leads Fatah, would be for a two state solution. But Hamas is not. They don't want there to be an Israel at all.

They want the Palestinian flag to fly on every inch of Palestine, as they would say. They want to annihilate the Jews, in order to destroy the State of Israel. And so, that's a lot of why there's not a two state solution, because one of the parties governing the Palestinians... doesn't want there to be one.

And another party that's very active in the West Bank doesn't want there to be one. And Hezbollah to the north doesn't want there to be one. Iran doesn't want there to be one. They don't want there to be the nation of Israel. And so very frustrating, isn't it? But back to your point, as we're talking to college students coming forward, it is a good thing to distinguish between peoples and lands and make the point that all people ought to be valued. Arabs or Jews. The Bible does, and we should as well.

[00:34:15] **Dr. Mark Turman:** So let's talk a little bit more while we have a few minutes left about the issue of place and the idea that seems to be growing on college campuses and running in a lot of directions toward a lot of our history, which is the idea of oppressive colonialism. How does that relate to this situation in Israel?

This idea that you've referenced a little bit already, which is that Israel is an occupying colonizer who stole the land from the Palestinians and they should give it back and vacate. So talk about that idea because that's one of the things really driving a lot of the anger that we see.

[00:34:58] **Dr. Jim Denison:** It is. The first test we've talked about is a Critical Theory claim that Israel is the oppressor of a minority, of the Palestinian minority. The other is what you just claimed, which you just stated, which is that Israel is the occupying colonizers of the land and should therefore, as you say, give it back because what they're doing, the whole project of the State of Israel is itself an unfair, and they would say illegal theft of land from its rightful Palestinian owners.

Some background for that charge on college campuses and in Western culture is the aftermath, I would say the the consequences of the empires, western empires and their colonial efforts around the world that we saw 17th, 18th, 19th, even 20th century to a significant degree and all of the significant downsides of that.

There was a day when the sun never set on the British Empire, as they would say, when the British were very much about colonizing India, colonizing parts of Africa, , and they would say, therefore, bringing Western democracy, Western values, Western education and literacy to parts of the world that sorely needed and lacked these experiences.

They would have said there's truth in that. There's also truth in the fact that a lot of what the British Empire was about was creating a global economic empire, creating a global military empire, being able to import and export in ways that were very much to their, advantage from a financial point of view.

And so now we've seen some of the excesses and the downsides of colonizing in Africa and India and other parts of the world as well. And so if you can come along and claim anybody as a

colonizer of somebody else, well, you've disparaged them and you've put them in a very bad place to be just to begin with. That's just an historical fact.

And so now we come along and say the creation of Israel in 1948 was a theft of land from its rightful Palestinian people. That look, the Palestinians have been in control there for 2,000 years. The story goes that the Jews were dispersed by the Romans in the second century. They renamed the area Palestine. It was taken over by the Palestinians from that point forward and really before that.

Then in 1948, This nation gets created and it steals the land from people that owned it for 2,000 years. I had a Palestinian make that claim to me one time when I was in Israel and said it to me like this, How would you like it if the Indians just suddenly showed up one day and reclaimed America as theirs, the indigenous people?

Well, you might say, but we've had it for 200 years. Well, we had it for 2,000 years was his response and now these people come along and take our land. Well, there's some truth to that mark the person saying that told me that every day on his way to work he drives by the home that was his home his family's home before 1948 When it was taken from him, he would say by the Jews when they created their nation.

There's no question that that middle part that we call Israel compared to West Bank and Gaza belonged to Palestinians before 1948. It was populated a third of it by the Jews, but it belonged to Palestine to the degree that they had no autonomy, but they were understood as a region anyway. I mean, that is a fact of history.

That is a fact. As I said before, about a third of the folks that were there that were stayed and they, their descendants are the two million Arabs that live there today. But for those that left to the West Bank and Gaza, they departed land that had been theirs. No doubt about that. That's absolutely true.

What's wrong about the claim that Israel is a colonizing oppressor, colonizing occupier is that the Palestinian people themselves were exactly that, stealing it from the Jews before the Jews ever so-called stole it from the Palestinians, the people we call Palestinians are not the descendants of the Palestinians of the second century.

As I said, the Romans renamed the area for the Philistines. Palestine is a Latin version through Greek of Philistine. The genealogical descendants of the Canaanites who lived there in ancient times and of the Philistines actually live in Lebanon. They are not the Arabs. The Arabs conquered the land in AD 640 as part of a Muslim advance into the land and a Muslim invasion as where. They stole the land from the Jews who were already there. So if anybody was a

colonizing occupier, it was the Arabs and then the Palestinians, as we think of them now, the Arabs that live there now.

The Jews never entirely forsook the land, especially to the north. They always had a strong presence. And over recent centuries, they came back. Began under British Zionism, came more and more to live in the land. So that by 1948, it was one third Jewish, two thirds Arab, but it's never been true that the Jews were gone. It's never been true that in 1948 They stole the land from people that owned it for 2 000 years.

The Palestinians never really owned it They didn't have autonomy. But in 640 A D It's the arabs who took the land from the jews way before the jews took the land It's an important point of history as we counter the charge that we're going to hear over the holidays with college students and others that the State of Israel is an occupying colonizer who should give back the land that they illegally stole. That's just not true historically.

[00:40:12] **Dr. Mark Turman:** and very important as to understanding and having reliable sources of history and historical instruction. Especially in these kinds of conflicts in this part of the world it's just enormously complex. And like I said, to have an accurate teaching about history and how things have progressed, not just for a few hundred years as Americans typically think, but for thousands of years when you get into the land of biblical times and in places like that.

Jim, as we wrap up this morning, as preparing to go into this holiday season for the next six weeks or so put your pastor hat on and give us two or three ideas about how family and friends might navigate this conversation.

You know, I recently had a conversation with a Christian leader who said, you know, we just have to be marked by compassion, by civility and by conviction. And if we can hold those three things together we'll navigate most things well. What would be your word like that to families and to friends as they gather so that they handle these conversations well without damaging their relationships?

[00:41:22] **Dr. Jim Denison:** Well, the first thing that you'd want to say, I think Mark, as a pastor, and this will be true of whatever the issue might be, whether it's a Middle East or anything else, is that we ought to expect generational differences of opinion. I mean, we've always had them, haven't we? You know, we did with our parents. They did with their parents. That is just a fact of life. That is how society moves forward. It's just not at all unusual for us and our children and grandchildren to see things somewhat differently as we have different life experiences as we come at the world from different places.

So we'll not be surprised if we're having conflict or differences of opinion with our children, grandchildren over this issue, as would be the case with a variety of other issues we could be having this discussion over. It might be LGBTQ rights. It might be political, partisan issues. Could have to do with various religious points of view, worldviews, or a variety of places where we ought to expect and shouldn't be surprised by conflict. So you start, I think, with that.

I think second, we're praying, Lord, show me how to speak the truth in love. Show me how to hear. As well as to speak in love. Give me patience to hear the other side here. Give me patience for my, let's say, children to feel heard. To feel seen here. Not to simply wait for them to be quiet so I can explain why they're wrong.

To show them what's wrong about the viewpoint they brought to the conversation here. So that I can understand, not only what they believe, but why they believe it. Lord, give me that kind of heart, that kind of listening heart, that kind of compassion. Give me insight to be able to get behind what they believe to why they believe it.

Help me ask them that question, why do you think that? What is it in your experience that's caused you to come to that point of view? Holy Spirit, help me not to take offense at this, to feel that they're rejecting me if they disagree with me on this. Hard thing for parents to do.

When our kids kind of grow up, they go off to college, they come back with a point of view that isn't ours. It's hard not to think that they rejected us, that they rejected what they were taught growing up, that they rejected our values and our faith and our perspective and kind of take it personally. And that's when these things devolve very, very quickly if we're not careful.

So we're really praying, Lord, give me wisdom and patience and compassion here. Help me to learn from their point of view. Help me to be able to teach in love on my side. Lord, help me to redeem this. To make our relationship even stronger rather than more divisive in the midst of this. Help us to manage this conflict in a way that makes our relationship stronger than it is right now. So it's a matter of prayer to pray for a listening heart and to pray for compassion and not to take offense personally when somebody differs with our point of view in the midst of all of this.

And then the third thing I want to do as I'm praying about this as I want to be prepared myself. First Peter three tells us to be ready, always to give an answer to the hope that we have. And so hopefully this podcast has helped to some degree, hopefully other writings that we have on our website and that other resources could help those listening to this to be informed to be ready to come into these conversations.

Understand that if you're talking about college students, they're going to be reflecting what professors have taught them. They're going to be reflecting what they've learned in their classes

or from their fellow classmates to some degree. They could therefore come at this with a belief they're educated more than we are.

That they know more than we do. That if we had been in their class, we might see it the way that they do. They esteem, we would assume, on some level, their professors. They respect what they're being taught. And that's a good thing. To respect those that are teaching us. And so, just like we could feel rejected if they disagree with us, they could feel rejected if we disagree with them.

And they could feel that we just don't know what we're talking about. That we just don't know what they now know. What they've learned. So be prepared. Be equipped. Don't mean you have to go out and read Howard's in you have to read the 1619 Project or you have to go spend hours and hours doing this but hopefully be equipped enough to understand at least on some level the two points we've talked about today and some of the other factors inside this and so I'm saying Lord help me to be prepared to be able to speak the truth and love here by what I can learn and by my heart and my spirit as I expect there to be a conflict on some degree here and i'm asking god to redeem this in a way that draws us even closer to our lord and to our kids.

[00:45:30] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah, such a good word. And just one of the thought I had while you were thinking is just to recognize that this generation of college kids, high school kids they get their news, they get their information many times from social media sources, which is not always bad. But it's usually very different from the news organizations that their parents, their grandparents are following.

And as we continue to talk about it, Denison Forum, the challenge of curating the news through multiple sources so that you get as accurate a picture of these big issues as you can, that's a whole conversation in and of itself that maybe we'll have, but to realize, hey, if your college kids comes home and says, well, I saw on the internet, don't get immediately dismissive or offended by that either.

Because some of the sources that they may be coming across could be very legitimate and helpful. Not necessarily all of them. And we all are facing the challenge of managing a big news and information world that we get a lot of conflicting opinions about Jim. Thank you again for

[00:46:35] **Dr. Jim Denison:** one other thing, Mark, if I could. There's a whole lot of peer pressure at work here. One of the things on college campuses that is so pervasive, and always has been the case, is the degree to which we want our friends to like us. We want our friends to think like us, and we want to think like them.

There's a kind of a collectivism. Social media just exacerbates that. When my whole status self identity is based on likes and follows and shares and all of that. , so if I'm asking my college age kids , to agree with me and disagree with their friends, that's a big ask. I'm going to get them for a few days over Thanksgiving or Christmas.

They're going to go back to the campus. They're going to go back to their fraternity or sorority or whatever their social group is there. They're going to go back into classrooms where they're being taught the opposite, maybe of what we believe in, of what we've been saying. So come at this with an understanding heart that says, Hey, this is a short term deal here. , I'm in a long term relationship here. I don't want to let anything over this season permanently damage my relationship with these people I love. And so we're going to even agree to disagree on occasion. I'm going to be quiet when I'd rather talk. I'm going to let this be a season as opposed to a permanent sort of relationship.

Boy, how many of us changed our minds after college about some of the things we thought in college? you know, just the way it works that's just the way maturing works. And so we don't want to disparage that at all, but we also want to recognize it So let's just come into this understanding kind of the nature of this

and what matters most and you said it so well before Mark, we're all created in God's image. We're all loved by god starts with our kids. How do we love them? Well, even if we have to disagree on this and other subjects lord help us to do that as our prayer

[00:48:07] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah, such a good word, Jim. Again, thank you for your insight and continuing work in this area, more resources about the conflict in Israel coming. And we just thank you for the diligent and humble work that you are doing so clear brings us such a insight and is so accessible for us.

I want to also thank our audience again for listening to this and to other podcasts. Again, if this is helpful to you and to your preparations for talking with others, we pray that you would share it with others, that you would like and rate us on your podcast platform. That does help people to find and discover this podcast. And we look forward to seeing you for future updates about Israel as well as additional podcasts. You can find us at denisonforum.org and we look forward to the next conversation. God bless you.