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Message: A Look at Israel Today
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Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important for us as believers to remember the spiritual nature of life and spiritual battles? Why do we forget? How might we overdo it?
2. What are ways the world deals with evil? Are they effective or not? Is it different than how God deals with evil?
3. What can you learn from the way the Jews fought the Amalekites in your own life?
4. What do you need to focus on in your life from this study?
5. Take some time to pray today.

Teaching Notes:

We do not make a habit of jumping into every news cycle or comment on every global or even local event.

However, I feel like the war in Israel is something that is both historically and biblically relevant to our lives as believers.

I want to try to provide a Biblical perspective and direction as we navigate the current situation.

Message:

1. **Less news feed, more spiritual food.**

If you are watching hours of news, take a break and a breath.

Let's start with a Biblical truth to understand...

Ephesians 6:10-12

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

Daniel 10:13

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia

2. Demonic forces are really what is going on.

What does this mean? Big Idea:

There are demonic, evil spiritual kingdoms that rule and influence places and people on earth and are engaged by those in relationship with God.

Paul describes the armor of God.

Daniel fasted and prayed. We cannot be fooled.

What do we know about evil?

God condemns evil and judges sin.

Evil does not stop on its own.

Just like you can't talk darkness or cancer away...

3. Righteous action must be taken to fight evil.

Just like turning on the light drives out the darkness...

...or cutting out the cancer brings healing.

...or getting a new heart brings change.

You can't talk a rattlesnake into being a cuddly pet.

Take out its fangs and venom and you will still deal with getting bit because that is who it is.

As long as a rattlesnake is a rattlesnake it is going to bite.

It needs a new heart, a new identity.

In a way that is the story of Joshua...

...Joshua was God's judgment to end the evil and sin in Canaan.

It is also the story of redemption...

We all being evil and going our own way are under the righteous judgment of God.

But Jesus took action in coming to live a perfect life and die in our place for the judgment of our sin so that we could be forgiven and given a new heart and brought into the family of God.

There is a spiritual battle, and it will take more than talk to bring righteousness and justice and peace.

...Righteous action drives out evil.

Next let's look at a brief history of Israel because...

...there is a regular pattern of demonic violence against the Jews.

When Israel grew in number in Egypt, babies were murdered, and they were oppressed as slaves.

When God called for their freedom, Egypt answered with more oppression and demonic power.

God acted in judgment on Pharaoh and Egypt and set them free.

As they journeyed to the Promised Land in Canaan.

They were attacked.

They were not allowed passage.

They came into the land under the promise of God and the judgment of the Canaanites, a violent, immoral people.

We have seen this play out throughout Joshua.

Through the ancient, biblical history the Jews had regular attacks from different groups on an ongoing basis.

...Two of those groups were the Amalekites and Philistines.

Now, let's fast forward to after the time of Christ.

The Romans destroyed the temple in 70 AD.

In AD 135, Roman Emperor Hadrian expelled the Jews and decreed the name Palestina (Philistines, Israel's old enemy.)

There were Romans, Crusaders and Ottomans over the land.

Jerusalem has been attacked 52 times.

Destroyed twice, and captured and recaptured 44 times.

After World War I & the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire...

...Palestine came under British rule.

In 1917, the British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour promised the Jews a national homeland and proposed Palestine.

Jews began moving back to Palestine...

...It was met with violence from those in Palestine.

After WW II, in November of 1947, the UN passed Resolution 181 partitioning the land to "Independent Arab and Jewish states"

...Palestinian militias attacked Jewish settlements.

May 14, 1948 Israel declared itself a **nation** and was immediately attacked by Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestinians.

By the end of the First War, Palestinians lost 4/5ths of their UN allotment. 700,000 were driven out and not allowed to return.

Egypt kept the Gaza Strip and Jordan the West Bank

In 1967, in the Six Day War, Israel preemptively struck Egypt, Syria, and Jordan and seized East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza.

In 1972, a Palestinian militant group killed two Israelis at the Munich Olympics and took 9 hostages.

In 1982 Israel gave back the Sinai Peninsula.

In 2005, Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip.

In 2006, Hamas, a terrorist group, was elected to power.

They called for Israel's destruction. Employed suicide bombers.

...Soon both Egypt and Israel locked their doors for safety.

In 2017 the Palestinians called for a Palestine state but would not recognize Israel as a state, so Israel did not recognize them.

The issue is...

...many Arabs and in particular the Palestinians don't want peace with Israel, they don't want Israel to exist at all.

The problem is complicated in that Palestinians elected a terrorist group to run their country.

Hamas means violence, and that is their agenda.

They do not seek peace or even a better life for Palestinians.

They seek the destruction of Israel.

Hamas uses their own citizens as shields and emotionally weaponizes images to appear as the victim and garner support.

One expert said this week...

...the Palestinians greatest problem is a lack of leadership...

...And Hamas must be eliminated before peace can be negotiated

Terrorists cannot be rehabilitated. They cannot be trusted.

How do we respond? What do we do?

There are innocent people on both sides caught in the crossfire.
We mourn the innocent, the families, the women and children.

But just because we are modern, educated people, we should not be so naive to think this can all just be talked out.

A war cannot be successfully fought when it is influenced or directed by the opinions of people that do not understand war or the complex issues of the actual state of affairs.

There was a Jewish Christian group that referred to Hamas as having “the spirit of the Amalekites”.

I think there is interesting insight from this idea.

The Amalekites were descendants of Esau, Jacob’s brother.

The Amalekites were those first to attack the Jews out of Egypt.
They attacked those in back- typically women, children, elderly.

Joshua fought them at Rephidim and won a victory as Moses prayed and lifted up his hands to the Lord.

...Aaron and Hur held up his hands.

In 1 Samuel 30, Amalekites attacked Ziklag out of nowhere and kidnapped the women and children, David sought the Lord and rescued and returned them all.

One of the last appearances of Amalekites in Scripture was **Haman in the book of Esther** who also tried to destroy the Jews

There is an Amalekite spirit of demonic attack continually coming against innocent people in Israel.

They are God’s chosen people and a focus of Satan’s attacks.

How the Jews engaged those battles is instructive for us.

...It is seeking the Lord and obeying w/ faith & action.

- **Moses** fought in prayer. Joshua fought on the battlefield.
- **David** sought the Lord’s direction, then engaged the fight.
- **Esther** trusted God’s direction and then they fought them.

4. Pray for peace, for people and against demonic powers.

- Lift up those who are praying and fighting.

- Pray for wisdom and godly direction for leaders.
- Pray for protection and for salvation for everyone.
- Pray for comfort and healing and help.

Another question is, is this prophecy being fulfilled?

We do actually find Hamas in the Scripture...

The word “Hamas” means violence or cruelty.

Genesis 6:13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence **H2555** through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Obadiah 1:10 For *thy* violence **H2555** against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.

Most Bible scholars would agree this is not specific prophecy being fulfilled, **war in the Holy Land is nothing new.**

Matthew 24:6-8...

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

But it could be prophecy being set up.

Israel will be attacked from the north as Ezekiel 38 speaks of.

Some think Magog is Russia.

Persia or modern day Iran is an ally in the attack against Israel.

...Iran is backed by Russia, Palestine is backed by Iran.

If those from the north and Iran begin to attack...

...that will be something to take notice of.

But one thing Jesus said about the end times is important for us.

5. Do not be alarmed.

Jesus is the true king.

He is seated on the throne.

And they sing “Holy, holy, holy,

Lord God Almighty,

Who was and is and is to come!”

John 16:33

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

We pray for peace for wisdom and righteousness.

We also pray come quickly Lord Jesus...

...because there will not be true peace until Christ returns.

Jew and Palestinian, Arab and American need Jesus.

The hope of the world is not negotiating peace, it is Jesus the Prince of Peace who has died and rose again and torn down every wall of division.

And in His kingdom it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, it doesn't matter what race or nationality...

We are all sinners coming humbly to the throne of grace and made into a new holy nation.

I Peter 2:9

But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;