

Stanley PHC Adult Sunday School Class

Sunday School Lesson Handout, 10-12-25

Who are the people called Palestinians?

Today, we regularly hear the non-Jewish people who live in Israel, called Palestinians, especially those in the coastal area of Gaza.

There is no country called Palestine, nor has there ever been one. There is no Palestine mentioned in the Bible.

The word Palestine, has its origin from Latin, Greek, and Hebrew words that referenced the “land of the Philistines – Philistia.”

In A.D. 135, the Romans, after defeating a Judean uprising, began to call the land of Israel “Palestine.” This was done out of spite by the Romans, and was an effort to erase the association between the land of Israel and the Jewish people.

Some history on the land of Canaan

In Genesis 10, we first read of a man named Canaan, son of Ham, grandson of Noah. The descendants of the man Canaan were the Jebusites, Amorites, Hivites, and others. The land they lived in came to be known as Canaan.

In Genesis 12, around 2,000 B.C., God calls Abraham to leave his home and go to a land God promises to give his descendants. Abraham traveled to and lived in that land. That land was Canaan.

Isaac and Jacob, and their families will live there, until they go to Egypt to survive the great famine. Pharaoh makes them slaves. Moses leads them out of slavery and Egypt around 1446 B.C.

The Israelites, with Joshua as their leader, will enter Canaan around 1406 B.C., conquer the pagan nations, and settle in what we call the Promised Land.

After the time of Joshua, the time of the Judges, and the United Kingdom Age (Saul, David, Solomon), the nation of Israel will be divided into northern kingdom of Israel, and southern kingdom of Judah (around 930 B.C.)

The Jews will continue to live there, even after the Romans destroy Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70. Most of the Jews will be scattered to many other countries – but a remnant remains and are ruled by various conquering nations.

After the Roman Empire fell, and the Muslim armies conquered the region in A.D. 629, they “Arabized” the name to “Filastin.”

The Arab population in this area remained low, until the late 1800's, when the influx of Jewish financial investments and Jewish people, made the land economically attractive.

The Arab inhabitants of that area were but temporary strangers and residents. They pitched their tents in fields and built their places of refuge in ruined cities. Their contribution to the land was minimal.

After WWI, and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, the League of Nations (now called United Nations) granted Great Britain the authority of administrating the territory, in order to prepare it for self-governance. This mandate came into force on September 29, 1923, and lasted until May 15, 1948, when the State of Israel was proclaimed, re-established, and recognized.

After the 1967 Six Day War, Israel won control of Judea and Samaria from Jordan. In 1967, a national mythology was created around the terms "Palestine" and "Palestinian."

The Palestinians Arabs have claimed to be descendants of the Canaanites. However, most Palestinians trace their origins to the tribes of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Egypt. The Canaanites disappeared from the Holy Land several hundred years before the Arabs arrived.

Palestinians have asserted that Jesus was a Palestinian. This is not true. Jesus was a Jew from Judea - which was named Judea because it was and still is the homeland of the Jewish people.

The people called Palestinians are Arab descendants of Abraham and his wife's handmaid Hagar's son Ishmael. The descendants of Ishmael were not given the same blessings and inheritance as Isaac (the only son of Abraham and Sarah). God declared Isaac as the promised son, and that he would inherit the birthright – which included Canaan.

History shows that the people today called Palestinians are really Arabs from surrounding countries; not descendants of people who have lived in Israel for thousands of years.

The proper historical name for the land now called Israel, is Canaan. To call it Palestine is an insult to the Jews and Israel. God gave the land called Israel to the Jewish people. It has been theirs since God promised it to Abraham, and it will always be theirs.

Randy Skidmore, 10-11-25