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with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

The Fuel Behind the Fire: Anti-Israel Protests & American Universities

(April 30, 2024)

JOHN:

Hello, everybody. I have to ask, why all these anti-Israel protests going on on college campuses across the country? We're hearing of hundreds of different arrests, threats of violence against Jewish students, and school boards and school administration getting worked up. And now, just today, the 29th of April, 21 Senate Democrats signed off on a letter this week effectively scolding all of these schools for letting these campus protests continue in an unsafe, in a dangerous way. They're even calling it anti-Jewish and antisemitic. What is going on here?

My name's Dr. John Ferrer. I'm a speaker with CrossExamined, and I want to get to the bottom of this. This is important. This speaks to the political climate, the political landscape, the stability, the cultural time that we're in. This is a very important subject. But to understand it, it's important for us to hear, why are these protests even going on in the first place? Well, first, what are these protests? Well, Columbia University seems to be the epicenter for these protests, but it quickly spread to UCLA, Emory, Harvard, Yale, Ohio State, George Washington University, Portland State, Vanderbilt, and more.

Now, what are they asking for? Well, they're demanding, these tent-based, agitational protests are demanding divestment, meaning they're demanding that schools separate themselves financially, culturally, and politically separate all ties from Israel, effectively leaving Israel more isolated. Now, they're adding to that implicitly, if not explicitly, demands for Israel to cease fire, for Israel to either stop existing and die, or to, at best, somehow create some two state solution.

Now, the interesting thing about these protests is you're seeing evidence of a very coordinated effort. It's very aggressive. There's signs of a lot of money invested in this with matching tents, with people using the same slogans, showing a lot of the mass formation, the mob mentality, led by apparently organized, experienced protesters. And we've seen hundreds of arrests, because this isn't just peaceful protests. This isn't just people having a sit in. This is a lot of noise. This is a lot of shouting. This is a lot of violent threats.

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One report said that there were signs and people with bullhorns pointing to local Jewish groups that were out there taking a positive stand. I think they were singing the anthem or something like that, but they were holding signs and shouting, pointing to them saying, effectively, we want you to be the next targets of Hamas. Now, that's a threat of violence. This is not the kind of peaceful protests that we might charitably expect to be going on.

Now, underneath those protests is the question of what would they say these protests are about? What would the protesters say is motivating it? Now, they say they want divestment from all ties to Israel, and that's what they'd be telling the schools. But the schools, of course, aren't Israel. The schools can't create a two state solution. The schools aren't empowered directly to handle any demands that these protesters would be making of Israel. Nevertheless, you hear a lot of the rhetoric.

You hear a lot of the shouts and the calls for an immediate ceasefire, for a radical reformation or even disbanding of Israel. And you hear a lot of the common rhetoric calling Israel an occupying apartheid state committing Palestinian genocide, and therefore that Israel is an illegitimate state. Now, some of these folks are liable to propose a two state solution. Two-state, meaning Israel would exist right alongside of a Palestine, and somehow, they share space. They are close neighbors that way, and they both would have states' rights. They would both have a national identity in the United Nations, for example.

So, many would be calling for that, considering that to be the moderate and charitable position. But underneath all of this protesting, underneath the rhetoric, underneath the hot air, there's a long and complicated backstory. Now, Middle Eastern turmoil, geopolitics, antisemitism, and disputed land, these are all old news. There's nothing new about these phenomena. They've been going on for decades, for centuries, and for millennia. We're having this conversation today, however, because of October 7, 2023. On October 7, Hamas launched the largest single rocket attack on Israel in Israel's history.

Twenty-two hundred rockets launched more or less at the same time, within seconds and minutes of each other. And they did it without warning. It was a surprise attack. And because of the number of rockets and because it was a surprise attack, the effect was they were able to overpower Israel's world class missile defense system, known as the Iron Dome. At the same

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time, or just after, Hamas was breaching the perimeter defenses, literally fences between Gaza and Israel, and they breached it in 60 different places. Within minutes, they were invading neighborhoods, landing on beachfronts, and even invaded and attacked an open air concert with thousands in attendance.

Now, they were obviously coordinated because they had all these things timed down to the minute. And when they went in, they were instructed by Hamas. And we have some reports from what Hamas was saying within their inner workings. They were wanting as many casualties as possible. This was intent on massive bloodshed, under the expectation that there's probably going to be some reaction from Israel thereafter. So, they're trying to take out as many Jews as possible. So, they took 240, about 240 kidnapped hostages, many from that concert. And best estimates we have are about 1200 casualties.

Now, to put this in perspective, that attack on October 7 is the third largest or third deadliest terrorist attack in world history. And you probably are familiar with number one, which would be the Twin Towers on 9/11. This was also the deadliest attack on Israeli soil since 1948. So, this is huge global geopolitical news. This is not just some minor skirmish. This is basically a steroid boost to a whole bunch of global terrorists who sort of are on the same wavelength with groups like Hamas.

Now, the next day, Israel declared war, and justifiably so. If the US had received a terrorist assault that killed 1200 of our citizens, we would do that, which is more or less what we did with 9/11. So, this behavior is predictable. Israel declared war. Now, in the ensuing war, there have been more or less about 35,000 casualties. Now, we still have to parse out that number a bit carefully, because Hamas authorities, who are responsible for, or I say, Gazan Hamas authorities, are responsible for that number.

They don't always distinguish between civilian and military casualties. And of the 240 or so hostages that were taken, about 140 are still in captivity. Some have died in captivity; others have been released back. But they're still holding hostages. Now, the international community has largely been calling for a ceasefire. But think about it. What does a ceasefire mean from Israel's perspective? They have the military advantage.

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They are one of the strongest militaries in the world, and pound for pound, you know, size wise, they are the strongest military in the world. They're just a small nation, physically and numerically compared to others. But they're still a world class military. And Hamas is still guerrilla warfare, terrorist tactics. They are much smaller, but they are reasonably well-funded.

So, Israel has the military advantage, and they would be surrendering that for the sake of the ceasefire. Not to mention that ceasefire would effectively translate into negotiating with terrorists. And they would be empowering their enemies, who, incidentally, are more or less our enemies, too. Now, Hamas is targeted, is specifically aimed at opposing Israel. But they are jihadist, radical, fundamentalist Muslims. They're not just Muslims, they are hyper fundamentalist Muslims. But it is jihadism that they promote.

And I crunched the numbers a few years back, writing an article for Christian Research Journal, and found that roughly two-thirds of all the global terrorist organizations are Islamic, are jihadist in nature. The other third are radical left wing, Marxist revolutionary type of organizations. And then there's the IRA in Ireland, but they haven't been in operation since, like, the 1980s. But nonetheless, when we're talking about terrorism, we're talking about two out of three terrorists are Islamic jihadist terrorists.

So, in that sense, Israel is fighting a shared war with us against jihadism. So, in rejecting a ceasefire, Israel is maintaining a military opposition to Hamas, and they are maintaining their pursuit of reclaiming those hostages. Now, at some level, all of this is a moot point, because Hamas is still rejecting ceasefire. They've been offered ceasefire, but they'd have to surrender the hostages to do that, and they don't want that. Keeping the hostages is how Hamas keeps that warfare up. Plus, a ceasefire would be like lowering your weapons more or less.

In the US to understand just what that means, if they're lowering their weapons in the midst of a war with a group that has not surrendered, with a group that has not agreed to a ceasefire, if Israel were to stop firing, they would basically be sitting ducks. But in the US, what would this look like? A ceasefire in the US, comparable to Hamas and Israel having a ceasefire would be basically, if we let Cold War Russia have a military base in Charleston, West Virginia, that's about 250 miles from DC. And Gaza is about 260 miles from Jerusalem.

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Can you imagine how ridiculous it would be for there to be a military base of Cold War Russia, you know, nuclear Russia, that the Cuban Missile Crisis was over. Cold War Russia potentially having nukes in Cuba. So, imagine if it wasn't in Cuba, but was in Charleston, West Virginia, 250 miles outside of DC. And then the global community was telling us, who cares if they started it? You already drew blood. You already got your revenge. You don't need to press the attack.

Just let them be. Let that military base in Charleston, West Virginia, continue untouched. It doesn't matter that they are militantly opposed to your existence. Just ceasefire. Do you see how ridiculous a ceasefire would be in that context? Nonetheless, that ceasefire is what a lot of these protesters are calling for. Now, the short answer, if we boil this down to the question of why do we have all these anti-Israel protests? Why all these anti-Israel protests on campuses?

Well, the short answer is, anti-Israel sentiment is trending, and opportunists can co-opt this for their political agenda. Anti-Israel sentiment is trending, and political opportunists can co-opt this movement to advance their agenda. Now, this phenomenon isn't new. We've been seeing this go on with whatever the lead issue happens to be, whether it's blue on black violence and BLM coming along, or LGBT protests, anti-Trumpism, the women's march.

It at least goes back as far as Occupy Wall street, but you saw whatever this issue is, anti-capitalism, racism, sexism, transphobia, anti-Islam, whatever that lead issue is, there seems to be an experienced, politically charged protester class that works kind of like an amoeba to just go around, sidle up alongside these issues, and just swallow it up, and then use it to advance a progressive political agenda. Now, we've seen this many times over the last 15-20 years. But we're seeing it now, it seems over anti-Israel protests on college campuses.

And part of the reason it feels right to some people is that there seems to be an underdog bias where Israel is seen as the big kahuna. They are a very powerful military. They have outsized influence in the geopolitical community. Given that they're about the size of New Jersey but a little smaller, they nonetheless are the heartland for a lot of big tech companies. They are reasonably wealthy as a nation, and I already mentioned their military influence. But geopolitically, they're just big for their britches. I'm not saying too big, but they're big for people who look at history more or less as a competition between the haves and the have nots, the oppressed and the oppressors.

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Israel looks from that perspective to be the haves. The guy you want to lose at the end of that movie, the guy who has everything in its favor, it seems the guy who everybody favors. And if you're trying to bank on that long shot to bet on that dark horse and to root for the underdog, then in this case, you'd be rooting for Hamas. Now, for some people, they would say, okay, Hamas isn't the good guys, per se, but Palestinians are. And Hamas kind of represents the Palestinians and Israel because of whatever crimes they attribute to Israel. They started it. They're motivating, they're driving.

They're inspiring Hamas to keep pushing back. And that underdog bias pressures people to interpret this dynamic as Israel bad, Palestine good. And if that's the way you see it, then you may be pressured to hyper criticize Israel. Not reasonably criticize, because Israel's not a bunch of angels. They're not perfect. They've made mistakes, they've done wrong. And I am not an apologist, my country, right or wrong, advocate for Israel. That's not what I'm saying here.

I am saying that it's easy if you believe in this underdog bias, if you're falling prey to it, you might want to look at Israel and scrutinize them, faulting them for everything they're doing wrong, or everything they might have done wrong, or everything that's been alleged about them, whether it's true or false. Meanwhile, on the other end, you might be looking at Palestine or Palestinians, I should say, and giving them a charitable take. Reading their behavior, their actions, their stance as, well, it's understandable. You know, they have to. They have limited options, so of course they're going to lash out from time to time.

It's not that Hamas is right, but we can understand where they're coming from. And that's how the underdog bias plays into this. So that people who think of history in terms of this back and forth between the haves and have nots, they're liable to oversimplify this geopolitical situation and say, Israel bad, Palestine good. And the protester class can come along, sidle up to these, swallow that up and say, oh, we're right there with you. We agree. And while you're at it, let's add some other demands, like BLM did with the subject of racism.

If you've ever read the founding statements for BLM and their demands, it veered far and wide of race based issues and started talking about dismantling the traditional family. It talked about trans rights, LGBT rights, and getting rid of prisons, and defunding the police, which we're

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seeing some of the blowback from that. But it took that issue and then expanded on it with most every hobby topic of current progressive politics. That's the short answer.

Anti-Israel sentiment is trending, and opportunists can co-opt it for their agenda. The long answer is that it's a complicated mix of mob mentality. Again, just to repeat, why all these anti-Israel protests? The long answer is that it's a complicated mix of mob mentality, progressive politics, political opportunism, theology, and even prophecy.

Now, when I say mob mentality, I'm talking about a lot of ignorant conformism, groupthink, and people just kind of joining in with what's trending, getting into whatever this group is, because maybe someone identifies as politically left. They don't want the US to be involved in any international warfare. I get that.

So, you can have some libertarian moderate all the way to radical left wing folks who kind of resonate with this idea, thinking that the US shouldn't be involved in any international skirmishes like what's going on in Israel. But you can kind of tell that there's some mob mentality going on because when some man on the street interviews, I think it was Triggernometry I saw them doing some man on the street interviews with some protesters and they're asking about October 7.

They were asking about what anti-Israel means. They're asking, what does ceasefire mean to you? What do you mean by calling for a ceasefire? And they're asking, what does this "From the river to the sea Palestine will be free", what does that mean? So, some of these man on the street interviews were reaching out to find out what are these people really thinking? What are they after? But they found that underneath a little sloganeering and buzzwords, most of the masses they could interview didn't know what they were talking about.

They weren't really an informed populace. It was more like what psychologists call mass formation, mob mentality. A lot of conformist behavior, maybe with a thin agreement along some political lines, but for the most part it was an ignorant mob. I'm not saying all of them were dumb, and I'm not even saying that that means that they're wrong. I think there's other reasons why they're wrong. Ignorance itself doesn't mean they're wrong, but it does help explain what was going on there. But there's also progressive politics and political opportunism.

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I mentioned this a little bit earlier, but I think we can add to it that this anti-Israel sentiment that has been growing and has allowed a lot of fundamentalist and Middle Eastern voices to resonate with some anti-American voices that are in the US, and then some political moderates to the left. And they could kind of see, test their efforts to bring that kind of people power together to get something done politically.

And it seems what's going on is that some of the political opportunists who are kind of behind this, because there has to be money, because these are expensive, these are challenging students to potentially risk suspension or expulsion. If you didn't know, this is April and many of them are about to graduate if they don't get suspended or expelled first. So, you have to have some financial incentives mixed in there, at least a little bit.

So, it looks like we've got political opportunists playing some kind of role here. And it seems like they're trying to test every fuse for their own revolutionary powder keg. Cause there are a lot of folks who align with a broad, kind of modified Marxist perspective. And from that Marxist perspective, there's the sense that the labor, the masses, the disenfranchised multitudes kind of want to line up in some large scale revolution. But what issue will bring them together? Could it be racism? Could it be sexism? Could it be trans rights? So, could it be queer theory? Could it be anti-Israel sentiment?

Each of these represent a possible issue that some opportunists, according to their political worldview and their ideology, are hoping to light that, fuse, light that issue, and thus spark and ignite their preferred revolutionary powder keg that would topple the system and potentially introduce whatever their political agenda is into the world. Because the old system has crashed down from its own internal pressures, and now this new system would, in theory, do better.

That's how some forms of progressive politics and some political opportunists could try to use anti-Israel sentiment to their advantage. But there's also a historical element where antisemitism runs deep and wide. Israel's success, relative success, leads many people to interpret it as conspiracy or cheating. If your view is that people can't get wealthy unless they cheated the system and stole it from someone else, then Israel's relative wealth could look like, oh, they must have cheated and stole to get there.

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There's no limit to conspiracy theories that are populated by nefarious Jews. And so, conspiracism, just deep suspicion. In the Middle Ages, when the Jewish people were largely protected from the Black Plague, a lot of Europeans accused the Jews of witchcraft, like they were using some kind of spell casting to curse their enemies and protect themselves. When it was more likely just that they had ritual hygiene that was built into their ceremonies.

And so, they stayed cleaner and were less likely to have rats with the fleas that carried the Black Plague. Nevertheless, there's no end historically to Israel being accused of conspiracy and Jews being accused of cheating, and theft, and witchcraft. And so, there's a wide range of antisemitism historically. So, not to mention you've got, I think, the Hebrew Israelites, which is a black cult group, are deeply antisemitic to ethnic and religious Jews. I believe there was a lot of controversy around the 1900's about finally letting Jews into some elite universities in the US. It was worried that, oh, they're going to come in and take over.

They're going to take our jobs; they're going to take our positions. And the Jews were seen in a very bad light. And of course, you've got Nazi Germany, which itself has some unfortunate Christian roots, with Martin Luther being a well-documented antisemite himself, and Lutheranism having a history of antisemitism. But you really don't have to look far to find antisemitism in various forms across different Christian denominations and definitely across the Islamic world. And that's a theological reason for some of these protests, that there's a deep Quranic basis for anti-Jewish prejudice.

Surahs from the Quran, Surahs 2-62 have antisemitic passages to be found in all of them. Now, of course, there's Islamic apologists, some maybe of a more liberal bent, who explained that away. Saying, no, they're not antisemitic. They're just saying Jews aren't part of the same covenant. They're not part of the same promise that Muslims are. And if they convert to Islam, then they can participate in these privileges and rights as well. So, there's Islamic apologists that explain these away. But nonetheless, there's a well-proven history of Islam, I should say, of Muslims more or less being antisemitic, or at least being common in Muslim populations.

Not to mention Muhammad could readily be accused of antisemitism. And there are some commentaries known as Hadiths in Islamic tradition that reinforce that. So, whatever dispute there is about the theological basis between antisemitism and non-antisemitic Islam, there's at

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least enough of a dispute that we can show historically that many Muslims have claimed a theological basis for being antisemitic. And by antisemitic, I'm talking about anti-Jewish. Strictly speaking, Jews and Arabs are Semites in a sense, but the term has more or less been used to describe anti-Jewish beliefs. Whereas anti-Muslim or anti-Arabic would describe prejudice against Arab and Muslim populations.

So, that's theology. There's also prophecy. There are sibling rivalries described in Scripture, with Isaac and Ishmael going back all the way to Genesis 16 and then between Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25. Now that sibling rivalry between Isaac and Ishmael is pretty significant for Israel and for Islam, because Isaac is considered the son of the covenant with Abraham and the forefather to the Jewish people down the road. Because Judah, the namesake for the Jews, is Isaac's grandson.

Ishmael, however, is considered to be a son of the Arabic covenant promises. Before the Arab people were a distinct population, you had Ishmael being one of their forefathers. But Islam interprets that sibling rivalry between Isaac and Ishmael different than how Scripture reports it. They say that Ishmael was the son who almost died as a sacrifice on the mount under Abraham.

They also say that Ishmael's mother was a bride of Abraham, as opposed to being a handmaiden, which would be a lesser status. So, Isaac and Ishmael are both seen as being sons of covenants in a sense. And Ishmael is lifted up a little higher in the Quranic and Islamic perspective. Nevertheless, in Genesis 16, that sibling rivalry is described prophetically as something that will continue on for generations.

Effectively, Israel and the Arab Muslim world, who are descendant from Ishmael, would be at each other's throats throughout history. The same kind of rivalry is prophesied regarding Jacob and Esau, who are sons of Isaac. Genesis 25:23 describes how they will be at each other's throats wrestling for all of time. Now, depending on how you interpret end times prophecy and Revelation and scattered throughout the rest of the Bible, you may or may not have a strong view of a restored Israel and a covenant of peace that will be established in seven years of tribulation.

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You may or may not grant all of that, but nonetheless, we do have biblical grounds for there being a continued rivalry between Israel and their enemies in the Arab Muslim world. So, you've got prophetic, you've got theological, you've got historical, you've got political, and then you've got psychological foundations underneath these anti-Israel protests.

So, that is the long answer for why we have these anti-Israel protests. Now, some people might be listening in and objecting, but can't Israel just grant a ceasefire? Why can't they just stop fighting? They're more powerful. They can just protect their borders. They could just end it now if they wanted to. But the problem is that Hamas has been offered a ceasefire. They decline it, they're not willing to give up their hostages. And so, they're kind of committed to this warfare on the long haul.

So, Hamas is the reason we can't have a ceasefire right now. Additionally, Hamas is really, really bad. I can't state this strongly enough. You may not know this, but Hamas is an acronym for Harakat al Muqwama al Islamia, which translates into Islamic Resistance Movement. They are the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. That is another terrorist organization well recognized globally, not just in the US now. They were elected into power in 2007 in Gaza, displacing the Palestinian Authority.

And ever since then, Gazans have been regretting that decision, because as soon as Hamas was elected into power, they closed their fists, clamped down, operating as an authoritarian force that has been guilty of thousands of crimes, we should say international crimes, breaches of the Geneva Convention, routinely using human shields in most every skirmish they've been involved in. And there's a theological reason for that, because they are fundamentalists in their understanding of Islam. And according to that fundamentalist perspective, they put Sharia law, that is Islamic law, above all other laws.

So, Sharia takes precedence over the Geneva Convention, takes precedence over anything the UN ever said, takes precedence over anything Israel, or the US, or the European Union, or any other country has ever said. Sharia law is above that. And Sharia law grants them the right to continue warfare, to reclaim lands that they perceive as being Muslim lands. And according to Islamic theology, once a territory has been conquered in the name of Allah and claimed by Islam, that territory is forever more a Muslim territory. Did you get that?

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Once a territory has been claimed in the name of Allah under Islamic rule, forevermore, that land is understood by fundamentalist Islam to be a Muslim territory, and that includes Israel. If you remember the Crusades, the Crusades were waged over reclaiming Israel from Islamic invasion because Islam, in its caliphate expansionist era, had expanded, and conquered, and took over Israel and Jerusalem, setting up on the Temple Mount on purpose. That wasn't an accident.

And so, that land is seen as an Islamic land. And as long as it's seen as Islamic land, Hamas feels, believes it has a divine right to keep waging war on Israel until Israel is dissolved. And every enemy of Allah that is religious Jews, and potentially ethnic Jews as well, must be defeated so that Allah can win out. So, as soon as Hamas came into power, Gazans regretted that decision. And many Gazans today want Israel to win and hate Hamas.

So, Hamas is literally a terrorist organization. We're not talking about rhetoric and exaggerated language. They are literally a recognized terrorist organization, and they really need to be smashed because they pose a decided, destabilizing threat in the powder keg that is the Middle East. Now, others may look at this and say, okay, hold on Maybe they can't grant a ceasefire, but you're making it sound like these anti-Israel protests are antisemitic. But so, the logic goes, what about when people are anti-Israel and not anti-Jew? They're just anti-Israel, they're anti-Zionist. They're not antisemitic.

Well, to answer that question, yes. That's theoretically possible. Possibly there are people who are genuinely anti-Israel, but they're not antisemitic. They're not anti-Jewish. But because of the deep and gnarly roots of antisemitism, we shouldn't grant that theoretical possibility lightly. That would be like saying, I'm not racist against black people. I just think black majority cities like Detroit shouldn't exist. Do you hear that? I'm not racist against black people. I just think black majority cities like Detroit shouldn't exist.

Is it theoretically possible that someone isn't racist against black people, but somehow has some twisted belief structure set up that they don't think Detroit should exist because it's black majority? Well, I guess it's theoretically possible. But is that realistically possible? Is that actually what's going on? And I'm not prepared to grant that lightly. You see, there's an implicit

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double standard going on here that translates this anti-Israel sentiment into kind of a sublimated anti-Jewish view. Excuse me.

This double standard is that Israel is held to a higher standard where they can't do anything without it being meticulously critiqued. And as long as Israel is held to a higher standard than most any other country is, and Palestinians and Hamas are given a charitable interpretation, given a pass almost, then that double standard means you're holding Jews to a different standard than anybody else. That double standard is a bias. It's a prejudice that weighs against Jews, and therefore it's anti-Jewish prejudice. It's antisemitism.

Yet that's what we really see. So, people will often back up and say, hold on. Israel, when they settled that land in 1948, they displaced a lot of Palestinians, forcing them out of their homes. And that's really evil. They killed some people, and yes, they did. Now, I am not giving a defense for that behavior specifically, but I want to clarify that. Is there any other nation in the world that didn't at some point, displace a population so that they can enact their culture, their politics, their governance as they saw fit?

Is there any nation in the world that didn't displace a population more or less, the same way as Israel did? I'm not sure there is. Now, maybe there are some exceptions, but those exceptions only prove the rule. Because pretty much every country you find, there's some sort of cultural overpowering force that comes in and takes over a territory, displaces a population, often by bloodshed and often just by sheer force of power. Israel doesn't even have that. They didn't move in by sheer force of power.

They were granted that land by a human declaration, by a UN consensus, in part because of World War II. Israel as a nation is in many ways a response, a concession to the fact that Israel could not rely on the rest of the world to protect them from extinction level events. Israel could not rely on European charity, definitely couldn't rely, or definitely couldn't rely on Middle Eastern support so that they could still exist as a people.

They couldn't rely on any of these other supports to stay alive because the antisemitism, the peak of which was the Holocaust, was so rabid, so vicious, so stark that Israel, almost as a people, that is, the Jewish people, almost got extinguished in World War II. So, granting them a

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homeland was to empower them to be able to defend themselves. Because realistically, they couldn't rely on anybody else to have their best interests in mind and protect them from genocide. So, Israel didn't just exert its power and take that homeland. No, they were granted it by an international declaration, and they displaced people. And let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that there were some crimes, some evils done.

Is Israel worse than other countries in how they went about it? I'm not prepared to say that they are. And when you interact with people who are defending the Palestinian cause, often they'll have a litany of abuses that they'll bring up. But if you ask them to prove that other countries didn't have more or less the same kind of thing in their founding, they usually get silent because there is a double standard applied to Israel, scrutinizing their every behavior while giving a charitable reading, a pass to Palestine, and even Hamas.

Now, if you're anti-Israel but not anti-Jewish, then you shouldn't be calling for a ceasefire, because a ceasefire would be meaning Israel is surrendering their responsibility to protect and secure their own citizens who are kidnapped and taken hostage by Hamas. It's not very pro Jewish to say to those 140 or so remaining hostages, well, forget about you. We just want the war to end.

Well, Hamas is perpetuating this war by retaining those hostages because Israel has a right and a responsibility to protect their own citizens, and that's what they're doing in trying to reclaim those hostages. Short of releasing those hostages, a ceasefire would be antisemitic. Also, Israel exists in large part because the Jewish people couldn't rely on the kindness of other nations to protect them from the Holocaust.

If you're anti-Israel, you are anti the lone Jewish nation in the world that is most fit to protect Jews from another Holocaust level event. That's what you're opposing. And so, there's at least the potential for an implicit antisemitism anytime someone says that they're anti-Israel. Because Israel exists in large part to keep the Jews from being wiped out. If you want Israel to be denied the best chance at solace they have to prevent an extinction level event for the Jewish people, then that's not a terribly pro-Jewish position to take.

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Now, one of the reasons that we have these kinds of conversations and people try to make those distinctions is because they may not really realize what's behind some of the slogans that they could hear at these anti-Israel protests going on on campuses today. One of those being, from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free. From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free. What does that even mean? Many westerners think that's just a rally cry for free Palestine.

They're just trying to root for the underdog. They're rooting for the people that the oppressive, powerful force of Israel has kept in a second class apartheid place. That's how people understand this mantra. They think it's just free Palestine. We want Israel to stop bullying the Palestinians. That's what many think. But what it really means is Israel needs to vanish. All the people who constitute the nation of Israel today need to die, or at least get out of the way and move out so that you can free up that space.

Because that's what the space is between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean: From the river to the sea. If Palestine is free across all of that, then Israel doesn't exist anymore. That is a denial of any two state solution. If you're chanting that and you mean it, you cannot in the next breath say you support a two state solution. Because from the river to the sea, Palestine being free means there is no Israel anymore. There is only Palestine. It's a call for Israel to stop existing.

And frankly, in the voices of many folks chanting this, it really does mean by killing all Jews. This isn't a message of peace. It's a call for an end to the world's only Jewish state and its Jewish people. That's a quote from the American Jewish Committee in a video explaining this very phrase. Let me repeat. From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free isn't a message of peace. It's a call for an end to the world's only Jewish state and its Jewish people.

Additionally, this slogan or this mantra, this chant is a recruitment tool for anti-Israel militants and jihadist terrorists. Now, I am not saying all Muslims are jihadists. I'm not saying all Muslims hate Israel. There are Muslims who are experiencing more religious and humanitarian freedom in Israel than they could in any other country in the Middle East. Israel is the safest place to be a Muslim. So, I'm not saying that all Muslims are anti-Israel, or all Muslims are jihadists. They're not. There's complexity to this.

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But when we speak of how this phrase is used, from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free, we're talking about a slogan that is a recruitment tool for anti-Israel militants and jihadist terrorists. Now, another question someone might ask, another objection that might be raised is how legitimate is the free Palestine cause? How legitimate is the free Palestine cause? Well, at one level, it kind of depends on whether Allah is God. That is, whether Islam is correct.

Because if Islam is correct, then doctrines of the caliphate, the divine right to Palestine, the implicit Arabic supremacy in much of the Arab Muslim world, a lot of these teachings center around Islam being able to reclaim Jerusalem as their God given rightful land. So, if that's true, then a lot of this Palestinian effort would be justified if Allah is God and Islam is correct. But let's say, as a Christian apologist, let's say that we don't know that to be true.

We can still grant for the sake of argument that Israel isn't all angels. Israel has been guilty of some wrongdoing, and they are worth critique. Every country deserves fair minded, responsible critique. There's no culture that is populated entirely by angels outside of heaven. There's no culture that is entirely pristine and unaffected by the fault. There are sins, and evils, and mistakes, and errors, and wrongdoing in every nation, in every people group, in every population, in every culture. And Israel is no exception. So, we can grant those real wrongs for Israel.

And we can also grant that when you get down to ground level, you're dealing with mixed ethnicities. The Palestinians aren't all Arabs. Some are Jewish people; some are transplants from other parts of the world. And then the Palestinians aren't all Muslim. Some are Jewish, some are secular. There might even be some Christians in there too. But you've got some mixing here. So, it's not as simple as good guys versus bad guys, ethnic Jewish Israelites versus ethnic Arab Muslim Palestinians. It's not quite that simple, although those are generally the case.

So, even if we grant Israel's not a bunch of angels and it's mixed on ground level, it gets more complicated between ethnicities and religions. We can grant all that and we still have a historical problem. You see, Palestine has never been a nation. It's not a country. It refers roughly to a region that overlaps with Israel. I'm not prepared to try to draw where those fine disputed borderlines are, but more or less, it's the same area as Israel.

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So, it's never been a country. The term didn't exist until the second century AD. We're talking the mid 100s AD. That's almost 2000 years ago. It didn't exist until Hadrian, Emperor Hadrian, who was avowedly antisemitic because these Israelites had started an uprising trying to reclaim their homeland from Rome and set up their own governing authority.

And it was squelched around 70 AD and there was broodings about that and ill will. And in the mid second century, Hadrian said, okay, let's put an end to this. And he exiled the Jews from Jerusalem. He started setting up Roman religious temples and shrines on top of sacred Christian and Jewish lands, or sacred Jewish and Christian sites. And so, he coined the term for that land, Palestine. And he drew inspiration for that word Palestine from Israel's most formidable historically, which was the Philistines.

Palestine is a derivative of the word Philistine. It's not the same, but it's derived from it. And it was created for that land by Hadrian, emperor Hadrian in the second century. What this means is, is that the Palestinians don't have the more ancient or more rightful claim to that land. Unless Allah is God and Islam is correct, Palestinians, that is the Muslims among them, don't have the more rightful land claim to that territory. Israel, however, came into that land about 1300 years before the word Palestine was invented.

Israel came into the land and made their land claim over that, what is now today Israel. The Israelites, that is, the sons of Israel, the name of Jacob, they left Egypt in the Exodus, came to the promised land, Canaan. And within a generation or two, they claimed that land as their sacred ancient right through Abraham and promised to them by God. So, all of that means Israel has the more ancient land claim by at least 1300 years before the word Palestine was even invented.

There was never a nation of Palestine. There was never a state of Palestine. There was never an empire of Palestine. Palestine refers to a region that at one point in the past was ruled by Rome. Later it had some Ottoman Turks and some British, and some other groups trying to vie for that land. But it refers to a territory, not to a nation. Israel has the more rightful claim to that land if we're going on historical claims. So, in that regard, the free Palestine cause is somewhat illegitimate because Israel isn't colonizing a foreign land.

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They aren't occupying Islamic land. They aren't taking over a place that was never theirs. Instead, they're moving back into their own homeland. They are the natives. They are the indigenous Palestinians reclaiming the land before it was ever called Palestine. What does that make the Palestinians? Well, they're more like squatters who've been living on land that wasn't their rightful land.

So, Israel has the more ancient claim to that land. Now, at this point you might be wondering, we've talked about why we've got all these anti-Israel protests going on on campuses. We've talked about the slogan, from the river to the sea, will Palestine be free. We've talked about the question of how legitimate is this free Palestine cause? But you might be wondering, hold on a second. I didn't think I was tuning into Al Jazeera or Haaretz.

I wasn't tuning into some Middle Eastern geopolitical channel. I was tuning into CrossExamined. I want to find out about Christian apologetics. So, you may be wondering, what does this have to do with Christian apologetics? I would say it's got a whole lot to do with Christian apologetics, because Christian antisemitism is very real. There are people in some of these protests who identify as Christian themselves.

Martin Luther was famously antisemitic, and his influence within Lutheranism, which took root in Germany, is one of the causal factors between the notorious German antisemitism that helped fuel Hitler's fires in World War II. There's also the claims and allegations that have been found in different parts of the Christian history world where folks say Jews killed Jesus, or blood libel, which is this slander that says Jews have to extract the blood of a Christian child to make their matzah bread for when they have Passover services. It's total fabrication. There's no truth in it. That was a myth that arose from antisemitic minds, often within Christian circles.

There's also what's known as replacement theology. There are forms of replacement theology that aren't strictly antisemitic, but there's a lot of antisemitism that overlaps heavily with replacement theology, effectively saying that God's promises through Abraham, through Jacob, through Moses, that were given to the people of Israel, God's promises have all been transferred over from ethnic Jewish Israel to the Church. All the sons of Abraham now are Christian, and there are no practicing religious Jews who are part of any of those covenant promises through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Moses. That's replacement theology.

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The Church has replaced Israel entirely in God's eyes. Now, a more refined statement of this kind of theology that isn't quite replacement theology would say that the Church is part of the covenant of Abraham, but we are grafted into that tree. We are now part of the covenant community with Israel. But there's still a literal, future prophetic role for literal geographic Israel, national Israel. And there's still grounds for it now that there has been a restored Israel ever since 1948.

Nineteen forty-eight was a head smacking event for a lot of Christians who thought that there would never be a national Israel ever again. And replacement theology was much more popular before 1948. But after 1948, replacement theology didn't go away entirely, but some of it molded back into sort of a hybrid that allows the Church to be grafted into Israel. But there's still traditional forms of replacement theology that say, no. There's no future place for Israel. There's no unique covenants to Israel that don't extend and cover the Church.

And so, replacement theology has been a fueling fire for antisemitic forms of Christianity. Politically, why should we Christians be concerned? Why should we Christian apologists be concerned about what's going on in Israel right now? Politically, Israel has been called the epicenter of geopolitics. It has outsized influence. And to whatever extent we're concerned about the political landscape out there and how we as Christian apologists can speak Christian truth into it, we should be concerned for what's going on in Israel.

Additionally, in the Middle East, Israel is basically the bastion of freedom. It's the only humanitarian, western style Democratic Republican in the Middle East right now. That's why it's such, that's one reason why it's such strong allies with the US. They are the safest place to be a Muslim in the whole Middle East. Ninety-nine percent of, if you look at a map, 99% of the Middle East is Arabic Muslim land. And that 1%, that little holdout about the size of New Jersey, that's Israel. Yet that's the safest place to be a Muslim.

Why? Because you have religious freedom. You have freedom of thought; you have freedom of speech. If you accidentally blaspheme against Allah around the wrong people in Saudi Arabia, you could be brought up on capital crime charges for that. In Israel, you might get a wry look, but it's legal. If you want to convert from Islam to atheism, to Christianity, to Judaism, if you do that in much of the Arab world, you now have a bounty on your head. But if you want to do

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that in Israel, you might get a pat on the back. You see, Israel is a unique oasis in the Middle East. Now, I don't want to oversimplify.

There's a different historical context. There's a different socio-political phenomenon going on in Saudi Arabia, in parts of Iran, because Iran is ancient Persia. And they're not all fundamentalist Shiite Muslims. Some of them hearken back to Persia as their stronger identity. You've got Iraq, which is the heartland of Babylon back in the day. Turkey was the last holdout of the Roman empire. So, we can't just say that the whole Middle Eastern and Eastern European world, that is Islamic, it's all homogenous. It's not.

Nevertheless, Israel still represents more freedom, more capital, more potential for human rights than most any other place in the Middle East. Additionally, Islam, especially jihadism, is a big enough force, you might even say threat, that Richard Dawkins himself, none other than one of the four horsemen of the atheist apocalypse, takes sides against Islam, claiming to be a cultural Christian. That's news when one of the foremost outspoken new atheists, Richard Dawkins, claims to be a cultural Christian. If that's what it takes to stand against the encroaching phenomenon of global Islam, it might not all be militant, but there's enough of a militant edge that even Richard Dawkins is concerned.

Additionally, Israel is a political barometer. Our security in many ways is tied to Israel. You see, fundamentalist factions of Islam often call Israel the little Satan. Well, guess who is the great Satan, the big Satan? That's the US. And once that head of the perceived Hydra is chopped off, the next one that they are coming for is the US. And we've seen that. We've heard that in chants in the streets. We saw that in 9/11. We've seen it in occasional spots of Islamist jihadist terrorist attacks in the US.

So, Israel is a political barometer. And as long as they are around, they're at least partly preoccupying and distracting some of the focus from some of those anti-western and anti-Israel forces within Arabic Islam. Additionally, we have to mention that Iran, according to recent reports, might be as short as one week away of having enough nuclear fissile fission material to be able to make a nuclear warhead.

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Now, if you're tracking the events, you know that a couple weeks ago, months after the start of the October 7 attacks and war declared on the 8th, Iran launched about 300 missiles or so, kind of sporadic. They're all shot down by Israel and they're out and partial allies with Egypt, and Jordan, and I think maybe Saudi Arabia. So, some of those were all shot down. There were no casualties. I think one young girl was hurt, but that was about 300 missiles. So, Iran was using drones to try to draw fire from Israel's world class missile defense system, which is called the Iron Dome. That Iron dome is kind of a world leader in missile defense compared to anything else going on in the world.

And so, when Hamas' attack on October 7 overwhelmed the Iron Dome with 2200 rockets fired at more or less the same time, they found a golden ticket into Israel by overwhelming the Iron Dome with lots of missiles. So, Iran tried to do it with fewer to see if they could still get some missiles through with 300 or so different missiles, drones, because the drones, if they have more drones than rockets, then they could try to use the drones to draw fire while a missile could come in behind it and land. But the Iron Dome was able to knock them all out.

Nevertheless, Iran might be planning, and we have every reason to expect them to be planning another attack of some sort where they can have a nuclear payload in tow with even more drones and even more rockets. So, if they had, say, 1500 rockets, which they could potentially pay for with the latest, I believe it was 2 billion granted to them through, I want to say it's the Biden administration, but I don't know how much I can trust different reports here and there. But allegedly Iran got a huge amount, up to about 2 billion or so, from western forces, including the US.

And of course they're going to leverage that for what they do. And they are probably the epicenter for terrorism, Islamist terrorism, radical Islamic terrorism. And so, we have every reason to expect Tehran and Iran to make that nuclear payload so that they can try to bomb Israel out of existence, because that's what they've been committed to do for decades now. This playbook is out there. This isn't news. This isn't conspiracism. This is well-known within anybody who's been monitoring jihadist terrorist groups.

When I say Israel is a political barometer, I'm saying that their security is in many ways an estimate of how secure the US is. If Israel isn't able to prevent attacks and they're bordered on

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all sides, then we have to expect that we will see an uptick in attacks on US soil. So, Christian apologists in the US should at least have a practical vested interest in the livelihood of Israel to the extent that they represent how safe freedom as an ideology can be in surrounded and threatened by Islamic terrorism. Now, we don't even have to like Israel. Like, let me back up and clarify. A lot of this language gets lost under rhetoric like Zionism, and anti-Zionism, and slanders, and slurs.

And you don't even have to like Israel or believe in their independent national status to still be able to affirm their utility from a geopolitical and western perspective. They're still helping to preoccupy and contain radical elements in the Muslim world, which means in the US, for example, we can have a little bit more freedom to preach the Gospel. We can have a little more freedom to evangelize, to disciple, to speak freely, to speak the Gospel, to speak the Bible in public places without fear of arrest.

We have a little bit more freedom to the extent that Israel remains intact in fighting off the hounds that are trying to penetrate their gates theologically. So, that's historically, antisemitism is a Christian issue as well. And we need to take it seriously, vetting our own antisemitism, and doing that as we're interpreting, and evaluating, and figuring out how to contribute towards the cause. What side should we be rooting for here?

Well, if we're antisemitic at our root, in our theology as Christians, then we might be taking the wrong side on a difficult, complicated issue in this Hamas war. Politically, we've got plenty of reason to stand for Israel, even if we're not terribly fond of Israel. And even if we didn't happen to think they had full, independent national status, if we thought they were an illegitimate state, they could still be politically useful and important for the sake of preserving freedom and including Christians who are in Israel, people who have the freedom to share the Gospel in Israel, people who have the freedom to share their faith.

And there are churches in Israel. My wife has connections. She's the founder of Mama Bear Apologetics. She has connections with some folks who are part of churches in Israel. And they would not be able to have that church freely congregating in Israel. Likely, they wouldn't be allowed to have that congregation if Israel was wiped off the map and the land was reclaimed by radical terrorists, radical Islamist terrorists, that is Hamas. But there's another reason.

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Besides history and politics, there's also theology. You see the Abrahamic covenant that we read in Genesis 12:2-3 says this. I will make you, Abraham, into a great nation, and I will bless you. I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you, I will curse. And all people on earth will be blessed through you. I take that because it's Scripture, I take it to be true. I interpret it because it's Abrahamic. It's not just part of the Mosaic covenant. It's not just part of God's words to Jacob, that is Israel.

It goes all the way back to Abraham. I take that to mean that the descendants of Abraham, through the covenant promise that issued through Isaac, that is Israel. That's the land that God promised that his descendants would reclaim and that he would be a father of a great nation. I take that to mean more or less the nation of Israel. Now, there's more to that where Christians are grafted into that, that tree that is Israel. But you still have a literal fulfillment, where Abraham's descendants claimed that land and fulfilled that prophecy and are continuing to fulfill it more and more fully over time.

But what does that mean when it says, those who bless you, I will bless. And those who curse you, I will curse? I think that has been at least typologically fulfilled historically in that every nation that has risen up against Israel and tried to destroy them failed in the process. And when they were world powers, they were no longer world powers thereafter. Now some had temporary success. So, Israel has been defeated in times past. But they were defeated by Assyria. Is the Assyrian nation around anymore?

No. Syria, but that's not Assyria. Not Assyria. The Babylonians. They conquered Israel, they conquered Judah. Are they around anymore? No, they're not a world power. The Persians, they conquered Israel. Are they around anymore? No. Fast forward. The Greek empire conquered them around the time of Alexander the Great. Is Greece an empire now? No, they're a nation, but they're not a world power. Rome conquered Greece and became this big Roman empire. Are they the world power now? Are they leading the globe in geopolitics anymore? Not really.

Now, the city of Rome and Italy is still outsized in its influence, but the Roman empire doesn't exist anymore. And you could fast forward, you could talk. Britain had that land, and as much as they have been a world power, they've kind of retreated a great deal. I don't know that they were active enemies of Israel at any. I'd have to check my notes on that. But Israel and the US is

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largely allies with Israel right now, which, I'm sorry, England and the US is largely allies with Israel right now. But what about Germany? What about the Ottoman empire? Every world power that stood against Israel fell from world power status. And now if they exist at all, they're much weaker for it.

And that's why you can have this little sliver of a country, a little bit smaller than New Jersey that is 1% of the Middle East still cleaning house anytime the rest of that 99% of the Middle east wages war against it. I think that's because God is on their side. I don't want to say everything Israel's done is right. It's not. But Israel still has a place in God's plan, his eschatological plan for how things are going to play out in the end times. And I don't think we should take Israel lightly. And I don't think we should dare to stand against Israel.

Remember, God will bless those who bless Israel, and whoever curses them, He will curse. It is to our self-interest, to our advantage to find ways to tactically and strategically support Israel without supporting, as much as possible, without supporting any wrongdoing that they may be guilty of. So, that is why we have campus protests against Israel going crazy nowadays. It's not just about Hamas. It's not just about October 7, though those are triggering events that brought that into the current consciousness.

There's a long history of antisemitism, and there are a lot of political opportunists that are trying to seize this issue, co-opt it, appropriate it, and colonize it for their political cause so that they can use it to advance other typically politically progressive agenda items and sort of cram them into the forefront today. That's where we stand.

And by God's grace, may Israel be protected, and may this war come to a peaceable and humanitarian resolution. At the end, we pray this to God. My name is John Ferrer and thank you for listening to the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast. And I want to remind you that we have lots of free resources on our website. Just visit CrossExamined.org. Thank you and God bless.

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