

## Christian Zionism *Origins in America* Lesson Plan

**Central Historical Question: What factors led to a strong Christian Zionist presence in the U.S.?**

### **Materials:**

- Origins in America PowerPoint
- *Origins in America* Video
- Copies of Documents A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I.

### **Plan of Instruction:**

*The PowerPoint, video and supporting documents reinforce lesson content through purposeful repetition and the gradual addition of new material.*

1. Pass out Documents A-I.
2. Mini-lecture with PowerPoint:
  - Slide: Pilgrim Fathers: *The early settlers of Plymouth Colony who arrive in Plymouth, Massachusetts and establish Plymouth Colony in 1620 do so for religious reasons. They are Evangelical Christians who have left the Church of England, a punishable offense. To escape persecution, they had already fled to Holland, a relatively more tolerant place in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. When they become fearful that they will lose their British identity in Holland, they decide to emigrate to the New World.*

*The Pilgrims identify with the ancient Israelites, a trait shared with other Puritans. But the Pilgrims' identification perhaps runs deeper than even their Puritan counterparts in England. For the Pilgrims play out the story of Exodus in their own lives, seeing themselves as fellow refugees fleeing oppression in search of a new land. As in England, the Pilgrims are entranced with Hebrew, giving their children biblical names. They even consider adopting Hebrew as the language of the New World*
  - Slide: Restorationism: *At the time the Pilgrims abandon the Old World for the new, Restorationism is at its height among Evangelical Protestants. The Pilgrims, like all Puritans, share a devotion to the Bible. Their reading of the Scriptures makes them aware of the promise God made to the people of Israel to return them to their homeland. They believe Israel's return is key to the Second Coming. In fact, two English Puritans living in the Netherlands will petition England in 1649, urging England and Holland "to transport Izrael's sons and daughters in their ships to the Land promised to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for an everlasting*

*inheritance.” The famous Puritan preacher Increase Mather and his son Cotton Mather are early Restorationists. Increase Mather’s 1669 book “The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation” argues that the Jews will return to their land and convert to Christianity in a miraculous event.*

- *Slide: Early American Protestantism: As Protestantism developed in America in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, terms like “Zion” and “the land of Israel” took on a metaphorical meaning. As historian Hertzal Fishman writes, “American Protestants, like Christians all over the world, retained a sentimental association with the ‘land of Israel,’ the country of Jesus’ earthly drama. In usage, the term was applied symbolically, but not practically. ... connoting a distant past or a vague theological future, not a viable present. It had little to do with the nationalist strivings of the contemporary Jewish people.”*

*Even Increase Mather represented this attitude to a degree. While he desired to see the Jews convert to Christianity and restored to their land, (even arguing for the destruction of the Ottoman Empire to hasten the process) ultimately, he believed America would become God’s future kingdom. The idea of a new Jerusalem developing slowly on American soil was advanced by others who treated America as the ‘new Zion.’*

- *Slide: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Resurgence: The early nineteenth century marks a change in attitudes. American Protestants start to take interest in the Jews. Their concern is sparked by the persecution of Jews in other countries. The plight of the Jews leads to calls for a Jewish homeland as a solution. Upon hearing a speech in New York in April 1818, by Mordecai Manuel Noah, former U.S. consul to Tunis, former president John Adams says, “I really wish the Jews again in Judea, an independent nation.”*

*Decades later, in 1844, New York University professor of Hebrew, George Bush, ancestor of the Presidents Bush, writes “Valley of Vision or the Dry Bones of Israel Revived,” arguing for a pragmatic program for encouraging Jews to return to Palestine.*

- *Slide: Dispensationalism: By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, a new theology takes hold in Protestant America known as Dispensationalism. Dispensationalism explains God’s sovereignty over man by dividing His rule into distinct time periods, or “dispensations”.*

*What is important to understand for the purposes of this lesson is that Dispensationalism breaks from the traditional Christian view that the Church has replaced Israel in God’s eyes; that the people of Israel has been brushed aside for having failed to recognize Jesus as Messiah. In*

*the Dispensationalist view, the Church and Israel should be viewed separately. The idea that the Church had not replaced the people of Israel and that the Israelites still had a role to play in prophecy already appeared earlier in Protestant theology, appearing with more or less force at various times. Dispensationalism, however, gives it new life.*

- Slide: John Nelson Darby: *Dispensationalism as a distinct system of theology is developed by John Nelson Darby. According to Darby's theology, while God may have punished the children of Israel for a time, He will not go back on the promises He made to them. Darby writes: "Deny Israel's place and glory with Messiah, and the church will become earthly, rise in its own conceits, and finally, as a system down here, be cut off."*

*According to Darby, all the prophecies, including the ingathering of the exiles to the Land of Israel, will be fulfilled. He says: "...the Jews are the habitual object of the thoughts of God; for, although He cannot recognize them for the moment, as being under His christening hand, they are nevertheless still His people ... and ... will by and by be re-established in all their privileges ... He was and is always the God of the Jews."*

*Darby makes a series of tours to America starting in 1862. He travels across the country giving lectures. His ideas gain momentum and by 1866 many ministers are traveling considerable distances to hear him speak.*

- Slide: Darby's Disciples: *Helping to spread Darby's ideas are his disciples, including Dwight L. Moody, founder of the Moody Bible Institute and at the time considered "the most influential 'clergyman' in America", and James Hall Brookes, a St. Louis pastor, who edited a journal on prophecy called "The Truth".*
- Slide: Scofield Reference Bible: *Cyrus Scofield is a disciple of James Brookes. He produces the "Scofield Reference Bible." This becomes an important vehicle for conveying Darby's theology. The Bible contains detailed explanatory notes presenting Darby's interpretation of Scriptures. Scofield's Bible is a huge success. At one point, half of all evangelical groups rely on it. It is called "perhaps the most important single document in all fundamentalist literature."*
- Slide: William E. Blackstone: *William E. Blackstone, a friend of Dwight Moody and Cyrus Scofield, is a successful Chicago businessman. Born a Methodist, he becomes born again at the age of 11 after attending a revival meeting. Blackstone subscribes to Darby's ideas.*

- Slide: “Jesus Is Coming”: *In 1878, Blackstone publishes “Jesus is Coming” in which he makes the case for the Messiah’s imminent return and the pivotal role the restoration of the Jews will play. “Jesus is Coming” is wildly successful with sales eventually topping 1 million. It will be translated into 48 languages, including Hebrew. Blackstone argues that the very existence and continued survival of the Jews is proof of the Bible. He writes: “And the wonderful preservation, as a distinct people, through all the persecutions, vicissitudes and wanderings of the past eighteen centuries down to the present moment is a standing miracle, attesting to the truth of God’s word.” The book makes Blackstone a hero to evangelicals.*
- Slide: Holy Land Visit: *In 1888, Blackstone visits the Holy Land. He sees early Zionist agricultural efforts to work the land. Blackstone concludes that the “End Times” are closer than he imagined.*
- Slide: Blackstone Memorial: *In the early 1880s, Jews are attacked in Russia in a wave of pogroms. Eager to help Russia’s Jews, Blackstone organizes a conference in Chicago in 1890 of Jewish and Christian leaders. They pass a resolution in sympathy with Russia’s Jews. Certain that the only solution for the Jews is a country of their own, Blackstone drafts a petition to the president. Known as “The Blackstone Memorial,” the petition is signed by 413 prominent Americans, including politicians, judges and captains of industry.*

*He presents the petition to President Benjamin Harrison on March 5, 1891. The petition asks: “What shall be done for Russia’s Jews? ... Why not give Palestine back to them again? According to God’s distribution of nations it is their home, and inalienable possession from which they were expelled by force.” Although Harrison promises to give the Memorial careful attention, it doesn’t appear that he ever did so. Indeed, there is no mention of the Memorial in the volumes of Foreign Relations of the United States for that period.*

- Slide: *Blackstone’s Response to Zionism: When the Herzl-led Zionist movement appears five years after Blackstone’s Memorial in 1896, Blackstone is encouraged. Although, he’s also dismayed by its nonreligious aspect. Blackstone writes, “Strange to say, these agnostics furnished the leaders, namely, Dr. Max Nordau of Paris and Dr. Theodor Herzl of Vienna. They aver that this is not a religious movement at all. It is purely economic and nationalistic.”*

*Blackstone is stunned when Herzl suggests Uganda as an alternative country. He sends Herzl a Bible in which he marks all the parts noting that*

*the Land of Israel is the place to which the Jews will return. Herzl, who is not insensitive to religious feeling on the matter, keeps the Bible, now on display in the Herzl museum in Jerusalem.*

- Slide: Evangelicalism Cools: *American Evangelical enthusiasm fades with the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among U.S. government officials, particularly within the State Department, it was never popular. Nor does it find sympathy among Protestant missionaries in the Middle East, who turn their attention to Arabs after low success rates in their efforts to convert Jews.*
- Slide: A Second Memorial: *William Blackstone will play an important role in breaking through this hostility when he resubmits his Memorial, this time to President Woodrow Wilson in 1917. It is the middle of World War I and England is debating whether to approve a declaration in favor of a Jewish National Home. A key missing ingredient for the British is American support. Britain won't issue a statement without America's approval.*

*In order to convince President Wilson, Zionist leader and Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis recognizes he'll need to appeal to Wilson's Christian faith. He contacts Blackstone and asks him to present his petition again. Unlike President Harrison, who received the first petition, Wilson is moved by the petition, particularly because it comes from a fellow believing Christian. In June 1917, Wilson tells Zionist leader Stephen Wise: "Whenever the time comes, and you and Justice Brandeis feel that the time is ripe for me to speak and act, I shall be ready."*

*Brandeis will later attribute his success to Blackstone's appeal to Wilson's Christian faith. On Oct. 13, 1917, Wilson assures the British of his support for a British statement in favor of a Jewish national home. On Nov. 2, 1917, the British Cabinet approves the Balfour Declaration.*

- Slide: Blackstone Honored: *Two months after the Balfour Declaration, in January 1918, Blackstone is honored at a large Zionist meeting. In his speech, he expresses his deep religious belief: "Oh my Jewish friends. God says that you are dear unto Him ... He has put an overwhelming love in my heart for you all, and therefore I have spoken thus plainly. Study this wonderful Word of God and see how plainly God Himself has revealed Israel's pathway unto the perfect day."*
- Slide: Father of Zionism?: *Justice Brandeis keeps up his friendship with Blackstone until Blackstone's passing in 1935. Because his efforts preceded Herzl, Brandeis pays Blackstone a high compliment, saying: "You are the father of Zionism."*

### 3. Play video: Origins in America

Introduce inquiry question: What factors led to a strong Christian Zionist presence in the U.S.?

### 4. Whole class discussion:

- Christian Zionism, or Restorationism, had more than one introduction to America. Which do you think was most important?
- When Blackstone heard of the Uganda plan, he sent Herzl a marked-up Bible. Blackstone, a Christian, could not imagine any place but the Land of Israel as the Jewish Homeland. While Herzl, a Jew, could contemplate other possibilities. How is that explained?
- Restorationists believe that Jews will return to their Land but they also believe that the Jews will convert to Christianity. This didn't bother Zionists like Brandeis who welcomed Christian support. Why do you think it didn't?
- Do you think Restorationism would have taken hold in America if Darby had not made several tours of the country?
- Why did the Blackstone Memorial fail the first time and succeed the second and what lesson can we learn from that?

### 5. Hand out Review Questions (may be used as end of class Quiz).

***Document A: “The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation”,  
Increase Mather (1669)***

Some have believed and asserted a general conversion of the Jews, yet have doubted whether they should ever again possess the land of their fathers. But the Scripture is very clear and full in this, that you see not how it can justly be denied or questioned. . . .

A little before the conversion of the Jews, there will be the most terrible doings in the world that ever were heard of in respect of wars and commotions, the waves of the sea roaring, confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, blood and fire, and vapor of smoke; but after the kingdom shall be restored unto Israel, then shall be glorious days of peace and tranquility.

*Source: The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation Explained and Applied — a discourse concerning the general conversion of the Israelitish nation, Increase Mather, London, 1669.*

**Document B: “American Protestantism and a Jewish State”, Hertzal Fishman (1973)**

American Protestants, like Christians all over the world, retained a sentimental association with the “land of Israel,” the country of Jesus’ earthly drama. In usage, the term was applied symbolically, but not practically. It was a metaphysical and metaphorical term connoting a distant past or a vague theological future, not a viable present. It had little to do with the nationalist strivings of the contemporary Jewish people.

The early nineteenth century marked a turning point in the attitudes of American Protestants toward the Jewish people and Palestine. Leading Americans began to speak out on the subject of the Jews and a Jewish homeland, largely as a result of Jewish persecution abroad. Furthermore, a millenarian fervor began to influence American Protestants, especially those of the smaller, fundamentalist denominations. In 1816, Hezekiah Niles of Baltimore, publisher of the important *Weekly Register*, recognized the plight of European Jewry in the aftermath of Napoleon’s defeat, and wondered why wealthy Jews could not exploit Turkish weaknesses to secure Palestine as a homeland. Mordecai Manuel Noah, a former United States consul to Tunis and a figure in New York City politics, visited the Levant and, upon his return, began to agitate for a political haven of refuge for persecuted Jews. When John Adams was asked to respond to a proto-Zionist speech delivered by Noah in April 1818, dedicating the new Shearith Israel Synagogue in New York City, the former President declared: “I really wish the Jews again in Judea, an independent nation. For, as I believe, the most enlightened men of it have participated in the amelioration of the philosophy of the age.”

*Source: American Protestantism and a Jewish State, Hertzal Fishman, Wayne University Press, Detroit, 1973, p. 18.*

**Document C: “Power, Faith and Fantasy”, Michael B. Oren (2007)**

Restorationism found its broadest antebellum exposition in an 1844 treatise, *The Valley of Vision; or, The Dry Bones of Israel Revived*, by the biblical scholar and distinguished professor of Hebrew at New York University, George Bush. Denouncing “the thralldom and oppression which has so long ground them to the dust,” Bush called for “elevating” the Jews “to a rank of honorable repute among the nations of the earth” by re-creating their state in Palestine. Such restitution would benefit not only the Jews but all mankind, forming a “link of communication” between humanity and God. “It will blaze in notoriety,” Bush foretold. “It will flash a splendid demonstration upon all kindreds and tongues of the truth.”

Source: *Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present*, Michael B. Oren, W.H. Norton and Company, New York, 2007, p. 141-142.

**Document D: “For Zion’s Sake”, Paul Richard Wilkinson (2007)**

Darby began a series of lectures in Geneva in 1840 with the following appeal: ‘It should be the endeavor of the Christian, not only to be assured of his salvation in Christ, but also of all the results of this salvation.’ Darby believed that one of the ‘results’, or outworkings, of salvation was a clear understanding of Israel’s place in the purposes of God, since salvation in Christ was ‘from the Jews’ (John 4:22) and had come to the Gentiles ‘to make Israel envious’ (Rom. 11:11). Darby took Paul’s metaphor of the olive tree, into which Gentile believers in Christ had been grafted, to show that the root of the tree was ‘not Gentile, but Abrahamic and Jewish’; since ‘the root bore the branches’, there was no ground for Gentile-Christian pride (Rom. 11:20-22). He also maintained that despite God’s judgment of Israel, on account of her apostasy and rejection of the Messiah, ‘that which God had once chosen and called He never casts off. He does not repent of His counsels, nor of the call which gives them effect.’ According to Darby, it was incumbent upon the Church, therefore, to understand God’s continuing purposes for Israel, especially in relation to the Messiah’s *Second Coming*. He also emphasized the relationship between Israel and the Church as two *distinct* people groups in God’s purposes. ...

By 1829, Darby was already reflecting on ‘the restoration of the Jews to their own land’, a restoration he saw ‘scattered through all Scripture’ and one which rested ‘on the whole plan of God’s dispensed purposes.’ He identified the inextricable bond which existed between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, asserting that only in their ancient homeland would a Jewish remnant be ‘blessed with Israel’s blessings, according to promise’, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and delivered from the nations which would besiege Jerusalem before Messiah’s return. Darby pointed out that

even the geography of Scripture is always considered according to the position of the Holy Land. If we have a king of the south, it is a king to the south of Palestine; for Palestine is the centre of all God’s thoughts as to the government of this world. Jerusalem is His chosen city.

Darby noted how, in his command to Joseph to leave Egypt with the infant Jesus (Matt. 2:20), the angel Gabriel had mentioned the land they were to return to 'by the name that recalls the privileges bestowed by God. It is neither Judea nor Galilee; it is "the land of Israel".' He believed that this land had been 'entrusted to Israel', and that the Gentiles had 'no right' to it even when occupying the Land during her exile. In an article published in the *Christian Witness* in 1834, Darby not only described the Land of Israel as 'the great centre of divine providence', but also as 'the Jewish land'.

*Source: For Zion's Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby, Paul Richard Wilkinson, Paternoster, UK, 2007, p. 97-116.*

**Document E: “For Zion’s Sake,” Paul Richard Wilkinson (2007)**

Another Chicago minister Darby impacted was Dwight L. Moody, who has been described as ‘the most influential “clergyman” in America’.

...

Moody was inspired by the devotion of the Plymouth Brethren to Scripture, and by their missionary zeal and ‘uncompromising belief in the imminent, bodily, and premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ’ which, by 1877, Moody was teaching.

... in St. Louis ... was James Hall Bookes, the pastor of Walnut Street Presbyterian Church and the man who disciplined Cyrus Scofield in the Christian faith. Besides sermons, Bible readings, and home visits, Darby’s eschatology was disseminated most widely through Brethren literature. In a letter to C. Wolson in October 1866, he wrote: ‘Tracts and books we cannot get enough of for the States.’ ...

The demand for literature led to a complete overhaul of Brethren printing and supply procedures. Books and tracts written by Darby, William Kelly, Charles Mackintosh, and William Trotter were shipped to the United States and distributed through publications such as James Inglis’ *The Witness and Waymarks in the Wilderness* (1864-1872), and Charles Campbell’s *The Scripture Testimony* (1863). ...

Writing to C. McAdam from Boston in 1875, Darby noted how the Brethren had become ‘the subject of discussion everywhere’, with ‘evil doctrine... less rampant’ due to their influence. ...

In his final letter from America, written to Mr. Brockhaus in June 1877, Darby summed up how the Brethren had been received by the American Church:

There is an acknowledgment here in the United States of their acquaintance with the word such as nowhere else. They are not the less opposed to us; but they buy the books, and come in numbers to the Bible readings: they feel they must reckon with us, as they say. ...

By the time Darby left America, eighty-eight regular Brethren Bible-reading meetings had been established. His achievement is best expressed, however, in terms of the 'sheer momentum' he generated, a momentum carried forward by the American Bible and Prophecy Conference movement, which put Darby's dispensationalist eschatology firmly on America's theological map.

**Vocabulary**

Eschatology: any system of doctrines concerning last, or final, matters, as death, the Judgment, the future state, etc.

*Source: For Zion's Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby, Paul Richard Wilkinson, Paternoster, UK, 2007, p. 243-247.*

**Document F: “Jesus Is Coming”, William E.  
Blackstone (1878)**

But, perhaps, you say: “I don’t believe the Israelites are to be restored to Canaan and Jerusalem rebuilt.”

Dear reader! Have you read the declarations of God’s word about it! Surely nothing is more plainly stated in the Scriptures. We would that we had space to quote the passages, but we can only give you a portion of the references. We beg of you to read them thoughtfully. Divest yourself of prejudice and preconceived notions, and let the Holy Spirit show you, from His word, the glorious future of God’s chosen people “who are beloved” (Rom. 11:28), and dear unto Him as “the apple of His eye.” Zech. 2:8

*Source: Jesus Is Coming, William E. Blackstone, Fleming H. Revell, Chicago, 1908 (First Published 1878), p. 162.*

**Document G: “Israel in the Mind of America”, Peter Grose (1983)**

Born a Methodist in upstate New York in 1941, William Eugene Blackstone became an avid student of the Bible in boyhood. After the Civil War he followed the path of fortune to the West and established himself in Oak Park, Illinois, with a construction and investment company. Self-earned wealth gave him the space and security to pursue a sense of mission that reached far beyond the confines of a balance sheet. He threw himself into his lifelong avocation, the preparation for the Second Coming of Christ. ...

The evangelist took his daughter on a grand tour of Palestine in 1888, and with one eye on the inspiration of the Holy Land and the other on the social pressures of restive Russian Jewry crowding into the United States, this born-again businessman devised a plan.

Eventually, no less than 413 prominent Americans joined in his appeal, among them John D. Rockefeller, Cyrus McCormick, J. Pierpont Morgan, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, senators, clergymen, newspaper editors. It was a formidable listing of the American elite. Absent from their text were the inspirational, doctrinal arguments which generated such excitement on the revival circuit. The petition which Blackstone handed to President Benjamin Harrison on March 5, 1891, appealed to humanitarianism and, though hardly stated explicitly, the need to do something lest teeming crowds of immigrants would make life too uncomfortable for American society, socially endangering Jews as well as Gentiles. ...

The Blackstone Memorial, as it was called, is a remarkable document: in its timing, 1891, half a decade before European Jewry heard the call of political Zionism; in its source, a fundamentalist Christian from the American heartland; and in the grandiose sweep of its naïve vision. ...

...nothing ever came of the Blackstone Memorial. Acknowledging its receipt, President Harrison promised “to give it careful consideration,” but there is not the slightest evidence that he ever did so. ...

Blackstone had tried to persuade the President of the United States by recalling the Persian monarch Cyrus, who permitted the Jewish nation to return from Babylon and build their Second Commonwealth in Jerusalem. “Not for 24 centuries,” Blackstone told Benjamin Harrison, “has there been offered to any mortal such a privileged opportunity to further the purposes of God concerning His ancient people.” Harrison himself was unmoved, but no one could then know the impact which the Bible story of Cyrus and the restoration of the Jews would have upon a later holder of presidential office, then a seven-year-old farm boy in Missouri.

*Source: Israel in the Mind of America, Peter Grose, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1983, p. 35-37.*

**Document H: “Blackstone Memorial,” William E. Blackstone (March 5, 1891)**

What shall be done for the Russian Jews? It is both unwise and useless to undertake to dictate to Russia concerning her internal affairs. The Jews have lived as foreigners in her dominions for centuries and she fully believes that they are a burden upon her resources and prejudicial to the welfare of her peasant population, and will not allow them to remain. She is determined that they must go. Hence, like the Sephardim of Spain, these Ashkenazim must emigrate. But where shall 2,000,000 of such poor people go? Europe is crowded and has no room for more peasant population. Shall they come to America? This will be a tremendous expense, and require years.

Why not give Palestine back to them again? According to God's distribution of nations it is their home, an inalienable possession from which they were expelled by force. Under their cultivation it was a remarkably fruitful land sustaining millions of Israelites who industrially tilled its hillsides and valleys. They were agriculturists and producers as well as a nation of great commercial importance – the center of civilization and religion.

Why shall not the powers which under the treaty of Berlin, in 1878, gave Bulgaria to the Bulgarians and Serbia to the Serbians now give Palestine back to the Jews? These provinces, as well as Romania, Montenegro and Greece, were wrested from the Turks and given to their natural owners. Does not Palestine as rightfully belong to the Jews? It is said that rains are increasing and there are evidences that the land is recovering its ancient fertility. If they could have autonomy in government the Jews of the world would rally to transport and establish their suffering brethren in their time-honored habitation. For over seventeen centuries they have patiently waited for such an opportunity. They have not become agriculturists elsewhere because they believed they were mere sojourners in the various nations, and were yet to return to Palestine and till their own land. Whatever vested rights, by possession may have accrued to Turkey can be easily compensated, possibly by the Jews assuming an equitable portion of the national debt.

We believe this is an appropriate time for all nations and especially the Christian nations of Europe to show kindness to Israel. A million of exiles, by their terrible suffering, are piteously appealing to our sympathy, justice, and humanity. Let us now restore to them the land of which they were so cruelly despoiled by our Roman ancestors.

To this end we respectfully petition His Excellency Benjamin Harrison, President of the United States, and the Honorable James G. Blaine, Secretary of State, to use their good offices and influence with the Governments of their Imperial Majesties -

Alexander III, Czar of Russia;

Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Empress of India;

William II, Emperor of Germany;

Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austro-Hungary;

Abdul Hamid II, Sultan of Turkey;

His Royal Majesty, Humbert, King of Italy;

Her Royal Majesty Marie Christiana, Queen Regent of Spain;

and the Government of the Republic of France and with the Governments of Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece. To secure the holding at an early date, of an international conference to consider the condition of the Israelites and their claims to Palestine as their ancient home, and to promote, in all other just and proper ways, the alleviation of their suffering condition.

*Source: Text of Blackstone Memorial, William E. Blackstone, Presented to President Benjamin Harrison, March 5, 1891.*

**Document I: “Standing With Israel”, David Brog (2006)**

In April 1917, the United States entered World War I on the side of the British. The Americans were crucial allies, supplying a massive infusion of armaments and troops that turned the tide of the war. Determined to keep the Americans by their side, the British Cabinet was unwilling to approve any postwar commitments that might alienate them. The Zionists and their allies recognized that an American green light would have to precede any British endorsement of Zionism.

Both Weizmann and Balfour approached Louis Brandeis, a man uniquely situated to help them secure the approval they needed. Brandeis was the leading American Zionist of his day. Brandeis was also a close confidant of President Woodrow Wilson. ...

Brandeis agreed to seek from President Wilson an expression of support for creating a Jewish home in Palestine. In so doing, Brandeis' entrée would certainly play a crucial role. Equally important, however, was Brandeis' familiarity with Woodrow Wilson and how best to motivate this man.

In the national memory, and even during his own lifetime, Woodrow Wilson has been thought of as a northeastern intellectual. Prior to entering politics, Wilson had spent decades at Princeton University, first as a professor and later as the university's president. Wilson then served as governor of New Jersey. Yet these positions, and the stereotypes associated with them, obscured some of the core elements of Wilson's personality.

Throughout his life, Woodrow Wilson was a deeply religious Christian. As the son of a Presbyterian minister, Wilson was raised in a devout home. In adulthood, Wilson continued to actively participate in his church and read the Bible daily. ...

In seeking to persuade President Wilson to support the creation of a Jewish home in Palestine, Brandeis had a number of solid political and policy rationales from which to choose. ...

Yet Brandeis believed it was important to appeal to President Wilson's Christian faith. Brandeis had learned of William Blackstone and the petition he had sent to President Harrison in 1891. Brandeis was impressed with the cogent argument made therein for a Jewish state in Palestine and was more impressed still by the fact that it was written by a believing Christian. While the Memorial may have been ahead of its time in 1891, Brandeis felt that Blackstone's work could now be pivotal in persuading Wilson.

Brandeis contacted Blackstone and urged him to resuscitate and recirculate his Memorial. Blackstone readily agreed. ...

On June 30, 1917, the Blackstone Memorial was presented to Wilson. On October 13, 1917, Wilson permitted Brandeis to convey to Lord Balfour and the British cabinet President Wilson's "entire sympathy" with the proposal to create a homeland for the Jews. The Balfour Declaration followed in November. Brandeis later attributed his success in winning Wilson over to the Zionist cause to his ability to appeal to Wilson's deep Christian faith.

*Source: Standing With Israel, David Brog, Front Line: A Strang Company, Florida, 2006, p. 116-118.*

**Guiding Questions**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What changed about American Protestant attitudes in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century?
2. What helped spread Darby's ideas in the United States?
3. What was Blackstone's reaction to the Zionist movement led by Herzl?

In the space below answer the following: *What factors led to a strong Christian Zionist presence in the U.S.?*