



# **BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

“DO NOT CONFORM TO THE PATTERN OF THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND. THEN YOU WILL BE ABLE TO TEST AND APPROVE WHAT GOD’S WILL IS—HIS GOOD, PLEASING AND PERFECT WILL.”

(ROMANS 12:2)





# A PEOPLE WHO...



... ARE **CHRIST-CENTRED**

... ARE **BIBLE-SHAPED**

... ARE **FAMILY**

... ARE **VIBRANT**

... **DEMONSTRATE INTEGRITY**

... **EXTEND GRACE**

... **CONNECT**



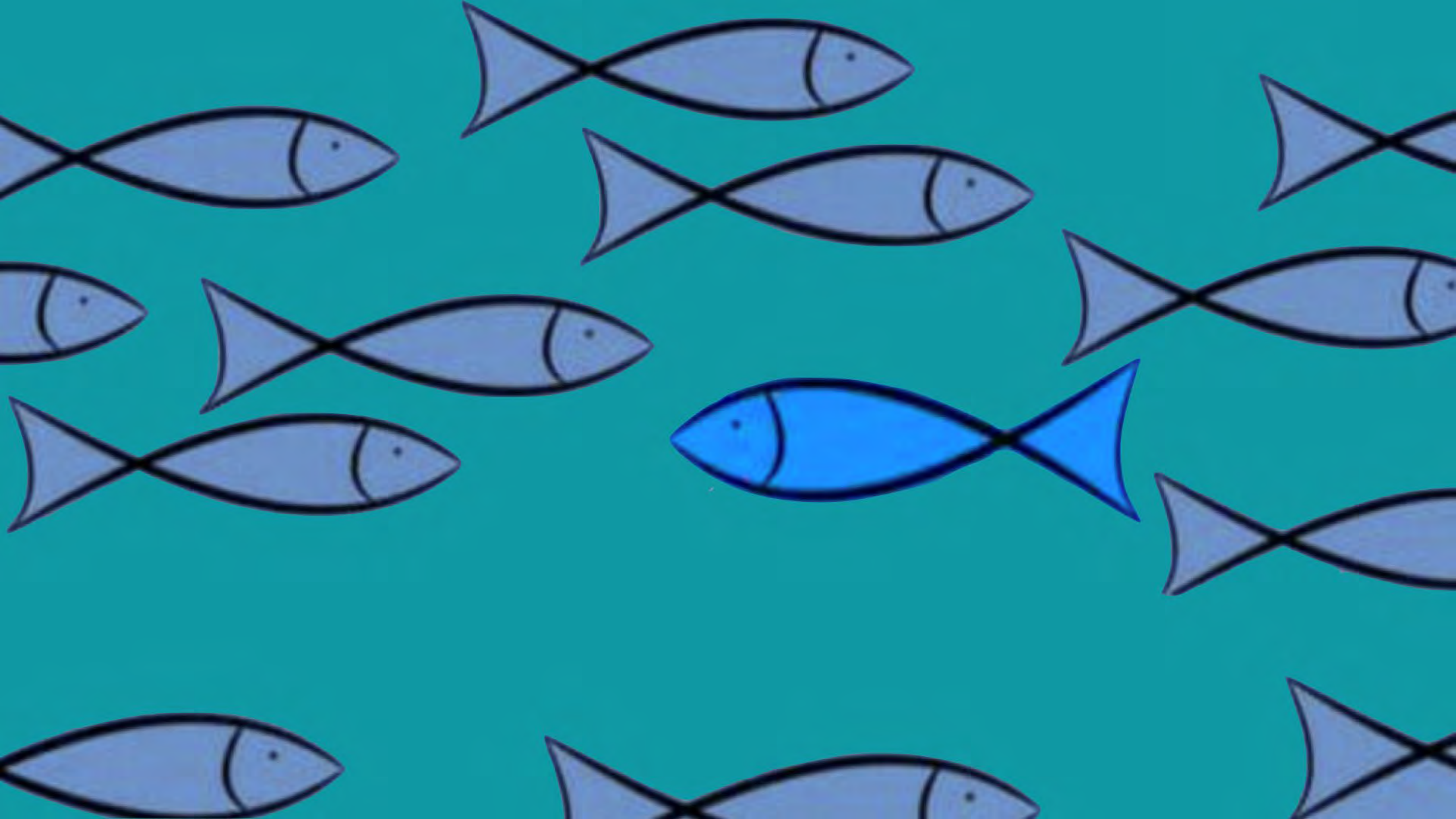


# The Bible

***We believe the Bible, as originally given, to be without error, the fully inspired and infallible Word of God and the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.***

**ELIM FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS**







# Q&A





# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT...

Marriage, Civil-  
Partnership &  
Cohabiting

Gender Identity

Sexual Orientation

Singleness

Divorce & Remarriage

**Suffering**

**Persecution of God's  
people**

**Israel & Palestine /  
Antisemitism &  
Zionism**

**Immigration**

**Assisted suicide**

Forgiveness & Justice

Forgiving others &  
knowing I am forgiven

Christians and the pub

Doubting my faith

Being on His path





# SEEKING A BIBLE-SHAPED PERSPECTIVE ON...

**SUFFERING**

**PERSECUTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

**ISRAEL & PALESTINE / ANTISEMITISM & ZIONISM**

**IMMIGRATION**

**ASSISTED SUICIDE**

**\*WE DO NOT INTEND TO COVER EACH OF THESE COMPLEX SUBJECTS COMPREHENSIVELY TODAY, BUT WE CAN DEFINITELY EXPLORE SOME RELEVANT BIBLICAL TRUTH**





# GRACE AND TRUTH

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**These are not simply theological issues - they are real life matters that impact individuals, families and communities**

**We must not handle such matters without both the truth and the grace embodied and emanated by Christ**

**To avoid the truth is not to be kind at all, to present the truth without kindness is not Christlike at all**





# REMEMBER

**BE FULL OF GRACE & TRUTH (JOHN 1:14)**

**SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE (EPHESIANS 4:15)**

**ANSWER WITH GENTLENESS & RESPECT (1 PETER 3:15)**





# SUFFERING





# SUFFERING

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Pentecostals have not always been good at developing or practicing a helpful theology of suffering**

**In faith we rightly pursue God for healing and blessing -  
Jesus ministered in this Kingdom reality**

**In love we must, like God, come alongside those who are suffering and live in the hope beyond our pain**





# SUFFERING

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**‘Why would God allow suffering?’ - one of the most common questions to those who believe in a loving God**

**It is a very good question and one that we cannot hope to answer in a way that is universally ‘satisfactory’**

**There are many questions that leave us with further questions and an element of mystery - and that is ok!**





# SUFFERING

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Suffering is a great leveller of all humankind - not one person has experienced life without pain of some kind**

**Any amount of wealth or privilege cannot make one immune to physical, emotional or mental suffering**

**Suffering often serves as a pathway to growth or positive change - even the world says 'no pain, no gain'**





**THE PAINFUL TRUTH - GREAT STRENGTH IS  
RARELY DEVELOPED WITHOUT TIME IN THE  
CRUCIBLE OF GREAT SUFFERING**





# SUFFERING


BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Sin (human rebellion against the will and instruction of God) is the underlying reason for suffering (Genesis 2-3)**

**Sometimes we directly bring upon ourselves, or others, as a consequence of our sin (Numbers 32:23, Gal 6:7)**

**But Jesus clearly taught that personal suffering should definitely not always be attributed to personal sin...**





3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.





# SUFFERING

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Why did God allow sin and suffering to enter the world and to be a defining characteristic of human experience?**

**The bible places less emphasis on the cause of pain and more emphasis on the potential**

**Perhaps because there is a greater value and purpose that we can attain through the redemption journey**





***“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world”***

**CS LEWIS**





2 Count it all joy, my brothers and sisters,<sup>1</sup> when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup> for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.  
4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.





# SUFFERING

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**James can only say this because we have seen the redemptive power of Christ through His own suffering**

**In the midst of His moment of deepest pain and suffering, Jesus achieved what no other human could - the salvation of all mankind**

**Our own suffering is often that which causes us to find God and to grow in His purposes**





3 He was despised and abandoned by men, A man of great pain and familiar with sickness; And like one from whom people hide their faces, He was despised, and we had no regard for Him. 4 However, it was our sicknesses that He Himself bore, And our pains that He carried;





Yet we ourselves assumed that He had been afflicted, Struck down by God, and humiliated. 5 But He was pierced for our offences, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; The punishment for our well-being was laid upon Him, And by His wounds we are healed.





# SUFFERING


BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Our God has not given us an easy escape from the pain and suffering as part of the human experience...**

**... He has entered into and borne the very brunt of its depths and the consequences of sin**

**And He has prevailed over sin and pain and we will one day be with Him and He will wipe away every tear**





3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,





4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”





# SUFFERING

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**'But it is not fair'**

**True - it isn't and we shouldn't pretend that it is - why should any 'innocent' person suffer more than another?**

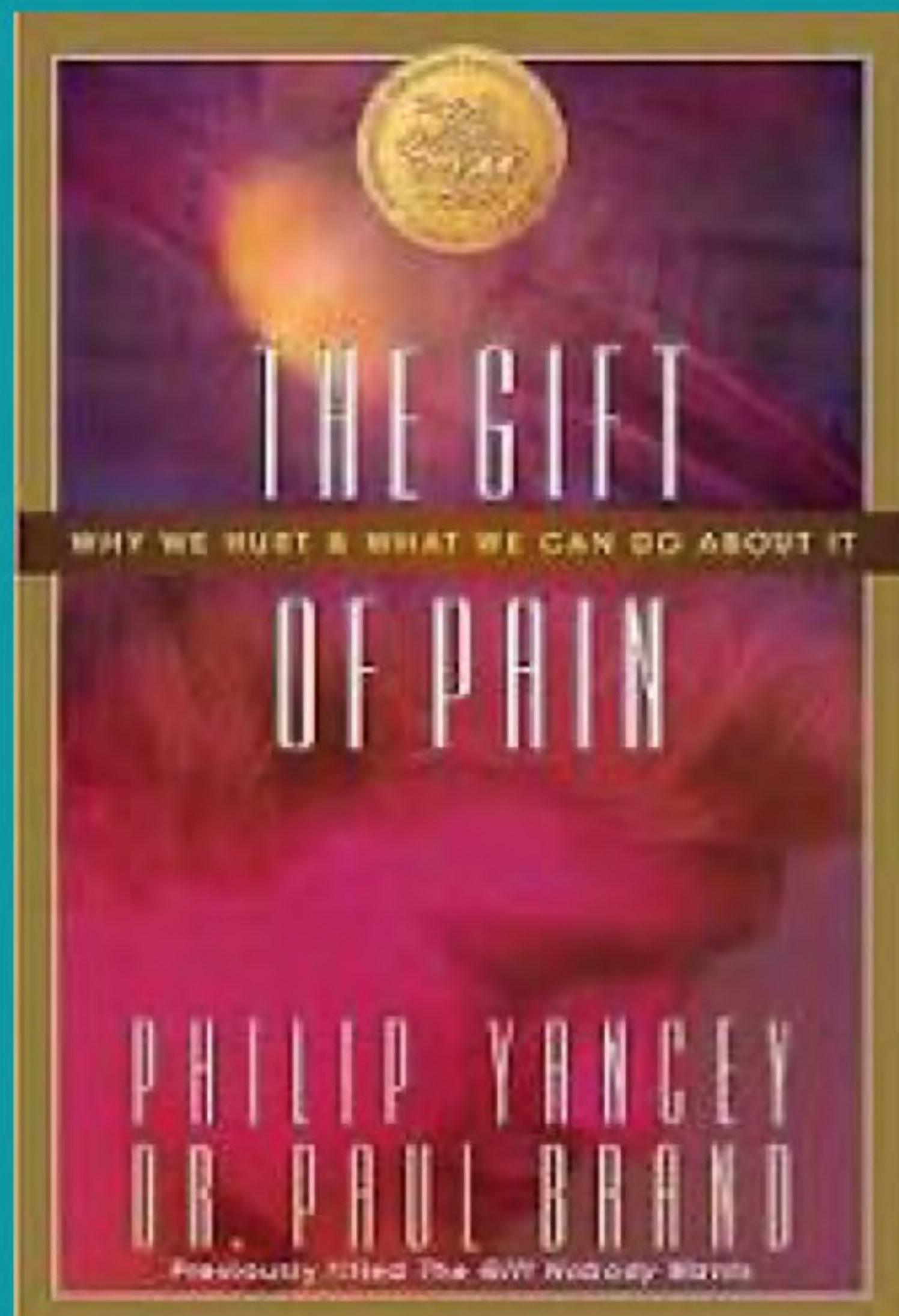
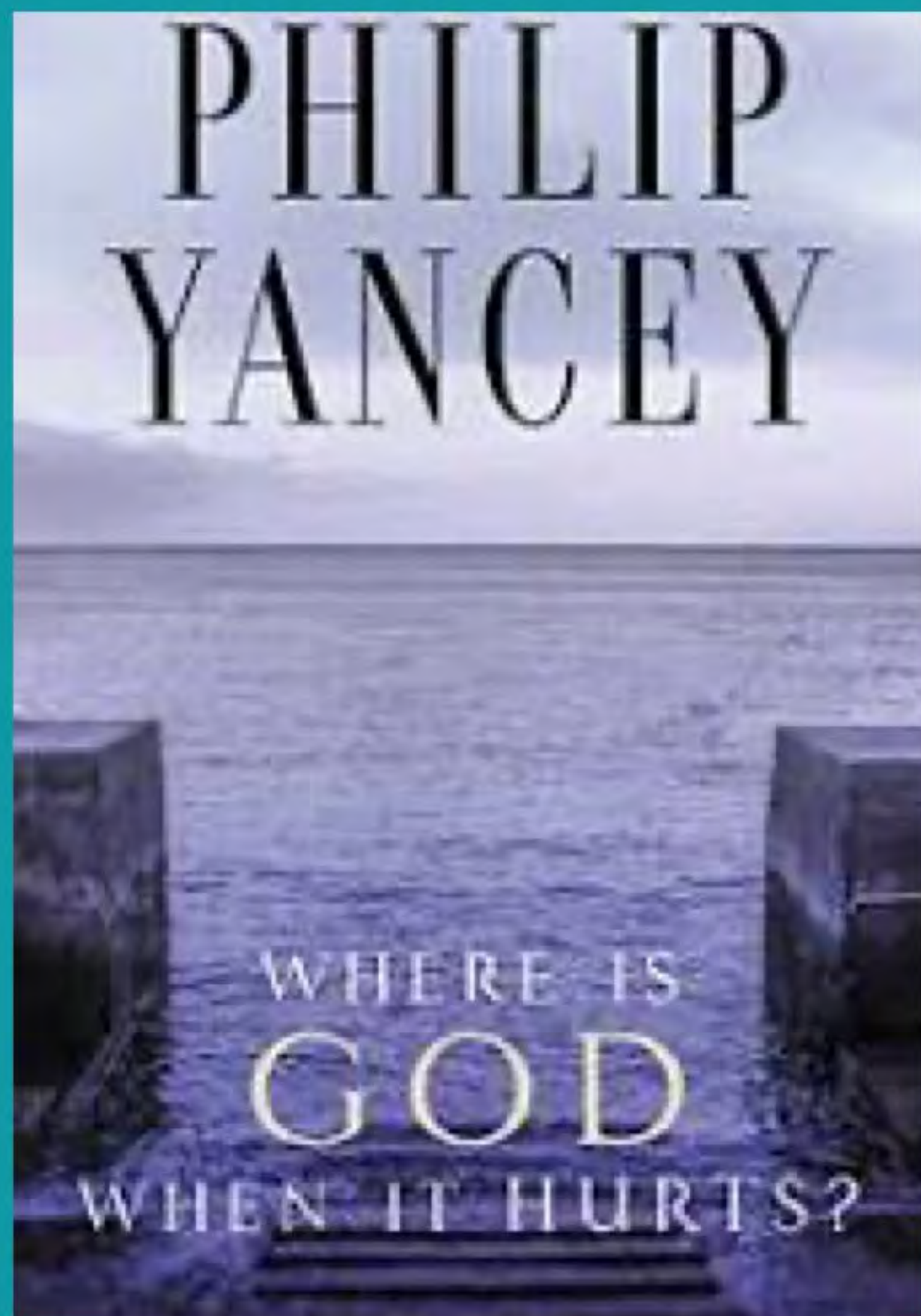
**We cannot fully answer such questions but can trust God to provide justice and point to saviour who suffered to give us hope of life in His eternal Kingdom**





**WHEN WE SUFFER, THE BIBLE TEACHES NOT  
TO ASK 'WHY?', BUT TO ASK 'WHAT NOW?'**









***Christian faith does not offer us a peaceful way to come to terms with death. No it offers instead a way to overcome death.***

**PHILIP YANCEY, 'WHERE IS GOD WHEN IT HURTS?'**





# PERSECUTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE





# PERSECUTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**The question: Why would God allow His people to suffer and be persecuted?**

**Very similar to the wider issue of suffering, but with an emphasis on why those 'blessed' would suffer**

**The term 'God's people' here is assumed to refer to Christians, as well as His OT covenant people Israel**





24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'





# PERSECUTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE


BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Referring to the cross was unavoidably about suffering and death - this was some time before His crucifixion took place**

**Why would God allow His only begotten Son to suffer?**

**Because He knows the big picture - Christ's suffering on earth would achieve our redemption and home in heaven**





16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.





**THIS IS NEITHER A TEMPORAL EARTHLY  
'PROSPERITY' GOSPEL, NOR A DIRECTIVE TO  
INVITE OR PURSUE SUFFERING FOR  
SUFFERING'S SAKE**





# PERSECUTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE


BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Jesus did not 'sugar coat' the reality of what it means to be a follower of His way**

**The suffering and martyrdom of the apostles and followers of the way is one of the strongest evidences gospel truth**

**What would you be willing to die for?**





12 In fact, everyone who  
wants to live a godly life in  
Christ Jesus will be  
persecuted





**SO WHY WOULD WE WILLINGLY FOLLOW  
'GOOD NEWS' THAT INVITES US TO SUFFER  
IN ORDER TO FOLLOW CHRIST?**

**BECAUSE IT IS TRUE! AND GLORY AWAITS!**





12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.





# ISRAEL & PALESTINE





# ISRAEL & PALESTINE

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Questions on this subject were around the current conflict, antisemitism (contemporary and historical persecution of Jewish people), 'Zionism' (Israel's Jewish national ideology)**

**There are many separate and complex issues within these, but they are also highly a complexly interlaced**

**I am not an expert - this is a brief introduction to our/my views - please be gracious about any misunderstandings**





# ISRAEL & PALESTINE

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Much of your view on this will depend on how you understand the 'nation of Israel' - in history and today**

**'Bible' Israel - a nation of God's covenant people, The State of Israel since 1948 - a political and geographical country**

**Elim do not hold an official position on this - we would not understand them as 'matters of first importance' (1 Cor 15)**

**\*Incidentally: 'British Israelism' was a major problem early in Elim's history**





# ISRAEL & PALESTINE

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**We have to understand and honour the Jewish foundation and origin of our Christian faith**

**We should do more to study and understand Israel as the covenant nation and how this informs our faith in Christ**

**There is a distinction between Jewish moral law and civil and ceremonial law**





# ISRAEL & PALESTINE

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**There is a danger of over-emphasis on certain Jewish practice as argued between Peter and Paul (Gal 2:14)**

**Faith in Christ is not dependent on circumcision (Acts 15) or the following of Jewish ritual law (Acts 10)**

**It is dependant on the God of Israel (who was God of all before revealing Himself to Jacob) and His redemption through Yeshua, born of the Jews**





21 'Woman,' Jesus replied, 'believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.'





23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.





# ISRAEL & PALESTINE

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Being the people of God is not a matter of geography but of faith - In Christ, there is neither Jew nor Gentile (Gal 3:28)**

**We do not have a defined position on the state of Israel or its place in the end times - the 'New Jerusalem' in Revelation this can be understood as both literal and/or symbolic**

**You can hold a strong view on any of these matters and still be 'with us' if you are happy to be!**





# ISRAEL & PALESTINE

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**I believe the recent conflict breaks the heart of God, as it does ours - We must call upon the Prince of Peace**

**Suffering and human greed and evil have been evident on all sides - We must trust Him as the God of Justice**

**Be aware that everything we read or see about the conflict has been 'mediated' by someone, usually with an 'angle'**





# ISRAEL & PALESTINE

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**What should be our approach to Israel today?**

**I think our 'baseline' position should be supportive and honouring toward Israel and the Jewish faith, whilst praying for Jerusalem (Psalm 122) and that they may know Yeshua as the Messiah and Lord**

**I do not currently believe we need to observe the Jewish festivals or ritual laws to live a godly life**





# ISRAEL & PALESTINE

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Nationalism of any kind leading to hatred or mistreatment of fellow humans is not godly**

**We are not 'pro' anything other than the Kingdom of God or 'anti' anything other than the work of the satan/deceiver**

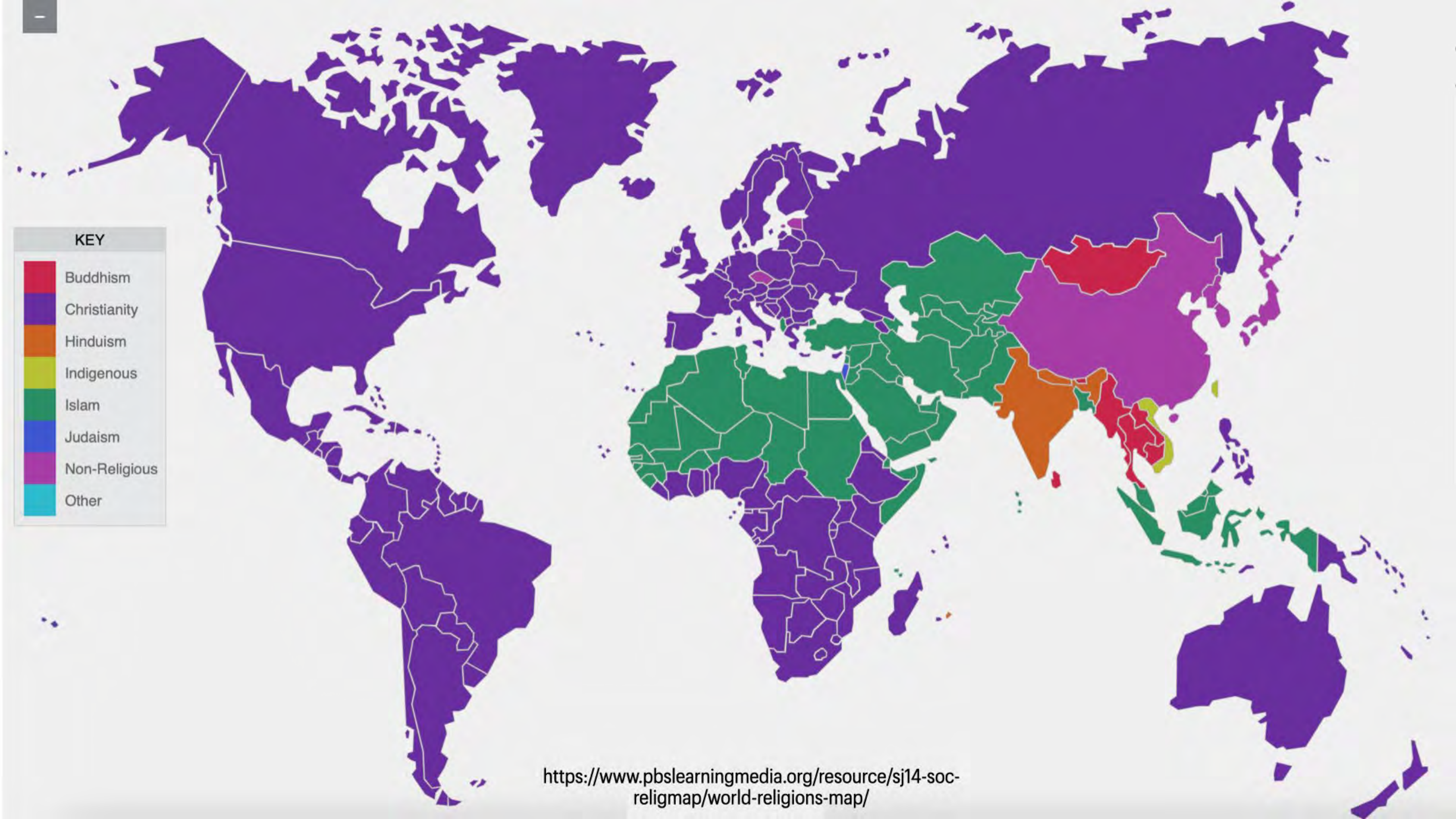
**Jewish people have been horribly mistreated and persecuted - perhaps due to their place in God's story?**





**THE STATE OF ISRAEL DOES HOLD A VERY  
STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHICAL AND  
SOCIOLOGICAL POSITION**



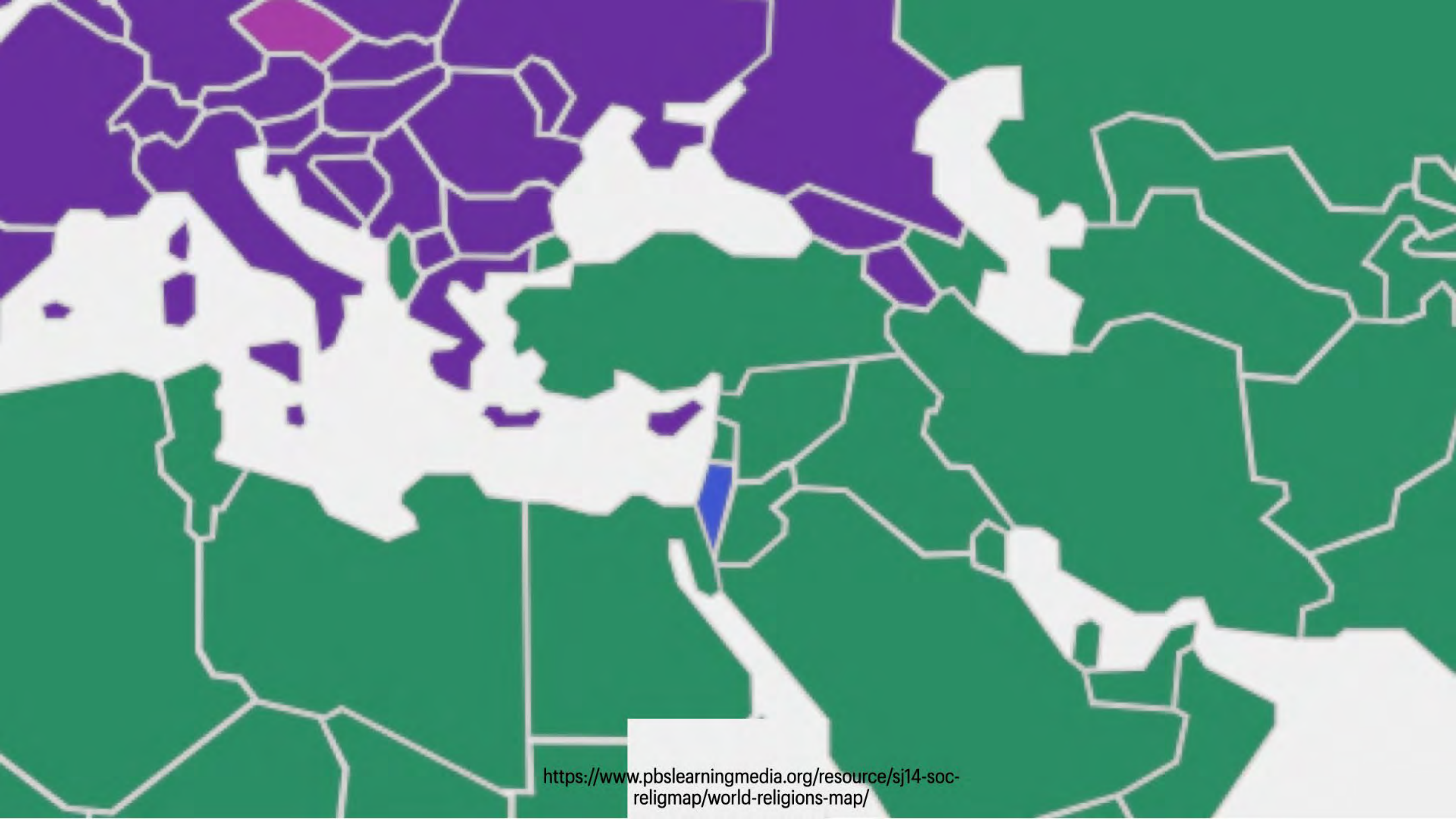


KEY

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Indigenous
- Islam
- Judaism
- Non-Religious
- Other

<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/sj14-soc-religmap/world-religions-map/>





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17 ...you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,  
18 do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. 19 Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."





# IMMIGRATION





# IMMIGRATION

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Immigration - this is not something we would have a defined policy or a statement about**

**On one level this is a political matter, but on another level it is about how we fundamentally treat human beings**

**The Bible does have some things to say about to treat those who 'sojourn' among us...**





33 “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. 34 The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.





**LOVE GOD, LOVE PEOPLE**





# IMMIGRATION


BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**It could be suggested Israel were welcoming those into the community who embraced their culture and customs**

**We must remember that the people of God have often been 'refugees' - including our Saviour Himself (Matt 2)**

**Though here we must recognise there is a difference between someone being a refugee or choosing to move**





23 In whatever tribe a  
foreigner resides, there you  
are to give them their  
inheritance,' declares the  
Sovereign Lord.





# IMMIGRATION

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**We should be glad to welcome and support those in need, showing compassion to anyone forced to leave their homes**

**There is also a place for exercising wisdom, discretion and assessing of motives when people are choosing to move**

**I'd rather be 'wrong' and kind to someone underserving than 'right' and unkind to anyone!**





**HOW WE TREAT PEOPLE IN NEED (SUCH AS  
'STRANGERS') IS ACTUALLY A SALVATION  
LEVEL MATTER**





33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,





# ASSISTED SUICIDE





# ASSISTED DYING / SUICIDE

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**This is an issue that can seem like a simple yes/no theological question, but the real-life pastoral situations require sensitivity, understanding and kindness**

**Our 'baseline' understanding on this issue surrounds the sanctity of human life and trust in God's timing**

**Due to the recent political debate, Elim joined other Christian organisations in making a public statement**





We, the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance, affirm the sanctity and intrinsic value of all human life, created in the image of God. We stand with the majority of doctors in this country who do not want the legalisation of assisted suicide.

We strongly oppose any legislation which undermines the intrinsic value of people, threatens the protection of the vulnerable, or poses significant ethical and societal risks. Instead, with compassion for those for whom this legislation is trying to serve, we call for much greater investment in palliative care to ensure good professional care and dignified support is given for those at the end of life.

We believe life, even in disability or suffering, remains sacred and deserving of protection. Death should never be seen as a final medical solution.





## Christian Views

From a Christian perspective, liberalising the law on euthanasia would be hugely problematic for at least three reasons:

1. **Human life bears God's image** and it is not for us to terminate.
2. According to the Christian worldview **we are part of community** joined to each other. We are not autonomous. The decisions we make impact other people.
3. If the law was changed there would be a **great risk that people would feel pressured into accessing assisted suicide or euthanasia**. At present if you are a burden on your family and the state and have a sensitive conscience you don't need to feel guilty about being a burden in the sense that there is nothing you can do about it. If assisted suicide or euthanasia became available, though, then there would be a mechanism sanctified with legal approval, that you could take.





# REMEMBER

**BE FULL OF GRACE & TRUTH (JOHN 1:14)**

**SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE (EPHESIANS 4:15)**

**ANSWER WITH GENTLENESS & RESPECT (1 PETER 3:15)**





1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.