

# What is Zionism?

Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people.

You may have always thought Jews were a religion. They are that, and more.

Throughout the long history of the world, many national states have arisen and fallen. Among these are the great empires of the ancient world: Sumeria, Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, Persia and Rome. Many other smaller states also existed. Among them those of the Jebusites, Moabites, the Ammonites and the Judahites.

In the ancient world, when one nation defeated another, the defeated people and its identity disappeared from the historical record. There are rare instances when this did not occur and the group continued to play a role in contemporary affairs.

You will not meet a Jebusite, Moabite, nor an Ammonite in the mall, even though people now live in the area long-ago known as Jebus, Moab and Ammon.

You will, however, meet descendants of the ancient Babylonians, known today as Chaldeans, though the ancient Persians destroyed their empire and they have never again held political power in their land. Many Chaldeans live in Detroit, Michigan and San Diego, California as well as in their native land now known as Iraq.

You will also meet the descendants of the ancient Israelites and their cousins the Judahites, known as Jews (for short).

Not terribly unlike the American people who carry an ideal of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," the Jewish people have also carried a set of ideas throughout their long history, we call this set of ideas "Judaism". This is why Jews are thought of as being a religion.

Nearly 2000 years ago, while suffering under the oppressive Roman Empire's occupation of their land, the Jews rose up and fought for their liberation. Following two major uprisings — that spanned generations — Rome destroyed nearly all vestiges of their presence in their land. The western retaining wall of their Temple still stands as a reminder of their sovereignty. Ruins of meeting houses, known as synagogues are found throughout the land.

During the following two millennia, Jews lived among other peoples, suffering with their sorrows and sharing in their successes; often attacked for being the outsider. In the late 1800s Jews all over the world began returning to the land of their origin.

They organized to make this possible. Jews raised money and purchased land. They trained themselves to farm and work in industry. They established the infrastructure of a new society.

This effort is called Zionism. The fruit of this effort is Israel.

Jews of every color and race, from every corner of the world are welcomed to return to rebuild their society in the modern State of Israel. Zionism is not racism.

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