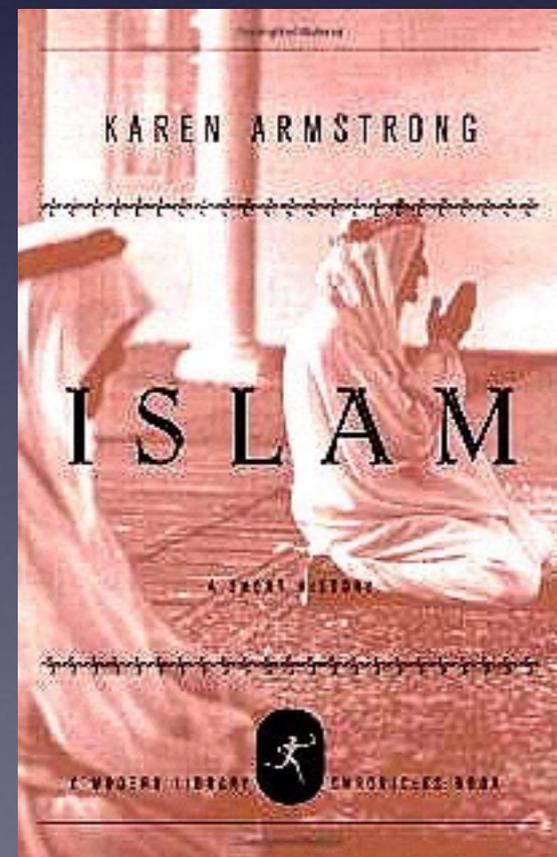


# Israel - Palestine 2 studies



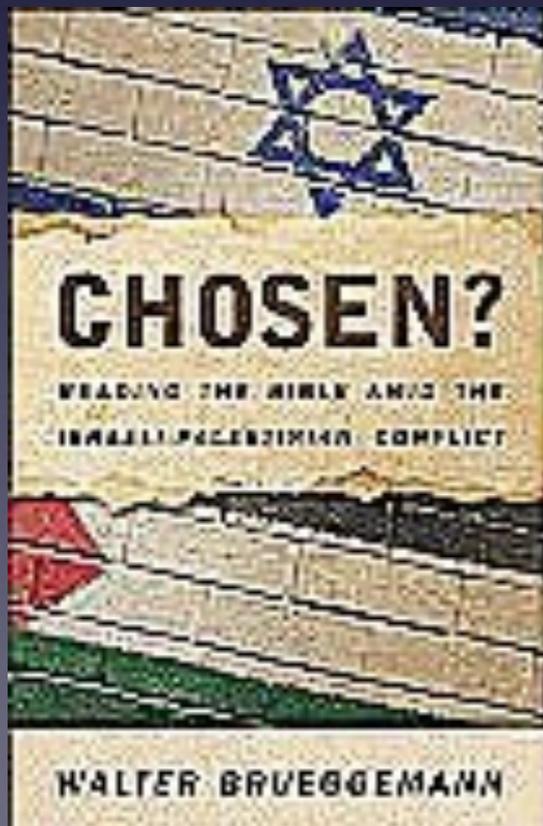
ACTS  
Winter 2016

St David's United Church  
Calgary

# Chosen: Reading the Bible Amid the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

## Session # 2

- Opening
- Introductions
- Chapter Summaries
- Media
- Discussions
- Closing



# Opening

## Prayer

Holy One, we gather to study and reflect on a topic that quickly raises fear, anger, and frustration. Calm our hearts, open our minds, guide our time together so that we all might learn something we did not know, reflect on something we had not thought, and listen to one another with respect and love. Amen.

# Observations

1. Should we equate the ancient belief that Israel is "God's chosen people" with modern Israeli policies toward the Palestinian people living among them?
2. \*In this book, Brueggemann presents and juxtaposes two biblical Hebrew traditions - the "purist" of post-exilic Ezra, and the more 'welcoming' justice - seeking, human rights tradition of the book of Deuteronomy.
3. \*Both are authentic Hebrew Bible traditions but each speaks to a different time and circumstance in Jewish history.

# Observations

4. Assumption One - the situation is difficult and complex, but not without solution..
5. Assumption Two - both Israelis and Palestinians need to be assured of peace, security and a hopeful future in the Holy Land.
6. Assumption Three - Brueggemann attempts to present an inclusive theological approach that would appeal to both Jews and Palestinians.
7. Caution - do not associate the "chosen" promises of God to the Hebrew people with the policies of the current exclusivist Israeli government.

# Book Promo Quotes

1. Dr. Mitri Raheb, president of the Diyar Consortium, Bethlehem
2. Jimmy Carter "Palestine - Peace Not Apartheid"

Acknowledgement - Ten years ago) Carter issued a dramatic wake-up call that summoned leaders to a fresh consideration of practices and policies that appear grounded in the 'promissory tradition of the Hebrew Bible." We will attempt to follow his example.

# Introduction

1. "New occasions teach new duties"
2. This is not an insolvable conflict. It only appears to be so. We must regularly re-evaluate our position on this issue." (note the matter of Israeli citizenship that our Holy Land tour hosts Claudia and Ahuva shared with us)
3. Today, we cannot assume standard biblical clichés about Israel such as "God's chosen people\*" as there are differing classic biblical views about this.

# Introduction

4. We cannot be cowed in our quest by criticisms of anti-Semitism.
5. The two state solution is a dead issue for the current Israel government.
6. We need to focus on human rights as a natural development of the Ten Commandments for all people living in Israel today.
7. Uncriticised ideology such as that held by conservative Israelis does enormous damage to the prospects for peace and a future for all.

# CH 1 - Reading the Bible Amid the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

1. Two key issues - Land plus Human Rights

2. We need to combine the GENESIS PROMISE of a special land for a special people given to Abraham and his offspring - with the COVENANT TRADITION requiring faithfulness to God. The chosen people can break the covenant through their behaviour and lose their right to God favour and exclusive use of the promised land.

3. The land is given unconditionally, but held conditionally.

# CH 1 - Reading the Bible Amid the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

4. The Ezra tradition was exclusivist. Jonah and Ruth, for example, were inclusivist.

5. Today, the Ezra exclusivist reading trumps the Jonah/Ruth inclusivist reading.

6. Conclusion - The question of "the other" becomes the interpretive key to how to read the Bible... We ought rightly to be skeptical of any reading of the Bible that excludes "the other" because it is likely to be ideology, and informed by vested interest, fears, and hopes that ultimately serve self-protection and end in suicidal self-protection.

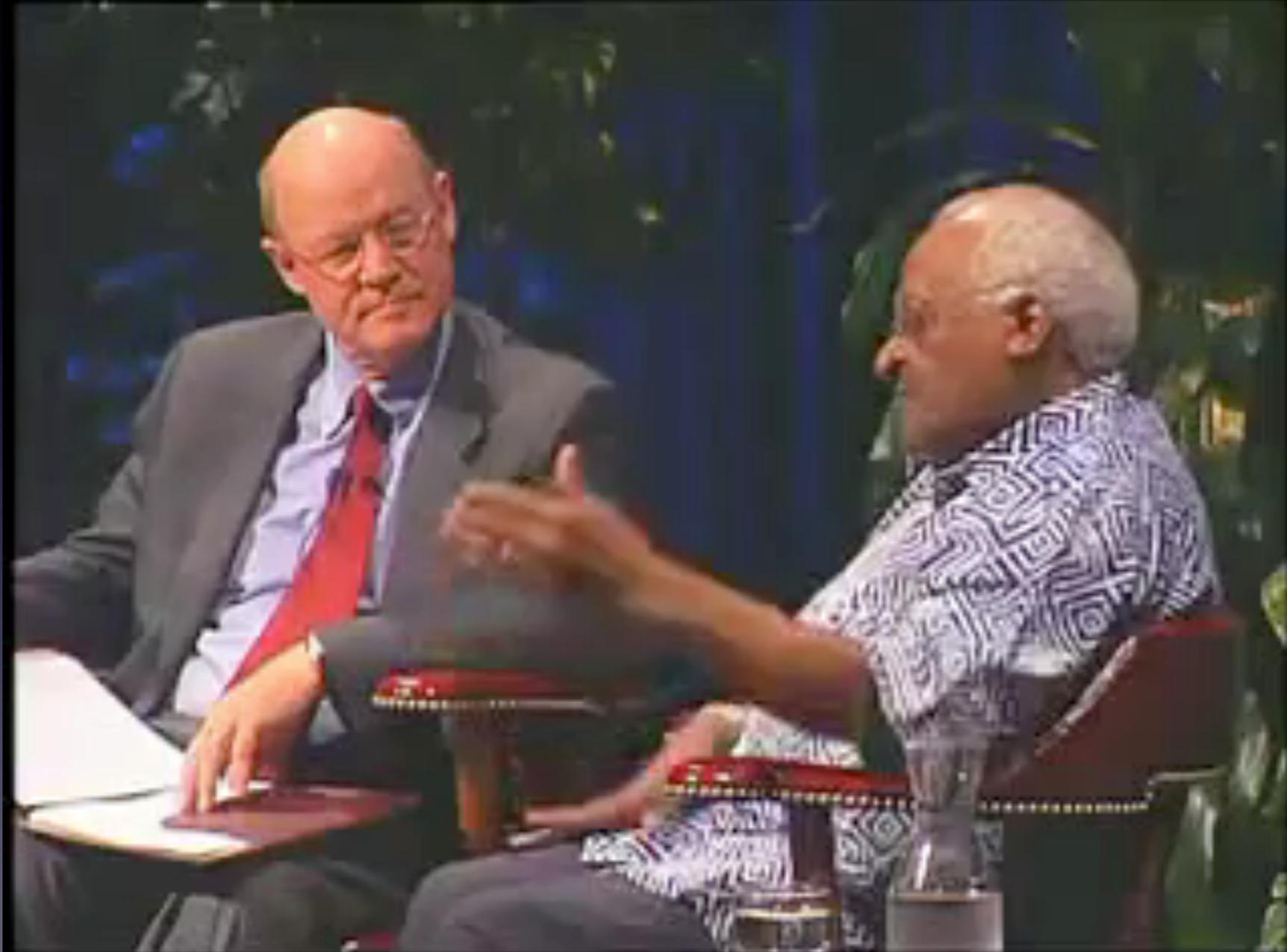
# Video

“Palestine and Israel: not totally hopeless.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

4:19

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bp9769rTBtc>



# Video

“Injustice of any kind is spitting in the face of God”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu  
2:20

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMrU990dz7I>



# Video

AJ Jacobs:

My year of living biblically

14m excerpt

[https://www.ted.com/talks/a\\_j\\_jacobs\\_year\\_of\\_living\\_biblically?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/a_j_jacobs_year_of_living_biblically?language=en)

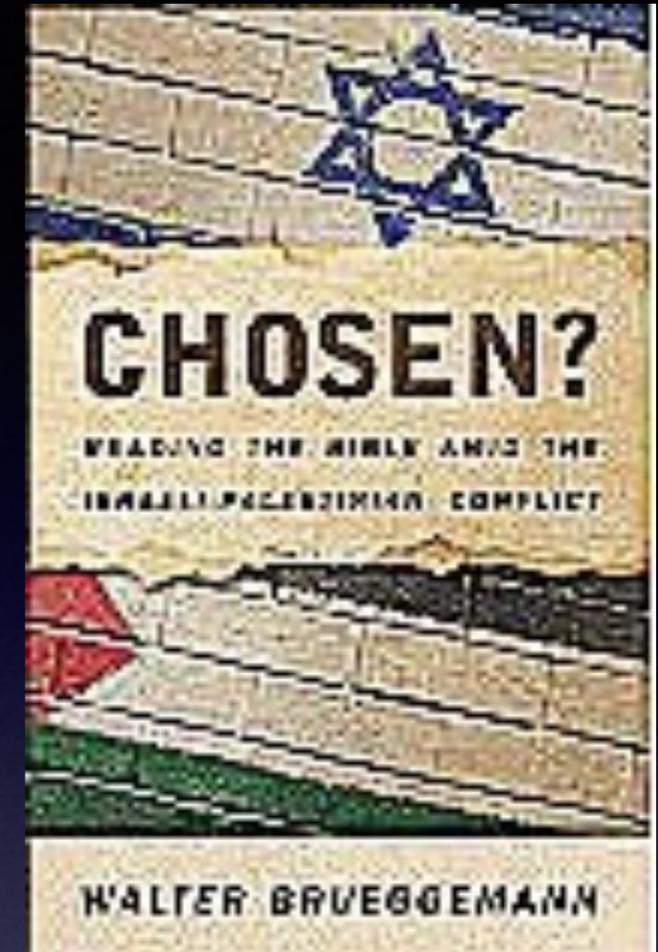


Break

# Discussion Questions

1. Discuss biblical "exclusion" and "inclusion." What is good about each? What are the dangers inherent in each?
2. Discuss - the Bible speaks with multiple voices. We must avoid simplistic readings.
3. Discuss - Desmond Tutu: "Goodness prevails in the end. The pursuit of the people of Palestine from humiliation and persecution from the policies of Israel is a righteous cause. It is a cause that the people of Israel should support."

# Chosen



## Next Readings

Ch 2. God's Chosen People: Claim and Problem

## Study Website

<http://chosen.stdavidscalgary.net>

# Closing

Karen McKeown

Willie Nelson  
“Living in the Promised Land”  
3:20

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTR1xx8tuaA>

