

The Bible
For Our Times

“WEEPING MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING.” PSALM 30:5

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Palestinian Myths and Facts

President Bush is focusing intense efforts, in the waning days of his administration, toward the elusive goal of Middle East peace. The 2007 meeting in Annapolis between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs laid the ground rules for ensuing peace talks. For years, as attempts at peace talks between these two parties trudged along, cessation of hostilities has been specified as one of the most basic ground rules.

Time and again Arab terrorism has persisted in violation of the ground rules. Kidnappings, drive-by shootings, homicide bombings and frequent wanton rocket attacks on Israeli citizens are true indicators of Arab sincerity toward a permanent peace with Israel. Mr. Bush has included Hamas, Hizbullah and the Islamic Jihad as part of the terrorist network, with whom the United States is at war and yet these are also expected to engage in a Bush manufactured peace with Israel.

From the early 1970s until Israel's Prime Minister Rabin and Yassir Arafat signed the 1993 Oslo Peace Accord, Arafat was considered a terrorist. His Palestine Liberation Organization (which was founded in 1964—three years before the Six Day War and Israel's expansion into the “West Bank” and Sinai) was on the United States list of terrorist nations or organizations. Why the change in 1993?

One of Israel's conditions before even entering a peace process with Arafat was that Arafat renounce terrorism. Arafat made this promise. But he broke it again and again and again. Even now, in 2008, Arafat's legacy of hate fueled terrorism persists.

The United States perspective began to change after 9/11. With the declaration of war on terrorism, the United States began pressuring Arafat to not only stop terrorism but to dismantle the terrorist organizations among the Palestinians. Since then Arafat's Palestinian Authority has lost control of the Palestinian territory and is sharing power with newer, more extreme, terrorist organizations like Hamas. Can these become willing and responsible partners in peaceful coexistence?

In 2002 The Palestinian authority was caught smuggling 50 tons of highly sophisticated weapons from the terrorist state of Iran. Today a flood of weapons and other contraband of war still flow into Gaza through secret tunnels at the Egypt/Gaza border.

Despite the persistence of Palestinian terrorism in violation of formal agreements, the United States expects Israel and the Palestinians to return to the peace negotiations. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has stated that the Bush administration expects Israel to give all or most of the West Bank to the Palestinians. Evidently Arab oil, not historic-rights, remains the bottom line of much Middle East policy.

Though we as Bible Students solemnly believe and observe the Biblical principle that God “will bless them that bless thee [Abram's seed—Israel], and curse him that curseth thee,” (Genesis 12:3) we do not endorse all of Israel's actions. We grieve for innocent Jews or Arabs who are killed or plunged into extreme grief and hardship by the present conflict.

But the Lord is angry with the nations who strive to curse Israel by dividing Israel's Land. "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land." Joel 3:1,2

Brief History

Jews lived in their Land for 1700 years virtually uninterrupted. Then the Roman destruction of their polity in AD 70 marked God's temporary rejection and chastening. The Jewish population of over 3 million was decimated by slaughter and expulsion. The Arabs conquered and dominated the Land for over 300 years beginning in AD 640, yet the Jews remained the largest minority.

The noted Arab historian Khaldun (called one of the greatest historians of all time by Arnold Toynbee) observed that as late as A.D. 1400 the Land still was permeated with Jewish culture and customs. Nearly 300 years after Arab rule ended, there was still no evidence of Palestinian roots or established culture.

Thus an Arab historian, who happens to be one of the greatest historians of all time, demolished the claim that there is an uninterrupted Palestinian culture dating back to AD 640.

James Parke's exhaustive work *WHOSE LAND* observes, "It is not until the Turkish period, AD 1517-1917, that it [the Land God gave Israel] acquired a substantial Arab population." How? By Arabs emigrating from Arab nations into the Land, which then became utterly desolate. Thus the claim of a thriving verdant Palestinian culture since AD 700 defies Scripture and history.

During these centuries the total combined population of Moslems, Christians and Jews was less than 200,000. Compared, therefore, with the previous Jewish population of over 3 million, the land did become relatively "desolate of man and beast." Jeremiah 3:10 Notice, there was a continual nucleus of Jews in the Land.

Why did the Land of Israel become a barren wasteland? The pro-Arab British Palestine Royal Commission in 1937 completely placed the blame on the destructive life style of the Arabs who wandered in and out of the Land.

Who Are The Palestinians?

Ezekiel 36:1-12 predicted that the "heathen (people) round about" the Land of Israel would render it desolate. Who are the "people round about?" Look at a map. Israel is a little island surrounded by a sea of Arab nations. Arab people who immigrated to the Land of Israel desolated the Land, fulfilling Ezekiel 36. The so-called Palestinians are simply Arabs from Syria, Egypt, Iraq and other Arab countries that immigrated to the Land.

How desolate did the land become? In 1738 Thomas Shaw observed a land of "barrenness.... from want of inhabitants." In 1835 Alphonse de Lamartine wrote, "Outside the city of Jerusalem, we saw no living object, heard no living sound. . . a complete eternal silence reigns in the town, in the highways, in the country . . . The tomb of a whole people." In 1867 Mark Twain wrote, "Palestine is desolate and unlovely. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies...."

In 1857, the British consul in Palestine, James Finn, reported, "The country is in a considerable degree empty of inhabitants and therefore its greatest need is that of a body of population." What a remarkable confirmation of the Biblical prediction that during Israel's period of punishment and dispersion, the Lord would cause the Land to become desolate of man and beast (Jeremiah 33:10). By 1857 it was just waiting for "a body of population!" In the Lord's providence this needed body of population—the Jewish people—began to return after 1878. God's favor was now returning.

Verses 8-12 reveal the Jewish people would return in mass and their Land would again return to the fertility of old. But from 1878 onward, the influx of "the people round about"—the Arabs—accelerated. Why? The Jews returned to build an infrastructure for a new Jewish State. This created jobs and the Arabs rushed in to take advantage of the new economy.

Both British Prime Minister MacDonald and President Roosevelt confirm this flood of Arab immigration since 1918. In 1946 Bartley C. Crum, a United States Government observer, noted that tens of thousands of Arabs had entered Palestine “because of this better life—and they were still coming.” Some writers have claimed that 75 percent of the Arab population were either immigrants or descendants of immigrants into the Land after 1882.

Arabs in the Holy Land did not adopt the Palestinian identity until the 1960s. They referred to themselves as Southern Syrians. In 1956, Ahmed Shukairy, the first head of the PLO observed to the Security Council, “It is common knowledge that Palestine is nothing but southern Syria.” TIME magazine reported. “It was Arafat who made the intellectual leap [1964] to a definition of the Palestinians as a distinct people; he articulated the cause, organized for it, fought for it and brought it to the world’s attention.”

But God promised the Land to Israel, not the so-call Palestinians. The Peace Process will end in an Israeli-Arab war in which the Arabs will be decisively defeated and Israel will acquire parts of Jordan and Southern Lebanon. Isaiah 11:14; Zephaniah 2:4-12

The Problem—Arab Elitism

Saudi Arabia is in favor of the war on terrorism but unhappy that the United States is waging war against Islamic Afghanistan with its large Arab population. In fact, many wealthy Saudi princes have been financing Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda terrorists. The Arab oil rich nations warned Bush not to at-

tack Iraq in his war on terrorism. Why? Simply because Iraq is Arab. Never mind Iraq’s long record of terrorism. Of those 9/11 Taliban and al-Qaeda captives imprisoned in the United States Guantanamo Base, over 100 were Saudis. Saudi Arabia is demanded the Saudis be turned over to them for trial. Some how it is demeaning to the Arab world for Arabs with Islamic fervor to be judged by non-Arabs. Some might say, infidels.

Remember the terror attack on the United States military base in Saudi Arabia? Many United States personnel were killed. Saudi Arabia restricted the scope of United States investigation so that the Arab terrorists have never been apprehended.

Why do Saudi Arabia and the other Arab countries back the Palestinian cause? Even though at times they might suffer embarrassment by egregious Palestinian terrorism, the bottom line is the Palestinians are Arabs—part of the Arab Elite.

There is a sharp disagreement among non-Islamic writers and even Islamic clerics on the meaning of the word Jihad in the Koran. One source of controversy is at what point of events in his personal history did Mohammad write and apply certain Jihad verses. But none can deny that the military expansion of the Arab Empire was premised on Holy Jihad. Ten prominent Islamic clerics of differing theological backgrounds, including the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, have publicly declared that Palestinian terrorism directed at civilians, including woman and children, is not Holy Jihad.

One of these Islamic clerics, Sheikh Professor Abdul Hadi Palazzi, in a video interview proves that the designation “Palestinian people” is a political deception and that Arafat’s application of Holy Jihad to his terrorist killing of civilians is a violation of the Koran.

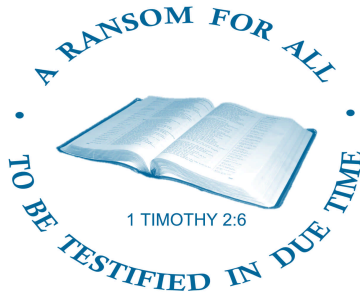
Peace will come the Middle East, on God’s terms. By God’s arrangement Israel will be the nation of destiny. That destiny is to be a blessing to all other nations in God’s kingdom. “But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many

(Continued on page 4)

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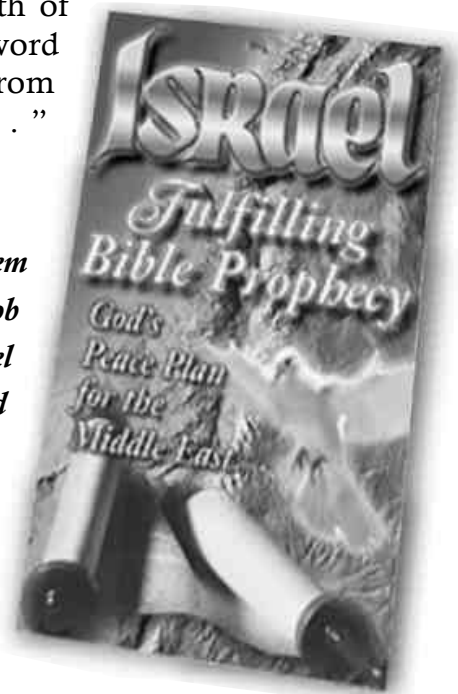
THIS ISSUE...

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nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”
Micah 4:1, 2

“He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.”

Isaiah 27:6



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