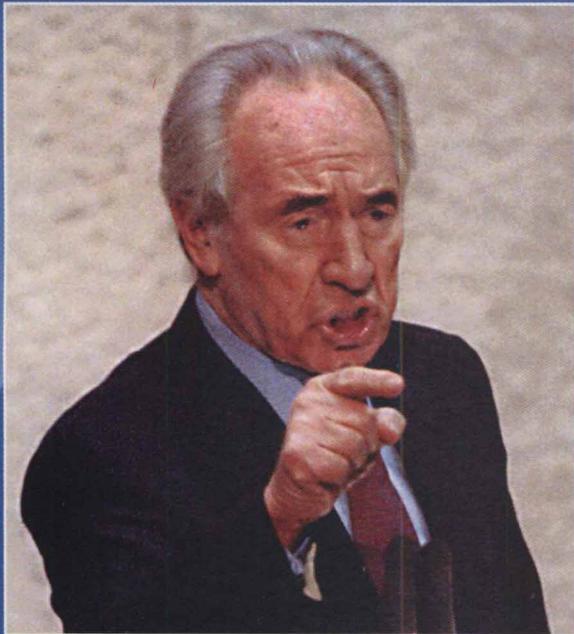


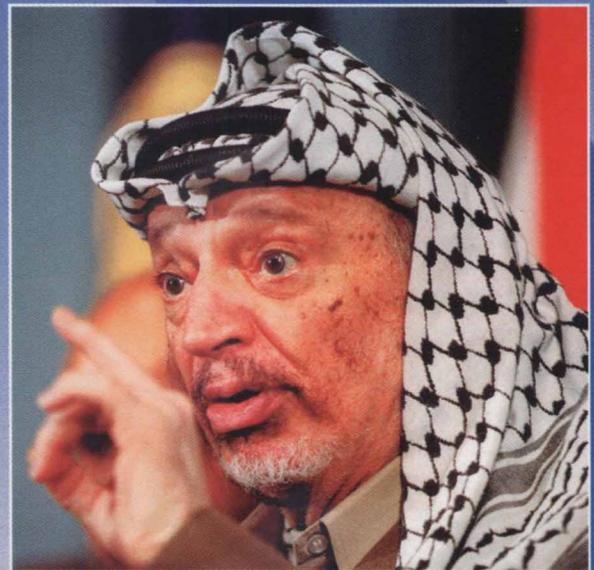
# THE WORLD AHEAD

A view of today...A vision for tomorrow!

June 1996



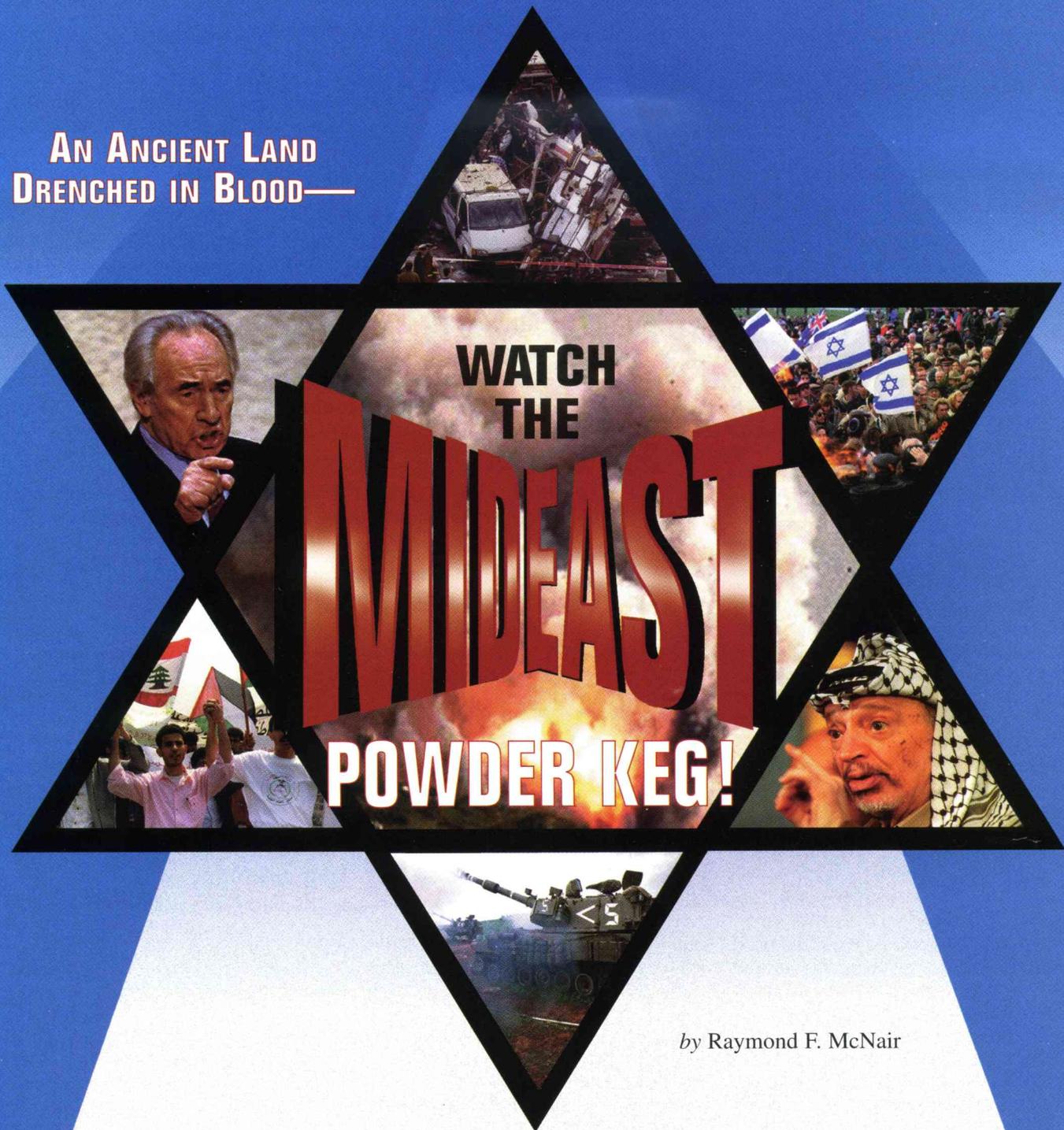
**AN ANCIENT LAND  
DRENCHED IN BLOOD—**



**WATCH THE**

**MIDEAST  
POWDER KEG!**

**AN ANCIENT LAND  
DRENCHED IN BLOOD—**



*by Raymond F. McNair*

**Why incessant strife and bloodshed in the volatile Middle East?  
What historic factors impel Jews and Arabs—blood brothers!—to continued violence?  
Will Jimmy Carter's "anguished cry for peace" ever be realized in the turbulent Mideast?**

**I**n April, Israel launched "Operation Grapes of Wrath" against Iranian-backed, Syrian-tolerated Hezbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon. Why this most recent display of Israeli wrath? For

some time the Hezbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon had been firing Katyusha rockets and mortar shells at civilians in northern Israel.

In response, the Israelis pounded suspected Hezbollah targets with

artillery, F-16 fighter jets and helicopter gunships. They struck at suspected Hezbollah targets as well as Lebanese power stations, highways and other infrastructure. Since Israel had warned the civilians in target

areas to flee, nearly half a million refugees took to the roads, mostly heading north, hoping to escape this latest round of retaliation. Israel was trying to send a clear message—to Hezbollah, Iran, the Lebanese government and Syria's President Assad who ultimately controls Hezbollah's ability to operate—that a heavy price would be paid (at least by Lebanese civilians) for continued attacks against the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona.

Israel had carefully planned Grapes of Wrath, hoping the latest laser- and radar-guided weapons systems might prevent unintended civilian casualties. But, according to the

Israelis, something went terribly wrong. When Hezbollah guerrillas attacked Israel from a position only 200 yards away from a UN peacekeeping compound in Qana, Lebanon, the Israelis fired back at the guerrilla rocket position. But five 155-millimeter artillery rounds overshot their mark and killed more than 100 civilians who had taken refuge at the base. A United Nations report, however, claims, "While the possibility cannot be ruled out completely, it is unlikely that the shelling of the United Nations compound was the result of gross technical and/or procedural errors" (*Los Angeles Times*, May 8, 1996). The UN report also noted that two or three Hezbollah fighters entered the UN compound to rejoin their families either before or after the Israelis fired.

This carnage, whether unintentional or deliberate, caused an international outcry! President Bill Clinton sent Secretary of State Warren Christopher scurrying to Jerusalem and Damascus to broker a cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah. After shuttling between the two cities, he obtained a written—though *unsigned*—truce: Hezbollah guerrillas would stop firing rockets and mortars into Israel,

and Israel would cease attacking civilian targets in southern Lebanon.

All told, the 16-day Grapes of Wrath offensive had claimed about 160 lives. Many others were injured, heavy property damage was sustained and more than 400,000 refugees had been temporarily displaced. Israel's retaliatory military operation threatened to stall the Mideast peace process.

But in spite of this, another small step was recently taken toward settling some Israeli-Palestinian differences when the Palestine National Council voted by an overwhelming majority (504 to 54) to amend its charter, which previously called for



the destruction of Israel. Afterward, Yasser Arafat said, "The changing of the [PLO] covenant is a debt. And we have to pay it."

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres's Labor Party responded the following day by dropping a clause in its platform that obstinately opposed the creation of a *Palestinian state*. But will these tiny steps toward peace really ensure trust between the Israelis and Palestinians?

## Backdrop to the Mideast Impasse

What is the real meaning behind Israel's recent retaliation? Will real peace ever overtake the war-weary civilians of the Middle East? Why have so many Arabs harbored such deep-seated hostility toward the Israelis? Could this conflict prove to be the fuse that ignites another horri-

fying world war? Few people really understand the ancient historic threads woven into the fabric of today's Mideast impasse.

For millennia, the "Holy Land" has been drenched in blood, as conquering armies repeatedly marched across this unfortunate place. In fact,



**Page 16 clockwise from top:** A general view of the remains of a bus blown up in Jerusalem on Feb. 25. Jews marking the Warsaw ghetto anniversary on April 19—*Reuters*. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat speaking during a luncheon in Washington on May 1—*AFP*. An Israeli 155mm cannon firing at targets in south Lebanon on April 14. Palestinians chanting anti-Israeli slogans calling on revenge for the massacres in Lebanon on April 20. Peres making a point against the Palestinian attacks—*Reuters*. A shell exploding in Lebanon during the Israeli air raid—*AFP*. **Page 17 top:** Arafat and Clinton during their White House meeting on May 1. **Bottom:** Palestinian youths confront Israeli border police on May 7 over the West Bank land disputes. **Page 18:** A Palestinian resisting arrest by Israeli soldiers at the Damascus Gate of Jerusalem's Old City on May 9—*AFP*.

more battles have been fought on its soil than in any other area of the world! From antiquity, control of this strategic land bridge between Eurasia and Africa has proved vital to those powers that wished to dominate the Mideast.

To really grasp the deep-seated problems inherent in today's Arab-Israeli conflict, we need the light of God's Word to illuminate both history and prophecy. Christians and Jews have become quite familiar with the land of the patriarchs and prophets

through studying the Hebrew Scriptures. Jews, Muslims and Christians are all aware that, in the book of Genesis, God solemnly gave a "Promised Land" to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The real crux of today's Mideast problem is neither the *religious* nor the *racial* differences between Arab and Jew. Rather, the heart and core of this tragedy involves conflicting claims to the disputed Promised Land! It is neither possible to understand the *source* of today's Mideast impasse, nor its *solution*, without first turning to the pages of the Bible to examine the backdrop to this ancient conflict.

The former U.S. president, Jimmy Carter, a devout Baptist, realizes, at least in part, the source of today's Mideast conflict. In his book, *The Blood of Abraham*, he repeatedly mentions that Jews and Arabs share the *same blood*. When he was president (1977-1981), Carter was instrumental in helping to bring the leaders of Israel and Egypt together as a first step in their frustrating search for lasting peace in the Middle East. In September 1978, President Carter supervised the signing of the Camp David accords between Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. And, in 1995, President Bill Clinton brokered another peace accord—this time between Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, chairman of the PLO. But are we about to witness *lasting peace* in the Middle East?

## To Whom the Promised Land?

"Israel emerged as a sovereign state on May 15, 1948. It was the first Jewish state to be established in nearly 2,000 years. Its creation represented a fulfillment of the historic ideal of the Jewish people stemming from the traditional religious belief in God's promise of the land of Israel to these people" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*,

"Israel," 15th ed., vol. 22). For much of the past 2,000 years after Rome renamed "Judea" *Palaestina* in 135 A.D., Palestine was inhabited mainly by Arabs.

So who, if anyone, has a divine claim to the Promised Land today? The Israelis? Or the Palestinian Arabs?

Apart from the Scriptures, it is impossible to peacefully answer that question. God's Word alone tells us who has a rightful claim to the Promised Land! Unfortunately, most people, even among those who profess to believe in the Bible, do not really take it seriously. Today, many don't realize that "God, who made the world and everything in it... is Lord of heaven and earth" (Acts 17:24). Nevertheless, we need to heed what God tells us!

God divided the earth and set the nations according to His will (Gen. 10:5). Moses explained how God apportioned territory to Israel, saying, "When the Most High divided their inheritancē to the nations... He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel [not yet born]" (Deut. 32:8). He reserved, therefore, certain lands for His chosen people. The Prophet Daniel echoed the same theme when he explained that "the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses" (Dan. 4:25). As Creator and Ruler, He assigns to the nations their inheritances. But to whom did the Great God give this contested land?

## Ishmael's or Isaac's Descendants?

What did the Almighty promise to give Abraham and his offspring? And aren't the *Arabs* also his descen-



dants—just as much as the *Jews*? Both claim descent from the Patriarch Abraham. After he left Babylon and journeyed to the land of Canaan, God solemnly promised him, "To your descendants I will give *this land*

[Canaan]" (Gen. 12:7). Abraham realized the "LORD, God Most High, [is] the Possessor of heaven and earth" (14:22).

What was the extent of the land that the Almighty promised Abraham? "The LORD made a covenant with Abram [later renamed Abraham], saying: 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates'" (15:18). But how did it come about that both Israelis and Arabs trace their ancestry back to Abraham, and both claim that land?

In frustrated desperation, Abraham's wife Sarah, who was barren, gave her Egyptian maid, Hagar, to Abraham so that she might obtain a child through her (Gen. 16). Subsequently, Abraham had a son (Ishmael) by Hagar. Later, however, God told Abraham He would give the Promised Land, not to Hagar's descendants, but to his wife Sarah's offspring (17:1, 8, 15-16).

Then Abraham replied, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You" (v. 18). Not so said God! But God did promise him that He would establish His covenant with Abraham's yet unborn son, to be called Isaac. "But My covenant I will establish with *Isaac*, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year" (v. 21).

Still later, God told Abraham's son Isaac, "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your

father” (26:3). Thus we see that God did *not* give the “Promised Land” to Abraham’s son Ishmael and his descendants, but to Isaac and his offspring. God did, however, promise to make Ishmael’s offspring (the Arabs) “a great nation” (17:20; 21:18).

Modern Arabs realize that Abraham (Arabic *Ibrahim*) is the father of their ancestor, Ishmael (16:16). “Arab traditions attempt to establish genealogies beginning with Shem [father of both Jews and Arabs] and *Ishmael*” (*Collier’s Encyclopedia*, “Arabs,” 1959, vol. 2). The Arab name for Ishmael is *Ismail*, and this name has been commonly used throughout the Arab world. *Ismailia* is the name of a city in northeastern Egypt, in the general area where some of Ishmael’s descendants have lived since antiquity.

Later, Hagar, herself an Egyptian (Gen. 16:1), “took a wife for him [Ishmael] from the land of Egypt” (21:21). Ishmael was half Egyptian, but his children by his Egyptian wife would have been three-quarters Egyptian. This helps to explain why modern Arabs share a very close affinity with the Egyptians. Of course, Ishmael had numerous wives, and the Bible says he had at least 12 sons (17:20; 25:12-16). A thorough study of the history of the Arabs reveals that, both in ancient and modern times, there has been considerable intermixing of the peoples of Ishmael (whom we now call “Arabs”) with their Egyptian cousins. Some who are now called “Arabs” have descended from Esau, Philistines, Phoenicians or from Lot’s sons, Moab and Ammon.

## The Great Arab Expansion

Today it is generally agreed that the Arabs originated somewhere in southwestern Arabia, though some think their origin may have been

northeastern Africa. Properly speaking, the Arabs are those peoples who, since antiquity, inhabited a large portion of the Arabian Peninsula.

Did God keep His promise to Abraham that his son Ishmael would become a great nation?

After the death of Mohammed in 632 A.D., the Arabs conquered much of the Middle East, including the Promised Land. They then swept across North Africa and on into Europe, before being halted by the French king, Charles Martel, in 732. “In the space of one hundred years following the death of Mohammed in 632, the Arabs had carried the sword of Islam from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, holding at one time most of Spain, part of southern France, the isle of Sicily, all of North Africa and Egypt, all of Arabia, the Holy Land, Armenia, Persia, Afghanistan, and almost a third of India. The empire of the Arabs was larger than that of Alexander the Great or of Rome” (Louis L’Amour, *The Walking Drum*, pp. 171-172). The Arabs imposed their language, culture and religion (Islam) on most of the peoples whom they subjugated.

Today, a broader definition of “Arab” includes all those peoples of North Africa and the Near and Middle East who have a racial, linguistic or religious kinship to the peoples of the Arabian peninsula. The *Arab Bloc* now stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf!

*Pan-Arabism* and *Zionism* (the Jewish aspiration for a national home in the Promised Land) were destined to clash from the beginning. The Arabs, who had controlled Palestine almost continually since 636 A.D. until the Ottoman Turks captured it in 1516, believe they are the rightful possessors and heirs to the Holy Land. The Jews—who were driven out of Judea by the Romans in the second century A.D., and were oppressed by

successive conquerors—only began relocating to that land in appreciable numbers in the 1800s! They believe the land was given by God exclusively to their ancestors. Many Jews also believe they are destined to repossess their ancient homeland and make it blossom (Is. 35). A dispute over this strategic real estate is the crux of the problem between today’s Israelis and the Palestinians and their brothers in the surrounding Arab nations.

## How the Jews Lost Palestine

Around 1400 B.C., the people of the Twelve Tribes of Israel took possession of the Promised Land under their leader Joshua. After the death of King Solomon (c. 930 B.C.) the nation of Israel was divided into two competing kingdoms—Israel and Judah. Those in the Northern kingdom of Israel were taken captive to Assyria and Media around 721 B.C. (2 Kings 17:6) and never returned to the Promised Land. Those in the Southern kingdom of Judah (Benjamites, Levites and Jews) were taken captive around 586 B.C. Later, in the late 500s B.C., approximately 50,000 Jews returned to the Promised Land and established a nation that eventually became known as “Judea.”

But the people of Judea were destined to go into a second captivity in the first century A.D. Christ Himself had prophesied, “And they [the Jews] will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away *captive into all nations*. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). When and how did this second dispersion of the Jews occur?

During the Jews’ wars with Rome (c. 66-135 A.D.), most of the Jews living in Judea were either killed or carried captive into the far-flung corners of the Roman Empire. In 135 A.D.,

*(continued on page 28)*

## MIDEAST

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the Romans renamed Judea, calling it *Palaestina* or Palestine.

Palestine contained a minority of Jewish inhabitants from 135 A.D. until modern times. During the 1800s, however, Jews began immigrating to their ancient land. By the 1900s, the number of immigrant Jews had risen dramatically. When the initial mere trickle of Jewish immigrants turned into a flood, many Arabs became alarmed. Thereafter, Jews and Arabs began fighting over who should have political control of the land.

### President Carter's Assessment

In *The Blood of Abraham*, President Carter writes of the "continuing bloodshed caused by the ancient rivalries between the Israelis and Arabs.... For centuries this region has been... a center of conflict for control of the precious land surrounding the holy places of three great monotheistic religions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity—the faiths of those who share the blood of Abraham. In addition, the Arabian Peninsula contains the largest oil reserves in the free world" (pp. 3-4).

He adds, "To understand the roots of the hatred and bloodshed it is useful to go back to the holy scriptures of ancient times.... God's early promises [to Abraham and his descendants] and how they must now be implemented cause conflict some forty centuries after the Patriarch Abraham fathered the Arabs and the Jews in the Holy Land.... Tragically for 'the People of the Book' who profess to worship the same God, the

scriptures are a source of more *difference* than agreement, inspiring more *hatred* than love, more *war* than peace" (pp. 4-5).

President Carter goes on to say, "God promised [Abraham] great



The Arch of Titus in Rome, which contains reliefs commemorating the capture of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, shows the menorah being carried off before the Temple was destroyed by fire—Art Resource, N.Y.

blessings, including the land from the Nile to the Euphrates [see Gen. 15:18].... Jews consider the covenants made by God with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses to apply exclusively to them" (p. 5).

What, according to President Carter, is the root cause of today's Mideast conflict? "The basic cause of continuing bloodshed in the region is the struggle for land" (p. 10). But, admits Mr. Carter, "there is no magic answer to the Middle East puzzle.... Most chilling of all, could the present differences lead to the use of nuclear weapons or a direct military confrontation?... Even the ultimate horror of mutual destruction is not totally unthinkable.... It is widely assumed that Israel has atomic weapons [and] the capability to deploy them quickly" (pp. 195, 197).

What, in Mr. Carter's view, is the main Arab-Israeli issue?

"The key issue and one of the most controversial, of course, is **what to do about the Palestinians....** There can be no successful negotiations for permanent peace unless the

Palestinians are included" (p. 204). Mr. Carter then says, "The Arabs must acknowledge openly and specifically that Israel is a reality and has a right to exist in peace behind secure and recognized borders.... Israel must

reconfirm its willingness to withdraw from occupied territories, as required by UN Resolution 242 and reconfirmed in the Camp David accords.... *Compromise* is necessary from both sides in any negotiation" (pp. 206-207).

President Carter concludes, "But it is Israel that remains the key, the tiny vortex around which swirl the winds of hatred, intolerance and bloodshed....

The Arabs must recognize the reality that is Israel, just as the Israelis must acknowledge Palestinian claims to civic equality and their right to express themselves freely in a portion of their territorial homeland.... The blood of Abraham... still flows in the veins of Arab [and] Jew... and too much of it has been spilled in grasping for the inheritance of the revered patriarch in the Middle East. **The spilled blood [of Abraham] in the Holy Land still cries out to God—a anguished cry for peace**" (p. 208).

How the protracted Arab-Israeli struggle ignited four major wars—and how those hostilities almost dragged the superpowers into a nuclear holocaust will be examined in a later article in *The World Ahead*. Furthermore, we will look at those Bible prophecies that reveal precisely *how* peace will finally be achieved in the volatile Middle East.

Bible prophecy reveals that a titanic struggle will yet engulf this troubled region before peace finally settles on it and the rest of the world as well (Micah 4:1-4; Zech. 14:5-9)! 

# Who Are the Palestinians?

Will the Mideast peace process grind to a halt under Israel's new Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu?

by Raymond F. McNair

Israel's recent election of a right-wing prime minister has raised fears of an ugly new round of bloodshed between the Palestinians and Israelis. Many Israelis, including Netanyahu, harbor grave doubts concerning the wisdom of Israel making concessions to the Arabs on the basis of *land for peace!*

Since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, many world leaders have wrestled with the thorny Arab-Israeli problem. Former President Ronald Reagan once expressed his fervent desire to see a solution to the Mideast conflict: "Tragic turmoil in the Middle East runs back to the dawn of history. In our modern day, conflict after conflict has taken its brutal toll there. In an age of nuclear challenge and economic interdependence, **such conflicts are a threat to all people of the world**, not just the Middle East itself. It is time for us all... to call a halt to conflict, hatred and prejudice" (Presidential Address, Sept. 2, 1982).

Yet unconcerned by world opinion, Palestinian acts of terrorism, followed by Israeli retaliatory attacks, continue casting a dark cloud over the Middle East, threatening the peace and stability of the whole world!

## What Are the Main Issues?

What are some of the main issues that continue to threaten the peace of the Mideast? Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter noted, "**The Middle East is perhaps the most volatile**



**and coveted region in the world**, one whose instability is almost certainly the greatest threat to world peace" (*The Blood of Abraham*, 1993, p. 4). He also states that "the basic cause of continuing bloodshed in the region is the *struggle* for land. With their swift victory in the 1967 war, the Israelis tripled the amount of land they controlled at the expense of Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinians, and Syria" (p. 10). Further, President Carter explained that "the Arab-Israeli conflict is a struggle between *two national identities* for control of territory" (p. 106)!

What are these "two national identities"? Mr. Carter was speaking of "the *brotherhood* of Arab and Jew and how they are both the *sons of Abraham*"—all sharing "the blood of Abraham" (pp. 4-5). According to Carter, "The *Palestinian issue* is a basic cause of the continuing Middle East conflict, and it must be addressed successfully if there is ever to be peace in the region" (p. 121).

What is the Palestinian issue? "The Palestinians are convinced that all the Arab-Israeli wars have boiled up out of the *Palestinian problem*—in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 and the Lebanese invasions of 1978 and 1982—and, of course, the civil wars [among Arab factions] of 1970 in Jordan and 1975 in Lebanon.... With a single-mindedness amounting to tunnel vision, **they see the restoration of Palestinian rights as the key to regional and, under some circumstances, even world peace**" (p. 120). Today's world leaders are struggling to balance the claims of the Israelis against the grievances of the Palestinians—many of whom are scattered throughout the Middle East.



**Page 10:** Palestinians pray at Jerusalem's Temple Mount during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The mount is, today, the site of the Muslim al-Aqsa Mosque. Previously, the Jewish temples of antiquity were built here. This causes an ongoing conflict between the "rightful heirs." **Page 11 top:** Hundreds of Palestinians wave flags and hold candles in a procession. **Bottom:** Standing under a portrait of Yasser Arafat and beside a Palestinian flag, a woman screams and makes the "V" sign calling for an end to violence in the West Bank—*Reuters*. **Page 12:** Palestinian masked members of the preventive security special forces march during a graduation ceremony—*Agence France-Presse*.



## Who Are Today's Palestinians?

By carefully searching the Scriptures, we can learn which ancient peoples were the ancestors of today's Palestinians! Even though modern Palestinians (both Muslims and Christians) are now known as "Arabs," nonetheless, most of them are not the same people as those *Bedouin Arabs* who for thousands of years inhabited the Arabian Peninsula. The Bible and secular history reveal that, ethnically speaking, today's Palestinians are a "mixed bag," including significant numbers of the following ancient peoples: *Philistines*, *Ishmaelites* and *Edomites*.

We will first consider the Philistines. They were descendants of the *Philistim* (KJV), whose ancestor was *Mizraim* (Gen. 10:13-14), from whom the ancient Egyptians also descended. The ancient Philistines, who lived in the general area known today as the Gaza Strip, were never numerous. However, they were one of Israel's fiercest enemies, as recounted in the Hebrew Scriptures.

"The borders of Palestine, also called the Land of Canaan or the Holy Land, have never been clearly defined. The name Palestine is an ancient one, derived from the Philistines who lived

there. Known as the People of the Sea, they inhabited lands primarily on the seacoast of what is now southern Israel and the Gaza Strip.... The Roman conquerors, wanting to obliterate both the capital and the name of the Israelites after they smashed the final Jewish revolt, chose to call the southern part of their new Syrian province *Palaeestina*" (p. 103). Thereafter, those living in the former land of Canaan became known as *Palestinians*.

There is no biblical or historical evidence to support the conclusion that the *majority* of the four million modern Palestinians are descendants of the ancient Philistines—though a significant number of the Arabs in the Gaza Strip are.

The second ancient people are the *Ishmaelites* (Arab Bedouins). "Bedouin... [Arabic] *badawi* desert dweller... a nomadic Arab of the Arabian, Syrian, or North African deserts" (*Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed.).

"Ishmael was the elder son of Abraham in the Bible. Ishmael's

mother was Hagar, an Egyptian serving-maid.... He is honored by the Arabs, along with Abraham, as their ancestor" (*World Book Encyclopedia*, 1972, vol. 10). *Collier's Encyclopedia* says, "Ishmael was banished from Abraham's house together with his mother.... **Ishmael is the traditional ancestor of the Arab peoples**" (1959, vol. 11).

After the Prophet Mohammed died in 632, the Ishmaelites and other desert peoples united in their drive to establish a far-flung Muslim Empire—from the Atlantic eastward into India—thus fulfilling God's promise to Abraham that Ishmael's descendants would become "a great nation" (Gen. 17:20; 21:18). Following the Arab conquest of Palestine in 636, some Arab Bedouins began filtering into Palestine.

Though the Ishmaelites attacked Israel in ancient times, they don't appear to have been a cruel enemy. Biblical and secular history indicate that the descendants of the Philistines and the Ishmaelites are less numerous among modern Palestinians than another ethnic group—the Edomites.

## Israel's Implacable Foe

It is the third group who settled the area, the *Edomites*, that makes up the largest percentage of modern Palestinians.

When considering Old Testament history, one people—the Edomites—stands out as having a persistent hatred toward the people of Israel. In fact, the Bible records numerous incidents in which the Edomites attacked God's people.

Who were the Edomites? Both the Bible and secular history reveal that many of the modern Palestinians are their direct descendants. They were close relatives of the Israelites, being descended from Esau, Jacob's twin brother. Like Jacob, Esau—the father of the Edomites—had many

sons, whose many descendants became “clans” (Gen. 36 NRSV). His firstborn son was called Eliphaz, whose concubine bore a son named **Amalek, father of the Amalekites—one of the cruelest and most aggressive branches of the Edomites** (vv. 10, 12). None of Israel’s ancient enemies were as vengeful toward the Israelites as were the Edomites. From the beginning, they bore a deep resentment toward Israel and his descendants.

How did this deep-seated enmity come about?

Even before Esau and his twin brother Jacob were born, God told their mother, Rebekah, “Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people [the Israelites] shall be stronger than the other [the Edomites], and the older [Esau] shall serve the younger [Jacob]” (Gen. 25:23).

The older twin, Esau, sold his birthright to Jacob in exchange for a bowl of soup (vv. 29-33). “So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils.... Thus Esau despised his birthright” (vv. 33-34). The stew Jacob prepared was of *red* lentils and this incident gave Esau’s descendants their nickname “Edom” or red (v. 30).

Later, Isaac gave a fabulous blessing to his younger son Jacob (Gen. 27:18-29). Those fantastic blessings included the “dew of heaven,” the “fatness [literally “fat places”] of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine” (v. 28). The fabulous blessings promised Jacob’s descendants would later include the rich lands of North America, Australia and New Zealand, plus much of Northwest Europe—lands inherited by Israel’s modern descendants. (Ask for our free brochure, *America and Britain in Prophecy*.)

Under God’s inspiration, Isaac

said to Jacob, “Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren [including Esau and his descendants], and let your mother’s sons bow down to you” (v. 29).

Not long afterward, Esau came in to see his father to receive Isaac’s blessing. But Isaac told him that his brother had already received the



chief blessing. “Indeed I have made him your master.... What shall I do now for you, my son?” (v. 37).

“And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. Then Isaac his father answered and said to him.... **‘By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother’**” (vv. 38-40).

Jacob’s purchase of the birthright—and his duplicity in obtaining the birthright *blessing*—caused Esau to have great enmity toward him. “So Esau hated Jacob... [then said] ‘I will kill my brother Jacob’” (v. 41). Jacob’s mother and father then urged him to flee to Haran (Syria) to live with his uncle Laban until Esau’s anger abated. (According to Genesis 28:9, Esau married his uncle Ishmael’s daughter—thereby cementing a long-standing closeness between the Edomites and the Ishmaelites.)

Many years later, God told Jacob to return to the Promised Land, where He would bless him (32:12). Before meeting Esau on his return journey, Jacob spent an agonizing night in prayer, then prepared a huge present to give to his brother (vv. 13-23). Almighty God delivered him from his brother, and changed his name to “Israel,” meaning “Prevailer

with God” (vv. 24-32).

After having met the next day, the brothers parted company amicably—but **the descendants of Esau—the Edomites—never forgot the fact that their ancestor had foolishly sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of soup, and later lost his father’s blessing through Jacob’s duplicity.**

The Bible admonishes us to beware “lest any root of *bitterness* [such as the Edomites’ bitterness toward Israel] springing up cause trouble... lest there be... [a] profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For... afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected” (Heb. 12:15-17).

## An Enduring Hatred Toward Israel

The Amalekite branch of the Edomites was the first to attack the Israelites after they left Egypt. “Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim” (Ex. 17:8). “So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword” (v. 13). Then God told Moses, “Write this for a memorial in a book and recount it... that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” (v. 14).

Moses told the Israelites, “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, **how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary;** and he did not fear God” (Deut. 25:17-19). In fact, there are many different accounts in the Old Testament of Israel warring against the Amalekites—Edomites!

When the Israelites refused to obey God’s Word, and made an abortive attempt to force their way into the Promised Land, they were defeated by their enemies, including

the Amalekites. "Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah" (Num. 14:45).

Some years afterward, God used a brave man named Gideon, and his small army of 300 valiant men, to deliver the Israelites from a larger invading army. "Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number" (Judges 7:12).

Many years later, God had Samuel tell Saul, "I will punish what Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him on the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them" (1 Sam. 15:2-3). But King Saul did not obey God's command, sparing their King Agag (vv. 7-8). An Amalekite slew King Saul (2 Sam. 1:1-16). The Edomites attacked Judah, but were defeated, in the days of King Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:22).

Many years later, after the Jews had been taken captive to Babylon, a wicked Edomite named Haman planned to slay the Jews. "After these things King Ahasuerus [Xerxes I 486-465 B.C.] promoted Haman, the son of Hamedatha the *Agagite* [a royal descendant of the Amalekite kings], and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him" (Esther 3:1).

Haman plotted to slay all the Jews throughout the Persian Empire, which then included the Promised Land (vv. 6-15). But after Haman had built a gallows on which to hang his Jewish rival, Mordecai, matters were reversed, and Haman was himself hanged.

God revealed through Moses that there would be continual problems between Israel and the Amalekites or Edomites in Exodus 17. "**Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation**" (v. 16).

Could it be that this prophecy extends even to our day? Are the present-day Palestinian attacks against the Israelis merely another chapter in a long-standing, bloody feud?

### When Did the Edomites Migrate into Palestine?

The ancestors of many of today's Palestinians first began migrating into southern Palestine or Judea several centuries before the birth of Christ. These *Edomites* were then called *Idumeans*. Both the Old and New Testaments mention a nation called Idumea (Is. 34:5-6; Ezek. 35:15; 36:5; Mark 3:8). The Romans later appointed an Idumean, Herod the Great, as king over all of Judea. *Where* was Idumea located, and *who* were the Idumeans?

The Edomites had originally lived south of Judah, in the general area located between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. Later, however, after the Ten Tribes of the Kingdom of Israel and the Two Tribes of the Kingdom of Judah were uprooted from the Promised Land and taken captive, Edomites began settling much of the Jews' former lands (cf. Ezek. 35-36).

The Edomites had once inhabited Mount Seir south of Judah. "So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom" (Gen. 36:8). Sometime after the Jews were taken captive to Babylon, many Edomites living near Judah's southern border started moving north into the nearly depopulated land of Judah. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says, "There was some movement upwards from the south of Judah of **groups closely related to Edomite and kindred peoples of South Palestine and Northern Arabia**. The immigrants, like the new occupants of Samaria, gradually assimilated themselves to the new soil... [subsequently] the Edomites were responsible for a new catastrophe" ("Palestine," 11th ed., vol. 20).

They began claiming the lands formerly occupied by the peoples of

Israel and Judah. They said, "**These two countries [Israel and Judah] shall be mine, and we will possess them**" (Ezek. 35:10)!

What did God think of the Edomites, who had appropriated Israel's land as their own? "Thus says the LORD God... 'Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all *Edom*, who gave My land [promised to Judah and Israel] to themselves as a possession, with whole-hearted joy and spiteful minds, in order to plunder its open country'" (36:5)!

God solemnly declares He will punish the Edomites for their hatred and cruelty toward His people. "'Because you have had an *ancient hatred*, and have shed the blood of the children of Israel by the power of the sword at the time of their calamity... therefore, as I live,' says the LORD God, 'I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you; since you have not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue you'" (35:5-6; cf. Is. 34:1-10).

Later, during the time of the Hasmonean kingdom of the Maccabees, a Jewish priest-king called John Hyrcanus (135-104 B.C.) forced those Edomites living in Idumea to be circumcised and convert to the Jewish religion and customs. "He conquered *Idumea* [Edom] and compelled its inhabitants to adopt Judaism" (*Encyclopedia Judaica*, "Hyrcanus, John," vol. 8). This blurred, temporarily, the distinctions between Jew and Edomite.

Yet numerous New Testament references show conclusively that those same Edomites, including Herod the Great, later committed terrible atrocities against the Jewish people—including Herod's slaughter of the male babies at Bethlehem in his attempt to murder the infant Jesus (Matt. 2:1-23)!

About 70 years later, during Rome's war against Judea in 66-70 A.D. 20,000 heavily armed *Idumean*

(continued on page 27)

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## PALESTINIANS?

(continued from page 13)

troops were treacherously admitted into Jerusalem, and mercilessly butchered tens of thousands of Jews (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, bk. 4, chaps. 4-5).

### A Glimmer of Hope?

Is there a faint flicker of hope indicating that the ancient enmity that has troubled the Arabs and Israelis during much of this century may at last come to an end?

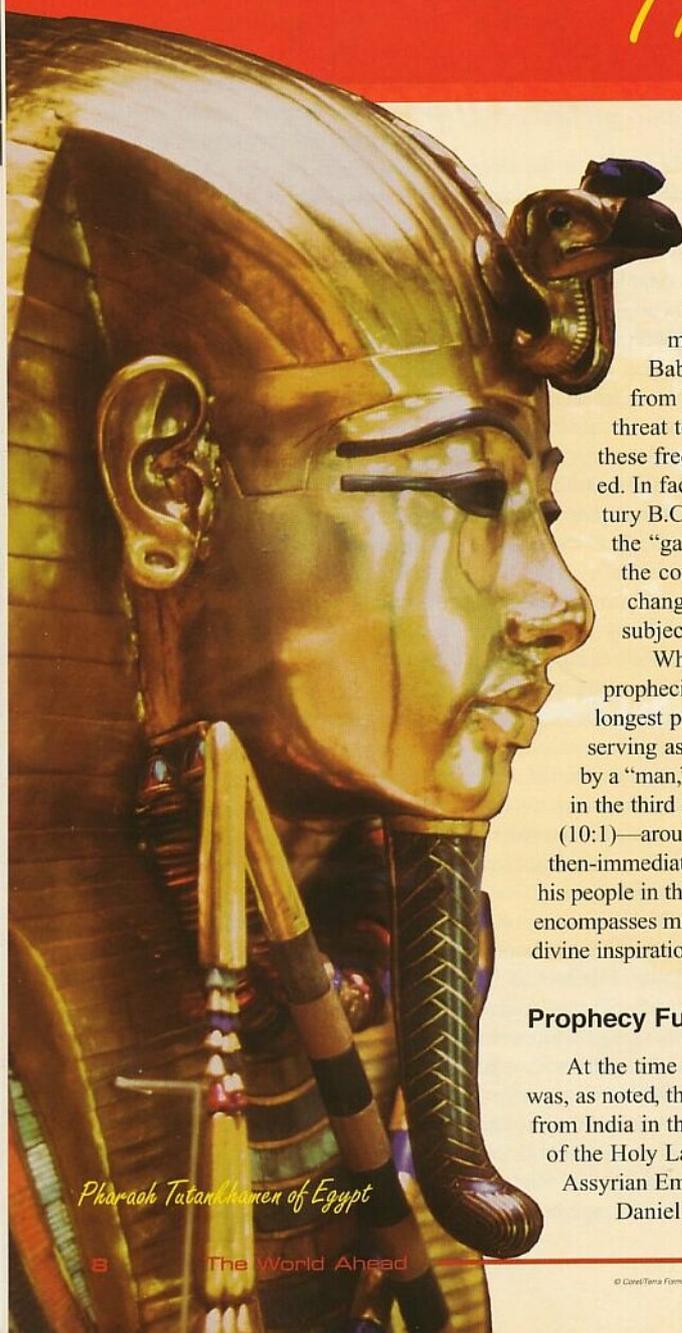
Both the Old and New Testaments make it clear that Israel's most spiteful enemies were the Edomites. And it was they who harassed and slaughtered the Israelites time after time. It was the Edomites—not the Philistines or Ishmaelites—who, a few centuries before Christ, pushed northward into the heartland of Judah, even claiming the ancient Jewish city of Hebron as their own.

In modern times some of these same people's descendants have resorted to frequent acts of terrorism, destruction, mayhem and bloodshed, openly declaring that, **if they get their chance, they will drive the Israelis into the sea!** The bitterness that some Palestinians have shown, both toward Israel and toward the United States, is but a continuation of an ancient hatred between the descendants of Esau and Jacob! Consider incidents such as the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the massacre of Americans on the *Achille Lauro* cruise ship in 1985, or the Israeli athletes butchered at Munich in 1972 when Palestinian terrorists invaded the Olympic Village.

In a coming article in *The World Ahead*, we will examine certain Bible prophecies revealing that, after a yet-future bloodbath (Dan. 11-12; Zech. 12, 14), the Arab-Israeli conflict will finally be resolved—not by men, but by the mighty Prince of Peace, who, at long last, will teach all nations the *way of peace* (Is. 9:6-7; Micah 4:1-5)! 

# NORTH

## The Age-Old Struggle



In ancient times, “god-kings” of the two earliest river valley civilizations—Mesopotamia and Egypt—dreamed of controlling the entire Middle East. And invariably, their path to imperial conquest ran through the Holy Land—the narrow “land bridge” between Eurasia and Africa through which trade and military traffic had to flow. Whether it involved Babylonian, Assyrian, Chaldean or Persian emperors from the *north* or Egyptian pharaohs from the *south*, the threat to the inhabitants of Palestine was almost constant. In these frequent hostilities, the northern power usually dominated. In fact, Assyria briefly *absorbed* Egypt in the seventh century B.C. Later, although specific peoples and rulers changed, the “game plan” seemingly remained the same. Throughout the course of history, rulership of the Holy Land has often changed hands—it being at times autonomous, but usually subject to some great northern or southern power.

Which brings us to one of the most amazingly detailed prophecies in the entire Bible. Found in Daniel 11, it is the longest prophetic passage in Scripture. With preceding chapters serving as an introduction, this prophecy was revealed to Daniel by a “man,” evidently the *archangel* Gabriel (9:21). This happened in the third year of the reign of Persian Emperor **Cyrus the Great** (10:1)—around 536 B.C. The prophecy began with events in the then-immediate future, but also showed Daniel what would happen to his people in the “latter days” (v. 14). All told, this incredible prophecy encompasses more than 2,500 years of Mideast affairs—and proves the divine inspiration of the “Scripture of Truth”! (v. 21).

### Prophecy Fulfilled!

At the time of Daniel’s prophecy, the power to the *north* of Judah was, as noted, the Persian Empire under Cyrus. It stretched all the way from India in the east to modern Turkey in the west. And to the *south* of the Holy Land was, as always, Egypt—long since freed from the Assyrian Empire and now ruled by its 26th dynasty.

Daniel is told, “Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia,

Pharaoh Tutankhamen of Egypt

# & SOUTH

by Thomas E. Robinson

## le for the Middle East

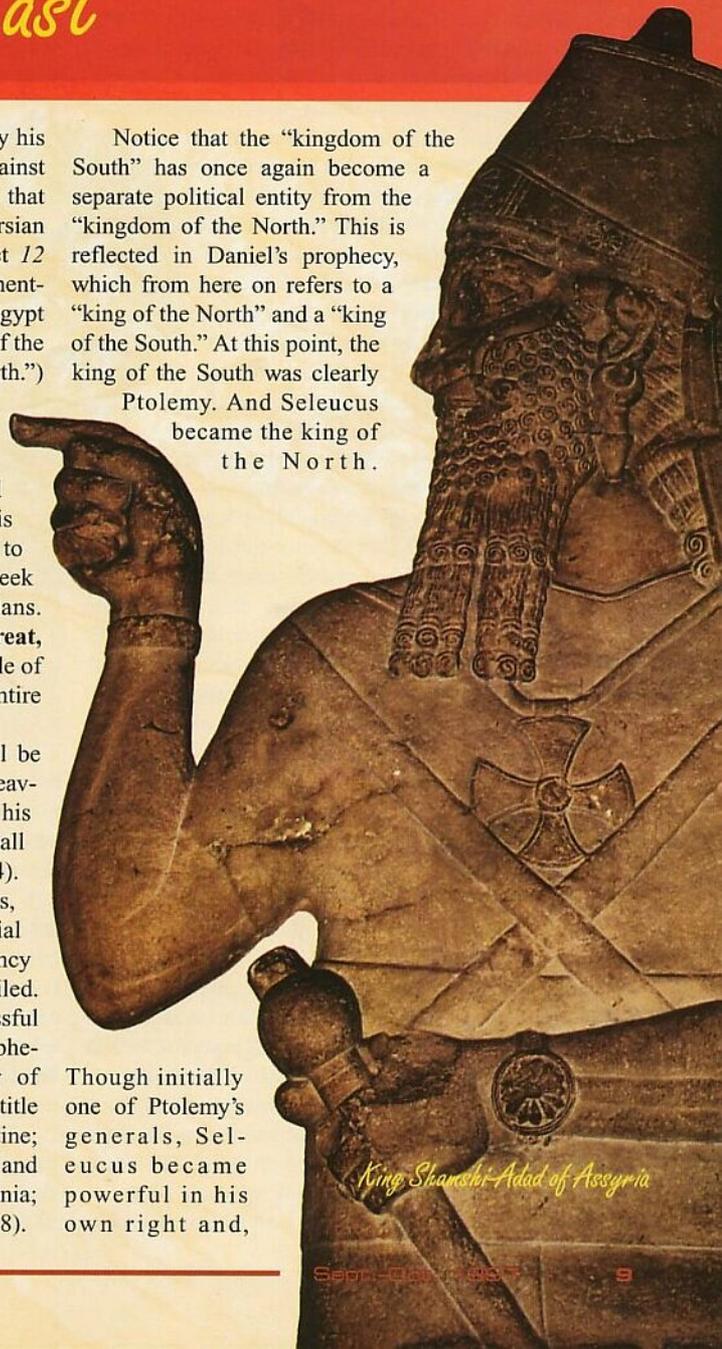
and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece" (11:2). This is not to say that there would be only four more kings in the Persian Empire following Cyrus—for there were in fact 12 more. Rather, only the first four are being documented here. First came **Cambyses**, who took over Egypt around 525 B.C. (Thus, as before, the "kingdom of the South" was absorbed by the "kingdom of the North.") Then followed **Pseudo-Smerdis**, **Darius** and finally **Xerxes**, who, being the wealthiest of them all, launched an all-out war against Greece.

"Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will" (v. 3). King Philip of Macedonia determined to defeat the Persian Empire with a mostly Greek army—but died before carrying out his plans. However, his now-famous son, **Alexander the Great**, took up the cause, crushed the Persians at the Battle of Arbella in 331 B.C. and then conquered the entire Middle East all the way to India.

"And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these" (v. 4). And so it was that at the height of his achievements, Alexander suddenly died at age 33. An initial attempt to hold his empire together by a joint regency in the name of his nephew and his unborn son failed. One of his generals made an ultimately unsuccessful bid for power. But within a few years, just as prophesied, the empire ended up split among four of Alexander's *other* generals who assumed the title "king": 1) **Ptolemy Soter**, ruling Egypt and Palestine; 2) **Seleucus Nicator**, ruling Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia; 3) **Cassander**, ruling Greece and Macedonia; and 4) **Lysimachus**, ruling Asia Minor (cf. 7:6; 8:8).

Notice that the "kingdom of the South" has once again become a separate political entity from the "kingdom of the North." This is reflected in Daniel's prophecy, which from here on refers to a "king of the North" and a "king of the South." At this point, the king of the South was clearly Ptolemy. And Seleucus became the king of the North.

Though initially one of Ptolemy's generals, Seleucus became powerful in his own right and,



*King Shamshi-Adad of Assyria*

when Ptolemy was tied up fighting a war in 312 B.C., Seleucus established his own throne in Syria over an even greater territory. “Then the king of the South [Ptolemy] shall become strong, as well as one of his princes [Seleucus]; and he [Seleucus] shall gain power over him [Ptolemy] and have dominion. His [Seleucus]’ dominion shall be a great dominion” (11:5).

There is then a clear time interval. The prophecies that follow were fulfilled much later in the Seleucid wars between Syria and Egypt: “And after some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the South will come to the king of the North to carry out a peaceful arrangement....” (v. 6 NASB). This happened in 252 B.C., when **Ptolemy II Philadelphus** of Egypt gave his daughter **Berenice** in marriage to **Antiochus II Theos** of Syria to cement a peace treaty between them. This required that Antiochus put away his former wife Laodice, who had pushed him into conflict with Egypt in the first place.

“...But she [Berenice] will not retain her position of power, nor will he remain with his power, but she will be given up, along with those who brought her in, and the one who sired her, as well as he who supported her in those times” (NASB). And indeed, Berenice, her father and her husband were all removed from power—by death! When Berenice’s father Ptolemy II died, her husband Antiochus II repudiated her and took Laodice back as his wife. Laodice, however, doubting Antiochus’ faithfulness and anxious to secure the throne for her son **Seleucus (II) Callinicus**, murdered her husband. And she had Berenice put to death as well. What an amazing literal fulfillment of God’s Word!

“But from a branch of her roots [i.e. Berenice’s brother **Ptolemy III Euergetes**, since her parents were her roots] one shall arise in his place [as king of the South], who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail” (v. 7). Ptolemy III invaded Syria around 245 B.C. to avenge the death of his sister. And he seized Syria’s “fortress”—Seleucia, which served as the port of Antioch, capital of the kingdom. “And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold...” (v. 8). Ptolemy carried immense wealth back to Egypt, including around 2,500 molten images and idolatrous vessels that Cambyses had taken from Egypt in 526 B.C. “...and he shall continue more years than the king of the North.” Ptolemy II ruled until 222 B.C., four years after the death of Seleucus II of Syria.

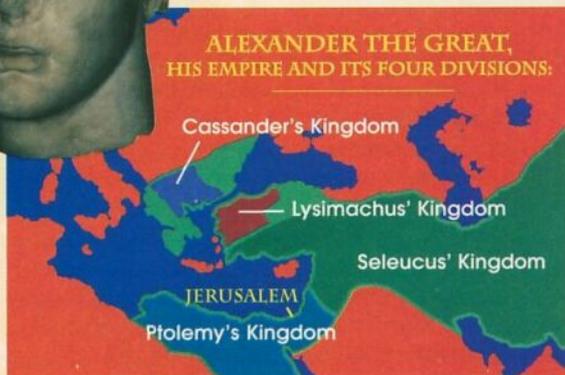
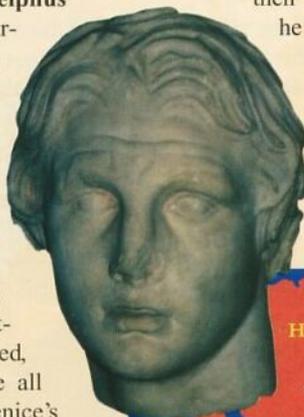
And on and on this awesome chapter goes,

foretelling detail after detail—more than 100 of which have already been fulfilled *exactly as prophesied!*

## Abomination of Desolation

Verses 10 through 20 give us specifics about the lives of Syrian Kings **Seleucus III Ceraunus**, **Antiochus III the Great** and **Seleucus IV Philopater**, as well as Egyptian Kings **Ptolemy IV Philopater** and **Ptolemy V Epiphanes**. These men reigned more than 300 years after Daniel wrote about them! Verses 14 through 16 foretold that a number of Jews would actually help Antiochus III in his fight against Ptolemy V but that Antiochus would then “stand in the Glorious Land”—that is, he would wrest the Holy Land from the South’s control, which he did.

Eventually, we come to an individual who served as a type of the end-time ruler to come. Verse 21: “And in his [Seleucus IV’s] place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of



royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.” **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** was a despicable reprobate who came by surprise and—through flattery and deceit—took over the kingdom in 176 B.C. Notice what was to later happen after he defeated Egypt: “While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage and return to his own land” (v. 28). Returning from the South with the spoils of victory in 168, Antiochus set himself against the Jews, massacred many of them and plundered the temple at Jerusalem before returning to Syria.

The next two verses describe his second venture into Egypt—unsuccessful this time because a Roman fleet forced him to give up his fight and return the island of Cyprus to Egypt. “Therefore he shall be grieved, and

return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant” (v. 30). Antiochus vented his fury on the Jews, yet accorded special favor to those among them who rejected their religion.

Then came the worst: “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; **then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation**” (v. 31). In 167 B.C., Antiochus sent troops to the Holy Land. They desecrated the temple and its sanctuary, stopped the daily sacrifice and set up a pagan altar in the temple, with pigs—unclean in God’s law (cf. Deut. 14:8)—being offered to an image of Zeus! Moreover, the Jews were forbidden to observe the Law of Moses and were forced to adopt the Greek culture!

“Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits” (Dan. 11:32). We’ve already seen how Antiochus extended favor to those Jews who recanted their religious beliefs. And shamefully, as a result, many did. But a number did not. The next year saw the uprising of the Maccabees—followers of Judas Maccabeus of the Hasmonean priestly dynasty. In large part due to the efforts of these patriots, Syrian forces were gradually driven out and independence was reestablished.

But this is where the step-by-step fulfillment of prophecy in Daniel 11 seems to end. Why? We must realize that prophecy sometimes skips forward in time without directly saying so. For example, notice this messianic prophecy in Isaiah 9: “*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given*; and the government will be upon His shoulder” (v. 6). Notice that the italicized text refers to Jesus Christ’s *First* Coming, whereas the unitalicized text pertains to His *Second* Coming. Other passages show that these two events are thousands of years apart, but this fact is not directly evident from this prophecy alone.

We should also realize that prophecy is sometimes *dual*—that is, there may be *two* fulfillments of the *same* prophecy. For instance, Malachi 4:5 prophesied that someone would precede the Messiah in the spirit of the prophet Elijah. Now in Matthew 17:11, Jesus confirmed that this “Elijah” would *yet* come, but then explained that such an individual had *already* come in the person of John the Baptist. Thus, according to Christ, this prophecy has two fulfillments—one that preceded the earthly ministry of His First Coming and a similar one that would precede His Second Coming.

With this in mind, let’s look at Daniel 11:32 again: “...the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.” This verse is *dual* in nature and

serves to advance the time frame of Daniel 11. For not only was this true of the Maccabees, but it is even more characteristic of those who have known God better than any group of people on earth—true Christians. Now verse 33 makes perfect sense: “And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by the sword and flame, by captivity and plundering.” Christ and His apostles did teach many people. Moreover, they were all persecuted and *nearly* all of them were killed. Later Christians would experience the same suffering—even as late as the Middle Ages, when millions were slaughtered for their beliefs.

“Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purge them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time” (vv. 34-35). This describes what members of God’s Church have experienced since it was founded—false prophets coming among them (Acts 20:29-30; 2 Peter 2:1-3), and trials and tribulation, even martyrdom, to refine their character and make them spiritually white (Rev. 6:9-11; cf. 7:14).

## From Apostolic Times to Now

So the prophecy has now come to the New Testament period. But who was the king of the North at this time? In 65 B.C., the Romans took possession of Syria and the Roman state thus became the kingdom of the North. Rome also later annexed Judea. (Note that when *Egypt* was swallowed up by Rome in 31 B.C., the Roman leader did not then become the king of the *South*—because he was already the king of the *North*.)

Notice Daniel 11:36: “Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.” The Roman emperor had virtually absolute power and required everyone to sacrifice to and worship him *as a god*. Both Jews and Christians were persecuted and killed because they would not participate in this idolatry.

The next two verses show that instead of the old Roman deities, the emperor would, as we’ve just seen, declare *himself* a god and would honor a “god of fortresses” or “forces” (KJV). Indeed, extravagant “defense spending” made Rome the strongest war-making power and the best-defended empire the world had ever known. Furthermore, according to the prophecy, the emperor would also honor “a god which his fathers did not know...

(continued on page 29)

## NORTH & SOUTH (continued from page 11)

a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain" (vv. 38-39). This commenced with Constantine the Great in the fourth century, when Roman emperors began to honor and expand the power of a "god" in a high religious office. This would progress through various "resurrections" of the West Roman Empire until the end time. (To learn more about this subject, please write for our free booklet, *The Beast of Revelation*.)

And that brings us to the next verse: "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him." But who will the northern and southern powers be at the end of this age? As mentioned, the western part of the Roman Empire has been revived numerous times in Europe—by Justinian, Charlemagne, Otto the Great, Charles V, Napoleon and the Mussolini-Hitler Axis. And at the 1947 Treaty of Rome, which brought the European Economic Community into existence, the signers were, according to former NATO Secretary-General Henri Spaak, "consciously re-creating the Roman Empire once more." Thus, it appears that today's European Union, which traces its roots to that starting point, is paving the way toward the final revival of the Roman Empire that the Bible elsewhere prophesies. It will be led by a Hitlerian dictator of whom Antiochus Epiphanes was a type.

But what about the southern ruler? Though the East Roman or Byzantine Empire continued until 1453, Egypt was separated from it during the Arab conquest of 639 to 642, when that nation became an integral part of the Muslim world. Thus, the caliph of Islam became the king of the South, eventually ruling from Baghdad over a huge empire—including the Holy Land. Interestingly, the struggle between North and South never really abated. The Muslims were repelled by Charlemagne's grandfather from taking control of Europe in 732. And the 11th through 13th centuries saw the Crusades, launched by European Christendom to regain the Holy Land.

From around 1250, Egypt was ruled by Mamluk sultans until the Ottoman Turks seized this land in 1517. It then remained part of the Ottoman Empire for 400 years until World War I—when it became a British protectorate. In 1937, Egypt finally gained its independence. Then, in World War II, the North-South struggle erupted yet again, when Axis forces tried to take over the whole of North Africa and the Middle East. The Allies, though, prevented them from doing so.

After the war, Egypt became a key member of the fledgling Arab League in 1945. In 1948, the Arab

League jointly attacked the newly formed state of Israel. Later, from 1958 to 1961, Egypt, Syria, Yemen and the United Arab States were merged into one political union—the United Arab Republic. And in 1965, the Arab Common Market was founded.

All of these events may merely represent the beginnings of the Arab "confederacy" prophesied in Psalm 83. Dedicated to wiping out modern Israel, it comprises: "the tents of Edom [including Palestinians] and the Ishmaelites [Arabs in general]; Moab [central Jordan] and the Hagarites [north Arabians]; Gebal [a mountain region of Jordan], Ammon [the environs of Amman, Jordan], and Amalek [a branch of Edomite



**Christians of the First Crusade erect a cross in the entrance to Jerusalem in 1099. European Christendom and the Muslim world fought the Crusades for control of the Holy Land—Archive.**

Palestinians]; Philistia [Gaza Strip] with the inhabitants of Tyre [southern Lebanon]" (vv. 5-7). But verse 8 says that "Assyria has also joined with them," indicating a future alliance with modern Germany, the leading nation of the coming European empire. (For this last identification, please refer to our free brochure, *America and Britain in Prophecy*.)

It seems, then, that the final king of the South will be the leader of a coming Muslim confederation, of which Egypt will certainly be a part. That doesn't necessarily mean, however, that the leader will be an Egyptian—though he may very well be. Some might think this can't be since Egypt was, in Roman times, absorbed into the kingdom of the North. However, Daniel 11:42 shows that Egypt will be defeated by the king of the North at the time of the end—proving that this southern nation is not part of the northern kingdom directly beforehand.

To find out how this incredible North-South saga will end, please read Raymond F. McNair's article on page 18: "The Coming War for the City of Peace." It takes us to the very end of this age. 

# The Root of Today's Mideast Turmoil

Why are the Israelis so reluctant to grant the Palestinians statehood?  
What ignited Jewish-Arab passions in this 20th century?

by Raymond F. McNair

While touring the Golan Heights a few days after the Six-Day War in June 1967, my Israeli guide warned us to beware of Syrian mines that Israel hadn't yet destroyed in the wake of its stunning victory. Today, many Israelis feel as though they are walking through a different kind of deadly minefield in pursuit of lasting peace in the Middle East!

Recently, Israeli leaders granted Palestinian Arabs on the West Bank a certain measure of local "self-rule." But, since becoming prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu has said categorically that there will be *no Palestinian State* on the West Bank—and that **Jerusalem will not again become a divided city!**

While outlining the aims of his government to the Knesset (the Israeli parliament) on June 18, Netanyahu emphasized, "We will guard and strengthen Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish people, undivided under the sovereignty of the State of Israel."

Previous articles in *The World Ahead* have highlighted two of the major problems confronting world leaders in their search for a peaceful solution to today's Mideast impasse—ancient *racial enmity* and a question of *political control* over Palestine.

Today's Arabs and Jews are the descendants of two different sons of the Patriarch Abraham. The Arabs' lineage is partially through Abraham's son Ishmael, whereas the Jews trace their ancestry through Isaac, the younger son.

There has been ethnic hatred and bloodshed between the two "family" groups through the centuries. In 636 A.D. "the Arabs burst into the land—after having destroyed the large and prosperous Jewish populations of the Arabian Peninsula root and branch. The rule of the Byzantines [the eastern Roman Empire] had been harsh for the Jews, **but it was under the Arabs that the Jews were finally reduced to an insignificant minority** and ceased to be a national force of any consequence in their own land.

"The Jews initially vested their hopes in the 'ISH-MAELITE CONQUERORS,' as they were known in contemporary sources, but within a few years these hopes were dashed as Arab policy became clear. Unlike previous conquerors, the Arabs poured in a steady stream of colonists... [and] finally succeeded in doing what the might of Rome had not achieved: the uprooting of the Jewish farmer from his soil. **Thus it was not the Jews who usurped the land from the Arabs, but the Arabs who usurped the land from the Jews**" (Netanyahu, *A Place Among the Nations*, p. 25).

Except for a 192-year period of rule under the Crusaders (1099–1291 A.D.), the Muslims ruled Palestine from 636 until 1917, when Britain's General Allenby conquered Jerusalem and subsequently brought all of Palestine under British rule.

Can divergent Jewish and Arab claims to Palestine ever be reconciled? According to President Carter, "the basic cause of continuing bloodshed in the region is the *struggle for land*" (*The Blood of Abraham*, p. 10).

To whom did Britain promise the land of Palestine following the Great War? "Allied politicians meanwhile, had promised Palestine to: [1] *France*; [2] to the *Arabs* under Husein Ibn-Ali; and [3], in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, to the *Jewish people* for a national home" (*Collier's Encyclopedia*, vol. 15, p. 389). Inevitably, this led to irreconcilable Jewish and Arab claims!

## Claims of the Palestinian Arabs

Palestinian Arabs believe they should possess and politically control Palestine—including all the territory of the modern states of Israel and Jordan. Arab claims to Palestine are based primarily on the fact (freely *admitted* by the Israelis) that Arabs have been a *majority* of the inhabitants of this land since the Romans expelled most of the Jews from Palestine in the first and second centuries A.D.

"The Arabs claimed the right to be the sole rulers of Palestine by virtue of *Mohammed's conquest* of that country in the seventh century and by virtue of constituting a *majority* of the population at the end of World War I" (Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, p. 416). Furthermore, "the Arabs could not see any valid reason why they should give up *their* national patrimony" (*Encyclopedia Americana*, "Palestine," 1960)!

Moreover, Arabs claim that Britain's promises to them included *all* of Palestine, and were made *before* Britain promised this same land to the Jews in the Balfour Declaration. The Arabs claim that "the world's leaders [at the end of WW I]... erred in believing that they were 'giving a people without a land [the Jews] a land without a people [Palestine]'" (Netanyahu, p. 17).

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat claims that when the Jews wrested Palestine from the Arabs—who were then a *majority*—Arabs had lived in that verdant land since their conquest of the Jews in the seventh century A.D. "The Jewish invasion [by immigration] began in [1882].... Palestine was then a *verdant area*, inhabited mainly by an Arab people in the course of building its life and dynamically enriching its indigenous culture" (Address to the U.N. General Assembly, Nov. 13, 1974).

## Israeli Counterclaims

The Israelis, however, claim that Palestine was anything but a "verdant area" when Jewish immigrants began arriving there in 1882. To prove their point, Israelis often quote famous writers who toured this land during the late 1800s.

Mark Twain visited in 1867 and recounted his experiences in *The Innocents Abroad*. He says, "Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies.... Palestine is desolate and unlovely.... **It is a hopeless, dreary, heartbroken land.**"

The Jews assert that only *after* the Holy Land became invigorated by the industry and expertise of many thousands of Jewish immigrants did it begin to blossom and hum with activity! Benjamin Netanyahu writes, "In the twelve centuries of the Arab presence in Palestine before the return of the Jews in modern times, *the Arabs built only a single new town—Ramleh*" (p. 44).

By stark contrast, he adds, "Beginning with the first wave of Zionist immigration in 1882 and continuing through successive waves before and after WW I, the country was rapidly transformed. The Jews built roads, towns, farms, hospitals, factories, and schools. And as Jewish immigration increased their numbers, it also caused a rapid increase in the Arab population. Many of the Arabs immigrated into the land in response to the job opportunities and the better life afforded by the growing economy the Jews had created" (p. 36).

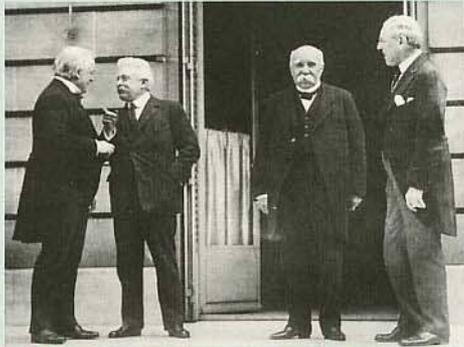
*World Book Encyclopedia* confirms this. "The long series of conquests and increasing neglect [by the Muslims, 636–1917] turned Palestine into almost a wasteland. Cities crumbled, and swamps formed over rich soil. **The population was mostly Arabs. There was also a small number of Jews.** All of them were miserably poor. In 1882 the first group of Jews from Europe came to settle in Palestine. That was the start of the Zionist pioneering movement that led to the creation of the State of Israel [in May 1948]" (vol. 15, 1972, p. 86).

Netanyahu says that when modern Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine, "they joined the Jews of Hebron, Safed, or Jerusalem who down [through] the ages had kept an uninterrupted vigil over a *ruined land*. As a consequence, **there was no period during which the land was devoid of Jews.** (In the villages of *Peki'in* and *Shefar'am* in the Galilee, Jews have lived continuously from ancient times until the present.)" (p. 33).

The Israelis believe God gave Palestine to *them*—not to their Arabic cousins, nor to any other descendants of Abraham. "Jews consider the covenants made by God with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses [granting ultimate possession of Palestine] to apply exclusively to *them*" (Carter, p. 8).

They think it only right that they continue to occupy, and politically rule, all the land that is now under their control. **These conflicting claims to the land of Palestine constitute the main source of tension between these blood relatives.** And this conflict has been a perpetual thorn in the side of those nations that try to mediate the Middle East dispute of who will control Jerusalem and all of Palestine (cf. Zech. 12:1-3).

"The Jews claimed the right to Palestine by virtue of their *conquest* of that country in the twelfth century B.C., and by virtue of having been a *majority* in that country far longer than the Arabs" (Dimont, p. 416).



**The Big Four at Versailles Peace Conference. Lloyd George of England, Vittorio Orlando of Italy, Georges Clemenceau of France and Woodrow Wilson of the U.S. endorsed the Balfour Declaration and incorporated it into the Treaty of Versailles which promised the Jews a national home in Palestine—Reuters**

The Israeli claim to Palestine is partly based on the simple fact that it has been the homeland of the Jews from around 1400–1200 B.C.—long *before* the Arab conquerors took over Palestine in the seventh century A.D. They claim that, though most of the Jews were either slaughtered or taken into slavery by the Romans (66–135 A.D.), nonetheless a remnant has lived continuously in Palestine for thousands of years!

## Modern Roots of Conflict

What ignited the endemic hatred, violence and bloodshed between Arabs and Jews during this 20th century? Why such bitter enmity between these Semitic cousins who, in the words of Jimmy Carter, share the “blood of Abraham”?

Despite their turbulent history, modern Jews and Arabs lived in comparative peace in the Holy Land until the early 1920s. As long as Jews were an insignificant minority among the Arab population of Palestine there was no problem. But when the stream of Jewish immigrants reached flood tide, the Arabs began to be alarmed. “As early as 1855 an estate was purchased near Jaffa for Jewish settlement, and from that time onwards Jewish immigration, mainly from Russia and Rumania, increased steadily... the Jewish population of Palestine had increased by 1914 to nearly 100,000” (*Chambers’ Encyclopaedia*, vol. 10, p. 369). Today, there are about 4.3 million Jews living in the land.

How did Britain become embroiled in this vexing Jewish-Arab Palestinian controversy? Many Americans and Britons don’t know that God’s prophecies had predicted they would be “vexed” by the Jews—and would be “caught in the middle” between the Jews and Arabs, unable to please either side.

But to understand the biblical prophecies concerning this thorny problem, you must first know that, according to the Bible and secular history, many of the British peoples are descendants of an Israelite patriarch, Ephraim. Bible prophecy says the time is coming when “Ephraim [Britain] shall not *envy* Judah, and Judah shall not *vex* Ephraim” (Is. 11:13 KJV). (For more on this topic, please write for our free brochure, *America and Britain in Prophecy*.)

## A Promise to the Arabs

How did Britain become enmeshed in the Jewish-Arab struggle for control of Palestine? During WW I, Britain wanted to bring both the Arabs and Jews into the Allied cause against the Central Powers (Germany, Austria, Turkey). In order to win both Arabs and Jews to her side, Britain made numerous promises, which later proved to be both contradictory and impossible to fulfill.

To secure Arab support in 1915–1916, Britain

promised them a large Arab state, which some Arabs took to mean all the Arab lands (except British-occupied Aden) in the Arabian Peninsula—from Egypt to the Persian Gulf. This supposedly included Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Arabia, Jordan—and *Palestine!*

“During WW I, Jews and Arabs outside Palestine collaborated with the Allies and bid for a postwar place in Palestine when it should be liberated from the Turks. Various and *conflicting commitments* were made with respect to Syria and Palestine. In the first place, Great Britain gave through Sir Henry McMahon, the high commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan, a pledge of Independence (Aug. 30, 1915) to Sherif Husein Ibn-Ali of Mecca... **Neither Palestine nor Jerusalem was mentioned by name or specifically excluded.** The Arabs therefore came to believe that *all of Palestine* was to be included in the pledge; whereas the British maintained (when the mandate was eventually established) that only... Transjordan [modern Jordan] had been included” (*Encyclopedia Americana*, 1960, vol. 21, p. 201). **However, Britain said she did not include the West Bank (modern Israel) in her promise to the Arabs!**

Britain’s Prime Minister Lloyd George was outraged by later Arab accusations that the Treaty of Versailles, which granted Britain a mandate over Palestine in 1922, had treated the Arabs unfairly: “No race has done better out of the fidelity with which the Allies redeemed their promises to the oppressed races than the Arabs .... [in particular] the Palestinian Arabs” (*Jamahiriya News Agency of Libya*, Apr. 19, 1989).

South African Field Marshal and Prime Minister Jan Smuts, who served in Britain’s War Cabinet in World War I, explained the views of the British Cabinet, which favored a national home for the *Jews* in Palestine: “It was naturally assumed that large-scale immigration of Jews into their historic homeland could not and would not be looked upon as a hostile gesture to the highly favoured Arab people... [who] largely as a result of British action came better out of the Great War than any other people” (Abu Iyad on *Radio Monte Carlo*, Mar. 4, 1989).

Clearly, Britain’s Balfour Declaration promises to the Jews have been a source of deep Arab hostility toward Britain since 1917. The Arabs have felt this to be a breach of the promise Britain made to them! But, since WW II, America has inherited most of that Arab hostility—because it has continued to champion the cause of a secure national home for the Jews in Palestine.

## A Promise to the Jews

Near the end of WW I, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration, which promised a Jewish State in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration was, in fact, a letter written on November 2, 1917, by Britain’s Foreign Secretary,

Arthur Balfour, and was addressed to Lord Rothchild, a prominent Jewish financier and supporter of Zionism. Balfour wrote, **“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people,** and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.”

Lord Balfour’s assistant foreign secretary, Lord Robert Cecil, clearly laid out Britain’s policy when the official Declaration was made in 1917: “Our wish is that *Arabian countries* shall be for the Arabs, *Armenia* for the Armenians, *Judea* for the Jews.”

The Jews immediately interpreted the Balfour Declaration as a firm promise by Britain to assist them in establishing a sovereign Jewish state in Palestine. Following WW I, the victorious Allies met in San Remo, Italy, in April 1920, and hammered out an agreement under the auspices of the League of Nations. “At the San Remo Conference in 1920, the Balfour Declaration was ratified by the Allied Powers. Prime Minister Lloyd George sent Chaim Weizmann [Israel’s future president] on his way with the words: ‘Now you have your State. It is up to you to win the race!’ Two years later the Balfour Declaration was embodied in a Mandate of the League of Nations entrusting Britain with the government of the country” (Abba Eban, *My Country*, pp. 30-31).

“The Authors of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate envisaged that an autonomous, distinctive Jewish society would evolve until it was strong enough to establish an independent government.... The British Royal Commission in 1937, having examined the documents, stated clearly that the plan was for the Mandate to be succeeded by *Jewish statehood*, and if the Arabs ‘secured their *Big Arab State* outside Palestine, they would concede *little Palestine* to the Jews” (p. 32). And at Versailles, American, French and British leaders were sympathetic to the idea of a national home for the Jews in Palestine—though the precise geographical limits were always vague!

Winston Churchill particularly favored creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. “Churchill took office as a man of outspoken sympathy for Zionism. In February 1920, he sent chills down the spines of government Arabists [in London] by telling the *Sunday Herald* that he envisioned ‘a Jewish State by the banks of the Jordan... which might comprise three or four million Jews” (Netanyahu, p. 60).

In 1921 Winston Churchill eloquently reaffirmed his staunch belief in the concept of Jewish statehood in Palestine: “It is manifestly right that the *scattered Jews* should have a national centre and a *national home* to be reunited, and where else but *in Palestine*, with which for three thousand years they have been intimately and profoundly

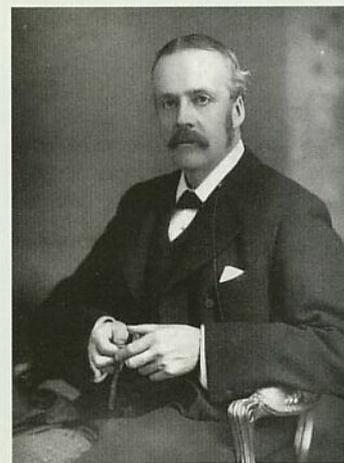
associated? We think it will be good for the world, good for the Jews, good for the British Empire, but also good for the *Arabs* who dwell in Palestine... [because] they shall share in the benefits and progress of Zionism” (p. 48).

However, Churchill’s memorandum of 1922 says that the creation of a “wholly Jewish Palestine” was never contemplated by Britain. In other words, British officialdom explained that the East Bank (Jordan) was never promised to the Jews!

And yet, according to Netanyahu and many other prominent political leaders, Transjordan was also original-

ly included in Britain’s promise of a Jewish state. The Jews know that both the East and West banks of Palestine were included in their ancient ancestral home—the *Promised Land!*

In May 1921 Anti-Zionist Arab riots resulted in 46 Jews being killed and 146 wounded. “Impressed by Arab opposition, the British government issued in a white paper in June 1922 an interpretation of its concept



British Foreign Secretary (and P.M., 1902-1905) Arthur James Balfour issued the “Balfour Declaration” on November 2, 1917, supporting the establishment in Palestine of a “national home” for the Jews—Reuters

of the Jewish national home. The intention was not that Palestine as a whole [including Transjordan] should be converted into a Jewish national home, but that such a home should be established in Palestine.... In September 1922 Trans-Jordan, although *included* in the British Mandate of Palestine, was *excluded* from the scope of the Balfour Declaration *under protest* from the Zionists, and on September 29, 1923, the Mandate came officially into force” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Palestine,” 1970).

And so we have seen that the ancient roots of conflict over control of Palestine—competing claims by different blood-related “families”—has a modern parallel. Britain, which administered this territory after WW I, made contradictory promises to both the Jews and Palestinian Arabs. These ill-advised promises rekindled nationalist rivalry in both these peoples, leading to much hatred and bloodshed!

The next installment in this series on the Middle East will examine how Britain broke these promises and the ensuing bitterness and turmoil that has led to the current Mideast minefield. **W**

# Seventy-Five Years of

by Raymond F. McNair

**P**alestine proved to be Imperial Britain's crown of thorns. After Turkey's defeat in World War I, some of her territories, including Palestine, were ceded to Britain under a League of Nations' mandate.

"Palestine involved Britain in a **tragic and intractable dilemma**. Here in a harsh land with a sparse but predominately Arabic population, Jews had already begun the attempt to reestablish the Jewish nation destroyed and scattered 20 centuries before. Paradoxically, Britain had assumed obligations to *both* communities—a recipe for disaster. An influx of Jewish immigrants, eager to see Jerusalem once again the capital of a Jewish nation, alienated the Arabs. British efforts to control the rush [of immigration] set Jew against Briton. After 30 years of mutual bitterness and violence, **Britain departed, leaving Israel to come to birth in a welter of blood**" (*The British Empire*, Time-Life Books, p. 2,241).

## Room for Both?

How small is the State of Israel compared to the large "Arab nation"—the combined Arab States? "The land mass of the Arab states today is 5,414,000 square miles, as compared with 8,290 for pre-1967 Israel, and 2,130 for Judea, Samaria, and Gaza (together 10,420 square miles). **This is a ratio of 540 to 1**" (Benjamin Netanyahu, *A Place Among the Nations*, p. 41). Can you now see why modern Israelis feel like little David before an Arabic Goliath?

Following WW I, many prominent world leaders welcomed the idea that the Jews be given a "national home" in Palestine. Even the Emir Faisal (the future King Faisal of Iraq) told American jurist, Felix Frankfurter, "We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look *with deepest sympathy* on the Zionist movement.... We will wish the Jews a hearty welcome home.... We are working together for a reformed and revised Near East, and our two movements [Pan-Arabism and Zionism] complement one another.... There is room in Syria [which then included Palestine] *for us both*. Indeed, I think that neither [Jew nor Arab] can be successful without the other"

(Martin Gilbert, *The Atlas of Jewish History*, p. 87).

However, Arab leaders subsequently began to have second thoughts, arguing that Britain's promises to them in 1915–1916 included *both* the West Bank region (of the Jordan River) as well as the East Bank lands. They began to resent the establishment by the West of a bridgehead in the very heart of the "big Arab state" that they claimed Britain promised to them.

## Why Did Britain Abandon the Jews?

In 1917, Britain's Balfour Declaration promised the Jews "a national home" in Palestine. Following WW I, the "Balfour Declaration was ratified by the Allied Powers. [and in 1922] the Balfour Declaration was embodied in a Mandate of the League of Nations entrusting Britain with the government of the country" (Netanyahu, p. 60).

Winston Churchill declared, "It is manifestly right that the scattered Jews should have... *a national home* to be re-united, and where else but in Palestine?" However, after the Arab riots of 1920–1921, many British politicians, including Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, began to *reinterpret* the Balfour promises.

In spite of the fact that Transjordan (or the East Bank—the western part of modern Jordan) had been *included* in the British promise to the Jews, Britain did not keep her promise. Rather, the British began seeking the favor of the Arabs. In the 1930s, discovery of vast Arab oil fields played a key role in convincing British officials to renege on their promise of a Jewish national homeland. Britain soon became deeply dependent upon Mideast oil—not having yet developed her own North Sea reserves. To the dismay of the Jews, Britain simply turned her back on the promise made to them, and openly courted the Arabs.

Even though the Jews had looked upon Britain as their friend at the time of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, they soon came to realize that a drastic change had occurred in the attitude of the British government toward them. Some British officials looked upon strident Jewish objections to Britain's repudiation of the Balfour promis-

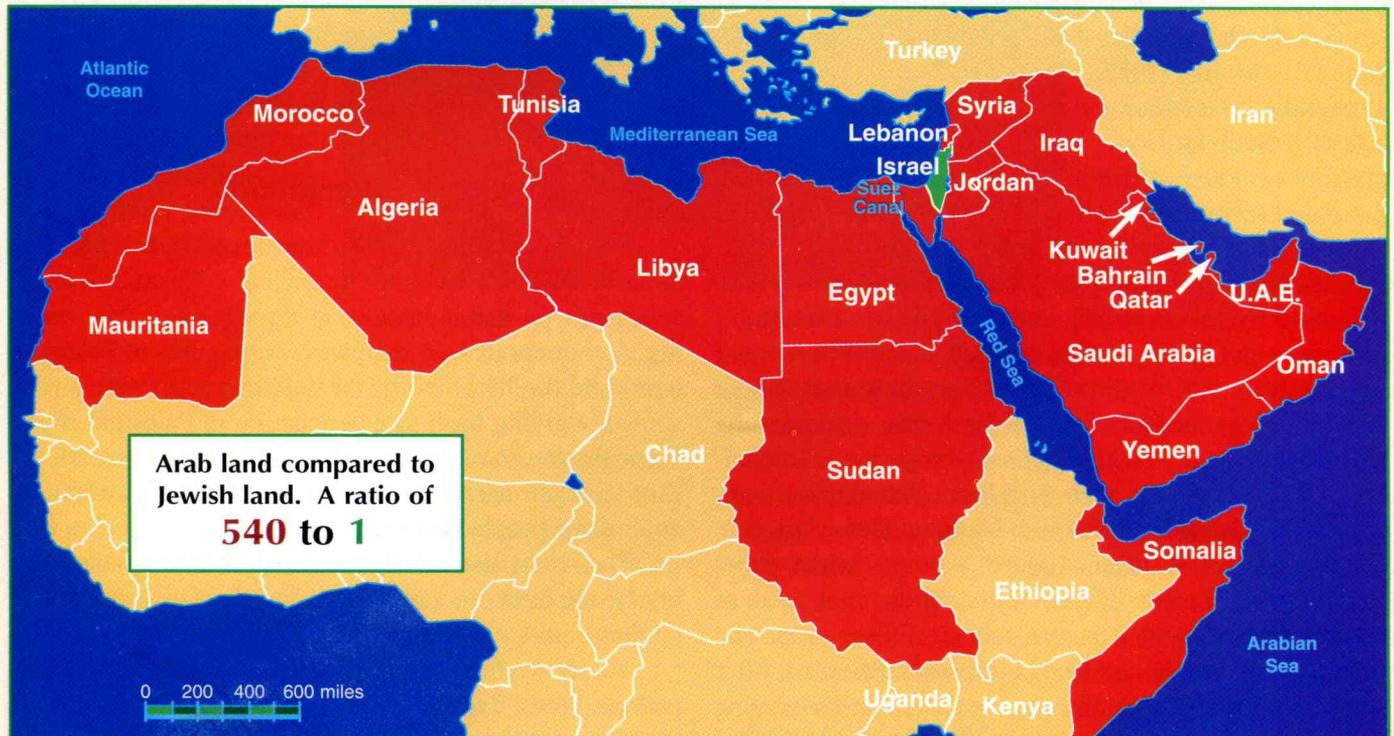
es as “unscrupulous Zionist sob-stuff!” Britain’s Lord Curzon revealed that attitude when he said that Britain’s “Mandate... reeks of Judaism in every paragraph” and was therefore *unfair* to the Arabs.

Mediterranean, Iraq and everything which counts in the Middle East” (Harris Schoenberg, *Mandate for Terror: The U.N. and the PLO*, pp. 413-414).

Meinertzhagen said, “The Nazis mean to eradicate

# Mideast Bloodshed!

Why did both Jews and Arabs come to resent Great Britain?



“Under its changed policy, **Britain turned its back on promises it had undertaken in the Balfour Declaration....** Britain tore off Transjordan from the Jewish National Home in 1922. With one stroke of the pen, it lopped off nearly 80 percent of the land promised the Jewish people, closing this area to the Jews to this day” (Netanyahu, p. 50). Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain led the British Government to abrogate the Balfour Declaration only six months after his shameful betrayal of the Czechs at Munich in September 1938.

When President Franklin Roosevelt heard what Britain had done, he said, “I was at Versailles, and I know that the British made no secret of the fact that they promised Palestine to the Jews. Why are they now *reneging* on their promise?”

Col. Richard Meinertzhagen, a British official charged with helping carry out Britain’s policy under the mandate, commented, “**How we have let the Jews down.** And if we are not careful we shall lose the Eastern

Judaism from Germany and they will succeed. Nobody loves the Jews, nobody wants them and yet we are pledged to give them a home in Palestine. **Instead we slam the door in their faces just at the moment when it should be wide open.** We even whittle down their home at a moment when we should enlarge it. The action of His Majesty’s Government in Palestine is very near to that of Hitler in Germany. They [the British] may be more subtle, they are certainly more *hypocritical*, but the result is similar—insecurity, misery, exasperation and murder” (*The Wall Street Journal*, July 26, 1979).

British rule over Palestine (1917–1948) was dogged with nothing but headaches and vexing obstacles from the beginning. God’s Word had prophesied that the Jewish question would “harass” or “vex” Ephraim—modern Britain (Is. 11:13 KJV; see our free brochure *America and Britain in Prophecy*)! Following is only a partial list of the many troubles that vexed Britain during the 30 years she ruled over Palestine: in May 1921

anti-Zionist Arab rioting broke out—killing 46 Jews and injuring 146; in 1929 Arabs butchered 60 Jewish civilians in Hebron, the burial city of Abraham, and killed 133 Jews in the northern Palestinian city of Safad.

After the Arab riots, the British, fearful of more violent Arab-Jewish clashes, issued a “white paper” in June 1922 in which they said that Britain had *not* promised the Jews “Palestine as a whole... [as] a Jewish national home.... In September 1922 Transjordan [modern Jordan], although included in the British Mandate of Palestine, was excluded from the scope of the Balfour Declaration under protest from the Zionists” who felt they had been *betrayed* by Britain (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Palestine,” 1970).

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu explains this betrayal. “In July 1937, the Royal (Peel) Commission gave explicit sanctions to Arabist policy. The Mandate for a Jewish National Home in Palestine, it concluded, simply could *not* be fulfilled in the face of Arab sensibilities. Instead, it recommended that Palestine be partitioned: [1] the Jews would receive their ‘state,’ (roughly *five percent* of the original homeland granted the Jews by the Palestine Mandate); [2] the British would retain Jerusalem and Haifa; and [3] an Arab state (to be merged with Transjordan) would receive everything else—more than *90 percent* of Palestine. Yet the Arabs... rejected the plan unequivocally and demanded everything... [including] a *complete end* to all Jewish immigration and a *complete renunciation* of the Jewish National Home” (p. 68).

In May 1939, Britain issued another “white paper [that] limited further Jewish immigration to a total of 75,000, to be admitted in the course of five years, and severely restricted Jewish land purchases in Palestine. After some hesitations, the Arabs accepted the plan as meeting their demands. The Zionists rejected it as meaning the end of the policy of the *Jewish national home* (a view which was supported by the League of Nations) and the Jews replaced the Arabs as the party in opposition to the government” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Palestine,” 1970)!

## Israel, an Illegitimate Child?

What was the Arab reaction when the League of Nations included the Balfour Declaration promises in Britain’s mandate to rule Palestine? “The Arabs now assert that at the time of Versailles, the Jews had no political rights over the land, that these devolved upon the Arabs then inhabiting it—and that therefore the *original sin* in favor of Zionism was committed by the international community not in 1948 (the year of Israel’s founding) or in 1967 (the year Israel gained control over Judea, Samaria and Gaza) but in 1917, when the British government endorsed the Balfour Declaration promising the Jews a national home in Palestine” (Netanyahu, p. 22).

The prime minister of Israel also says, “Half a century after the Jewish state was created, the notion still endures among Arabists that somehow Israel was conceived in *geopolitical sin*—that sin being, in Arabist eyes, that its very existence deprived the West of cherished Arab support” (p. 75).

After Israel’s lightning victory in the Six Day War in 1967, Pakistan accused Israel of “naked aggression” and also said, “Israel is an *illegitimate child* born of fraud and force” (Katz, *Battleground*, p. 61).

Speaking in Geneva on December 13, 1988, Yasser Arafat said, “More than 40 years ago, the U.N., in its Resolution 181 [1947 partition of Palestine], decided on the establishment of *two states* in Palestine, one Palestinian Arab and the other Jewish... [which resolution Arafat called a] *historic wrong* that was done to our people.”

## Israel’s Lifeblood—Immigration

For nearly 2,000 years the Jews had longed to reclaim their ancestral homeland. “Next year in Jerusalem!”—had long been an expression of this yearning. A continuous flow of Jewish immigrants to Palestine would be the lifeblood of the Jewish people’s dream of someday giving birth to a new nation in Palestine. They knew the return of Jewish exiles to Palestine was necessary to reach a critical mass that would allow them to attain their prophesied sovereign status.

The Arabs also realized that Jewish immigration was vital to the birth of a Jewish state in Palestine—so they did all they could to choke off the flow of Jewish immigrants.

Yasser Arafat even urged the Arabs to use murder to prevent Jews from immigrating to the West Bank. “I want to say clearly: **Open fire on the new Jewish immigrants....** It would be disgraceful of us were we to see herds of immigrants conquering *our land* and settling *our territory* and not raise a finger. I want you to shoot on the ground or in the air, at every immigrant who thinks our land is a playground and immigration to it is a picnic.... It makes no difference if they live in Jaffa or Jericho. I give you explicit instructions to *open fire. Do everything to stop the flow of immigration*” (quoted by Hans Josef Horchem, *Conflict Studien*, “Terror in West Germany,” 1985).

We are informed that “between 1880 and 1914 over 60,000 Jews entered Palestine, mostly from Russia, Galicia, Rumania and Poland. The victims of persecution and discrimination, they sought a new homeland and a new security under Turkish rule. Many settled on wasteland, sand-dunes and malarial marsh, which they then drained, irrigated and farmed. In 1909 a group of Jews founded the first entirely Jewish town, Tel Aviv, on the sandhills north of Jaffa. The Jews purchased their land

piecemeal, from European, Turkish and (principally) Arab landlords, mostly at extremely high prices” (Gilbert, p. 85). Many of those immigrants either worked as hired laborers in the towns, or on the land. By the time of the First World War, 100,000 Jews lived in Palestine.

What were the terrible *consequences* of Britain’s vague promises to the Jews and Arabs? And more importantly, what were the *tragic results* of Britain deliberately *breaking* her promise of a Jewish national homeland? And after promising that the British would “use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object”—why did they do the exact opposite?

Shortly after the Balfour Declaration was issued, many Arabs (even those like Faisal who had previously favored such a national home for the Jews) began to bitterly oppose giving the Jews political control over Palestine—regardless of how small their homeland might be!

Much of the 20th century turmoil and bloodshed in the Middle East can be traced to: 1) the vagueness of Britain’s *conflicting promises* to the Jews and Arabs; and 2) the broken British promises to the Jews, thereby sacrificing Jewish interests in order to court Arab favor! *Oil diplomacy* figured prominently in Britain’s renegeing on her promise to the Jews.

There is a tragic footnote to Britain’s foreign policy regarding the Jews. While Hitler implemented his “final solution” to secretly eliminate six million Jews in Europe, Britain tried to prevent desperate Jewish refugees from reaching the safe haven of their ancestors’ homeland in Palestine. In the novel *Exodus*, Leon Uris dramatically portrayed this sad chapter in Anglo-Jewish relations during the closing years of British rule over Palestine.

## Born in a “Welter of Blood”

In 1946, Jewish frustrations toward Britain began to surface. “Two terrorist groups, the *Irgun* and the *Stern Gang*, took it upon themselves to attack and murder British officials. At first, *Haganah*, the defense force created in the 1920s to stave off Arab attacks, believed that terrorism could only harm the Zionist cause, and helped the British try to crush the extremists. But when at the war’s end Britain still made no move to fulfill Zionist dreams, *Haganah*, too, defied her with violence.... On July 22, 1946, *Irgun*—with *Haganah* complicity—blew

up the British Military H.Q., a wing of the King David Hotel. Ninety-one Jews, Arabs and Britons were killed” (*The British Empire*, Time-Life Books, p. 2,258).

It soon became clear to both Jews and Arabs that matters had gotten out of hand. Atrocities were being committed by both Arab and Jewish “freedom fighters.” Each side felt totally justified in its cause, and each was fully determined to fight to obtain its objectives.

By 1947, Britain realized she could no longer handle the Palestinian problem so she dumped this political hot potato squarely in the lap of the United Nations! Therefore, on November 30, 1947, the U.N. approved a plan to *partition* Palestine between Jews and Arabs. The U.N. partition plan was supported by 33 nations—including both the United States and the Soviet Union. Thirteen nations (mostly from the Arab League) bitterly opposed the U.N. plan, while Britain, along with ten other nations, abstained from voting.

The Jews immediately accepted the U.N. partition plan, but the Arabs flatly rejected it—vowing to fight, if necessary, to prevent its implementation. Soon violence erupted between the Jews and Arabs. On February 23, 55 Jews were killed by an Arab terrorist’s bomb in Jerusalem; on March 4, Arabs ambushed and killed 16 more Jews.

On April 9, in retaliation for Arab atrocities, Jewish terrorists (*Irgunists*) massacred “250 civilian inhabitants of the village of Deir Yasin”—including men, women and children (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Palestine,” 1970). The Jewish Agency and the *Haganah*—Britain considered the latter to also be a terrorist organization—condemned the killings as “utterly repugnant.”

More violence occurred on April 13, as Arab terrorists killed 40 Jewish doctors and nurses en route to the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. Then, on May 12, just two days before Israel would declare independence, Arabs killed 100 Jews—15 of whom were machine-gunned to death *after* they had surrendered! As the British prepared to leave Palestine, both Jews and Arabs braced themselves for the struggle they knew lay just ahead!

In May 1948, the Jews numbered about 650,000, the Palestinian Arabs about 980,000. Tiny Israel knew that the armies of the Arab nations—whose peoples then numbered about 50 million!—were poised to crush the infant Jewish state. The Arabs were also much better armed.

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## MIDEAST BLOODSHED

(continued from page 23)

The Jews, however, had a burning desire to build for themselves a new nation in their ancient homeland. They were willing to fight and, if necessary, to die in order to realize their dream of a Jewish state. As the fateful day—May 14, 1948—approached, everyone watched and waited! The Arabs and much of the rest of the world expected tiny Israel to be strangled before it could draw its first breath of freedom.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that on May 14 “the last British High Commissioner, General Sir Alan Cunningham, left Palestine. On the same day the State of Israel was proclaimed and within a few hours won *de facto* recognition from President Truman” (“Palestine,” 1970). The Russians quickly followed suit and before long most of the other nations recognized Israel.

The next day, May 15, the armed forces of five Arab nations (Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Iraq and Lebanon) savagely attacked Israel—ensuring that her birth would be “in a welter of blood”! But Israel’s armed forces prevailed. Many believe the Great God had decreed that the new nation of Israel would survive and *thrive* during the coming traumatic decades.

The Israelis viewed their struggle with the Arabs as a replay of the ancient life-and-death struggle between the youthful David and the giant Goliath (1 Sam. 17). Most Israelis firmly believed Almighty God would grant them victory over their foes and crown their infant nation with success. They believed the God of their fathers had so prophesied in their ancient Scriptures, the Hebrew Bible!

In a future article in *The World Ahead*, we will examine the tumultuous decades following the birth of Israel in May 1948, as we note the hand of God delivering the Israelis from their hostile neighbors time and again. ■

Like David fighting Goliath—

# Israel Is Plunged In

Since Israel's independence in 1948, Arabs and Israelis have been the cause of major wars. What were the *causes* and *sad consequences* of these wars? Can a peace formula be found to end this bitter struggle?

by Raymond F. McNair

President Bill Clinton tried to broker a real peace between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and his Arab neighbors, Yasser Arafat and King Hussein of Jordan, at the Mideast summit meeting last year in Washington. But his efforts were to no avail.

Why are Netanyahu and his people so reluctant to allow a Palestinian State to be established on Israel's West Bank? To understand their fears, we must examine the historic record of traumatic Arab-Israeli wars during the past 50 years.

## Israel's War of Independence

In the early months of 1948, Arab leaders—shocked and angered by the United Nations' resolution to partition Palestine—sent *volunteer* soldiers to forestall its implementation. But Arab troops were soon overwhelmed by the Israelis. By May 13, Israeli forces had gained full control of their U.N.-allotted share of Palestine, as well as important Arab areas they had captured.

In April 1948—after years of *massacres* of hundreds of Jewish civilians—members of a Jewish national military organization known as *Irgun* retaliated by storming the Arab village of Deir Yasin near Jerusalem. They killed 250 people, and the Arabs promptly began publicizing the atrocity—causing a mass exodus of Palestinians from the West Bank. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs fled due to the wildly exaggerated Arab propaganda that all Palestinians were about to be slaughtered by the Jews!

The Islamic Grand Mufti of Jerusalem whipped up hysteria by proclaiming, **“I declare a holy war. Murder the Jews. Murder them all.”** Chaos then prevailed.

Full-scale war began on May 15, when five Arab nations (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq), joined by special forces from Saudi Arabia and Yemen, attacked the Israelis. The Jews in Palestine then numbered only about 650,000, compared to a Palestinian Arab population of approximately 980,000. The Palestinian Arabs also had the support of *50 million Arab friends!*

By the time the dust of Israel's War of Independence had settled, the Jews had conquered even more strategic land that had been allotted to the Arabs in the U.N. partition plan of 1947. Israel signed separate armistice agreements with Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan in 1949. But of these nations, *only Egypt* would later sign an actual peace treaty with Israel.

What did these various armistice agreements include? **They “left Israel in possession of all the areas it had won by conquest:** [1] the whole of Galilee; [2] the whole of the Palestinian coast minus a reduced Gaza Strip (occupied by Egypt); [3] all of the Negev; and [4] a strip of territory connecting the coastal region to the western section of Jerusalem. The remaining parts of Jerusalem (including the Old City), along with what remained of the Arab share of Palestine, were taken over by Transjordan, which then became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. **No entity remained that was officially called Palestine.** The departure of



On May 14, 1948, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion reads a proclamation declaring the existence of the State of Israel—*Bettmann*.

# to War

een locked in a series  
these armed conflicts?  
struggle?

hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs had meanwhile left Israel with a substantial Jewish majority” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Israel,” vol. 22, 1991).

It would not be long, however, before the Arabs wanted more. They soon demanded that, at the very least, the Israelis return to the frontiers fixed by the U.N. partition plan of 1947—a plan the Arabs had previously *rejected*. They also demanded that the Israelis repatriate some 700,000 Palestinian refugees who—due mainly to exaggerated Arab propaganda—had fled Palestine in 1948.

Even after the armistice agreements, Arab bitterness toward Israel continued with incessant guerrilla raids mounted from neighboring Arab countries.

## The 1956 Suez War

In 1956, the Israelis found themselves in another conflict with Egypt. What was the catalyst for these renewed hostilities?

In July 1952, Gamal Abdel Nasser and some 80 fellow officers staged a bloodless *coup*, ousting Egypt’s King Farouk. Two years later, Nasser wrote *Philosophy of the Revolution*, in which he outlined “his aspiration to be the leader of the 55,000,000 Arabs... 224,000,000 Africans... [and] 420,000,000 followers of Islam” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Nasser,” vol. 8, 15th ed.).

In the summer of 1956, Nasser became president of Egypt, and immediately led that nation on a collision course with both Israel and the West. On July 20, America and Britain canceled their offer to build Egypt’s Aswan High Dam. Five days later, President Nasser announced the *nationalization* of the European-owned Suez Canal and sent the British and French packing.

Nasser also began prohibiting Israeli shipping through



the Suez Canal. The Israelis took that to be a declaration of war, and invaded the Sinai Peninsula on October 29—quickly capturing Gaza, Rafah and Al 'Arish. Two days later, British and French planes attacked Egyptian airfields. The Israelis swiftly occupied most of the Sinai Peninsula east of the Suez Canal. During the brief Suez War, the Egyptian air force was almost totally destroyed.

But Nasser’s foes overlooked one important factor. America’s President Dwight Eisenhower had not been consulted regarding the joint Anglo-French-Israeli venture. He brought American pressure to bear on the “aggressors,” while the Soviets threatened Israel. In the end, Britain, France and Israel yielded to American, Soviet and U.N. pressure. Egypt’s Nasser emerged from the Suez War having gained unprecedented prestige among the Arabs. From then on, the Arab world looked upon this charismatic Egyptian leader as their *savior*.

Notwithstanding this turn of events, there *were* some positive outcomes of the Suez War for Israel. Even though Israel, Britain and France were forced to relinquish their conquests, the Israelis accomplished a number of important goals: 1) the Suez Canal would remain open to international shipping—including *Israel’s* ships; 2) the Gulf of Aqaba would also remain open to allow Israeli ships free access to the Indian Ocean via

Israel's port of Elat; and 3) U.N. troops were to be stationed in a demilitarized zone in the Sinai.

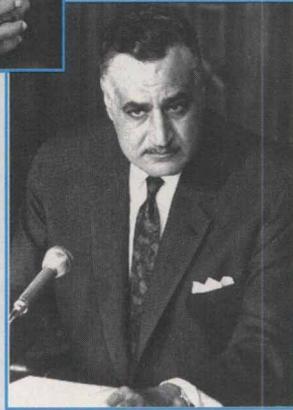
Although an armistice was signed between Israel and Egypt, a very *uneasy truce* continued! During the following bloodstained years, various Arab factions persisted in harassing Israel by incessant terrorist raids across her borders. A third Israeli-Arab war loomed on the horizon.

## Victory in the Six-Day War

Arabs continued to smart under the humiliation of their defeat at the hands of Israel in 1948 and 1956. They longed for a strong Arab leader to restore their honor and territory. Nasser had long aspired to become the greatest Arab hero since Saladin had delivered Jerusalem and most of Palestine from the "infidel" Christians in the 12th century. His hysterical propaganda echoed throughout the Middle East, as Arab leaders vowed to exterminate Israel.

In one of Nasser's many daily radio addresses, he told Cairo's screaming crowds that if war broke out, "**our main objective will be the destruction of Israel.**" On May 25, 1967, he declared, "The problem before the Arab countries... [is] how totally to *exterminate* the State of Israel for all time."

On May 31, just four days before the Six-Day War erupted, President Aref of Iraq said, "There is resolve, determination and unity to achieve our aim: **to remove Israel from the map....** It is the day to wash away the stain." Only one day before the war began, Algerian President Boumedienne said, "The Arab struggle must



lead to the liquidation of Israel." Then, on the very day the war started, Radio Damascus exhorted Arabs to "throw [the Jews] into the sea!" Clearly, calls came from all Arab quarters for the extermination of Israel.

The Six-Day War in June 1967 resulted mainly from continued Egyptian and Syrian provocation against Israel. Most provocative of all was Nasser's reckless decision to close the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping, thereby blocking Israel's port of Elat. Further, on May 30, Jordan's King Hussein signed a mutual defense pact with President Nasser. The Israelis interpreted this to mean that a concerted attack by the Arabs was imminent! When Nasser ordered the U.N. Emergency Force out of Egyptian territory, it meekly complied, prompting Israel's Foreign Secretary Abba Eban to call the United Nations a "broken reed."

These threatening events in May alarmed the Israelis, prompting them to make important cabinet changes. As ominous war clouds darkened the Middle East, the Israelis appointed Moshe Dayan as minister of defense and girded themselves for a life-and-death struggle.

Israeli leaders decided to take the initiative by striking first. On Monday, June 5, Israeli planes roared westward over the Mediterranean Sea, then turned south before swooping down undetected upon the Egyptian air force, whose grounded planes were easy targets for Israeli fighter jets! In the first few hours of the battle the Israelis destroyed the Egyptian air force, then later proceeded to deal similar blows to the Jordanian and Syrian air forces.

Why were Egyptian pilots caught napping? According to Anwar Sadat, who later became Egypt's president, "on Monday June 5 [Field Marshal Abdel Hakim] Amer, accompanied by all commanders... flew off on a 'tour of

## Birth Pangs of a Modern Nation

In 1917, Britain's Balfour Declaration promised a "national home" for the Jewish people in Palestine. However, British leaders did not follow through, prompting U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt to ask why the British were "*reneging* on their promise."

Britain finally dumped this vexing problem in the lap of the United Nations in 1947. That same year, the U.N. passed a resolution to *partition* Palestine into two states—one Jewish, one Arab. The Jews accepted the U.N. partition plan, but the Arabs rejected it—vowing to take up arms to prevent the State of Israel from being established.

In spite of strong objections and dire Arab threats, the Jews went ahead with their Declaration of Independence: "We... representing the Jewish people in Palestine... hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine—to be called Israel... *with trust in Almighty God*, we set our hands to this Declaration... the 14th Day of May, 1948." The United States immediately recognized Israel, and most other nations quickly followed.

Since then, the U.S. has consistently tried to prevent Israel's destruction. Many Arabs have never forgiven the United States for its vital role as a staunch ally of Israel—even calling America the "Great Satan."

inspection' to Sinai. It was only natural that when the commander-in-chief was in the air, orders should be issued to all SAM [surface-to-air missile] and anti-aircraft batteries to *hold their fire*. And it was during that tour that Israel attacked all our airfields and hit our aircraft on the ground. **We can thus say that the war began and ended while Amer was in the air"** (*In Search of Identity*, p. 174).

With the annihilation of the Egyptian air force, an easy Israeli victory was assured. Moshe Dayan then used Israel's air power to attack enemy columns and objectives that, without air cover, were practically defenseless. Israeli forces quickly decimated Egyptian tank columns in the Sinai, and soon gained mastery of the entire peninsula. Their paratroopers and naval units stormed Sharm el Sheikh, thereby securing the southern entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba. Israeli forces then leapfrogged across the Suez Canal, poisoning themselves with easy striking distance of Cairo.

Prior to the Six-Day War, the Israelis had sent a message to Jordan's King Hussein urging him not to enter the conflict. Israel's Prime Minister Levy Eshkol told Hussein, "Our fight is not with you!" On June 7, King Hussein gave the

Israelis his reply in a broadcast to his armed forces: **"Kill the Jews wherever you find them. Kill them with your arms, with your hands, with your nails and teeth."** Hussein's troops then began shelling the entire Israeli frontier—Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the international airport at Lod.

But Hussein and his forces suffered the frightful consequences of his unwise decision. With complete air superiority, the Israelis quickly took the offensive, and soon drove Jordanian forces eastward across the Jordan River. Jerusalem was the toughest target of all. In order to take the Old City of Jerusalem, the Israelis had to engage the Jordanians in house-to-house combat so as not to destroy the holy places of the Arabs, Jews and Christians.

The most emotionally charged moment of the entire six-day battle occurred when Israeli soldiers seized control of Jerusalem's Temple Mount, on which stood the

Dome of the Rock, the al-Aqsa Mosque and, in ancient times, the Jewish temple. Jewish soldiers, armed with machine guns and grenades, rushed to pray at the temple's remaining Western Wall—the most sacred spot on earth for Jews. Moshe Dayan exclaimed, "We have returned to the holiest of our holy places, never to depart from it again!" Hundreds of Israelis streamed to their "Wailing Wall," where many of them wept—the first time Jews had been permitted near that wall for nearly 2,000 years! The Old Testament prophets foresaw that Jews would be in control of Jerusalem just before the Messiah, the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6), establishes His Kingdom to rule all nations (Zech. 12, 14)!

Once Egyptian forces in the Sinai were crushed and King Hussein's army had been chased back into Jordan, the Israelis turned their fearsome military might against the Syrians to the north. Prior to the Six-Day War, Syrian gunners had used their commanding position on the Golan Heights to fire upon defenseless Israelis as they

went about their work in the valley below. Even with air superiority, taking the Golan Heights proved to be a very difficult task. The Israelis had an uphill battle as they slowly fought their way through the hilly terrain. After capturing the Golan Heights, one Israeli said, "We will never give back this ridge!" Current Prime Minister

Netanyahu has repeatedly expressed that same sentiment.

After scaling the Heights, Israeli forces then raced, almost unopposed, to the Syrian city of El Kuneitra (just 40 miles from Damascus) before halting their lightning-swift advance.

This short, but decisive, war had begun when Israeli fighters destroyed the entire Egyptian air force, which was grounded during a tour of inspection. Was this some brilliantly executed stratagem conceived by superior Israeli military intelligence? Or was it God Almighty who delivered the Israelis from annihilation at the hands of the Arabs by causing Amer to plan his inspection at a critical moment favorable to an Israeli victory? The Psalms say that "no king is saved by the multitude of an army" (33:16), but that



**Left top: Statesman Moshe Dayan, the commander who led Israeli forces to decisive victory in both the Suez and Six-Day Wars. Left center: Egyptian President Gamel Abdel Nasser. His leadership role abruptly ended after a humiliating and decisive loss to Israel in 1967. Top: Israelis worshipping at the Wailing Wall immediately after winning the Six-Day War. Right: The victorious soldiers returning from the battlefield at the end of the Six-Day War on June 11, 1967—Archive Photos.**



*(continued on page 29)*

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## ISRAEL INTO WAR

(continued from page 25)

real victory is from the Almighty (vv. 18-19). Many Israelis believe that God has guided them to victory in their struggle to survive as a nation.

### Consequences of the Six-Day War

The Six-Day War brought important changes to the entire Middle East: 1) Israel immediately annexed the Old City of Jerusalem; 2) Israeli troops, sitting atop the Golan Heights, were now in a commanding position to defend themselves against future Syrian attacks; 3) the Israelis now controlled *all* the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the entire Sinai Peninsula; and 4) the whole world had gained a new respect for what tiny Israel had accomplished—in just six days! Even Israel's enemies begrudgingly accorded them a new respect—or at least *fear!*

Zechariah 12 prophesied that the Jews' modern leaders would be victorious in their wars against Arab neighbors (vv. 6-8). The time setting for Zechariah's prophecy is definitely *before* Christ's 1,000-year peaceful rule over the entire earth (Rev. 20:4-5; Zech. 14:9, 12-19).

How did the Arabs look upon their defeat in 1967? The depth of the humiliation and despair that they experienced in the wake of their defeat is clearly explained in the words of Nasser's successor, President Anwar Sadat.

His book, *In Search of Identity*, says Nasser was *shattered* by the Arabs' defeat in the '67 war: "I rang up Nasser several times. Every time I felt he was worse; his voice was that of a man who belonged in the past—a dark, hollow distant past.... He must be suffering much. **His pride, his most treasured asset, had been hurt as never before**" (pp. 179-180). Sadat himself admitted, "I myself was completely overwhelmed by our defeat!"

Who can deny that Nasser brought a *curse*, that is, death and destruction, upon the Arab world by attacking God's people, Israel? God said to Israel, "Cursed be everyone who curses you" (Gen. 27:29).

Their stunning victory gave the Israelis a new *self-respect*. During the war, Israel had "destroyed or captured 430 combat aircraft and 800 tanks. It had inflicted 15,000 fatal casualties on Arab troops. It had taken 5,500 officers and non-commissioned officers as prisoners. Its own losses were 40 aircraft and 676 dead" (Abba Eban, *My Country*, p. 227). Understandably, the victors were bursting with nationalistic pride in their ability to defend themselves against their foes, who at the time outnumbered the Israelis 50 to 1!

Unfortunately, as a result of the Israelis' spectacular victory in that war, some became overconfident. Instead of giving *God* the credit for their stunning success (Ps. 33:16-20), some Israelis began to take the credit themselves. But such overconfidence—even arrogance—resulted in a *lack of vigilance*. This helped set the stage for the next tragic Arab-Israeli conflict. The *humiliating* Yom Kippur War was soon to erupt with traumatic consequences for the Israelis!

The next article in this series will examine the fruits of Israel's near defeat in the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and will consider the results of Israel's tragic war in Lebanon in 1982. We will also look at the continuing terrorist bloodletting, especially since the spontaneous uprising of the Palestinian *Intifada*, which Israeli leaders are still struggling to cope with! Bible prophecy reveals that Israel's goal of "peace with security" is not *yet* just around the corner! 



# Israel Victory

After its founding, Israel  
But how long could the Is

by Raymond F. McNair

This year promises to be one of increased tensions in the Middle East as Israelis and Palestinians seek to coexist peacefully in the Holy Land. Emotions ran high in January as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat, leader of the PLO, hammered out an agreement for the Israelis to withdraw their forces—turning over most of the city of Hebron to the Palestinians. But thorny problems yet remain: How much control over *other* areas of the West Bank (ancient Judea and Samaria) will the Israelis be willing to give up?

As Israelis and Palestinians continue their peace process, nervous Arab neighbors keep a watchful eye on what Israeli leaders are doing. Repeated threats of a new Arab-Israeli conflict loom on the horizon. Many believe it's just a matter of time until another bloody Mideast war erupts. Bible prophecy reveals that the bloodiest of *all* battles—Armageddon—is not far off.

It is impossible to understand today's Arab-Israeli problems without first examining the historic roots behind their bitter 50-year struggle. During that momentous period, Arabs and Israelis have fought *five major wars!*

In the previous article in this series, we examined the bitter fruits of the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1956 and 1967—wars which, militarily speaking, went very well for the Israelis. This article, however, shows that all did *not* go so well during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 or the Lebanon War of 1982.

In fact, Israel narrowly averted being annihilated in the October or Yom Kippur War. And her "surgical operation" in Lebanon (to remove the PLO "cancer") was widely condemned.

## Arab-Israeli Stereotypes

Before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the typical Jew was often stereotyped as being

without roots and being unwilling to fight for his rights. Benjamin Netanyahu explains this stereotype: "Slowly and surely, through the centuries of the exile [after the destruction of the Jewish nation in A.D. 70], the *image* and *character* of the Jew began to change. For non-Jews, the glorious Jewish past faded into dim memory and irrelevance. **The word Jew became an object of contempt, derision, at best pity. It became synonymous with the word coward in a hundred different tongues.** The adjective *wandering* was affixed to it, signifying the rootlessness and precariousness of Jewish existence.... And many Jews came to view themselves as others had come to view them" (*A Place Among the Nations*, p. 363).

But after Israel's military successes, the image of the Jews was suddenly transformed from supposed inferiority to superiority—from *underdog* to *king of the hill*—especially after Israel's stunning victory in the Six-Day War of 1967.

But in the wake of that conflict, many Israelis became *overconfident*. In the euphoria of victory, some began to think of *themselves* as superior. And in Arab eyes, the Israelis became arrogant—holding Arab soldiers in contempt. United States President Jimmy Carter described this trend: "Opposing forces tend to become further radicalized by the *arrogance of victory* or the *hopelessness of defeat*. In any confrontation, the most abusive statements of a few are always remembered and nurtured by those who already despise each other. Insecurity breeds paranoia, and this... among the Israelis and Palestinians... prevents any move toward mutual recognition or alleviation of hatred" (*The Blood of Abraham*, p. 180).

Netanyahu says, "For if the rendering of the Jews from a militant to a docile people had taken place over *many centuries*, here in the space of only a *few years* a reborn Jewish sovereignty rediscovered the art of soldiering.... Much to the amazement of the world, the

# ious Again—But Barely!

enjoyed stunning and decisive military victories. Israelis continue to dominate their Arab neighbors?

Jewish state was soon producing fighters second to none and an army that proved itself capable of routing far larger and better-equipped fighting machines again and again. Furthermore, in the war against *terrorism* Israel's soldiers showed a demoralized and paralyzed world that civilized societies could fight this scourge: In countless raids and special operations culminating in the *rescue mission at Entebbe*, Israel proved that terrorism could be fought and beaten.

"All this not only changed the condition of the Jews of Israel, enabling the Jewish people to successfully resist assaults aimed at its annihilation for the first time in centuries. **It also changed the image of the Jew in the eyes of non-Jews.** [But] the respect for Israel's military prowess against overwhelming odds did not necessarily mean that the *anti-Semitic stereotypes* of the Jews were replaced everywhere and in every way" (p. 366).

Unfortunately, through the centuries many Westerners also belittled the *Arabs*—disparaging their character and abilities. The words of a British colonial

much for the Arabs, they do not know the meaning of gratitude; moreover they would be a liability; the Jew would be an asset.... The Jews have moreover proved their fighting qualities since the Roman occupation of Jerusalem. **The Arab is a poor fighter, though adept at looting, sabotage and murder**" (pp. 55-56).

It was the previous Israeli military successes that had convinced them the Arabs were no match on the battlefield. But the Yom Kippur War was about to prove a rude awakening for the Israelis, forever changing their view of Arab military might.

## Prelude to Humiliation

Just as the Israelis had launched a preemptive strike at Arab targets in June 1967—so, six years later, the Arabs retaliated by attacking the Jews in total surprise.

Egypt's President Nasser died in 1970—just three years after the Arabs' humiliating defeat in the Six-Day War. Anwar Sadat succeeded him in office. Still mind-

ful of the humiliating defeat during the watch of his predecessor, Sadat began plotting revenge. His plan called for a surprise attack on the Israelis on the holiest day of the year for Jews: "An attack could coincide with Yom Kippur—Day of Atonement—on October 6 [1973] when all public services in Israel would be suspended" (Sadat, *In Search of Identity*, p. 141).

To mislead the Israelis, Sadat leaked "secret" *misinformation*, indicating he would be in New York "at the U. N. headquarters in [early] October 1973" (p. 244). This "strategic deception" was part of a larger military stratagem. When Israeli Gen. Moshe Dayan was asked why he hadn't mobilized in October, he said that Sadat "made me do it *twice* at a cost of ten million dollars each time. So, when



Egyptian President Anwar Sadat (2nd from left) at the Armed Forces General Command, follows progress of fighting on the Suez Canal front during the Yom Kippur War with Israel—Bettmann.

official, Col. Richard Meinertzhagen, illustrates this bias: "We cannot befriend both Arab and Jew. My proposal is based on befriending the people who are more likely to be loyal friends—the *Jews*.... Though we have done

it was the third round I thought he wasn't serious, but he tricked me" (p. 242).

President Sadat's rationale for the October War was that an Arab victory would erase the shame of past Arab defeats. **"First to go would be the humiliation we had endured since the 1967 defeat;** for, to cross into Sinai and hold on to any territory recaptured would restore our self-confidence" (p. 244). And victory would be all the more satisfying in light of Israeli *boasting* about the Six-Day War (p. 251).

President Carter noted this same attitude just before the Yom Kippur War: "Our final military visit was with Major General Eliahu Zeira, the chief of Military Intelligence.... He and other military commanders had an air of *absolute confidence*. Again and again they referred to the 1967 war, and they left no doubt that they were thoroughly prepared for any eventuality.... I recorded [a private comment indicating] the attitudes prevailing in the springtime of 1973.... **'No one should fear the Arabs. They have been badly beaten and will have to sue for peace'**" (pp. 26-27).

But was this Israeli overconfidence *justified*? The book of Proverbs warns us that "pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (16:18). Israel was about to learn the meaning of that proverb.

## Surprise Attack

According to Sadat, "on Saturday October 6, 1973... at 2:00 p.m. sharp... 222 supersonic jets took part in this first wave and accomplished their mission in twenty minutes. We lost only five aircraft.... The air strike... was a complete and stunning success. It *surprised* us... by achieving 90 percent of its targets; and it was equally surprising to Israel, and the world—both East and West" (pp. 246, 248-249).

The Egyptian president assessed his soldiers' performance: "The October 6 epic had begun, marked by the superb performance of Egyptian and Arab soldiers.... The moment the 222 aircraft passed overhead at zero altitude, crossing simultaneously into Sinai... [Egyptian soldiers] pushed their boats into the Canal... and crossed [into Israeli territory]" (p. 250).

Shortly after the October War began, Sadat congratulated the air force commander, General Hosni Mubarak (Egypt's current president), and "all the commanders in the Ops. Room on the air strike, which actually determined the future course of the war... Israel was to *lose her balance* entirely not only during the first decisive twenty-four hours of fighting but for the first four days. She lost

control of her forces in Sinai, and her lines of communications with the forces there were broken off completely. With this admirable air strike, **the Egyptian Air Force recovered all it had lost in the 1956 War and the 1967 defeat,** and paved the way for our armed forces subsequently to achieve that victory which *restored the self-*

*confidence* of our armed forces, our people, and our Arab nation. It also *restored the world's confidence* in us, and exploded



forever the *myth of an invincible Israel!*" (p. 249).

When the Yom Kippur War erupted, the Israelis were caught off guard. Egyptian and Syrian forces had the decisive upper hand during the first four days of fierce fighting. But finally, after mobilizing and regrouping, the Israelis pushed the Egyptian forces back across the Suez Canal and even established an Israeli enclave on Egyptian soil. They also routed Syrian troops in the Golan Heights, who had made considerable advances before the Israeli counterattack.

Sadat complained that, although his air strikes had taken out *400 tanks* almost from the outset, the United States provided replacements immediately. But he also admitted that *Egypt* received 390 tanks during the war. In fact, Egypt was supposed to receive even more tanks from the Soviet Union, but they never materialized. When Sadat asked Premier Aleksei Kosygin why the Soviets hadn't delivered the tanks and other promised supplies, he replied, "We've concentrated on Syria because she took a thrashing and lost *1,200 tanks* in one day!" (p. 259).

## October War's Bitter Fruits

What were some of the tragic consequences of the Yom Kippur War?

**For the world:** After Israeli forces crossed the Suez Canal and began to encircle the Egyptian Third Army, the United States and the Soviet Union faced a political stand-off that could have ended in nuclear holocaust. American forces worldwide were put on heightened military alert. The superpowers' who-will-blink-first confrontation



had taken the world to the very brink of nuclear Armageddon, threatening all humanity! Fortunately, that crisis ended when they worked out a compromise that established a U.N.-monitored cease-fire on October 24.

**For the Israelis:** Their forces were badly routed by the Arabs during the first four days of fighting. According to Sadat, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir's government sent an urgent appeal to the United States to "save Israel"—requesting immediate armaments. On a human level, only a massive U.S. airlift of tanks, planes and other vital supplies stood in the way of Israeli defeat.

Though they were able to turn the tide of battle after four days and were eventually victorious, the Israelis had nonetheless paid a terrible price, both in battle deaths and non-fatal casualties. The loss of tanks, planes and other military equipment was staggering. During the Six-Day War, Israel had sustained only 676 deaths. But the Yom Kippur War saw more than 2,500

Israeli soldiers killed in action. Further, they suffered the *humiliation* of the Egyptians parading Israeli soldiers through the streets of Cairo. Even though the Israelis won the war, this *close call* gave them new respect for Arab fighters, whose military prowess had been previously discounted. Much of Israel's overconfidence perished in the near-fatal Yom Kippur War.

**For the Arabs:** Though the Egyptians and Syrians scored decisive victories in some of the early battles, they nonetheless *lost the war*—their fourth such defeat in 25 years! On a personal level, President Sadat paid a heavy price: "In those early minutes of the war I lost my youngest brother—Air-Pilot 'Atif—who was as close to me as my own son" (p. 249).

Right after the war, the Egyptian president began having serious health problems. He said, "At this point I was in great pain. I was suffering daily, hourly.... For four days I hemorrhaged. The doctors who examined me... said it was due to *tension*" (p. 269). Was Sadat's "tension" the result of months of plotting the October War that was meant to *annihilate* the State of Israel? Was he paying a personal price for his military aggression? More than 3,500 years ago, the Great God said, regarding Israel's descendants, "**Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you**" (Gen. 27:29; cf. Num. 24:9). This should stand as a warning to those who would do battle with God's chosen people!

After the Yom Kippur War, Sadat frankly admitted that the Arab-Soviet alliance had been a mistake. He came to believe that the Soviets either *could* not, or *would* not,

deliver what they had promised. He admitted that only the "U.S. can play this role... of *mediator* between two sides that harbor intense hate for one another.... **the U.S. holds 99 percent of the cards in this game**" (p. 293).

The conviction that no other nation has the *military strength*, and therefore no other power on earth holds the key to mediation in the Middle East, is undoubtedly *why* Sadat later decided to promote his peace initiative with Israel and the United States.

Four major wars had only brought death, suffering and increased poverty upon the Arab participants. Both the Israelis and the Arabs were utterly *exhausted* by the time the October War ended. The bitter results of that war convinced Sadat that there must be a better way. So, showing great courage, Sadat began working toward *peace*. In an unprecedented move, he visited Jerusalem in November 1977 to present his plan for a peace settlement before the Israeli Knesset.

By September of the following year, under the auspices of President Jimmy Carter, a framework for the Camp David peace accords between Sadat and Israel's new prime minister, Menachem Begin, had been worked out. But an actual peace treaty was not signed until March 26, 1979. Because of the peace initiative, President Sadat's popularity rose in the West, but plummeted in Egypt. This



Page 18 top: As smoke rises in the background, heavy Israeli tanks head down the road toward Damascus, Syria, during the Yom Kippur War. Bottom: Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir is shown at a news conference in Tel Aviv on August 13, 1973. Page 19 top: Beshir Gemayel, the president of Lebanon. Bottom: The massacre of Palestinian refugees at Camp Shatilla, Lebanon, in 1982—Bettmann.

culminated in his tragic assassination by Muslim extremists on October 6, 1981—eight years to the day after he had launched the ill-fated Yom Kippur War!

## Incursion into Lebanon

Although peace now prevailed between Egypt and Israel, it wouldn't be long until Israel's war machine

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## MIDEAST CONFLICT

(continued from page 19)

trained its sights on new targets. In 1982, almost a year after Sadat's death, Israel undertook a "surgical invasion" of Lebanon. "Having neutralized Egypt, the largest and most powerful of the Arab states, Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, a hero of the 1973 war, planned an invasion of Lebanon to secure [1] **the elimination of the PLO** and [2] the selection of a new president of Lebanon who would sign a peace treaty with Israel along the lines of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty of 1979" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., "Israel").

But what the Israelis didn't know was that their military venture into Lebanon would not go as planned. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* continues, "On June 6, 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon and subsequently defeated the PLO, the Syrian armed forces, and assorted leftist Lebanese groups. By June 13, Israeli forces and their Phalangist Lebanese allies had encircled West Beirut, and the trapped PLO and Syrians were forced to agree to leave the city. The assassination of the pro-Israeli Lebanese president-elect, Bashir Gemayel, provoked Israeli troops to move into West Beirut, where they allowed Lebanese Christian Phalangists to massacre Palestinian civilians in two refugee camps."

Benjamin Netanyahu explains that Israel's June 1982 invasion of Lebanon resulted in a "limited war, waged on the soil and over the skies of Lebanon. While Israel's aim was the uprooting of the PLO bases, it encountered resistance from the Syrian armed forces that were, and still are, occupying most of Lebanon.... Israel was pushed to commit what in Arab eyes was a most egregious sin, entering an Arab capital" (pp. 201-202).

He also says the Israelis failed to explain to the world exactly *why* they had to clean out the PLO from Lebanon: "Rather than *fighting* the political battle, Israel did the *opposite*, imposing an information blackout for the first crucial days of the war—the chief effect of which was to ensure that the *Israeli side* of the story went virtually unreported.

"Completely left out of the picture was the fact that Israel's northern cities had been tormented by PLO rocket and terror attacks for a decade, as children grew up in bomb shelters and urban populations dwindled from year to year. Left out was the preceding decade's history of PLO murder, rape, and looting in South Lebanon and the fact that **even the Shi'ite Moslems there greeted the Israeli soldiers as liberators**" (pp. 383-384).

Netanyahu adds, "But [the political battle] was

worse than lost. For if there is one thing for which the Lebanon campaign is remembered internationally, it is the *massacre* of several hundred Palestinian Arabs by Christian Lebanese [Arabs] allied with Israel in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatilla outside Beirut. This horrifying massacre was not perpetrated by Israeli forces but by *Arabs* seeking to avenge the assassination of Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel (who was a Christian). It was yet another bloody chapter in a civil war in which Palestinians and Christians had massacred each other again and again since the early 1970s. **Israeli forces did not participate in the massacre, did not enable it, did not even know about it**" (p. 384).

But if the Israelis didn't know about it, then how did the blame get laid at their feet? Netanyahu goes on to say, "In fact, Israel's judicial commission of inquiry, the Kahan Commission, recommended the resignation of Defense Minister Ariel Sharon in the wake of the massacre *because* he knew nothing about it, and, according to the commission, should have *foreseen* that the Christians would slaughter the Palestinians and should have acted to pre-empt the massacre" (p. 384).

### Bittersweet Results

Israel achieved its objective of driving the PLO out of Lebanon. But many Israelis resented the West pressuring them to allow PLO gunmen to be safely escorted out of Beirut. "The result was mounting Western opposition to the Israeli operation and mounting pressure to stay Israel's hand and prevent the PLO, trapped in West Beirut and surrounded by the Israeli army, from being destroyed.... **In the end Western pressure prevailed**, and the PLO's ten thousand gunmen were escorted out of Beirut, rifles in hand, and spirited away to the safety of the PLO's bases in Tunisia and other Arab states" (Netanyahu, pp. 384-385).

Israel was further condemned for not preventing the Sabra and Shatilla massacres. No one doubts that the Israelis suffered a political setback in the eyes of the world as a result of their invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

Following this disastrous military incursion, violence and bloodshed continued. Although the PLO was driven out of Lebanon in 1982, a spontaneous uprising, the *Intifada*, and various terrorist organizations (*Al Fatah*, *Hamas*, etc.) have taken up the banner of violence. But despite this litany of continued bloodshed, Bible prophecy reveals that the Jews and Arabs will yet learn to dwell together in peace (Zech. 8:20-23; Is. 2:1-4).

In the next installment of this series, we will examine the continuation of the sometimes uncertain peace process from 1982 until today. 

# Palestine and Israel *Two Nations*

by Raymond F. McNair

**Terrorism and  
Palestinian  
uprisings erupt  
in the face of a new  
Jewish housing project  
in East Jerusalem.  
Will this be a death  
knell for the Mideast  
peace process?**



**Above:** An ultra-Orthodox Jew walks past posters in Jerusalem decrying PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. These portraits show Arafat wearing a helmet and calling for a *jihād* (holy war) to gain control of Jerusalem. **Right:** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu points to the Har Homa neighborhood. It is slated to be the 11th Jewish suburb of East Jerusalem, despite Palestinian threats of a violent backlash if the project continues—*AFP*.

**M**odern-day Israel is a deeply divided nation. Israelis have historically rallied around their leaders—ever since the Arab-Israeli struggle began in 1948—as they fended off repeated attacks from their foes. But why has this unity begun to crumble in recent years? And why does Israel increasingly feel vulnerable and isolated from the rest of the world?

As is so often the case, part of the answer lies with land use and disputed territory. In early March, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat met with United States President Bill Clinton. A few days later, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak also visited the White House, followed by King Hussein of Jordan. Why? Because they, as did former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, believe that "the U.S... holds 99% of the cards" in the high-stakes Mideast political process (Sadat, *In Search of Identity*, p. 293). Foremost in their minds was bringing pressure on the United States to *help prevent* the Israelis from building 6,500 housing units in the Har Homa district of East Jerusalem.

President Clinton told the Arab leaders that, though he *regretted* the Israeli decision to build housing units at Har Homa, the U.S. has *no authority* to make the Israelis desist. Another controversial topic was the ongoing Palestinian and Israeli attempts to reach a "final settlement" concerning the Occupied West Bank.

Arafat, Hussein and Mubarak want American diplomacy to pressure Israel into *making a deal* with Yasser Arafat's Palestine Authority whereby the Israelis would return most of the land they have occupied since the Six-Day War of 1967.

And the Palestinians have other fears. Arafat believes Israel's decision to build housing in East Jerusalem is not *all* the Jews plan to build. He said that "Israel's decision to build in east Jerusalem will destroy the peace process and [he] threatened to declare a *Palestinian state*.... Arafat declared that the neighborhood at Har Homa will cut Arab access to the Old City, adding that **Israel has a plan to build a new temple on the Temple Mount where Al-Aksa stands today**" (*The Jewish Press*, March 7, 1997).

## An Israeli Perspective

But the Israelis have a different perspective. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claims that his country has every right to build since "75% of the land of Har Homa was private Jewish

# —One Land

land. All of this land was expropriated a long time ago.” He tried to reassure the Palestinians, saying, “It is well known that we have plans to build for *both* Jews and Arabs in East Jerusalem” (ibid.).

Mr. Netanyahu is walking a political tightrope. We have just seen some of the Palestinian opposition he faces. And the situation is just as volatile on the domestic front. Delays in construction at Har Homa have many *Israelis* up in arms. Hard-liners elected Netanyahu because they believed: 1) he would not make further concessions to the PLO; 2) he opposed the creation of a Palestinian state; and 3) he favored the establishment of more Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories.

Jerusalem’s Mayor Ehud Olmert says, “For me, the clearest test of the leadership of this government will be the matter of Har Homa.... We are talking about an area, like all the neighborhoods around Jerusalem, where there isn’t even *one Arab*. The land was expropriated mostly from *Jews*. It is a *strategic location* of the first degree which creates a continuous band of Jewish settlement at the southern entrance to Jerusalem” (*Jewish Press*, Jan. 17, 1997). This same article also quoted Israel’s Interior Minister Eliyahu Suissa as saying, “**It’s either Har Homa or war**; the Palestinians must understand that Har Homa will be built, no matter what.”

Why are the Palestinians so hostile to Israel’s projected housing project in East Jerusalem anyway? The answer lies in the conflicting dreams and beliefs of sovereignty and destiny. The Palestinians look to the day when East Jerusalem will be the capital city of a free Palestinian state. This, of course, can never happen so long as Israel continues to view the *entire* city of Jerusalem as capital of the Jewish State that still partly controls the Palestinians! (*The San Diego Union-Tribune*, March 11, 1997).

The Palestinians, then, are determined to block Israeli construction. They claim the disputed territory is “Arab land,” and say that completion of the Har Homa project would enable Israelis to almost completely *encircle* the Palestinians living in East

Jerusalem. Arafat and his people threaten the Israelis with *more rioting* if they continue with construction. Netanyahu’s reply: “We are prepared. We are resolute. I’m not going to settle for the idea of *periodic acts of terror* and call it PEACE!”

## Through Palestinian Eyes

The Palestinian view regarding the ongoing struggle with Israel is clearly expressed in *The Politics of Dispossession*:

“The Palestinian Arabs were promised independence by Britain after World War I... for joining the war against the Ottomans on the Allied side. In 1917, however, Palestine was also promised to the *Zionists* by the British, even though the population of Palestine was at that time about 90 percent Arab. After decades of Jewish immigration... Palestine in 1948 was still only 30 percent Jewish and about 70 percent Arab. Zionist settlers still owned only about 6 percent of the land surface of Palestine, the Arabs owning all the rest. **Yes, the Arabs contested the [U.N.] Partition project of 1947** for perfectly sound reasons then: that it would allot 55 percent of Palestine... to a Jewish state comprising less than a third of the total Arab and Jewish population” (Edward Said, 1994, p. 139).

Years later, in 1967, “Israel acquired the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights, and the entire Sinai peninsula. It returned Sinai to Egypt in 1982... even as more *illegal settlements* were being built on the West Bank and Gaza. Today... more than 50 percent of Palestinian land in the Occupied Territories has been *expropriated*; 120 settlements and 65,000 settlers sit provocatively on land taken from Arabs” (p. 140).

“We have accepted Israel’s existence, we have said we are willing to *live in peace* and coexistence [but] Israel will not withdraw its military occupation, will not recognize Palestinian rights... will *not*—even in principle—accept a *Palestinian state*.... [nevertheless] **our attachment to Palestine is as significant, as deep**



and as lasting as theirs” (pp. 142-143).

Palestinians have long harbored deep-seated feelings of ill will toward the United States, seemingly as resentful of Americans as they are of Israelis. Mr. Said explains why: “The challenge of Palestine to people in the U.S., which virtually underwrites the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and in effect pays for the bullets that kill Palestinians, is an especially serious one.... Today, because of the massive uprising on the West Bank and Gaza, the world is being asked to confront reality as if for the first time. A new truth has emerged... the Zionists in fact came to Palestine, found another people already there, and then for several decades have *dispossessed* them with the moral approval and support of the West generally and the U.S. in particular.... As the *intifadah* [Palestinian uprising] demonstrates... only forceful and creatively original action can make a difference” (pp. 138, 143-144). And, of course, all too often the “forceful and creatively original action” is nothing less than indiscriminate terrorism and bloodshed!

### Jewish Perspectives on the Occupied Territories

(1) The **leftist, ultra-religious Jews** believe it was biblically and morally wrong to establish a secular state in the land of Israel. They think the Jews should have waited for the Messiah to establish His Kingdom in Jerusalem to rule over all nations (cf. Jer. 3:17; Is. 2, 11). Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is indebted to their religious party, which now makes up 20% of the Knesset, because it put him “over the top” in his close-run election with Shimon Peres in May 1996.

Netanyahu further describes their position: “On the left, this *messianic belief* focuses today on the ‘*sin*’ of Israel’s conquest of the territories during the Six Day War.... In this *leftist* revision of history, the incorporation of the [conquered] territories into Israel during the Six Day War was the *beginning of all evil*. Israel became smug and self-satisfied, insensitive and inhuman, repressing the Palestinian Arabs and tarnishing the Israeli soul in the process. To save Israel’s soul, we must amputate part of the body” (*A Place Among the Nations*, p. 375).

(2) By sharp contrast, the **religious Jews on the right** offer quite a different solution to Israel’s woes. Israel’s prime minister says, “A mirror image of this *messianism* is found on the *religious right*, where it is believed that the act of settling the land is in and of itself sufficient to earn divine providence and an end to the country’s woes. If Israel were merely to *hang tough* and erect *more* settlements, it could dispense with world opinion and international pressures.”

(3) Finally, Netanyahu describes the third view: “A variation on the religious right’s view is the idea advanced by a segment of the **non-religious right** that Israel could achieve lasting stability if only it could get rid of the Arabs living in its midst. That is, the *left* believes that getting rid of the [occupied] territories would cure all of Israel’s ills, [while] the *right* believes that keeping the territories would achieve the same effect” (pp. 375-376).

### Standing on Biblical Ground

Why are there such divergent and mutually exclusive views of these two peoples? Part of the answer is that the Israeli viewpoint is heavily influenced by the Old Testament Scriptures. “The modern State of Israel was created upon the concept of *Zionism*, the biblical concept of Jewish return and rebuilding of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel. From the very inception... **claims made by all Zionist leaders... were always based on the Jewish Bible**” (Rabbi Eliezer Waldman, *Jewish Press*, Jan. 17, 1997).

Rabbi Waldman continues, “Certainly, after [God] has helped us to achieve Jewish independence in our *homeland*... it is absurd that Israeli leaders should think that the way to secure the lives of this people is by compromising upon their *land* and handing parts of it to their enemies!”

The Jews, much like the Palestinians, were also dispossessed of *their* land. This was at the hands of the Romans, nearly 2,000 years ago: “From the time of the Exile [A.D. 70] the Jewish People cherished the hope of renewing national life in [the land of] Israel. **They never considered themselves a people without a land, but rather a nation dispossessed and daily prayed for the Return**” (*Encyclopedia of Jewish History*, p. 116).

Clearly, God promised Palestine to the descendants of Abraham’s son Isaac and *his* son Jacob or Israel (Gen. 26:3-4; 28:13-14; 35:10-12). God *never* promised this land to the descendants of Abraham’s *other* son Ishmael or to Jacob’s twin brother Esau: “The covenant which [God] made with Abraham... Isaac, and... Jacob... saying, ‘To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of *your* inheritance’” (Ps. 105:9-11). (Note: As a previous article in this series has shown, most Arabs are descendants of the patriarch Abraham and his son Ishmael. The *Palestinians*, however, have descended primarily from either Israel’s brother Esau—also known as Edom—or Ishmael.)

But despite biblical evidence to the contrary, the Palestinians claim that the Jews *drove them out* of “their land” during the War of Independence and the Six-Day War. The Israelis, of course, dispute this. But not only on biblical grounds. They also claim that leaders of nearby Arab states *urged* the Palestinians to flee from their homeland prior

to the outbreak of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. This was to prevent them from being harmed during the carnage that Arab armies expected to inflict as they attempted to crush the infant Israeli nation! In fact, history shows that much of the misery suffered by Palestinian refugees during the past 50 years is due, in great measure, to the fact that their Arab brothers have been reluctant to do very much to help them.

minister might go further still. One such leading contender is General Ehud Barak, **who now says he would be willing to see Israel accept "a Palestinian state,** maybe with certain limitations on... its sovereignty" (*Christian Science Monitor*; Feb. 22, 1997).

On the other side of the debate, Israeli Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon (Minister of Defense, 1981-83) explains why many Israelis still think it is *dangerous* to compromise with Arafat. "The fact is that a Palestinian state *has* existed since 1922, when Great Britain split off 75 percent of Palestine to create Transjordan. Transjordan—Jordan



## A Palestinian State?

On September 1, 1992, President Ronald Reagan said in his national address, "Beyond the transition period, as we look to the future of the West Bank and Gaza, it is clear to me that peace cannot be achieved by the formation of an independent Palestinian state in those territories.... **So the United States will not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.**" And this has been a consistent foreign policy position both before and after President Reagan's term of office.

In the past, *Israeli* leaders said they would *never* permit a Palestinian state to be established on the West Bank. More recently, however, a number of them have changed their position. As a concession toward the peace process, they have permitted the Palestinians to establish, not an independent state, but a Palestinian "Authority" or "Entity" in the Occupied Territories. The Israelis have decided to return about 50% of the territory for Palestinian use, and to keep the other half for their own self-defense.

The Israeli people are deeply divided on what their leaders have done. Many are *weary*—fed up with decades of terrorism—and are now willing to give back a sizable portion of the Occupied Territories in exchange for "peace." And if Mr. Netanyahu's government were to fall because of this hotly debated issue, a successor prime

**Left:** Israeli soldiers guard bulldozers in the disputed Har Homa area (also known as Jebel Abu Ghoneim by the Palestinians) in East Jerusalem. **Top:** An injured Palestinian is carried away during a riot in Bethlehem on March 20 after the decision was announced to build the controversial Jewish Har Homa neighborhood. **Right:** Israeli tanks are lined up to prevent rioting Palestinians from reaching the disputed construction area—*AFP*.

now—is a country where most of the population... [the] members of parliament... the cabinet... and most of the prime ministers have been Palestinian. **Jordan is in fact if not in name a Palestinian state....** Whatever the political rhetoric, the reality here is that a Palestinian state exists in Jordan with its capital in Amman, and a Jewish state exists in Israel with its capital in Jerusalem"! (*Warrior—The Autobiography of Ariel Sharon*, 1989, pp. 545, 551).

But, in spite of these Israeli protests, Arafat seems determined to pressure the United States and the rest of the world into persuading the Israelis to grant him his demand: An independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital! After Israel turned 80% of Hebron over to the Palestinians, he said, "We have liberated Hebron.... We will continue to Jerusalem. A promise is a promise, and an oath is an oath. **On to Jerusalem**" (*Jewish Press*, Jan. 24, 1997).

Arafat has often said he is determined to carve out

a Palestinian state on the West Bank with Jerusalem as its capital. And though Netanyahu has repeatedly said Israel won't permit this, Palestinian terrorist groups are confident nonetheless. For example, in November 1996, Hamas spokesman, Dr. Mohmoud Zahar, said, "God revenged the death of Fathi Shakaki by sending someone to kill [Yitzhak] Rabin.... *Jihad* (holy war) is our strategic decision. We have put fear [in] the Jews.... Guns will be directed towards Jerusalem until the promise of God is achieved in an *independent Palestinian state*." And Jihad spokesman Nafez Azzam said, "**Jerusalem is us, Hebron is us, and all the land of Palestine is us**" (*Jewish Press*, Nov. 7, 1996).

All this bloodshed, all this conflict and the intractable, opposing points of view are not a new story. In fact, long ago God's Word foretold that modern Palestinians, many of whom are descendants of Esau called Edomites, would claim the ancient lands of Israel and Judah as their own possession. In Ezekiel 35:10, they are prophesied as saying, "These *two nations* and these *two countries* shall be *mine* (cf. vv. 1-15; 36:5-7; Obad. 1-21).

## How Will It All End?

Israelis are now quite concerned about the increase in terrorist activity against civilians within the Occupied Territories and in Israel proper. They believe another "war of liberation" is now being planned by certain Arab nations using various terrorist organizations to

their own ends. Many Israelis are fearful about their future, wondering when and how the violence will end.

Today's Israel is deeply divided, and a divided house cannot stand (Mark 3:24-25). So said Jesus Christ shortly before a deeply divided *Judea* fell to the Romans in A.D. 70. In both ancient and modern times, Israel's *religious* and *secular* Jews often clashed over divergent political and religious issues.

But the deepest rift dividing Israelis in recent years concerns how to deal with *internal security matters*—in particular, how to cope with the *intifada* and how to handle terrorism. In a compromise for peace, some Israelis are now willing to give back much of the West Bank to the Palestinian Arabs, trading "land for peace." Other Israelis argue that to do so will only whet the Palestinians' appetite to demand *all* of Palestine, and will, in the end, result in *even more* bloodshed.

Bible prophecy reveals that the Middle East *will* continue to be a dangerous powder keg, which at any time could ignite World War III—with nightmarish consequences for the whole world!

Only Bible prophecy sheds a clear light on major events yet to take place in the volatile Middle East. Few realize that **the stage is now being set for the final, decisive battle for control of the Middle East—and of the whole world—the so-called "Battle of Armageddon!"** This coming apocalyptic event will be fully explained later. Be sure to keep reading *The World Ahead*.  

# Countdown to Armageddon!



by Raymond F. McNair

*Where are Mideast events heading? Many warnings have been sounded about a coming “Battle of Armageddon.” Just what IS this apocalyptic term, “Armageddon”? Does it involve nuclear destruction that will spell the end of all human life?*

**W**hy is the Middle East being “armed to the teeth”? Will the ongoing political battle for control over Palestine—and Jerusalem in particular—spin out of control, thereby igniting a military firestorm that will engulf the entire world?

The concept of “Armageddon” has been familiar to the English-speaking world since at least the 1500s, and is now well entrenched in our culture. But most of those who speak of Armageddon don’t really understand its prophetic significance.

Many of this earth's nearly two billion professing Christians are acquainted with the idea of a "Battle of Armageddon" that is supposed to occur at the end of the world. But most people couldn't tell you much about it. Just what *is* Armageddon? And what are some of the events that will lead up to it?

## Some Perceptions

Today, even though the long, nightmarish Soviet-American standoff is seemingly over, we still sometimes hear about "nuclear Armageddon" that could erase all human life from our planet. But for centuries, men in the midst of one catastrophe or another have believed that "Armageddon" was almost upon them. Some even thought that World War I—and later World War II—would end in this "doomsday battle." But not until the end of the second world conflict had man unleashed the destructive power necessary to annihilate all human life from the face of the earth.

When the Japanese surrendered after atomic weapons were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the allied supreme commander in the Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur, made a historic broadcast to the American people: "Today, the guns are silent.... The destructiveness of war has in fact now reached a point which revises the traditional concept of war.... We have had our last chance. If we will not devise some greater and more equitable system, **Armageddon will be at our door.** The problem basically is theological and involves... improvement of human character.... It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh!"

But has human character improved since World War II? Sadly, no. Rather, it is now clear that human conduct is rapidly becoming more debased the world over. Violent crime is out of control in many areas of the world. And during the past 50 years countless millions have been butchered through genocidal wars in Southeast Asia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Africa, Central America, the Middle East and other troubled areas. It is obvious that the nations have not heeded MacArthur's warning! And as world events continue to spiral out of control, we may well wonder—more than at any other time in history—if our precious "minutes to midnight" are fast running out.

Concerned that Arab hatred of Israel could engender such an apocalyptic scenario, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu states, "For close to a century Arab society and Arab politics have been commanded by an anti-Jewish obsession that has known no limits: It harnessed the Nazis, promoted the Final

Solution, launched five wars against Israel, embarked on a campaign of global terrorism, strangled the world's economy with oil blackmail, and now, in Iraq and elsewhere, is attempting **to build nuclear bombs for the great Armageddon.** This obsession must be stopped not only for Israel's sake but for the sake of the Arabs themselves and for the sake of the world" (*A Place Among the Nations*, pp. 330-331).

## Mideast Arms Buildup

The entire Middle East—but especially Israel—has become an "armed camp," with the highest concentration of weapons of any place of comparable size on earth. According to the article on "Israel" in the *1997 Britannica Book of the Year*, each Israeli spends nearly three times as much on national defense as does the average citizen in other countries of the world! And Arab nations—especially the oil-rich states—also spend very heavily on armaments and war-related materiel. Of course, all of this comes at a terrible cost. For with so much financial and material resources devoted to "war," much less is reserved for the "peacetime" investment of building a thriving, prosperous economy.

How does the Israeli military compare with that of her Arab neighbors? *The Jewish Press* reports, "Israel has become the **third strongest world power** and its air force is seven to eight times stronger than the combined might of those of the Arab Nations. This is what the prestigious military magazine, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, concluded in a report it just released. The British periodical says in its 25-page report that the IDF [Israeli Defense Force] is a generation ahead of its Arab counterparts. War in the Middle East, the study notes, is closer than ever before, but would result in another Israeli victory.... [If some] general confrontation [developed] into a united Arab stand against the Jewish state... concludes *Jane's*, Israel is capable of destroying the Arab armies within 10-15 days" (March 7, 1997, p. 26).

Yet even with the balance of military strength tipped in their favor, there is little reason for jubilation among Israelis. Since December 1987, the Palestinian *intifada* (often-violent civil unrest) has kept them off guard—with its terrorist bombings of civilian targets in cafes, marketplaces, cars, buses, passenger planes, etc. The Israeli government seemingly does not know how to cope with such violence. And many Israelis have become weary in waging a constant defensive war against an elusive enemy.

As we've seen in previous installments in this series, the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin tried to

strike a deal with Yasser Arafat and the Palestinians by agreeing to grant them limited sovereignty over certain Israeli-occupied territories including Gaza, Jericho and Hebron (prompting his assassination in 1995 by an Israeli extremist). But violence has not abated since ceding control to the Palestine Authority. Furthermore, the Israelis agreed to allow tens of thousands of Palestinians (some say up to 40,000) to arm themselves. This is a potential source of carnage in the event of another full-scale Arab-Israeli war. In such a scenario, the Israelis would have to fight an *internal* enemy—reoccupying such areas as Gaza, Jericho and Hebron—while waging a war of survival on two or three *external* fronts!

## Islamic Fundamentalism

Many wonder what persuaded Israeli leaders to go to Norway in 1993 and sit down with Yasser Arafat, whom they had repeatedly labeled a terrorist, to negotiate for peace. Why did they endorse the “Oslo Accords” when they apparently did not trust the other side to abide by its terms? One reason is that the Israelis became convinced they were losing the “propaganda war” to the Palestinian



*Massive crowds gather in the streets, marking an anniversary of the Islamic revolution in Iran. The Islamic Republic was born in 1979 when the late Ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the Shah—AFP.*

Arabs in the eyes of the world. They believed that the international news media nearly always took the side of the Palestinians.

Another reason is that Israel, with a population of less than 6 million, is surrounded by Arab nations with a combined population of 150 million!

More ominous still, the Israelis saw Islamic fundamentalism—the most powerful force in today’s

Muslim world—looming on the horizon! Muslim nations—most of which are *not* Arab—now have a combined population of more than one billion people! Even *Arab* leaders fear Islamic fundamentalism—especially in light of how easily this movement swept through Iran and gained control of its government in 1979.

Author Thomas L. Friedman makes an interesting point: “Islamic fundamentalism is going to be a permanent challenge for the Jewish state. Rabin and [then Foreign Minister Shimon] Peres were calculating, though, that if they could strike a deal with the Palestinians and the surrounding Arab states, it might give the Arabs a stronger hand to deal with some of their economic problems, reduce the ability of the [Islamic] fundamentalists to blame every blight in their society on Israel, and maybe, just maybe, secure a Muslim majority ready to live and let live with the Jews. That, at least was their theory. As Peres put it, **‘In twenty years there will be 500 million Arabs and 2 billion Muslims. There is no way to defend ourselves unless we overcome the hostility.’**” (*From Beirut to Jerusalem*, pp. 548-549).

As Israelis look to the future, they realize that the Muslim population could reach this two billion mark *within one generation!* Hundreds of millions of Muslims might throw their political, economic and military support behind the Palestinian Arabs, whom they believe to have been dispossessed of their rightful homeland by Israeli Jews. This is why the specter of Islamic fundamentalism haunts Israel today. What will be its end? Islamic  *jihad*? An Arab-Israeli holy war could engulf the Middle East, eventually escalating into World War III!

Prime Minister Netanyahu says, “Islamic fundamentalism continues to gather momentum. Worse still, **the development of nuclear weapons by Arab states and Iran continues at a feverish pace....** Now the U.S. is trying to ferret out of Iraq the multiple hidden nuclear weapons projects that Saddam has built and continues to build, using technologies sold to him by the West.... But this is precisely the danger that the world faces today. Iraq, Iran, and Syria are now all vying to develop nuclear weapons and the missile systems to deliver them” (pp. 249, 390).

## Israeli Nuclear Arms?

From its inception in 1948, Israel realized the day might come when she could no longer defend herself against hostile Arab neighbors with conventional arms. Therefore, the Israelis quickly began a nuclear weapons

program. It is common knowledge that they have now possessed nuclear weapons for decades.

But would the Israelis use these weapons? Certainly not under any normal circumstance. But what if they found themselves with their backs to the wall, about to be overwhelmed by some numerically superior Arab army?

Netanyahu says, "When advocates of an Israeli withdrawal [from the Occupied Territories] are presented with the facts, they usually fall back on one final argument: **Israel can always unsheathe a nuclear sword**, thereby ending all threats to its existence. But Israel has promised not to be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East, and even if it were to change its policy and introduce them, it is unclear how even this would serve as a deterrent... But would Israel really be willing to threaten nuclear war every time a Palestinian battalion changed its position? Would nuclear weapons be used if an Arab column crossed into Israeli territory... or would they be reserved for the actual arrival of such a force in downtown Tel Aviv twenty minutes later?" (p. 282).

The prime minister leaves no doubt what Israel would do if hostile armies threatened to snuff out her very national existence: **"If Israel were to face a threat to its existence, it would respond with awesome power** [i.e. nuclear war]—something that no sane person, Arab or Jew, could possibly desire"! (p. 334). If deemed absolutely necessary, Israel would probably not hesitate to act. Former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban (1966-74) says, "It is the anomaly of our times that small countries... sometimes have more mobility and resilience than greater powers whose eyes are always fixed apprehensively on each other's potential reaction and on **the perils of Armageddon**" (*My Country*, p. 236).

### Meaning of Armageddon

Having talked about the potential for an end-time battle, there remains an important question. Just what is "Armageddon"? The dictionary defines this term thus: "Armageddon... Gk. *Armageddon, Harmagedon*, scene of the battle foretold in Rev. 16:14-16... the site or time of the final and conclusive battle between the forces of



**And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.**

**—Revelation 16:16**

good and evil" (*Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed.).

Let's look at Revelation 16. It is set during the "Day of the Lord," at the time of Jesus Christ's return to this earth. This is when the seven last plagues of God's wrath are poured out on the nations as punishment for their wicked behavior—meant to humble them into submission to God's supreme will. Notice what the Apostle John foresaw, nearly 2,000 years ago, concerning the *sixth* of these plagues: "Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl [symbolizing God's awesome power] on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.... [Then Satan's]

demons... go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.... And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon” (vv. 12-16).

Students of Bible prophecy have long understood that a gigantic Eastern army is prophesied to sweep down, cross the Euphrates River and enter the land of Israel. There it will meet other Gentile armies—of the “kings of the earth and of the whole world”—at a specific location called Armageddon. But exactly where is this place? *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* explains that the New Testament term “Armageddon” comes from the Hebrew *har-megiddon*, meaning “hill of Megiddo.” This hill lies to the north of the Carmel Ridge in Israel, commanding “the most important pass from the coastal plain to the valley of Esdraelon [or Jezreel]” (vol. 2, p. 975).

The ancient site of Megiddo, overlooking the Jezreel Valley, has historically been the scene of untold bloodshed due to its important strategic location. The road between Egypt and the ancient empires of Mesopotamia passed through this area. Around 3,500 years ago, Pharaoh Thutmose III claimed that he who controlled Megiddo controlled a thousand cities.

Megiddo was a fortified city in ancient Israel. It was at Megiddo that King Ahaziah of Judah died in battle as he warred against King Jehu of Israel (2 Kings 9:27). King Josiah of Judah was also killed in battle at Megiddo while fighting Pharaoh Necho (2 Kings 23:29).

Near the end of World War I, Britain’s General Allenby won a signal victory over the Turks at Megiddo in 1918: “The engagements fought between 19 and 25 September came to be collectively known as the Battle of Megiddo, after [British forces emerged] on to the plain of Esdraelon... [Megiddo] was the site of many Old Testament contests and is associated with that great battle of nations, Armageddon, described in... Revelation (16:16). Megiddo was a decisive victory” (Lawrence James, *Imperial Warrior*, p. 167).

## The Final Battle

But you may be surprised to learn that the prophesied “great battle of nations” will not actually take place at the ancient, war-ravaged site of Armageddon. The Bible only says that the armies will be *gathered together* at the hill of Megiddo—and certainly in the vast plain of Esdraelon that adjoins it—for this end-time battle. As *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* notes, Armageddon is “the *assembly-point*” (vol. 1, p. 111).

Where, then, does the actual *battle* take place? Speaking through the Prophet Joel, God says, “Proclaim

this among the nations: ‘Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up [to Jerusalem]. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, “I am strong.” Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around.... Let the nations be awakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for

***Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness.***

—Joel 3:14-15

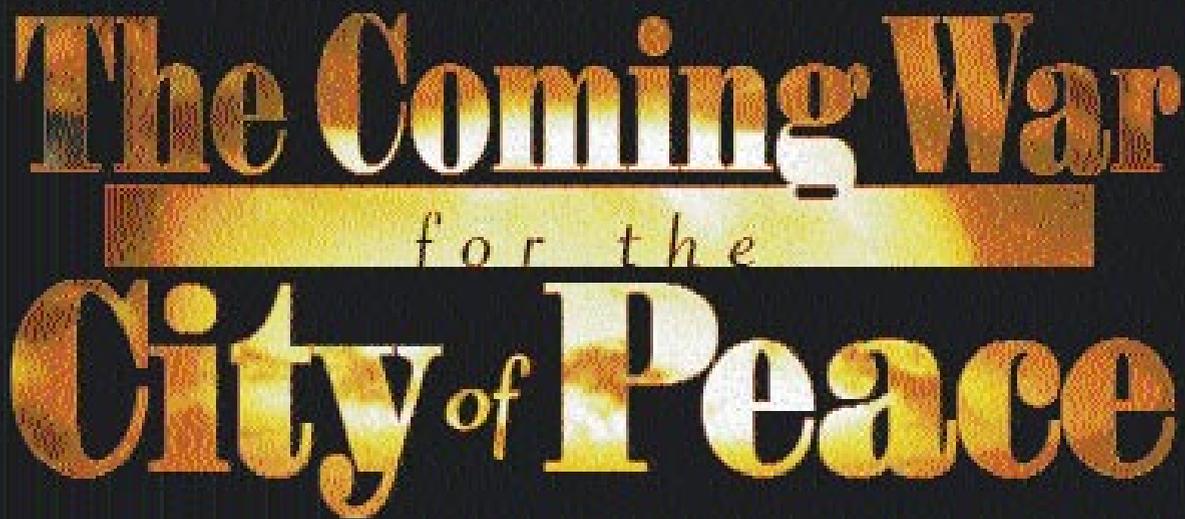
there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations” (Joel 3:9-12). The Valley of Jehoshaphat, a term meaning “the Eternal’s judgment or decision,” is the ancient name for the Kidron Valley in East Jerusalem.

God continues, “‘For their wickedness is great....’ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. The LORD also will roar from [Mount] Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and the earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people” (vv. 13-16; cf. Zech. 14; Rev. 19).

Clearly, then, the Bible does not say that Armageddon in northern Israel will be the actual end-time battle site. Rather, that is the place where hostile armies will marshal their forces. They will then march 75 miles south to Jerusalem, where the final “battle of that great day of God Almighty” will actually take place.

Will this *final showdown* involve nuclear weapons? The Bible doesn’t say. But you may be surprised to learn that, according to prophecy, weapons of mass destruction of some sort will already have been unleashed a few years *before* the gathering at Armageddon. And though millions upon millions will die, many will be spared. (This subject is more fully explained in chapter five of our full-color brochure, *America and Britain in Prophecy*. Please write for a free copy if you don’t already have one.)

Which nations will take an active part in this final battle of the end time? Who will be the victors? And who will be given ultimate control of Jerusalem—and all of Palestine? These and other questions will be answered in a future issue of *The World Ahead*, as we examine the climactic battle for control of Jerusalem! 



# The Coming War for the City of Peace

by Raymond F. McNair

*The Bible reveals that an awesome military engagement—  
in fact, the last battle of this age—will be fought at Jerusalem.  
Who will win ultimate control of the Holy City—and of the entire Middle East?*

## Jerusalem

is sacred to fully *half the world's* population. Its name literally means “Possession of Peace.” Yet how tragic it is that, down through time, no place on earth has stood at the center of so much conflict and bloodshed. And sadly, the worst is yet to come. For of the end of this age, God says, “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth

are gathered against it” (Zech. 12:2-3).

Just what political and religious forces will culminate in this horrific end-time military showdown? What exactly lies ahead for the Holy City?

Let us here point out that you may *first* want to read “North & South: The Age-Old Struggle for the Middle East,” beginning on page 8. The prophetic overview of Daniel 11 presented in that article serves as a historical backdrop to this one.

### An End-Time Invasion

The article mentioned above stated that Germany is prophesied to ally herself with an Arab confederacy



against Israel (cf. Ps. 83). But that alliance won't last! Notice from Daniel 11 what will happen to a German-led European union, the final "kingdom of the North": "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him..." (v. 40). What might provoke this? We can better understand by considering the nature of the Hitlerian leader of the coming European "Beast."

As we will later see more clearly, Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria (vv. 21-31) was in fact a *type* of this end-time dictator. And Antiochus was a "silver-tongued devil"

who used his oily manner to extend his power at every opportunity. He even made a "covenant" or "league" with elements of Jewish leadership and at first entered "peaceably" into the Holy Land (vv. 22-23). Of course, he acted deceitfully and ended up severely persecuting and even slaughtering the Jews. From this and other scriptural indications, it appears that the end-time king of the North may make similar initial overtures of peace with Israel.

"Israel" in this context probably not only means the modern Jewish state, but the nations that comprise the present-day descendants of the "Ten Lost Tribes" of Israel as well, including the United States and Britain. (Please write for a free copy of *America and Britain in Prophecy* if you don't already have one.) If the new Hitlerian leader proclaims "peace" with modern Israelites, Islamic fundamentalists at the forefront of the Arab confederation—who hate Israel and label America the "Great Satan"—would no doubt see this as an enormous betrayal. Would we not expect them to lash out at some point against their ally-turned-enemy?

Whatever the cause, the king of the South will strike against the Beast, thereby provoking Europe to retaliate with a blitzkrieg of air, ground and sea forces (v. 40). And "**he shall also enter the Glorious Land...**" (v. 41). We will delve further into the European occupation of the Holy Land shortly.

But let's first see how the Beast's counterstrike will affect other Mideast nations: "...many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab and the prominent people of Ammon"—i.e. modern Jordan.

Others will not fare so well: "He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and **the land of Egypt shall not escape**. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; **also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels**" (vv. 42-43). Note that modern Sudan may be among those nations swallowed up by the Beast,

since its territory was part of ancient Ethiopia.

Interestingly, Libya and Ethiopia were both part of Egypt at various times in antiquity. So the kingdom of the South will again be absorbed by the kingdom of the North.

## The Future Abomination

To learn more about the coming invasion of Israel, we must turn to the New Testament. Christ's disciples asked Him when the temple would be destroyed and what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). He answered by giving them an outline of events culminating with His return.

Notice Luke 21: "**But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near**. Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains.... For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.... For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (vv. 20-24).

This has *already* happened in certain respects. For in A.D. 70, less than 40 years after Christ spoke these words, Roman armies under Emperor Vespasian's son Titus quelled a Jewish uprising, conquered Judea, destroyed Jerusalem and its temple, and carried the inhabitants away as slaves. From then until modern times, Jerusalem was held by Gentiles. In fact, even present-day Israel has never re-assumed complete rule over the *entire* city—for it still allows Muslims to control the Temple Mount.

Matthew and Mark didn't record Christ's remark about armies surrounding Jerusalem. But they did add something Jesus said about the city's "desolation" that is not found in Luke: "**Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...** then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" (Matt. 24:15-16; cf. Mark 13:14). But hadn't this part of Daniel's prophecy already been fulfilled almost 200 years earlier in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes—when he stopped the daily sacrifices and set up a pagan image in the temple? (Dan. 11:31). Absolutely! So Daniel's prophecy must have a *dual* fulfillment!

Yet, though the Romans destroyed the Jewish temple, no "abomination" was *set up* by them in A.D. 70. So what is the time frame here? Matthew 24 explains what immediately follows: "For then there will be **great tribulation**, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved [alive]; but for the

elect's sake those days will be shortened" (vv. 21-22).

This too hearkens back to Daniel's prophecy, which says that at the time of the end, "there shall be a **time of trouble**, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered.... And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (12:1-2; cf. 11:40). So this horrific Tribulation occurs at the end of the age, just before the resurrection of the dead at Christ's return (1 Cor. 15:21-23). In fact, Daniel writes that "from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination is set up," there will be 1,290 days or 43 months until the resurrection (12:11).

Incredibly, then, the prophesied abomination of desolation is yet future. Thus, we see clearly that the previous invasions by the North—especially that of Antiochus, but also that of Titus and perhaps others—were merely *precursors* of a far more sinister end-time fulfillment that will usher in the most terrifying events in human history! But before we focus more attention on this coming catastrophe, let's examine how things will be directly beforehand.

Consider that Christ said the abomination will be "standing in the holy place" and that it is prophetically and historically attached to the removal of the daily sacrifices. It appears, then, that some form of *temple worship* will first be reinstated by the Jews. Otherwise, how could the sacrifices be "cut off"? However, whether there will be an actual *temple*—or just a *sacrificial altar* as in the days of Ezra—is not certain. Yet a strong argument can be made for the former since the Apostle Paul says that the final "man of sin"—the false religious leader known as the Antichrist, who will be in partnership with the Beast dictator—will enthrone himself "as God in the *temple* of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4). In fact, this in itself seems closely tied to the end-time abomination.

It should be noted that quite a number of Jews are right now engaged in reproducing implements of Levitical worship and drawing up plans for a new house of worship on the Temple Mount. If they do actually build a temple or altar in the years to come, this would certainly fan the flames of Arab hatred toward Israel. And it should be easy to see that if Europe's leaders make any pretense of promoting Jewish temple worship, Islamic fundamentalists might well be driven to violent action.

## World War III

As we saw in Luke 21, Jesus mentioned "days of vengeance" and national captivity (vv. 20-24). Now while this does in some small way describe the

first-century destruction of Jerusalem, it makes much more sense to understand these verses as parallel to Matthew 24:15-22—which describes the Great Tribulation of the end time. Remember that Christ said, "Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). This refers in part to the fact that Jerusalem would remain under Gentile rule for many centuries. But more importantly, it is also directly tied to an end-time prophecy in Revelation 11:2. There it says that the outer court of the "temple" will be "given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months"—that is, for 1,260 days or 42 months (cf. v. 3).

Zechariah 14 describes the coming "day of the LORD" (v. 1) in which, directly before Christ's return, God begins punishing the nations for their evil deeds. Notice some of the events leading up to this time: "The city [Jerusalem] shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off" (v. 2).

But the Jews will not experience this captivity *alone*. Hosea 5:5 says that modern Israelites will "fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall *with them*" (KJV). In ancient times, Judah fell about 135 years *after* Israel did. But in the end time, both will fall *together*: Regarding the Tribulation period ahead, Jeremiah 30:7 says, "Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of **Jacob's trouble** [i.e. affecting ALL Israel], but [after suffering through it] he shall be saved out of it."

This all means that around the same time that the Beast power invades Palestine, it will *also* unleash mass destruction against North America, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the democracies of Northwest Europe—perhaps even *nuclear* destruction since, among other factors, all major cities in these nations will be laid waste (cf. Ezek. 6:6). A *third* of their people will be killed in the war, *another third* will die by famine and pestilence, and the *remaining third* will be taken captive and sold into slavery (5:12). This will be an awful, terrible time. To learn more about it, we refer you again to our free brochure, *America and Britain in Prophecy*.

How long will the Great Tribulation last? Remember that, according to Daniel, the abomination of desolation will be set up 43 months before Christ returns. Then, just one month later—i.e. 42 months or 3 1/2 years before Christ's return—the city will be overrun and the Tribulation will begin. But will it last the full 3 1/2 years? No. For after "Jacob's trouble"—but prior to Christ's actual return—will come the Day of the Lord, mentioned previously. Because of the prophetic "day-for-a-year" principle (cf. Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6),

it appears that the “day” of the Lord will be the final year before Christ’s Second Coming. So the Tribulation will last 2 1/2 years (cf. Hosea 6:2), ending one year before Jesus’ return.

The book of Revelation mentions the Great Tribulation (7:14; cf. 6:9) and, in the next few chapters, describes seven trumpets being blown successively. Evidently, they sound over the course of the next year—the Day of the Lord. The *fifth* trumpet signals “locusts” and “scorpions” rising out of the “bottomless pit” and tormenting men for five months (9:1-12). This may be describing modern helicopters and tanks of the Beast (cf. 17:8), perhaps using chemical or biological weapons (cf. 9:5-6). But against whom?

For the answer, we must return to Daniel 11. Look at what the European dictator will do after his Mideast occupation is well established: “But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many” (v. 44). It seems, then, that rumors of hostility toward him from Eastern capitals and “the north” (Moscow is almost due north of the Holy Land) will cause the Europeans to launch a preemptive strike against the powers of the East, which will be successful for a time.

## The Final Assault

The end-time king of the North will then move his capital to the Holy Land: “And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain...” (v. 45 KJV)—i.e. in Jerusalem, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea.

*Model of a new temple that some Jews propose to build on the Temple Mount.*

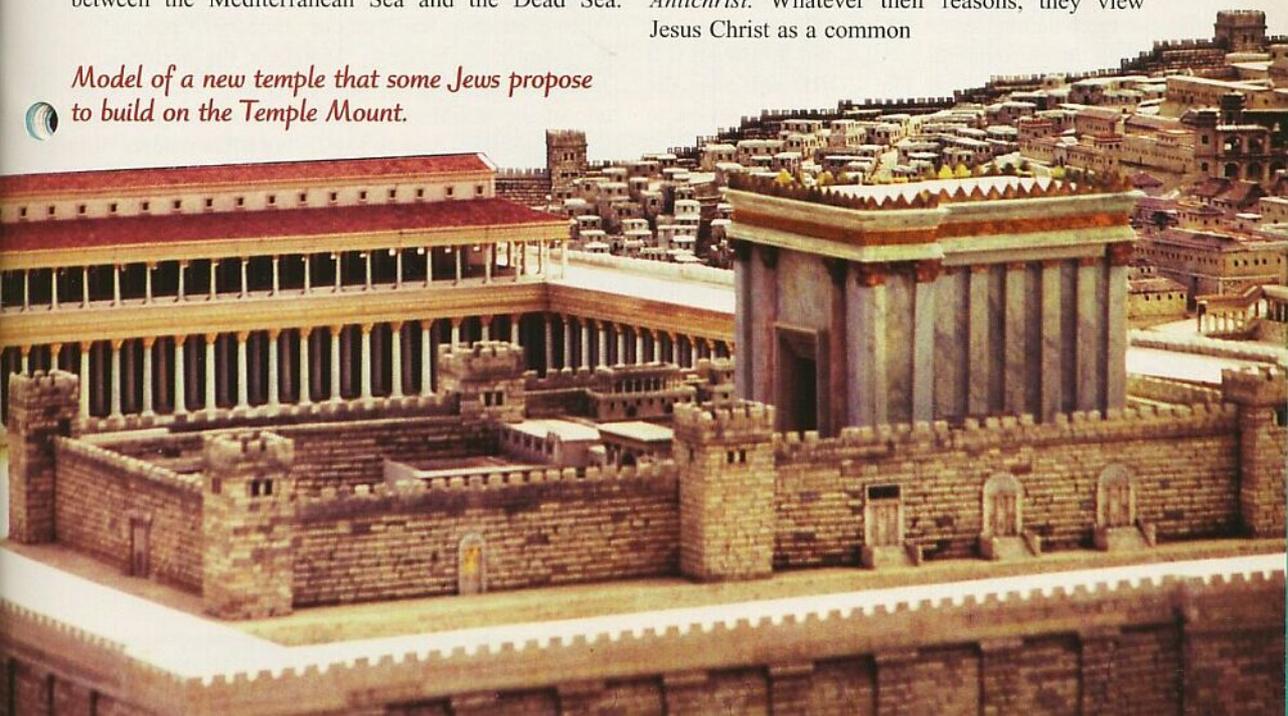
“...yet he shall come to his end, and none will help him.” How will this transpire?

The sixth trumpet of Revelation signals a titanic and merciless counterattack by Eastern forces from beyond the Euphrates River (9:13-21). By their incredible military force—200 million strong! (v. 16)—they will devastate Europe and much of the world. Nuclear armaments or other weapons of mass destruction will certainly be employed as a *third of mankind* will be killed in a very short time! (v. 18).

The Eastern forces will then march toward Israel, intent on finishing the job of wiping out the Beast power and its leader. The Euphrates River will be dried up “so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared” (16:12). And as explained in our previous issue’s installment of this series, the Beast and his forces will meet the European army at Armageddon or Megiddo in northern Israel (v. 16)—in fact, “the kings of the earth and of the *whole world*” will be there (v. 14).

Then, just when it appears that humanity will completely destroy itself, events will not be allowed to run their course (Matt. 24:22). For at that time, “all the tribes of the earth... will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (v. 30). Jesus and a mighty angelic army with Him will suddenly appear on the scene (Rev. 19:11, 14). And the resurrected saints will accompany them (Jude 14-15). What an awesome and wonderful event!

But the nations will be “angry” (Rev. 11:18). It may be that they will view the return of Christ as an *extraterrestrial* invasion, or perhaps as the appearance of the *Antichrist*. Whatever their reasons, they view Jesus Christ as a common



enemy! The Apostle John writes, “And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him... and against His army” (19:19). So “all nations” then march together to the Valley of Jehoshaphat (the modern Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem) to fight against the Lord (cf. Joel 3:1-2).

What happens then? God says, “**For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem....** Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley.... Then you shall flee through My mountain valley” (Zech. 14:2-5). But just who will flee? Remember that only half of Jerusalem’s people will have been taken captive. And, as the city’s population is currently about 600,000—of which nearly 400,000 are Jews—there will still be quite a few Jews there, as well as in the surrounding countryside.

In fact, God says, “On that day I will make **the leaders of Judah** like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place. **The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first....** On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem” (12:6-8 NIV). And, “**Judah also will fight at Jerusalem**” (14:14), *retaking* the city.

## God’s Enemies Vanquished

In the final battle, the Almighty “will strike every horse [armored vehicle?] with confusion, and its rider with madness... every horse of the peoples with blindness” (12:4). Will the electronic sensors and guidance systems of enemy tanks malfunction, causing a flurry of “friendly fire” incidents that spark uncontrolled infighting? Perhaps. But, however He does it, God Himself will send a “great panic” among the attacking nations, causing them to slaughter *one another* in the ensuing confusion (14:13-15)—just as He did to ancient Gentile forces

that came against Judah in the days of Kings Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah (2 Chron. 20; 2 Kings 18-19).

Yet this is not the *primary* method God will use to obliterate the enemy forces. For upon His return, the Living Christ will smite the attacking armies with the equivalent of a nuclear firestorm! “And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve [“consume away” KJV] *while they stand on their feet*, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their

tongues shall dissolve in their mouths” (Zech. 14:12).

The book of Isaiah fills in more details: “For behold, the LORD will come with *fire* and with His chariots, like a *whirlwind*, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be

many” (66:15-16; cf. 2 Thess. 1:7-8). This is the same fate described for the Beast’s accomplice, the False Prophet, “whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the *brightness of His coming*” (2:8).

In a blinding flash, untold numbers of people will be instantly incinerated: “Moreover the multitude of [Jerusalem’s] foes shall be like fine dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passes away” (Is. 29:5). And as *The Living Bible* renders verse 7, “all the nations fighting Jerusalem will vanish like a dream!” Indeed, the nightmare will at long last be over.

Yet right now you may be somewhat disturbed and frightened at what is to come. But you need not live in fear. For Jesus said, “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to *escape* all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36). You can have God’s protection if you start obeying Him and completely submit your life to His will (cf. Rev. 3:10).

In the end, what will happen after the Messiah decisively defeats the armies that fight against Him, and liberates the Holy City? That will be the subject of the next article in our Mideast series. So be sure to keep reading *The World Ahead*. **WS**



A view of the Mount of Olives. Across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem’s Old City, it is where Jesus Christ is prophesied to stand at His return.

# A Millennial Po



After viewing today's political turmoil and bloodshed in the Mideast, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel asks, "When will it all end?... Will we go on struggling forever? Will the sword forever devour its makers?... Political conflict in the Middle East is not about to disappear under any predictable circumstance—that is, unless one accepts the idea that history will soon come to its end and we shall reach the Millennium" (*A Place Among the Nations*, p. 372).

Is he right? Is continued conflict and bloodshed—in a world that has mastered the technology to erase human life from this planet—the *probable* course of events? Or will the Great God intervene supernaturally and establish this Millennium—a 1,000-year age of peace, justice and prosperity under the rule of Jesus Christ and His resurrected saints?

In past articles of our Middle East series we have traced the ethnic roots of the inhabitants of this region, examined the violence surrounding the birth of the modern State of Israel and considered the horrendous war that will take place at the end of this age. In this final installment of our series, we will look beyond that destruction to the glorious 1,000-year reign of our Savior—the Millennium.

One of the most popular, long-time religious beliefs is that those who have led a "good life" go to heaven when they die. It follows, then, that heaven would be where

Christ establishes His Kingdom. But are these assumptions really what the Bible teaches?

Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit *the earth*" (Matt. 5:5). What a strange thing to say if people go to heaven when they die. And most assuredly, the meek have not inherited *today's* world, where so often "might makes right"!

Perhaps the most definitive proof of all is found in Revelation 5. Speaking of the resurrected saints, we learn that they will be "kings and priests to our God; **and... shall reign on the earth**" (v. 10).

## He Will Rule All Nations

What will happen in this Kingdom? Jesus taught that after He returns to earth, He will take the reigns of government. "When the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His

glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him" (Matt. 25:31-32).

It is the Father who will give Christ the authority to rule these nations at His Second Coming. The book of Revelation tells us of that time: "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever'" (11:15). But first, as our last installment in this series showed, Jesus will have to destroy the armies gathered at Jerusalem who oppose His rule (cf. 19:15).

Under Christ, a resurrected King David will rule the descendants of the Twelve Tribes of Israel





# Paradise on Earth

by Raymond F. McNair

living at that time (Ezek. 37:24-28; Jer. 30:9). Under David, the twelve apostles will "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28). As we saw earlier, other immortal saints will rule as "kings and priests" over all nations under Christ (Rev. 5:10).

The very seat of Christ's Government will be in the Middle East. "At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it" (Jer. 3:17 NRSV).

In chapters 43 and 44 of Ezekiel, we are told of a glorious millennial temple that will be located in Jerusalem. "And He said to me, 'Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever'" (43:7).

The book of Daniel also tells of this time: "Then the... greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His Kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (7:27).

And Isaiah foretells the Messiah's rule over nations as well: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder.... **Of the**

**increase of His government and peace there will be no end,** upon the throne of David and over His kingdom... forever" (Is. 9:6-7).

## A Time to Learn

What a wonderful concept Isaiah speaks of—global peace! But peace can never come to a world held in the grip of ignorance, poverty and lawlessness. Today's world rejects God's laws and has turned to "man's way"—the path that produces *ignorance* and *suffering* (Rom. 3:10-18). But the time is soon coming when this earth will be refreshed by first learning, then following. God's ways of peace and happiness (cf. Is. 48:17-18). These "times of refreshing" will come to this earth after Christ's return (Acts 3:19).

The Father "will send Jesus Christ whom heaven must receive until the time of *restoration of all things*" (v. 21). What will the Father *restore*? God's way, His law and His government over all the earth!

But to restore these things, the entire human race must be *reeducated*. Men and women will need to acquire true wisdom, knowledge and understanding. "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house

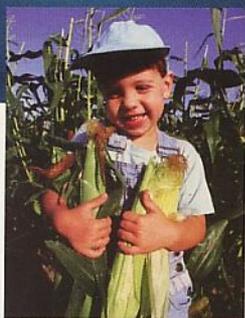
shall be established on the top of the mountains....

And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; **He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.**' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Is. 2:2-3).

Mankind will then come to love the law of God, and will learn how to apply it in everyday life (cf. Ps. 119:97-104). During that utopian age, man will no longer doubt the existence of his Creator. The foolishness of atheism (Ps. 14:1) will be replaced by the full realization by everyone that our universe did not come into being through blind, random forces.

In the wonderful World Ahead, all nations will come to see that the fear of or deep reverence for the Lord "is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Prov. 9:10). Part of fearing God is learning to *obey* Him. "A good understanding have all those who do His commandments" (Ps. 111:10).

But more than just learning His



laws, people will come to really know God Himself, the Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth. No person or nation can be truly wise and understanding without genuinely comprehending that an all-wise Creator made the entire universe and rules it by His great power, through His invisible laws! (cf. Deut. 4:6-7).

During this present age, all mankind has been misled by Satan, the great deceiver (Rev. 12:9). And surely the greatest of his deceptions have been in the realm of religion. Of the six billion human beings alive today, only one-third even *professes* to believe in Jesus Christ. But, sadly, even most of them do not really understand the awesome plan of God and the real meaning of His true Gospel. Rather, many have accepted a *counterfeit* gospel (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 11:3-4).

Today, countless millions look to Mecca, Rome or other holy cities for religious guidance and direction. Millions make pilgrimages to those places. But during the Millennium, far greater numbers will flock to Jerusalem, and will then look to it as God's Holy City: "And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me" in Jerusalem (Is. 66:23). Furthermore, "it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up [to that city] from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16). Thus, God's Sabbaths and Festivals (cf. Lev. 23) will be kept by all of humanity!

When the Messiah comes to establish His Kingdom on earth, He will begin the colossal task of reeducating the entire world. It will take much time and effort to convince all nations that they have been deceived by following false ideologies in all

major areas of belief and activity—religion, morality, education, government, commerce, etc.

But God will bind Satan and remove the evil influence he has had over all mankind from the time of Adam and Eve (Rev. 20:1-3; Eph. 2:1-3). Then, with the resurrected saints helping Christ to teach mankind a better way of life, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Is. 11:9).

There is so much instability in today's world—in its religions, government, education and family structure. But, that will not be so in the World Ahead: "The LORD is exalted.... He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, and the strength of your salvation" (33:5-6).

After the Almighty removes Satan's influence from this earth, He will then graciously pour out His Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28-29). God will give humanity "a new heart and... a new spirit" (Ezek. 36:26-27). Further, the Great God says that He will put His laws "in their mind and write them on their hearts" (Heb. 8:10).

## Peace and Prosperity

The nations will then learn that living by God's law of love—summarized by the Ten Commandments (1 John 5:3)—is the only way to peace, happiness and everything good. Only then will they begin to experience true peace with security. The power of divine love will then replace the destructive influence of bitter hatred and strife that is so prevalent in our world today.

What will be the result of the influence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of *billions*? Today's worldwide ethnic hostilities will vanish as God's Spirit softens the hearts of all men. The book of Isaiah tells us that

men will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore"! (2:4).

Do you fully realize the importance of this prophecy? Men will convert their weapons of war and destruction into implements of production! No more heavy taxes to pay for arms that serve only to maim and kill fellow human beings.

The peace, prosperity and abundant living of the coming Millennium is perhaps best summed up by the Prophet Micah: "Everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree and no one shall make them afraid" (4:4). What a contrast to our present societies plagued by violence, poverty and ignorance. May God hasten Christ's return and the establishment of that marvelous paradise on earth!

The city of Jerusalem today is a hotbed of ethnic strife, unrest and violence. But in the Millennium, this same city will be the focal point from which will flow the knowledge of God's way of life to every other nation and people on the face of the earth. God tells us of that time in the book of Zechariah: "I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.... Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing"! (8:3-5).

At this time of year, many are beginning to recite the words of the heavenly host on the day of Christ's birth: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" (Luke 2:14). Yet how sad it is that most who read these words do not understand what the angels were really talking about—that Jesus Christ was born as the King of a genuine World Government that will one day bring world peace, harmony and love. 