

Arab-Israeli Peace???

Despite the euphoria over the Israeli-P.L.O. peace accord, the road to actual peace between Israel and the Arabs is full of difficulties. Bible-believing Christians view this startling development with great prophetic interest. Those who have a short prophetic time frame expect a peace that will prophetically position Israel in the setting of Ezekiel 38:11—dwelling "at rest," "without walls and having neither bars nor gates." Then Gog and his associates would invade Israel resulting in the destruction of our world order (Ezekiel 38 & 39). We, however, are inclined to believe that other prophetic events have to develop in Israel, Europe, and the United States before the drama of Ezekiel 38 & 39 can unfold. Therefore, whether or not peace is attained, this peace process will set in motion a series of events that will precipitate another Arab-Israeli war.

Regardless of our prophetic view, Christian attitudes toward Israel and its land are all important. Sometimes attitudes contradict. For example, some Christians who believe God used the Holocaust to punish the Jewish people for not having the faith to return to their promised land, feel it is now right for Israel to give up land which they claim the Jews were punished for not having the faith to occupy in the first place.

Whose Land?

This raises the question—whose land are the world powers pressuring Israel to give to the Arabs? During the period of the prophetic development of Israel, before God's Kingdom is set up in Jerusalem, God refers to the land as "His land." Ezekiel 38:16; Isaiah 11:11. Joel 3:1-2 reveals that one of the reasons the Lord punishes the nations is first they scattered His people Israel among the nations and then they "parted (partitioned) My land." In 1917 Britain declared the Jews had a right to a National Home in Palestine. The League of Nations in 1921 gave Britain a mandate to implement this Jewish State on both sides of the Jordan River. In 1922 at the urging of Britain, three-quarters of Palestine—all of Palestine east of the Jordan River was given to the Arabs and is now known as the nation of Jordan. In 1947 the UN reneged further on the world's promise of a Jewish State in Palestine by partitioning the remaining one-quarter of Palestine into a Jewish State and an Arab State. Despite the Arab boast to push the Jews in the sea, in the '67 War Israel captured the West Bank and Gaza and now had one-quarter of the land promised to them in 1917 and 1921. Ever since, the World powers have been pressuring Israel to give up the West Bank and Gaza and now, seemingly, they have succeeded. The LORD is angry with the nations for these efforts to partition His land to appease the oil rich Arab nations.

Expanding Borders

The Rabin-Arafat agreement is at variance with Micah 7:11 (NAS, NIV) which identifies our time as "the day for extending your (Israel's) boundaries." This peace agreement actually shrinks Israel's boundaries, consequently it will not last. There is only one nation

on earth that has its boundaries decreed in the Bible. That nation is Israel. Genesis 15:18-21 declares that Israel's ultimate boundaries are from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates River. These boundaries will be fully attained in God's Kingdom after the "time of trouble" or "great tribulation" which terminates our world or age (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:3, 21-22; Zephaniah 3:8,9). We will content ourselves here with identifying the minimum territory Israel will occupy before the "time of trouble" is over, and incidentally deal with the immigration of Russian Jews to the extent that that immigration is tied into the "land issue" scriptures.

Psalm 83 deals with the Israeli-Arab conflict. It contains a prayer for the defeat of the Arab nations. The following scriptures reveal how this defeat is accomplished.

After Micah 7:11 speaks of our day as "the day for extending your (Israel's) boundaries," verses 13 through 17 describe the "time of trouble." For example, verse 13, "And the earth (symbolic of the social order) will become desolate because of her inhabitants. On account of the fruit of their deeds." Verse 14, sandwiched in this "time of trouble" setting, speaks of the Lord feeding (Hebrew "ruling," Strong's #7462) over Israel in a territory that includes Bashan (the Golan Heights—Deut. 3:3,4; Num. 21:23-25; Josh. 21:27) and Gilead. Gilead is a part of the East Bank of the Jordan River. The current peace process in the Middle East is negotiating the status of the Golan Heights and the West Bank. What man proposes, God disposes. If Israel is forced to compromise land for peace, Micah 7 indicates that Israel will again acquire the Golan Heights, and not only the West Bank, but the East Bank as well, before the time of trouble is over.

Zechariah 10:10,11, speaks of an immigration of Jews from Assyria and Egypt that is so large that it will fill the land of Gilead and Lebanon. Joshua 13:5,6, reveals that at least southern Lebanon belongs to Israel by divine right. Israel already occupies a buffer zone in southern Lebanon. An immigration from Assyria and Egypt will be so numerically great that it will fill the land of Gilead (East Bank) and southern Lebanon.

Literal Assyria is Iraq. There are fewer than a thousand Jews in Iraq and Egypt. This is hardly enough to fulfill Zechariah 10:10. Micah 5:5-7 is an example that "Assyria" is symbolic in other prophecies concerning Israel. Here Assyria invades Israel just before Israel becomes a blessed nation (v. 7), and "Assyria" is repelled. This is evidently a parallel account of Gog's invasion recorded in Ezekiel 38 and 39. It is generally agreed that Gog and some of his associates mentioned in Ezekiel 38:3-7 refers to Russia and at least some of the republics of the former Soviet Union—including the Moslem republics. Therefore, the massive immigration from Assyria may be a reference to the current wave of Jews from Russia and the CIS (former Soviet Union) republics. Symbolic "Egypt" is the Christian world. There are over 5 million Jews in the United States alone.

Ezekiel 20:32-38 identifies Israel's ancient exodus from Egypt as a picture of the exodus of Jews from all nations back to Israel at the end of the Gospel age. In this picture Israel had to cross a "sea" and a "river" in order to enter the promised land. The sea and the river (Hebrew word here does not mean the Euphrates but merely a river) in Zechariah 10:11 seem to be symbolic of removing the obstacles that prohibited the Jews from

leaving the former Soviet Union. That obstacle was Communism. With its removal the massive exodus began. Nearly a half-million have immigrated to Israel.

Peace, Peace When There Is No Peace

Isaiah 11:14-16 also speaks of the smiting of a sea and a river (again in Hebrew not the Euphrates) in connection with a large immigration of Jews from Assyria to Israel. Verse 13 parallels Jeremiah 3:18 the "house of Judah" and the "house of Israel" become one in Diaspora and return "together" to the Promised Land. Verse 14 shows any peace agreement will explode in a two-front war on Israel's southwest and eastern borders. "They (Israel) shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west (Gaza strip on the southwest Mediterranean coast where the Palestinians now reside)." The Hebrew literally means a flying attack from behind. The picture becomes even more vivid as the Hebrew for "shoulders" in Numbers 34:11 refers to a maritime coast—"the side (shoulder) of the sea." Any Palestinian state or self-rule on the Gaza Strip will be short lived. Eventually, Israel by missiles or planes will circle out into the Mediterranean and attack the Palestinians from behind. Then the war shifts to the eastern front and verse 13 (NAS) continues—"they (Israel) will plunder the sons of the east. They will possess Edom and Moab. And the sons of Ammon will be subject to them."

These Old Testament nations occupied territories that are now within the Arab nation of Jordan on the East Bank of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. A war in which Israel defeats Jordan and occupies portions of Jordan, Gilead, Ammon, Moab and Edom could spark a wave of worldwide anti-Semitism that could precipitate a further massive exodus from Russia and the former Soviet Republics as described in the 16th verse.

In Ezekiel 38:14,15 Gog, is spoken of as coming from the "northern parts." Jer. 16:14,15; 31:7,8; 23:8 and 3:18 all speak of the regathering from all the nations, but additionally mention an emigration "out of the land of the north," which seems to be the land of Gog, or the former Soviet republics. Jeremiah 3:14-18 reveals a trickle return, which was true from 1878 to the fall of communism in 1990. Isaiah 27:12-13 also speaks of trickle immigration from Russia until the sounding of a great trumpet, which causes another massive immigration. The Jubilee trumpet blast of human rights brought down Communism and nearly a half-million Jews fled to Israel. Isaiah 11:13-16 indicates the next massive immigration wave from the former Soviet Republics to Israel might be after the next Arab-Israeli war.

Zephaniah 2 is a parallel prophecy to Isaiah 11:13 which showed a decisive victory over the Palestinians in Gaza on the west and Moab, Ammon and Edom on the east. The Zephaniah 2 setting is during "the day of the Lord's anger (verse 2)." Verses 4-7 describe a complete defeat of the Philistines in the Gaza area. Of course the literal Philistines have long since passed off the scene but they are symbolic of the Palestinians who now occupy that territory. Ironically one of the fanciful claims of the Palestinians is that they are descendants of the Philistines.

Then Zephaniah 2:8-10 indicts Moab and Ammon for all their abuses towards Israel. "I have heard the reproach of Moab and Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people and magnified themselves against their (Israel's) border (verse 8)." The Lord spared ancient Moab and Ammon during Israel's wilderness journey but not modern Moab and Ammon, which is the Arab nation of Jordan. It was Jordan who captured the West Bank, the Bible Jerusalem, expelled all Jews during Israel's War for Independence in 1948 and occupied them until Israel's victory in the '67 War. It was Jordan who destroyed all Jewish holy places in Jerusalem. Also Jordan and the Palestinians sided with Saddam Hussein during Desert Storm in the hope he would fulfill his threat to "scorch half of Israel." Now in the "peace process" Jordan is maneuvering to have the West Bank and Jerusalem federated to Jordan. Because of these sins, verse 9 informs us that Moab and Ammon (parts of modern Jordan) shall become "a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people (Israel) shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people (Israel) shall possess them."

Who Are The Palestinians?

Joan Peters in her book *From Time Immemorial* proves historically that the overwhelming majority of Arabs in Israel, including the West Bank and Gaza, do not have centuries' long roots in the land. For centuries relatively few Arabs wandered in and out of the land of Israel. The Royal British Commission in 1937 blamed those Arabs for the desolation of the land. When the Jews, since 1878 and especially after World War I, returned in fulfillment of Bible prophecy, the economy of that land perked up. As a result, Arabs from Syria, Egypt, Iraq, etc., poured into Palestine by the tens of thousands. In Ezekiel 36:1-7 the Lord is angry with "the people round about" the land of Israel (Arabs) who came into the land and made it a desolation. Verse 7 shows the Lord will punish these self-styled Palestinians. (And that punishment as already noted was depicted in Isaiah 11:13 and Zephaniah 2:3-8.)

After their decisive victory over the Arabs, Israel will dwell in peace and unwallled villages as symbolized in Ezekiel 38:11. At this juncture, Gog and the nations listed in Ezekiel 38:3-6 will invade Israel. Here we disagree with many of our "born-again" Christian friends. We do not believe in the so-called second holocaust in which nine-tenths of the Israelis will be eternally destroyed when slain by the forces of Gog and only a one-tenth holy remnant remains. The Scriptures show that some Israelis will be killed in Gog's invasion but even these will come forth from the grave for their trial for eternal life. (John 5:28-29).

This concept of the destruction of nine-tenths is based on the RSV's gross mistranslation of Ezekiel 20:37 which implies the "rod" that Israelis pass under is a shepherd's counting rod. The New RSV has corrected its former mistranslation of Ezekiel 20:37.

Holy Remnant Is A Holy Flock

The several Hebrew words translated remnant mean remainder, descendants, survivors. The thought of minority is not contained in these Hebrew words. The Hebrew words

translated remnant can refer to a minority or a majority. Micah 2:12-13 refers to the remnant of Israel that is delivered as a flock that is noisy because it is crowded with men. Ezekiel 36:32 speaks of this flock as a "holy flock" that is increased with men. This "holy flock" will be led by the Old Testament saints who, when raised from the grave, will be made princes in all the earth (Psa. 45:16). Together they will be the nucleus of God's Kingdom that will spread unto the ends of the earth. Zechariah 8:20-23 The Scriptures show that some Israelis will be killed in Gog's invasion but even these will come forth from the grave for their trial for eternal life. (John 5:28-29).

For a more detailed Scriptural discussion of the land issue and the "holy flock" send for the booklet [The Israeli-Arab Peace Process In Bible Prophecy.](#)

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