

The Intractable Middle East Problem

Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:

And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me...

(Ex. 4:22b, 23a).

(Almost all of the material in this article, save for comments on recent or current events in the world, can be found in material which the author has written at one time or another over the past thirty years, scattered throughout the books which have been printed during that time. In this respect, the short of the matter follows, with not that much explanation or that many references. The long of the matter, with explanation and references, can be found in the books.

This material has been put together and is being sent out because of a number of requests for comments brought about by the current Middle East situation. The existing problem is far from simple, though, from a Biblical standpoint, not as complex as one might be led to believe.

One might say, from a Biblical standpoint, a person can understand the problem; apart from a Biblical standpoint, it is not possible to understand the problem.)

“Israel,” of course, is *the key*. And concerning problems existing between Israel and the nation’s Moslem neighbors in the Middle East (Arab, Iranian, et al), during the spring of 1991, James Baker, Secretary of State under the first President Bush, stated that this is “the most intractable problem that there is.”

James Baker was also one of the two men who co-chaired the Iraq Study Group in late 2006, turning out an assessment and recommendations — *the Baker-Hamilton report* — on Iraq and the Middle East in general which referred to the situation as “grave and deteriorating”

and warned of “dwindling chances to change course before crisis turns to chaos.” And the somber faces and urgency in the voices of both James Baker and Lee Hamilton told the story apart from the report itself.

Was James Baker correct in his assessment of the situation in the Middle East over fifteen years ago? Insofar as man solving the problem, he was as correct as one can become.

Were James Baker, Lee Hamilton, and others in this group correct concerning the recent assessment of the Middle East situation? That could be answered two ways: 1) From a Biblical standpoint, the situation is *far worse* than the report indicates, but 2) also from a Biblical standpoint, the situation is *much brighter* than the report indicates.

And the preceding would require explanation, providing, at the same time, information to address the whole of the issue at hand.

So, let’s look at it.

First, dealing particularly with the intractable problem in the Middle East, this *must* be done from a *Biblical base*. There is no other way. Apart from a Biblical base, a person will only find himself as mired down in trying to deal with the problem as the problem itself has become.

A Biblical base is simple and easy to come by. However, *it would not be acceptable* to the secular world at all. How could it be acceptable when most of those in the Middle East are Moslems, along with the fact that the Bible would not be acceptable as a base to work from by any nation attempting to solve the problem, whether the United States or elsewhere? Even Israel would have major problems in this respect because of that which would have to be stated and dealt with.

And the preceding would be true even among many Christians in these nations. Allow an example to illustrate the point, part of which bears directly on the Middle East situation. And, in order to understand the existing problem, this would have to be dealt with *first and foremost* anyway.

The One Nation with a God

In the 1950s, during the Eisenhower administration, the words “under God” were added to a line in the United States pledge of al-

legiance to the flag, making the pledge of allegiance read, “one nation under God.” But is this true of the United States? That is to ask, “Is this true from a Biblical perspective?” — the only place where one can possibly go to answer the question.

Christians will fight the ACLU and others through whatever means deemed necessary over this issue. But does either side really know what Scripture has to say about the matter?

The Biblical base for this and all the remainder of the Middle East problems can be found in *Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets*. One doesn't even have to go into the New Testament. Such would be of little to no value in the matter anyway, for there is nothing in the New that cannot be found in some form in the Old. The New is simply an opening up and unveiling of that which had its beginning in the Old. So, for the most part, we'll simply stay with the Old since all of the information is there anyway.

For “one nation under God” a person would begin with Genesis chapter nine and proceed from there. This chapter deals with Noah and his three sons following the Flood, and everyone in the human race today can trace their ancestry back to Noah through one of his three sons.

Only one of these three sons — *Shem* — is said to have *a God* (v. 26). Neither Ham nor Japheth had a God; and if either was to receive spiritual blessings, which can come only from and through the one true God, *they had to go to the one son with a God*. As stated in the text, Ham and/or Japheth *had to “dwell in the tents of Shem”* (v. 27).

That is to say, in order to receive spiritual blessings, Ham and/or Japheth *had to go to and partake of that which God had bequeathed to Shem*. Or, in the words of the explanatory statement by H. C. Leupold in his word studies in the Hebrew text of Genesis, the expression “implies friendly sharing of his hospitality and so of his blessings.”

This is the manner in which God has established the matter in Genesis, and *it can never change*.

The lineage from Shem, in the respect seen in Gen. 9:26, goes through *Abraham* nine generations later and then through *Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons*, from whom sprang the twelve tribes of Israel, the nation of Israel. In short, *the descendants of Shem through this lineage alone have a God*. The whole of this matter is something clearly

revealed and seen in Scripture.

Other descendants of Shem, such as the Arab nations (from Abraham through Ishmael, or through one of the sons of Keturah, or through Isaac's son, Esau), are as the descendants of Ham and Japheth in this respect. They are to be "reckoned among the nations [Gentile nations]." Israel, on the other hand, is *not* to be "reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23:9).

With that as a base to work from, one can then understand verses such as Psa. 72:18 and Psa. 96:5. The first verse refers to:

"...the Lord God, the God of Israel..."

And the second verse states:

"For all the gods of the nations are idols [*lit.*, 'nothing']..."

That is to say, the gods of all the nations (whether they be idols, demons, or anything else) are "nothing" in comparison to the God of Israel, the one true and living God.

Psalm 33:12 is often misunderstood in the preceding respect:

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord..."

That statement is not a reference to any Gentile nation. *It can't be!* From a Biblical standpoint, *such could not be possible* (unless projected out beyond Man's Day, into the Messianic Era, during that future time when a Gentile nation would be able to associate itself with Israel in the respect seen in Gen. 9:27)!

The statement, contextually, has to do with *Israel*, the only nation with a God. *The only way any Gentile nation can have a God is to go to the nation with a God, go to Israel.*

God made that *quite clear* at the outset of His word, in Genesis chapter nine. And today, with Israel in her current state of unbelief, for the most part scattered among the nations, *it is not possible* for a Gentile nation to dwell in the tents of Shem and possess a God.

For a New Testament reference relative to the preceding, note Eph. 2:12. *Christians possess a God*, but this is only because of and through a Jewish Messiah Who came through Israel. With Israel in

her current state of disobedience and unbelief, the same thing *cannot* presently be true of nations per se.

Thus, from a Biblical standpoint, *it is not possible* for any Gentile nation to look upon itself as “one nation under God.” And *that one truth* really forms the central base for understanding the whole of the Middle East problem.

At the center of the problem is Israel, the only nation on the face of the earth with a God, a standing which Israel holds even in the nation’s present state of unbelief. And surrounding this nation with a God are Moslem nations with a governmental system, intermixed with a religious system, with a god who is described in Psa. 96:5, the same place the god of the United States or any other Gentile nation is described during the present day and time.

Israel’s Position Among the Nations

Beyond that, Israel is *God’s firstborn son* (Ex. 4:22, 23), the one and only nation among all the nations which God recognizes as possessing *the rights of the firstborn* — a firstborn right among nations, which, among other things, includes *the right to hold the sceptre, the right to rule*. Israel is the only nation which God recognizes as possessing these rights, and, with Israel exercising these rights (which the nation one day will exercise, though that is far from the case today), *the Gentile nations are to be ruled by and blessed through Israel* (in accordance with Gen. 12:2, 3, realizing another part of the rights of the firstborn, the priestly rights).

The Gentile nations today rule under Satan and his angels (in accordance with that seen in Dan. 10:12-20). But Israel, not to be reckoned among the nations, occupies a position separate from this rule (in accordance with that also referenced in this chapter in Daniel, in v. 21).

Satan knows all these things, and he has been doing and will continue doing everything within his power to prevent the one nation with a God from ever exercising her God-ordained position *as God’s firstborn son*. He knows that when this occurs, not only will he have to relinquish the sceptre but conditions relative to Israel and the nations will become as described in Zech. 8:20-23.

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts; it shall yet come to pass, that there shall come a people, and the inhabitants of many cities:

And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also.

Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”

And in an effort to prevent the preceding from ever occurring, Satan and his angels, ruling from a heavenly sphere through the Gentile nations on earth, have been seeking for decades in the Middle East, through the nations, to bring about that stated in Psa. 83:4:

“Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.”

In Psalm chapter eighty-three, ten Gentile nations are seen allying themselves against Israel in the preceding respect, foreshadowing the ten-kingdom confederacy of Gentile nations which will one day rule under Antichrist and ally itself against Israel in exactly the same manner.

(For information on the present and future government of the earth, refer to the author’s book, THE MOST HIGH RULETH.)

And There Is More...

Then, as if the preceding wasn’t already too much for man to even begin to deal with, there is still more. There is the matter of Israel being driven out among the nations, *because of unbelief, to effect repentance*. And a remnant has returned back to the land *before the time*. The slayer, “Israel,” typified in Numbers chapter thirty-five, has returned to the land of her possession *before it is time for the nation to return*.

The Slayer, according to the type in Numbers chapter thirty-five, *cannot* return to the land of her possession before Christ completes

His present high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary and comes forth as the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek (cf. Gen. 14:18-20; Psa. 110:1-7; Heb. 5:6-10; 6:20; 7:1-21). And because a remnant has returned *before the time*, before Christ completes His high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, *a major Middle East problem has resulted.*

It is the age-old story of a disobedient Jonah asleep on board a ship headed away from God's calling and then finding himself in the midst of a raging storm out on the sea, a storm so severe that it struck fear in the hearts of those men on the ship, a storm so severe that it was about to destroy the ship. *That is the picture which Scripture presents of the dire situation in the Middle East today.*

(For information on the preceding, in relation to the antitype of Numbers chapter thirty-five, refer to Appendix I in the author's book, ESTHER.)

Then, as if the preceding addition to the existing problem wasn't enough, add something else. God pictures Israel as *having been wounded, as being sick, because of past disobedience* (Isa. 1:2ff). And God states concerning Israel's condition in this respect that the One Who brought about this condition (God, because of the nation's disobedience) is *the only One Who can cure the nation* (Hosea 5:13-6:2).

The present nation of Israel in the Middle East is an outgrowth and result of a Zionistic movement which began under Theodor Herzl (an ardent Zionist) and others toward the end of the nineteenth century. Then, the catalysts to bring this Zionistic movement to fruition were, centrally, events occurring during and following two subsequent world wars, WWI and WWII.

The former provided England with the Mandate to Palestine ("the administration of the territory of Palestine" given to England by the League of Nations in 1922). And England, prior to this time, had become sympathetic toward the Zionists' aims of a homeland for the dispersed Jew in the land to which they now held the Mandate, resulting in numerous Jews, during particularly the next two decades, returning to the land of Palestine.

And *the latter*, resulting centrally from the actions of the Third

Reich in Europe — seeking to produce a Jew-free Europe, slaying some 6,000,000 Jews in the process, in what is called *the Holocaust* — provided the Jewish people with that which was necessary among themselves and world opinion to bring about events of May 14, 1948.

On this date, the current Israeli nation was born. A remnant of Jews, for the first time since Rome had ruled the known world, once again existed as a nation in the Middle East. And since that time, with Jews worldwide continuously streaming into Israel, the nation to date is over 5,000,000 strong. And it is *this return* of the Jewish people from a worldwide dispersion (referred to through the name, *Aliyah*) that Bible students often associate with the prophesied Biblical return.

The fact of the matter though is that the Jewish people have sought to return *through man's own power and strength during a time in which the nation remains in disobedience and unbelief*. God scattered the Jewish people among the Gentile nations *because of disobedience, to effect repentance*. However, *an unrepentant and a disbelieving remnant returned before the time*. A nation resulted, and that nation has grown over the past almost sixty years to where it comprises a sizeable percentage of the world's Jewish population (about two-fifths).

A people described in the words of Isa. 1:4-6 (“a people laden with iniquity”) presently reside in the land. And the land itself is described in the verse immediately following, in verse seven (“desolate...strangers devour it”).

Numerous verses in Scripture deal with Israel's restoration (e.g., Deut. 30:1-3; Isa. 1:4-2:5; 6:1-8; Ezek. 36:24ff; 37:21ff; 38:8ff; 39:25ff; Matt. 24:30, 31). And that stated in the text and context of verses of this nature clearly presents *numerous insurmountable problems* for anyone attempting to associate the present return of a remnant with God's promised restoration of His people.

The same prophecies which deal with Israel's restoration also deal with the reason Israel was driven out among the nations (*because of disobedience*), along with that which must occur before God will remove His people from the nations and place them back in the land — *repentance*. *And the latter has yet to occur*.

Thus, in this respect alone, *it is not possible* that the return of a remnant *at a time before repentance occurs* can be looked upon as God restoring the Jewish people in accordance with the numerous Old

Testament prophecies.

If the present restoration of a remnant to the land is the beginning of the prophesied Biblical restoration of the Jewish people to the land, this would result in *God acting contrary to His revealed Word*, not only relative to repentance but in numerous other realms as well — *an impossibility*.

Aside from the fact that the restoration of the Jewish people *can occur only following Israel's repentance*, this restoration *must occur in accordance with the chronology of that foreshadowed by each of the seven Jewish festivals in Leviticus chapter twenty-three* (which means that it can only follow Israel's national conversion at the end of the Tribulation); this restoration *can occur only after Christ completes His present high priestly ministry in the sanctuary*; this restoration *can occur only after Christ has returned at the end of the Tribulation*; this restoration *can occur only after two days, on the third day* (only after 2,000 years, in the third 1,000-year period, which comprises the Messianic Era); this restoration *can occur only after the Times of the Gentiles has been completed*; this restoration *can occur only after Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy has been fulfilled* (and seven years yet remain to be fulfilled in this prophecy).

The Complete Picture

Thus, the complete Middle East picture, as it exists today, could be succinctly depicted:

On the one hand, God's firstborn son, the one whose right it is to hold the sceptre, the only nation with a God, is sitting wounded in a place where the nation is not even supposed to be today, in the midst of Moslem nations, with the nations raging and the whole situation about to tumble out of control (cf. Psa. 2:1ff).

And on the other hand, Satan, through existing conditions, is doing all within his power to destroy Israel through using the surrounding Gentile nations, which are under his control and sway.

This is why there is a situation rapidly becoming uncontrollable, with the nations raging, in the Middle East today. This is why the world heard the cry from Nasser four decades ago that the primary goal of a war between Egypt and Israel was to drive Israel into the sea, doing away with the nation. And, as well, this is the reason why the

present ruler of Iran and others are openly and defiantly continuing to call for this same destruction of Israel today.

None of the basics behind these things are being taken into account in the nations' endeavors to effect Middle East peace. They can't take these basics into account. The intractable Middle East problem has both *a Biblical base* and *a false religious base*, and the nations seeking to effect peace cannot operate in either realm.

Both bases are *spiritual* and involve *supernatural powers* — one emanating from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the other emanating from the god of this age. Man's best efforts in either supernatural realm would be as powerless as trying to extinguish the flames of a burning skyscraper with an empty eyedropper.

And even if the nations could operate in the spiritual realm, the nations *couldn't* cure Israel of her current condition. *Only God can do this*, something which He clearly states that He will do following Israel being brought to *the place of repentance*.

The Middle East is *a powder keg with a burning short fuse*. It is going to blow, and man can't stop it, for the prophets have already spoken. *This is simply what GOD HAS DECREED that it will ultimately take to bring Israel to the place of repentance*, something that has been in the offing for over 2,600 years of Gentile rule and persecution of Israel.

How soon will it be before the Middle East tumbles completely out of control in the preceding manner? We're not told. So there is no need to speculate. Such would be useless anyway. Suffice it to say that *it is later than most care to think, imagine, or admit*.

Then, There Is Something Else

The preceding outlines the bad news. The preceding shows why a report such as the Baker-Hamilton report *can't even begin to touch the problem, as it exists*. And this is not to speak negatively of the report. Rather, it is simply to say, from a Biblical base, as previously outlined, that *there is an existing problem in the Middle East which man can't deal with*.

But there is good news. *The more the matter deteriorates, the brighter things become in another respect*. The dawn always follows the darkest hour of the night.

The time is rapidly approaching when the Church will be removed, and after that God will allow conditions to deteriorate to a point, particularly in the Middle East, where Israel will have no place to turn other than to the God of their fathers. Scripture describes that time as a day "that shall burn as an oven" (Mal. 4:1), and Scripture also speaks of conditions deteriorating during that time to a point where "no flesh" would survive apart from Divine intervention (Matt. 24:22).

It will be the story seen in the Book of Exodus all over again. Israel, through Gentile persecution, will be brought to the place of repentance, a Deliverer will be sent, Israel will be delivered, and Gentile power will be destroyed.

That coming day will see the "Sun of Righteousness" arising "with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4:2). Christ will return, Israel will be cured of her wound (her sickness), Gentile world power will be destroyed, and God's firstborn Sons (Christ, Israel, and the Church following the adoption) will then exercise the rights of primogeniture, with the Gentile nations being blessed through Israel.

Then and only then will the intractable problem in the Middle East be resolved. Then and only then will there be peace in the Middle East.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Psa. 122:6).