

## **How Should We As Christians React to Israel's Crisis?**

Charles Stambaugh 10/28/2023

### **We should understand how they began:**

God told Abram (Abraham) to leave his father's house. He would then show Abram the land that He would give to him for Abram's seed to become a great nation. Gen 12:1-8. 13:15-18 15:4 In Genesis 16, Abram's wife Sarai was barren and beyond childbearing years. She told Abram to go unto her maid Hagar, the Egyptian, so that they might obtain a child. Abram hearkened to her voice and Ishmael was born.

"The angel of the LORD said unto Hagar, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude...He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him." Gen 16:10,12 Abram sent Hagar and Ishmael away because Sarai despised them. In Genesis 17, Abram and Sarai did have a child in their old age who was named Isaac as God promised. Isaac became the ancestor of the Jewish nation. Ishmael became the ancestor of the Ishmaelites, Arabs and Muhammad.

**Think about:** The fight between the half-brothers continues today. They both claim that the same land was promised to them by God through Abram. If Abram did not sin with Hagar, we would not be in this crisis today. We should think about the consequences of our sins before we do them.

### **We should understand their religion:**

The Muslim's Quran (bible) includes many biblical figures, such as Adam, Moses, Abraham, Mary, Gabriel, and Jesus. They do not believe that Jesus is the son of God, but they believe Jesus was an important prophet who did miracles. They also believe he will return to Earth before the Day of Judgment to restore justice and defeat al-Masih ad-Dajjal, or "the false messiah."<sup>1</sup> The Dome of the Rock has the inscription: "O Lord, send your blessings to your Prophet and Servant Jesus son of Mary."<sup>2</sup>

The Christian's Old Testament is the same as Judaism. But Judaism does not believe that Jesus is the son of God but rather that He was a false prophet. To them the true Messiah is expected to return the Jews to their homeland and rebuild the Temple, reign as king, and usher in an era of peace and understanding where "the knowledge of God" fills the earth, leading the nations to "end up recognizing the wrongs they did Israel".<sup>3</sup>

**Think about:** Is it possible that we all pray to and worship the same God the Father? Does our God hear and answer their prayers? Is God answering your prayers?

### **We should understand how the modern Israel nation was formed:**

In World War I, the British Empire occupied the area of Palestine and the Suez Canal area. In 1922, the League of Nations granted Britain the Mandate for Palestine in which at that time Jews accounted for 11% of residents. The rise of Nazis prosecution in the 1930's brought a quarter of a million Jews. This caused an Arab revolt where 10% of the Palestinian Arab population was killed. By the end of World War II, the Jewish population increased to 31% of the area's population. After World War II, the UK found itself facing a Jewish guerrilla campaign over Jewish immigration restrictions, as well as continued conflict with the Arab community. On 22 July 1946, the Jewish guerrilla group Irgun bombed the British administrative headquarters for Palestine.<sup>4</sup>

On 29 November 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 181 (II) recommending the adoption and implementation of the "Plan of Partition with an Economic Union." The plan assigned 55-56% of Mandatory Palestine to the Jews and renamed the area Isarel. At the time, the Jews were about a third of the population of the area and owned around 6-7% of the land. Jews relocated 700,000 Arabs out the area.<sup>5</sup> Arab Palestine was then divided into two section the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The City of Jerusalem was also divided with the old part in Arab Palestine. Both the Jews and Arabs now claim Jerusalem as their capital and holy place. The Jewish population continued to grow, and they began settlements outside the UN boundaries. This brought on fighting and outrage from the UN, the international community, and the PLO. Israel did give back some of the land which included Gaza and agreed to coexist with the Arabs in the West Bank.

**Think about:** What would your reaction be if another group came and took over your home and made you move to another country? Should Israel make settlements outside the defined UN boundaries?

**We should understand the enemy:**

The Gaza Strip is only 25 miles long and 7.5 miles wide with a population of about 2 million. Most people in the Gaza Strip are descendants of refugees who fled or were expelled from the area that became Israel. Hamas is a terrorist organization the Islamic Resistance Movement. Hamas's first strike against Israel came in the spring 1989. In July 2007, after winning the 2006 Palestinian legislative election, Hamas became the elected government. In 2007, Hamas expelled the rival party Fatah from Gaza. This broke the Unity Government between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, creating two separate governments for the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Following the takeover of Gaza by Hamas, the territory has been subjected to a blockade maintained by Israel and Egypt. Over the next 15 years, periodic bouts of violence have resulted in 6,407 Palestinian and 308 Israeli fatalities.<sup>6</sup>

According to the latest Washington Institute polling, conducted in July 2023, Hamas's decision to break the ceasefire was not a popular move among the Palestinians. Half (50%) agreed with the following proposal: "Hamas should stop calling for Israel's destruction, and instead accept a permanent two-state solution based on the 1967 borders." Moreover, across the region, Hamas has lost popularity over time among much of the Arab public. This decline in popularity may have been one of the motivating factors behind the group's decision to attack.<sup>7</sup>

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a major attack on Israel from the Gaza Strip, killing at least 1,300 people and taking at least 199 hostages. Israel then declared war on Hamas.<sup>8</sup> Hamas is trying to find favor with the world by asking for a ceasefire, releasing a few hostages and blaming Israel for the hospital bombing. The hospital was owned by the Southern Baptist Church from 1954 to the 1970's when they turned it over to Anglican Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. It was proven that it was a misfire by Hamas.<sup>9</sup>

**Think about:** Terrorism has been used on both sides of all conflicts expressly during war. However, terrorism cannot be morally permissible if it violates the rights of innocent people. To combat terrorism, it must be prevented from developing, guarded against the actions, and punish the participants. However, we cannot assume that a terrorist organization is endorsed by the country, group, or cause they represent. There are a large number of Arabs who do not agree with Hamas. Yes, Israel has the moral right to destroy Hamas, but it will be hard not to harm innocent people. Did Hamas deliberately aimed a rocket against a Christian hospital to stir trouble?

**We should understand consequences:**

If Israel invades Gaza, many soldiers on both sides would die. Many civilians would also die or would be displaced. Civilians and hostages will be used as human shields by Hamas. Gaza will be a difficult invasion because it would involve both urban and tunnel warfare. The enemy will not be wearing uniforms or fighting in conventional ways.

It is possible that other countries would join the conflict. It could turn into World War III. With the weapons of today it could turn into mass destruction. Enemies of the US without and within could take advantage of the situation and do harm to our forces and homeland.

**Think about:** Thousands would die and go to Hell if they did not accept Christ as their Savior. If war breaks out, America will greatly change militarily, politically, spiritually, and financially. Will our Allies help the US? Who should govern Gaza and the West Bank? Should Christians be involved with War? When is humanitarian aid is too much or wrong?

**We should trust in God:**

Our nation's motto is "In God we trust." Is this true today? Some churches have turned their "Common Grounds" from the prayer room to the coffee room. They have turned their worship centers in to entertainment centers. Their motto is "Be a friend to all and offend none." You must be born again was changed to "Be a follower." They have accepted sinful activities as a present-day norm. They deny the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

Politically, our nation is weak and split. Financially, we are going broke and promising money to others that we do not have. Our borders are weak. Our national intelligence has failed us. Our manufacturing is leaving. Our military is strong, but will our allies help us in a time of need? Our education systems are being used to teach antichristian and anti-American ideology.

In II Kings 6, the King of Syria warred against Israel. Elisha prayed that the eyes of Israel King be opened. He then saw the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire from God. "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Elisha prayed again and the Lord smote the enemy with blindness. This is just one example of how God fought for Israel when they sought Him.

**Think about:** "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God."

Ps 20:7 Those demonstrating against the Jews, on our college campuses today, are really against the stands of America and Christianity. If they are drafted because of a war was caused by the current crisis, will they fight to defend the US and Israel? Should Christians fight the enemy? Why are America and our Allies not in the Bible?

**We should look up and not down:**

Some many have in the past predicted the time when Christ would return for His church. There is one faith that believes that He did come back, and we have been in the Tribulation for many years. There are many books and videos about the Rapture and the End Times. Yes, many of the current events fit the signs of the time. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13:32-33

**Think about:** Every day that goes by we are getting closer to Jesus' return. We should live, pray, and serve ready. Only a man with supernatural powers will be able to bring peace. Many will falsely follow him.

**We, as Christians, can:**

Be concerned but not worry.

Trust the Lord is involved.

Look up for the overtaker and not at the undertaker.

Pray for quick, effective results with minimal casualties.

Support Christians organizations that are helping those in this crisis.

Pray for the leaders to make the correct decisions.

Help those who are afraid.

Pray for peace and protection.

Pray for our children and grandchildren.

Pray for those who do not know Christ that they turn to Him.

**References:**

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**Personal note:**

I am not a doomsday person. I am not an expert on these current events. But I have been moved to write on what I believe "How we as Christians should react to this Israel crisis." Keep looking up, pray and share the Gospel.