

SABBATH THOUGHT 2023-11-04—WHO ARE THE PALESTINIANS?

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Israel was established as a modern nation on May 14, 1948. From that day, Israel has fought numerous wars:

- 1) **1947-1949—War of Independence** (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq).
- 2) **1950s-1960s—Palestinian Fedayeen Insurgency** (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq).
- 3) **1956—Suez War** (Israel, France, UK vs. Egypt).
- 4) **1967—Six-Day War** (Egypt, Jordan, Syria). Resulted in the capture of Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights.
- 5) **1967-1970—War of Attrition** (Egypt, USSR, Jordan, Syria, PLO).
- 6) **1973—Yom Kippur War** (Egypt, Syria).
- 7) **1971-1982—Palestinian Insurgency** (PLO).
- 8) **1982—First Lebanon War** (Lebanon). Eliminated the PLO but Israel's withdrawal in 2000 contributed to instability in Lebanon and the rise of Hezbollah.
- 9) **1985-2000—South Lebanon Conflict** (Lebanon, Hezbollah).
- 10) **1987-1993—First Intifada** (Palestinians).
- 11) **2000-2005—Second Intifada** (Palestinians).
- 12) **2006—First Lebanon War** (Hezbollah, Lebanon).
- 13) **2008-2009—Gaza Wars** (Hamas).
- 14) **2012—Gaza Wars** (Hamas).
- 15) **2014—Gaza Wars** (Hamas).

In the 75 years of its existence, Israel has only known 14 years without military engagements—at least according to official designations. Can you imagine living under constant war or the threat of it? Every protester outside of Israel has no concept or perspective of that reality. They live in luxury and peace so they are nothing more than ignorant hypocrites. Moreover, the list of wars does not include the terrorist bombings, shootings, and stabbings that frequently occur so has there been ANY time in the last 75 years that the Jews did not live under threat of harm or death? I doubt it.

But once more, beginning on October 7, 2023 (the holyday on the eighth day of Tabernacles or Shemini Atzeret), Hamas again attacked Israel and at the time of this writing it is one of the top four bloodiest wars in Israel. Not surprisingly, it has prompted hundreds of thousands of Jew-haters around the world to openly protest on behalf of Hamas. In too many cases, it brought threats, violence, and destruction of property for the Jews. But who, exactly, are Hamas? *Hamas* is an acronym for Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya, or Islamic Resistance Movement, which was founded in 1987 during the first Palestinian uprising against Israel. Basically, Hamas are Palestinian terrorists.

But who are the Palestinians? Some claim they are descendants of the ancient Philistines, a people who lived along the coast of the land of Canaan or what is now known as the

land of Israel. Archaeological evidence indicates this people actually migrated as early as 2000 BC from Crete, an island near Greece in the Aegean Sea. A people called the Philistines certainly existed in the land of Canaan by 1200 BC, about 200 years prior to king David (Goliath was a Philistine). However, they were decimated by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in 600 BC and, later, annihilated by the Greek king Alexander the Great around 500 BC. The result is that the ancient Philistines no longer exist.

Neither are the Palestinians descendants of Canaan (a son of Ham and grandson of Noah). Modern DNA testing indicates they are likely related to the Lebanese who mixed with Indo-Eurasian peoples to some extent. While there are a number of Arabs living in Lebanon, the real Lebanese are unique from both Arabs and Jews. Lebanon is the home of the terrorist organization Hezbollah, arising after the PLO.

So where does the term ‘Palestine’ originate? As a derivation of ‘Philistine’, *Palestina* or *Palestine* was the derogatory name used by the Roman Empire for the land of Judea after the Jewish revolt led by Shimon Bar Kokhba in 132 AD. From that time to the present, ‘Palestine’ has been a **geographical** reference rather than a national ethnic one. Over the centuries it has included Arabs, Jews, and a mixture of peoples relocated to the area by the Assyrian Empire in the 8th century BC (including the Samaritans in the Bible). In other words, ‘Palestine’ is similar to ‘Europe’—it defines the region where many different nationalities reside. The French and Italians are Europeans but the French and Italians are very diverse and distinct nations and ethnicities. Like ‘Palestinian’, there is no such thing as a unique European ethnicity. The Hebrew word translated ‘Palestina’ in the KJV Bible refers to the Philistines who no longer exist.

Today, ‘Palestine’ refers to the land of Israel and ‘Palestinians’ are those who reside there. In an interview, Golda Meir (the Israeli Prime Minister from 1969-1974) said, “**I’m a Palestinian.** From [19]21 until 48 I carried a Palestinian passport. There was no such thing in this area as Jews and Arabs AND Palestinians. **There were [only] Jews and Arabs.**” (emphasis mine throughout). This was true at least until the last decade or so when the terms now refer to non-Jews living in Israel.

In every regard, there is no such thing as a Palestinian nation, ethnicity, or people. Since the second century, Palestinians were mostly Arabs and Jews but with a significant number of people of mixed heritages who are neither Arab nor Jew but of Indo-European descent. Every so-called ‘Palestinian’ Arab is either from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, etc. In terms of ethnicity, there is no such thing as a ‘Palestinian’ Arab. Arabs are descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham by Sara’s handmaid Hagar. Unsurprisingly, DNA testing has proven that the Arabs and Jews have a common ancestor. If Hamas were actually Arabs, the ‘Palestinian’ pogrom behind the cries for *jihad* would be nothing less than familicide (murder of family members).

Moreover, any assertions Palestinians make upon the land of Israel are only historically legitimate for a few several centuries starting at the time the Jews were expelled in the second century. On the other hand, the Jews have had legitimate claims for more than 3,000 years. Both archaeological evidence and the Bible prove the residency of the Jews

(Israelites) since the time of Abraham. In fact, there have always been Jews in Palestine even when the land was ruled or controlled by others.

The view of land heritage for Jews, Arabs, and Palestinians (including Hamas) by Saudi Arabs may be surprising to those in the western world. In a very interesting blog that was recently posted by Saudi Arabian author and media personality Rawaf al-Saeen, he rebuked the Palestinians and reminded them that they WERE given a land for a national state back during the presidency of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. However, Arafat, leader of the Palestinians at the time, rejected it. Furthermore, he says, “None of you [*Palestinians*] want a Palestinian state. Since you have no case, no country, and no land, **this land belongs to Israel**. According to the Quran you are a displaced people scattered from all over—Mongols, Turkmens, Circassians, Armenians, Gypsies. You have nothing in Palestine. **Palestine is the State of Israel for the people of Israel**.” In fact, this was not the first time the Palestinians were offered land for a Palestinian state. The original UN Partition Plan in 1947 divided the land up by assigning 55% to Israel and 45% to Palestinians. While the Palestinians may claim they are fighting to establish a country, their actions prove they only seek the extermination of the Jews.

Rawaf al-Saeen goes on to say, “And just so you know, the people of Israel are the sons of Isaac and we Arabs are the sons of Ismail. Isaac and Ismail were brothers and their father was Abraham. That makes them [*Israel*] our cousins. But where did YOU come from? How are you a part of all this? You were scattered, originally Gypsies, Mongols, Turkmens, Circassians, Romans—leftovers of other peoples. How are you a part of all this? ... Don’t try to fool us. ... You Palestinians, **you are not Arabs**.” While there are certainly Arabs living in Palestine, there are many non-Arabs, as previously discussed, and Rawaf al-Saeen substantiates it.

However, the big question is whether or not Hamas is an organization of Arabs or non-Arabs (obviously excluding Jews)? If Hamas are the non-Arabs of Indo-European descent that were forcibly settled there in the eighth century BC, that would make them **gentiles**—foreigners to Arabs and Jews! Do they have a part in fulfilling prophecy for Jerusalem and the Temple? Who knows? But Rawaf al-Saeen does not waver in saying that they are not Arabs; instead he calls them descendants of various Indo-Europeans. I believe what he says is correct because no Arab country of the Arabian Peninsula or northwest Africa will allow Palestinians as a nationality inside their borders. Even Egypt during this current war has refused to allow Hamas to cross the border. At one time, Jordan gave the Palestinians land for settlements but they were expelled around 1970 when the PLO tried to take over the country. In all regards, Arab countries want nothing to do with the Palestinians, which could be why their calls for an Arab uprising to join their jihad have gone largely unanswered (notwithstanding Iran’s threats). Notably, only Lebanon and Turkey have responded and neither one is an Arab country. While Iran funds Hamas and other terrorists, they rarely get directly involved—their focus is the destruction of the U.S.A.

But there is one more very intriguing point made by Rawaf al-Saeen: “And about the Al-Aqsa [*the mosque on the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem*]. Just so you know, **there’s**

no such thing as ‘Al-Aqsa’ [in Jerusalem]. There is only Al-Quds [city of Jerusalem]. **The Al-Aqsa Mosque mentioned in the Quran is located in Ju’arana, 29km [17 miles] from the city of Taif [city in Saudi Arabia near Mecca].** There were 2 mosques there: Al-Aqsa which means ‘the further’ and Al-Adna which means ‘the closer’. Your Al-Aqsa Mosque was built by [caliph Abd] Hisham in the 682 AD. How could Muhammad visit a structure which was built in the year 682, sixty years after Muhammad has died?” While the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem is purported to be the ‘third most holy’ place for Muslims, Rawaf al-Saeen claims it is essentially a fraud and the true Al-Aqsa of the Quran is located near Mecca, Saudi Arabia!

Today, there is evidence that the Al-Aqsa Mosque is actually located on Fort Antonia, which places Herod’s Temple to south of it. It usually takes a generation or more to change perceptions, but it would be interesting if the Dome of the Rock suddenly became less important to either the Jews or Muslims (or both) because they come to realize that the Al-Aqsa Mosque located there is a fraud. One thing is certain—the perceptions of western nations are quite different from people of the Middle East. If Herod’s Temple was south of Fort Antonia, that is something not generally acknowledged by Jews or Arabs. On the other hand, perhaps the Arabs will eventually reject the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem as legitimate. The point is that either view could be the catalyst to the building of the third temple in Jerusalem.

World events and prophecies are next to impossible to connect while they are occurring because many times fulfillment is the result of incremental events building to a climax. Or, critical events can be obscured by ‘larger’ geopolitical concerns that overwhelm the publicity or reporting.

Many unspeakable atrocities have been committed by Hamas who are likely neither Arabs nor Jews. Behind them are many nations of the world who only support but encourage them. So, if Hamas are gentiles, then they are a terrible example of the evil that the gentile world will be capable of doing in the actual fulfillment of prophecy.

Adam was the beginning of the 6,000 years of flesh and blood so we are well into the end times, but it is uncertain that world events are near at hand in terms of months and years. Of greatest importance is the necessity to be able to withstand the evil of OUR day (Eph. 6:11), whether or not it stems from the fulfillment of prophecy. The public display of pure malice and hatred in the hearts of so many people is staggering, but it should only cause us to cry out to God to fill our vessels with His agape love. It is hard enough to love and forgive a brother who offends but we must be able to do the same for enemies—including those who are so filled with the mind of Satan.

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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