



The MidEast Crisis in Perspective

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Presentation notes for Vacation Bible School 2004 Adult Bible Study

Note: These presentation notes are intended to go along with the PowerPoint presentation with the same title created by Dave Reagan of Lamb & Lion Ministries (www.lamblion.com) for NACC in July, 2003. Scripture used in these notes is from the New King James Version.

Slide 1

Tonight, we're going to take a look at The Middle East Crisis from a biblical perspective.

This presentation was originally developed by Dr. David Regan of Lamb and Lion Ministries. I've made some minor edits to it to work better with my style of presentation.

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The key passage regarding the land of Israel is Genesis 12:1-7, *"The Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country... to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great. To your descendants I will give this land.'"*

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This promise was reconfirmed by God several times...

The promise was reconfirmed to Abraham six more times.

In Genesis 17:7 God declared the promise of the land to be *"an everlasting covenant."*

The promise was reconfirmed to Isaac and to Jacob.

And it was reconfirmed through King David in Psalm 105...

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Psalm 105 says, *"Oh give thanks to the Lord... For He has remembered His covenant forever... The covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, Then He confirmed it to Jacob... and to Israel as an everlasting covenant. Saying, 'To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion of your inheritance.'"*

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God elaborated on His expectations regarding Israel's use of the land he gave them in Deuteronomy 28-30. Israel's enjoyment of the land would depend upon their faithfulness to God. If faithful, they would be blessed, Deut. 28:1-2. If unfaithful, they would experience curses, Deut. 28:15, 58.

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The Abrahamic Covenant establishes title to the land. It is an unconditional covenant. Before the Children of Israel entered the land, God gave them a conditional covenant through Moses. It governed the land's use and enjoyment.

The Crucial Point to remember is that the gift of the land was irrevocable and unconditional. They were given an eternal title to it. But Israel's use and enjoyment of the land was conditional, it depended upon their obedience to God.

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An illustration may be in order to better understand this. Consider a case where a wealthy dad gives his teenage son a sports-car. The father even gives his son the title to the car. The car is the son's to use as he wishes but there are certain requirements that need to be met to enjoy the privilege...

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For example, if the son breaks the law and gets a speeding ticket... this is evidence that he is driving recklessly...

And the Dad could take action to restrict his son from using his car for a time by locking it in the garage. The son still owns the car but he is denied using it for a while. By taking away his son's privilege of using the car, the son will be more likely to remember that observing speed limits are preferred to having to bum rides from his friends.

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This is essentially what happened to the Jews...

The Jews took the land under the leadership of Joshua, Moses' successor. And they occupied the land for the next 1,000 years (400 under the Judges and 600 under the Kings).

But in violation of God's law, they inter-married with the Canaanites and became involved deeply in idolatry. God raised up prophets like Elijah and Elisha to call them out of idolatry, but they persisted.

Finally, God poured out His wrath through conquering armies: First the Assyrians attacked the northern tribes of Israel and took them into captivity,

Then the Babylonians attacked Judah destroying the temple and Jerusalem then took the remaining Jews into captivity.

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In His grace and mercy, God allowed the Jews to return 70 years later to rebuild Jerusalem and their Temple.

But the Jews persisted in rebellion for the next 500 years, and when they rejected the Messiah, God allowed the Romans to conquer and disperse them worldwide, in fulfillment of prophecy.

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But keep in mind a crucial point: The Jews were dispersed from their land in discipline, but they were not dispossessed of their land... The title to the land remained in their name.

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Now, I have mentioned the prophecies about their dispersion and persecution, but what I did not mention was the prophecy God gave at the same time that one day He would re-gather the Jews to their land:

Deuteronomy 30:3-5 says, *"The Lord will restore you from captivity and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the Lord your God will gather you..."*

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"And the Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers."

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This prophecy is the most prolific one in the Old Testament, mentioned more than any other prophecy.

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When you study these prophecies carefully, you will note that there will be two future gatherings of the Jews:

First, a gathering in unbelief before the Lord returns...

For example, Isaiah 11:11-12 says, *"It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."*

Next, there will be a gathering of the Jews in Belief after the Lord returns. For example, Deuteronomy 30:1-2 says,

"Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice,

according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul"

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Regarding the regathering in unbelief, God set in motion the fulfillment of this regathering in the late 1890's when He began to raise up prophetic voices in Europe, calling the Jews to return to their homeland - voices like Eliezer Ben Yehuda and Theodore Herzl.

Herzl became the father of the Zionist Movement. He was a great visionary. For example, at the First Zionist Conference, held in Switzerland in 1897, he declared that a Jewish state would come into existence within 50 years. Sure enough, 50 years later in 1947, the United Nations voted to allow the establishment of the state of Israel.

His vision of a restored Israel motivated waves of immigrants to return in the early 1900's. In 1900, there were 40,000 Jews in the land. By 1945, the number of over 700,000. Today, there are 6 million who have come from countries all over the world.

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There were two key events that made the remarkable regathering of Israel possible...

World War I prepared the land of Israel for the people of Israel to return.

And World War II prepared the people of Israel for the land.

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During World War I, the Turks sided with the Germans and thus ended up losing their Ottoman Empire when the Germans were defeated by the Allies. In anticipation of their victory, the British released the Balfour Declaration in November of 1917, promising the Jews a homeland in Palestine.

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Palestine at that time of the Balfour Declaration consisted of both modern day Israel and Jordan, a total of 45,000 square miles.

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In 1922 the British Government gave two thirds of Palestine to the Arab thus creating a Palestinian state. The Jews were left with only 10,000 square miles for their future state, less land than the state of New Jersey.

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World War II produced the Holocaust. The Holocaust produced the motivation for the Jews to head home, producing a flood of refugees.

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In November, 1947 the United Nations decided to divide the Jewish land once again, giving half to the Arabs. The light tan area was to be the Jewish state; the gray area, the Arab state.

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The Jews were disappointed over the loss of more territory, but they accepted the UN's offer. Israel declared their independence on May 14, 1948. The Arabs rejected the UN plan and declared war on Israel attacking with seven Arab armies. Note carefully that they could have legally created a second Palestinian state at this point but refused to do so because they wanted all the land.

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Since that time there has been war after war and each time Israel has won miraculous victories against overwhelming odds - all because of a promise of God: Amos 9:15 says, *"I will plant them in their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them," says the Lord your God.*"

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Let's talk about the Arabs for a moment...

Just as God made a covenant with Abraham's heirs thru Isaac, He also made a covenant with Abraham's heirs thru Ishmael, the father of the Arabs. God's promises to the Arabs has been fulfilled by God in every detail.

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Here are the provisions of the Covenant with Ishmael described in Genesis 16 & 17...

First, God said He would multiply Ishmael's descendants "exceedingly."

Second, God would make Ishmael's descendants a great nation.

Third, God would give the Arabs all the land east of Canaan.

Fourth, God would give the Arabs a personality like a "wild donkey."

And fifth, the Arabs would have a warlike spirit - "their hand will be against everyone."

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God has faithfully fulfilled these promises to the descendants of Ishmael:

There are 200 million Arabs.

There are 21 Arab nations.

The Arabs have 5.3 million square miles of oil rich land.

And the Arabs are characterized by an inability to get along with anyone, including themselves.

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In contrast: There is only one Jewish state with a population of 6 million squeezed into an area of only 8,000 square miles.

That's a population ratio of 33 to 1, and a land ratio of 662 to 1.

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Regarding the Palestinians, the whole 'concept of a Palestinian people being deprived of their Palestinian homeland is a modern day myth, developed since the Six Day War of 1967.

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Regarding the Palestinians, the fact of the matter is that from 70 AD to 1948...

There was never a Palestinian state.

Jerusalem was never the capital of any Arab state.

The Arabs who lived in the area considered themselves to be Syrians.

There was never any Palestinian identity, culture or language. Again, a Palestinian state already exists - the nation of Jordan. It comprises 75% of Palestine and its population is 75% Palestinian.

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The same is true of the Arab claim to Jerusalem. The Arabs say Jerusalem is their third most holy place. But all that has developed in recent years. There is no mention of Jerusalem in the Koran, whereas it is mentioned in the Jewish Scriptures more than 600 times! And Muslims pray toward Mecca whereas Jews pray toward Jerusalem.

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The real claim of the Arabs is based on a portion of the Koran... The Koran claims that any land conquered for Allah remains his forever and, if lost, it must be reconquered.

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There are two other considerations that make Jerusalem important to the Arabs:

The re-establishment of Israel and the reoccupation of Jerusalem are viewed as judgments of Allah on the Arab peoples for their lack of faithfulness to Islam. They must win it back to prove their repentance.

Control of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount is considered to be proof of the superiority of Islam.

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The truth is that the goal of the Arabs is not the establishment of another state within Israel. Rather, their goal is to incorporate all of Israel into a second Palestinian state. In other words, the goal is the annihilation of Israel! They have made this goal clear in a number of ways:

The Phased Plan of 1974 which introduced the concept of trading land for peace.

Arafat's Arabic language speeches have made it clear that the "peace process" would not stop until Israel is driven into the sea.

The Palestinian Terrorists have demonstrated that the very existence of the state of Israel will not be tolerated.

The incredible rejection of Israeli Prime Minister Barak's offer to Arafat which President Clinton brokered in the waning days of his presidency.

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Consider, for a moment, the details of Barak's generous offer in July 2000 at Camp David:

Barak offered Arafat 96% of the West Bank and Gaza

4% of Israel adjacent to Gaza.

3/4 of the Old City of Jerusalem and sovereignty over the Temple Mount.

Five neighborhoods in east Jerusalem.

And the right of return for 50,000 Palestinians... But incredibly Arafat rejected the offer! Arafat did not want the matter settled short of all Israel being given up to be a Palestinian state.

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Further evidence of the intentions of the Arabs can be found posted on the official website of the Palestinian Authority.

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All of this raises a question: With Arab intentions so clear, why has Israel pursued a policy of appeasement? There are three reasons for this...

First, Israel's **Humanistic Leadership**: With the exception of Menachem Begin, they have been led by atheists and agnostics who are Humanists. As such, they believe in the basic goodness of Man. They have therefore deceived themselves into believing that if they will treat the Arabs honorably, the Arabs will reciprocate. They have refused to believe that the real intention of the Arabs is to destroy them.

Second, Israel's **Desire for Acceptance**: The Jews have always had a desire to be like other nations (1 Samuel 8:20) and to be accepted by them. Example: Lead character in Fiddler on the Roof: "Why did you choose us?" This desire flies in the face of the reality of Anti-Semitism. The fact of the matter is that the world hates the Jews and will continue to do so, regardless of what they do. They could surrender all their land to the Arabs, and they would still be hated.

And the third reason is **American Pressure**: In our desire for Arab oil, we have exerted enormous pressure on Israel to follow a policy of appeasement by trading land for peace. Bush began this process in 1991 when Communism collapsed and Jews from Russia began to flood into Israel. Israel needed 5 billion dollars to deal with the onslaught. The US agreed to back a loan from the World Bank only if Israel would agree to start trading land for peace.

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Since that time the Israelis have been committed to a policy of appeasement that is destined to fail: As World War II proved when Prime Minister Chamberlain of England went to negotiate with Hitler in 1938 giving up control of the Sudetenland for peace. Chamberlain came back to England thinking he was successful at bringing peace to Europe. But this only led to Hitler getting bolder. Appeasement leads to war because it only whets the appetite of the aggressor.

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This brings us to three crucial questions: Why has God re-gathered the Jews?

What is the likely future?

And what does it all mean to us?

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God has re-gathered the Jews as part of His plan to bring a great remnant of the Jews to salvation.

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The likely future is that there will be a war over Jerusalem that will bring the Jews to the end of themselves.

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And the meaning to us is...

That God is faithful to His promises and will literally fulfill all that He said...

God's grace is unfathomable in the length He will go to save the unbeliever. The relationship between the nation of Israel and God is a type of the relationship between the believer and God.

And of course the obvious conclusion is that Jesus is coming soon! This should give us a sense of urgency to get on with doing all that God has called us to do before it is too late.

As Paul said at the end of 1 Corinthians, Maranatha, or oh Lord, come!