

# Come, Let Us Reason Together

By Debra Mullins



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## **Introduction—My Personal Experience**

Since the early 1970s, the Near East has been a prayer concern for me. Directly out of college, I taught at the private American School of Kuwait, its student body representing 44 nationalities (1971-1973). Also, I tutored the son of a prominent Kuwaiti journalist & the daughter of Kuwait's Head of Parliament. My faculty Bible study prompted clandestine baptisms in the Arabian Gulf; & the summer of 1974, I initiated Kuwait's first Vacation Bible School with 167 attendees.

Trips to Bahrain and Iran (on six occasions) were eclipsed only by my three-month car trip from Kuwait to Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Turkey and beyond. I have since traveled to Egypt, Dubai and Djibouti. I've also visited Morocco and Israel on three occasions. These experiences have informed my understanding of complex Near East culture and politics. Most importantly, they have stirred my passion to pray.

Although only 2% of Palestinians are Christians, Palestinians were among my esteemed friends in Kuwait where "Occupied Palestine" was accepted nomenclature; and the word, "Israel," was verboten. As were "Yahoodi" (Jewish) enterprises (coca cola and Helena Reubinstein cosmetics, to name two)!

A Palestinian Fatah sniper and trusted driver for Yassir Arafat, Tass Saada is a personal acquaintance. Having come to know Jesus, Tass founded *Hope for Ishmael* to reconcile Arabs and Jews; and *International Christian Response* helps persecuted Christians in the war-torn Middle East.

Sadly, loud cries on behalf of Palestinian brethren ring hollow when Arab leaders refuse to liberate the 3.7 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations, and highly educated Palestinian professionals are relegated to lives of servitude in Arab countries to which they flee. This, I've witnessed firsthand. To the point: Whereas no Arab countries (Kuwait included) welcome Palestinian refugees, nor are they allowed full-fledged citizenship, Israel has welcomed and resettled hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees from Arab countries. Since the first Knesset elections in 1949, there have been *Israeli Arab members*.

As best I can, I follow the biblical command to "bless Israel" while, at the same time, I embrace sons and daughters of Ishmael who, for years, have graced my life with extraordinary hospitality and friendship.

### **Ultimate Family Feud: Ishmael v. Isaac**

Key to my understanding is knowledge of an ongoing family feud between progeny of Ishmael (Abraham's first born) and Isaac (Abraham's son of promise).

#### **Ishmael's Nature & Inheritance**

Ishmael was first to get a God-picked name—his, meaning "God hears." As promised, God "was with the lad." When Ishmael and his mother, Hagar, were cast out, and threat of death loomed, God released ministering angels to Ishmael. Clearly, God loved him.

Though Ishmael was not heir with Isaac to *the promise*, he was heir to a promise—specifically, "numerous descendants." In

time, Ishmael was distinguished as a famous archer in the wilderness of Paran; and his twelve sons and daughter became princes and predecessors of many tribes. Importantly, Ishmael is progenitor of Arabs, many of whom follow Islam today.

Consistent with Islam, Ishmael's life was marked by conflict. In fact, Genesis 16:12 characterizes him as "a wild ass of a man" whose hand would be against every man (and every man's hand against him). Correspondingly, to establish an Islamic state or Caliphate, "holy" warriors are inspired by the Qur'an & Hadith to justify violence against perceived infidels, corrupt regimes and, pointedly, against progeny of Ishmael's half-brother, Isaac. The Qur'an disparages Jews as "estranged," "despised and rejected apes," "insolent," "open enemies" *not* to be taken as "friends," "helpers" or "protectors."

- **"Outer" & "Inner" Struggles**

Juxtaposed to the outer struggle of *Jihad al-asghar*, commonly understood as religiously-sanctioned warfare, Islamic *jihad* is nuanced to include inner struggle for self-improvement of the heart, tongue and hand (*Jihad al-akbar*). Unfortunately, this purportedly "softer side" of Islam is betrayed by 66,872 Islamist terrorist attacks, causing at least 249,941 deaths globally between 1979 and April 2024. Theirs is an even harder sell when some 70% of the Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza purportedly approve the suicide bombing of women and children—especially if the targets are "little Satan" Jews or "big Satan" Americans.

For faithful Muslim warriors, fatal fanaticism holds promise of great reward. By joining the fight unto death, young, hormonal suicide bombers are ensured instant access to heaven, where seventy-two beautiful virgins await their blissful entry. Martyrs' families reap monetary rewards and generous accolades for their sons' murderous, albeit self-inflicted violence.

- **Verbal Fuel Added to Fires of Hatred**

The so-called “Jewish problem” identifies Jews as the most universally hated and persecuted ethnic group in history. *Nakhba* (meaning “the catastrophe”) is the term many Arabs use for the birth of Israel, and hatred of Jews is taught in mosques around the world. The Qur'an commands the faithful to “lie in wait” for infidels (purportedly “made for hell”)—then, “beleaguer,” “terrorize,” “fight,” “seize,” “smite” & “slay” them—specifically, by “slitting their necks” and “smiting all their fingertips off them.”

- **Creeping Antisemitism**

Broadly speaking, a Semite is a member of any of the Near- or Middle- East peoples whose languages are related. Race speaks to bloodline, and ethnicity addresses a shared sense of identity/culture. A form of racism, antisemitism is prejudice resulting in discrimination and/or persecution leveled specifically against the Jews as an ethnic group.

Tellingly, most Islamist terrorist attacks and subsequent deaths occur in Muslim countries marked by poverty, lack of opportunity for youth, alleged political exclusion and human rights abuses. No longer. In the dubious name of free speech, inflammatory Muslim hate-speak has been allowed to escalate unabated. Following the October massacre, for example, student groups like the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) organized protest encampments and other demonstrations on America’s Ivy League campuses (including Columbia, Harvard, Penn and Yale). The Committee on Education and Workforce *uncovered rampant, authenticated demonstrations of antisemitism marked by verbal abuse, harassment and intimidation.*

Keep in mind that Ishmaelite fanatics do not collaborate; they conquer. Case in point: In August 2025 seven agitators improperly entered the Redmond office of Microsoft President Brad Smith—this, to protest use of the company’s software for

surveillance relating to warfare in Gaza (deemed *just warfare* at that). Predictably, when asked to do so, Intifada disrupters refused to leave voluntarily.

- **Coveted Land “Unfairly Occupied”**

Under the Ottoman Empire & British Mandate thereafter, Jewish organizations & individuals legally purchased land in Palestine, yet Israel's claim to her homeland (about the size of New Jersey) is popularly disparaged as selfishly nationalistic.

Note, too, that much of the current Palestinian population resides in the West Bank and Gaza, areas that were under Jordanian & Egyptian control, respectively, before Israel's occupation in 1967. Keep in mind that many instigators of the PLO never lived in the Palestine Mandate before (or after) creation of Israel. This, of course, calls into question their flagship “land narrative.”

A foremost authority of Islamic law, Robert Spencer painstakingly separates fact from fiction. To illustrate the source of immense hatred toward the Jews, Spencer masterfully marshals anti-Jewish Quranic commands. He brings to bear historical facts that expose gross misconceptions and misrepresentations regarding the “land of Zion.” (2 Samuel 5:7–5:7) In fact, Israel did not seize a country known as “Palestine.” Recall that the Romans captured Judea and demolished the Jewish Temple in A.D. 70. Particularly after the Bar Kokhba revolt in A.D. 134, he explains, they forced the Jews out of their land and renamed the land of Judea “Felestin,” or Palestine, which was thereafter the name of a region, not of a people or a nation.

Yes, Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are broadly disputed under international law; nonetheless, even during periods of *diaspora*, archaeological findings support a continuous Jewish presence dating from the Iron Age.

In Scripture, Israel is aptly characterized as “center of the Earth.” God gave the land of Canaan to Abraham’s descendants, the people of Israel, as a perpetual inheritance and a place to worship Him. While the larger promise encompassed a broad region, the land that the Israelites settled and inhabited was primarily Canaan, the area of modern-day Israel and Palestine.

- **Eschatological Arguments**

It mustn’t be overlooked that Israel’s sovereign statehood was formally acknowledged in 1948; and Matthew 24:32-34 affirms that the generation witnessing Israel’s reestablishment as a nation will not pass away until the entire Eschatological Discourse is fulfilled. Indeed, many biblical scholars contend that full appropriation of her rightful territory, extending from the Nile to the Euphrates Rivers, will be realized in the Millennial Reign of Christ. (Genesis 15: 18; Ezekiel 38: 12)

- **“Liberate Palestine” Mantra**

The presumed-to-be greedy 15.8 *million* Jews worldwide pale in comparison to about 2 *billion* Muslims who today constitute majority populations in 49 countries. Though Ishmaelites control 35K square miles of prime Middle Eastern real estate, Ishmaelites nonetheless covet the entirety of Israel (about 8,723 square miles) and Gaza (about 141 square miles).

*Israeli settlements/colonies* are civilian communities built by Israel throughout the Israeli-occupied territories. The PLO’s answer for this is to deny Israel the right even to exist. Truth be told, the conflict will never be solved by any treaty that allows a Jewish state. It’s all about pushing the Jews into the sea. To accomplish this (and thereby destroy the Jewish state), armed struggle is deemed necessary. Accordingly, over 1,400 years, Muslims have unleashed wrath upon the Jews—in recent years through the Taliban, Islamic State (IS), Boko Haram, Al Shabaab and al-Qaeda, among others.

Contrary to partisan talking points, Israeli withdrawal from

the Gaza Strip has proved that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not about land that a two-state solution can fix. Recall that the 1947 United Nations partition plan and Prime Minister Ehud Barak's generous offer of Y2K were outright refused. Believing that giving a piece of Israel's land to the Palestinians would bring peace, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered Israel's disengagement from Gaza in 2005. What this brought instead were 20 years of terror.

The purpose of the 2020 Abraham Accords was to normalize relations between Israel and several Arab nations (primarily the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco & Sudan) by establishing cooperation to foster regional peace and prosperity. The Accords provided a framework for direct dialogue, people-to-people exchanges, business partnerships and government agreements.

Unfortunately, giant steps aimed at strengthening security and advancing shared interests in the region clashed with manifest hostility toward Donald Trump, who helped mediate the Accords.

### ▪ Godly Hope

Good news: Hope is soundly embedded in Ishmael's name meaning "God hears." To borrow a phrase from Lamentations 3:29, "Let them lie face down in the dust, for there may be hope at last." "Arab" means "to lie in wait." In a sense, Ishmael lies in wait for God's love that bears, believes, hopes & endures all things.

### **Israel's Nature & Inheritance**

Abraham's son of promise, Isaac, is progenitor of Israel. In the Bible, the statesman Daniel references a complete history of Israel (the nation and its geography) from Daniel's time to that of the Messiah. Moreover, he discloses Israel's miraculous restoration as a nation within a period of seventy weeks of seven years each (a total of 490 years), starting with the commandment to restore Jerusalem.

## ▪ God's Blood Covenant with Israel

Notably, in the presence of, and for the benefit of, Abraham & his progeny, God made a solemn, sacred blood covenant—with *Himself*. While Abraham literally slept, God alone traversed the blood-covered trail between slaughtered animal sacrifices, thereby swearing to Himself (sole, authoritative witness) to uphold His promises. Note: No conditions whatsoever were imposed upon Abraham. Whatever Abraham did, or failed to do, God swore (1) to multiply Abraham's seed as the stars of heaven & (2) to grant the land “from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.” Ezekiel described national Israel as “living securely” upon returning from many nations.

Fast forward. On a sliver of mostly desert land (without oil), Jews created abundance (hence, the metaphorical “Green” Line). Arabs were allotted nine times the acreage of Israelis, but chose instead to sit on its aridity and, in many cases, nurture poverty and resentments. To this day, a so-called “Green Line” marks the boundary between Israel and her Arab neighbors. In the end, “The L ORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden; her desert, like the garden of the L ORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her; thanksgiving and sound of a melody.”

Notably, God's promise to Abraham came with no expiration date. That the last half of Daniel's “seventieth week” has yet to happen confirms God's continuing plan for Israel. God faithfully made of Abraham a great nation through which all families worldwide would be uniquely blessed. First and foremost, that blessing came as the Babe in a manger!

Israel supplies America with more innovative ideas, inventions and creations than any other nation, and she is our strongest partner in research. Thanks to Nobel prize-winning Jews, extraordinary contributions in literature, economics, physics

and medicine have graced our modern world. Add to that Israel's innovating drip irrigation, the USB drive & firewalls, the PillCam, flexible stent and the world's first instant messaging service (ICQ). Moreover, Israel pioneered desalination and recycling technologies.

Descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Israeli people introduced monotheism into the world, and through brutal sufferings against all odds, Jews accurately recorded the Scriptures. Attested to by discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, they excelled as faithful custodians of the oracles of God. For good reason, Israel means "to prevail with God," or "prince with God."

Over some ten generations, God faithfully increased the nation of Israel in numbers and substance. Indeed, Israel was foreordained to "blossom as a rose"—to "lend, not borrow"; to reign, not be reigned over. Rooted in biblical principles, Israel stands today as the sole democracy in the entire region.

In the words of author/Pastor Gary Gilley: "A fair and balanced portrayal of the Middle East reveals that one nation stands far above the others in its commitment to human rights and democracy as well as in its commitment to peace and mutual security. That nation is Israel."

There's no mistaking that God's plan involves and even features Israel. Crusades, the Inquisition, forced conversions and the Holocaust could not extinguish Israel, for "He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep." (Psalm 121:4) Of course, Israel's unique favor is no reflection of her unsullied saintliness. As Christians, we understand well that, in God's economy, unmerited favor transcends human merit.

#### ▪ **Israel's Miraculous Existence**

Likely out of fear and jealousy, the first of the land's Hyksos (foreign) rulers and, then, the native Egyptian Empire

enforced antisemitic policy. Several hundred years before Christ, a high-ranking appointee of King Xerxes' court, Haman, plotted unsuccessfully to destroy the entire Jewish race. Israel's utter annihilation was attempted, albeit in vain, by Pharaohs (3K years ago), Babylonians (2.5K years ago), Romans (2K years ago) & Nazis (80 years ago). The 1981 Mecca Declaration pledged *jihad* against Israel ("the little Satan") until the last Jew in the world is eliminated. But, wait, there's more!

Israel's unprecedented obstacles include forty years of wilderness wanderings; seemingly endless warfare, blood baths (Masada), brutal captivity and enslavement (Assyria, Babylon, Egypt); displacement and persecution; pogroms (Russia), Intifadas and riots; plundering and genocide. In 1348, Jews were even blamed for the Bubonic plague, otherwise known as the "Black Death."

Under Hitler, Jews lost their businesses, food was rationed and they were "marked" with yellow badges. Exported *en masse* to Eastern Europe concentration camps, where egregious medical experiments were performed on them, literally millions of Jews were mercilessly mistreated and eventually out-and-out exterminated.

Arguably, Jews represent the most enduring, universally hated group in history. Though "victim" (as opposed to "victimizer") is a more fitting descriptor, the latter label obstinately, yet mistakenly trails Israel.

Historically, Arab Christians, too, have suffered persecution, hardship, forced mass emigration and opposition from the world. Added to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, historical conflicts and political instability contribute to their persecution and humanitarian crisis, particularly in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and the Palestinian territories. Groups like the Islamic State have subjected them to massacres, forced conversions, sexual slavery and the destruction of

their churches and historical sites. Chaos resulting from civil wars and regional conflicts, such as those in Syria and Iraq, has left Arab Christians uniquely vulnerable to violence and displacement.

In fact, “all who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus” will be “hunted and persecuted” because of their faith. (2 Timothy 3:12) Even so, they are enjoined to “be glad & rejoice” when facing persecution or trials for Christ’s sake. Indeed, Jesus himself promised tribulation (John 16:33), and the Apostle Paul affirmed that it has been “granted... to suffer for Him.” (Philippians 1:29)

### **“One New Man”: Revival & Awakening**

Described in Ephesians 2:15-16, the “One New Man” emphasizes that—through Jesus—two groups are reconciled into one body. “Grafted in” refers to Gentile believers (e.g., Palestinian Arabs) into the family of God, symbolized by an olive tree (Israel).

The grafting metaphor holds promise for Israel, for if Israelis forego unbelief, they can and will be grafted back into their own tree. It likewise holds promise for Arab Christians who, with Israel, complete the “One New Man” and thereby share Abrahamic covenant promises. Given rich nourishment of God’s established root, Messianic Jewish & Gentile believers become one in Christ.

Be sure God takes no pleasure in provocative narratives that demonize one people group over the other. Doing so thwarts the “family unity” God intends and, significantly, in today’s climate, it’s a distraction from blame that is best assigned to Islamist militant groups—Hamas, for example. Designated a terrorist group by the US, the EU and other countries, Hamas alone is culpable (1) for its vicious attack on October 7, 2023 (leading to 1,200 Israeli deaths, kidnapping and torture) & (2) for strategically positioning noncombative Arab

Christians, for example, as expendable “human shields.”

Since the war began in October 2023, local church sources report death of at least 33 Arab Christians, a significant number given Gaza's small Christian community. Direct military action and indirect consequences of war are at fault. Both are traced to the Hamas attack without which Israeli airstrikes, sniper shootings and raids would not have happened. The same applies to deaths of 11 Arab Christians who were deprived access to medical treatments.

Regrettably, a recent poll by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research found that, among Gaza residents, support for Hamas increased to 37%, compared to 35% seven months earlier. Were the IDF to limit military force in Gaza, Hamas butchers, their evil deeds and advocates would surely and inevitably enjoy full reign.

God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 is a blessing to those who bless (בָּרוּךְ בְּנֵי אַבְרָהָם) –that is, “kneel in deference to”—His progeny through whom “all families of the earth” are blessed (namely, Israel). Importantly, those who execrate (הָרָאָה loathe or denounce) her will themselves be execrated. Hence, we do well to forego blame and instead bless (not curse) Israel.

## ▪ “One New Man” Pictured in Ruth of Moab

While a modest, but growing minority of Messianic Jews in Israel varies from 10K-30K believers, some 133K Arab Christians constitute about 75% of her total Christian population. Large or small, both categories qualify as beloved brethren in Christ.

Across the Middle East (notably in Iran, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Sudan), there are reports of significant, unprecedented growth in Christianity! Following Issa (Jesus) dreams and visions of Christ (and despite threats in doing so), many Muslims are converting to Christ. Remarkably, there are more

converts within the last decade than in the previous 15 centuries of Islam!

God's plan is for enmity to cease between "national-" & "spiritual-" Israel. Consider, by way of example, the Moabitess Ruth from the fertile land east of the Dead Sea (today, Jordan). In type, Ruth foreshadows Arab Christians.

Moabites were known for pagan worship and seducing Israelites into sin. Moreover, Moabites denied the Israelites passage to the Promised Land and, in time, hired the prophet Balaam to curse Israel. Nevertheless, natural enmity between Israel (Boaz) & Moab (Ruth) ceased when Ruth committed herself to the Israelite people by an oath to her mother-in-law, Naomi. In marrying Boaz of Bethlehem (her kinsman redeemer), Ruth received redemption for herself and her offspring as part of the lineage of King David and, ultimately, of Jesus!

### **Victim or Victimizer?**

In pondering the Jewish question, I recall *Fiddler on the Roof* in which Tevye poses a revealing, though tongue-in-cheek question: "I know, I know," he concedes. "We are Your chosen people. But, once in a while, can't You choose someone else?" His is the story of life in a small Russian *shtetl*, still under the Romanov dynasty. At the time, anti-Jewish propaganda in Western Russia often led to one pogrom after another; in the end, violence claimed the lives of no less than 1,500 Jewish citizens.

By definition, victimhood targets a person or group unfairly attacked, reviled, abused or mistreated. In today's culture, claim to victimhood has become "a thing" whether real, perceived, manufactured or fomented. Even so, I contend that, throughout history, one victim group stands out above most, if not all, others. In my opinion, Tevye nailed it!

History is clear. In A.D. 635, Mohammed conquered Palestine, subjugated Jews and used Jewish spoil to support his movement.

The 1981 Mecca Declaration pledged *jihad* against Israel until the last Jew in the world is eliminated.

Before Arafat, there was Palestinian spiritual leader Haj Amin al-Husseini. Called “Führer of the Arab world,” the Mufti of Jerusalem befriended Hitler, supported his “Final Solution” and murdered Jews. To this day, *Mein Kampf* is a best seller in Arab countries. Additionally, throughout the Arab Middle East, government press promotes a long-debunked source for turn-of-the-century hatred of Jews. In his anti-Semitic campaign (1933-45), Hitler likewise embraced *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Repeatedly and unremittingly, Jewish sovereignty has been attacked—not to mention Israeli El Al airliners, busses, schools, restaurants, peace spokespersons and friends of Israel. At the Olympics in Munich (1972), Black September terrorists attacked Israeli athletes; and for having sought peace with Israel, Egyptian president Anwar Sadat became one of three Arab leaders assassinated by fellow Arabs.

- **Inescapable Collateral Damage**

Sadly, despite Israel’s use of precision-guided munitions, AI-assisted targeting and aborting airstrikes where civilians are identified, innocent human collateral in wartime cannot be avoided. While some media naysayers (themselves antisemites) have successfully fomented intense international criticism against her, Israel has made millions of documented, recorded calls and distributed hundreds of thousands of leaflets to citizens in Gaza urging evacuation from areas targeted for airstrikes. The IDF also announced daily, temporary pauses in operations to allow civilians to leave combat zones. To guide civilians away from operational areas, the IDF has even distributed military maps and urban warfare graphics.

- **Misplaced Blame Regarding Famine**

In times of war, to aid and abet an enemy is deemed treasonous

yet, in the midst of hostilities, the world demands that Israel feed their Gazan attackers & provide them with fuel, water and electricity. Of course, all grieve reports of Israel's supposed blame for purported famine in the Gaza Strip; however, Israel has delivered more humanitarian aid to an enemy population during wartime than has any military in history. More than 94,000 trucks carrying over 1.8 million tons of aid have successfully entered the territory.

Traditional international efforts led by the UN & Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) are backed by the U.S. and secured by Israel. To facilitate UN deliveries, Israel has even pinpointed "safe corridors" for timely transport; however, at times, UN aid is inexplicably withheld; and Islamic marauders reportedly thwart well-intentioned efforts of countless Christian ministries that provide humanitarian aid, including food assistance, to Palestinian refugees.

Throughout 40 years, the International Fellowship of Christians & Jews has raised \$3.1 billion to provide assistance and support extended to all vulnerable communities. Christian Mission to Gaza, Catholic Welfare, Shepherd Society, World Vision, Samaritan's Purse & Anglican Relief likewise serve suffering communities. And, yes, churches in Gaza are relief centers for those suffering, as well as gathering places for Christians.

With little, if any, media recognition, Israel has supported hospitals, repaired water pipelines, increased access to clean water and enabled over 36,000 patients to leave Gaza for treatment abroad. For example, a Gaza woman, Marah Salad Mahmoud Zohry (20), was evacuated to Pisa under a humanitarian program coordinated by Israel and the Italian government. Reportedly, she died an emaciated victim of Israel-inflicted starvation; but what media omitted was the crucial fact that Zohry's actual cause of death was an aggressive cancer (promyelocytic leukemia).

Sheba Medical Center & Rambam Health Care Campus require equal treatment for every patient regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or nationality. To their credit, Israeli doctors strive to provide the highest quality medical care to all, including people from Arab communities during ongoing conflicts.

Hamas terrorists butchered and burned Israeli children. In contrast, Israeli hospitals treat Palestinian children at no cost to their families. Case in point: A 12-year-old Palestinian boy, Suleiman Hassan, was airlifted to Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem following a bicycle accident in which he was hit by a car. There, the trauma unit performed a complex and rare operation lasting several hours. Despite having only a 50% chance of survival, Suleiman was discharged from the hospital with a cervical splint and reportedly is functioning with no neurological deficits.

Similar testimonials belie politicized media reports of mistreatment and Israeli-perpetuated starvation in Gaza. Truth be told: The *real* victims of starvation are Israeli hostages; but, then, obtainable videos of Hamas captors feasting on confiscated booty are seldom, if ever aired on legacy media.

- **No Mistaking Hatred**

Power struggles between the terrorist group, Hamas, and Israel's assertively conservative Likud party provide helpful context, but one thing *is* certain: There's no mistaking hatred.

On October 7, 2023, militants massacred over 1,200 (including civilians and foreign nationals). Homes were set ablaze; sexual violence and grotesque mutilations ensued. Innocent victims recount harrowing details of torture, starvation and unimaginable violence while imprisoned by Islamists in tunnels full of lice, bedbugs, mold and mildew.

Thereafter, in 2024, there were 6,326 documented acts of

antisemitic hatred. Disturbingly, the so-called Red-Green Axis (a dangerous fusion of revolutionary socialism and Islamist extremism united by anti-Western, anti-capitalist and decidedly antisemitic agendas) inspired Isis emissary Shamsud-Din Jabbar's attack in New Orleans. On New Year's Day, at least 15 died with dozens more injured. In the Near East, deadly Hamas and Hezbollah rockets continue to rain down devastation. When rockets were launched across Lebanon's border, 11 Israelis in Majdal Shams (Golan Heights, Israel) were killed.

Though Israel's Iron Dome defense system can intercept most missiles, some Iranian weapons have penetrated. Jeremiah 49:34-39 speaks of God's sending out a sword in judgment against Elam (modern-day Iran) and for good reason. Civilians at Soroka Hospital in Beersheva were deliberately targeted.

When Iran amassed enough uranium at near-weapons-grade levels to make nine nuclear bombs, Operation Midnight Hammer addressed this clear and present danger to world peace. But then media criticism (not praise) followed.

It's true. Manufactured victim/victimizer rhetoric can muddy the waters; but, again, there's no mistaking hate. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei vowed not to let Israel "escape safely." However, when Iran's ballistic missile arsenal was targeted, and three of the nation's top military leaders were killed, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres fingered Israel and urged *her* to cease.

- **New Wave of Antisemitism:**

Sadly, today's antisemitism is at an all-time high—even in Christian churches. Trendy Replacement Theology teaches that the church has permanently replaced Israel as God's instrument and, contrary to Daniel's prophecy, God is entirely done with the Jew. Advocates contend further that Israel has no future as a special nation in God's economy.

As never before, America's homeland is under siege. Sadly, civilians account for 27.7% of deaths perpetrated by Islamists.

In 1988, Bin Laden (and another suspect) allegedly issued a religious edict (*fatwa*) calling on Muslims to kill Americans "anywhere in the world where they can be found." Thereafter, the 1993 World Trade Center bombing retaliated against U.S. support for the Israeli government. Remember, too, that American citizens were among October 7 victims.

Lethal antisemitism was grievously demonstrated in the brutal murder of two Jewish Israeli Embassy workers in Washington, D.C.; and in June 2025 a 45-year-old Egyptian national, Mohamed Sabry Soliman, threw Molotov cocktails in Boulder, Colorado at a peaceful, weekly gathering dedicated to keeping alive the memory of Israeli hostages in Gaza.

Under leadership of Columbia University student Mohsen Mahdawi & ilk, multiple campus protests erupted following the October 7 massacre. In sync with fellow protesters, New York mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani chanted, "One Solution, Intifada Revolution" & "Globalize the Intifada!" Anti-Israel protestors who took over the University of Chicago's Institute of Politics call for launching a nationwide insurgency and domestic terrorism campaign. Again, there's no mistaking hatred.

A letter to Harvard from the Office of Civil Rights under the Department of Health and Human Services revealed that Harvard was in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin. The 57-page investigation came from 50 different listening sessions with Jewish students from Harvard who had experienced blatant, first-hand antisemitism. Still, media outrage toward Israel persisted.

**Taking Sides; Assigning Blame**

Having recently celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a modern nation, Israel boasts 4K years of history—this, under uncommon duress legendarily propelled by the inflammatory “Blame Israel” mantra.

It's alleged now that Israeli settlements make life in the West Bank nearly impossible for residents, but then a closer look is indicated. Since 2007, Hamas has been the de facto governing body in the Gaza Strip. Founded by Yasser Arafat, the Fatah is a Palestinian nationalist and social democratic political party for whom my acquaintance, Tass Saada, was a ruthless assassin before converting to Christ. (Conversely, Arafat's wife was a Palestinian Christian who, sadly, converted to Islam.)

Arguably, Israeli settlements aren't the biggest problem Gaza Christians face. To the contrary, and for good reason, I'm told that Palestinians under limited self-rule have become increasingly disillusioned with the Fatah-led governing body that rules, not by elections, but rather by decree.

Assigning blame where it is due has biblical precedence. As part of the Philistine nation, ancient Gaza was judged by God for historic transgressions toward Israel—transgressions that persist to this day. (Ezekiel 25:15–17, Zephaniah 2:4–5)

While the sword attends Fatah leadership, Prime Minister Netanyahu praises the Bible as “the foundation of our existence, the basis of our faith.” The Netanyahu family's interest in biblical scholarship is a long-standing tradition. Influenced by his grandfather, Benjamin Netanyahu's son, Avner, was a 2011 International Bible Quiz award winner.

Before us is the clear choice between directing our fidelity toward the sword, on one hand, or to the “more sure word” on the other. All said, it's unthinkable for people of faith to abandon Israel (0.02% of the world's population) to stand alone against the 20% hell-bent on “wiping her off the face of

the earth."

As sole democracy in the Near East, admittedly imperfect Israel may not, after all, be the worst neighbor for 2,747,943 Palestinians living in the West Bank, as some would have us believe.

In conclusion, my prayer is this: Let there be *shalom* on earth (signifying wholeness, completeness and reconciliation), and let it begin with me!

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