

THE INTRACTABLE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM

PART I

GOD'S NATIONAL FIRSTBORN SON, RETURNING BEFORE THE TIME

By Arlen L. Chitwood

“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).

The existing Middle East problem is far from simple. From a Biblical standpoint though, it is 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 their 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.

A Biblical Base

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 1954, at the urging of President Eisenhower, the words “under God” were added to a line in the United States pledge of allegiance to the flag, making the pledge of allegiance read, “one nation under God” (the words “under God” [or similar words] had been used in statements and documents by a number of preceding U.S. presidents,

beginning with Washington, the first president).

But is the United States really “one nation under God”? Is this true from a Biblical perspective? —*the only means through which one can possibly 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 Ps. 72:18 and Ps. 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 Ps. 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 will one day 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 should this occur, not only would he have to relinquish the sceptre but conditions relative to Israel and the nations would 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 Ps. 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.

But, as Scripture clearly attests, it will all be for naught. God has already spoken concerning the matter. God has already had the last Word.

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