



ISRAEL

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Part I

INTRODUCTION

The nation of Israel is about the size of New Jersey, is comparatively small compared to its Arabic neighbors (Fig. 1), yet is one of the most contentious and well-known portions of land in the world. Israel dates back to the book of Genesis and although blessed with a rich history of biblical nuances, its history has also been periodically intermingled with disobedience to God, enslavement,



Figure 1. Israel is comparatively small compared to its Arabic neighbors

evictions, persecution, wars, anti-Semitism, the German holocaust of World War II, and is currently engaged in a survival war with Hamas (a radical Islamic organization).

However, in direct contrast with the preceding adversities, the Israeli people are the Chosen People of God, they have been given the Promised Land by God, and are a key element of end time biblical prophecies – such as Ezekiel 38-39. Due to the extensive history of Israel – not only their relationships with God but also with Palestinians – lets look at the many facets of Israel's history from a biblical perspective.

However, due to the current war between Israel and Hamas, lets **first** look at this war and define the prevalent terms that are commonly used in the media so we can have a clearer understanding of current events as applied to the nation of Israel.

2014 Israeli-Gaza Strip Conflict

On July 8, 2014, Israeli Defense Forces launched “*Operation Protective Edge-Solid Cliff*” in the Hamas-governed Gaza Strip in response to multiple issues that primarily consisted of stopping numerous rocket attacks launched from the Gaza Strip, the kidnapping and murder of three Jewish teenagers by Hamas, and intelligence reports of underground tunnels from the Gaza Strip into Israel by Hamas.

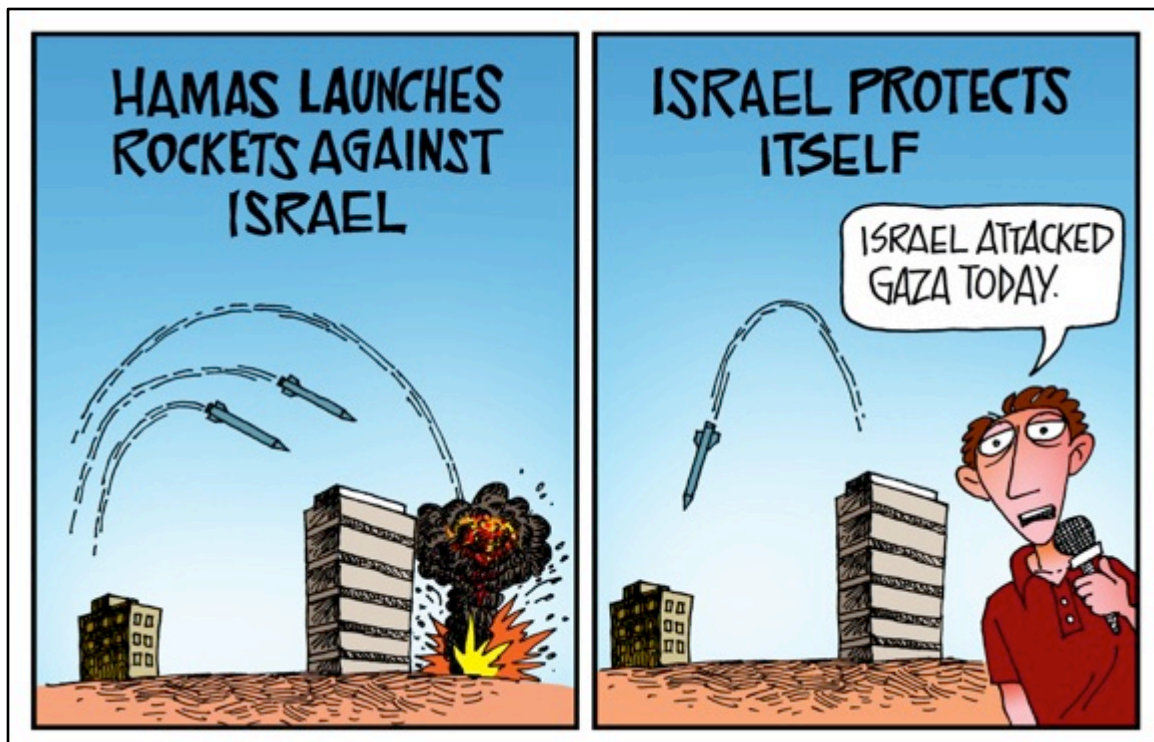


Figure 2. Hamas enjoys global acceptance and forgiveness

Since this current conflict and several unsuccessful cease-fire initiatives have been the center of attention by the global media – particularly the American media – a variety of terminologies have been used to describe various facets of the conflict, often without a clear understanding of the terms.

Note: It should be remembered that the nation of Israel is still subjected to a measure of global anti-Semitism as well as a degree of global acceptance and forgiveness towards Hamas as illustrated in Figure 2.

With these thoughts in mind, let's look at the definitions (with some associated backgrounds) of the commonly used terms that are listed in no particular order.

Palestinian

Generally considered as descendants from people who have lived in Palestine and are largely linguistically and culturally Arab and Islamic.

Palestinian Territories (Palestine)

Modern Palestinian territories (also referred to as occupied Palestinian territories) encompass two specific areas that are the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip of which the boundaries are located within Israel and typically recognized by the international community (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Modern Palestine is comprised of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank territories *within* the contiguous boundaries of Israel

The West Bank and Gaza Strip were conquered by Israel in the Six Day War of 1967 and had earlier been controlled by Jordan and Egypt. In 1988, Jordan relinquished territorial claims to the West Bank and East Jerusalem. After the Palestinian Declaration of Independence in 1988, the "*State of Palestine*" (Palestinian territories) has been recognized by 130 UN Nations but not recognized by the United States, Israel and some Western nations. Then, in 1993, parts of the territories came under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority with Israel having full military control over 60% of the West Bank area. In 2005, Israel disconnected from the Gaza Strip and in 2007, the Hamas political takeover of Gaza politically divided the Palestinian territories with Hamas administering the Gaza Strip and Fatah administering the West Bank.

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

The Palestine Liberation Organization was founded in 1964 and can be considered as an umbrella organization for various groups that represent the Palestinian people (you may remember its late Chairman Yasser Arafat). Today, the PLO is officially referred to as the Palestinian National Authority (PLA) as a result of the Oslo Accords of 1993 that determined the "*right of the Palestinian people to self-determination*" but stopped short of promising a Palestinian state.

Caliphate

Caliphate is derived from the word caliph that means successor - as in successor to Mohammed - and is an Islamic state that is supposed to encompass every Muslim on earth. Although a caliphate still generates the notion of a modern unified Islamic community-state, the only time a caliphate has existed was during 632 A.D. when the Prophet Mohammed died and one of his followers assumed leadership and was referred to as the khalifah (Arabic for successor - simplified as caliph). Interestingly the Ottoman Empire claimed to be the last caliphate that lasted until 1914.

Jihadists vision a caliphate as the height of Islam's glory, or, a version of Islamic nationalism. Jihadists and Islamists also view a caliphate as the solution to the past several hundred years of suppression and humiliation by Western nations and believe that all Muslims should be united in one state and ruled by Islam.

Allah

Allah is the Arabic designation for God and is primarily used by Muslims to refer to God in Islam.

Muhammad

Muhammad is considered by Muslims to be a messenger from God. Muhammad was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia in 570 AD, and was instrumental in converting the Arabian Peninsula to a single religious system known as Islam. It is believed

his revelations were from God, is known as Islam, and is mostly found in the Quran.

Islam/Muslim

Islam is an Abrahamic and monotheistic religion voiced in the Quran and considered by its followers as the *absolute* word of God (Allah). Muhammad was considered to be the last prophet of God, and disciples of Islam are called Muslims. Currently, most Muslims are comprised of two primary denominations:

- Shia (10-20%).
- Sunni (80-90%).

Islam is the second-largest and fastest growing religion in the world (Christianity being the largest) with the Kaaba (Islam's most sacred mosque) in Mecca, and Saudi Arabia being the center of Islam.

Arab Spring

The Arab Spring was a series of anti-government protests and rebellions that spread across the Middle East during the beginning of 2011. The Western media popularized the term "*Arab Spring*." From an achievement viewpoint, it did not reform decades of authoritarian regimes but likely provided a catalyst for long-term change.

Muslim Brotherhood

The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood – shortened to Muslim Brotherhood – is an Islamist organization that was founded in Egypt in 1928. The Brotherhood's stated goal is to "*instill the Qur'an as the sole reference point for ordering the life of the Muslim family*." Additionally, the Brotherhood insists it is a peaceful organization that also disavows violence.

Hezbollah

The Party of Allah or Party of God is also transliterated to the more common term of Hezbollah and is an Islamic militant and political group that is based in Lebanon and primarily funded by Iran. Their influence has been damaged by the Syrian civil war in which they have been involved since 2012.

Jihad

Jihad is an Islamic term and a religious duty that means, "*struggle*" or "*resisting*." It appears in the Quran 41 times and refers to the struggle against those who do not believe in Allah. There are two accepted meanings of jihad:

- An inner spiritual struggle.
- A physical struggle against the enemies of Islam that can be non-violent or violent. Supporters of violent jihad view jihad as a form of a holy war.

al-Qaeda

al-Qaeda is a well-known militant Islamist terror organization that was founded and funded by Osama bin Laden between 1988 and 1989 as a result of the Soviet

war in Afghanistan. During the Syrian civil war, al-Qaeda factions started fighting each other and that has led to other terrorist organizations branching off from al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda was responsible for the September 11 attacks in the U.S. as well as others around the world.

Hamas

Hamas is a shortened term for the Islamic Resistance Movement and is a Palestinian Sunni Islamic organization primarily located in Palestinian territories and some other portions of the Middle East. Hamas is a designated terrorist organization by numerous countries except Iran, Russia, Turkey, China, South Africa and many Arab nations.

Hamas was founded in 1987 as a derivative of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood with the principal goal of liberating Palestine – including Israel – from Israeli occupation. Moreover, Hamas also has a stated goal of establishing an Islamic state in Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank. In short, Hamas does not recognize Israel and is devoted to its destruction and has launched consistent rocket attacks into Israel since 2001.

In the Palestinian parliamentary elections of 2006, Hamas defeated the PLO Fatah party and assumed political control of the Gaza Strip. The Hamas Charter issued in 1988 states the following:

- *“Our struggle against the Jews is very great and very serious” and calls for the obliteration and/or dissolution of Israel with the eventual formation of an Islamic state in Palestine.*
- *“The time will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, come and kill him!”*
- *“Hamas is humanistic, and tolerant of other religions as long as they do not block Hamas’s efforts.”*

On August 5, 2014, former President Jimmy Carter called on the West to recognize the U.S. designated terrorist group Hamas as a legitimate *“political actor”* that represents the bulk of the Palestinian population. President Carter also stated *“only by recognizing its legitimacy as a political actor – one that represents a substantial portion of the Palestinian people – can the West begin to provide the right incentives for Hamas to lay down its weapons.”* Also, *“There is no humane or legal justification for the way Israeli Defense Forces are conducting this war.”*

Fatah

Founded in 1959 and previously known as the Palestinian National Liberation movement, Fatah is a current Palestinian political party that comprises a large portion of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and is identified with its late founder, Yasser Arafat. In 2006, Fatah lost to Hamas in the Palestinian elections and has since taken political control of the West Bank.

ISIS

ISIS is shorthand for the jihadist organization known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria *and may also be referred to as ISIL and/or The Islamic State* although there may be some inconsequential differences. Linked to al-Qaeda in Iraq (and after the U.S. damaged al-Qaeda in Iraq), ISIS emerged as a fearsome and well-funded group several years ago that has swept across northern Iraq and northern portions of Syria and is responsible for imposing sharia law. Among other factors, their success in Syria has:

- Forced mainstream Syrian forces to fight on two fronts.
- News out of Syria has been obstructed.
- Aid into Syria has also been obstructed.

ISIS has quickly become one of the most powerful forces in Syria as they continue to rapidly expand and capture additional territories.

ISIL

ISIL stands for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. The word Levant comes from a term in the group's Arabic name "*al-Sham*" that refers to a region stretching from southern Turkey, through Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories (refer back to Figure 1). The stated goal of ISIL is to restore an Islamic state or caliphate in this entire area. ISIL can be viewed as a derivative of ISIS with more of a focus on enlarging its caliphate over discrete acts of terrorism.

Islamic State (IS)

Some sources indicate that The Islamic State was formerly known as ISIL in Iraq and was formed out of that organization in April of 2013. However, due to frequently changing English titles – ISIS, ISIL, or Islamic State – the basic idea is that Islamic militants flying the "Black Flag" have a central focus of territorial conquest underscored by rape, crucifixion, mass ethnic murder, public beheading, and imposing an extreme form of Sunni Islam. These atrocities have been so radical that some fellow extremist Islamic organizations have rejected their ideology (i.e., Turkey, Iran, and Hezbollah, etc.). The Islamic State is particularly dangerous and a modern threat to the U.S. as follows:

- Well funded (control of eastern Syrian oil fields, selling looted antiquities, and its conquest of Mosul and its central bank).
- Militants from other countries such as the U.S., UK, Germany, and the Arab world are joining its cause.
- Considerable military success in northern Iraq and Syria including Mosul.
- Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and General Dempsey, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff have warned that Islamic State militants pose the "*biggest threat*" to the U.S.

- Even though President Obama has stated that ISIS, ISIL, and IS are not Islamic, the “I” stands for Islamic.

Israel

Israel is a small country in western Asia and is located at the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Against all odds (except Godly intervention), David Ben-Gurion officially declared Israel a “*State of Israel*” on May 14, 1948, in a former British mandated territory, that was then sanctioned by the United Nations. We will look at Israel in more detail in Part II of this series.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem is not only one of the oldest and most well known cities in the world, it is also considered a holy site to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. As a focal point of contention, both the Israeli people and Palestinian people publicly claim Jerusalem as their capital. During the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, West Jerusalem was captured by Israel while East Jerusalem (and the old city) was captured from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War. Today, Israel’s Basic Law of 1980 considers Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

East Jerusalem

East Jerusalem is comprised of the eastern segment of Jerusalem and was captured by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War and came under Israeli administration. Although there were attempts by the Palestine Liberation Organization to control East Jerusalem, Israel unilaterally declared all of Jerusalem to be its undivided capital although the international community has not recognized this declaration. Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1980 and considers all of Jerusalem to be its capital. Interestingly, the international community considers East Jerusalem to be a part of the West Bank and Palestinian territories.

Gaza Strip (refer to Figure 3 for Gaza, West Bank, and the Golan Heights)

Typically referred to as just Gaza, this area of land makes up a portion of the Palestinian territories. Gaza is located within the state of Israel and is located on the southwest of Israel just above Egypt and next to the Mediterranean Sea. Israel captured the Gaza Strip from Egypt in the Six-Day War in 1967. In 1994, self-governance was granted by Israel to the Palestinian Authority. Since 2007, administration for the Gaza Strip has been provided by Hamas.

Interestingly, the Gaza Strip is comprised of a total area of 141 square miles and contains about 1.82 million people (primarily Palestinian refugees) that make this land one of the most densely populated areas of the world.

West Bank

The West Bank is a section of land that is also located within the state of Israel and shares a boundary with Jordan and the Dead Sea. The West Bank includes East Jerusalem, is mostly inhabited by Palestinian Arabs and some Jewish

Israelis. The West Bank was occupied by Israel after 1967 and is currently politically administered by Fatah.

Golan Heights

The Golan Heights is an area of about 700 square miles in the upper portion of Israel that also borders Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The Golan Heights was captured from Syria and occupied by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War.

Operation Protective Edge

The Israeli Defense Forces launched Operation Protective Edge (or Operation Solid Cliff) on July 8, 2014 on the Hamas-governed Gaza Strip. The stated purpose was stopping rocket attacks into Israel from the Gaza Strip. However, after the start of Operation Protective Edge, additional rocket strikes from Gaza militias continued on Israeli cities. This conflict is reportedly the deadliest conflict in Gaza since the Second Intifada. The Second Intifada was the second Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation and began after the failure of the Camp David Summit of 2000.

Rocket Attacks

For at least the past ten years, the land of Israel has been subjected to rocket fire and/or a realistic threat of rocket fire from Gaza/Hamas and some other terrorist organizations. Since 2001, over 15,000 rockets and mortars have been launched into Israel with the greatest number coming from 2005 after Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip in that same year. Some of the rockets that are launched into Israel are capable of reaching Israel's largest cities such as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. When incoming rocket fire is detected, Israeli citizens have between 15-45 seconds to find shelter.

For informational purposes, the following is a yearly count of rockets launched into Israel before Operation Protective Edge:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| ○ 2001: 510 | 2008: 3,278 |
| ○ 2002: 661 | 2009: 774 |
| ○ 2003: 848 | 2010: 231 |
| ○ 2004: 1,528 | 2011: 627 |
| ○ 2005: 488 | 2012: 2,248 |
| ○ 2006: 1,123 | 2013: 41 |
| ○ 2007: 2,427 | 2014: 450 |

Since the Gaza Strip is located within the contiguous boundaries of Israel, the launching of rocket fire by Hamas (and some other terrorist organizations) has been simplified and is able to reach many areas of Israel in addition to Hamas incessantly increasing the capabilities and size of its terror arsenal. Although Israel Defense Forces have currently been successful in severely damaging terrorist long-range rocket arsenals, shorter-range mortars and rockets still pose a constant threat.

Generally, most Palestinian rockets that are launched into Israel are home made, about the height of a person, are easily transported and launched from common areas, and are called Qassam rockets by the Israeli media (Figure 4). These rockets cannot be precisely launched to a specific target so they are used indiscriminately against Israel. Although the Qassam rockets pictured in Figure 4 are the most accessible rockets in the arsenal of Hamas (manufactured within the Gaza Strip), Hamas also has limited access (due to the Israeli blockade of Gaza) to the following rockets:

- Grad: Supplied by Iran and China, 11-24 mi range, 39 lb. warhead.
- WS-1E: Supplied by China, 24 mi range, 44 lb. warhead.
- Fajr-5: Supplied by Iran, 46 mi range, 385 lb. warhead.
- Khaibar M-302: Supplied by Syria, up to 93 mi range, 3-9 lb. warhead

Note: As a side note, indiscriminate attacks against civilians (that do not discriminate between civilians and military targets) are viewed as illegal under international law.



Figure 4. Qassam rockets are easily launched from common areas

A primary advantage of Qassam rockets is cost in combination with ease and speed of manufacture, transport and mobility. There are three common types:

- Qassam 1: Range of 3 mi, 11 lb. warhead.
- Qassam 2: Range of 7 mi, 22 lb. warhead.

- Qassam 3: Range of 9 mi, 44 lb. warhead.

The Qassam propellant is a mixture of sugar and potassium nitrate (a widely available fertilizer), the warhead is comprised of TNT and urea nitrate (another common fertilizer), and a single person can carry one rocket. The cost of each rocket is about \$800. Not surprisingly, the Israeli Ministry of Defense views the Qassam rockets as *“more a psychological than a physical threat.”*

Iron Dome

Operational since 2011, the Iron Dome is a missile defense system that is designed to intercept in-coming rockets and missiles. The Iron Dome is comprised of *“batteries”* that use a radar unit and three launchers that are each capable of firing 20 Tamir interceptor missiles designed to intercept incoming short-range missiles launched from 2.5 to 43 miles away (Figure 5). A sixth battery was installed in September 2013. Interestingly, the Israeli designed system (Rafael Advanced Defence Systems) is capable of simultaneously handling multiple threats but can ignore threats that will land outside of a specific defended zone. The system does not target missiles that are directed at uninhabited areas. This system has been very effective in reducing the number of missiles reaching Israeli citizens/property.



Figure 5. An Iron Dome battery

Currently, Israel and the United States are jointly producing and testing the latest generation of a missile defense system known as the Arrow. The Arrow

is a cutting-edge system designed to counter long-range missile attacks from Gaza, Iran, or elsewhere. Although Hamas does not presently have long-range capability, they likely will in the not to distant future.

Tunnel Systems

Although the media has reported the discovery of underground tunnels constructed by Hamas, the magnitude of the discovery has either been softened or omitted by their reporting. During Operation Protective Edge, Israeli Defense Forces discovered a labyrinth of underground tunnels that had been secretly dug by Hamas, costing millions of dollars, using common building materials, traveling from Gaza into Israel and Egypt, and even the West Bank into Israel. The tunnels from Gaza into Egypt were assumed to provide supplies from Egypt into Gaza to negate the current Gaza blockade by Israel. However, the tunnels from Gaza into Israel were designed to not only bring supplies into Gaza but to also provide some of the following considerations:

- **The tunnels were scheduled to be activated and cause a mass terror attack during the Jewish High holidays of September 24, 2014 (Jewish New Year of Rosh Hashanah).**
- Interconnected tunnels that would allow Hamas senior leadership to easily move underground (between various locations) with freedom.
- Part of the tunnel enterprise was a part of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) that has a stated goal of helping Palestinians. They have also been allegedly linked to militant organizations.
- Some tunnels with explosives were located under Israeli kindergartens. Detonation would have caused building collapse and wholesale murder of children in the building.
- In addition to the aforementioned explosives, hundreds of heavily armed Hamas fighters would have exited the tunnels into Israel during nighttime hours to infiltrate Israeli communities by the Gaza strip. This would have positioned them to kill the kindergarten children and then kill and/or kidnap as many Israelis as possible.
- Abductions-kidnappings (from Israel into Gaza). This would have allowed Hamas to put pressure on Israel while holding Israeli citizens hostage.
- Stockpile thousands of weapons (i.e., Russian anti-tank missiles, explosive devices, and large amounts of sedatives, tranquilizers, handcuffs, syringes and ropes that are the tools for capture on a large scale).
- Secret access between Israel and Gaza for personnel and weapons (infiltration avenues).
- Stockpiles of materials for bomb-making materials (primarily located in the tunnels from the West Bank into Israel).

Some tunnels were very deep, reinforced with concrete (Figure 6), large enough to contain vehicles, serve as command centers and rocket launcher hiding sites, and so on. In short, Gaza and the West Bank had been preparing for war and on a scale that was far more advanced than Israeli intelligence imagined. It is estimated that Hamas diverted 40% of its budget into the Gaza tunnel system in order to initiate a major military strike on Israel. Israeli Intelligence acknowledges that Operation Protective Edge prevented a catastrophe for Israel by eliminating and/or minimizing a mass terror attack that would have emerged from underground.

Note: One has to wonder about the technical rapid tunnel and missile abilities of Hamas and the Islamic State spreading to the US-Mexico border areas.



Figure 6. A typical Hamas underground tunnel

Funding

Recently, the Islamic State (IS) has been referred to as “*the most well funded militant organization in history,*” and “*the richest terrorist organization in the world.*” Linked to Hamas, the IS are allegedly sponsored by:

- Qatar and Turkey with Turkey their NATO representative and Qatar primarily providing the financing. Interestingly, Qatar is the world's richest country per capita.
- The conquest of the bank in the northern city of Mosul, Iraq that netted about 430 million dollars.
- Wealthy individuals in the Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar.
- Oil fields of northern Iraq.
- Extortion and taxes levied in conquered/occupied areas.

Acquisitions

The recent acquisitions by the Islamic State have been rapid and with an overwhelming force compared to the weak Iraqi Security Forces and the fact that Assad has allowed the Islamic State to operate with little resistance in northern Syria (due to Assad's focus of trying to maintain power). Although the Islamic State has made noteworthy inroads in Libya, the map in Figure 7 graphically illustrates the amount of land in northern Syria and Iraq that the Islamic state currently controls. Notice how close the Islamic State area is to the capital city of Baghdad in Iraq.

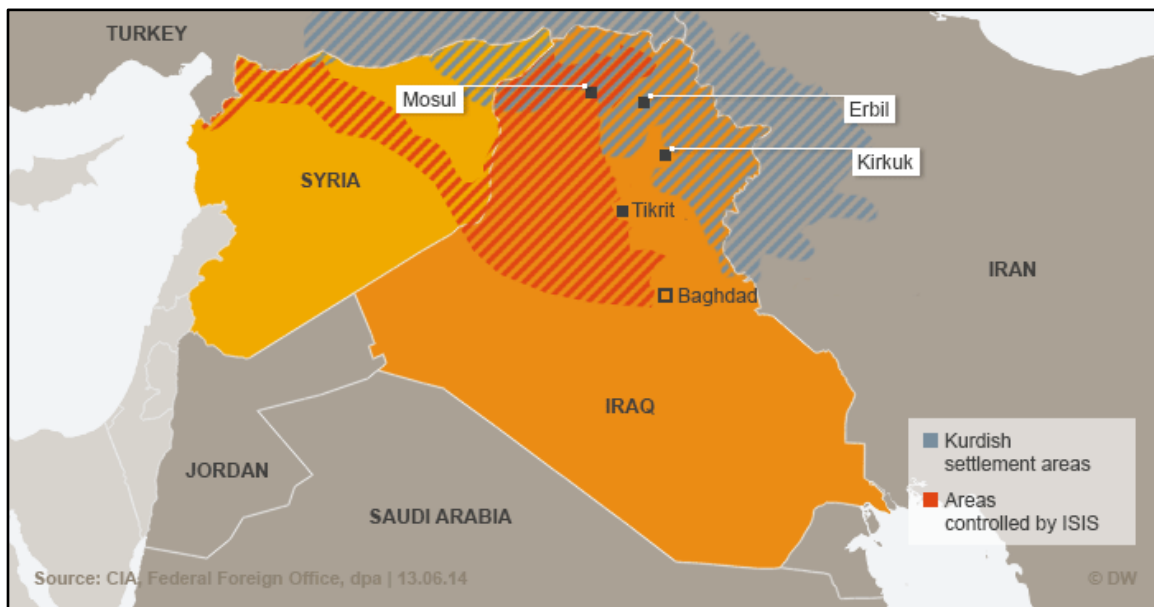


Figure 7. Areas controlled by the Islamic State

UPDATE

September 11, 2014 Program

For people who have been following the world news regarding the Islamic State and their violent actions to expand their areas of influence and control, a

large portion of the rapidity of their current success was graphically displayed and reported in the global media following our program on August 27th as follows:

- Islamist affiliated forces captured the Tripoli International Airport in Libya. The operation was known as Libya Dawn. Additionally, Libya continues to be beset by political and military instability.
- Islamic militias are making a concentrated effort to control the Libyan Waha Oil Fields that are owned by ConocoPhillips, the Hess Corp, and Marathon Oil Corp. Although the militias were briefly successful in gaining control over the oil fields, they have currently lost control of the oil fields although this will likely change. Libya is a key oil exporter to European refiners.
- The Islamic State captured Tabqa, the Syrian air base in North-Eastern Syria and was a major blow to the Assad regime. Tabqa is the latest in a number of bases (three in this region) to fall under the control of the Islamic State in Northern and Eastern Syria. The following weapons were seized along with the Tabqa base:



Figure 8. An Islamic State captured Syrian Mig 21 aircraft

- SA-16 ManPads - man portable defense systems – ground to air)
- Aim-7 Sidewinder - air-to-air missiles
- Helicopters
- Tanks
- Artillery
- Ammunition

- Mig-21 aircraft (Fig 8). It has also been reported the Islamic State is forcing detained Syrian pilots to train militants
- Radar facilities. This reduces the Syrian ability to provide radar coverage and air defenses in that region
- The Islamic State is using a methodology called “*Smash-and Grab*” that means that as additional weapons are seized they are used to further the Islamic State offensives.
- Iraqi security forces thwarted an attempt by the Islamic State capture the Baiji oil refinery north of Baghdad. This refinery once accounted for over 50% of Iraq’s supplies of refined products.
- On September 5, the United States and NATO tentatively formed a coalition to destroy the Islamic State.
- On September 8, the Associated Press reported that the head of the Arab League urged its members to “*confront Islamic state extremists militarily and politically.*” Backing from the 22-country Arab League could provide crucial support for an international coalition against the Islamic State.

On October 1, 2014, we will continue with Part II of this series and go back to Abraham to the present from a biblical perspective and look at the origin and “bloodline” of Christianity and Islam.

CONCLUSION

A familiarity with the history of the age-old Israeli-Arab conflict in combination with Israel being surrounded by larger Arab nations that openly voice a hatred for Israel combined with the current escalation of the Israeli-terrorist war could easily result in a perception that Israel is destined for a potential Islamic destruction of Israel and its Jewish inhabitants. However, the Bible clearly states:

- God has promised the land (i.e., Promised Land) to Israel as follows:
 - God declared to Abraham – “*To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates,*” *Genesis 15:18* - and to Isaac and Jacob – “*Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates – all the Hittite country – to the great sea on the west,*” *Joshua 1:4.*
- God has promised to deliver Israel from a future Islamic invasion as described in Ezekiel 38-39. In these explicit prophetic passages, God predicts a coming northern confederacy of Islamic nations (led by Russia) who will invade Israel (Ezekiel 38:1-6). However, God will miraculously defeat the invading forces in Ezekiel 38:18-39:8, and then restore the nation of Israel (Ezekiel 39:21-29).

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ISRAEL

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October 1, 2014

Part II & III

INTRODUCTION

In Part I we overviewed radical Islamic militias, the current turbulence between Hamas and Israel, and some of the side issues that are related to Israeli forces invading the Gaza Strip that was initiated on July 8, 2014. Although Israel is a very small country that is surrounded by much larger Arabic/Islamic countries (Figure 1), it is easy to understand why a combined and coordinated effort by these countries has been a constant threat to the permanence of Israel.



Figure 1. Israel is surrounded by larger Arabic countries

Since Israel became a recognized state in 1948, Israel has been attacked multiple times and has consistently and miraculously triumphed against

overwhelming odds. Currently, multiple Islamic factions repeatedly subject Israel to an extreme form of vitriolic hate in addition to a global community that offers little support (Figure 2).

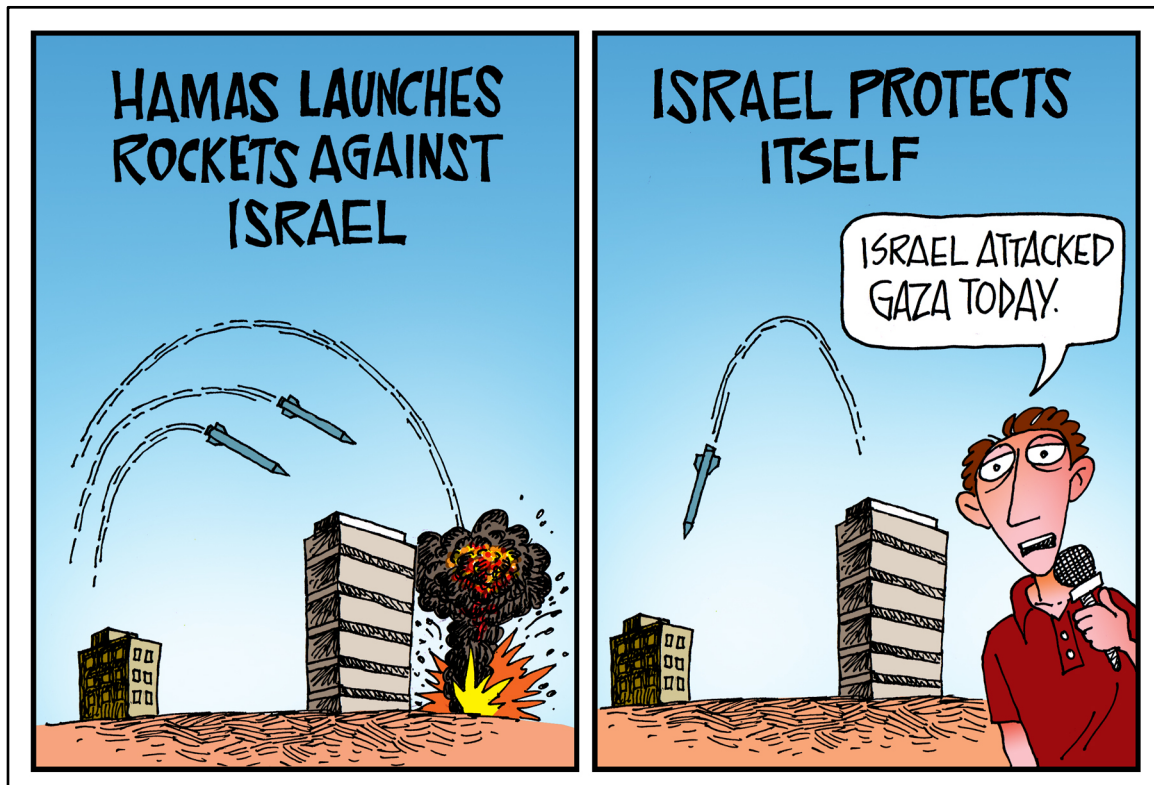


Figure 2. Israel does not have the support of the global media

Not surprisingly, unrest between the Jewish and Arabic/Islamic people can be traced back to the story of Abram (later changed to Abraham) as found in biblical scripture beginning in Genesis 11 in addition to a longstanding misinterpretation of the Bible and Qur'an. With these thoughts in mind, let's look at the history of the Jewish and Arabic people, the Islamic religion, and highlight why these two groups of people have been in conflict for thousands of years (and will continue to be in conflict), and then look at the land of Israel and the "Promised Land."

JEWISH-ARABIC HISTORY

The history of both the Jewish and Arabic people originates with Abram – likely an idolater (Joshua 24:2-3) - when God directs him to leave his homeland and travel to a new home in Canaan. Although Abram - which stands for "*exalted father*" - is first mentioned in Genesis 11:26 that is part of a post Babel genealogy, the definitive story begins several verses later as follows:

“And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sari, his son Abram’s wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there.”

Genesis 11:31

As Abram is dwelling in Haran, God speaks to Abram and directs him to leave:
Now the Lord had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation, I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 12:1-3

Genesis 12:1-3 contains the introduction of the Abrahamic Covenant whose fulfillment extends from this passage all through scripture to Revelation 20 and is comprised of the following elements:

- Introduced in 12:1-3
- Actually made in 15:18-21
- Reaffirmed in 17:1-21
- Renewed with Isaac 26:2-5 and Jacob 28:10-17
- Everlasting Covenant (Gen 17:1&8, 1 Ch 16:17, Ps 105:7-12, and Is 24:5). This covenant contains four fundamentals:
 1. Seed (Gen 17:2-7, and Gal 3:8&16 where it refers to Christ)
 2. Land (Gen 15:18-21, 17:8)
 3. Nation (Gen 12:2, 17:4)
 4. Divine blessing and protection (Gen 12:3)

Highlighting the next portion of the Abrahamic story:

“So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him. So they came to the land of Canaan. Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said – To your descendants I will give this land. And there he built an altar to the LORD who had appeared to him.”

Genesis 12:4-7

In this portion of scripture we find two primary tenets:

- I will give this land (Gen 12:7):
 - This is the first indication of a “Promised Land.” However, the specific boundaries are first specified in Genesis 15:18-21 (*we will look at this in more detail in Part III of this discussion*)

- This specific land was also chosen by God as the most appropriate land for the coming of divine revelation and salvation of the world (birth, death, ministry, and final return of Jesus Christ)
- Altar to the LORD (Gen 12:7). By this act, (1) Abram made an open confession of his religion, (2) established worship of the true God, and (3) declared his faith in God's promise. This was the first true place of worship ever erected in the Promised Land and would be repeated by Isaac (Gen 26:24-25) and Jacob (Gen 33:18-20)

From Genesis 12:7, let's skip over the journey of Abram to Egypt, dividing the land with Lot, Lot's captivity and rescue to the 16th chapter of Genesis that begins the story of Hagar and Ishmael. However, note that between Genesis 12:7 and Genesis 16, God repeats his covenant with Abram in the following passages:

- Genesis 13:14-17
- Genesis 15:7, 18-21

Now, let's summarize the narrative story of Hagar and Ishmael in Genesis 16:1-15 that sets the stage for the division of the Jewish and Arabic peoples:

"Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne no children. So Sarai said to Abram, see now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children from her. So he went into Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. And when Sari dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence. Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness."

Genesis 16:1-15

Because Abram and Sari decided to not trust God for an heir through Sari and used Sari's maidservant to fulfill that role, the next portion of scripture details the beginning of a "division" in Abram's family that will ultimately lead to Abram being the father of two groups of innumerable descendants that will be known as Jewish and Arabic:

"Then the angel of the LORD said to her (Hagar), I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude. And the angel of the LORD said to her, Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has heard your affliction. He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren."

Genesis 16:9-12

This portion of scripture describes Abrams firstborn son Ishmael as a “wild-man...against every man.” This phrase best describes the fiercely aggressive and independent nature Ishmael would exhibit, along with his Arabic descendants. Then, in Genesis 17, God changes Abram’s name to Abraham and Sarai’s name to Sarah and informs Abraham that Sarah will bear him a son. Not surprisingly, Abraham does not believe God and replies “Oh, that Ishmael might live before you!” This plea indicates how impossible Abraham believed it was for he and Sarah to have children. Then, God forcefully settles the discussion in verses 17-21 as follows:

*Then God said: “**No**, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes (sons), and I will make him a great nation. **But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this set time next year.**”*

Genesis 17:17-21

At the conclusion of Genesis 17:21, a primary covenant has been established between God and Abraham as follows:

- A Promised Land
- The beginning of two diverse nations – Jewish and Arabic. **Ishmael would multiply exceedingly and become the father of a great nation (Arabic) and Isaac would be the heir of the “Everlasting Covenant” between the Jewish people and God**

JEWISH-ARABIC HOSTILITY

Regrettably, history has proven there has been a significant amount of hostility and animosity between the Jewish and Arabic peoples, particularly in modern times. However, a familiarity with all of the preceding verses should indicate that at least some of this animosity goes back to an ancient measure of bitterness between Isaac and Ishmael as follows:

- Isaac was the promised son who would inherit the blessings of Abram (Gen 21:1-3) and receive the Covenant from God (Gen 17:17-21). Ishmael was the son of a slave woman (Gen 16:1-16)
- As a result of this clear division, there was an animosity between Ishmael and Isaac from Abram sending Ishmael and Hagar away, Ishmael mocking Isaac (Gen 21:9), and Ishmael being described as a wild man and his hand being against every man, and every man’s hand against him (Gen 16:9-12)

However, there are several additional factors that have made this animosity and hostility even more pronounced:

- The Qur'an (and the religion of Islam). In Islamic tradition, it is typically believed that Abraham is told to sacrifice his son Ishmael, not Isaac, although the Qua'ran does not actually state which son (this story is found in Surah 37, verses 100-111 where it only refers to a son). As a result, and according to the Islamic doctrinal scheme, Muslims celebrate the Islamic holiday of *Qurbani id* that is known as the "Sacrifice Festival." This holiday celebrates the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son by Hagar, Ishmael (who is also believed to be the son of Promise and the ultimate right to the Holy Land). Obviously this viewpoint is in direct conflict with Genesis 17:17-21, Genesis 22:9, Hebrews 11:17, and James 2:21. However, Muslims believe that the Bible is corrupt, not reliable, and has been changed by men's alterations and narrations
- In 1948 Israel became a nation with set boundaries that were approved by the United Nations. The land at that time was primarily inhabited by Arabic peoples (Palestinians) and was vehemently protested by most Arabs. This hostility resulted in the Israeli-Arab war of 1948 that started immediately after Israel declared independence. This hostility between Israel and its Arabic neighbors has continued to escalate into modern times. Ezekiel 38-39 gives a clear account of Israel being attacked by Islamic countries sometime in the future and being miraculously delivered from annihilation by God

Part III

October 24, 2014

ARABIA BEFORE MUHAMMAD

In the preceding discussion, we looked at the Arabic nation as promised by God to Hagar in Genesis 16 and Abraham in Genesis 17. However, as history will record in detail, the birth of Muhammad in 570 AD will lead to the establishment of the Qua'ran, the Islamic religion, and a principal leadership (Muhammad) for the Arabic peoples. However, before we look at the next section on the Islamic religion we need to briefly consider the time period between Ishmael and Muhammad and the growth of the Arabic peoples.

From a time perspective, Ishmael was born around the time of 1911 B.C. and Muhammad was born in 570 AD. Therefore, the pre-Muhammad time period we are considering is about 2481 years of a growth period for the Arabic people. During this time, the Arabic people were dramatically increasing into one of the largest civilizations the world has ever known. For this discussion, this time period can be summarized by the following highlights:

- Initially and during the time of Abraham, Arabia was inhabited by the Bedouins (people with a nomadic life style) and could best be described as a culturally isolated and economically underdeveloped region. As a side note, most of the land is desert, arid (rainfall is scarce), minimal vegetation and land suitable for farming. As a result, the nomadic lifestyle was the lone successful existence
- Ishmael's offspring would consist of 12 sons (Gen 25:13-16) who would initially comprise a portion of the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula (also descendants from Joktan, Shem, Keturah, and Essau)
- As the Arabic population increased, the nomads (or Bedouins) still lived according to ancient tribal patterns but were beginning to be influenced by neighboring and more sophisticated cultures of Ethiopia, Persia, and Byzantium
- 853 BC - First reference to Arabs found in an Assyrian inscription
- 350 AD - The first Aramaic script is developed
- 450 AD - The king of Mecca (Quasayy) unifies enough people to found a city around the shrine of Mecca
- 500 AD - Southern Arabia ruled by a Jewish kingdom
- 500 AD - Northern Arabia is ruled by the Kinda
- 570 AD - Christian Ethiopia tries to capture Mecca but is defeated by the Arabs
- 570 AD - Muhammad is born
- 610 AD - Muhammad preaches a new religion, Islam, in Mecca
- 610-632 AD - Muhammad and his followers gain prominence and followers. During 627 AD, Muhammad kills 700 Jews and in 629, Muhammad wins the battle of Khaybar and beheads all the Jews
- 632 AD - The Muslim army conquers the Arabian Peninsula
- Post 632 AD - And so on.....

THE ISLAMIC RELIGION

In the preceding sections we highlighted Jewish-Arabic history and hostility with an overview of the beginning of the Jewish and Arabic nations. However, at this point a question is usually asked regarding the appearance of Islam in Arabic history. So, with these thoughts in mind, let's briefly look at the history of Islam by highlighting its noteworthy characteristics:

- Islam is a monotheistic (belief there is only one God) and Abrahamic religion that is expressed in the Qu'ran and is considered by its supporters as holy and the exact word of God

- Islam is the second-largest religion and may be the fastest growing religion in the world
- Allah is the Arabic word for God and is primarily used by Muslims to refer to God in Islam
- The Qua'ran is a collection of revelations and teachings of Muhammad who Muslims believe is the last prophet from God to mankind
- The name of Muhammad means "Praiseworthy"
- Muslims maintain that previous revelations, messages, and the Bible have been partially misinterpreted or altered over time
- Muslims believe that the Qua'ran is the unaltered and final revelation of God
- Muhammad was a man, born in Mecca, Arabia (present-day Saudi Arabia) in 570 AD and died in Medina, Arabia (present-day Saudi Arabia) in 632 AD at age 62
- Muslims believe that Muhammad restored the unaltered and original faith of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc. and is the founder of Islam
- While working as a merchant, Muhammad would occasionally retreat to a cave for prayer and seclusion. At age 40, Muhammad allegedly was visited by the angel Gabriel and received his initial revelations from God
- Three years after this event, Muhammad began publicly preaching these revelations, emphasizing:
 - God is one
 - Complete surrender to Him
 - Islam is the only way acceptable to God
 - He was a prophet of God
- In 622 AD, Muhammad and his followers migrated to Medina. This event marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar
- In Medina and after 8 years of fighting the Meccan tribes, Muhammad collected an army of 10,000 Muslim converts and marched on the city of Mecca, capturing the city with little resistance
- Muhammad had all pagan idols in the city destroyed and all remaining pagan temples in Eastern Arabia were destroyed
- Shortly after, Muhammad became ill and died. However, most of the Arabian Peninsula had converted to Islam and Arabia was united into a single Muslim religious organization
- Muslim law is the result of Muhammad's practices and teachings
- After the death of Muhammad, Abu Bakr (a friend) was appointed successor and the first Caliph
- Within 10 years, Islamic Arabs had conquered Mesopotamia, Byzantine Syria and Egypt, and large parts of Syria that led to the establishment of the first Caliphate

- History has graphically indicated that Islam has significantly increased to the status of a large and active religion since the death of Muhammad. Today, the militaristic side of radical Islam has dominated the global media

THE LAND OF ISRAEL

From a geographical perspective, the Land of Israel is a unique state in that it is a God-given topographical portion of land that is nestled at the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea and also shares land borders with the Muslim states of Lebanon to the north, Syria in the northeast, Jordan on the east, and Egypt to the south (Figure 3). Located within the boundaries of Israel are the Palestinian Territories (conquered by Israel during the 6-day war of



Figure 3. The Land of Israel is nestled between the Mediterranean Sea, the Muslim States of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon

1967) of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights which is currently monitored by United Nations Forces.

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly recommended the implementation and resultant adoption of a Partition Plan named Mandatory Palestine (that was rejected by the Palestinians). However, on May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion (president of the Jewish Agency for Palestine

and Executive Head of the Zionist Organization) boldly declared “the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz Israel, to be known as the State of Israel, and independent upon the May 15, 1948 termination of the British Mandate for Palestine. This declaration came to be sanctioned by the United Nations with additional approval from the United States. Not surprisingly, neighboring Arab armies were incensed that they had lost their proposed land and invaded the new State of Israel the next day but were miraculously defeated in the war of 1948. The armistice lines that were agreed upon at the end of fighting in 1949 served as Israel’s boundaries until the Six Day War of 1967 that ended with Israel occupying the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights in Syria (Figure 4).



Figure 4. The Land of Israel and captured land
after the Six Day War of 1967

In the interest of peace agreements, the Sinai Peninsula- largest of the captured areas - was returned to Egypt in stages during the time period of 1974-1982, and in 1994, a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) resulted in the ending of Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and Jericho in the West Bank. An additional peace agreement in 1995 led to the Israeli withdrawal from most of the West Bank area. Referring to Figure 5, it is easy to see that the modern boundaries of Israel have been significantly reduced from 1967 (in the interest of peace) and yet has not resulted in any form of reduced hostility from Israel's Islamic neighbors and/or organizations. In fact, history has demonstrated that hostility towards Israel has not only been simplified from the Gaza Strip and West Bank but has dramatically increased.

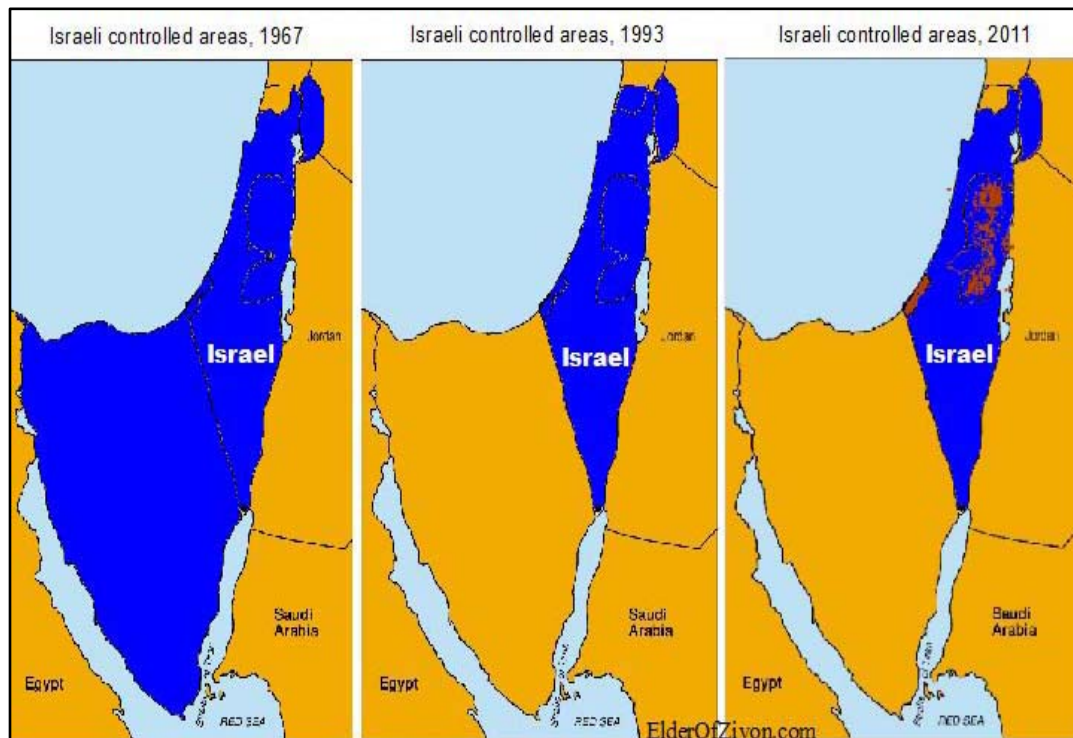


Figure 5. Israeli controlled areas from 1967 to 2011

Following are some items of interest (in no particular order) that summarize the Land of Israel from a biblical, historical, and geographical perspective:

- Israel is the size of New Jersey
- Israel is the land promised to Abram in the Bible
- Israel is located in a strategic location of the junction of Africa, Asia, and Europe
- Israel is a democratic country

- Israel is central to the Jewish religion
- Israelis and Palestinians both claim Jerusalem as their capital
- Israel is home to more than 1/3 of the world's Jews - and that number continues to increase
- Over 20% of Israel's citizens are not Jewish
- Zionism comes from the word Zion, and over time was referred to as the Jewish idea of utopia
- Israel is holy to four faiths:
 - Jews
 - Christians
 - Muslims
 - Baha'i
- Christ ministered in Israel and will once again return to Israel as the conquering King
- Israel is often referred to as the "Holy Land." However, this expression occurs only once in Zechariah 2:12 and not once in the New Testament. As a side note, Zechariah 2:12 states – *"And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land and will again choose Jerusalem."*

THE PROMISED LAND

The Promised Land is the land originally promised by God to the Israelites, the descendants of Jacob, and is first made to Abram in Genesis 15:18-21 and then renewed to his son Isaac and to Isaac's son Jacob (Genesis 28:13). Related historical terms for The Promised Land include:

- This Land
- The Land of Canaan
- The Holy Land
- Palestine
- Dan to Beersheba

Interestingly, the boundaries of The Promised Land vary somewhat between multiple biblical scriptures such as Genesis 15, Exodus 23, Numbers 34, Ezekiel 47, and Joshua (Figure 5 illustrates the boundaries as defined in Numbers and Ezekiel). Starting with Genesis 15, the boundaries are categorically defined as follows:

Genesis 15

In Genesis 15:18-21, the "Borders of the Land" are defined as the *land* promised to the descendants of Abraham, through his son Isaac and grandson Jacob.

Exodus 23

Joshua 1:4 recaps the land promise just prior to the Israelites invading The Promised Land.

In summary, lets look at three relevant questions regarding The Promised Land:

What is the Promised Land?

The Promised Land as defined in Genesis 15:18 and Joshua 1:4 consists of (Figure 6) everything from the Nile River in Egypt to Lebanon (south to north) and everything from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (west to east).

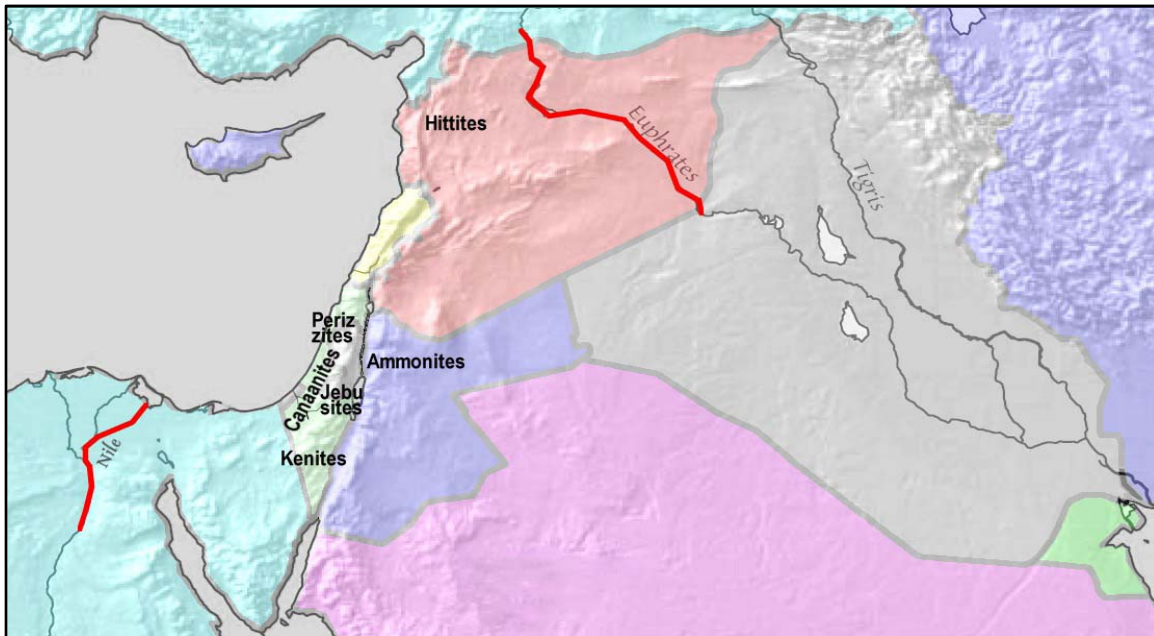


Figure 6. The Promised Land as defined in Genesis and Joshua

What portion of the Promised Land *does not currently* belong to Israel?

The West Bank, the Gaza Strip, some of Egypt and Syria, all of Jordan, some of Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

Has Israel ever totally encompassed the promise in Joshua 1:4?

The entire land that has been promised to Israel in Joshua 1:4 (and other scriptural passages) has yet to be fulfilled. During the reigns of David and Solomon, Israel achieved the greatest control of the Promised Land - although not totally. After David and Solomon, Israel suffered through kingdom divisions and exiles. However, in 1948 the modern nation of Israel was established and Israel has become a democratic and thriving nation.

As a complete answer to the question of Israel encompassing all of the Promised Land, Revelation 20:1-6 indicates that God will fulfill the promise to give Israel total control of the Promised Land that will be ruled by Christ during the 1,000 year Millennium.

Did God give Israel the Promised Land for all time?

To answer this question, let's look at Deuteronomy 4:40 that says – “*Keep His decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you for all time.*” Interestingly, this passage indicates this promise conditional and unconditional. The Israelite's had to obey God's statutes to *remain* in the land. However, the end of verse 40 says that God is giving Israel the land “*for all time.*” So, the clear answer is that God conditionally offered blessings within the Promised Land, and God made an unconditional promise that Israel would have the Promised Land for all time.

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