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 All Scriptures are printed verbatim with translations noted. • SOURCES ARE END NOTED • Pastor Joe's email is Joe@SouthReno.com.

A. The Current Situation

1. The current conflict is *predominantly* between Hamas and Israel.
 - A. 'Hamas' means 'zeal' in Arabic and forms an acronym (spelled backwards) for "Islamic Resistance Movement." Its official charter calls for the "complete destruction of Israel and for the raising of a banner" that would lead to "Allah controlling over every inch of Palestine." [Source: <https://hamas.ps/en> and also cf., Wikipedia "Hamas" article.]
 - B. Iran is the biggest supporter of Hamas. Hamas and Hezbollah (the terrorist organization that dominates Lebanon to the North of Israel) is seeking to expand its influence across the Middle East.
 - C. Iran is Shiite and Persian; it is locked in a geopolitical conflict with Saudi Arabia and other Sunni Arab nations (which have entered into peace agreements with Israel.) [Source: Randall Price, *Fast Facts on the Middle East Conflict*, (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2020 rev., p. 47ff.)]
 - D. Hamas (and Hezbollah) are hoping the current conflict will rally all Muslims in opposition to the Jews.
 - E. Iran also believes that engaging in these attacks and causing these



conflicts and chaos prepares the way for the coming of their Mahdi (ie., their *Messiah*.)

- F. Hamas leaders have also sought to position themselves to win Palestinian legislative elections scheduled for May 22. [Source: Denison Forum, art., "Latest Conflict in Israel..." dated May 14, 2021.]
 2. Hamas has raised these tensions over the possible expulsion of six Palestinian families from East Jerusalem—that started in Early March 2021.
 3. During Ramadan—specifically, Laylat al-Qadr or "The Night of Power" (the holiest day of Ramadan), clerics speaking in the al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount stirred up the crowd about the pending evictions of the Palestinian families in East Jerusalem. [Source: The Times of Israel, art., "Israel says of US..." dated May 14, 2021.]
 4. That led to rocks being brought to the al-Aqsa Mosque and ultimately thrown on Jewish police at the Western Wall. [Source: The Times of Israel, art., "Palestine Stocked Rocks on Temple Mount..." dated May 8, 2021.]
 5. IDF (Israeli Defense Force) secured the Temple Mount during the Ramadan. [Source: The Jerusalem Post, art., "Israel Under Attack" dated May 18, 2021.]
 6. This caused Hamas to fire thousands of rockets from Gaza into Israel that, for the most part, were defeated by Israel's Iron Dome (anti-weapon defense apparatus currently being paid for by the United States).
 7. Israel responded to these attacks with counter attacks into Gaza.
 8. Many people have been killed and much property has been destroyed in Gaza, and there have been some casualties in Israel, as well.
 9. Skirmishes like this (even though this is the largest one in some time) have generally lasted between a week to 45 days.)
 10. Unique to this event is Hamas' utilization of Social Media (Tik-tok/IG) and news agencies to misrepresent actual situations on the ground.
- BONUS: My fear is that Iran, Lebanon, or some other extremist Suni Muslim group joins the fight against Israel.

B. An Important Question—Whose Land is it Anyway?

Both Jews and Arabs claim divine, legal and historical right to the land known as Israel (or Palestine).

Israel is controlled and occupied by Israel. The Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip are "Israeli controlled but Muslim occupied."

Jewish Claims (and Pastor Joe's position)

1. God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people in an everlasting covenant.

"The Lord promised Abraham, to your descendants I have given this land, from the River of Egypt to the great River, the River Euphrates. Also, I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; And I

will be their God.” Genesis 15:18; 17: 8 (Also cf., Psalm 105:8-11; Ez. 36:22, 24; Zech. 12:9-10)

2. The Jewish People have a historical tie to the Land.

- A. The Jewish People have a 3,500-year connection with the land of Israel.
- B. Archaeological discoveries confirmed what historians record about Israel being in the land long before the Muslims. (eg., One such discovery took place in 1993, when a team of archaeologists discovered a 9th century BC inscription at Tel Dan, the mountain north of Galilee. The artifact read, “The House of David, King of Israel” [SOA, PA TV, “Archaeology Verifies the Bible as God’s Word.” January 5, 2012, pp. 17-18]
- C. Historical evidence (historical writing and archaeology) support Israel’s claim to the land of Israel more the 16 centuries before Muhammad founded Islam, 610 AD and long before the Arab conquest of 634 AD.

3. Israel obtained international and legal possession over the land in 1947.

The British Balfour Declaration of 1917 declared the land, known as Israel, “theirs ... due to both divine and historically evidence.” The United Nations responded in 1947 by voting to partition Palestine into two states: A Jewish State and an Arab State. President Woodrow Wilson had previously endorsed the Balfour Declaration in 1918. Israel officially began as a nation on May 15, 1948 [Source: “A Case for Israel” by Alan Dershowitz, NJ: John Wiley and Son’s, 2003, p. 22ff.]

The Arab’s Claim

1. Like the Jewish people, the Arabs also believe God gave them the land of Palestine. The Arabs base this claim on two assertions: First, ‘Israel transgressed against God and therefore forfeited its claim to the promised land, and second, ‘Arabs are descendants of Abraham through his son, Ishmael.’
2. The Koran claims, “Abraham in truth was not a Jew, neither a Christian; But he was a Muslim...and [Allah] made a covenant with Abraham and Ishmael” (Sura 3:60; 2:110). (**IMPORTANT NOTE:** There is “no biblical evidence...and very, very little historical evidence...that Ishmael was the forefathers of the Arabs, nor was the belief of ancient Arabs...it was Mohammad who claimed this lineage,” circa 635 AD. [Source: Price, Ibid, pp. 50-51] Also, note that the Bible says that Abraham was a Mesopotamian pagan—not a Jew, Muslim Christian or even an Arab [Source: cf., Joshua 24:2-3 and Genesis 11:27-32 and his clarified “genealogy and salvation experience” in Price, ibid, p. 62ff; ie., “Abraham’s family members were outright pagans, as was Abraham before his conversion, showing he was not perfect in obedience.”])
3. History provides no evidence that backs the claim that Muslims have historical evidence to the land. There is no mention of Muslims occupying the Land of Palestine before the early 400s AD. [Source: Johnathon McLatkie, “A Simple Reason Why the Qur’an Cannot be the Word of God,” answeringmuslims.com, November 2015]

C. My Issues with the Current Biden Administration

1. When President Biden says, “Israel has a right to defend itself,” it’s not enough for me. [CNN, “Biden in call to Israel PM...” dated May 18, 2021.]
2. The current administration has sought to rename the “Ambassador to Israel” as “The Ambassador to Israel, Gaza and the West Bank”—thus, legitimizing a two-state solution within the nation of Israel. [SOURCE: LA Times, art., “Biden has not named Ambassador to Israel...” dated April 29, 2021 and Breitbart, art., dated Jan. 20, 2021, “Joe Biden walks back ‘West Bank and Gaza’ change to US Ambassador to Israel Twitter Name.”]
3. The current administration has also proposed extending the demarcation line of the West Bank westward by as much as 11 miles. [SOURCE: JPost, art., “Presidential candidate Biden proposing Halting West Bank Annexation...” dated, September 14, 2020.]
4. On Wednesday, May 19, President Biden told PM Benjamin Netanyahu that he expected “a serious de-escalation of attacks on Gaza.” I want to know what President Biden told Hamas. [SOURCE: Politico, art., “Biden calls for a significant de-escalation today of bombing in Gaza...” dated May 19, 2021.]
5. “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you, oh Israel.” - Genesis 62:1.

D. Closing Observations

1. **VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND:** Americans make judgments based on “right v. wrong”, while Muslims (especially extremist Muslims) operate from a paradigm of “passion vs. passivity.” (*Israel gets this—and fights accordingly!*)
2. There will be no lasting peace in Israel until the Lord’s Return.
3. We are still called to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem. (Psalm 112.6-9)
4. The demarcation line (Jordan River) cannot be moved toward Jerusalem.
5. The Nation of Israel must not give up any more land—even for peace.
In the map below, nations in the darker print are Muslim Nations and represent over 5,000,000 square miles of land. The Nation of Israel (barely seen on this map) represents only just under 9,000 square miles of land.
6. We must not remain neutral on this issue. (Pastor Joe will stand on the side of Israel BUT he is not against Muslims.)

