

# Arabs & Jews

## Marching Toward Armageddon

BY IRVIN BAXTER JR.

The Middle East is boiling again. Since the Middle East is that part of the world, which will ultimately give us Armageddon, it simply cannot be ignored.

It is highly possible that we are less than ten years away from the Battle of Armageddon. If this is true, we will see things in the very near future that must come to pass between where we are right now and that final battle.

In order to understand the events that will be witnessed in the times just ahead, we need to know what has led us to this point, where we are right now, and what the Bible prophecies will happen between now and Armageddon.

### How did we reach this present crisis?

When the Allied soldiers finally marched into the Nazi concentration camps at the end of World War II, the horrific scenes that unfolded before their eyes shocked the conscience of a world that had been infected with anti-Semitism. For many years, world Jewry had campaigned to influence the world's great powers to create a Jewish homeland. Finally, the magnitude of the holocaust jarred the sensibilities of the world's leaders. On November 29, 1947, the United Nations voted to partition the area called Palestine, creating a Jewish state and an Arab state.

### Palestinians reject first offer of statehood

The Jews accepted the UN action, but the Arabs rejected it. The day after Israel's official declaration of statehood, the Arab nations surrounding Israel, declared war against the fledgling state. The nations of the world thought for sure that the 42 million Arabs would quickly annihilate



A wounded Israeli child is taken in to a hospital in the southern Israeli town of Beersheva, March 5. The child was wounded by a Qassam 2 rocket that hit the center of the Israeli city of Sderot.

the 600,000 Jews living in Israel.

To the world's amazement, the tiny nation of Israel not only held her own, but actually gained territory against her attackers.

When a cease-fire was finally declared in 1949, Israel controlled half of Jerusalem. Jordan controlled the West Bank and the other half of Jerusalem where the Temple Mount is located. This situation continued for the next 18 years.

### Palestinians reject second offer of statehood

In 1967, Egyptian President Gamel Abdel Nasser blockaded the Straits of Tiran from passage by Israeli ships. This was a blatant violation of international law.

When Israel saw that Egypt was bent on war, she launched a pre-emptive strike. Egypt's planes were caught on the ground, and the Egyptian airforce was almost totally destroyed.

As soon as the conflict began, Syria entered the war against Israel. In Israel's counterattack, she captured the Golan

Heights from which Syrians had been shelling the northern Jewish settlements for many years.

The Israeli government then called King Hussein of Jordan, telling him that if Jordan stayed out of the conflict, Israel would not attack her. However, King Hussein did not feel he could sit aside while his Arab brethren were at war with the enemy. He launched an attack against Israel. Israel counterattacked, capturing East Jerusalem and all the way to the Jordan River. Egypt, Syria and Jordan were totally defeated by Israel in six short days.

A few months later Israel offered to return all territories captured in the 1967 War in exchange for peace and Arab recognition of Israel's right to exist. The offer was rejected. This was when the Arabs issued their famous "Three No's"—no to peace, no to negotiation, no to recognition.

### Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement

In 1973, Egypt launched a surprise

AP/WideWorld Photo/Meir Azulay

attack against Israel on Yom Kippur, Israel's holiest day. Israel was caught totally off guard and sustained heavy casualties. Ariel Sharon was brought out of retirement and given command of Israel's southern army. Sharon directed a brilliant maneuver, crossing the Suez Canal, cutting the Egyptian army off from behind. Nothing stood between the Israeli armies and Cairo. The UN immediately clamored for a cease-fire.

The Yom Kippur War demonstrated that Arabs could hold their own in battle against the Israelis. This restoration of Arab honor prepared the ground for Egypt to deal with Israel as an equal.

In 1977, Anwar Sadat made his famous trip to Jerusalem. The end result of this courageous move was a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. But Sadat paid for this treaty with his life. He was assassinated by those in his own country that opposed what he had done.

As a result of the Israeli-Egyptian agreement, all land captured from Egypt in the 1967 War was returned. Egypt and Israel have enjoyed peace since '79. But it's been a "cold peace."

## Oslo Peace Accords

In 1991, the United States persuaded and pressured Israel to attend peace talks in Madrid, Spain. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir intended to talk, talk and talk for the next 25 years, if necessary. However, in 1992, the Israeli people elected Yitzhak Rabin, a candidate who promised peace.

On September 13, 1993, the famous Oslo Accords were signed—accompanied by the famous handshake between Rabin and Arafat. The Accords called for a phased withdrawal from certain of the territories captured in the 1967 War, with further withdrawals to be negotiated later. It also provided for Yasser Arafat to move into the West Bank so that he could begin building the structures of government that would rule the Palestinian people. In 1994, Arafat was allowed to move into the West Bank, setting up his government.

On November 4, 1995, Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by Israelis opposing his policies. This elevated Shimon Peres to the position of Prime Minister. Elections were scheduled for May of 1996—elections that everyone was sure Peres would

# Whetstone

by John L. Bryant

1. Out of whose mouth went a sharp two-edged sword?  
A. David B. Saul C. Jesus Christ D. none of these
2. The sword of the Spirit refers to the -  
A. Word of God B. Weapon of war C. Torturing tool D. Dictionary
3. Having an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams. To whom is this referring?  
A. Joshua B. Abel C. Daniel D. Abraham
4. What does "Emmanuel" mean?  
A. Emma is strong B. God with us C. Manuel is forsaken D. Jesus forever
5. Who complained that her sister left her to serve alone?  
A. Joanna B. Leah C. Ruth D. Martha
6. At what hour did the Lord smite the firstborn in Egypt?  
A. Midnight B. 8:00 A.M. C. Noon D. 5 P.M.
7. Who was Elisha's servant?  
A. Aaron B. Gehazi C. Abraham D. John
8. Who was Isaac's wife?  
A. Sarai B. Eve C. Rebekah D. Rizpah
9. Which two of the 12 spies said the Israelites could capture the land of Canaan?  
A. Joshua and Caleb B. Asher and Dan C. Lot and Levi D. Gideon and Gerah
10. Who was made a spectacle unto the world?  
A. Pilate B. Festus C. Jesus D. The Apostles
11. The shortest verse in the Bible records that Jesus did what?  
A. Prayed B. Wept C. Slept D. Danced
12. To Solomon which Queen said "Behold, the half was not told me?"  
A. Queen of India B. Queen of Turkey C. Queen of Sheba D. Queen Esther
13. What Old Testament prophet did Peter quote on the day of Pentecost?  
A. Joel B. Zephaniah C. Hosea D. Obadiah
14. What does "epistle" mean?  
A. An ornament B. A letter C. A type of food D. A form of worship
15. What woman tricked Samson into telling his secret of strength?  
A. Jezebel B. Rahab C. Delilah D. Naomi
16. This giant said "Give me a man, that we may fight together?"  
A. Og B. Goliath C. Anakim D. Emim
17. This man lost all of his possessions and his health but remained true to God  
A. Naboth B. Nathaniel C. Job D. Cain
18. At this name every knee should bow and every tongue should confess.  
A. Jesus B. Lucifer C. Pharaoh D. none of these
19. The name of what place means the place of the skull?  
A. Aceldama B. Golgotha C. Gethsemane D. Mt. Moriah
20. Christ Jesus came into the world to do what?  
A. Construct a temple B. To restore the priesthood  
C. To praise the Father D. To save sinners

*Answers on page 31*

## Mideast Update

win. Then came bloody February. Four brutal terrorist bombings by the Palestinians drove Israelis away from Shimon Peres and straight into the arms of candidate Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu was elected by less than one percent.

1998—Negotiations concerning further Israeli withdrawals were hosted by President Bill Clinton in October of 1998. Prime Minister Netanyahu agreed that Israel would withdraw from another 14% percent of the West Bank area.

1999—Elections were held in Israel, resulting in Ehud Barak as Israel's new Prime Minister.

### Palestinians reject statehood for third time

2000—President Clinton invited Barak and Arafat to Camp David. Clinton wanted to reach a final resolution to the Middle East quagmire. Barak offered to withdraw from 97% of the West Bank, to re-divide Jerusalem, and to place all of the Temple Mount under Arab control. The world was shocked! No one believed that an Israeli Prime Minister would go this far...especially to permanently surrender control over Israel's holiest site on the face of the earth. The shock that Barak would make the offer was only exceeded by the greater shock that Arafat turned it down. Arafat said that Israel would have to also allow 3.5 million Palestinian refugees from 1948 and before to return to their homes in mainland Israel—Tel Aviv, Haifa and West Jerusalem. Fulfilling this request would mean the end of the modern state of Israel.

September 28, 2000—When Ariel Sharon heard that Barak had offered to place the Temple Mount under Palestinian control forever, he felt that a stand had to be taken. On September 28, 2000, he made a visit to the Temple Mount, declaring that it must remain under Israeli control forever. Immediately, Arafat ordered the launching of what has come to be called the Al Aqsa intifada. Blood began to flow; battles began to be fought.

February 4, 2001—Ariel Sharon was elected to be Prime Minister of Israel by an unprecedented margin of victory. Israel was voting for a strong man who would not sell them out. Sharon formed a coalition government with the Labor Party led



*Vice President Dick Cheney, right, Ariel Sharon, center, and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, left, gather for a breakfast meeting at the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem on March 19. Cheney said he would meet with Arafat if a truce took hold, and Sharon said he was ready to lift a travel ban on the Palestinian leader in that case.*

Sharon recently said, “We will hit them so hard, they will beg for mercy. Then we will talk.”

by liberal Shimon Peres. Sharon and Peres have launched many peace initiatives since their government was formed, all to no avail.

September 11, 2001—Muslim militants hijacked four American airplanes, successfully flying three of them into the World Trade Center and Pentagon. When the Palestinians heard about this strike against America, they danced in the streets with joy. Many world leaders, already disillusioned with Arafat for turning down the best peace deal he could ever hope for, began to understand that those who rejoice with terrorists are terrorists themselves.

On January 3, 2002, a ship called

Karine A was spotted by U.S. intelligence taking on a load of weaponry off the coast of Iran. The ship was then tracked until it entered the Red Sea. Israeli Defense Forces were notified, and the ship was intercepted. It was found that fifty tons of armaments were on board, destined for delivery to the Palestinians. All of these armaments were illegal for the Palestinians to have according to the signed Oslo agreements. Arafat then lied, saying that he had no knowledge concerning the arms shipment. Any trust that President Bush had toward Arafat was destroyed, seemingly for good.

### The present situation

The Palestinian terror attacks against Israel have continued and escalated. Ariel Sharon has apparently thrown all hope of a negotiated settlement to the side, at least for the time being. Sharon recently said, “We will hit them so hard, they will beg for mercy. Then we will talk.”

All the discussion in Israel is of unilateral separation. Simply stated, Israel would draw boundaries between herself and the Palestinians and then enforce those boundaries without Palestinian consent. Palestinians would not have access to Israel; consequently, the oppor-

tunity to carry out suicide bombings against Israel would not exist.

If Israel follows through with this separation plan, she would love to obtain international agreement for this action. This would insure the support of the world community.

## What does the Bible prophesy?

In the midst of all the chaos of the Middle East, the only things we can know for sure are those things specifically prophesied in the Bible. Let's take a look at the prophecies concerning Israel's future.

1. The Antichrist and the world community will confirm a covenant with Israel for seven years. This seven-year period ends at the Battle of Armageddon.

Daniel 9:27 states that the coming one-world leader, the Antichrist, is the one who will confirm a covenant concerning the nation of Israel and the Temple Mount. Some people contend that it was Jesus who confirmed the covenant, not the Antichrist who is yet to come. How do we know then that it is the Antichrist that confirms the covenant?

Notice in the prophecy that the one who confirms the covenant will also cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. The same person places the abomination of desolation. Thus we know that the person who takes away the daily sacrifice and places the abomination of desolation, is the one who confirms the covenant.

Daniel 11:31 clearly teaches that the Antichrist and his partners will take away the daily sacrifice and place the abomination that makes desolate. This proves conclusively that it is not the real Christ who confirms the covenant, but the Antichrist.

2. Israel's Third Temple will be completed and worship, including animal sacrifice, will be enacted there before the first three and one-half years expire.

In Daniel 9:27, we are told that the Antichrist will cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease three and one-half years after the confirmation of the covenant. He can't stop sacrifices that have not yet begun and Jewish people believe the temple must be rebuilt before the sacrifice can be re-instituted. Furthermore, both Revelation 11:1-2 and II Thessalonians 2:4 teach that a temple will be in operation at least three and one-half years before Armageddon.

3. The Temple Mount will be under a sharing arrangement, probably under UN supervision.

The prophecy says it this way: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." (Revelation 11:1-2)

This prophecy describes the Temple Mount 42 months before the Battle of Armageddon. Notice that the temple will

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be under Jewish control, but the outer court of the temple will be under Gentile control. President Clinton suggested this exact arrangement at the negotiations between Yasser Arafat and Ehud Barak at Camp David in July of 2000.

4. The Antichrist will sit in the rebuilt temple claiming to be God.

II Thessalonians 2:3-4 says that this event will be the revealing of the identity of the Antichrist to God's people. The terms "man of sin" and "son of perdition" are other names used in the Bible for referring to the Antichrist.

5. The great tribulation will begin at the time of the abomination of desolation and continue for the final three and one-half years.

Jesus clearly stated, in Matthew 24:15-21, that the event known as the abomination of desolation would trigger the great tribulation. This time of terrible persecution will then last for three

and one-half years.

6. The Battle of Armageddon will occur at the end of the great tribulation period.

The Battle of Armageddon will be triggered when the world community invades Israel in order to force compliance to some edict of the United Nations. Zechariah 14:2 describes it this way: "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle."

## Where are we headed?

As we go to press, U.S. Envoy Anthony Zinni is arriving in Israel. The hope is that he will be able to bring about a cease-fire and then convince Israel and the Palestinians to begin peace negotiations.

Israel has just completed its largest military operations since the invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The Israeli army has gone through virtually every Palestinian town, arresting 1,200 suspected terrorists and killing 50 or 60 who have resisted. Sharon claims he is cleaning out terrorists that Yasser Arafat refused to deal with.

In the meantime, Saudi Arabia has floated a peace plan that has received worldwide attention. They have proposed that Israel withdraw to pre-1967 borders and that all Arab states, in return, commit to be at peace with Israel.

Many people believe the region is headed for full-scale war. Others in Israel think Sharon's government has failed and should be replaced.

So what will happen? Let's review what we know one more time. We know that a covenant between the Antichrist and Israel will be confirmed at some point in time. We know that Israel's Third Temple will be built and animal sacrifices resumed. We also know that the Temple Mount will be shared. At the same time, we know conflict between Israelis and Palestinians will continue to boil because Jesus said great tribulation would begin in the West Bank area (Judea).

We may not be able to chart an exact course between where we are and where we are going. However, it seems that unilateral action on the part of Israel with the consent of the international community is the best explanation for what lies ahead. There may be temporary cease-fires and hopes for peace agreements.

But one thing is certain. The ultimate destiny for the Middle East and for the world is the Battle of Armageddon. □