



Middle East tensions

We must emphasise that we are in no way supporting the politics of any nation. We're not looking at the rights and wrongs of what any nation have done or are doing. We're looking at fulfilments of predictions and not the politics of situations.



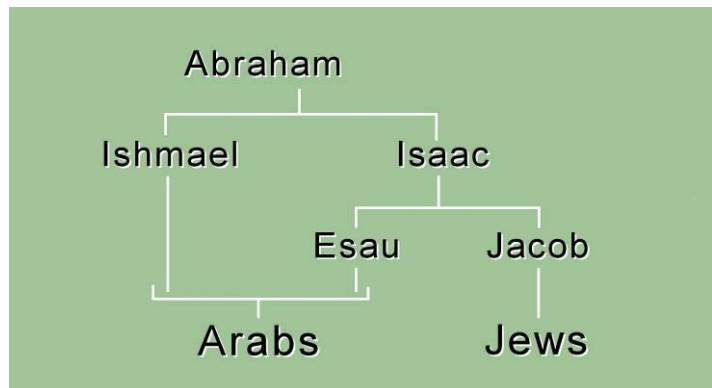
We are all aware of the tension that exists between the Jews and the Arabs. It dominates world politics and is regularly in the news. The problem centres on the Middle East, where much of the world's oil is to be found. This means that all the world takes sides in this situation. Both Jews and Arabs correctly claim the man Abraham as their ancient ancestor.

Both claim that they should have the land promised to Abraham. The Bible shows us how these tensions started 4,000 years ago.

As the family tree on the left shows, Abraham had two sons called Ishmael and Isaac.

Isaac also had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Some of the Arab nations are descended from Ishmael and Esau.

The Jews are descended from Jacob.



So we can see the possible tensions when two groups of people believe they have a

right to the same piece of land. Thousands of years ago, the Bible predicted that this tension would develop into hatred and cause the international problems that we see today.

As we look at these predictions, we must be careful to keep our own political views out of these considerations. The Bible criticises the actions of both Arabs and Jews. We are looking at the fulfilments of the predictions, not the rights and wrongs of the people or the politics involved.

Before Ishmael was born, his mother was told:

You shall name him Ishmael ... his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers. Genesis 16 v 11 & 12

4,000 years ago, problems were predicted among Abraham's children. There are many verses in the Bible which talk of the hatred that the descendants of Ishmael and Esau would have for the Jews, who are Jacob's descendants.

One of the most amazing comments about this hostility is in Psalm 83. The writer of the Psalm is pleading for help because the Jews are surrounded by enemies:

*"They have taken crafty counsel against your people,
...They have said, 'Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation,
That the name of Israel may be remembered no more.'" Psalm 83 v 3 and 4*

The Psalm goes on to list these enemies, which include most of the nations surrounding Israel at that time. It would be difficult to give a more accurate prediction of what has happened to the nation of Israel in the last 60 years - surrounded by enemies that would have liked to see Israel removed from the map.

This map shows how the surrounding Arab nations attacked the infant nation on all sides after it had barely been established in 1948.

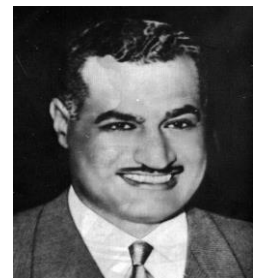


Nearly twenty years later in 1967, during the weeks leading up to the Six Day War, Arab leaders repeatedly threatened Israel with annihilation.

"Our basic objective will be the destruction of Israel..." said President Nasser of Egypt,



President Abdel Rahman Aref of Iraq threatened
"Our goal is clear – to wipe Israel off the map. "



“Syria's forces are ready not only to repulse the aggression, but to initiate the act of liberation itself, and to explode the Zionist presence in the Arab homeland.”

said Syrian Defence Minister Hafez Assad,



In more recent times, the destruction of Israel is seen as central to the aims of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement.

Hamas Foreign Minister Mahmoud Zahar is on record as saying:

“I dream of hanging a huge map of the world on the wall at my Gaza home which does not show Israel on it.”

In March 2011, the newspaper of the Palestinian Authority had an editorial saying that

“once the pro-democracy revolutions across the Middle East reach their conclusion, a newly empowered Arab nation will turn its hostile gaze on Israel.”

It is clear that the surrounding Arab nations want the nation of Israel destroyed – part of the ongoing fulfilment of predictions made thousands of years ago.



The surrounding nations want to destroy Israel just as the Bible predicted



The problem of Jerusalem

We now want to look at two interesting verses in the prophecy of Zechariah:

First,

“And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it”. *Zechariah 12 v 3*

And the second is this:

“For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem.”
Zechariah 14 v 2



These two verses very clearly predict that the city of Jerusalem will become the focus of world attention.

Jerusalem has been at the centre of conflict many times during its long history.

Both Jews and Arabs now want the city as their capital. This means that it is at the heart of Middle East tensions. No one knows what will happen next, but the Bible was right in predicting that Jerusalem would be a problem to the nations.



The Bible correctly predicted that Jerusalem would become an international problem

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