

# MID-EAST e-NEWS

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Issue No. 50 Texas

September 30th, 2005

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## Contexts

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## Welcome

Well, time got to us this month, so the promised articles on Jerusalem and Christians in the Middle East will have to wait. Instead, on page 3 there is a chronological map summary of the city of Jerusalem.

Instead, I hope you are tempted to read further by the book reviews on page 2. These are all books that I have found valuable in my research, and in some cases have not been able to put them down. Don't take my word for it, try one.

The referendum on the draft Iraqi Constitution is scheduled for October 16<sup>th</sup>, and on this page is a summary of the first two sections.

Email your responses to [pkclark@pmbx.net](mailto:pkclark@pmbx.net) & check the web for back issues.

## The Draft Iraqi Constitution

### Chapter 1: Basic Principles (Articles 1-13)

(1) The Republic of Iraq is an independent, sovereign nation, and the system of rule in it is a democratic, federal, representative (parliamentary) republic.

(2-1) Islam is the official religion of the state and a basic source of legislation: No law can be passed that contradicts (a) the undisputed rules of Islam, (b) the principles of democracy, or (c) the rights and basic freedoms outlined in this constitution. (2) This constitution guarantees the Islamic identity of the majority of the Iraqi people and the full religious rights for all individuals and the freedom of creed and religious practices.

(4-1) Arabic and Kurdish are the two official languages for Iraq.

(4-4) The Turkomen and Assyrian languages will be official in the areas where they are located.

(5) The law is sovereign, the people are the source of authority and its legitimacy, which they exercise through direct, secret ballot and its constitutional institutions.

(7-1) Entities or trends that advocate, instigate, justify or propagate racism, terrorism, "takfir" (declaring someone an infidel), sectarian cleansing, are banned,

(9-1) The Iraqi armed forces and security apparatuses consist of the components of the Iraqi people, ... fall under the command of the civil authority, defend Iraq, don't act as a tool of oppression of the Iraqi people, don't intervene in political affairs and play no role in the rotation of power.

(10) The holy shrines and religious sites in Iraq are religious and cultural entities.

(11) Baghdad is the capital of the republic of Iraq.

(13-1) The constitution shall be considered as the supreme law in Iraq. It shall be binding throughout the country.

### Chapter 2: Rights (Articles 14-21, 22-34) & Freedoms (Articles 35-45)

(14) Iraqis are equal before the law without discrimination because of sex, ethnicity, religion, sect, etc...

(17-1) Each person has the right to personal privacy as long as it does not violate the rights of others or general morality. (2) The sanctity of the home is protected. They cannot be entered or violated except in accordance with the law.

(18) An Iraqi is anyone who has been born to an Iraqi father or an Iraqi mother.

(19-1) The judiciary is independent, with no power above it other than the law. (2) There is no crime and no punishment except by the law.

(23-1) Private property is protected and the owner has the right to use it, exploit it and benefit from it.

(28-1) Taxes and fees shall not be imposed, amended, collected or eliminated except by law. (2) Low-income people should be exempted from taxes in a way that guarantees maintaining the minimum level necessary for a living.

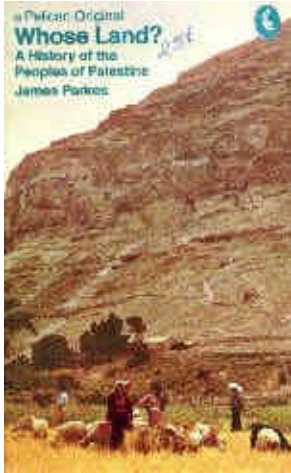
(29-1) The family is the foundation of society and the state should preserve its (the family's) existence and ethical and religious value.

(31-1) Every Iraqi has the right to health service, the state guarantees the means of protection and treatment by building hospitals and health institutions. (2) Individuals and associations have the right to build hospitals, dispensaries or clinics.

(34-1) Education is a main factor for the progress of society and it is a right guaranteed by the state. It is mandatory in the primary school and the state guarantees fighting illiteracy. (2) Free education is a right for Iraqis in all its stages.

*This is a summary of the first section of the draft constitution. Another sample will be in the next issue of e-NEWS.*

## Book Reviews

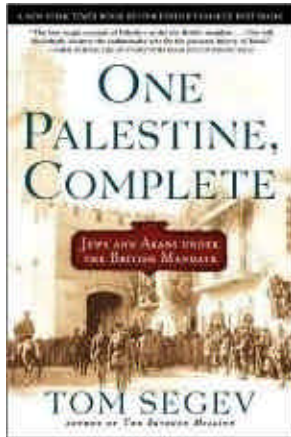
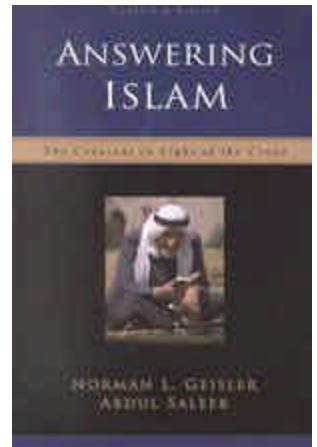


James Parkes, author of Whose Land? A History of the Peoples of Palestine, spent several years until 1935 in Geneva, enabling Jewish émigrés to successfully escape Nazi Germany. During and after this period he collected material concerning Christian thinking and Christendom's historical relations with Jews. It was his conviction that the Christian's duty was to "respect the religious integrity of Judaism and to abandon all attempts to proselytize," which understandably set him apart from evangelicals of his time and since.

His book, however, is thorough in accounting for the history of the peoples of 'The Land' (and throughout the book he avoids the use of other geo-political terms by using this title) and recognizes – more than many others I have read – the significance of the *practical* Zionists over the *political*s (which included Herzl, who died in 1904). He also thoroughly discusses the issue of the Palestinian Christians throughout the book. This book, whose author's name is used for a literary prize in Israel today, was originally written in 1949, and updated in 1970. One sentence will suffice to illustrate his honesty, or two: "What is new, and desirable, is that out of tragedy and confusion a Palestinian identity is beginning to emerge. We must not dismiss it because it has emerged as a terrorist movement...an Israeli government which includes the found of the terrorist movement, the Irgun Zvai Leumi, could not reasonably refuse to negotiate with the Organization for the Liberation of Palestine, led by Yasir Arafat." Copies of the long out-of-print *Whose Land?* are readily available on the internet.

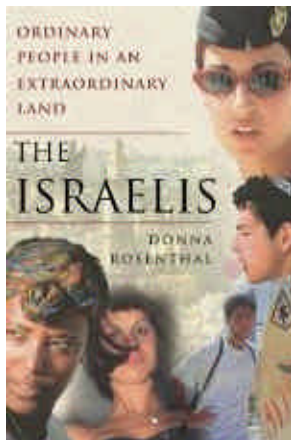
I have used Answering Islam (Baker Books, 2002, by Norman Geisler) in my research on Islam and have read and re-read his section on the Basic Doctrines of Orthodox Islam. He examines these doctrines and their origins carefully, and critiques them in the second section of the book, A Christian Response to Basic Muslim Beliefs. His attention to detail in the early history of Islam, as well as the

development of the Qur'an, are helpful, particularly the early attacks of the Muslims in Medina upon the trading caravans of their Meccan neighbors. The plight of the Jews, a significant portion of the Yathrib/ Medina population, is explained clearly, as are the political changes that allowed Muhammad to first dominate and then eliminate them.



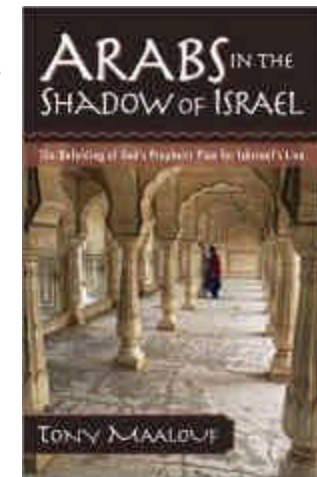
Tom Segev is a journalist for the Ha'aretz. By bringing us into the daily life in British Mandate Palestine, he helps us identify with the pioneers who were attempting to fulfill the promise of the Balfour Declaration "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," as well as the British military and political establishment, who grew increasingly concerned with how they were to maintain order amidst the growing tension. As the book opens we meet Khalil al-Sakakini accepting an unwelcome guest into his house. Alter Levine, a Russian Jew with American citizenship, would be protected from the Turks by a Christian Arab family native to Jerusalem. Since he was a Zionist, Levine was seen as a traitor by ultra-Orthodox Jews; Sakakini had left the Orthodox Church complaining about its corruption. "In the school he founded... the pupils did not learn by rote; instead they were expected to understand the material...he said he

hated nothing more than a school run on violence...as was common practice." Segev traces the Sakakini family through the 1929 riots, the increasing internal violence (mirroring the coming war) of the 1930s, and the final departure of the British in April and May of 1948. (One Palestine, Complete, Owl Books, 1999)

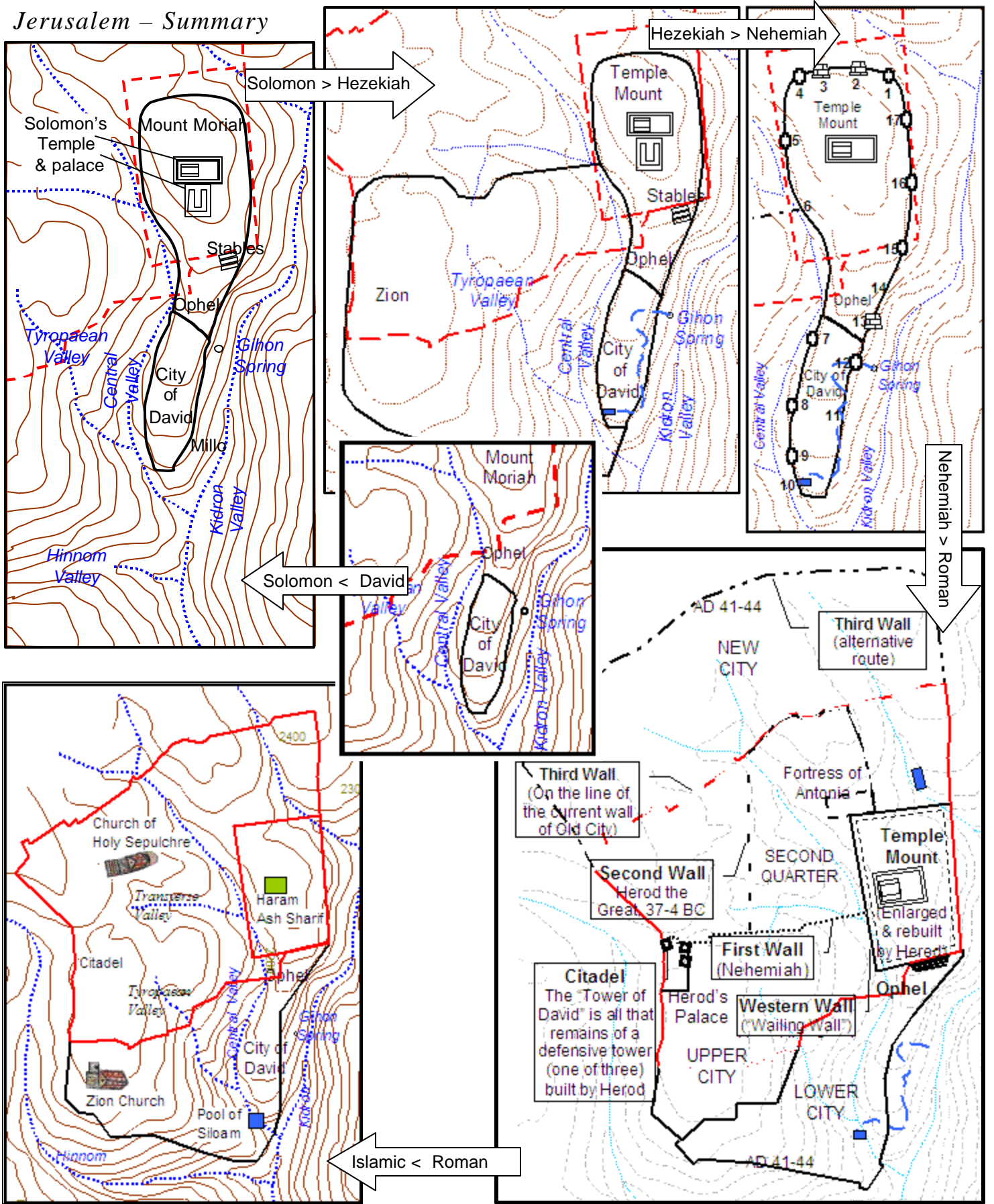


Donna Rosenthal's book, The Israelis (Free Press, 2003), introduces us to the variety of peoples that make up modern Israel. Along with the Orthodox Jews of the city of Jerusalem we meet those of the successive Aliyahs whose waves of immigration have periodically overturned the political status quo of the country. Rosenthal describes the rapid changes as Israel moved from having an 80% politically dominant Ashkenazim in the 1950s to a 60% population of working class Mizrahi a decade later. This is an excellent book for discovering the peoples within a People that occupy the Holy Land today.

In Arabs in the Shadow of Israel, Tony Maalouf reminds us that Arabs have also been recipients of God's blessing, and that the early relationship between the children of Jacob and the *other* children of Abraham was not always the animosity we see today. He carefully expounds on the context of Abraham's willingness to have a child by Hagar, the prophecies given to Hagar and Ishmael by the Theophany, and the context of Abraham's expelling his son from his tent (Kregel, 2003).



# Jerusalem – Summary



This Month

Sept	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
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