

# MID-EAST e-NEWS

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## Welcome

In the spirit of education, the first article is written to encourage us to discern truth from falsehood, and to be alert for incorrect information that can cause us to take positions we might otherwise hesitate on. I would recommend the book discussed on this page, but not the forwarded email that I received!

Thanks for your comments on the discussion on 'Christian Zionism' that we have begun. Some of them have already been incorporated into this issue and the next. Some of those comments have already misjudged my position. What I am trying to do is analyze the issues that are involved.

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

## Discernment

You have probably received this forwarded email at some point. I will quote some of the first lines:

THIS IS A LENGTHY ARTICLE BUT WORTH READING AND THOUGHT PROVOKING.

"VIEW OF THE ARAB WORLD BY AN ARAB"

The Arab who wrote this is: Haim Harari, Chair, Davidson Institute of Science Education.

Talk delivered by Haim Harari ... April, 2004:

"...The millions who died in the Iran-Iraq war had nothing to do with Israel.

The mass murder happening right now in Sudan, where the Arab Moslem regime is massacring its black Christian citizens, has nothing to do with Israel..."

The article makes the point that much of the turmoil around the Muslim world has nothing to do with Israel, though the reverse impression is often given. In the forwarded email, as shown above, we are told that the author is an Arab. Since the article is generally critical of the Muslim habit of blaming Israel for the region's problems, it being written by an Arab would seem to give it added significance.

Unfortunately, it is not true.

Having found Haim's email address I wrote him, and this is his response:

Thanks for your message.

I am not an Arab. I am a (non religious) Jew, fifth generation born in Israel, whose family immigrated between 1820 and 1897. The speech was given in April 2004 in a closed forum, not to be published anywhere. Someone leaked it to the internet, where it has been circulating ever since with misquotes, false allegations and unauthorized translations into 8 languages. I cannot help it.

As a result of the wide publicity as well as the numerous arbitrary revisions, misquotes and misrepresentations, I have expanded the article into a book which appeared in New York in April 2005.

The title of the book is: "A View from the Eye of the Storm - Terror and Reason in the Middle East"

**Search Amazon.com for the book,  
and read the first chapter online.**

## Words Replace Action

A recent email reminded me of a characteristic behavior frequently seen in the Middle East. As we were sharing some thoughts about the effect of Hamas winning the Palestinian election, we were reminded that "part of Arab culture is to make threats and not fulfil them. Words so often take the place of action."

This cultural trait demonstrates itself in two ways – **positive** and **negative** – and in **private** situations as well as **public**. Firstly, because our private, personal, communications are generally polite and restrained the experience most people recognize is the use of promises *instead of* action. In the Arab world, however, frustration at an employee, child, or – for example – waiter, may be more vividly expressed. In the public arena, where you are not addressing an individual so much as a position, the scope is more varied, but it is here that we notice the extremist language. This is the second facet of words *replacing* action.

While living in Jordan we were pleased that our landlord appreciated us as tenants. We enjoyed taking care of the garden (watering the grass, pruning fruit trees, etc.) and visiting with him and his wife. After we had been there a few years –perhaps 4 out of the 7 years we spent in that house – our landlord would talk about improvements he would make to our part of the house (the lower floor). Eventually, after an amount of talk about it, we realized that this was probably not going to happen, but was another expression of his gratitude (if I may put it like that) for having us in the house.

Though Hamas continues to support actions against Israel, at some level we are still seeing the use of words in place of action in the vitriol of politics. Hamas – the organization that has basically sustained a cease-fire (period of 'quiet') for more than a year, since the election of Abbas to replace Arafat in January of 2005 – still shouts for the total destruction of Israel. Whereas Fateh has misused much of the money donated by the international community, and the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (a *Fateh* offshoot) continues to practice violence.

## Pakistan

The name of the country is said to have been coined from the different people groups that would eventually make up the state: **P**unjab, **A**fghan, **K**ashmir, **S**ind and Baluchistan. When Pakistan obtained its independence from Britain in 1947 it was originally comprised of East and West Pakistan. East Pakistan obtained its independence in 1971, after a violent civil war in which it was supported by India, and took the name Bangladesh, after the Bengali people that formed the majority of its population.

Pakistan is comprised of four provinces, Baluchistan, Sind, the Northwest Frontier Province, and Punjab. Islamabad is administered as a separate territory. The turbulent region on the Afghan border is administered as Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

India claims Azzad Kashmir and the Northern Areas as its own, and the two countries have come to war over this Kashmir region in the past, though since 2003 there has been progress on the status of the region. (For more information, see *e-NEWS* 13).

Pakistan is not a homogenous country, but clearly divided into four different people groups. The **Sindhi** occupy the province of Sind located east of the Indus river in the southern part of the country. The **Baluch** peoples occupy the southern part of the province that has their name, (almost as far north as Quetta) and predominate across the border in eastern Iran. Northeast Pakistan is the province of the **Punjabi** peoples, whose territory is split by the



Indian border as is that of the Baluchs in the west.

In the northern portion of Baluchistan, including Quetta, the Pushtun peoples also occupy the Northwest Frontier territories and Tribal Areas adjacent to Afghanistan. The Pushtun peoples are also spread across southern Afghanistan, and have historically been dominant in that country. (For more information on the people groups of Afghanistan see *e-NEWS* 10.)



A bazaar scene in Quetta. Baluchistan.

Tribal Areas and the Northwest Provinces. Included in this region are the tribes of Waziristan, amongst whom Osama Bin Laden has obtained much of his support in the past, and who have resisted Pervez Musharraf pursuit of the Taliban amongst their towns and villages.

In the next issue of *e-NEWS* we shall look at the



Mode of transport in Quetta

## 1. Prophecy – differing views

Our attitude to Israel is affected by a multiplicity of concerns, about each of which we hold – perhaps unconsciously – a specific position. Some of these *themes* are **biblically** based (1, 2, 5, 11, 13) – though our interpretations may differ – and others depend more on the emphasis we give to different facets of the Bible text regarding either the **fulfillment** of prophecy (3, 4) or the **role** of a prophetic Israel and believers in a modern world (6, 7, 10). Other themes are more **politico-strategic** (8, 9, 12), focusing on the way we see Biblical prophecy developing in current times.

A significant variable in the way people respond to Biblical prophecy is in their position regarding the scope of its application. Doctrinal positions on eschatology, etc., are related to fundamental beliefs such as Biblical inerrancy, how literally the Bible should be read, and the reliability of prophecy. Doctrines and structures of doctrines, such as dispensationalism, replacement theology, and Zionism, arise from these basic beliefs, and become a *lens* through which the Bible is read.

The first theme that we will address is the issue of Biblical prophecy regarding the future of Israel as a nation.

1. Prophecy (B)	Regarding the land of ancient Israel, Scripture ...				
What we believe about the Bible's prophecies affects our view of Israel today.	is not clear		indicates that Christians have replaced the Jews	indicates a converted remnant of Jews	prophecies that the Jews will reoccupy the land

The different positions held, indicated above, arise from interpretations of scripture in general, rather than application of specific verses relating to Israel's presence as a nation in the land.

In Romans 11 we read <sup>25</sup>*I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.* <sup>26</sup>*And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.* <sup>27</sup>*And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

A major disparity between believers is in the relation of the Church and Israel in prophecy, and particularly the validity of application of Old Testament passages to the Church. Dispensationalism holds a permanent distinction between Israel and the church, to the extent that Darby, a founder of dispensationalism, has said that "The Jewish nation is never to enter the church." [J.N. Darby, *The Hopes of the Church of God*. London: n.d., G. Morrish, p.106.] In this case any prophecies regarding possession of the land we call Israel could be fulfilled only by those who carry the 'nationality' of Israel, rather than the Church in its place.

Alternatively, it has been claimed that the passage in Jeremiah 31:31 – *"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."* – is seen to have been fulfilled in Jesus' sacrifice, and was expressed during the Last Supper, in Luke 20:20 – *"Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."*

The Jeremiah 31 passage is also used in Hebrews 8 and has been used to express a discontinuity between the 'old' and 'new' covenants: *"The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. <sup>9</sup>It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. <sup>10</sup>This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>11</sup>No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. <sup>12</sup>For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

<sup>13</sup>*By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.*

Whether this strictly applies to the Church, or remains applicable to Israel's continued presence as a nation, can depend upon whether one sees the early Church as initially being an 'Israelitish' body. The early church was primarily Jewish, and has in some places been identified as the inheritor of the *new covenant*, though in time its swelling numbers rapidly changed its makeup until the Gentiles were predominant.

This is why passages such as that quoted from Romans 11 have been taken alternatively to refer to Israel as a nation in the land, or applied to Israel's eventual recognition of Jesus as the promised Messiah.

As mentioned earlier, human interpretations of passages of Scripture reflect presuppositions, often held prior to analysis of the text.

Discussion of this topic, prophecy, will continue in the next issue of *e-NEWS*. I look forward to your comments.

*This Month*

Feb	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
	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T
<b>Europe</b>								Abu Hamza found guilty in London																Pres. Chirac attends memorial for slain French Jew				
<b>Africa</b>																												
Cartoon protests spur sectarian violence, more than 100 killed over 10 days																												
<b>Asia</b>																												
<b>Pakistan</b>																												
<b>Afghan.</b>																												
<b>Arabia</b>																												
<b>Iraq</b>																												
Baghdad suicide bomb kills 8																												
Baghdad experiencing severe water shortages. Bird Flu in Suleimania and in South. Attacks on senior police officers. Bombing of Samarra mosque leads to general unrest & reprisals																												
US Deaths: 10/31:2,019, 11/14: 2,052, 12/30: 2,169 1:31: 2,235, 2/10: 2,263																												
<b>Civilian deaths-&gt;</b>	-	6	1	3	8	-	10	30	11	14	4	22	13	4	14	13	10	8	5	26	27	47	130+	6	35	30	18	60+
<b>Iran</b>																												
<b>Syria &amp; Lebanon</b>																												
<b>Turkey</b>																												
<b>Egypt</b>																												
<b>Israel</b>																												
<b>WB &amp; Gaza</b>																												