

MID-EAST e-NEWS

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An electronic journal of the Middle East, for those who want to be informed.

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Welcome

Our series on Armenia continues in this issue. In the next issue of *e-NEWS* an update on the two countries as they are today is planned.

This issue of *e-NEWS* considers the various positions in Christian Zionism regarding the state of Israel, the current entity, as the fulfillment of Scripture.

Not unrelated to that is the immediate situation in Gaza. It is particularly tragic when it is your friends who are killed by stray missiles, as I heard this week; just as it is when the random trajectory of a rocket impacts your family. See page 2 for a summary of the action so far.

Email your responses to pkclark@pmbx.net & check the web for back issues.

Armenia

The Armenian Crusader State of Cilicia never accounted for a large proportion of the Armenian people. In 1639, during the Ottoman period, Greater Armenia was partitioned and Persia took control of the eastern section. In the early 1800s Russia incorporated Armenia (east, 1813, and west, 1828) into its own territory, where it remained until the Soviet Revolution of 1917. As part of the treaties after World War I, the 1920 treaty of Sevres was intended to allow for Armenian independence, under the auspices of the League of Nations. This was prevented, however, by a Turkish uprising led by Kemal Ataturk, fighting for a unified Turkey – and then by a Soviet invasion. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia became Soviet republics in 1936.

In the 1980s period of *glasnost* tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan increased, and in the wake of the break-up of the Soviet empire Armenia and Azerbaijan went to war over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, a region of Azerbaijan that remains primarily Armenian. (Next Issue: Armenia Today)

The shaded area on the map indicates the historic spread of the Armenian peoples.

Even today Armenians can be found in the areas within Turkey and Iran. However, since the 1980s, most Armenians that were living in Azerbaijan territory have moved either into Armenia proper, or stayed in the Nagorno Karabakh enclave. (Nakhchivan is actually an autonomous province of Azerbaijan)

[This information was accidentally omitted from an earlier version of e-News 68]



This week in Gaza

The news from Israel and the occupied territories has been dominated by the abduction of an Israeli soldier on June 25th. The Israeli reaction and various incidents are summarized here.

June	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	July 1	2	3
	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M
20 th -24 th	Air strike on Gaza car kills 3 children												BACKGROUND	
			Air strike misses militants, kills 2 in home										Sunday: In a dawn raid on a southern Gaza Israeli military post 2 IDF soldiers are killed and one is abducted. Three groups claim responsibility for the attack: PRC (Palestine Resistance Committee), Hamas' Al Qassam Brigades, & Islamic Army. 3 militants were killed in the attack.	
			Al Aqsa militant killed in Nablus raid										The army named the missing soldier as 19-year old Corporal Gilad Shalit.	
25 th am						Israeli raid captures 2 militants in Rafah								
						5:15am: Hamas militants attack Gaza military post, 2 IDF killed, 1 taken								
						6am:3 groups claim credit for raid/abduction								
pm						7pm:PM Olmert delays response for soldier release								
						9pm: Abbas asks for Israeli to be released								
26 th am							Israel masses troops on Gaza border							
pm							West Bank settler kidnapped							
							4pm:Militants make demands on Israel							
							7pm:Olmert rejects prisoner exchange							
							Rockets from Gaza injure 4 in S.Israel							
27 th am	On Monday a settler is reported missing, and West Bank militants claim that they hold him. On Wednesday they threaten to kill him. Israeli forces build up over a 2-day period, as they hope that pressure from Abbas and from Egypt might result in the release of Shalit. Forces enter Gaza in the south, setting up forward bases near the airport outside Rafah, during the early morning hours of Wednesday.						11am:Egypt increases border police force							
pm							Israel threatens to assassinate exiled Hamas leaders							
							Israeli tanks mass on Gaza border							
							5pm:Gaza City explosion kills Hamas militant							
							9pm:Missile hits bridge in central Gaza							
							11pm:Missiles hit Gaza power plant, cutting power in S. Pal. security forces pull out of airport, after Israeli warning							
28 th am							1am:Israeli tanks, troops enter Gaza near Rafah							
							2am:PRC threaten to kill West Bank settler							
							Israeli warplanes fly over Assad's palace in Latakia, Syria							
							Warplanes set up sonic booms over Gaza							
pm	Prior to the movement of troops, the main electricity power plant for the south was put out of action with an air strike. An immediate consequence is the spoiling of food stored in refrigerators across Gaza, as well as the inability to pump or purify water. the estimate is that the power plant – built by Enron, began operation in 2002, and currently insured by a US government agency – will be out of operation about 6 months. As many as 20 locations were targeted Friday, June 30 th .						1pm:Warplanes attack Hamas training base							
							2pm:Home explosion kills 2 in S Gaza							
							White House:"Israel has right to defend itself"							
							9pm:IDF Artillery shelling increases in N Gaza							
29 th am							1am:Arrests of Hamas ministers & officials begin, 64 by 2pm							
							1am:Gaza Islamic University bombed							
							3am:Israeli troops enter Northern Gaza							
							3am:PRC claims to have killed settler, body found later							
pm							1pm:Islamic Jihad militant targeted, escapes							
							2pm:Militants blast hole in Egypt border wall							
							8pm:Militant rocket damages power substation							
							10pm: Hamas training camp bombed							
30 th am	Beginning early in the morning, on Thursday, Hamas cabinet members and politicians are arrested. Some of them have the residency in Jerusalem cancelled. Having earlier demanded the release of women and children in Israeli prisons, in return for 'information' on the whereabouts and condition of Gilad Shalit, on July 1 st the militants specifically call for the release of 1,000 prisoners. This is shortly after Hezbollah calls for the militants not to give up their hostage for nothing in return.						12am:Egypt 'Hamas willing to hand over soldier'							
pm							12:30am:Missile destroys Gaza Interior Ministry							
							6am:Islamic Jihad militant killed in air strike							
							Israel increases electric supply to Gaza							
							4pm:Air strike on militant car, 3 flee, 1 hurt							
							2 killed attempting to fire rockets into Israel							
							9pm:Air strike on militant training camp							
1 st am							1am: PRC demand release of 1,000 jailed							
							7am: Israel rejects prisoner trade							
							11am: Palestinians say soldier is alive							
pm							4pm: Militants clash with tanks, fire RPG							
2 nd am							1am: Missile hits Prime Minister's office in Gaza							
pm							3pm: Hamas threatens attacks in West Bank							
							Stray Israeli missile hits Gaza school							
							6pm: Olmert steps up Gaza campaign							
							9pm: 3 attackers shot by IDF near airport							
							11pm: Gaza city targets hit by air strikes							
3 rd am							5am: IDF begins operations in north Gaza							
							6am: Militants set Tues 3am deadline for trade							
pm							11am: Gunman killed in northern Gaza							
							11pm: Strike kills 1 laying explosives in N.							
							12am: Gaza city university hit by missile							
							3am: Militant deadline for prisoner release							

Christian Zionism - Entity

This article will consider the position of Israel in the fulfillment of Scripture, using various reference points to do so. However, it may be best to recognize the political element at this point, before refocusing on the Scriptural point of view. Numerous writers question the claims of modern-day Israel to be the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, but very few deny the political validity of the State of Israel. That Israel has a right to exist is, taking broad opinion, not in question. The State has had broad acceptance in the United Nations (though not unanimous), and has established relations with most of its neighbors, peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan, and broad trade and even military relations with other neighbors, such as Turkey. Concerning Israel's right to exist, even its most vehement detractors have had occasion to express willingness to accept the presence of the State. How much of ancient Canaan, Roman Palaestina, British Mandate Palestine, Israel actually has a right to, is what is questioned.

3. Entity (F)	The status of the modern State of Israel...				
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<i>Since 1948 Israel has existed as a nation, but is this political entity necessarily the fulfillment of scripture?</i>	is not the promised return of prophecy	is a manipulated political phenomenon	is an 'Abramic' return, but not God's method	may be the return prophesied in scripture	clearly is the return prophesied in the Bible
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Various Bible scholars have written on the issue of Israel's position in the fulfillment of prophecy. Some are very vocal in their dogmatic assertions that the present state is without doubt the Israel of prophecy. Pastor John Hagee, of San Antonio, is perhaps the most outspoken of these: *"Genesis 12:3 'And I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed.' Point: God has promised to bless the man or nation that blesses the Chosen People. History has proven beyond reasonable doubt that the nations that have blessed the Jewish people have had the blessing of God; the nations that have cursed the Jewish people have experienced the curse of God."* (www.jhm.org/support-israel.asp). His statements indicate his belief that Jews do not need to become Christians (*"I believe that every Jewish person who lives in the light of the Torah, which is the word of God, has a relationship with God and will come to redemption."* Houston Chronicle, April 30, 1988) a position we will take up in a later issue of e-NEWS.

Other writers distinguish between the political and prophetic Israel: As Stanley Ellison puts it, *"her international right to the land can be well defended"* but he goes on, *"her divine right by covenant has only sentiment in its favor"* (Stanley Ellison, *Who Owns the Land?*, Multnomah, 1991).

Bridges For Peace, a Christian organization promoting the welfare of Israel, teaches the *three R's* of bible prophecy: "a RETURN from exile to the land of their forefathers; the RESTORATION of the land, and then, the REDEMPTION and renewal of the spiritual life of the Jewish people in the land." (www.bridgesforpeace.com, article 2173). Since the second, Restoration, seems to be occurring today in Israel, in fulfillment of Ezekiel 36, they see the nation of Israel as being divine fulfillment of prophecy.

To be continued in the next issue of e-NEWS.



* Sites traditionally associated with Biblical events, but exact location not proven. Gadara itself was on a ridge on the south side of the Yarmouk, but gave its name to the region east of the Sea of Galilee. As early as the 4th Century a church was built in Tabgha to mark the location of the *Feeding of the Five Thousand*.

