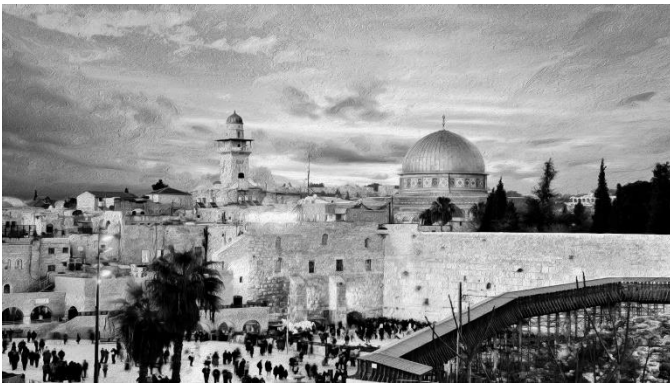




## THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT PART III: ISSUES PREVENTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

*By Carol Rushton*



**This ambitious series has sought to explain to Westerners some of the reasons why attempts to negotiate a peace settlement between Israel and her Arab neighbors are doomed to fail until Jesus Christ returns to set up His millennial kingdom from Jerusalem. The first two parts have hopefully established a historical foundation that will help Westerners understand this third and last part as we examine some of the charges of pro-Arab/pro-Palestinian apologists who blame Israel for the breakdown of peace negotiations and efforts to bring peace to the Middle East. Although space prohibits us from covering all facets of this incredibly huge topic, we can cover some of the more important issues that are brought up whenever peace in the Middle East is discussed.**

**Charge:** You are using the Bible as the basis for the Jews' right to the land they are now illegally occupying from the Palestinians. The Bible is not historically accurate. It was written by Jews for Jews and is full of lies and fairy tales. Therefore the Bible cannot be used to prove that Jews were in the Holy Land for

thousands of years and to justify the right of the Jews to their own nation in the Middle East.

**Answer:** Archaeology has proven the biblical record to be true beyond a shadow of a doubt. For example, Werner Keller in his superb book, *The Bible As History*, reports that the excavations of the ancient Kingdom of Mari in the 1930s contained a wealth of information in the thousands of tablets found still intact after hundreds of years. The Kingdom of Mari existed around 1900 B.C., the same time as biblical scholars claim Abraham and Sarah lived, in what is now Abu Kemal, Syria. The tablets contain the name of the city of Haran, as well as the names of Peleg, Serug, Nahor, Terah, and Abraham, all found in the Book of Genesis, the first book of the Bible.

The Nuzi tablets, found by archaeologists 15 miles southwest of Kirkuk, Iraq and referred to by both Keller and Dr. Henry Morris, also corroborate the biblical account of Sarah giving her handmaid, Hagar, to Abraham to provide the family with an heir as a well-known practice at that time when the wife was unable to bear children.

Murals found in Beni Hasan, Egypt in the 1890s by British archaeologist Percy Newberry depict foreigners visiting the area who looked like what we think the early Israelites must have looked like. They look completely different from their Egyptian hosts. The murals report that the name of the leader of this expedition is Abishai, a Jewish name, first found in I Samuel 26:6, "Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab . . ." In his notes on the Book of Judges, Dr. Henry Morris documents that the names of Ahimnan and Talmai in Judges 1:10 and also that of the Joseph in Genesis have been found on Egyptian tablets as well.

According to Newberry, these foreigners were “fairer-skinned and had sharper features” than their Egyptian counterparts and also carried a shepherd’s crook (Werner Keller, *The Bible As History*, pg. 83), which agrees with Genesis 46:32 in recounting how Joseph’s brothers made their living: “And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.”

The foreigners are depicted in the murals as wearing clothing completely different than that found in Egypt. Werner Keller continues:

The style and colour of their clothing are faithfully reproduced. Square woolen blankets, reaching in the case of the men to the knee, in the case of the women to the calf, are caught up on one shoulder. They consist of highly coloured striped material and serve as cloaks. Does that not remind us of the famous “coat of many colours which Jacob, much to the annoyance of his other sons, bestowed upon his favourite son Joseph? (Gen. 37). The men’s hair is trimmed into a pointed beard . . . One of the men is playing the eight-stringed lyre. According to the instructions given in the Bible some of the Psalms of David were to be accompanied on this instrument: “To be sung to eight strings” is the heading of Psalms 6 and 12.

The Mernepta Stela, discovered in Egypt, describes the military campaigns of the Egyptian Pharaoh Mernepta, who reigned around 1213 B.C. to 1204 B.C., the time period corresponding to the Judges period of the prophetess Deborah and Barak in Israel. Dr. Morris wrote, “While Merneptah’s boasts of victory [over Israel] are somewhat hollow, the stela does indicate Israel as the strongest nation in Canaan at that time. It is believed to be the oldest archaeological monument containing the actual name of Israel.”

Several archaeologists have confirmed the biblical account of Joshua and the Israelites’ defeat of the city of Jericho around 1440 B.C. John Garstang excavated Jericho in the 1930s, Carl Watzinger from 1907 to 1909, and Kathleen Kenyon from 1952 to 1958. Jericho had a complex system of defense, including a 15-foot high retaining wall topped with an 8-foot brick wall and another brick wall that surrounded the city. According to Bible.org, “Archaeologists also found that in one part of the city, large piles of bricks were found at the base of both the inner and outer walls, indicating a sudden collapse of the fortifications . . . the collapsed bricks formed a ramp by which an invader might easily enter the city . . . This is remarkable because when attacked city walls fall inward, not outward.”

Kenyon verified that Jericho at one time had been covered by a thick layer of soot, indicating that the city had experienced a terrible fire. Kenyon wrote, “The destruction was complete. Walls and floors were blackened or reddened by fire and every room was filled with fallen bricks.” Kenyon’s discovery parallels Joshua 6:24, “And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein . . .” Although archaeologists have argued about the date of Jericho’s destruction, Dr. Bryant Wood feels he has irrefutable proof confirming the date of Jericho due to a piece of charcoal tested by carbon 14 dating to be around 1410 B.C. (Bible.org, <https://bible.org/article/archaeology-and-old-testament>).

Some of the other amazing archaeological discoveries confirming the truth of the Old Testament are:

- A black basalt stela or stone slab located at Tell Dan at the foot of Mt. Hermon with the words, “The King of Israel” and “House of David” (<https://bible.org/article/archaeology-and-old-testament>)
- An inscription on a stone found near the Temple Mount translated from the Hebrew that means “to the house of the blowing of the trumpet to announce” which corresponds with the blowing a trumpet by Jews to announce the Sabbath and Jewish holy days (<http://half-shekel.org/archaeological-evidence-first-second-temple/>)
- A tiny golden bell found near the southern end of the Western or Wailing wall that would have hung from the bottom of a robe or other such garment by the high priest
- A seal from the Jewish city of Gibeon describing a tax from the king and dating to the First Temple period, anywhere from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century to the 7<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.
- A man-made cave near the Damascus Gate of the Old City in Jerusalem is Solomon’s Quarries where the stones for the First Temple were made
- A king’s stables have been found both at Megiddo and Jerusalem; some think that at least one of these dates from the time of Solomon; others think the stables could date from the later kings Ahab and Jeroboam II
- The Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran

I could go on but there is no getting around the fact that archaeology authenticates the veracity of the biblical account of the history of Israel and the Jews.

If Jews do not have the right to live in Beit El, where Abraham erected an altar to worship the Lord, where Jacob had his dream of the ladder and the angels, and where the prophetess Deborah was buried or Shechem where Abraham first entered Canaan and Joseph's Tomb is located, then Jews don't have the right to live anywhere.

**Charge:** What do you mean there is no peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors? Maybe not with the Palestinians, but Israel has signed two peace treaties, one with Egypt and one with Jordan. Israel is at peace with at least two of her Arab neighbors, right?

**Answer:** Israel signed the first peace treaty with Egypt when Menachem Begin was prime minister of Israel and Anwar Sadat was president of Egypt (1978). Sadat was rewarded by being assassinated by Muslim Brotherhood members. So much for peace between Israel and Egypt.



When I first arrived in Israel in 1991 to begin living there, one of the first things I read in *The Jerusalem Post* newspaper was an article that included the following statement from an Egyptian military official: "Israel is very bad. She does not want peace." I was shocked because I thought that the Camp David Accords had paved the way for Israel and Egypt to be on at least better terms than in previous years.

I learned from my Jewish neighbors that Israelis view peace with Egypt very differently than Westerners do. It is not war but not peace; it is a cold peace. At least during the 1990s when I lived in Jerusalem, planes were filled to the brim with Israelis flying to Cairo to visit the pyramids or to begin business partnerships with their Egyptian associates. Those same planes would return to Israel full - with Israelis. Egyptians refused to visit Israel at all. They didn't mind making business deals with Israelis - up to a point. But Egyptians had no intention of returning the same rapport the Jews felt toward them.

The peace treaty with Jordan has been a little less rigid. Israelis jumped at the chance to visit Jordan.

Most had never seen Petra or anything in Jordan so again there were buses and planes filled with Israeli tourists to visit their neighbor to the east. Some Jordanians have visited Israel, generally to visit relatives, but most have not. Both Egypt and Jordan side with other Arabs in the region if there is any conflict or dispute involving Israel and the so-called "Palestinians."

The official maps of Egypt and Jordan do not include Israel. The names of Israeli cities retain their Arab names. For instance, Jerusalem is not Jerusalem on an Egyptian or Jordanian map of the region. It is Al Quds. Israel is not anywhere listed on their maps.

In both cases, tiny little Israel - not Egypt or Jordan - had to surrender land before the other countries would sign the treaties. In the case of Egypt, Israel gave up the Sinai, a huge peninsula that provided Israel with a buffer on its southern border against terrorist infiltrators. With Jordan, Israel had to give up some land and agree to share some of their water rights. Israel has received precious little in the way of peace with either country. Israel giving up land to achieve peace in the Middle East does not work.

**Charge:** The fact that giving up land for peace has not worked so far is because Israel has not gone far enough to bring about the two-state solution. If Israel would give up the West Bank to create a Palestinian state then peace in the Middle East would be achieved.

**Answer:** In 1947, the United Nations voted to accept a two-state solution in the Holy Land: one country for the Jews and another, separate country for the Arabs living the same area. Even though it was much less land than the Jews had originally been promised, they accepted the offer. The Arabs did not. When Israel formally declared itself a nation on May 14, 1948, the combined armies of the Arab countries in the region attacked the new Jewish country within 24 hours, thinking they would wipe the Jews off the face the earth forever. To this day, Arabs refer to the declaration of the State of Israel as "The Nakba" which means "catastrophe."

Since then there have been many conflicts and wars between Israel and Arabs, with the Arabs' objective in each one as the total destruction of the Jewish state and the eradication of Jews from the Middle East. The PLO and Hamas charters have adamantly refused to acknowledge the right of Jews to live in their land or to acknowledge the State of Israel as a legitimate country.

In 2000, President Bill Clinton hosted both Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat at Camp David. According to the British news outlet *The*



*Guardian*, Israel offered Arafat and his merry band of terrorists the following:

- 92% of the Judea and Samaria (West Bank) for a Palestinian state
- 100% of the Gaza Strip
- Additional territorial compensation for Palestinians from pre-1967 Israeli territory
- Dismantling of most Jewish settlements, with the Jewish settlers to be moved to 8% of Judea and Samaria that Israel would retain
- Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem
- Palestinian Authority (PA) sovereignty over half of the Old City of Jerusalem, which would include the Muslim and Christian quarters
- “Custodianship” of the Temple Mount
- Arabs who left Israel in 1948 and their descendants would be allowed to live in the new Palestinian state
- International aid to help Arabs in refugee camps to become re-established in the new Palestinian state



Even Barak, a very liberal member of Israel’s Labor Party, finally admitted that Arafat and the Arabs would never accept a two-state solution. In an interview Barak said, “What they [Arafat and his colleagues] want is a Palestinian state in all of Palestine. What we see as self-evident, [the need for] two states for two peoples, they reject . . . [Arafat believes Israel] has no right to exist and he seeks its demise . . .” (*The Guardian*, “Arafat Didn’t Negotiate - He Just Kept Saying No,” Benny Morris, May 2002).

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offered the PA even more in 2008. As well as almost all of Judea and Samara Olmert gave away Israeli sovereignty of the Temple Mount, the Jews’ holiest site in the entire world; a tunnel between the Gaza Strip and the areas in Judea and Samaria that the PA would now receive for their new state; a five-nation committee that would

oversee the religious holy sites in Jerusalem; Israeli withdrawal from the Jordan Valley; the right of return to 1,000 Arabs of year to Israel for five years. Abbas never responded (*The Jerusalem Post*, “Revealed: Olmert’s 2008 Peace Offer to Palestinians,” Avi Isacharoff, May 24, 2013).

When Israel pulled out of the Gaza Strip in 2005, the Arabs in Gaza promised to continue to cultivate the land Israeli settlers had worked so hard in reclaiming to produce fruit and vegetables. Those same lands are now Hamas training camps for terrorists. Terrorists use the Gaza Strip to launch missiles and rockets into Israel, terrorizing nearby Israeli cities. They dig underground tunnels under the Gazan-Israeli border to carry out terrorist attacks in Israel. Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority, has named streets in Arab cities after terrorists and paid families of suicide bombers and terrorists monthly stipends of upwards of \$3,000 a month. *The Times of Israel* reported as late as 2012 that Abbas and the PA were spending almost \$11 million on these types of compensation. Does this sound like a people who really want to live in peace with the Jews?

Whether you say Arabs or Palestinians, Judea and Samaria or the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority or the PLO, the Arabs will always reject a two-state solution because they don’t want one. They rejected the two-state solution in 1947-1948, and that rejection continues to this day. They want a one-state solution - an Arab state from Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea **with no Jews**.

**Charge:** Even if the Jews have a biblical claim to Israel, they have no claim to the West Bank. They have Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Why do the Jews insist on claiming the West Bank as part of their country?

**Answer:** There is actually no such thing as the West Bank. The land area most media sources designate as the West Bank is actually the Jewish biblical lands of Judea and Samaria.



If you look toward the east from Israel, you are looking in the direction of Judea and Samaria. Only in looking toward the west from Jordan will you look in the direction of the so-called West Bank.

The vast majority of the world opposes the Jews having Israel as a homeland in the Middle East. Most countries demonize the Jewish settlers who have moved into Judea and Samaria, calling them a provocation and a problem. They side with the Arabs who call Judea and Samaria theirs, supporting the uprooting of all Jewish settlements, and even participating in the BDS Movement (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions). They do not recognize the Jews' historical, biblical right to the land of Israel. They never will.

The term "West Bank" was specifically designed to deny and erase the Jews' biblical, historic ties to the land of Israel. It has been very successful. Even conservatives and conservative news outlets use West Bank instead of the correct Judea and Samaria.

Below is a list of just some of the cities and events in Judea and Samaria that are connected with the Jews' biblical history.

- Hebron is where the Cave of the Patriarchs is located. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebeca, Jacob, and Leah are buried there. The Jewish Virtual library calls this the Jews' most ancient site because it was purchased by Abraham over 3,700 years ago (Genesis 23). David made Hebron his capital city until he was accepted by all the twelve tribes and moved the country's capital to Jerusalem (I Samuel 3-5). When the Islamic Mamelukes conquered the Holy Land 700 years ago, they turned the Cave of the Patriarchs into a mosque. Since the 1967 Six Day War, both Jews and Muslims are allowed to pray there.



Cave of the Patriarchs

- Bethlehem is the birthplace of both King David and Jesus Christ (I Samuel 16, Luke 2). Naomi and Ruth settled in Bethlehem and this is where Ruth met and married Boaz (Ruth 1-4). Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem is where Jacob's wife, Rachel, is buried (Genesis 35).
- Shechem, now called Nablus by Arabs, is where Abraham and Sarah first entered the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:6). When Jacob returned to Isaac and Rebecca from his uncle's house, he settled his family Shechem (Genesis 33-34). Joseph was buried in Shechem (Joshua 24:32). His tomb is periodically burned and ransacked by Arabs.
- Bethel or Beit El means "House of God." Both Abraham and Jacob built altars to the Lord in Bethel (Genesis 12, 35). Bethel was also the scene of Jacob's ladder dream when he was fleeing from his brother Esau (Genesis 28).
- Anata or Anatot is most famous for being the hometown of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 1:1).
- East Jerusalem was held by Jordan after the Israel's War of Independence. Jews could not visit the Temple Mount or any parts of the Old City because of Jordan's refusal to allow Jews visiting rights. Jews took over East Jerusalem, including the Old City, following their victory in the 1967 Six Day War. East Jerusalem contains the Temple Mount, the site of the first two Jewish temples, the Western or Wailing Wall, Gordon's Tomb where Jesus was buried after His crucifixion, and Golgotha.
- The books of I and II Kings are filled with verses about Samaria, including the biblical characters of the Prophet Elijah, King Ahab, and the Prophet Elisha. Isaiah 7:9 confirms that Samaria was part of the land given to the tribe of Ephraim. "And the head of Ephraim is Samaria . . ." Jesus in John 4 talked to a woman in a city of Samaria, who when Jesus told her that He knew everything about her, went and called all of her friends and neighbors to see Him. Jeremiah 31:5-6 prophesies what will happen to Samaria in the future during the Kingdom Age: "Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things. For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount

Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.”

## CONCLUSION

While to concerned Christians and conservatives, who are pro-Israel, the answers to these and other issues associated with Israel and her Arab neighbors may seem simple and more than adequate - the truth is that the world at large will never accept them. Terrorist organizations like the PLO, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood, and others have been very successful at overwhelmingly turning the world against the God of the Bible, His chosen people, the Jews, and for the most part against evangelical Christians and Christianity, some of Israel's most supportive and vocal defenders.

Even though we are distressed over the Anti-Semitism currently sweeping the countries of the globe, as it was before World War II, the world's vehement hatred for Israel and the Jews is prophetically described in the Bible in the latter days. “And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it” (Zechariah 12:3). “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken . . . Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle” (Zech 14:2-3).

The Lord also has a specific warning for those who pressure the Jews to give up their land. “I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land” (Joel 3:2).

We must never back down from supporting Israel and the Jews, but we must also realize that backing Israel and the Jews is not a very popular position to hold right now. However, one day, our support of Israel will be justified. The Bible gives us this hope that one day there will be peace in the Middle East, not brought about by an imperfect mankind who can never achieve a “just and lasting peace” but by the Prince of Peace who will achieve peace, not only in the Middle East, but throughout the entire world.



And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Isaiah 2:2-4).

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Carol Rushton has been writing on the Middle East and Bible Prophecy for over four decades. She worked for The Jerusalem Post during her eight year stay in Israel during the 1990s.*

Reprints of this publication may be obtained from:  
**Southwest Prophecy Ministries**  
P.O. Box 58043, Oklahoma City, OK 73157  
5 copies for \$5.00; 25 copies for \$15.00; 100 copies for \$60  
*You can listen to our weekly podcasts at [www.swpm.us](http://www.swpm.us)*

