

Isaac and **Ishmael** Israel, Arabs and the Middle East **Part 5**

by **John Bell, President Light to Israel**

The War behind the War in the Middle East

Finding out that someone has lied about real estate doesn't always make the news. But there is a piece of real estate that is always in the media and it is the most lied about real estate on earth. That piece of land is Israel. In part two of this eight-part series we discussed how God gave this land to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendents. In this article we will take an in-depth look at the lies used to attack Israel and the war behind the war.

Lie #1 – Israel stole the land called Palestine from the ancient Palestinian people.

Truth #1 – This lie is actually two lies bound together. The first is about the land called Palestine and the second is about the people called Palestinians. First, let's discuss the land. Prior to 1400 B.C., the land of Israel was called Canaan and was inhabited by various tribes of Canaanites. This land was conquered by Joshua and his army in 1398 B.C. and settled by the twelve tribes of Israel. After the successful reigns of King David and King Solomon, the people of Israel were regularly carted off to captivity. In spite of these deportations, the Jewish people held on to the rights of the land given to them by God.

Israel was never called Palestine in ancient history. Palestine was a name given to the land of Judea by the Romans in 135A.D. This came 1500 years after the Jewish people had made it their homeland. It came on the heels of the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome. Rome punished the Jewish people by

killing and expelling many Jews and renaming the land and its capital. The name chosen, Palestine, was tied to the ancient enemies of the Jews, the Philistines, and was meant by the Romans as an act of contempt.

Now we need to discuss the second part of the lie. With regard to the people of today who are called Palestinians, this is a misnomer. Palestine was always a geographical location and never a racial or ethnic description. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the people in the area were called Jews and Arabs of Palestine. In fact, Jews were more intimately connected to the name Palestine than Arabs (e.g. the Palestine Post became the Jerusalem Post).

However, all that changed after the Six Day War of 1967. After a swift defeat and disgraceful loss of Arab prestige in that war, the Arab military campaign to destroy Israel shifted to terrorist attacks and propaganda. The primary group to lead in the new tactics was the Palestine Liberation Organization headed by Yasser Arafat. The PLO launched bloody terrorist attacks on Israel as well as a campaign of lies and deception. Arafat was an expert at telling the big lie and telling it continually and passionately until much of the world believed it. Today, he and other Arab leaders have convinced many people that Israel is an illegitimate state and should be compared to South Africa under apartheid. Arafat has been the primary voice in the

myth of the Palestinians. The truth is that there was never a recognizable Palestinian nation in all of history. There were never a distinct Palestinian people in history until after the 1967 war.

Lie #2 The evil Jews stole the Arab paradise of Palestine away from its rightful owners.

Truth #2 The first modern wave of Jews arrived in Palestine in 1882. It was primarily composed of Russians who suffered in the pogroms. The new arrivals were idealists with a desire to rebuild the ancient Jewish homeland with their own hands. They purchased land; drained mosquito infested swamps, planted trees as well as crops and began to rebuild their ancient cities. These first immigrants were followed by wave after wave of Jews coming to the land. They were not coming to the paradise described by Yasser Arafat in his brand of revisionist history. They were coming to a desolate place, a land laid waste.

A great American author gave an eyewitness report. Mark Twain, who visited the land in 1867 and traveled from the Sea of Galilee to Mt. Tabor, wrote, "We reached Tabor safely... We never saw a human being on the whole route..." He described the land as "dismal" and as being "under a curse." The Jewish immigrants are responsible for making the dismal wasteland into a garden and a home, the paradise that Arafat envisions.

Lie #3 The Arabs of Palestine just want their own Palestinian state but Israel won't allow it.

Truth #3 Much of the deception of this lie is centered on the so-called "peace process" or Oslo Accords. This deception began in 1993 between Arafat and Israel's Yitzhak Rabin with Bill Clinton's endorsement. All of the rhetoric and posturing for peace by Arafat seems to have been a ruse for world sympathy. In the years that followed more Israelis were killed than before the process was begun. Most, if not all, of the Arab nations would prefer to obliterate the state of Israel instead of creating a Palestinian state.

The War behind the War

Our purpose at Light to Israel is not to vilify Arabs. We understand that, just as many Arab leaders are telling lies to the world, they are also lying to their own people. These leaders have a sinister force behind them as well. He is a liar and a murderer and he is the one speaking into their souls. Jesus said to a group of liars, "You are of your father, the Devil." The Devil hates God and Jesus. He also hates the Jews because they represent a covenant relationship with God. In Ephesians we are told that there is an unseen but utterly real dimension that Paul calls the "heavenly realms." The heavenly realms represent our thought life, our attitudes, our inner life, our behavior—the place where we experience conflict, pressure, struggle, temptation, disaster and triumph. It is the place where we are exposed to the attack of the principalities and powers of Ephesians 6—those dark spirits in high places who get to us and if successful, cause us to believe lies.

We believe that this is the **war behind the war**. Lies that lead to hostility are being told. The end result is death and destruction for Arabs as well as Jews. But this realm is also a place where Jesus Christ is on the throne. It is a place where He intends to conquer. He said "I am the way, the truth and the life." No place on the planet is more hotly contested than the real estate called Israel. The people of Israel and the people of the Middle East urgently need the people of God to pray that the truth will be told and that their hearts will be enlightened to hear it. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

John Bell