

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CXVII. God's Biblical Hope For The Middle East
(Psalm 117:1-2 et al.)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The world needs hope for a lasting, just solution to the Middle East crisis:

(1) The situation is intense and corrupt: A UN "report" claimed "nine employees of the UN Relief and Works Agency . . . took part in terrorist activities on Oct. 7," but "investigators ignored evidence indicating that hundreds or thousands of UNRWA employees are Hamas operatives," for they sought "to protect UNRWA funding . . . from" loss of "US taxpayer dollars." (David May & Richard Goldberg, "Aiding Terror," New York Post, August 8, 2024, p. 27)

(2) The Gaza conflict has the potential to become a broad war: "(T)he killing in Tehran of Hamas's top political leader" and "an Israeli strike" that "killed a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut . . . escalated a recent cycle of violence and threatened to push the region to the brink of war." (Summer Said, Benoit Faucon & Laurence Norman, "Iran Rebuffs Calls for Restraint," The Wall Street Journal, August 5, 2024, p. A7)

(3) American colleges and universities are being impacted by the Gaza conflict: "(T)he Young Democratic Socialists of America are encouraging students at more than 100 colleges and universities to participate in a 'Student Strike for Palestine' protest to kick off the coming academic year . . ." (William A. Jacobson & Kemberlee Kaye, "Red-Green Riots?" Ibid., New York Post, August 16, 2024, p. 35)

(4) U. S. businesses have been affected by the war: Richard Goldberg of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies in Chicago wrote a letter to The Wall Street Journal (Ibid., p. A16) reporting that "Airbnb . . . Unilever" and "Morningstar" reversed their boycotts of Israel that had occurred under pressure of "deeply antisemitic . . . attempts to use economic warfare as a tool to delegitimize and destroy the world's only Jewish state."

(5) Our politics are immersed in the Middle East crisis: "Jewish leaders . . . fumed that Josh Shapiro was 'vilified' in an 'ugly, antisemitic campaign' as . . . Kamala Harris whittled down her veep contenders . . . passing over the Pennsylvania governor. Shapiro, who is Jewish, faced more scrutiny and criticism than other contenders . . ." (Carl Campanile, "Outrage on 'ugly' Josh takedown," Ibid., New York Post, August 8, 2024, p. 5)

Need: *So, we ask, "What hope does God have for the world regarding the Middle East crisis?"*

I. The solution to the Middle East crisis must of necessity address errant Islamic beliefs (as follows):

- A. Islam calls for the extinction of all Jews and Israel and the establishment of Islam as the world's only religion:
 1. Islam's holy book, the Quran at sura 5:51 claims, "'O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors.'" (Robert Spencer, The Truth About Muhammad, 2006, p. 178)
 2. Islam's prophet Muhammad said, "'The last hour would not come unless the Muslims will fight against the Jews and the Muslims would kill them.'" (Ibid., p. 180, citing Sahih Muslim, bk. 41, no. 6985)
 3. He also said, "'Allah will perish all religions except Islam.'" (Ibid., citing Bukhari, v. 4, bk. 60, no. 3449)
- B. However, the Quran and Muhammad are unreliable sources of truth even according to early Muslim sources:
 1. The Quran is an unreliable source of truth according to early Muslim sources:
 - a. The Muslim Hadith at Sahih Bukhari, v. 6 reveals that "Muhammad named four men as the best teachers of the Quran . . . but . . . (t)hey did not even agree with each other." (Nabeel Qureshi, Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus, 2014, p. 237-239) In fact, "(m)ultiple early Muslims documented the differences between the many Qurans of the early Muslim world." (Ibid., p. 240)
 - b. Today, formidable Islamic scholars do not argue "that the Quran" has "remained unchanged. They" rather argue "that Allah intended the many changes that came to it (Ibid., p. 241)," so, "the Quran's" alleged "perfect preservation, far from defending the faith," needs "to be defended by faith." (Ibid., p. 240)
 2. Muhammad is also an unreliable source of truth according to early Muslim sources:
 - a. "According to Islamic tradition, Satan, not Allah, once actually spoke through Muhammad's mouth." (Ibid., Spencer, p. 78) "He (Muhammad) received a revelation saying that it was legitimate for Muslims to pray to al-Lat, al-'Uzza, and Manat, the three goddesses favored by the pagan Quraysh, as intercessors before Allah." (Ibid., p. 79, citing Ibn Ishaq, 165-166 [Muhammad's first biographer])
 - b. This report "casts a shadow over the veracity of Muhammad's entire claim to be a prophet," for "if Satan could put words into Muhammad's mouth once, and make him think they were revelations from Allah, who is to say that Satan did not use Muhammad as his mouthpiece on other occasions?" (Ibid., p. 82)

c. Some ardent Muslim apologists argue that this incident never occurred, but early biographer “Tabari attributes his version” of it “to Ibn Ishaq and would have no reason for saying this if it were not so” (Ibid., p. 83, citing Tabari, v. vi, p. 107, 108). “Ibn Sa’d also notes the incident” (Ibid., Spencer, citing Ibn Sa’d, v. I, p. 236-239), and “(i)t is hard to see how and why such a story would have been fabricated and accepted as authentic by such pious Muslims as Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Sa’d, and Tabari, as well as by the later Qur’anic commentator Zamakhshari (1074-1143), who is unlikely to have recounted it if he did not trust the sources. Here, as in many other areas, the witness of the early Islamic sources is compelling.” (Ibid.)

II. Thus, God’s plan for solving the Middle East crisis is given in His TRUE Scriptures (as follows):

- A. Genesis 17:15-21; 21:9-14 and 25:1-6 reveal that God made Isaac, Abraham’s son by Sarah, the *sole heir* of the *Abrahamic Covenant* and *not any other son of Abraham by way of Hagar or by his later wife Keturah!*
- B. **However**, Psalm 117:1-2 recalls God’s Genesis 12:1-3 and 22:17-18 Abrahamic Covenant as God’s vehicle of blessing *not only the Hebrew people, but all mankind*, that **all people** of the **world** owe praise to the Lord:
 1. The call to praise the Lord is given to **all** “nations” (*goin*) and “peoples” (*‘ummim*), for God’s “loyal love” (*hesed*) is great toward **all** of **them**, and His “truth, faithfulness” (*‘emet*) **endures forever**, Psalm 117:2. (Kittel, *Bib. Heb.*, p. 1078; H. A. W., *T. W. O. T.*, 1980, vol. I, p. 153-154, 50-51, 305-307, 52-53)
 2. This refers to God’s intent to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant given back in Genesis 12:1-3 with 22:17-18 – God’s promise to bless Abraham and all the peoples of the earth through Abraham’s “seed.”
- C. How this blessing is to be implemented in God’s plan of history is presented in other Scriptures (as follows):
 1. The Abrahamic Covenant is fulfilled through Christ according to Galatians 3:13-19 with Luke 1:30-33:
 - a. Since all men are sinners (Romans 3:23) and thus unable in themselves to qualify to enjoy God’s blessing in righteousness, Christ died for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2), that when any Hebrew or Gentile believes in Him for salvation from sin, he receives the blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant, Gal. 3:13-19.
 - b. That blessing includes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and His ministry to and through the believer (Gal. 3:14) and participation in Christ’s coming Messianic reign of the world through Israel, Luke 1:30-33.
 2. The current status of God’s plan is seen in the current Middle East crisis, Daniel 9:25-26:
 - a. When Christ came to Israel in His first advent, offering her His Messianic Kingdom, Israel rejected Him, crucifying her Messiah at the hands of the Roman government, John 19:14-16 with Daniel 9:25-26a.
 - b. Accordingly, Israel is currently under divine discipline of suffering war and desolations for rejecting her Messiah in fulfillment of Daniel 9:26b (cf. also Luke 23:20-31).
 3. God will fulfill His plan of worldwide blessing through the Abrahamic Covenant in the future (as follows):
 - a. Right after the pretribulation rapture of the Church, God will work with the world to prepare it for Him to fulfill His Abrahamic Covenant through use of the coming worldwide Tribulation Period, Daniel 9:27: God will allow the antichrist to arise to discipline the Gentiles and Hebrews who rejected Christ during the Church era in fulfillment of Zechariah 11:7-14 with 15-17 and 2 Thessalonians 2:6-12.
 - b. God will then fulfill His Abrahamic Covenant with Christ’s return, His punishment of the wicked, and his establishment of the Millennial Kingdom starting *only* with **believers** in Christ, Zech. 12:10-13:1; 14:4-21.
- D. Meanwhile, our current duty as Christians is to disciple the nations for Christ, Acts 1:6-8; Matthew 28:19-20.

Lesson: *Gentile and Hebrew believers owe God praise for His loyal love, His everlasting truth and faithfulness through the Abrahamic Covenant and Jesus Christ through whom they have salvation by faith in Christ.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we (a) disciple the nations and (b) hope in God's ultimate, future fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

A great lesson for us from the rise of the errant Islamic faith is the need for us believers in Christ to hold to Biblical truth. Robert Spencer (Ibid., p. 53) noted, “What . . . is indisputable . . . is that the Qur’an incorporates . . . Christian sources and that some of the ‘tales of the ancients’ that found their way into the Qur’an are not from the canonical gospels but from decidedly heterodox sources – the sorts of sources Muhammad would likely encounter in Arabia, where heretical Christians predominated.” One wonders if history would have been far different had Muhammad met godly Christians who would have disciplined him with the Biblical truth!

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. May we disciple others with the truth and hope in God’s fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.