

8979U

ECHO LAKE STUDY WEEKEND - 2007

FROM EDEN LOST TO EDEN RESTORED

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis (NZ)

Study #4: Dramatic Moves in the Gaza Strip
(What are the prophetic implications in the rise of Hamas in Gaza?)

....it's always known as the graveyard shift of any seminar program. In looking around it was probably not far from the truth. But you seem to perk up as the afternoon moves on, so I thought I'd keep some interesting stuff for later on, and so now we're going to move away from Europe and the affairs of the Papacy and the false prophet, and to come now to some events moving in the Middle East, and in particular to developments in the Gaza strip and the rise of Hamas in that area. You know, I think as Christadelphians that it would be fair to say, that for us the greatest sign of the coming of Christ and the nearness of our Lord's return, is the fact that the Christadelphians have seen great significance in Israel coming back to their land, the most notable sign of our time, the Jewish people in the Promised Land. The interesting thing is that although they're back in their ancient land, they're clearly far from secure at this stage, aren't they? They're not safe yet and you wouldn't say that they're dwelling at peace and securely as the prophets indicate that perhaps they should, and the Palestinian threat in particular, just seems to be a huge problem that won't go away. Then you think, I don't know what the answer is, so what's the biblical significance of everything that's going on in that area.

You know that in 2002, just 5 years ago, Newsweek magazine commissioned a study on the reaction of people's views on the likely survival of Israel as a nation. The question that was asked was, 'Do you think Israel will be here in 50 years time?' 34% said it would remain; of course, you realize that 34% saying Israel will remain, means that 66% thought that Israel won't survive the next 50 years. 18% specifically said it won't survive, and 23% thought there would be a mixed Palestinian and Jewish state in 50 years, but with the Palestinians in the majority. So from a biblical point of view, what do we think about what's going on in this area in terms of the latter day?

Now I had an interesting discussion in the last break, and this next slide might be helpful in that regard because one of the things I think we have to be careful of, is how latter day applications work in bible prophecy. It's a bit tempting to look at current events and say, 'well this is bible prophecy being fulfilled'. The reality is that we've got to look at bible prophecy first and establish our credentials biblically and then come back and see what's going on in the world, and see if it does fit bible prophecy. One of the marvellous things about Brother Thomas is that sometimes he wrote things, and you

looked at the

world and it seemed almost impossible, and completely inconsistent with what Brother Thomas wrote. He said, 'but ah, I'm driven by what the bible says, not what it looks like right now'. One of the things that we've got to be careful of is latter day applications. Not all prophecies require nor necessitate both a primary and a secondary fulfilment. If there's to be a secondary or latter day fulfilment then the context and comparison needs to be used to decide whether in fact that is biblically warranted or not. If you think there is such evidence, then that latter application should be seen in either or both of the following: (one of these you'll recognize well, the other one is useful to know)

1. powers controlling the same territories
2. latter day fulfilment, it might be a different power but on the same territory or alternatively
3. powers manifesting the same attributes, It could be a prophecy being fulfilled by a latter day application where some thing or some power in the world today is showing the same characteristics of behaviour.
4. Then again, there are some prophecies that appear to have had no previous fulfilment at all, and it leads to the conclusion that the primary and only consummation lies still ahead in the latter days, There doesn't seem to have been any previous fulfilment in history.

So you have to be careful how we move ahead in bible prophecy. So now we've got to try and make sense of what's going on in Israel today, especially with the Palestinians, but we're going to do so from a clear line of biblical argument, which is the course we would always do.

Palestine and Palestinians! Well, it's a biblical term actually. The word 'Palestinian' comes from the word 'Palestina' which is found in the bible. It's the Hebrew word 'Palesheth' (6429) and that word means 'rolling or migratory'. It's the land of the wanderers, it's translated Palestina three times, as Palestine once, as Philistia three times and as Philistines once, but it's the word translated 'Palestina' from which the word 'Palestine' comes from and where the word 'Palestinian' comes from, so there is a biblical basis to this particular word. So I guess what I'm saying is, from a scriptural perspective therefore, a Palestinian is a Philistine and a Philistine is a Palestinian, because certainly they controlled the same territory, the Palestinians compared to the Philistines of old; they manifest the same attributes so they qualify on both accounts. And they're going to receive or share the same end from a biblical perspective. In fact, interestingly enough, the Arabic for the term 'Palestine Liberation' is 'cathlea philistine' so you can see that interplay between the words Philistine, Philisteen and Palestine, Palestinian, it's all one word in the Hebrew so there's a biblical background for that word.

Now I should really cover my position at the outset, in case you think I'm heading in the wrong direction biblically and just say this, modern Palestinians **are not in any way descended from** the actual Philistines of Old Testament times. There's no actual connection with the Philistines, there's no ethnic, or linguistic, or cultural connection whatsoever. The Philistines are gone, they were exterminated off the face of the earth, b&s, as we shall see through some prophecies that we'll look at later on. In fact, I would have to say that

the whole story of the Palestinian people today, is the most amazing media fraud, perpetrated by the Palestinian people themselves. It's been a very successful fraud, you see, there were Arabs living in mandate Palestine at the time of Israel's independence. There were lots of them, some of those people had lived there for generations, and there was no doubt about it! There were Arab families living in Arab villages in mandate Palestine that had been there for generations. And yes, they were dispossessed in the 1948 war of independence. But a lot of the Arabs that were in Palestine at the time when Israel came into existence, had actually come from other places and the reason is that when the Jews arrived they were industrious, they began businesses, they began commerce, there was economic activity. What happened was, Arabs came from other lands because of Jewish commerce and employment, they came into that region from other Arab nations. In fact, up until the year 1948, the word 'Palestinian' always referred to a Jewish person living in Palestine, not to an Arab. It's relatively a modern phenomena that the word 'Palestinian' is even applied to Arab people.

Now let me tell you something interesting that happened at the time of the war of independence in Israel. What happened was, there were all these refugees, all these Palestinian refugees, by the way, there was about 600,000 of them, and you'll never guess how many Jewish refugees came from the surrounding Arab lands into Israel at the time 600,000 Arab refugees fled out into those same Arab lands? why? 600,000 Jewish refugees who fled from Arab lands into Israel, and 600,000 Arab refugees fled out of Israel, I think they're about equal, aren't they? Yet the Palestinians claimed the right of return back to Palestine, at any time, but guess what? if any of the Jews had fled as refugees from Arab nations, if they went back there and said, 'we'd like our land back, our property, our factory, our bank account, do you think they'd be reinstated in the Arab lands where they had been confiscated? Not likely! but apparently, the Palestinians demanded the right of return at all times to Palestine. Because what happened in the 1948 war was, that the Jewish radio broadcast messages to all the Arab villages saying, 'don't leave, just live together in peace'. But the Arab radios said, 'get out, get out now, we're going to destroy them off the face of the earth; in a week or two it will all be over'. So they left but unfortunately the Arabs didn't win, Israel won! There were people stranded, you see, war is never an easy thing!

But let me tell you how silly it was! When the United Nations, that august assembly of important people, came into Palestine to sort out the problem, to deal with the poor Palestinian refugees, they said, 'what do we define a Palestinian Arab refugee as?' So they said, well, you've got to have lived in Palestine for at least 24 months. So we now had Arabs who had come from Tunisia, Morocco and from Syria and Iraq who had been in Palestine for all of 5 years, who have now been torn from their ancient homeland, where they'd lived for all of 5 years, and they're a Palestinian refugee. The whole thing was a fraud, there's no Palestinian language, no Palestinian culture, no Palestinian identity! they're Arabs living in the region. Now let me tell you something else that's interesting, from 1948 to 1967, guess who controlled the West bank and the city of

Jerusalem, brutally occupied? Why, the country of Jordan, not the Jewish people! Israel didn't control the West bank and the city of Jerusalem, Jordan did! and yet the strange thing is that during 1948 to 1967 while under Jordanian occupation, not one single Palestinian group put their hand up and said, 'we want to go back to our homeland, it's ours'. Funny thing is, they only discovered that they're Palestinians when Israel took control of that same territory. It's funny isn't it? how things work. It was a fraud, b&s, and we need to understand that!

So come to the book of Exodus and let's start with some biblical analysis of the Palestinian problem and see if we can get our bearings of what we might expect to develop, from here on out. Well, we're told this is, Exodus 15 in verse 13, this is the time of Israel coming up out of the wilderness towards the Promised Land. The record says, 'Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the duke of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till the people pass over O LORD, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased.'

What Exodus 15 is talking about, b&s, is as Israel marched towards the Promised Land, the nations that inhabited this particular land trembled because that land there had been promised to the Jews and other people were living there. In fact, if we were to come from the bottom up, verse 15, did you notice that we probably have an indication of where they were, these particular powers. It says, 'all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away', but it really was in the centre of the land. Then going ahead of that sentence we have, 'the mighty men of Moab trembling shall take hold upon them', but Moab was really east. Then it says, 'the dukes of Edom shall be amazed', but Edom was to the south, so it's not difficult to postulate where Palestina might be in verse 14, is it? you're quite right! Palestina is on the **west**, In fact, we know that because from the biblical point of view. What we're told is this concerning Palestina of Old Testament times that, there was a passage in the book of Joshua 13:3 that says, 'all the border of the Palestinians, the five lords of the Philistines, the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites and the Ekronites', five cities of the lords of the Philistines, and those five cities made up the territory that was known in Old Testament times as Palestina. It was on the coastal strip and that's where it was in biblical times and although that part of the land was expressly promised to Israel, b&s, they never managed to conquer it, not totally, they never managed to conquer the Philistines, who remained as a pricking briar or a piercing sword in Israel's side, and they were always at odds with Israel. In fact, Israel only enjoyed times of peace when the Palestinians were defeated. But they never had the faith to do the job properly. So from the time of Joshua, at the time of entering into the Land, that particular region of Palestina was a region of constant controversy with Israel.

Now let me show you two bible illustrations of that, to show you that enmity at work between Israel and the Palestinians of Old Testament times. You need two hands for this, how fortunate that you've got two of them. So in your right hand you need Psalm 108, a psalm of David; then in your left hand 1 Chronicles 18. So here it is, now Psalm 108 is a psalm of David and it's spoken at a certain time, because verse 7 says, 'God hath spoken in His holiness'. Now by the way, I think when Psalm 108 verse 7 says that God hath spoken in His holiness', I think it refers to the great promise of 2 Samuel 7, the great covenant promise made to David. Now do you remember in that promise, God promised David that He'd give him rest from all his enemies roundabout thee', and David goes out as a result of that promise and does battle with the kingdoms around him and subdues them. We read in Psalm 108 verse 7, God hath spoken in His holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver; Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Palestina (that's our key word in the Hebrew) will I triumph', says David. So he promises himself in this psalm that on the strength of the divine promise, he'll go forth and subdue that area. Well, that's exactly what 1 Chronicles 18 (in your other hand) says, immediately after receiving that promise, it says in 1 Chronicles 18 verse 1 says, 'Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines'. He said he would triumph over Palestina, and so he did, b&s, he went forth and warred against that area and brought them in subjection so Israel might have peace. The only way that they could have peace at that time!

Now here's a second illustration! We've come now from the time of David, a long way forward to the time of good king Hezekiah of Judah. So in your right hand you need Isaiah 14 and near the end of the chapter, and in your left hand you need 2 Kings 18 at the start of the chapter. So now we've come forward from David's time several hundred years, many generations of kings; the spirit of Palestina has changed, do you think life's easier for Israel with regard to the Palestinians? Well, let's read this, Isaiah 14 verse 28, it says, 'In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden. By the way, I think the burden of Isaiah 14 verse 28, is the words that will follow in verses 29 to 32. Here it is, verse 29, 'Rejoice not thou whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken (king Ahaz is dead); for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice (his son Hezekiah), and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent. And the first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: but I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant. Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, are dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times. What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of His people shall trust in it'. And when Ahaz died, in effect the prophecy was, if the Palestinians were expecting some respite because of the death of Ahaz, they would be disappointed, because Ahaz's son, would come forth and strike them with the same vigour as his father had done!

That's exactly what happened! In your left hand, 2 Kings 18 verse 1, 'Now it came to pass in the third year of Hosea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign'. So that's the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, when do you think that Hezekiah started his reign, b&s? what year? in the year that his father died, I suppose! Ah, Isaiah 14, 'In the year that Ahaz died was this burden' (that's the very year that Hezekiah comes to power) and see what it says concerning Hezekiah, verse 7, 'And Yahweh was with him and he prospered whithersoever he went forth; and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.' So he did exactly what the burden of Isaiah 14 declared he would do, and he became a power of judgment against the Philistines in his day. These kings like David and Hezekiah, warred against Palestina because one never had respite unless one could bring that area into subjugation.

In fact, finally b&s, what happened from a biblical point of view, that God decreed judgment upon Palestina because of their spirit of unrelenting hostility towards Israel. Do you remember the right promise of Genesis 12? 'I will bless him that blesseth thee, and **I will curse him** that curseth thee'. Palestina never stopped cursing Israel until God finally said, 'enough'. He uttered prophecies of judgment against Palestina; there was one in Amos 1, that was fulfilled by Pharaoh-necho of Egypt; there was another one in Jeremiah 47 which was also fulfilled by Pharaoh-necho of Egypt; there was another in Ezekiel 25 which was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. There's one in Zechariah 9 that was fulfilled by Alexander of Greece; and finally there was one in Zephaniah 2 which was fulfilled by Judas Maccabaeus of Israel. As a result of those judgments, b&s, by the time they were all fulfilled, the Philistines were gone from the face of the earth in their entirety, disappeared. They had been exterminated by the judgments of God. By the way, I'm not sure, I'm not at all convinced that any of those prophecies need a latter day fulfilment! You see, they've been fulfilled - you can't just take a prophecy and say it will happen again, unless there are sound bible evidence that they're going to happen again. They've been fulfilled and the Philistines were destroyed as a result of the fulfilment of those prophecies.

Ah, but the burning question for today is, 'well, if Israel is back in the Land again, at the time of the end, in fulfilment of bible prophecy, do we expect to see a Jewish-Palestinian conflict as well again, at the time of the end, in fulfilment of bible prophecy'? In other words, do we expect to see a revival not only of Israel but also of Palestina at the end, in a resumption of the hostility that was shown between them and to them, in biblical times? and the answer is, yes, I think probably so! So let's have a look at that, shall we? in terms of some of the bible evidence that might suggest this, that possibly we'll have Palestina revived upon its ancient territory! Well, let's have a look at some of these passages as we go.

The first one is this: Psalm 83 verses 6 and 7 (you might turn Psalm 83 up because it's

probably a very important little passage). In Psalm 83 we've got a prophecy clearly about a confederacy that comes against Israel. By the way, I'm quite sure it had an historical background and I'll get to that in a minute, the question is 'is there an latter day application of the Psalm?' You remember what we said, you have to be able to prove it, you can't just assume it, you have to prove that there might be a latter day application. Now what's interesting about Psalm 83, b&s, is that this Psalm is sometimes taken (again, within the Christadelphian community under an alternative prophetic view) as evidence that a Jewish-Arab conflict is the cause celebre of latter day bible prophecy, it's the great issue of the time of the end! A Jewish-Arab controversy - proof Psalm 83; there are ten nations in the psalm which are in turn linked to the ten toes of Daniel 2, to suggest that this is the final great stage of the battle. That battle, by the way, will result in a terrible and total defeat for Israel.

I think before rushing in to make that conclusion, we perhaps need to have a wee look at the historical background to the Psalm, because there was one and you might change your view of the psalm once you hear the background. So again, just hold your hand in Psalm 83 and come back to 2 Chronicles 20; actually this is one of the psalms of Asaph. As some of you will know, the house of Asaph uttered psalms throughout their various family generations, over quite a long period of Israelitish history. So we've got to try and establish when this particular psalm was uttered by the house of Asaph because they uttered many psalms at different times of the nation's history. So where does this Psalm fit? 2 Chronicles 20 and Psalm 83, do you see what it says in verse 5, 'For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee'. So it was a confederacy or a great number that came against Israel according to Psalm 83, a confederation no less! So let's see what 2 Chronicles says in verse 2, 'There came in some who told Jehoshaphat saying, there cometh a great multitude against thee'. Again, we're told in verse 12 in Jehoshaphat's prayer he says, 'O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us', and again in verse 15 in the middle, 'Thus saith Yahweh unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude.' So there was a great multitude, says Chronicles, and there was a great confederacy, says Psalm 83.

But the question is, who were the ring leaders? who was leading the drive of this confederacy on this occasion? Well, Psalm 83 tells us who were the leaders, because you see after the list of the people, in verse 8, 'they had holpen the children of Lot'. Ah, so the rings of the confederacy were the children of Lot, Who were the children of Lot, can anyone remember? Moab and Ammon! See what 2 Chronicles 20 verse 1 says, 'And it came to pass after this also that the children of Moab and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside', Ah, there's a confederacy but it's lead by the children of Moab and Ammon, who are the children of Lot, which Psalm 83 says. Then again in verse 10 of 2 Chronicles 'the children of Moab and Ammon and mount Seir, and then verse 22, 'And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon and Moab,' so Moab and Ammon were the ring leaders as was said in Psalm 83, the children of Lot. By the way, in Psalm 83 if

you've still got it, in verse 12 it says, 'Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession', and the margin itself says, see 2 Chronicles 20 verse 11, and the prayer of Jehoshaphat which said, 'behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which Thou hast given us to inherit', and the spirit of the psalm was echoed in the prayer of Jehoshaphat.

And lastly, do you see how Psalm 83 finished! Verse 17 for connection, 'Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: That men may know that Thou, whose name alone is Yahweh art the Most High over all the earth'. The Psalmist cried for a victory on that day, that everyone might know amongst the nations, how great the God of Israel is! Now do you know what happened in 2 Chronicles? Well, of course, you know what happened ! that they put the singers in front, didn't they? they put the singers in front of the army and they marched off to battle, with the singers in front, and when they got into the battle field, there was no need for a battle because God had already destroyed the hosts of the enemy. Now do you know what 2 Chronicles said? Verse 27, 'Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; **for** Yahweh had made them to rejoice over their enemies. And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of Yahweh. And the **fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries**, when they had heard that Yahweh fought against the enemies of Israel'. The Psalmist had said, 'let them be put to shame that men may know that Thou, whose name alone is Yahweh art the Most High over all the earth'; and Chronicles had said the same thing. That's fulfilment of the Psalm, is it not, b&s? I think so, so there's an historical background to Psalm 83, so by the way, it's already been fulfilled in the days of Jehoshaphat, so before we leap into a conclusion that it's a latter day psalm, we need other evidence that necessarily it might have a latter day explanation. By the way, even if it does, even if Psalm 83 had a latter day application, what would it suggest to us? I think it would suggest two things: first, there could be an Arab-Israeli conflict at the end and it could include Palestina, because that's what Psalm 83 verse 7 says (the word Philistines is actually the word 'Palestina') but that of itself doesn't establish that the Jewish-Arab conflict is the great contest of the time of the end, simply because there's some controversy again. And in one particular detail, I think what this Psalm suggests is the very opposite to the reasons that are pressed into service. Because the alternative view uses Psalm 83, to prove a devastating, shocking, terrible war that Israel loses and the Arabs win. But I think, that Psalm 83 if it proves anything at all, is not a catastrophic defeat of Israel by Palestina, but based on historical background in the days of Jehoshaphat, wouldn't it imply a brilliant victory for Israel. Now that's much more in keeping with our expectations in terms of another Arab-Israeli war.

Oh, did you notice the connection on the screen there, not just with Palestina but with the inhabitants of Tyre. Now where's Tyre? well it's up the road in Lebanon, so guess who's in Tyre at the moment? who's running things in the southern part of Lebanon? and the answer is Hezbollah being funded by the Syrians who in turn are being funded

by the Iranians (we'll come back to that in a moment) and so just notice the connection that the hostility that Palestina shows is linked to the inhabitants of Tyre. So let's turn up another passage then shall we? in the book of Obadiah; well, Obadiah is another tricky little book to find, Obadiah given it's brevity, says in verse 19 and 20, verse 17 for connection (by the way, this clearly does come to the time of the end finally), 'But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. Verse 21 says, 'And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S'; so that's reaching forward, isn't it? and if there's a fulfilment in verse 19, 'And they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the plain the Philistines (the coastal plain, by the way, where the Philistines were in Old Testament times) and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the field of Samaria; and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites even unto Zarephath'. Now where's Zarephath? and the answer is Zarephath is in Lebanon in between Tyre and Sidon. That's the very place associated with Palestina in Psalm 83, those hostile to Israel in Palestina and those hostile to Israel in the inhabitants of Tyre, and in the future it says that Israel will possess the territory of the Philistines, the plain, and they'll also possess the area of Zarephath which is the area of Tyre.

Well, let's come to another one! You might think, yes, that's interesting but I don't know if I'd be completely convinced that that's necessarily latter day! What about this one! Joel 3. Now in Joel 3 we do have a chapter that has clearly been given a latter day application by the Christadelphian community down through time, because we believe that this is a prophecy of the final threshing in the Land, the battle of Armageddon, when the sheaves are judged. Verse 14, 'Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of threshing' this chapter will go on to say, and the context is verse 1, 'For behold, in those day and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem', so we give a latter day application, don't we? to Joel 3 at the time of the end, when the great confederacy comes down against Israel in the Land. Yet the strange thing about that is, that in the middle of all that, verse 4 says, 'Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestina? will ye render me a recompense? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompense upon your own head'. Clearly what they're being told is that the recompense of God shall be on the coast of Palestina, in recompense for some evil that they have given to God, and presumably God's judgments can only be outworked in fulfilment of Joel 3 verse 4, if there are Palestinians in Palestina, on whom the recompense can be visited, don't you think? Otherwise, there's no basis for the fulfilment of the prophecy at the time of the end. Notice how particular Palestine is addressed?, it's quite interesting! It's not just Palestina it's the coasts of Palestina, there's something fishy about this, something very fishy about this, b&s. And Tyre and Zidon again, up the coast, the coastal cities of Lebanon, we've got the smell of the sea here somewhere! and that smell of the sea is in these verses and that significance of that seaside air, will become apparent by and by as our story about Palestina unfolds.

Now one last reference! Come to Isaiah 11 and this chapter is clearly set in the future, because we're told in Isaiah 11 that this is the time when the great ensign shall be established on the land of Israel once again, and the ensign refers to the root of Jesse, it's the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to the earth, the planting of the ensign, verse 10, which shall stand for an ensign for the people and to it shall the Gentiles seek'. Verse 11 of Isaiah 11 says, 'It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people', it's going to be a time of reconciliation of the Jewish nation. Then verse 13 says, 'The envy also of Ephraim shalt depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. They'll all be reconciled, but what will they do, verse 14, 'They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward to the west'. Now that's interesting, isn't it? and presumably, b&s, Israel in that day, when they return at the time of the ensign, presumably they can only fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west, if there is a Palestina to the west to fly upon it.

So I think the accumulative weight of these four passages certainly suggest to us, that a revival of Palestina on her ancient territory is very likely at the time of the end. In fact, one of the interesting things about the Oslo Peace Accords is that it nominated Gaza as the provisional capital for any proposed Palestinian state that might emerge! proposed Gaza as the provisional capital! Gaza! just think about it, b&s, that's one of the very names of the five cities of the lords of the Philistines, and where is modern Palestina? right smack where it used to be under the same name, the Gaza Strip, one of the cities of the 5 lords of the Philistines. The spirit of the latter day Palestina is an exact duplicate of the spirit of Palestina in the past, because this is one of the passages of judgment that we read earlier on, but didn't look at, but we'll look at one of them in terms of the spirit of what it is - Palestina and that spirit of continuous hatred towards Israel. You see, what it says in Ezekiel 25 verse 15, is that the Philistines were destroyed by God, because they have dealt by revenge and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart to destroy with a perpetual hatred'. In fact, in the AV it says, 'taken vengeance with a despiteful heart to destroy for the old hatred, But the word 'old' is the word 'olam' (5769), it is that hatred which is forever. It is the perpetual, endless, relentless hatred, and what's interesting about that prophecy in Ezekiel 25 is that it goes on to say, 'I will stretch out my hands upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethim, and destroy the remnant of the sea coast'. What's interesting about that spirit, b&s, is this, if you think about that, that is the spirit of Hamas today, isn't it? They dealt by revenge taking vengeance with a despiteful heart to destroy with **the old perpetual, relentless hatred**, that's Hamas.

Now what about the amazing sweep of events that has recently brought us to this moment of time. By the way, in lieu of what I said earlier on, about being careful of not trying to fit current events into bible prophecy, the first time I ever gave a lecture on this, about 8 years ago, long before there had ever been any moves in the Gaza Strip, so we're not being driven by current events, we're being driven by a biblical line of

argument here. Think of things now in the light of what we've seen; well, what Israel decided to do was relinquish control of the Gaza Strip, so they withdrew all the Israelis, there was about 8,000 of them. They drew the Israelis out and they offered to resettle them elsewhere, and one last settlement held out to the bitter end, and the soldiers had to go and literally drag them out, one by one, it was the settlement of Netzarim, the last of all the Jewish settlements to leave, but finally they were gone, all of them. They removed all the military personnel and they handed over responsibility to the PLO to govern Gaza.

When you stop and think about it, this was in the days of Ariel Sharon, he was an old battle warrior, so why would Sharon have given up the Gaza Strip, the warrior that he was? Well, I think he was playing a game of political brinkmanship with the world at that time; and what I think he did was this, you see, there was pressure to negotiate on the West Bank, releasing the West Bank to Palestinian control, I think what Sharon did, to test the world, to show the world that the Jews can do business, he said, 'well, let's give them the Gaza Strip to start with, shall we? we'll hand it over, we'll withdraw in full and we'll allow them to develop and control the Gaza Strip as a Palestine national entity, a Palestinian state, and see how that goes. If all that sorts out, well, and we live in peace and amenity side by side, then we can talk about the West bank in due course. But Sharon knew the spirit of Ishmael, he knew the words of Genesis, 'and he shall be a wild man; every man's hand shall be against him and his hand shall be against every man'. He knew what the Arabs would be like in that region.

Of course, what happened was that he expected that they would continue on being hostile to Israel, and continue on bombing Israel, and he would be able to say to all the world, 'well, look, we tried, we gave them the Gaza Strip and it hasn't solved anything, so we can't possibly talk about the West Bank at this stage! and he would have bought some peace and time for Israel. There was one thing that Sharon didn't bank on! apart from his stroke, of course, and that was this, there was a PLO election and it brought a dramatic result because to their surprise even to the Palestinians, Hamas was elected to the government and not Fatah, and what's interesting about that is that Hamas is committed absolutely to the old battle cry of the Palestinians, 'no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel'. Hamas has an openly stated policy that they are there to destroy Israel, quite openly, they're not ashamed to say that, that's what they believe! What happened, of course, as a result of that, was we ended up in that particular region with a brutal, internal battle for the control of not the West Bank notice, but of the Gaza Strip, which ended up with the complete rout of Fatah out of that whole area. Hamas has just recently taken control of the whole of the Gaza Strip, absolutely and totally, he controls it completely at this stage.

So much so that news agencies are already referring to the West Bank as 'Fatah Land' and the Gaza Strip is 'Hamaston' to signal the change that's occurred; so now we've got a split within the Palestinians, two different blocks, and two different pieces of land. And do you know what happened on the day that Hamas took complete control of Gaza,

Israel declared the Gaza Strip to be, '**a hostile entity**'. That's sounds like David and Hezekiah of old, that the Palestinians were on their doorstep and they regarded them as hostile; so the question is, who's funding Hamas? how come Hamas was able to do all of this? The monies flow through Syria, as someone rightly said, but it comes from Iran; and that same channel supports and equips Hezbollah in Lebanon (Tyre and Zidon). Now what's interesting about that is this, Iran is Shiite not Sunni Islam. Now why that's significant, b&s, is this, that Shiite doctrine is not the same as Sunni Muslim doctrine, because what the Shiites believe is that the successes of those who came from Muhammad, ended up in what was called, 'the mysterious 12th imam'. The 12th imam was known as 'the hidden one', he's going to reappear at one particular stage in the history of the world. When he reappears there's going to be a marvellous renaissance of the Arab nation, the 12th imam, the Shiites are waiting for him! But guess what? Shiite teaching says that when the 12th imam appears it will be at the time when Israel is destroyed. Shiites believe that! Sunnies don't! Sunnies have a different view about the successor from Muhammad; that is not their doctrine, it's the Shiite doctrine. Shiites are doctrinally committed to the destruction of Israel, so they're funding Hezbollah entirely (Tyre and Zidon) and they are funding Hamas in Gaza, in order that they might set up in those two places, two Islamic enclaves, but guess what? they'll be Shiite enclaves not Sunni enclaves, and they're driven by the same doctrinal imperative to destroy Israel. That's remarkable! and that's what's going on at this point in time, and that's exactly what we would expect prophetically. Certainly Israel now knows the value of any peace accord signed with the PLO which is, of course, that it is absolutely worthless.

Of course, they would have known that if they had read their bibles, because what the bible says about that is this; if you look at the bible's poems on Palestina, they were all poems of conquest not of peace. The bible had said that the inhabitants of Palestina would have sorrow take hold of them because Israel was coming to possess the Land. Psalm 108 said that Palestina would lie triumph because David was going to conquer them. Isaiah 14 says, that Palestina would howl because Hezekiah would come and smite them; the bible never suggested peace treaties with the Palestinians but quite the reverse. In fact, let me show you that, in terms of what the bible says, I think the bible made it absolutely clear, that there was only ever safety for Israel when Palestina was subdued. So look at this little run of quotations which help to establish that.

Chronicles says that David smote the Philistines and subdued them and took Gath and her towns out of the hands of the Philistines,' 1 Chronicles 18:1; I Kings 4:21 says, 'Solomon reigned over all the kingdoms unto the land of the Philistines, for he had dominion unto Gaza'; 2 Chronicles 17:11 says,'The fear of the LORD fell all the kingdoms, and the Philistines (Palestina) brought Jehoshaphat tribute; again we're going to be told that in the days of Uzziah the king, it says he went forth and warred against the Philistines and built cities about Ashdod and amongst the Philistines', 2 Chronicles 26:6 (which tells us, by the way, that the Jewish practice of building cities or settlements in occupied territory, is not a new one, because Uzziah was doing it many years ago). Building settlements in occupied territory and of the time of Hezekiah as

we've seen before, Hezekiah smote the Philistines even unto Gaza, 2 Kings 18:8. Do you see all those key words: David warred, Solomon had dominion, Jehoshaphat received tribute, Uzziah went out and warred against them, Hezekiah smote the Philistines. Now what's interesting about this is that all those kings had alliances, political alliances, but **none of them ever, ever** negotiated a peace treaty with Palestina, because peace only came when that area was under military subjection.

Have you ever stopped to ask yourself this question, b&s, how the peace and safety of Ezekiel 38 might come about? I give you two options, a peaceful negotiation with Hamas signed in the spirit of brotherly friendship or another military confrontation that the Jews win on the basis of Psalm 83. I think if Psalm 83 is an indicator it would suggest perhaps the latter, triggered by some dramatic event; we don't know what it might be. I don't know if that's what's going to happen, but it is a possibility that there will be an Israeli reprisal after the manner of David and Solomon and Jehoshaphat, Uzziah and Hezekiah of old, aroused to opposing forces and that Israel might take control of the West Bank absolutely which biblically she must control at the time of the end, and put a ring of steel around Gaza, to contain the spirit of hatred that broods and festers in that place. I believe, b&s, that if Israel does that at some stage in the future, she will have set the scene for the invasion of Gog who is the latter day Assyro-Babylonian.

Actually, there's a very good point that I want to make, so if you've been sleeping throughout the course of this particular lesson, now's the time to pay attention, for the last crucial few moments. Now here's the great lesson? What was the greatest calamity of Israel in Old Testament times? Answer, when the Babylonians came down and overthrew the nation and lead them off into captivity. Question, were there some surrounding Arab nations that threw in their lot with Nebuchadnezzar when he came down to be hostile to Israel? Yes, were they the main story? No, what was the main story? Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. When Rome came down with Titus or Vespasian, were there some surrounding nations that threw in their lot with them to settle some old scores against Israel? Yes, were they the main story? No, what was the main story? Rome (Babylon). When Gog comes down at the time of the end, might there be some Arab nations associated with Gog in her invasion? Yes! are they the main story? No! what's the main story? Gog, latter day Babylon. You see, it's a question of understanding the framework of bible prophecy. I think that what these prophecies indicate to us is that there is every likelihood of future Jewish-Arab controversy, but it's not the same as saying that it's the great controversy at the time of the end.

In fact, b&s, let me show you what I think is exactly going to happen when Gog comes into the Land, because I think it's extremely interesting concerning Palestina! Now look at this! Do you remember what it says in Zechariah? It says, when Gog comes into the Land, when the great invasion comes into the Land at the end, b&s, and by the way, Gog is simply part of the Babylonish thing at the time of the end, it's all Babylon (the military part of Babylon, but it's Babylon). So when Babylon comes down, we're told in

Zechariah 14, assuming that Zechariah 14 and Joel 3, and Daniel 11 and Ezekiel 38 are all synchronous and simultaneous prophecies, which I believe they are, it says in Zechariah 14:1, 'that half the city will go forth into captivity' - that actually means that Jewish people will be deported out of the Land, b&s, that's what it is saying - and if you were to say, from where from? Isn't that what Joel 3:6 said? 'yea, and what have you do with me, O Tyre and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestina, the children of Judah have ye sold unto the Grecians', and I think when Gog comes down and leads forth Jewish people into captivity and says what will we do? the Palestinians will put up their hand and say, 'we've got some pretty good coastline here, would you like to use our ships? and you can ship them off from here!' That's exactly what Joel 3 is suggesting, b&s, and why is that so?

Have a look at what Isaiah says. Isaiah says something very strange, do you know what brother Thomas said? He said, 'that those Jews back in the Land at the time of Christ's return, are prophetically styled **Judah**; and those Jews still in the world waiting to be regathered are prophetically styled **Israel**. Judah's back in the Land because God said He'll save the tents of Judah first - that's the Jews back in the Land when Christ comes - but the house of Israel is yet to be regathered, scattered in the four corners of the earth. But the funny thing about Isaiah 11 verse 12 it says, 'He shall gather the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah'. Question, 'how come there's dispersed of Judah after Christ has returned as the ensign in Isaiah 11? The answer is, because some of them were sent into captivity when Gog comes down, and do you notice what the very first thing they do when they come in? it says, 'they **fly** (5774) upon the shoulders of the Palestinians', and I wonder why they might do that, b&s? unless it is in reprisal for the fact that these were the ones who sold them into captivity, don't you think? At the time of the end, 'let's ship them off here!' says Palestina. I think what the bible is saying is that Palestina will be Gog's ally in Jewish deportations at the time of the end.

So just one more interesting thing about that in terms of signs of the times. There was an interesting article in the Christadelphian magazine about two years ago, in 2005. Now do you see that little red dot under Gaza, by the way, this is what the article said, 'An agreement has been reached for the Palestinians to rebuild their port just south of the city, not very far from where the settlement of Netzarim once stood (that was the last settlement to withdraw at the time of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza), That's the very place where the Palestinians intend to build their port, the old site of the last Jewish settlement of modern times. 'The port is being seen as a symbol of Palestinian independence and of the economic gateway to the world' - and we might add, and the shipping port for Jewish captives when Gog comes down. Isn't it interesting the way bible prophecy is fulfilled, b&s! I'm not even sure when the article was in the Christadelphian, that perhaps the full significance of that little article was thought through. But Deuteronomy 28:68 says, 'The LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again by ships by the way whereof I spake unto thee; thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies'. So by ships and with ships for one last time, the

Jews shall be into captivity, and we think it probably will be off the coast of Palestina.

So what do we expect? what is our biblical expectation for the latter days? Well, as we've

said, we expect the increasing drive of independent Palestinian activity in the coastal region of the Gaza Strip; we expect the increasing tendency of the Palestinian movement in Gaza to form into a state of enmity with Israel; we see the increasing likelihood that Israel's security with at least the Gaza Palestinians will not come by peace but possibly by some form of military control; and we see the increasing tension of the Palestinian conflict in Gaza as pre-staging the invasion of Gog and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. I'll tell you why because those three quotations at the bottom of the screen - Obadiah 19, Joel 3, and Isaiah 11, all passages we've looked at today, suggesting a latter day Palestina, but not only do they suggest a latter day Palestina, those particular passages also suggest the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, because Obadiah says that in that day, 'saviours will come up on mount Zion'; and Joel 3 says 'there's a voice that will roar in Jerusalem', and Isaiah 11 says, 'there will be an ensign set up for the nations'. They're all code words for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, b&s, what a marvellous thing! We see these things unfolding in the Middle East right now, we can have absolute confidence that Christ is near, His coming is sure, b&s, so let's be stimulated and go out and witness to the truth, and be thrilled that Almighty God has given us evidence, in all the controversy of the Middle East, that soon our Lord will come and solve that controversy and that apart from His coming, will remain insoluble!