

Bible Study on the Going Conflict
Between the Arabs/Israelis
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I. BACKGROUND

I am a follower of Jesus, the husband of my Queen Jean Nour and the Father of 3 sons and grandfather of 14 grandchildren.

I am an Arab by race, Palestinian by nationality and a Christian by grace.

I was born in Nazareth, Israel and lived in Nazareth till I was 3 years old. We moved to Haifa (on the slopes of Mt. Caramel = {God's vineyard}) before migrating to the USA in 1972.

I was raised as a Christian (Catholic) and attended a parochial school (The Convent of Nazareth) However, I was a Christian primarily in name only. I knew nothing of the Bible, the depth, height, length, and width of Jesus' exquisite love, His grace, His compassion, and what is His desire for me as His **B**aptized, **B**eloved, **B**eautiful, **B**lessed and **B**lood-**B**ought child. I am thankful to my lovely wife (my BELOVED Queen) who introduced me to Lutheranism and a life of living through grace of Jesus who redeemed and saved me by His crimson blood shed on Cavalry's cross and guaranteed my own resurrection when He vacated the borrowed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

I am fluent in Arabic and Hebrew. While in Israel, my family and I lived in an area called (Bat-Galim = {daughter of waves}) as the only Arab family among 10,000 Jewish people. I had many Jewish friends and neighbors. We often visited each other's homes. Most of my life was a happy one.

Two things that are helpful for us to consider about this topic:

1. The Middle East is the world's "*Migraine Headache.*"
2. A Major difference culture "Honor/Shame" Community vs. Individual.

A. HARDLY ANYONE TALKS ABOUT WHAT IS NOT HAPPENING IN ISRAEL

"We are all horrified by the ongoing armed conflict between Palestinian militant groups led by Hamas and Israel. Television brings these scenes straight into our living rooms. It is deeply disturbing and raises the question: How should we Christians think about such events from a theological perspective? Here are a few comments intended to generate reflection.

It is important, first of all, to state what is not going on. Current events in the Middle East are not the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, they are not the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38–39 or Zephaniah 2:4–7. The Old Testament prophets were referring to nations of their own day and not predicting what would happen in these same geographical areas over 2500 years later. The proper approach to the Old Testament prophets is not to leap over the New Testament and land in the Middle East of the twenty-first century. We are not dispensational premillennialists.

Well then, what can be said from a theological point of view? Good question. The perspective I want to bring to your consideration is that given in Revelation 5–6. Revelation 5 depicts the ascension and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth. *“For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.”* The Lamb is the only One worthy to open the book and break its seals. And the first four seals present the four horsemen of the apocalypse who are under the rule and authority of Jesus of Nazareth, the exalted King and Lord over all things. **The first represents conquering tyranny, the second, war, the third, famine, and the fourth, death.** These four horsemen will wreak havoc and inflict untold misery throughout the world, but it is all under the rule and reign of the exalted Lamb who was slain, who is the lion from the tribe of Judah, the root of David (Rev. 5:5). He will protect those who belong to Him by faith, both those of natural Israel and Gentiles who worship the One who sits on the throne and the Lamb, as Revelation 7 pictures it.

Jesus is Lord over all nations. And what is He doing? While we do not have any explicit word from the Lord on the events of today, we know that He is exercising His government over all nations according to His good and gracious will. Judging from the Old Testament prophets, we might say this: He might be changing the geography and international relations in the Middle East for the better, to bring about conditions on the ground that will promote civil righteousness and encourage nations to cooperate with each other in external peace, and ultimately that will allow churches to operate more freely. When it comes to international relations in the Middle East, *our primary interest as Christians is the spread in every land of the pure gospel, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper and thereby the spread of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.”* (Rev. Dr. Paul Raabe’s comments).

B. WHOSE LAND IS IT?

In the First Testament God owns the Land. Genesis 15:1-16. Look at Leviticus 25:23; Psalm 24:1, Isaiah 49:6; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 we are owned by God. We are managers and stewards.

II. EVIL IS IN THE HEART OF MAN

Know “The Big three (3) C’s” as we look at God’s Living and Strengthening Word in Holy Scripture.

1. Context is King
2. Culture is Queen
3. Christ IS the Center.

Every conflict has its beginning in the heart of man. The heart of man is a cesspool of hell. Remember Jesus' teachings: "*Out of the heart comes all of the wickedness and evil.*" (Mt. 15:18-20).

In Genesis 6 we hear the voice of God lamenting the state of His creatures saying: "*My Spirit shall not abide in man forever...*" (v3a) and then Moses adds: "*The Lord saw that the wickedness עַוְוֹנוֹת of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil רָע continually*" (v5 emphasis added). The problem is that wickedness and evil that proceed out of the heart of man, just as Jesus said.

Again, Moses states: "*Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence*" (emphasis added v11). The word translated 'violence' חַמָּס (Hebrew) is "Hamás." This is the first, but not the only place, we read/hear this Word in Scripture. חַמָּס means = "wicked, evil, wrongdoing, cruelty, damage, unrighteousness, violence." This word and it appears 69 times in the Hebrew Scriptures in a noun or verb form. But it is not the only place.

This word Moses uses and you heard it many times on TV, but never thought of it. In this verse we see a very profound picture of lawlessness, wickedness, evil and downright violence. The whole earth is corrupt and full of violence. The word *hamas* is used at times by crying out to God to deliver us from the violence. Other times it is used when people repent of *hamas* their violence.

In the Hebrew Scripture you will find Hamás in these books:

Genesis 6:11, 13; 16:5 (important words) this sets the tone for the conflict 49:5.

Exodus 23:1

Leviticus 11:16

Deuteronomy 19:16

Joshua 15:40

Judges 9:24

2 Samuel 22:3, 49

1 Chronicles 12:18

Job 15:33; 16:17; 19:7; 21:27

Psalms 7:17; 11:5; 18:49; 25:19; 27:12; 35:11; 55:10; 58:3; 72:14 (deliver from violence); 73:6; 74:20; 140:2, 5, 12

Proverbs 3:31; 4:17; 8:36; 10:6; 10:11; 13:2; 16:29; 26:6

Isiah 53:9; 59:6; 60:18

Jeremiah 6:7; 13:22; 20:8; 22:3; 51:35, 46

Lamentation 2:6

Ezekiel 7:11, 23; 8:17; 12:19; 22:26; 28:16; 45:9

Amos 3:10; 6:3

Obadiah 1:10

Jonah 3:8 Here we are told that they repented of the violence.

Micah 6:12

Habakkuk 1:2, 3, 9; 2:8, 17

Zephaniah 3:4

Malachi 2:16

Where have you heard the term *hamas* before? Hamas has been in the news quite a bit recently. While the term *Hamas*, as used by the Palestinian Islamic terrorist organization, is an acronym for حركة المقاومة الإسلامية (Araic) *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya* (Islamic Resistance Movement), so a one-to-one correlation to the Hebrew word perhaps cannot be drawn, it is still interesting to note how their tactics and policies are completely in-line with the Hebrew word *hamas* – violence! Like the Hebrew word, so the terrorist organization is not interested in peace, but evil, mayhem, murder, and violence.

III. THE CONFLICT BEGINS

In Genesis 12 God gives Father Abram 7 promises. The number seven is the number used by God in the Scriptures to denote perfection.

1. I will make you a great nation.
2. I will bless you.
3. I will make your name great.
4. You will be a blessing.
5. I will bless those who bless you.
6. I will curse whoever curses you.
7. All the people of the earth will be blessed by you.

Remember these promises are given so that the earlier Promise given to our first parents in the Garden will be fulfilled by the One Whom God will send to Redeem them and their offspring from the punishment of hell (Gen. 3:15). Also remember, God keeps His Word of promise by always keeping a remnant so that the גאל (Hebrew) “Redeemer” will ultimately destroy the Master of the wickedness, evil, and violence, Satan himself.

Look with me at Genesis 16:1-6

Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. 2 And Sarai said to Abram, “Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. 3 So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. 4 And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. 5 And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!” 6 But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please.” Then Sarai dealt

harshly with her, and she fled from her.

Neither Sarai nor Abram (their names had not yet been changed) were patient for God's promise to come to fruition. In her fallen state – a sinner – Sarai is moved to give Abram her maidservant Hagar (in Arabic Hajar) to father a child with her. When you mess with God's plan you are swimming in mud and bring about disaster. Despite our sinful impatience God in His compassion and grace uses everything for our good and for His glory. (Romans 8:28).

Hagar (Hajar) the **slave** girl
A son is born *Ishmael* "God heard." (16:15-16)
Hagar gets promises Gen. 16:7-12, check out 10, 12
Father of the Arabs/Ishmaelites

Sarah the **free** wife.
A son is born Isaac "Laughter."
Isaac get Promises Gen. 26:1-5
Father of the Jews
Jacob likewise Gen. 28:13-17, 35:10

12

Ishmael has 12 sons.
Genesis 25:12-18; 1 Chronicles 1:29-33

Name and meaning	
1. Nebaioth	<i>Prophecy</i>
2. Kedar	<i>dark-skinned</i>
3. Adbeel	<i>Miracle of God</i>
4. Mibsam	<i>Sweet smelling</i>
5. Mishma	<i>Hearing</i>
6. Dumah	<i>Silence</i>
7. Massa	<i>Oracle</i>
8. Hadad	<i>Joy, raise your voice</i>
9. Tema	<i>Perfection</i>
10. Jetur	<i>Order</i>
11. Naphish	<i>Soul's rest</i>
12. Kedemah.	<i>Orient/East</i>

Jacob Isaac's son has 12 sons.
Genesis 35:23-26

Name and meaning	
1. Rueben	<i>Behold a son</i>
2. Simeon	<i>God hears</i>
3. Levi	<i>Joined</i>
4. Judah	<i>Let him praise God</i>
5. Issachar	<i>Man of hire</i>
6. Zebulun	<i>Dwelling</i>
7. Joseph	<i>Will add/increase</i>
8. Benjamin	<i>Son of my right hand</i>
9. Dan	<i>Judge</i>
10. Naphtali	<i>My wrestling</i>
11. Gad	<i>Good fortune</i>
12. Asher	<i>Happy</i>

The conflict between the son of the free woman by promise (Isaac) and the son of the slave woman (Ishmael) has been ongoing since the time of the Patriarchs until today. It will continue until the end of time when Christ returns, unless both sides repent and bow the knees before Him.

Remember God's promise to Abraham that his children will inherit the land. Abraham had more than one son total 8. Ishmael, Isaac, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah (through Keturah, Abraham's second wife) Genesis 25:2.

As promised to Abraham, out of all of the peoples mentioned in the Bible, and living in this land, (Hittites, Jebusites, Canaanites, Amorites, Moabites, Babylonians, and others) all are gone except the two sons of Abraham: The son of the free Sarah (Jews), and the son of the slave Hagar

(Arabs). God ALWAYS keeps His promises.

And we see that this violence is not new. It has never stopped. We are able to see it more clearly now since we have the medium of television and cell phones. Muhamad the leader of the Muslim religion himself (fifth century A.D.) has carried out violent acts against Christians and Jews. There are many places in the Qur'an and Hadith (Holy Book for the Muslims and other commentaries that Muhamad had said respectively) that speaks about killing Jews and Christians. Their motto is: "Convert, Subjugate, or die." (See the Qur'an Sura 2:191; 3:118; 4:76, 4:144; 9:5, 9:29; 47:4).

Many of the Muslim leaders, seeking to motivate would-be suicide bombers, encourage them to commit murder of themselves and other atrocities in the name of Allah, and promise 72 Virgins in Paradise to those who kill and are killed in Jihad (a struggle or fight against the enemies of Islam) for Allah. The "72 virgins" comes from the Hadith (Table conversation) #2687. The Qur'an does not specify the number but alludes to a reward of those who fight for Allah. See Sura 56:22; 78:33.

FYI: According to the Islamic religion, (though it is not mentioned in the Qur'an nor is the Child named) the story of Genesis 22 where God asks Abraham to take his son Isaac to sacrifice him is twisted around. They teach that God asked Abraham to take Ishmael his first-born son to sacrifice him. They even state that Ishmael had directly told his father to follow God's command to slaughter him. However, in this narrative, the Hebrew Bible, the Greek Septuagint (LXX), and the New Testament (Hebrews 11:17-22) reveal that the Messenger of the LORD (Genesis 22:15-18) intervenes to spare Abraham's *only son Isaac* (Genesis 22:2,12) and provide the saving sacrifice.

All of this provides context why once a year Muslims around the world observe Eid-al-Adha to slaughter an animal to commemorate Abraham's sacrifice and to remind themselves of self-abnegation in the way of God.

Furthermore, according to Muslim teaching, God commanded Abraham to take Hagar and Ishmael to Mecca where he would build the Kaaba and sanctify it to be his (see Hadith 4:583). It is for this reason many Muslims hold Mecca in high esteem it is mandated that at least once in their lifetime they make a pilgrimage (called a Haj) to the Kaaba. Haj is a shorten version of Hajar who according to their tradition walked/ran back and forth 7 times between Safa and Marwah to find water to sustain Ishmael.

It is important to note: Both the Jews and the Muslims fight for the land because they believe if they don't possess the land their relationship with God is in danger. There is a true zealotry among them that has religious over and under tones. The fighting between them will not stop until one is extinct. Each believes God promised to them a land, a nation, and a Messiah (in the concocted manner they have concluded). Paradise is directly connected to their possession of that land.

Remember that the Gaza Strip was returned in 2005 by Israel to the Palestinians in exchange for peace between the two people.

IV. THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL

On May 14, 1948, after Jewish forces prevailed in the first phase of the Arab-Israeli war, Israel declared its independence. During the war leading up to independence, Israeli soldiers carried out some ungodly and violent activities. In some villages they poisoned wells. In others they gathered all the men and shipped them out and they were never seen again. They displaced more than 700, 000 Arab people from their homes, who then fled (like my maternal grandparents) to Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Kuwait, and other countries including the USA. Many are still living as refugees.

A good book to read that speaks about these violent acts and the Nachba = (displacements) is "Blood Brothers" by Elias Chacour. Some call this period "ethnic cleansing." Many Arab people have lived like prisoners in their own homes and land and experienced much oppression and persecution.

As a Christian, I am stuck in the middle of this conflict. I personally know this persecution firsthand. I have been humiliated more times than I like to remember. Growing up in Israel, it was not uncommon for the police to stop me while walking and checking my credentials. I have been spat upon and called "Filthy Arab and dirty Christian." After I migrated to the USA and would return home (in the 70's) Israeli soldiers would come on the plane with their guns and call out all the Arab names, and we would be asked to come out. They would take us to a separate place (individually) and asked me to strip down. How humiliating is that? When I would travel, they would make the check-out a hell by emptying every item in my luggage, opening every bag and every bottle. At times check-outs caused me to miss my flight even though we were plenty early. Thankfully, this all changed when I got married, had children, and started taking tours to the Holy Land.

I do understand the need for heightened security, but it could have been done in a God-pleasing way. Unfortunately, it still goes on today for those who are traveling in/out from the West Bank.

As a Christian I am stuck in the middle. I can't take sides. If I take the side of the Jews, which I believe have a right to exist and live in peace in the land of Israel, then the Muslim Arabs will be against me. If I take the side of the Arabs, which I also believe have a right to live as human beings and without being imprisoned or harassed by the Jews, the Israelites will be against me.

While certainly not all Palestinians or Arabs are violent people filled with hatred of Jews and Christians, I am sad to say the Muslims groups who are in charge - Hamas, Hizballah, etc - don't want to live in peace. Their main goal is to wipe Israel off the face of the earth. In the Muslim world, they call Israel "Al Shitan Al Sageer," "Little Satan. The USA is called, "Al Shitan Al

Kabeer,” “Big Satan.”

V. THE CONFLICT CONTINUES

While I do not want to minimize the violence Hamas and other organizations like them bring about, we must also remember that both sides are wrong by the way they have mistreated each other in the past and up until today. They both have carried out atrocities and violence against each other. They both follow the Old Law “An eye for eye and a tooth for a tooth.” (Ex. 21:24). Israel, however, unlike Hamas and other terrorist groups, has never purposely targeted and attacked civilians. Their military operations are either to eliminate the threat or to retaliate after they have been attacked.

I would rather live under the Jewish government rather than any Arab Muslim government. At least with my Jewish brothers I am able to live in civility and understanding. I would never live under a Muslim dictatorship because I would be living under the Islamic law as a third-class citizen.

VI. CONCLUSION

How do we solve this conflict? Where is hope to be found? How can people live in peace? Only by the power of Jesus and His grace. We let the light of the Gospel shine. It is the Christians who have made this world a better place. It is the Christians who built orphanages, clinics, hospitals, and schools. They carried out the mandates of Christ:

“And He [Jesus] answered, *‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’*” (Luke 10:27).

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” (John 13:34).

*“You are the **salt** of the earth... You are the **light** of the world... In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven”* (John 15:33).

“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Emphases added. John 5:44-55).

What is the Answer to this conflict? **Repentance**. By the Spirit of Christ, all sides need to be repentant of this violent behavior, as the Ninevites repented (Jonah 3:8), and bow the knee before the Prince of Peace Jesus, Who is the ONLY true God and Savior. Peace will NEVER happen unless they know Jesus the anointed One and heaven-sent Savior. **No Christ. No Peace. Know**

Christ. Know Peace.

When Christ rules the heart, PEACE rules the day.

Jesus' love is the ONLY answer to any conflict including the Middle East between the Arabs and Jews (children of Abraham), or for any ethnicity, race, or creed.

He is the God of all people.

“For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome

God, who is not partial and takes no bribe” (Deut. 10:17)

“All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name.” (Ps. 86:9)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (Jn. 3:16)

“So Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘Truly I understand that God shows no partiality’” (Acts 10:34)

Matthew 1:1-17 with emphasis on 17. *“So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.”*

Philippians 4:4-13

Finally, Isaiah 40:1-2

How do we move forward with hope and peace? The hope of the **B**aptized, **B**eloved, **B**eautiful, **B**lessed and **B**lood-**B**ought children of King Jesus, is not placed on the current events in the Middle East, but rather we are called by the Holy Spirit to fix our eyes on Jesus the Author and Perfecter of our Faith. Yeshua is our ONLY hope in this fallen world. Because He is the sin-bearer, we have hope and peace that lasts to eternity.

FORGIVENESS through Messiah Jesus' “Agape” love “חסד” (Hebrew) is the key to take down walls, build bridges, and turn hearts of hatred into living stones through the Stone of Salvation and the Eternal Rock! (Daniel 2)

“Relationships DON'T thrive because the guilty are punished but because the innocent One is MERCIFUL!”

Jesus Christ the INNOCENT One is MERCIFUL to us sinners!

“It is an illusion to think that military intervention, diplomacy or human negotiated peace accords can offset the self-centered arrogance of a heart without Christ. Only the transforming love of God can change hearts so filled with hatred.” (Saada, Tass. “The Mind of Terror” P. 89)

We the followers of Jesus can make a difference in the lives of these two peoples: the Jews and Arabs (Muslims) by letting them see us as God’s agents of mercy and compassion; and our lips send out words with verbs of love and nouns of mercy.

“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13:20-21)



Below are a few pictures that will show you the family Genealogy of Abraham all the way to Jesus.

Below are 3 podcasts I did on this subject.

Here is the Bible Study and a couple of links to listen to:

<https://recording.zencastr.com/jmbraaten/nour-on-middle-east-conflict>

[https://riverside.fm/studio/trek-through-the-scriptures-remote-recording-studio?
t=f6fbfc866a822b545aed](https://riverside.fm/studio/trek-through-the-scriptures-remote-recording-studio?t=f6fbfc866a822b545aed)

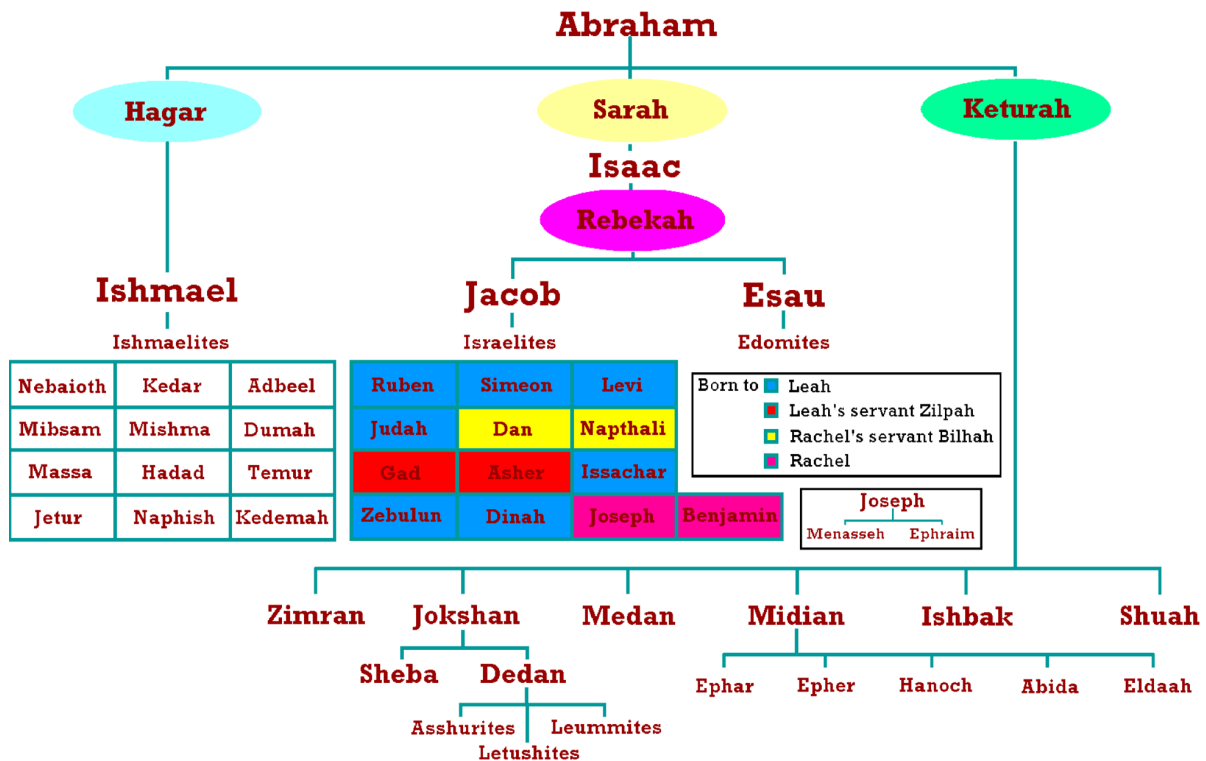
<https://www.kfuo.org/2023/10/31/coffee-hour-103123-palestinian-christians-view-of-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict/>

Ishmael (ישמעאל)

י YOD: Hand י
 ש SHIN: Consume/Destroy ש
 מ MEM: Nations מ
 ע AYIN: See ע "You are a God who sees" (Gen. 16:13)
 א ALEPH: God א
 ל LAMED: Shepherd ל } ל א = El (God)

"His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him" (Gen. 16:12)

The Genealogy of Abraham



Sons of Jacob / Tribes of Israel

