

Will There Be A Palestinian State?

There is much talk going on in the world at the present about the creation of a Palestinian State next to Israel in the area of the eastern Mediterranean.

Whereas it was looked on as nigh improbable a mere thirty years ago or so that such a "State" could possibly be developed in this 21st century it is now NOT "IF a State of Palestine is possible," but it is WHEN and WHERE will that "State" be inaugurated? Though it is recognized that the region of Gaza will be included in such a "State," people often wonder what other areas will be attached. In this regard, the Holy Scriptures have some prophetic teachings on this subject that we ought to pay attention to even though because there are few biblical details on the matter we can't be certain that we'll get everything correct.

The Gaza war that started with a vicious attack on the southern region of Israel on October 7, 2023, came from Gaza. While there is little doubt that a deeply wounded Israel will win that war, the cost to Gaza has been nearly total obliteration of its buildings and infrastructure that formerly served some 2.2 million Palestinian residents. The concern already is post-war: who will run Gaza? Who will rebuild Gaza? Will there still be a Gaza to rebuild?

Over a decade ago, another attack came from Gaza, again setting off hostilities. Egypt, which has a border with Gaza, found itself involved (at least from the Egyptian standpoint). To that end, President al-Sisi of Egypt made an offer that seems to have caught all involved off-guard, and yet it plays directly into Bible history, God's promises, and Bible prophecy. We'll get into that later.

Since Gaza is really the modern name for Philistia, let's talk about who and where the Philistines are today. This information is important for the understanding of prophecy. It will reveal that the Bible clearly prophesies the existence of a State of Palestine (alongside one of Israel) at the Time of the End, as much as most Jews and Christians hate the thought. And by the way, do NOT take what I'm about to teach you as being an advocacy for a Palestinian State. I'm no more an advocate for such a state than I am an advocate for the devil. But apparently in God's redemption plan, the existence of both is part and parcel.

This Palestinian State (the New Philistia) will no doubt occupy in its final development the very region in the Land of Canaan where their ancestors always lived from before the time of Abraham (long before the Israelites came into

Canaan at the period of the Exodus under Joshua). The Philistines still existed as a nation in the time of Solomon, and throughout the Old Testament period. Even in Roman times, the area of Philistia (with their five city states) was a cohesive and formidable national entity. And so will it be in the End-Time which is just over the horizon to us. It is important that Believers, the Jewish people and the world in general recognize these prophetic teachings of the Bible, because (as unwelcome as they are to many of us) these things are as certain of occurrence as the rising of tomorrow's sun.

The End-Time Political Divisions of the Eastern Mediterranean

The international borders of today's nations in the Middle East are about to be redefined. Circumstances are developing that will make the world at large enter the fray in this volatile Middle Eastern region and force the people to become ten national divisions (along with an eleventh division called "Assyria" which will arise out of the present rogue nation of Iraq when Iraq will no longer exist as a nation). ² The world will NOT allow Israel, even as the result of a war they might not start, to assume occupation or control over the present national areas called Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and those regions under the present Palestinian Authority that itself is presently fractured into separate governments (one under Hamas that governs Gaza, the other under Fatah that governs the West Bank). The Scriptures seem to indicate that these territories will actually be divided into smaller states. The world will allow Israel to be more or less dominant in the region, and Israel will probably be an economic powerhouse in the area bordering the eastern Mediterranean.

When this political division of ten national states is realized (they will be ten small states along the size range of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg in Europe), a period of peace and prosperity will develop for the region that will make it the envy of the world. This will occur when those ten small political divisions unite together in a way the European Union had always envisioned for itself, but has never come close to achieving. All of this is shown in several prophecies of the Holy Scriptures, but it is pinpointed in detail in Psalm 83 - a Psalm describing a political confederacy of ten small nations around Israel on the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean. When this new political arrangement

becomes evident, peace and prosperity will come to the Middle East. It will last a set period of time.

Let's stop and Read Psalm 83.

READ PSALM 83 all

We need to look closely at what the prophecies actually state will happen. Most prophetic interpreters are at a loss to comprehend even the outlines of this new ten nation confederation (a combination of small states) that is prophesied to exist in the Middle East just before the second advent of Christ. It will profit us in the Western World in a great measure if we begin to recognize what is destined to occur here as it will affect the entire world. Let us look at the history and prophecies about this important and highly significant region.

The Philistines Will Return to Statehood in the Middle East

We first need to recognize an essential point. The Philistines are mentioned prominently in prophetic contexts dealing with the Day of the Lord (a period yet future to us). Much is written about them in prophecies which have not yet taken place: Zephaniah 2:4-7; Zechariah 9:5-7; and Psalm 83. In Psalm 83, in particular, the Philistines are reckoned as one of ten nations that design an attack on the land of Israel to destroy the people of Israel from being a nation. That prophecy in Psalm 83 **has not yet occurred** in history, and the Philistines will be very much involved in helping to fulfill it! That's right. There are prophesied to be ten nations in the Middle East that confederate together in an effort to destroy the nation of Israel into oblivion.

Besides Psalm 83, there are only two other sections of scripture, which speak of a ten nation confederacy of peoples that will be evident at the End of the Age just before the second advent of Christ. This confederacy is mentioned in the Books of Daniel and Revelation. It is entirely possible that the ten nations of Psalm 83 are the same as those referred to in Daniel and Revelation, as opposed to what many think are a European based union of nations. If so, we have some essential information about the precise peoples who will comprise that End-Time confederacy. And one of those ten nations is the nation of the Philistines (Psalm

83:7). It is important for us to know who the Philistines are and where they are geographically located at this present time.

The Philistines in History

A proper recognition of who the Philistines are today is necessary for the identification of all the peoples mentioned in the biblical prophecies. This is why the understanding of history is so essential, and it is why Torah Class focuses so much on Biblical History. The reason why so many prophecies are misunderstood today is the lack of a proper discipline being exercised by many prophetic interpreters, and that discipline begins with understanding history.

The first reference we have to the Philistines is in the Table of Nations recorded in Genesis chapter 10 (and repeated in 1 Chronicles chapter 1). It states that they had their origin from the ancestor of the early Egyptians (Mizraim, Genesis 10:13–14). ³ It also says they were an outgrowth of the people called Casluhim. Since, however, Amos 9:7 and Jeremiah 47:4 both record that they came from the area of Caphtor, it seems the region of Caphtor was where they first settled after the Flood of Noah. ⁴ These details have been placed in the Bible (in the Table of Nations - Genesis 10) to help us understand where people living today once originated because God of course knew that the names men give to nations and people groups, and where these people groups might exist as time marched on, and language itself would be anything but fixed and static.

Where was Caphtor?

Let's read a few verses of Jeremiah 47.

CJB Jeremiah 47:1-4 *This word of ADONAI came to Yirmeyahu the prophet concerning the P'lishtim before Pharaoh attacked 'Azah: ² "Here is what ADONAI says: 'Water is rising out of the north; it will become a flooding stream, flooding the land and all that is in it, the city and its inhabitants. The people are crying out in alarm, everyone in the land is weeping ³ at the thunderous pound of his stallions' hoofs, at his rattling chariots' rumbling wheels. Fathers fail to turn back for their children; instead, their hands hang limp, ⁴ because the day has come for destroying all the P'lishtim, for cutting off from Tzor and Tzidon the last of their*

allies; for ADONAI is destroying the P'lishtim, the remnant from the island of Kaftor.

The native land of the Philistines of Jeremiah 47:4 is unclear but it certainly indicates a coastal region and may well mean an island area. There are Egyptian and Assyrian texts which suggest they came from the central Mediterranean locale, and that is the modern consensus opinion.

“Outside the Bible words similar to Caphtor occur in cuneiform texts of the second millennium BC. Kaptara is described as a land beyond the Upper (i.e. Mediterranean) Sea and within the knowledge of Sargon of Akkad. Mari mentions Kaptara and Ugaritic has Kptr but no location is given. In Egyptian texts of the same date mention is made of Keftiu. The fact that this name disappears from Egyptian texts about the same time that Linear B replaces Linear A on Crete suggests that Keftiu was the Egyptian word for the island of Crete”

- *Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, vol. I., p. 749*

This interpretation parallels that of Zephaniah 2:5 about the Philistines being a nation of the Cherethites, which almost certainly refers to the island of Crete. ⁵ That island was probably where the Philistines first settled after the Flood before going to Palestine. Whatever the case, it is certain from the biblical point of view that the Philistines first settled the region of Caphtor (the island of Crete and its neighbor regions). But that doesn't end the story because the first biblical references we have involving the Philistine people were not from Crete or the central Mediterranean coastlands. In the time of Abraham, they had already established themselves at an eastern bridgehead in the Land of Canaan - particularly in the southwestern section of the Holy Land. They were banded together into a confederacy of five cities, known later in Greek times as the Pentapolis of the Philistines.

Philistine Society and Culture

It is not surprising that the early Philistines, being a people located in and around the central Mediterranean Sea, would be involved in maritime activities. Since such enterprises normally embrace commerce through shipping, it is sensible that they would want a site in Canaan for the purposes of trade and their long

running battles with Israel had mostly to do with their need for unfettered land trade routes to their customers.

It is important in a historical and prophetic sense to realize that these Philistine people occupied the region of southwest Canaan LONG BEFORE the Israelites came into the area in the time of Joshua in the period of the conquest by Israel. Indeed, the Israelites failed to drive them out of the land, and God told Israel that the people would be allowed to stay in that area of Canaan as their inheritance (Judges 2:3, 21–23; also 3:1–5). The Philistines remained with a foothold in the Land of Canaan through the periods of David, Solomon and all the kings of Judah (and even throughout the period after the Babylonian Captivity as the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah attest). There can be no doubt that remnants of them still remain in their foothold region of the Land of Canaan. The area of the Philistines throughout the whole of the biblical period was in the territories attached to those five cities of the Philistines (the Pentapolis).

All of the prime area around the cities of Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath and Gaza from the coast up to the foothills was the territory of the Philistines. It is significant that in all the historical periods of the Bible, the Israelites NEVER occupied these areas around the five cities of the Philistines in any permanent way - and this even includes the powerful time of Solomon (who controlled the area economically, but NOT in an overt political sense).

The Early Israelites Rejected the Philistine Area for Conquest

Though the northern part of the Philistine territory was at first designated for the tribe of Dan, the people of that tribe for some reason did not like the region and even left the area and went north to the base of Mount Hermon to establish their place of inheritance in the Land of Canaan (see Joshua chapter 18). Israel either did not conquer the area (and Dan even left the region) or Israel allowed the Philistines to stay in the area in a permanent way, so God reckoned it as a legal area for the political existence of the Philistines.

CJB Judges 2: 20-23 ***²⁰ So the anger of ADONAI blazed against Isra'el; he said, "Because this nation violates my covenant, which I ordered their fathers to obey; and they don't pay attention to what I say; ²¹ in the future, I will not expel ahead of them any of the nations that Y'hoshua left when he died. ²² This is how I will***

test Isra'el, to see whether or not they will keep the way of ADONAI, living according to it, as their ancestors did." ²³ So ADONAI allowed those nations to remain where they were, without quickly driving them out; he did not hand them over to Y'hoshua.

Philistia was among those nations who God said would not be part of greater Israel due to Israel's refusal to obey Yehoveh.

These passages seem to mean that the State of Palestine (from a purely biblical point of view) will likely possess some kind of sovereignty over the southwest area of the Land of Canaan (from the coast to the foothills) from the Wadi Sorek and southward to the border of Egypt.

Even setting the Bible aside, the area that will be assigned to the State of Palestine in the near future when the world finally forces its geographical decisions on those areas, has become obvious and it will center mostly on the area that is now called the Gaza Strip. I think it is entirely possible that the so-called West Bank that was indeed conquered by Joshua and the Israelites could be the Palestinian bargaining chip that will be forfeited in order for the area of Gaza to become the center of a Palestinian State. In fact, I can envision Israel being forced into a bargain that would include giving up coastal territory up to and including the modern thriving Israeli city of Ashdod in exchange for having the West Bank returned to them.

Interestingly, however, as much as the thought of this grates at us, Israel's Muslim enemies should also remember that Jerusalem was NEVER a part of Philistia, so any claim over it by the modern Muslim and Palestinians using this same Biblical argument has no basis. The Muslim argument that Jerusalem is an historically holy sight for them is equally as bogus as there is not one word of Jerusalem in the Koran, nor is it claimed that Mohammed was ever there except in some kind of a vision or dream.

In fact, as the world's politicians get more orientated to accept the Bible as presenting an inevitable and unstoppable road map for our future (as prophecy says will happen), all nations will one day want a stake in the capital City of Jerusalem. When Israel was declared a state in 1948 Jerusalem, even then, it was envisioned as an International City owned by no nation.

The History of the Philistines

History and archaeology are now revealing that the early Philistines (as a people amidst the other Middle Eastern civilizations) provided profound influence throughout all historical periods - unlike what historians of the last century thought the Philistines were like. Before the advent of archaeological study of Philistine remains, it was believed (in the most scholarly circles), that these people represented the epitome of an uncultured society. So ingrained did this concept become that even the dictionary definition of a Philistine (or one like a Philistine) was: "a crass or priggish individual guided by material rather than intellectual or artistic values." But the decipherment of ancient Egyptian, Middle Eastern, and Aegean texts (also the uncovering of Philistine sites by archaeology and analyzing the remains) have convinced scholars that the dictionary description of the Philistines is so far wide of the mark that it seems to be a classic example of showing the exact opposite of what the truth really was.

The archaeological evidence shows that these peoples were highly sophisticated in their civilization and that they rivaled any people of the Middle East and Mediterranean worlds (and this was especially so in the 13th and 12th centuries BC - the exact time the Bible says the Philistines were the supreme controllers of the civilized arts in the Land of Canaan). A new image of the Philistines is now emerging, and it is about time. In no way were they the "uncultured" and "backward" peoples as some have conceived. Just the opposite was the case.

The Philistines in the Bible

It is clear that the original location of the Philistines (after the dispersal of the nations at the Tower of Babel) was Caphtor - the island of Crete. This geographical location necessitated their interest in maritime enterprises. Commerce was of vital importance. Being positioned in the central Mediterranean gave them an advantage for trade throughout the whole Mediterranean basin.

So as early as the time of Abraham, the Philistines had already established a land base for trade in the southwestern part of Canaan. Abimelech was then king of Gerar (Genesis chapter 20), and later he (or his son) was called "king of the

Philistines" (Genesis chapter 26). When Israel invaded the Land of Canaan, they found the Philistines still entrenched in five major city states: Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath and Gaza. These five cities constituted the main areas of Philistine influence in the Land of Canaan. The Bible reckons the kings in charge of these city areas as "the lords of the Philistines" (Joshua 13:3). It is true that the Philistine area was assigned by Joshua to the tribes of Judah and Dan. This was a part of Canaan that they were to conquer, but Judah and Dan failed. The Israelites were not able to subdue all the native peoples. A number of Canaanites were left in the land, and the Philistine cities were allowed to remain.

^{KJV} **Judges 3: 1 – 3** ***"Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them... ³ namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon."***

So here is the point: God has, for His reason, left certain areas in Canaan for nations other than Israel to occupy (at least until God's redemptive purpose for them has been achieved). This Judges reference shows that many Philistines and Canaanites remained in the land and still within their original areas of influence. But this is not the end of the story. There are historical and traditional records of an extended exodus of Philistines and others, into areas of Egypt and also into North Africa. Only in the last seventy years have historians been able to put together an account of the traditional teachings of many North African races. In a book published by the Jewish Publication Society (Nahum Slouschz's *Travels in North Africa* ⁸) many early Jewish and North African tribal traditions were first made public. It was a revelation! It was found that many of the peoples who first came to the areas of North Africa (from Libya to Morocco) were people who once lived in the Land of Canaan. I can only spend a moment with these, but here is a sample.

Among other things, the traditions of the Berbers (who live from Libya to Morocco) relate that they are descendants of Philistines who once lived in Palestine. Indeed, there was once a monument located at Tangiers (on the Straits of Gibraltar) which said that Joshua, the son of Nun, pursued certain of the Canaanites up to that point.

The Great Arab Invasion

In the early 7th century waves of tribes from Northwestern Arabia under the leadership of Muhammed and his generals came into Palestine, Egypt, Persia, and finally throughout North Africa, Spain, and in time they continued eastward into India, Malaysia, etc. This Muslim invasion conquered most of the Middle East and North Africa, and in doing so they forced upon most of the people the religion of Islam. Since their holy book was the Koran, written in classical Arabic, that language quickly began to be used by many of the native populations that the Islamic invaders had conquered. It is the Arabic language imposed upon these people that gave all of them the name "Arab." While this designation is acceptable in a linguistic sense, it is a big mistake to think that the nations of North Africa and the Middle East (with the exception of the Arabian areas themselves) should be reckoned as racially *Arab*. This particularly applies to the Palestinians. They are "Arabs" in the sense that they speak the Arabic language - but they are a mixed group of refugees from all over the Middle East, and no doubt some are descended from the original Philistines. God recognizes that some of the people are of mixed ethnic characteristics (note Zechariah 9:6), but this biblical indication does not mean that the main people are disqualified from being "Philistines." This is because that area of Canaan had been given to the Philistines since before the time of Abraham.

The Jewish-Roman Wars

The Jewish war against the Romans from 66 to 73 AD (and more particularly the one from 132 to 135 AD) brought disaster to the political existence of a Jewish nation in the Land of Canaan. Indeed, by the end of the war in 135 AD, the Jewish population was forbidden by the Romans from entering certain parts of the Holy Land.

It was common custom for the Romans to call the whole region as "Palestine"; this is one of the reasons why many Palestinians today want all of the Holy Land as a Palestinian state.

What Prophecy Shows

What does all this mean? In Psalm 83 we have a graphic description of ten separate nations (peoples) surrounding the nation of Israel. The account in this Psalm has NEVER occurred in history. The end of the Psalm relates how the events described will lead up to YHVH being most high over all the earth. The time setting of Psalm 83 is shown by its position in the Book of Psalms. ⁹ The Psalm describes a time just before the Kingdom of God is established over all the earth. Since this is true, we may have a prime prophecy revealing who the ten nations of Daniel and Revelation are and the area from which the Beast of Revelation (the Antichrist) will arise. And importantly, we find one of those ten nations called the Philistines (verse 7). This reference in Psalm 83 is a significant key to End-Time events in the Middle East that all prophetic interpreters should recognize.

This biblical prophecy indicates that the Philistines (or, as we say today, *the Palestinians*) will obtain their statehood. But in the biblical descriptions, the State of Palestine WILL NOT include what we call the West Bank.

The fact is the Philistines coming into the West Bank was a late intrusion. The people of Nablus (who in the main are descendants of the early Samaritans who converted to Islam after the Arab Conquest) are NOT Philistines! They are a separate people altogether though some westerners may not be aware of the differences. The West Bank, as stated before, is NOT former Philistine property in the original sense, it is territory that belonged to Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh.

What Believers of God's Word should be watching for, then, is the creation of ten small Islamic states within the area now composed of Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Arabia, and the Gaza Strip (Iraq is not part of this but instead will become a New Assyria). This is what Psalm 83 states. Being small states will help to stabilize the area. They will be dependent on one another for economic prosperity and security. Remember, the details of that Psalm have never occurred in history. The events are to be fulfilled in our day. What we need to realize is the fact that the End-Time cannot begin in earnest until the world establishes the ten national states that Psalm 83 describes as being in operation and functioning. There are, indeed, quite a number of verses in Scripture that

attest to the fact that these small nations will be created in the near future. Let us look at some of those Scriptures.

Modern Geographical Prophecies for the Middle East

There are key geographical prophecies that establish this fact. We have a reference in the Book of Daniel that when the Antichrist returns once again to the Land of Canaan and establishes his palace in the highest mountain of Jerusalem (in the Mount of Olives), people who live in the area at that time will witness that the lands of "Ammon, Moab, and Edom" will NOT then be subject to the direct rule of the Antichrist. Daniel said:

^{KJV} **Daniel 11:41** *"He shall enter also into the glorious land [the Land of Canaan], and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, Moab, and the chief of children of Ammon."*

These national states must be in existence at the time of this conquest by the Antichrist. These are three of the countries that will escape that particular thrust of the Antichrist in his quest to finally conquer the world to himself. Isn't it interesting that even our Lord (Christ Jesus himself) told people who will live in Jerusalem and surrounding areas at that time to "flee into the mountains" (Matthew 24:16). He meant the mountainous land of Edom to the southeast of Jerusalem. The Land of Edom where the city of Petra was once prominent was known in the Bible as a mountainous region where people could hide themselves from various oppressors. David said:

- **Psalm 60:9–12** and repeated in **Psalm 108:10–13**

"Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me to Edom? Will not you O Elohim, which has cast us off? And you, O Elohim, which did not go out with our armies? Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do valiantly; for he it is that shall tread down our enemies."

Those two Psalms speak of a time in the future (at the start of the Millennium when Christ begins to rule) when God will again measure out the Land of Canaan and give it to the people of Israel. In measuring out the Promised Land at that time, God states:

• **Psalm 108:9**

"Moab is my washpot [to keep God "refreshed"]; **over Edom will I cast my shoe** [for judgment]; **over Philistia** [the State of Palestine] **will I triumph."**

This again, shows that these nations will certainly be in existence at the beginning of the Millennium. One should read all of Isaiah chapters 15 and 16 where the Scriptures show Moab as being a strong and prosperous state before Christ's Second Advent.

There are major geographical and political references in Scripture that assure us that these nations will certainly be in existence in their original lands in the Middle East as the end nears. As to the exact time schedule that these events will take place, we are told by our Lord himself that it is NOT given to us (even to those who have the Holy Spirit and have a great deal of knowledge of history and prophecy) to know precisely the chronological periods in which God will perform these prophecies.

As far as God is concerned, all we need to know is the fact that they certainly will be fulfilled in the precise time periods that God the Father has determined before the foundation of the world (Acts 15:18).

So here we have a prophecy of the creation of a new State of Palestine that will exist in the original homelands of the Philistines and we are all aware that this could happen very quickly in the current world political environment. There is much work for us who are Believers to do to teach the people of the world about these End-Time events. God is giving us time to teach His Gospel to the world before the End begins (Matthew 24:14). We need to be about our Father's business by putting our contributions (and certainly any extra funds) into getting the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures to all in the world to whom God is sending the truth. We do not have long to do the job.