MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

An Address By

HON. E. C. MANNING

Dec. 1973

In recent weeks, the attention of many peoples and nations has been focused once more on the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli war immediately took on an importance much greater than would ordinarily be attached to a conflict of its limited scope. There are two reasons why this is so. In the first place, the balance of power in the Middle East has long been a matter of major concern to the two world super powers, the United States and Soviet Russia. Both recognize the strategic importance of the Middle East from a military standpoint. Both feel compelled to insist that the sensitive balance of power between the Arab nations and the Israelis is maintained. To this end Russia has consistently supported the Arab cause. She has been the source of military equipment for Egypt, Syria and the adjoining Arab states. She has supplied the technical knowhow and the military strategists and she has assured the Arab states of her support in their aggression against the state of Israel and her intervention if the United States should intervene militarily on the side of Israel. On the other side, the United States has given her moral and military support to Israel. She has been the main source of supply for planes, tanks, guns and munitions for Israeli armed forces. She has made it clear to the Soviet Union that she would come to Israel's defense if Russia became directly involved militarily against Israel.

The second reason is this: In the current Middle East crisis, a new element has been introduced by the Arab states namely the use of Arab oil resources as a weapon of economic blackmail against the United States and all other nations who have in any way aided the Israeli cause. During the previous six-day war, Israel occupied former Arab territory in the Sinai Peninsula and on the Golan Heights, and in the formerly divided city of Jerusalem. She has rejected all demands by the Arabs and by the United Nations that she withdraw from these areas that she occupied at that time. The recent conflict initiated by Egypt and Syria was justified by the Arab states on the grounds that they were acting to recover this territory that Israel had previously occupied.

In the light of what has transpired, certain conclusions have become obvious. The Egyptian and Syrian attack on Israel undoubtedly was made with the Soviet Union's knowledge and concurrence. This is borne out by the fact Soviet military supplies were pouring into Egypt from the very opening day of the conquest against Israel. This clearly indicated that all necessary arrangements had been made in advance. It is equally reasonable to assume that the Soviet Union was aware of the Arab
ons' intentions to use their oil as an instrument of economic blackmail against the United States and any other country that befriended Israel. The Soviet Union has a vested interest in weakening the economy of the United States which stands as the major obstacle in the struggle of communism's long-range objective of world domination. It is completely consistent with communist strategy to foster any action on the part of the United States that would weaken the U.S. economy, especially at a time when the United States is beset byastic instability at home and is suffering the after effects of her prolonged involvement in Viet Nam as a nation of communist aggression there.

It is deserving of note that the most serious consequences of the current energy crisis precipitated by the oil boycott will be its impact on the United States economy which may not only cause further domestic unrest, but will lessen her ability to continue the mammoth program of foreign aid which she has given so generously to so many countries for many years. By forcing the withdrawal of the Israelis from all occupied territory in a condition of obtaining Arab oil, the Arab nations are attempting to force all nations requiring Arab oil to put pressure on Israel and to align themselves with the Arab cause. This means that every nation cited must decide whether to bow to economic blackmail and renounce open friendship with Israel and at least tacit support to the Arab demands. To the extent of the United States she has shown no sign of abandoning Israel in order to serve her own economic interests in the present energy crises. I am aware that there are some voices being raised urging that she should do this very thing. Thank God for both individuals and nations who will maintain the position they believe is right, even when it costs them something to maintain their stand.

The bloc of nations comprising the European Common Market has bowed to Arab pressure and joined in demanding that Israel comply with the Arab demands. Canada and a number of other nations are sitting on the fence to avoid taking a stand. This is something I deplore, and I am certain many other Canadians will deplore. It is certain, out of the current Middle East tension and the Arab oil boycott may well come a significant realignment of nations in the months ahead. Time will tell how many will bow to economic blackmail and put their economic interests ahead of the things they believe is right and what is wrong in the Israeli dispute.

A peace agreement has been signed by Israel and the United States. You are aware of such further developments as taken place since the agreement was signed but final outcome of the present attempt by the great powers to force a settlement of the Middle East conflict time will tell. There are several assumptions that can make. It is inconceivable that Israel will agree return to the territorial boundaries as they were
before the six-day war. Israel understands the attitudes of her Arab neighbors far better than the United Nations and the super powers who have tried to pressure her into giving up territory she occupied because it was vital to her ability to defend herself and therefore vital to her survival.

Another safe assumption is this. There is very little hope that a successful peace agreement can be implemented and the animosity of the Arab nations towards the state of Israel will continue. To understand why this is so, it is necessary to know the origin and the cause of that longstanding animosity. It is one of the most fascinating chapters of the biblical record. It started with the ancient covenant that God made with the patriarch Abram as recorded in the book of Genesis. God said to Abram: "I will make of thee a great nation. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curses thee. I will give unto thee and unto thy seed after thee all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession."

This was a clear and positive promise of a territorial possession to the descendants of Abram. All the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. Canaan, as you know embraced the present land of Palestine. With the passage of time a division developed in the household of Abram. He and his household went down to Egypt and while there a young Egyptian woman by the name of Hagar became a servant to Abram's wife, Sarah. Abram and Sarah at that time had no children, although God had promised them descendants. Abram was without an heir. God had promised, but as they grew older and no child was born. Abram and Sarah began to doubt the promises of God and proceeded to take matters into their own hands and that is where the trouble started. Sarah persuaded Abram to take Hagar the Egyptian for a wife. He did so and through that union was born a child, Ishmael. A little later on in fulfillment of God's promise, Sarah herself bore Abram a son, whose name was Isaac. He was the heir that God had promised. Ishmael resented Isaac. He tormented him. Sarah complained to Abram and God said to Abram: "Cast out the bondwoman (that is Hagar) and her son for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free". So Abram cast out Hagar and Ishmael, and God made him a further promise. He said: "Also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation because he is thy seed." But the seeds of enmity between Isaac and Ishmael were already sown.

Later Isaac married and had twin sons. They were named Jacob and Esau. Esau was the elder and so he would be the heir, the line of descent. You probably recall the story of how Jacob persuaded Esau to sell his birthright for a mess of potage. When Esau discovered what had happened, he was very angry. Angry and bitter against Jacob. In his anger he left his father's house and went out and married a daughter if Ishmael and settled in the region of Mount Seer, which is the northern end of modern Arabia. His descendants became known as the Edmoites from whom descended the
Arabs of today. The bitter antagonism between the
two branches of the descendants of Abram has continued
ever since.

When the people of Israel were delivered by Moses
from Egypt and started their journey back to Palestine,
they were denied passage by the Edomites which brought
on them the curse of God. These were His words:

“The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the
house of Joseph a flame, and the house of
Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them,
and devour them: and there shall not be any
remaining of the house of Esau; for the Lord
hath spoken it.”

Obadiah 1:18

The fact is the title deeds to the land of Palestine
have been reserved by God Himself for the descendants
of Abram through Jacob whose name was changed to
Israel. The prophetic scriptures make clear that they
will not obtain the land of Palestine as a permanent
secure possession until Christ the Messiah of Israel
returns and regathers Israel from the nations among
whom she has been disbursed and plants her in the
promised land which will then become her everlasting
possession.

What we are witnessing today is merely a shadowy
fulfillment of that promise of God concerning Palestine
as a homeland for Israel that someday will be literally
fulfilled. Present-day Israel is not the whole of Israel.
They have been going back to Palestine in recent years
to try through their own efforts to regain the land
for their possession. They are trying to establish for
themselves a homeland but they have gone back in
unbelief, still rejecting their Messiah, the Lord Jesus
Christ. But God has said: I will give Israel her promised
land when she acknowledges the Messiahship of Jesus
Christ.

Meanwhile, the ancient enmity between Jacob and
Esau, that is between the Arab and the Jew, continues
and will remain the stumbling block to any permanent
peace in the Middle East.

I would like now to call your attention to two
further passages of scripture which throw a significant
light on this major world problem of our times. The
first is the parable of the figtree which Christ included
in His prophetic sermon recorded in the 24th chapter of
Matthew.

“Now learn a parable of the figtree. When
his branch is yet tender and putteth forth
leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So like-
wise ye when ye shall see all these things,
know that it is near, even at the doors”.

Matthew 24: 32;33

The Bible is its own interpreter. Isaiah 5:7 refers
to the household of Israel as the vineyard of the Lord
and to the tribe of Judah as His pleasant plant. In
Jeremiah 24 there is reference to the fruit of Judah,
the pleasant plant and it is spoken of as figs. Sym-
bolically, the figtree in scripture speaks of the tribe
of Judah whose descendants we know as the Jews. Please notice what Christ had to say about the figtree. When you see signs of life stirring in the figtree, when it starts “putting forth leaves”, you know that summer is nigh. Christ used this illustration when referring to world conditions and world events as they will be immediately before His personal return to this earth. He said: When ye see signs of life in the figtree you can know that the return of Israel’s Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ is near at hand.

Twenty-five years ago for the first time in centuries, the figtree stirred to life sufficiently to re-establish Israel as a nation in the land that God promised centuries ago to the descendants of Abram. If we are to believe what Christ said, such a stirring on the part of the figtree is an indication that the world has entered the last cycle of time that will culminate with His return to this earth. I suggest to you that every Christian should keep his eye on the figtree. What you see in Palestine today is one of the most definite indications that we are living in the last hours of this present age of grace that will end one of these days in a moment, in the twinkling of the eye, when as the Apostle Paul says in I Thessalonians:

“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

The second passage of scripture that I draw to your attention is a prophecy of Daniel. In the 9th chapter of the book of Daniel, the prophet refers to a treaty or covenant that the future Antichrist will make with the nation of Israel. It will be for one land week. That is a biblical term referring to a period of seven years taken from the old economy of Israel, when they were told to sow their fields for six years and on the seventh year they were to let the fields lie idle as a Sabbath or rest for the land and so it became known as a land week. Daniel’s prophecy says that the Antichrist will make a covenant with the nation of Israel for one land week, a period of seven years. The covenant evidently will include a guarantee from the Antichrist assuring the restoration of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem and the restoration of the Jewish temple worship. The 27th verse of the 9th chapter of Daniel says in the midst or the middle of the seven-year land week, the Antichrist will break the covenant and “cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease”. This is enlarged in Daniel 11:31:

“He (that is the Antichrist) shall have indig nation against the holy covenant (that is the alliance that he has made with Israel) and have intelligence with them that forsake the covenant and arms shall stand on his part. He shall pol lute the sanctuary and shall take away the daily sacrifice.”
Now please consider for a moment what this evidently is telling us and which is confirmed by the rest of the prophecy of Daniel and also the Old Testament prophecy of Ezekial. After Christ appears and takes His church out of this world, the Antichrist will emerge on the world scene. He will emerge from the Middle East. He is spoken of as the Prince of Tyres, an ancient biblical name for Turkey. He will identify himself with the communist regime of Soviet Russia. He is spoken of as Magog, the chief prince of Mescheh and Tubal. These are Biblical names well identified by ethnologists with the region and the peoples of the Soviet Union. The Antichrist, we are told will gain his political power by stealth and cunning. His treaty or covenant with Israel will be an act of expediency on his part. Daniel II says "after the league made with him, he shall work deceitfully for he shall come up and shall become strong with a small people." He will be a world federalist, and an avid champion of a world government which as a political ideology by that time will have gained world wide acceptance. It is rapidly gaining such acceptance today.

It is not too difficult to understand how the little nation of Israel surrounded by hostile Arab states, beset with uncertainties as to whether she can count on the continued support of the United States in the face of such acts as the Arab oil boycott would welcome a guarantee of her territorial integrity by a dynamic leader of an emerging world government. His proposal would be especially attractive when it carried with it a guarantee of the restoration of Israel's holy temple on the sacred rock on Mount Moriah presently occupied by the Mohammedan Mosque of Omar. How readily Israel might say: "This is the break we have been longing for; this is the answer to our desire for a secure homeland in which we can pursue our way of life, including our ancient religious rites."

Just recently I noticed an article in an eastern newspaper by a well-known columnist discussing the concept of one world as a possible solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict and after pointing out the fearful price both sides have paid in lives and suffering and materials in the recent conflict, he said: "Let's take another look at the notion of one world. Instead of negotiating a ceasefire, a truce or even a peace treaty, would the Arabs and Jews not be better off talking about a common citizenship, a single parliament, a united approach to the economic and social problems that are hampering both. Shouldn't the Common Market nations, Britain included, be working towards the same goal? While they are at it, wouldn't they be wise to open talks with their mighty neighbour, the Soviet Union with the purpose of achieving some kind of organic unity between Europe and western Asia".

At this point in time such a proposal may sound far-fetched, but wait until the Antichrist emerges on the world scene. He will stand out as a dynamic leader in a world of nations whose previous forms of governments
crumbling through a combination of political and economic decadence, crushing debt and taxation and internal strife and unrest. He will be the self-proclaimed savior of the world.

Daniel says: "He will do that which his fathers have done, nor his father's fathers for he shall scatter the prey, and spoil and riches and forego his devices against the strongholds." And all the world will wonder after him and say: "who is like unto him? And they will proclaim him as the head of a totalitarian, communistic world government. Once he has that power, he will move swiftly to crush all opposition. He will even insist that men worship him as the Son of God, publicly declaring their allegiance to him receiving an identification mark in their right hand or on their foreheads, and no man will be permitted to live or move unless he can show the Mark of the Beast. You see it for yourself in the 13th chapter of the Revelation.

The little nation of Israel will be one of the first suffer disillusionment under the Antichrist when he breaks his covenant and abolishes their religious rites. Israel! Down through the ages she has repeatedly confidence in those who in the end have betrayed her. There is a reason for her sad history that should be understood by Jews and Gentiles alike. Israel was once a chosen people, the descendants of Abram, the friend of God to whom God promised Palestine as an everlasting possession. But she turned her back on God, went her own way. She put her confidence in her ability and set out to fulfill her own destiny and in her Messiah came to win her back to God and God’s will she rejected Him and had Him crucified. There be no permanent recovery for Israel until she acknowledges her mistake and turns to Him in repentance belief and then she will have the most glorious re of any nation on earth.

Let me emphasize one irrefutable fact. No one can explain the full significance of what is presently going in the middle East unless he is aware of what biblical history reveals about both the Arabs and the Jews and unless he assesses the present Middle East problem in the light of the prophetic scriptures which so accurately foretold the final outcome of what is now taking place.

May I now summarize this matter under three headings:

1. The implications of the Middle East problem to the other nations of this earth.

First and foremost there is in the Arab-Israeli conflict the ever-present danger of a confrontation between the world’s two great super nuclear powers, the Soviet Union and the United States. Russia has a vested interest in the Arab cause because she does not want the United States to be in a position to play a dominant role in
Southwest Asia. The United States is equally determined not to permit the Soviet Union to gain undisputed control over that strategic part of the eastern hemisphere.

In recent weeks, the implications of the Arab-Israeli hostilities have extended to almost all nations as a result of the Arab oil boycott. We therefore have both economic and political implications for all nations in what is taking place. This use of economic blackmail has other goals in which Russia also has a vested interest. It is aimed at weakening the economy of the United States and the economy of Europe and causing divisions among the member nations of the European Common Market group and between the NATO allies. This is one of the vested interests that world communism has because the more they can weaken the economy of these nations, the more they can sow discord and disrupt the normal pattern of life throughout the world, the more they can capitalize on that unrest to their own advantage.

Japan already has capitulated to the economic blackmail and is pressuring Israel to accede to Arab and United Nations demands. The European Common Market bloc is being divided through Holland being denied any Arab oil, while further reductions have been deferred in the case of other members of the European Common Market bloc. The object in this case is not only to weaken the economy of the nations affected but to cause divisions between nations by forcing nations to take sides one against the other. The results will be a further deterioration of international relations and the creation of world conditions which will foster the world government concept in preparation for the emergence of the Antichrist on the world scene.

2. The Aspirations of the Arabs and the Arab nations.

The Arabs have consistently objected to Israel being recognized as a nation and permitted to establish a national homeland in Palestine. This is, the modern expression of the age-old animosity between the division in the descendants of the patriarch, Abram. The Arabs, the descendants of the Edomites whose origin goes back to Esau and Ishmael will never live in peace with the descendants of Abram through Isaac and Jacob. The sooner those trying to bring these two factions together recognize that this is so, the better for them and the sooner the matter can be dealt with on the basis of realities instead of on false hopes and wishful thinking. The modern bitterness was fanned into a searing flame by the war of independence over twenty-five years ago, and the Arab refugee problem that has been one of the tragic aftermaths. Here again, those in positions to deal with these problems should recognize that whatever their personal feelings and desires, the fact remains that the land of Palestine has been promised by God to the descendants of Abram through Isaac and Jacob or Israel and all the United Nations resolutions that can be passed, will not and cannot alter that ultimate disposition of the territory under dispute.
3. The long-range future of the nation and the people of Israel.

Let me emphasize again that the modern nation of Israel is not the ultimate future nation spoken of so frequently in the prophetic scriptures. The present-day Jews are but a part of the ancient tribe of Judah. The ultimate nation of Israel will consist of the descendants of all twelve tribes of Israel. Those of the tribe of Judah going back to Palestine today. They are going back in unbelief, still rejecting their Messiah, Jesus Christ, who came to redeem and recover all Israel but who was rejected by His own. Today, as far as God's dealing with man is concerned, the House of Israel has been set aside and God through Christ is calling out of the world another people for His name. This is the Church of Christ made up of all those who believe in the deity and Lordship of Christ as the Son of God, and in His substitutionary death on the cross in the place of sinful guilty men to redeem and reconcile them to God. God's offer of redemption today is to all men and women as individuals whether they be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free. The Bible says: "blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in".

When the Church of Christ is complete, the prophetic scriptures affirm that Christ will appear and take His Church out of this world. Israel will then once again occupy the centre of the world stage. There will be a great upsurge in their return to Palestine and in their desire to secure their homeland and re-establish their ancient temple worship, they will make a covenant with the Antichrist who will at that time be working subtly to become the supreme head of a world government. When he gains his goal, he will break his covenant with Israel and once more she will face bitter persecution ending with the great battle of Armageddon. In that day Israel's eyes will be opened to see and to acknowledge that Jesus Christ was and is her long promised Messiah. He will in that day return and intervene on her behalf and destroy the Antichrist and his godless world dictatorship with a complete and terrible destruction. You can read about it for yourself in the 19th of the Revelation.

Then will take place one of the great miracles of the ages. The Old Testament Saints of the House of Israel will be resurrected from the dead. The Messiah will re-gather all living descendants of Abram, Isaac and Jacob out of the nations where they have been disbursed as Christ said:

"They shall come from the north and the south and the east and the west to sit down with Abram, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven".

It was of this that the prophet Ezekiel was told to prophesy in Ezekiel 37. He was shown a valley full of dry bones and as he prophesied, the bones came together and they were covered with sinews and flesh and then the
wind blew over them and the dry bones were restored to life. God says "these bones are the whole house of Israel." He went on in the prophecy of Ezekiel to say:

"I will put my spirit in you and ye shall live. I shall place you in your own land. Then shall ye know that I the Lord hath spken it."

My friend, that is coming. The people of Israel should know it. The men dealing with the Middle East problems should know it. You should know and understand its significance.

The Apostle Paul writing his letter to the Romans, speaking of Israel said:

"Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall salvation has come unto the Gentiles. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world and the diminishing of them, the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead."

The only nation on earth to which God has promised a national resurrection is the nation of Israel. This is in the future. Today Israel is still set aside while God is calling out from all nations through Jesus Christ a people for His name. Through Israel's fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles.

This, my friend is your day of golden opportunity. May I ask you what have you done about the opportunity God has given you through Jesus Christ? Have you believed what God has said about His beloved Son? I John 5 says:

"This is the witness of God which he hath testified of His son, He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life".

You are in one or the other of these two categories. In which one do you find yourself? Do you have Christ living in your heart and life as your personal Savior or do you not? If you haven't will you open your heart and life to Him today.

Additional Copies of this Report are Available in Print or on Cassette from:
Canada's National Back To The Bible Hour Box 2350
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.