

The Inscrutable Question: Baptism of John: Review, JSH-475: The Truth about the Palestinians; Development of Plan A by Means of Deduction

This is a review of Lesson JSH-475, taught second session on Sunday, 29 April 2001. It seeks to clarify and expand upon principles developed regarding Plan A of the Incarnation. The first clarification has to do with comments made regarding the nonexistence of an authentic Palestinian people in the present-day Middle East. Clarification of this claim is provided in a column written by:

Farah, Joseph. "Myths of the Middle East." In *Between the Lines*. (Cave Junction: World Net Daily, 2000), 1-3:

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JOSEPH FARAH
BETWEEN THE LINES



Myths of the Middle East

By Joseph Farah

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I've been quiet since Israel erupted in fighting spurred by disputes over the Temple Mount.

If you believe what you read in most news sources, Palestinians want a homeland and Muslims want control over sites they consider holy. Simple, right?

Well, as an Arab-American journalist who has spent some time in the Middle East dodging more than my share of rocks and mortar shells, I've got to tell you that these are just phony excuses for the rioting, trouble-making and land-grabbing.

Isn't it interesting that prior to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, there was no serious movement for a Palestinian homeland?

"Well, Farah," you might say, "that was before the Israelis seized the West Bank and Old Jerusalem."

That's true. In the Six-Day War, Israel captured Judea, Samaria and East Jerusalem. But they didn't capture these territories from Yasser Arafat. They captured them from Jordan's King Hussein. I can't help but wonder why all these Palestinians suddenly discovered their national identity after Israel won the war.

The truth is that Palestine is no more real than Never-Never Land. The first time the name was used was in 70 A.D. when the Romans committed genocide against the Jews, smashed the Temple and declared the land of Israel would be no more. From then on, the Romans promised, it would be known as Palestine. The name was derived from the Philistines, a Goliathian people conquered by the Jews centuries earlier. It was a way for the Romans to add insult to injury. They also tried to change the name of Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina, but that had even less staying power.

Palestine has never existed -- before or since -- as an autonomous entity. It was ruled alternately by Rome, by Islamic and Christian crusaders, by the Ottoman Empire and, briefly, by the British after World War I. The British agreed to restore at least part of the land to the Jewish people as their homeland.

There is no language known as Palestinian. There is no distinct Palestinian culture. There has never been a land known as Palestine governed by Palestinians. Palestinians are Arabs, indistinguishable from Jordanians (another recent invention), Syrians, Lebanese, Iraqis, etc. Keep in mind that the Arabs control 99.9 percent of the Middle East lands. Israel represents one-tenth of 1 percent of the landmass.

But that's too much for the Arabs. They want it all. And that is ultimately what the fighting in Israel is about today. Greed. Pride. Envy. Covetousness. No matter how many land concessions the Israelis make, it will never be enough.

What about Islam's holy sites? There are none in Jerusalem.

Shocked? You should be. I don't expect you will ever hear this brutal truth from anyone else in the international media. It's just not politically correct.

I know what you're going to say: "Farah, the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem represent Islam's third most holy sites."

Not true. In fact, the Koran says nothing about Jerusalem. It mentions Mecca hundreds of times. It mentions Medina countless times. It never mentions Jerusalem. With good reason. There is no historical evidence to suggest Mohammed ever visited Jerusalem.

So how did Jerusalem become the third holiest site of Islam? Muslims today cite a vague passage in the Koran, the seventeenth Sura, entitled "The Night Journey." It relates that in a dream or a vision Mohammed was carried by night "from the sacred temple to the temple that is most remote, whose precinct we have blessed, that we might show him our signs. ..." In the seventh century, some Muslims identified the two temples mentioned in this verse as being in Mecca and Jerusalem. And that's as close as Islam's connection with Jerusalem gets -- myth, fantasy, wishful thinking. Meanwhile, Jews can trace their roots in Jerusalem back to the days of Abraham.

The latest round of violence in Israel erupted when Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon tried to visit the Temple Mount, the foundation of the Temple built by Solomon. It is the holiest site for Jews. Sharon and his entourage were met with stones and threats. I know what it's like. I've been there. Can you imagine what it is like for Jews to be threatened, stoned and physically kept out of the holiest site in Judaism?

So what's the solution to the Middle East mayhem? Well, frankly, I don't think there is a man-made solution to the violence. But, if there is one, it needs to begin with truth. Pretending will only lead to more chaos. Treating a 5,000-year-old birthright backed by overwhelming historical and archaeological evidence equally with illegitimate claims, wishes and wants gives diplomacy and peacekeeping a bad name.

[Joseph Farah](#) is editor and chief executive officer of [WorldNetDaily.com](#) and writes a daily column.

Had the Jewish nation of the first century accepted the offer of the Kingdom Age given first by John the Baptist and the later by Jesus Himself and then by His apostles, speculation arises as to how events would have transpired from that point.

Had the Jews openly accepted Jesus as Messiah, from the Sanhedrin on down to the lowliest shepherd, then Plan A would have remained in effect and the Church Age would not have occurred.

The Church Age however is actual history and was decreed from eternity past. But the *offer* of the kingdom was actual history too and also decreed from eternity past. What the omniscience of the Father knew is that the Jews in time would reject His legitimate offer of the kingdom. Consequently, He developed Plan B which is the mystery dispensation of the Church Age.

So that the offer of the kingdom during the Incarnation would be a legitimate one, God kept knowledge of the Church Age—Plan B—away from all Old Testament writers and even from the angels.

What are contained in the Old Testament are detailed prophecies of Plan A which excludes the Church Age. We are able to document several and their fulfillment as established facts:

- 1 - The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ: Isaiah 7:14; 9:7; Matthew 1:25; Luke 2:7.
- 2 - The Incarnation and the offer of the kingdom to the Jews: Jeremiah 50:6; Matthew 10:6.

- 3 - The redemption provided by Jesus as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world: Passover; Leviticus 23:4-5; John 1:29; Luke 23:44-46.
- 4 - His physical death and burial: Psalm 31:5; Luke 23:46.
- 5 - His burial in a rich man's tomb: Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-61.
- 6 - He was resurrected on the third day: Genesis 22:1-14 compared with Hebrews 11:17-19; Psalm 16:10 (Messianic); Luke 24:1-7, 46.
- 7 - The ascension into heaven: Psalm 68:18 (Messianic); Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11.
- 8 - Following this the Tribulation would have commenced. This is known in Scripture as "Daniel's Seventieth Week," Daniel 9:24-27; "The Time of Jacob's Trouble," Jeremiah 30:7; and a "Time of Trouble," Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:1-28; Revelation 6:1-19:10.
- 9 - The termination of the Tribulation by the Second Advent and the ending of the Armageddon Campaign: Ezekiel 38:1-39:24; Zechariah 12:1-14:7; Revelation 19:11-21.
- 10 - The Second Advent is celebrated by the Feasts of the Lord known as the Feast of Trumpets, or *Rosh Hashanah*, the Day of Atonement, or *Yom Kippur*, and the Feast of Tabernacles, or *Sukkoth*: Leviticus 23:23-36; and is fulfilled in Zechariah 14:16.
- 11 - The Millennium: Isaiah 11:1-16 (environment); Ezekiel 40:1-47:12 (the Temple), and Zechariah 14:9-11 (government); Revelation 20:4-6.

These are established facts from Old Testament Prophecy. All those that pertain to the Incarnation of Christ have been fulfilled. Those that pertain to the Tribulation, the Second Advent, and the millennial kingdom are certainly future since they are a part of the immutable Word of God. This information can be combined with two other passages to allow us to draw conclusions in order to describe the likely events that would have transpired under Plan A had it been a part of actual history instead of potential history.

We may *speculate* that had the Jews accepted Jesus as Messiah then the Romans would have executed Him anyway since the Lord's claim to be a King would have been considered by the Romans as the capital crime of treason.

John 18:33 - Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

v. 34 - Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?"

v. 35 - Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You up to me; so what have you done?"

v. 36 - Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world [**ablative of source from ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου / *ek tou kosmou* !: from the source of this cosmic world system**]. If My kingdom were from the source of this cosmic world system, and it is not, then My servants would be fighting in order that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not from the source of this system.

v. 37 - Pilate, therefore, said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king—and I am. To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world in order that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

v. 38 - Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him."

John 19:12 - As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him but the Jews cried out saying, "If you release this Man you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar."

Many of the Jews who came to greet the Lord as he entered Jerusalem on what is called Palm Sunday worshipped and honored Him only because they thought He had come to set up His kingdom immediately and this free them from the yoke of Roman rule.

Mark 11:8 - Many spread their garments in the road and others spread branches which they had cut from the fields.

v. 9 - And those who went before and those who followed after were crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord;

v. 10 - blessed is the coming kingdom of our father, David; Hosanna in the highest!"

These verses provide known facts indicating that had the Sanhedrin and the Jewish nation openly accepted Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah they would have demanded that He set up a political kingdom immediately and would have proclaimed Him publicly to be the King of the Jews.

From all of this we speculated on the events that might have transpired had Rome arrested Jesus on charges of treason. In order to do this we draw our conclusions by means of deduction.

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "deduction":

The process of deducing or drawing a conclusion from a principle already known; reasoning from general facts to particular facts.

Thus we will take known facts and draw from them reasonable conclusions regarding the proposed historicity of Plan A:

1. Jesus would have been proclaimed by the people and the Sanhedrin as their Messiah and exalted as King of the Jews.
2. The Romans would have viewed this as treason and arrested Jesus on such charges.
3. He would have been found guilty and sentenced to the ignominious death of Roman crucifixion.
4. The imputation of all humanity's sins would have been imputed to Him and judged.
5. He would have died physically, been buried, and then resurrected on the third day.
6. Following a brief period of about 40 days the Lord would have ascended into heaven terminating the Incarnation and beginning the Tribulation.
7. Jesus Christ is the first fruits of resurrection. The resurrection of Jewish believers who died during the dispensation of Israel plus those Jewish believers who died during the Tribulation would occur at the Second Advent.
8. Those Jews who entered the Tribulation as believers and those who believed in Christ during the Tribulation are those who "will be left" at the baptism of fire for the Jews.
9. Those Jews who entered the Tribulation as unbelievers and those who did not believe in Christ during the Tribulation are those who "will be taken" at the baptism of fire for the Jews.
10. Those who believed that Jesus was Messiah spoken of by the prophets and that He had come to set up His earthly kingdom are the ones to whom John offered baptism.

11. This baptism required that these believers identify themselves with the kingdom. When John immersed a person into the Jordan River, that person was identified with the kingdom and the One who would come to establish it, namely, Jesus the Messiah.