

Life Group Notes 10/29/2023  
Pastor Mark Warren Israel and Our Times

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[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 10/29. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On Jerusalem in Bible days.](#)
2. [On the Kingdom of God in us.](#)
3. [On different terms in the conflict.](#)
4. [On Isaac and Ishmael.](#)
5. [A bibliography of the conflict.](#)

\*\*\***Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. \*\*\*

1. What do you know about Operation Christmas Child and Samaritan's Purse? Do you have a testimony?
2. What troubles you most about world events this last week?
3. What do you know about Israel and current events there?

Look up Psalm 122: [1](#) I was glad when they said to me,  
"Let us go to the house of the LORD."

[2](#)Our feet are standing in your gates,  
O Jerusalem.

[3](#)Jerusalem is built up  
as a city united together,

[4](#)where the tribes go up,  
the tribes of the LORD,

as a testimony for Israel,  
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

[5](#)For there the thrones of judgment stand,  
the thrones of the house of David.

**6** Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

“May those who love you prosper.

**7** May there be peace within your walls,  
and prosperity inside your fortresses.”

**8** For the sake of my brothers and friends,  
I will say, “Peace be within you.”

**9** For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,  
I will seek your prosperity.

1. Look at verse three. How important is unity?
2. How important is it that “the tribes go up *together* as a testimony for Israel?
3. Have you ever prayed for the peace of Jerusalem?
4. Look at verse 8. Who benefits from your prayers for Jerusalem?
5. How is Jerusalem made bigger than a city in this psalm?

Pastor Mark says, “There are a couple of issues that I would like to address. This region has known conflict over the last thousands of years. Jerusalem has been attacked 52 times captured and recaptured 44 times, besieged 23 times and destroyed twice.” He asks, why should we be interested?

1. Answer him.
2. How many conflicts do you recall?
3. What biblical events can you name that took place in and around Jerusalem, beginning with Abraham?
4. Why does conflict surround Jerusalem?

Pastor Mark defined terms. ([See footnote 3 below](#))

1. What is a holy war?
2. What is a geopolitical conflict?
3. What is Jihad?

Pastor Mark says, “God’s will is that all these people will come to know Him through Jesus Christ. It is not His will that any should perish.” How do we know this?

Pastor asks, “Why is this conflict a little more significant than at other times. Look up Matthew 24: **32** Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its branches become tender and sprout leaves, you know that summer is near. **33** So also, when you see all these things, you will know that He is near, right at the door. **34** Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have happened. **35** Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.

1. What do you learn from the fig tree?
2. What signs do you see?
3. What is different today from other conflicts, even in that region?
4. What causes concern?
5. What are the dangers of nuclear weaponry unleashed, pastor’s first significant sign?

Look at Revelation 16: **12**And the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings of the East. **13**And I saw three unclean spirits that looked like frogs coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. **14**These are demonic spirits that perform signs and go out to all the kings of the earth, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. **15**“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who remains awake and clothed, so that he will not go naked and let his shame be exposed.”

1. What do you see?
2. Have you heard that the mighty Euphrates River is dried up?
3. How dangerous is the polarization of our societies, pastor’s second significant sign? Has it impacted you? How? How have you responded?
4. Review Romans 1: **28***Furthermore, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, He gave them up to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. **29**They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, **30**slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful. They invent new forms of evil; they disobey their parents.**31**They are senseless, faithless, heartless, merciless.* How does this fit into the picture of the frogs from Revelation?
5. What is happening today to mercy, forgiveness and integrity? Why?
6. Matthew 24:12 says, “Because iniquity will abound the love of many will grow cold.” We’ve talked about this in previous notes. What have you seen since? How is your love doing? How do you treat cold love to bring it back to life?

Pastor quoted Matthew 24:6 **6***You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. These things must happen, but the end is still to come. **7**Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. **8**All these are the beginning of birth pains.* What are we to be doing when we see all this?

1. How do you avoid alarm? Do you have a testimony?
2. Pastor points to nations taking sides on a massive scale as the third significant sign. What do you see?
3. He says, “Be watchful of what takes place.”

Pastor says, “There is hope in this. The soon returning king is going to establish a rule where there will not be this level of conflict. There will be a thousand-year reign that will end with a White Throne Judgment. I don’t know what that looks like, but what I do know is that Jesus is coming back. He’s coming back for His Bride, His church. He is coming back for people who are ready, not trembling in fear but ready with anticipation.” He says, “Be ready to give the hope that you have in Christ Jesus.”

1. Why is this comfort?
2. How does one “give the hope away?” Is hope contagious?
3. Is despair contagious? What is the cure?

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**The Follow-up Application**

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
3. Watch for hopeful signs that come across your path this week. Write them down.

**Take the time to pray.**

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**Scribe's Notes:**

1. **On Jerusalem in Bible days**—According to all claims, Abraham took his son Isaac to Mount Moriah, where the Temple eventually stood, to offer Isaac in obedience to God's command. There was no city there in Abraham's day, c. 2000 BC. In the days of Joshua's conquest, Jerusalem was the city of the Jebusites. David, five hundred years later, was the one who drove the Jebusites out of the city to establish his capital there. The city was completely overthrown by the Babylonians and the Romans. The book of Nehemiah describes the conflict caused by the rebuilding of the wall. Nehemiah, Hagar and Ezra all describe the return and the rebuilding of the city, but the kingdom was never restored to the Jews. The land was always subjugated to others from the exile on. Herod, called king, was Idumean, a descendant of the Edomites, the offspring of Jacob's brother Esau.
2. **On the Kingdom of God in us**—Jesus made it clear that the Kingdom is not discovered by sight. Look up Luke 17: [20](#) When asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God will not come with observable signs. [21](#) Nor will people say, 'Look, here it is,' or 'There it is.' For you see, ***the kingdom of God is in your midst.***" [22](#) Then He said to the disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. [23](#) People will tell you, 'Look, there He is!' or 'Look, here He is!' Do not go out or chase after them. [24](#) For just as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other, so will be the Son of Man in His day. The term "in your midst" is translated from the Greek ἐντός, (entos) which also means within, inside, the inside. You wash the outside of the cup, said Jesus, but the *entos* is filthy. What we are looking for must come from inside of us. The rules and laws of the kingdom are written into the very fabric of our being, and we are charged with seeking these laws...from within. In terms of technology, we are programmed to be this kind of love.

3. **On different terms in the conflict.**

- ❖ Zionist—believes that Israel should have their own self-governing nation state.
- ❖ West Bank—is that part of the land that was given to the “Palestinian” when the land was divided after WWII to give Israel a Jewish state. It’s the “West Bank” because it is located on the west side of the Jordan River. The nation of Jordan is located on the east bank.
- ❖ Gaza—is the comprised of the southwest Mediterranean coast where the cities of the Philistines were found in David’s day, a strip of land no bigger than Vermont. (Note: Philistine and Palestinian have the same etymological root. Palestinians are Philistines in both Arabic and Hebrew.) Gaza, part of Israel in 1948, was ceded to the Palestinians in an agreement made in 2005 when Ariel Sharon was Prime Minister, and George W. Bush was president of the US.
- ❖ Jew—is an ethnicity defined as anyone born of a Jewish mother, independent of their religious beliefs which can even be atheist/secular but cannot be Christian. “Messianic Jew” is considered an oxymoron.
- ❖ Palestinian—is any indigenous inhabitant of the land, comprised of three religious backgrounds: Muslim, Christian or Druze. In Gaza and the West Bank, the persecution of Christians has greatly diminished the Christian population, even in Bethlehem where the church of the Nativity brings Christians on pilgrimage since the beginning of the Church. Note: Christians descended from the original Jewish Christians are considered Palestinian. Part of the religion of the Druze is an unbreakable loyalty to the government of their region. Druze are so loyal they are found in the Israeli army as well as those armies that surround Israel. In contrast, no Arab citizen of Israel, Muslim or Christian, is allowed to fight in the Israeli army.
- ❖ The promised Land—is that land promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:7 [7](#)Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your offspring.”
- ❖ Replacement theology—is the belief that when Jesus came, God allowed Gentiles to come into Israel through His sacrifice, and now, the promised land, and indeed all promises are unto ALL peoples, and that the Jew is no longer the exclusively beneficiary of God’s choice.

4. **On Isaac and Ishmael**—Isaac and Ishmael are the two first sons of Abraham. Isaac is the son of the Promise made to Abraham. Ishmael is Abraham’s firstborn son, born of Hagar Sarai’s slave given to Abraham

to produce a son in proxy for Sarai who was barren for ninety years. Each son produced a race on his own, and Muhammed the founder of Islam laid claim to descendancy from Ishmael, whom he reveres as Abraham's firstborn son. Ironically, both Islam and Judaism place great importance on Abraham's willingness to commit human sacrifice of his own son on Mount Moriah, and Islam built the Dome of the Rock on what is called the "Temple Mount" over the purported rock on which that sacrifice was to take place. For the Muslims Abraham would sacrifice his firstborn son Ishmael. For the Jews, it was the son of the promise, their father Isaac. Only the Christians understand that no life was in jeopardy, because God's promise could not be broken: Isaac was to be the father of nations and he was still a boy. He could not die before the promise was fulfilled, as it is written in Hebrews 11: <sup>17</sup>By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac on the altar. He who had received the promises was ready to offer his one and only son, <sup>18</sup>even though God had said to him, "Through Isaac your offspring will be reckoned." <sup>19</sup>Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and in a sense, he did receive Isaac back from death.

5. **A bibliography of the conflict**—Our own lack of experience will often over-simplify conflicts that do not affect us directly. Here are two books that are excellent for their insight. For a complete history of the wars between Islam and the Christian nations starting with Muhammed's first assaults on Medina and Mecca, *The Sword and the Scimitar* is required reading. The author is fluent in the ancient languages of the day and his sources are all primary. It is a captivating read:

[https://www.amazon.com/Sword-and-Scimitar-audiobook/dp/B07L3CZF7Z/ref=sr\\_1\\_4?crid=278ZUCQD36M5I&keywords=the+sword+and+the+scimitar+by+dauid+ball&qid=1698594134&srprefix=The+sword+and+the+scimi%2Caps%2C115&sr=8-4](https://www.amazon.com/Sword-and-Scimitar-audiobook/dp/B07L3CZF7Z/ref=sr_1_4?crid=278ZUCQD36M5I&keywords=the+sword+and+the+scimitar+by+dauid+ball&qid=1698594134&srprefix=The+sword+and+the+scimi%2Caps%2C115&sr=8-4)

Before I went to Israel to live, I was given this book: *Blood Brothers*. It destroyed my perspective and my ignorance of the conflict. It is an eyewitness history of what life has been like in Israel from the opening of the nation in 1948. It is written by an Arab Christian pastor, Elias Chacour, who grew to become a bishop and leader in Galilee, this book will give you perspectives no one else will and should be read with caution.:

[https://www.amazon.com/Blood-Brothers-Dramatic-Palestinian-Christian/dp/154090217X/ref=sr\\_1\\_2\\_sspa?crid=3LEQJWPQ395PN&keywords=Elias+Chacour&qid=1698593901&srprefix=elias+chacour%2Caps%2C107&sr=8-2-](https://www.amazon.com/Blood-Brothers-Dramatic-Palestinian-Christian/dp/154090217X/ref=sr_1_2_sspa?crid=3LEQJWPQ395PN&keywords=Elias+Chacour&qid=1698593901&srprefix=elias+chacour%2Caps%2C107&sr=8-2-)

[sponsored&sp\\_csd=d2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGY&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/s?ref=sponsored&sp_csd=d2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGY&psc=1) Neither book is suggested as a "biblical" perspective, but both take pains to provide eyewitness accounts, clarity and primary source material for you examine to understand.

**For further study:**

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Psalm 122  
Tuesday: Jeremiah 29:7  
Wednesday: Hebrews 11:17-19  
Thursday: Matthew 24:32-35  
Friday: Matthew 24:45-47  
Saturday: Revelation 16:15  
Sunday: Luke 17:20-24

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.