



THE POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE IN ISRAEL

Will it create new conditions?

November 24th, 2005

Hello Everyone! Paul Billington here again with another edition of the Bible in the News. And once more the news headlines are telling us that the purpose of God—as outlined for us many centuries ago in this Book we call THE BIBLE—is moving forward.

This past week has seen a political earthquake in Israel—at least, that is what the *Jerusalem Post* and several others dubbed the story of Sharon's decision to leave the LIKUD party and create a new party in Israeli politics. With the present Israeli government now collapsing, and a General Election likely on March 28, 2006, a new chapter will open—and at this stage it is anyone's guess as to the shape of things to come in Israeli politics.

And "Guessing" is just where it is at right now. Opinion polls give us their verdicts, commentators and journalists try to form public opinion—the politicians strike out at each other, doing their best to discredit rivals—and lots of money will be spent in trying to convince Israeli voters who to vote for.

All this will continue for the next few months. But a lot can happen in the short time between now and March 28—especially in Israel. So it is wise to reserve judgement as to what the specific outcome might be—at least for now. Let us see how it goes—how Sharon's new party makes out with its middle-of-road policy. How LIKUD and the right-wing organize themselves, and how well the new Labour Party leader Peretz does in attracting popularity.

The Bible tells us very clearly that events in Israel—and indeed, Israel itself—is a *preparation* for the return of Christ, who will enter the scene with his saints. This preparation has been going on for a century—and it is helpful if we stand back and survey the big picture. The process is outlined for us in the symbolic language of Revelation 16:12 and 15. The two relevant verses read as follows:

Verse 12 reads: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."

Verse 15 reads: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Now as many listeners will know, this river Euphrates of verse 12 has long been identified with the Islamic Empire of Turkey—also known as the Ottoman Empire. This *political* power was indeed "dried up" about the time of the First World War, when Britain and her allies pushed the Turks out of the Middle East, including Palestine.

This reading of the verse was understood following the Reformation.

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Ariel Sharon: A New Party



"Bibi" Netanyahu: Likud Favourite



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Joseph Mede in 1645, Peter Jurieue in 1687, Thomas Newton in 1754 are some of the writers who understood Rev. 16:12 in that way—and with the events of 1914-18 driving the Turk out of the Middle East, all seemed to be fulfilled—especially when, as happened, the Balfour Declaration viewed with favour the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine.

But look at the situation today. The United States, Britain *and* Austrian forces are fighting Islamic “waters” (peoples) along the banks of the same river Euphrates. The power of Saddam Hussein—a number one enemy of Israel—*was dried up!* And who knows what is yet to come in the war upon Islamic extremism and terrorism? The more it is “dried up,” the better it will be for Israel.

But Rev. 16:12 says that *the waters* of this river are dried up “that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.”

Many have assumed that this “way of the kings of the East” referred to Israel itself. This brings another dimension into the picture.

The prophet Malachi (3:1) says that a messenger will be sent TO PREPARE THE WAY before the Lord. And in chapter 4:2 he describes the coming of the Lord as “the Sun of Righteousness arising.” The messenger that is to prepare his way, he tells us (verse 5) is Elijah. And Jesus himself also says (Matt. 17:11) that Elijah “truly shall first come, and restore all things.”

The preparation of the way then, we suggest, is the work of Elijah. That is what the Bible is telling us. It is there again in Isaiah 40:3 as “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD.” The context of Isaiah 40 is clearly *future*. Also, look at Isaiah 41:2, the righteous man raised up from the east (or sun’s rising)—a king of kings.

So this is where the politics of Israel is leading. A situation is to be created in which this work of the messenger, Elijah, can proceed. It requires a particular climate so that the preparation of the way can be developed. Elijah, and no doubt other saints with him will begin to enlighten a section of the Jewish people in Israel, bringing them to a closer observance of the Law of Moses (Malachi 4:4), in PREPARATION for the LORD, who in Rev. 16:15 announces: “Behold, I come as a thief.

Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

So it is not really a matter of who wins the up-coming election in Israel—but rather what CONDITIONS will be created by the new Government when it is elected. A way must be prepared.

The war on Terror, and the on-going battle to dry up the Islamic waters is part of this picture. This may yet become more intense, while in Israel itself the development of Religious Zionism can be expected to continue.

So once more we can see the Bible in the News—especially when we view the development of events as they have taken place over many years. Another chapter is about to open—what will it bring?

Join us again next week when once more God willing, we will look at the Bible in the News.

