



# ISRAEL LEADERS PUSH FOR PEACE WHILE PERSECUTING THEIR OWN PEOPLE

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The Bible is in the News again, and this is Paul Billington speaking about it.

The headlines about Israel this week are largely journalistic predictions about the expected political direction the country is expected to take since Ariel Sharon abandoned the Likud party to start his own show with a party he has called *Kadima*. Even Shimon Perez, the former head of the Labour Party is throwing his support behind Sharon. But it is another four months before the Israeli General Election and who knows what other news headlines we will be seeing before then! The present picture could change considerably.

Another headline that popped up this week tells us about another deadline that will be reached within four months also—The head of Israeli Intelligence, Major General Ahron Ze'evi says that the world has until the end of March to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. He says that even some Arab countries are beginning to fear Iran's potential power.

Now *there's* a development that could upset the applecart! The confrontation with Islamic extremism is not going away—All we can say to this is “*Watch this space!*”

But while the world walks (or is it running?) into World War III, other things are happening which—although they don't make page 1—are very significant to the Bible reader. I have in mind the aftermath of the Gaza pull-out which happened last Summer. Many of those who were evicted from their homes in Gush Katif in the Gaza strip, are now in the category of refugees. This is so much so that the a-political organisation, The Israel Homeless Association, has been involved in arranging for tons of supplies to be shipped from donors in the USA. El Al Airlines gave a special low rate for shipping the goods to those homeless Jews who were thrown out of their former homes in Gush Katif. From the Association's non-political perspective, “these people are dislocated individuals who need our help,” says the Director.

Another report appeared in *The Jerusalem Post* this week which reveals—in the words of the State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss—“the negligent manner in which the expelled Jews of Gaza and northern Samaria have been treated since they were ejected from their homes and communities.”

“There can be no doubt” says the *Post* “that the government acted with gross negligence on almost every level.” There was



*Above: Sharon forms his new 'Kadima' Party and is joined by Shimon Peres (below) from Labour. The idea is to go 'forward' to peace by giving up land to Palestinian Arabs.*



*Below: Jewish settlers watch their homes being demolished in Gaza last summer. They now abused and homeless, says report.*



“rampant abuse of the civil rights of opponents of the (disengagement) plan by the criminal justice system.” There was “selective enforcement of the law based on political affiliation.”

Quoting yet another official report, the *Jerusalem Post* says that it:

“...substantively proves that the abuses suffered by protesters at the hands of the judicial and law enforcement arms of the state were systemic, widespread and enabled, if not requested, at the highest levels of government. Attorney-General Menahem Mazuz, according to the report, made it absolutely clear to state prosecutors in public remarks that they were to treat non-violent protesters as if they were involved in a rebellion against state authorities whose purpose was to destroy the state and its institutions.”

The article goes on to point out that this abuse was directed toward *religious* Israelis.

“...apparent selective abuse of the civil rights of religious Israelis by law enforcement and judicial authorities does not seem to have ended in the aftermath of the withdrawal and expulsion plan.” No wonder then, that Israel’s Religious Zionists are feeling dispirited and depressed. Abandoned by Sharon, his Government turned into their enemy, their own political base virtually dismantled—homeless, and their “promised Land” taken from them, and talk of more Land being taken away and given to the Arabs; they must be feeling pretty low and hopeless!

Well: this is a picture that we are given in Ezekiel chapter 37, in the figure of dry bones. You might like to look at this. In verse 2 we are told that these bones are very *dry*. Now the Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon tells us that this word translated *dry* here is “especially used of a person whose hope has failed.” Gesenius says that it means “disappointed,” “ashamed.” This idea and condition is expressed in verse 11 where we read:

“...these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, *Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.*”

The idea of being “cut off” and “broken off” is given by the apostle Paul in Romans chapter 11 (see verses 17-22). But he also speaks in this chapter (verse 15) of their receiving, and of “*life from the dead*,” and of their being “grafted in again.” This is what Ezekiel 37 is about—look at verse 3 and the question. *Can these bones live?* The chapter goes on to speak of spiritual life being breathed into this disappointed and hopeless people. The spirit of the Truth is to enter into them says verse 14—and to understand what that means we must go to John 6:63 where Jesus says:

“It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, *and they are life.*”

So the depressed and hopeless people must yet “hear the word of the LORD” (Ezek. 37:4). They must be taught the Truth.

You know: it may well be that the expulsion from Gush Katif, the injustice and the abuse now being suffered, is all part of a humiliation that is preparing hearts and minds so that they *will* hear the word of the LORD!

We may be very close now to that time when spiritual restoration can begin. Both Malachi and Jesus have told us that Elijah truly shall first come and restore all things (Matt. 17:10-11; Mal. 4:5-6).

We can all pray for this promised restoration; we can pray—as the apostle Paul did—that Israel might be saved (Romans 10:1). The apostle Paul believed that they would be saved, as he writes in Romans 11:26; “And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

And so it is that we watch the Bible in the News—praying for, and awaiting the redemption of Israel. For that is our Hope too. Talk to you again next week, God willing.



**“OUR BONES ARE DRIED, AND  
OUR HOPE IS LOST: WE ARE CUT  
OFF FOR OUR PARTS.”  
Ezekiel 37:11.**