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Blinding Developments: Israel and the World



Imagine this scene: A group of international lobbyists coordinate demonstrations in front of the European parliament buildings in Brussels, the UN headquarters in New York, the Kremlin, the White House and in Tiananmin Square in Beijing.

These peaceful demonstrators all carry a placard with the same preposterous message: “Israel, Soon the Capital of the World!”

Just what would be the response of the world’s nations? Certainly, the mandarins running each of the world’s power centers and its institutions, if not affronted, would mock this procession. After all, these elite policy-makers are actively involved in solving the world’s problems — some are even directly engaged in trying to pacify the strife in

the oil-laden Middle East. They propose peace plans for Israel and the Palestinians and offer advice all around, all the while mostly considering Israel a rogue state. They think Israel is a constant irritant to world peace; that its capital, Jerusalem, is “a burdensome stone” (Zechariah 12:3); and that the world would be better off without this country. After all, in their eyes Israel is considered a runt, a stub of a country located in a precarious and barren location, not even having international recognition

of its own capital. And this will be the world’s capital ... soon?

The demonstrators would be denounced as deranged. Certainly, their demonstration wouldn’t be covered on the evening news.

But just what are the real facts? It may seem unbelievable to many today, but Israel will harbor the capital of the world in the not-too-distant-future. And not only that, but the world’s religious center will be found there as well as the seat of world government and the nexus point of world wealth.



Many signs today indicate that these developments are in the near future.

Re-emergent Israel: A Prophetic Sign?

What evidence do we have for such bewildering predictions about Israel? Bible prophecy — literal Bible prophecy. Of course, there is no shortage of debates on these and related topics. But little of this debate has anything to do with the Bible. Rather, most debates find their origin more because of preconceived notions, tradition and, sadly, vested interest. That said, there assuredly are some legitimate points of debate with respect to the interpretation of Bible prophecy. But regarding Israel's future, the expectation of its restoration and lifting up is firmly grounded in Scripture. We will not document the overwhelming evidence of the Bible on these points of future prophecy yet to be fulfilled.

How is it possible that a people — a small race dispersed into little fragments to virtually every nation around that globe and relentlessly persecuted, no less — has survived for almost 2,000 years with its identity intact?

But the significance of the topic of Israel is even more urgent than that of impending future prophetic fulfillment. It is prophecy already being fulfilled before our eyes. The world and its leaders have little excuse for not recognizing that last-day prophecy has already begun to be fulfilled. In fact, it is Israel that is the first last-day prophecy actually being fulfilled. Even if the world's policymakers do not know Scripture, then logic, history, or the study of anthropology and the laws of probability each alone argue that the re-emergence of a sovereign land called Israel is a development that qualifies as a miracle. How can this be denied? Otherwise, how is it possible that a people — a small race dispersed into little fragments to virtually every nation around that globe and relentlessly persecuted, no less — has survived for almost 2,000 years with its identity intact? This has occurred with no other people that once lost their country. How unlikely is it that in a world where languages are disappearing by the hundreds each and every year that Hebrew — a language that fell from common usage — is again broadly spoken and taught today? Never has this occurred in the history of the world. How improbable is it that

a nation again reestablishes itself in a war-torn region of its original location after almost 1,900 years? Yet, Israel today is reborn — though still in its unbelievably stage — just as Scripture has said would occur.

Why won't the world and the majority of what is called Christianity today (the vast majority of which denies the significance of modern Israel) not recognize this fulfillment of prophecy as an indication of certain future fulfillments of prophecy despite these extreme odds and the words of Scripture? Jerusalem, capital of the world? The leaders of the world instead laugh at Israel and the preposterous prophecies of its prophets.

However, the indications of future developments with Israel do not stop with itself. There are also many other signs evident today outside of Israel that point to the nearness of the time that it will again be fully restored. We are referring here to the start of the Millennium, right after the end of the seven-year Tribulation Period.

Foreshadows Today Outside of Israel

Given what the Bible says must happen before the Millennium can be under way and Israel and Jerusalem restored to



the “head,” we then have some clear insights as to current-day signs and developments that align and prepare for the future fulfillment of prophecy with respect to Israel.

While the sovereign nation of Israel is itself a sign of the times, other signs are mentioned that mark the “season” of the nearing appearance of the Day of the Lord. These have to do with two sets of preparations — one evident in Israel itself, and the other with respect to the emerging developments in the Gentile nation around her and the entire world. Both of these sets of signs interplay in the future fulfillment of prophecies that ultimately precede or lead to Israel’s full restoration and reconciliation with her Messiah. But before we briefly review some of these signs, let’s first identify the conditions that will apply to Israel and the rest of the world at the start of the Millennium. That will help us to recognize the signs and preparations today that contribute to the changes first required.

It will be quickening to take a brief look at these and other signs.

Characteristics of the Millennium

Just what will the Millennium be like for Israel and the world? Here is what the Bible says. The

For one, the Vatican will no longer need to have its own currency. Its palatial buildings no longer will exist for their present purposes. The chief temple will then be in Jerusalem, not Rome or anywhere else.

following list borrows heavily from a list of 26 characteristics compiled by Nathaniel West in his classic work, *The Millennium: The Thousand Year Reign of Christ*.¹

1. Satan will be bound [...] together with his angels, imprisoned in the “abyss.”

2. The Antichrist’s kingdom will be overthrown forever, and the kingdoms of the world never be revived. Babylon the Great has been destroyed.

3. There shall be one kingdom in that day, the Kingdom of Christ, to which all the kingdoms of the world will be obedient.

4. There shall be one religion then, the religion of Christ alone. All false religious systems, and corrupt forms of Christianity shall have disappeared forever. All idols will be destroyed.

5. “All Israel” shall be holy to the Lord. Their apostasy will be finished.

6. War shall exist no more.

7. Harmony will be restored in creation.

8. The land of Israel will be restored from barrenness into beauty, and made fruitful, glorious, and free from plague.

9. Israel and Judah will be reunited under one King.

10. The geography of Israel will be changed.

11. The “Outcast of Israel” and “Dispersed of Judah” will re-

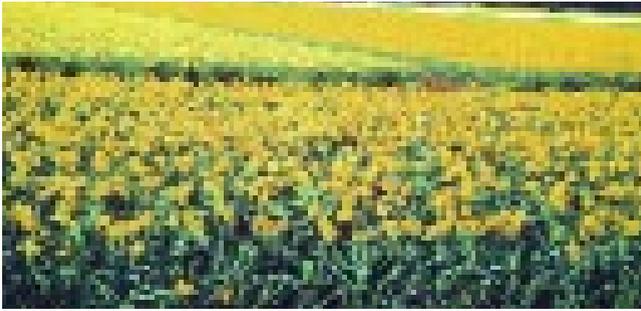
turn to their fatherland, from the East, West the North and the South.

12. The wealth of the world will move to Israel.

13. The people of Israel will be honored. Ten men will grab the skirt of a Jew.

We clearly see that there will be a lot of monumental changes in the world in the very near future. The centers of world religion, government and wealth will be radically shifted to what we see today as a sliver of contested land called Israel. For one, the Vatican will no longer need to have its own currency. Its palatial buildings no longer will exist for their present purposes. The chief temple will then be in Jerusalem, not Rome or anywhere else.

As mentioned, the nexus point of the world’s wealth and global government will find their berth there. Consider for a moment what this really means. The UN buildings in New York, Geneva and elsewhere will no longer be needed. Christ will be the Mediator between nations. “He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide” (Micah 4:3). The kingdoms centered in Brussels, Beijing, Moscow, Washington and other places will be denuded of power ... toothless and in abeyance to



Today, we can already see that some of the prophecies about future Israel are very possible. For example, this sere desert will again fruit and blossom. Modern Israel is one of the leading exporters of flowers in the world.

the Millennial Kingdom. The International Criminal Court in the Hague will be redundant. Justice and wise counsel will emanate from Israel. “The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:2).

In its mission to promote “mental health” (among other goals), the World Health Organization and the World Bank, which today is ineffectively wishing for a “world free of poverty” will be superseded. The world will be cleansed, suffering will end, and mental health will return. Man’s efforts for a humanist utopia will have been proven to be straw ... edifices built on sand. The stock exchanges around the world, the money market links and banking systems will be completely changed. Whatever their form or purpose in the Millennium, their centers will now be found in Israel. In my interpretation of Scripture, multinational corporations also will no longer exist in their present form. Instead, the Bible says, “Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken” (Micah 4:4. See also Zechariah 3:10). Accordingly, everyone will be engaged in his or her own independent economic activities.

To some, the prospect of all these changes will seem alarming. What should be most alerting is that today we clearly see the early preparations and tremors that will facilitate these very changes. All of these changes will take place after the Lord returns for His Church. While the Lord’s return has always been imminent, now it becomes ever more probable that this event could occur at any given moment as we now see the entire earth tremor in its rapid trajectory towards the Tribulation, the Day of the Lord ... Armageddon.

Israel: The Leaves Come Out

Christ said this about Israel: “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened” (Matthew 24:32-33). The fig tree signifies the beginning blossoming of Israel, the revived statehood of Israel and rule over Jerusalem.

Today, we can already see that some of the prophecies about future Israel are very possible. For

example, this sere desert will again fruit and blossom. Modern Israel is one of the leading exporters of flowers in the world (second only to Holland) and a sizable exporter of fruits. Pound for pound, Israel is the most efficient military force in the world. Orthodox Jews are already prepared to reinstitute sacrifices in the temple that will be rebuilt in the Tribulation Period. There are additional indications that preparations are already in train that point to the actual fulfillments that will occur.

However, many more indications of preparations and facilitating developments for future fulfillment prophecy can be seen outside of Israel. There are too many to review in this short space. Let’s briefly review some of the major ones:

The Rise of Globalization and Money Mobility: In recent decades, the world’s monetary and financial systems have been transformed into a highly mobile form. Cross-border money flows and trade have boomed. These and other developments have made wealth very mobile. While on the one hand, these rapid developments are emblems of the future evil Babylon the Great of the last days (the endtime re-emergence of last-day Tyre), it also creates the earthly means for

the fulfillment of future prophecy. Otherwise, how could it be possible that the wealth of the world will flow to Israel in a short time? Scripture says, "Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come" (Isaiah 60:5).

Many other Scriptures refer to this future occurrence. An all-encompassing one is this: "At the end of seventy years, the LORD will deal with Tyre. She will return to her hire as a prostitute and will ply her trade with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth. Yet her profit and her earnings will be set apart for the LORD; they will not be stored up or hoarded. Her profits will go to those who live before the LORD, for abundant food and fine clothes" (Isaiah 23:17-18).

The Rise of the Kings of the East: (Revelation 16:12) China has clearly awoken in recent decades after falling asleep in the 1800s. Now, following 18 centuries of being the world's leading economy, a brief interlude, it has again amassed great influence and is emerging as the hub of a new regional economic colossus. Together with India and other Asian tiger countries, world economic power is shifting (eastward) more rapidly than ever before. This dynamic must be seen as prophetically significant. Moreover, it is already possible to see how this region will be the cause of some great dislocations in world affairs. The serious malevolence that could yet emanate out of this area still lies

ahead. A point to realize, however, is that China may only have the window of a decade or two to project its power upon the world. While it has been growing rapidly in terms of its economic and financial clout, it faces some serious hurdles in the near future. The most significant one is that it has a rapidly aging population ... one the most severe conditions of any country in the world.

The Emerging Apostate Religious System: The architecture of the false religion typified by Babylon, the mother of harlots, is taking rapid form, both institutionally as well as in terms of a convergence of consensus of its false doctrines (Revelation 17). Another separate development relating to religion that aligns with endtime prophecy is the infiltration of the Church by false doctrines, and the "faith of many running cold." Certainly, we see clear evidence that these trends are also underway ... and how quickly. However, here again, as analysts we can conjecture a window of opportunity that allows us as Christians to broadly identify the very season of Christ's return. Islam is growing rapidly, relative to the faiths presenting themselves under the Christian label. Will Islam ever be part of the apostate religious system? While some think so, there are solid grounds for doubt. While anything is possible in God's plan, orthodox Islam brooks no compromise with the infidels. It will not rest until all worship Allah. As such, it seems inconceivable that the greater part of Islam will ever be part of the harlot

(Revelation 17). If so, given that Islam is expanding rapidly (number 1.5 billion today and even extending its footprint to the middle of Europe), that suggests that there also is only a limited time period that the "harlot" can emerge in the Great Tribulation, before it faces an onslaught by Islam. Could that window also be on the order to one or two decades?

The Re-energization of Russia: Just 10 years ago, some prophecy scholars began to doubt the pre-millennial role of Russia that the Bible mentions. After all, following the break-up of the USSR, Russia itself nearly imploded from the geo-political scene. Of course, what is seen can never deny what Scripture says will occur. Yet, today we can see that this was an incorrect conclusion. Virtually overnight, soaring oil prices and world energy supply problems have again vaulted this nation into a position of powerful influence on world affairs. For the time being, it is the world's second largest energy exporter. Its financial problems have virtually vanished. And it has also not lost its influence in weaponry. In 2004, Russia was second in global arm sales with \$6.1 billion in agreements. Only the US was greater. However, Russia's power can only be temporary, as its leverage upon the world rests large upon its energy wealth. Here, Russia faces certain decline as its oil fields are old and rapidly losing production. Some energy analysts project that Russia will largely be a spent force in the world



energy arena sometime over the next 10 to 20 years, if not earlier.

We could mention numerous other indicators of impending future prophetic fulfillment, some directly mentioned in Scripture, others only indicated tangentially (i.e. the convergence of mammon and religion, the politicization of oil and its positioning against Israel, populations trends, technology ... etc.) It is also interesting to observe that some of the last-day geopolitical trends and developments mentioned above and others that we have not reviewed also have a decay forecast ahead. One cannot be faulted for perceiving that there is only a brief window where all the prophesied events of the last days can occur. And that window is within the next one or two decades. While these conjectures are based upon fallible human forecasts, it nevertheless shows that Christians by watching (as they are commanded to do) can broadly discern the season of the Day of the Lord.

Of course, none of the above-mentioned developments individually provide reliable proof of the last day season, certainly not any present prophetic fulfillment. However, given that we are assuredly living during that era when this "generation will certainly not pass away until all these things" happen, we must take it as extremely significant that all the necessary preparation for the fulfillment of all prophecies (except that which occurs at the end of the Millennium) are today rapidly taking shape. After all, the twigs are getting tender and the "leaves are coming out."

Thoughts to Ponder

Considering what we have briefly reviewed, we return to our opening scene — demonstrators waving placards announcing the soon move of the world's power centers to Israel. Will the elites and leaders of this world listen? No. As they are of this world and under Satan's domain, in the end these designates will do everything to try to thwart this certain outcome. Sadly, if our demonstrators achieve anything, they will likely only incite the envy and hatred of the world against Israel. As such, the counsels and nations of the world will continue to repress Israel, trod on its internal affairs and to further propose its further partitioning.

Yes, before the fulfillment of all prophecy for Israel takes place, much has yet to happen, including enormously troubled times. Today, more than half of all Jews still reside outside of Israel. Notably, two-thirds of the Diaspora Jews in the world yet live in the United States.

However, to anyone who has eyes to see and ears to hear, they will recognize that the earth is now racing towards its prophesied destiny. How could believers not be aware that all prophetic spark plugs — every one of them — are being readied to fire, the fuel mixture is becoming hot and compressed, and all the cylinders ready to combust in rapid succession? Fulfillment of much prophecy is no longer in the realm of impossibility or inconceivability. The Lord has mercifully allowed all of these developments so as to be recognized by His people ... to enable

them to identify the season of His coming return.

Christ's return is imminent. Relentlessly, with every passing day, with every passing moment, we can also today say that His return at the very next moment is ever more probable. (MC)

ENDNOTES

- 1 US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, NIPA and International Transactions statistics.

Already, massive conversions have taken place claiming upwards of four billion converts... among them many Christians.

What form will this trap take and how can its grip be avoided? Can Christians prosper in the Lord's grace and live free of any complicity in this endtime agenda?

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