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Final Combustion: Oil, Islam and the Christian West – Part IV

By Wilfred Hahn



A Trap Set and Baited

Having briefly reviewed the situations in Europe and North America, we better understand the nature of the snare befalling the world. It is not as if oil prices have not surged before (i.e. the early 1980s, and also during the first Gulf War in 1991), providing ample foreshadowing of a possible future trap. Yet, interestingly, oil prices fell to new lows (in real terms, after adjusting for general inflation) in the late 1990s. It seemed inexplicable at the time given that supply and demand developments for global energy were inexorably worsening all the while. Yet, given the falling prices during that time, it would have been impossible to convince consumers and populist governments to prepare for the ultimate shortages that were sure to arrive in the future. The energy conversation warnings were soon forgotten. As an example, sales of gas-guzzling SUVs continued to surge. Looking back, that oil price decline can only be seen as a brilliant

stroke of deception, buying time for the ultimate trap to be prepared.

And Now, the Kings of the East

Having reviewed the incredible sequence of probabilities that have brought our world to this particular situation today, we recognize it as no accident. Both the overall scheme as well as the suddenness of the onset of the crisis phases has been masterfully orchestrated.

In the mid-20th century, all of the oil-producing monarchies of the Middle East were still insignificant, extremely poor and small in population. Today they are rich in oil reserves and strategically important to the world. As we have learned, the majority of the world's proven oil and gas reserves lie underneath Islamic countries, the majority in the Middle East. All begrudge the existence of Israel.

Today, America is the world's biggest oil importer, more than twice as large as the second-place importer, Germany. Taken together, European import requirements



are roughly similar to that of the US. Both Europe and America are hopelessly dependent upon Middle East oil supplies. The Top-10-X countries — our representative sample of the most powerful Christian countries — are the world's most voracious energy consumers. Any disruption of supplies from this area or a rise in the price of fossil fuels threatens serious hardship.

And now, in recent decades, a group of fast-growing Asian countries — perhaps representative of the Kings of the East as mentioned in Revelation 16:12 — have begun to grow in leaps and bounds. Why now? These countries represent almost half of the world's population and to this point are consuming only a fraction of the energy of the Top-10-X world (only 10-15% on a per person basis). And in recent years, their appetite for oil and automobiles is exploding. As fate would have it, these countries account for less than 2.5 percent to 3 percent of world oil reserves. One couldn't plan a worse set of dynamics for the fate of energy prices and Israel.

More Instability Ahead

As long as oil prices remain high — even if only in the \$30 to \$60 per barrel range, for example — the teeth of the world's energy trap will continue to inflict wounds in the future. Why? As long as oil prices remain high, the balance of world power will continue to shift. In the Middle East, oil production costs are but a fraction of anywhere else on the globe — as low as \$0.20 per barrel. Profits are booming and Arab nations are accumulating enormous cash reserves. They are strengthening financially, while the Western consumer is weakening.

In Russia's case, a similar situation applies. So much money is flowing into Russia that the unimaginable is happening: This country is actually repaying its debts.



Only recently (1998) did this country default on \$40 billion of debt. Today, it is a challenge to decide how best to spend its surplus revenues. Already, spending on armaments is scheduled to be boosted by 50 percent in 2006. This one-time communist country today possesses 3 times the foreign exchange reserves of the United States, its former arch enemy.

Final Woes for the Christian West and Israel

Critics of North American evangelicals often blame them for their apparent non-differentiating hatred of Muslims and Arabs and blind support for Israel. A recent, well-researched article entitled "American Rapture" in the December 2005 issue of *Vanity Fair*, written by respected journalist Craig Unger, is one example. Interestingly, this author wrote the best-seller *House of Bush, House of Saud* in which he presents disturbing connections between America and Saudi Arabia.¹ No, we should differentiate Muslims from Islam. Muslims are victims of deception — a false belief system. In truth, so is a portion of the Christian West. If oil is to be a major endtime catalyst that contributes to the eventual abandonment (and attempted annihilation) of Israel by the entire world, then the reciprocal part of the problem must be found in the Christian West.

Actually, we can be even more specific. The most critical pivot point is found in

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Ruins at Laodicea, Turkey



America. Why? The US is the world's current military superpower and remains as the key protector of Israel. As the saying goes, "To whom much is given, much is required." Not only that, America also has the world's largest energy deficit. Also, it is in this country that we may find "ground-zero" for the last-day version of the Laodicean church (see Revelation 3:14-21). A large portion of North American Christianity believes that its oil-intensive "good life" is an inerrant blessing. Maybe once it was ... but not likely forever.

Rather, much of the church is truly "poor, blind, and naked" (verse 17) and says, "I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing." (verse 17) In this regard, it is not an insignificant observation that the various forms of "prosperity theology" are found in no other country with such deep roots as in North America. Without a doubt, it would be difficult to preach this perverted gospel to persecuted Christians in China ... or in Nigeria.

It is not an unfounded speculation to observe that, on the present course, the world (including the former Top-10-X Christian nations) stands to be tempted at some point to sell out Israel. If the perspective of the Bible is true, if there is a Lord that offers us salvation, and if there is indeed an "enemy the devil who prowls around like a roaring lion looking for

someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8), we should be looking up.

Today, Islamic nations literally surround Israel. Islamic nations have oil and hate Israel. America is the world's largest importer and per-capita user of energy and still stands in the breach for Israel. But how much longer? How much longer until Europe will become much more anti-Israel than it already is, especially now that the Russian bear has Europe in the energy noose? We can only speculate.

Thoughts To Ponder

We oil analysts have now come to the end of our analyses. We've looked at both barrels and the Bible. As we have together concluded, the world's policymakers and industry captains have not given much recognition, if any, to eternal realities and the fact that there is an intelligent Prince of this world. Choosing to serve mammon, the world has been given over to its perversions and has marched headlong into a trap.

What the world is blithely witnessing today is neither circumstantial nor accidental. Our brief examination reveals this to be the case. We must seriously consider that we are living in the closing scenes of the pre-Tribulation era. If so, what could Christ be waiting for before He returns? Perhaps one more opportunity to woo people to Him ... to purify His Bride ... for wayward Christians yet to repent from lack of true faith?

If all of the above is true, then how might it impact each and every one of us on a personal level? This a deeply personal question. To be sure, it is not likely that our individual actions alone can change the geopolitical scales of the world. Then what can we do as individuals? While we may not escape the repercussion for the sins of the nations in which we live, here are some prescriptions from the Bible:



1. Come out of Babylon. Saying this does not mean that America or any other country is endtime Babylon (Revelation 17,18). The evil spirit of this Babylon is everywhere in the world today. Certainly, those of us living in the West will not be able to escape physically. But we can at least do so spiritually.

2. Consider the object of our affections. According to the familiar saying in regards to how humans can participate in sin, "The body goes to places; our spirit travels by affections." Taking this perspective, we can remove ourselves from any complicity in the great sinful endtime saga that is unfolding for the world by ridding ourselves of improper affections — for example, greed, love of money, love of indulgence, complacency born out of ease and comfort, and so on.

3. Anticipate disciplining. If we truly are to be found "sons of God" during a time such as this, then it is not unlikely that we might experience some discomforts. After all, in that brief space of time that Christ stands before the door just before He reappears for His followers, He says "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline" (Revelation 3:19). That implies that we can expect various types of disciplining, holy purging and even persecution. In one sense, it is a proof of our inheritance. "If you are not disciplined [and everyone undergoes discipline], then you are illegitimate children and not true sons" (Hebrews 12:8).

4. Be earnest, and repent (Revelation 3:19). If rising energy prices are galling us, causing us to grumble about oil companies or Muslims, in reality we may have played an unsuspecting, though small part. The world is where it is today because the whole earth has gone astray in some way ... or at least been tempted to stray and follow evil desires. We can repent and earnestly pursue knowledge ... knowledge of eternal significance and true riches.

No doubt, doing without cheap oil will be an inconvenience. Some are taking an arrogant and defiant attitude. Reflecting the self-absorbed consumer view, said one prominent columnist recently, "I'm good enough, I'm rich enough and doggone it, people in the Middle East like my money."² However, we recognize that this perspective reflects total blindness to spiritual forces. The Middle East will assuredly remain the key focus point of world geopolitical affairs, aligning its energy supremacy against Israel and the Church.

Jude tells us that "[...] the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone [because] they follow their own evil desires" (Jude 1). Thankfully, we have choices and precious promises because "[...] he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires" (2 Peter 1:4).

However, facing the sacrifices and difficulties that may be ahead, as Paul reminds us: "In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood" (Hebrews 12:4). Living with less oil shouldn't need to be the end of the world. In that sense, we can also pray and hope that the US will not trade blood for oil and despite the wailing of consumers, will remain steadfast in its protection of Israel. 🚗

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Craig Unger, *Saudi Arabia and the USA: The House of Bush, House of Saud: The Secret Relationship Between the World's Two Most Powerful Dynasties*, Scribner, New York, 2004.
- 2 John Tierney, "Burn, Baby, Burn," *New York Times*, Op-Ed. February 7, 2006.