

Money: Ends and Trends

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Endtime Nexus: Prophesied Oil Crisis

What would Martians think if they were ever to visit earth? Of course, we know there are no Martians ... only in sci-fi movies. After all, the recent Mars probe mission has yet to find any life on that planet. Yet, it is useful to sometimes look at the world as a mythical Martian might. It is a technique that I often employ in my work as a global strategist, viewing global affairs without nationalist or regional bias. Why are things as they are?

One of the most inexplicable features of earth that a Martian would observe is its fixation with the Middle East. From space, the revolving earth appears as a luscious ball, with beautiful blue and green hues. Yet, touching down, the centre around which the world's history and futures revolve mostly looks as an austere, desert wasteland — the Middle East of today. Despite a massive build-up of civilization in other regions around the globe, its axis point of history is still found here. Why? Our Martian visitor would do well to read the world's oldest history book — the Bible. Besides the fact that Mesopotamia is the cradle of civilization and from which all of Abraham's descendents originate, it is also the location of most of the world's hydrocarbons.

Though it is never mentioned specifically in the Bible, oil is inextricably linked to most, if not all of the major nation-players of endtime events.

History of Oil According to the Bible

We find that the first chapter in the Bible — Genesis 1 — sets up the stage for this important fulcrum of oil upon which world events hinge in the endtimes — the Garden of Eden itself. According to literal scripture, this general tropical area was the source of Middle East oil wealth. The landmass of the world at the time of Adam and Eve and right up to Noah's era, experienced a greenhouse climate and was rich in vegetation. Indeed, secular scientists do agree that such conditions existed at one time. There was only one land mass as all the waters had been gathered to one place. Then came the flood. The earth was massively restructured as the water above the earth¹ — the atmospheric water canopy that was called sky — crashed to earth over a forty day period. During and after the deluge, most of the earth was covered by sedimentary silt and the deposits of time. Areas of dense, built-up vegetation and organic matter were gradually compressed into oil, becoming today's non-renewable energy resource that modern society has become vitally dependent upon.

Much of this organic remnant of the pre-flood times remained in the Middle East, the region in which the Garden of Eden was originally located. After the Fall, man was driven out of the garden, and cherubim serving as sentinels were stationed on the east side of the garden to keep man out. Practically, this implies that the entire area could not be farmed, tilled or inhabited by humans. If this reasoning is correct, it was left to grow wild in the hot-house environment of that time, building up massive layers of organic matter. That may explain why so much oil is found in the Middle East today. With this explanation, at least our visiting Martian may now understand why so much oil lies in this region.

Today, approximately 65% of the world's proven oil reserves are concentrated in just five countries — Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iran. All of these nations are in the Middle East. Overall, the region accounts for an even greater portion.

Oil: The Beginning of Prophetic Significance

Is it coincidental that the Middle East — this politically and spiritually unstable region — sits upon the earth's greatest oil reserves? Was it an accident of history that gave so much of this valuable resource to the enemy countries of Israel and the God of the Bible? No. The scripture tells us that it was God himself that placed this vast wealth in the cradle of civilization. In Revelation we read, "*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.*" (**Revelations 4:11**) More specifically, it is He "*who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it.*" (**Revelation 10:6**)

Clearly, God put the oil there. That is a fact, but why? It seems perplexing to the world, not only to an alien Martian. For some answers, let's leave the anti-diluvian world and next leap to the mid-20th century. There we find some other significant connections that can lead to further insights.

Fueling a Rapid Fire

Developments following the trauma of World War II were extremely significant in the world's prophetic time-line in many ways. The carnage and human genocide of World War II triggered a global response, prompting monumental changes on the global scene, crucially setting the stage for rapid endtime developments. A cluster of events took place.

Consider some developments that had an impact on the modern-day role of oil.

- Israel was founded on May 14, 1948. As far as is known, this country has no proven oil reserves of material size. Yet, its arch enemies do. And, the world's largest nations — its potential protectors — are enslaved to a continuing supply of cheap oil especially as they ascribe to doctrines of globalization, materialism and humanism.
- Various global organizations were founded during this time that were committed to the idea that rapid economic growth and material prosperity was an ideal for humanity. The International Monetary Fund was conceived at the July 1944, Bretton Woods conference. Another influential organization in this respect, the World Bank, was also born at the same conference.²
- Many financial and consumer shifts began about that time. Consumer economics was born, representing a major shift from earlier economic theories. Advertising spending took off as of this period. Whereas advertising spending averaged about \$200 per person, suddenly this figure began to rise following the 1940s. Today advertising spending is roughly four times this amount (*adjusted for inflation*). The consumer era of the West required more and more oil.
- Travel, specifically international travel, began to boom. This is significant as transportation today accounts for roughly 50% of world oil consumption.
- And, most interestingly, in 1948 — the same year Israel was founded — America for the first time became a net importer of oil.

All these developments find their root in the same decade. The indirect result? Between 1948 and 1972, world oil consumption grew fivefold, ushering in the golden age of oil. That represents an average compound growth rate of 11% per year, or a doubling of oil consumption every six and a half years.

All of these threads lead to the situation that world finds itself today. Oil is a main reason why the Western world has become fixated and focused on affairs of the Middle East, which possesses the huge energy resources needed to serve as Europe's oil tanker and as America's supplier of last resort.³ For example, as of the early 1950s, the US began to cozy up to Saudi Arabia.

Oil — All Roads Lead to Mesopotamia

In the mid-20th century, all of the oil-producing monarchies of the Middle East were insignificant, extremely poor and small in population. Today they are rich in oil reserves and strategically important to the world. That said, they face wrenching troubles with booming populations and for the most part, shaky governments and finances. As already mentioned, the majority of the world's proven oil reserves lie in the Middle East, all of these countries of the Muslim faith and at best, grudging the existence of Israel.

The prominence of the Middle East with respect to oil will endure for a long time ... at least to the point of a world crisis. While these countries sit upon vast wealth of oil, they account for only 25% of world production. That means that the rest of the world will run out of oil long before oil wells in the Middle East will run dry.

Despite the strategic power that this represents, the Western world merrily continues to become more dependent upon imported oil. There, houses are becoming ever larger and low-fuel-efficient models of automobiles are popular sellers.

The result is that today the United States imports approximately 55% of its oil consumption needs. Recently, the US Energy Department forecast that dependence upon foreign oil will increase faster than previously predicted. By 2025, this proportion would rise to 70%. Some private forecasters are even more pessimistic.

Early this year, the US government's Energy Information Administration reported that crude oil stocks dropped to the lowest level since January 1975, when US oil consumption was well below its present level. While this may only be a short-term development, it certainly is an emblem of the overall vulnerability that America faces.

By far, 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. Any disruption of supplies from this area or a rise in the price of fossil fuels threatens serious hardship.

Given the growth of world oil consumption and the expected supplies, many energy experts expect that a major oil crisis is inevitable — sometime between 2010 and 2015. If the incredibly rapid economic rise of China and other Asian countries continues apace, a crisis could be earlier.

In truth, world agendas regarding oil (especially so in the West) are more concerned with its price than issues regarding its supply and demand. Consumers of the rich world not only want lots of oil, but also cheap oil. That means that the Middle East will assuredly remain the key focus point in world geo-political affairs. Oil production costs there are but a fraction anywhere else on the globe — as low as \$0.20 per barrel. Therefore, the greater access to oil in this area, the better for the gas-guzzling nations. That's why reconstruction efforts of Iraq's oil infrastructure are vitally important. Iraq, the Babylon of the Old Testament, possesses over 10% of world oil reserves — a source of supply that has generally been inaccessible to export markets for some time. Bringing it back online quickly is definitely in the interest of US and European consumers.

The Key Players of Endtime Prophecy All Linked to Oil

Oil is inextricably intertwined with all of the key players mentioned specifically in endtime prophecy, for example, Russia (Gog), Turkey (Togarmah and Gomer), Europe, Saudi Arabia (Sheba), Iraq (Babylon), Iran (Persia), Libya (Put) and others. The United States and Europe have already been mentioned. The US, while perhaps not specifically mentioned in endtime events, nonetheless remains significant as it remains a key ally and defender of Israel, not to mention its recent military campaigns in the Middle East.

Consider these other strategic facts of possible prophetic connection:

1. A possible endtime role of oil in the case of Russia's prophesied actions can be foreseen. It is interesting to learn that a large portion of Iraq's oil is very similar to that of Russia's. Once transportation lines from Iraq have been secured, this oil source stands to be a competitor to Russia's export interests.
2. Russia is today the world's top oil exporter (even more than any Middle East nation). Though Russia still has reserves that could yet last for several decades, its more immediate vulnerability is price. Were the price of oil to fall below \$18 per barrel this nation would be in trouble. Russia's government relies heavily upon oil revenues. Low oil prices would quickly again thrust this nation into financial crisis. As such, its interests in the Middle East are of vital importance and likely to drive its actions in this region.
3. One of the most important export routes for Russian oil goes right through the middle of Turkey. Oil produced in the Russian and Caspian region is shipped by tanker ships through the straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles (right through Istanbul). The former channel is one of the busiest and narrowest tanker waterways in the world. Turkey, the modern-day Togarmah of Bible prophecy scripture, regulates this flow. Its geographic position in this regard gives this country geopolitical power it would not otherwise enjoy. Recently, this transportation channel has again been in the news. Mediterranean refiners (*which supply most of the diesel for Europe*) are suffering severe shortages of crude oil due to security restrictions. To cries of great anguish, Turkey recently decided not to allow larger tanker ships to travel through these straits by night.
4. Russia is today Europe's most important source of oil and natural gas. This dependence will grow larger. Recently, Germany deactivated the first of nineteen nuclear power stations scheduled to be shut down by 2021. The resulting energy gap will have to come from Russia, mostly in the form of increased natural gas imports. As such, Germany (and Europe) are becoming ever more strategically intertwined with the interests of Russia. Already, Germany is Russia's largest investor and trading partner.

Many more oil connections could be cited that could play into prophesied events foretold in the Bible.

In this context, a prophecy found in Ezekiel 38 could apply. It speaks of the attack by a group of nations — "*Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, [...] also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops.*" (**Ezekiel 38:5**) When this happens, "*Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all her villages will say [...] 'Have you come to plunder? Have you gathered your hordes to loot, to carry off silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods and to seize much plunder?'*" (**Ezekiel 38:13**)

What could all this plunder be in the Middle East besides the items mentioned? Could it be the globalized world's most strategically valuable commodity, oil?

Points to Ponder

The Middle East is the main arena of future and fulfilled Bible prophecy, and oil plays a key role in the events in this area. Clearly, the prophetic timeline in this respect has accelerated rapidly since the 1940s. Looking ahead, our brief review just as clearly supports a conclusion that dynamics surrounding the role of oil will heat up leading to severely intractable problems for our increasingly consumer-oriented world. No doubt, oil will be a catalyst for some of the prophesied events in this region of the endtimes. While the "hows" and "whens" remain speculative questions, the geo-political role of oil can hardly be contested. Satan, the grand conspirator behind the world rulers of this age, would be remiss if he were not to seize the strategic advantage of oil in the Middle East, the very area of which a major part has been promised to the descendants of King David.

The facts reviewed suggest that the world will face a major oil crisis of endtime significance. Analysis supports the conclusion that this development is approaching rapidly ... perhaps 10, 20 or less years from now.

The Bible also states that as much as half of all true Christians will face an oil crisis of a much more cataclysmic kind.

Scripture tells us about the 10 virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom who symbolizes the return of Christ. *"The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps."* (**Matthew 25:3-4**) When the midnight cry announcing the bridegroom's arrival came, five virgins faced an oil crisis. They had run out of fuel for their lamps. They had stopped watching and fallen into a slumber of complacency.

The world's geo-politics is sure to devolve around the economics and supply of oil. Satan is well familiar with the strategic significance of this black gold. As such, petroleum holds great endtime significance, triggering certain prophetic events and crisis. While believers may not escape these worldly tremors — at least until the point that we are caught away — they can avoid an even greater crisis. They can stoke their oil supply for an eternity by being watchful.

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour." **Matthew 25:13**

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1. *"And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. God called the expanse 'sky' ".* (**Genesis 1:6**)

² The July 22, 1944 Bretton Woods Agreements, among other aspects was founded on these goals. Quoting the original organizational document: "To promote the long-range balanced growth of international trade and the maintenance of equilibrium in balances of payments by encouraging international investment for the development of the productive resources of members, thereby assisting in raising productivity, the standard of living and conditions of labor in their territories."

³To avoid oversimplification, it should be mentioned that other factors stemming from WW II contributed to the importance of oil in geo-political affairs. The key role that oil played in mechanized warfare during WW II and the following Soviet threat focused strategic attention upon this resource.