

Final Seven Years—How Close?

BY IRVIN BAXTER JR.

Violence, Violence, Violence! Suicide bombing in Netanya kills twenty-six. Suicide bomber near Megiddo kills nineteen. Sixteen killed by suicide bombing in Rishon Letzion. Fourteen killed in Haifa. And on...and on. When will it every end?

Only when Jesus returns at the Battle of Armageddon. There may be temporary lulls. As a matter of fact, it appears, according to the Bible, that there will be. But it won't last. Only conflict lies ahead, and it will continue until the coming of the Prince of Peace.

What do we know for sure about the road ahead for Israel?

We know that the World Community and the Antichrist will confirm a covenant with Israel. Shortly after the confirmation of this covenant, which will undoubtedly reaffirm Israel's right to exist, the Jews will build a temple on the Temple Mount. When the temple is completed, animal sacrifices, as were offered in the times of the First and Second Temples, will be instituted. A prophesied world leader that the Bible calls the Antichrist will then stop these sacrifices and desecrate the Jewish temple. This is when we will know for sure who the Antichrist is.

This event, which in scripture is called the abomination of desolation, will trigger three and one-half years of terrible tribulation. Jesus in Matthew 24:15-21 specifically said that the people in Judea would have to flee for their lives. Judea is the area of the West Bank often referred to as 'occupied territories'.

At the end of this final three and one-half years, the United Nations will apparently demand something of Israel to



The shadow of a bomb disposal expert is seen on the wall as he inspects the scene of a suicide bomb attack in a northern Jerusalem neighborhood, Wednesday June 19, 2002.

AP WorldWide Photo/Elizabeth Dalziel

which she will be unwilling to comply. This will result in the invasion of Israel by the World Community. This invasion will precipitate the Battle of Armageddon.

Just when it appears that Israel is going to be defeated, Jesus will appear to fight for them and to save them. He will then bring the peace to Israel that she has so desperately longed for.

Where are we right now?

The confirmation

It certainly appears that we are very near the time when the Antichrist and the World Community will confirm the prophesied covenant. Why should we think this?

The covenant concerning the status of the nation of Israel is to be confirmed by the International Community. US Secretary of State Colin Powell recently

called for an international peace conference on the Middle East. Israel has always resisted the idea of an international peace conference, fearing that she would lose control of her own destiny. However, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has now stated that he favors an international peace conference. The sponsor for this conference would be the US, the EU, the Russian Federation and the UN.

Building of the temple

Preparations are far advanced for the building of Israel's Third Temple. The only thing stopping it is the political situation. A temple cornerstone has already been obtained. The Temple Institute has been busily recreating all of the furnishings and utensils that will be needed. They have the brazen altar, the laver for washing, the candlestick, the table of shewbread and the altar of incense. They have also trained young priests to perform

all the services of the temple. We have been told that the architectural drawings for the new temple have already been completed.

Last but not least, word recently comes from the Temple Institute that a qualified red heifer has been born. Religious Jews believe they must have a qualified red heifer before they can renew temple worship (See Numbers 19).

Abomination of desolation

The abomination is mentioned in Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and by Jesus in Matthew 24:15. The most detailed description of this event is given by the Apostle Paul in II Thessalonians 2:3-4. He states that the Antichrist (the man of sin) will sit in the temple of God, claiming to be God.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:15-21 that this event would trigger the great tribulation.

In verse 16, He gave a very specific prophecy whose fulfillment is shaping up right now. He said that, when the abomination of desolation occurs, those living in the area of Judea should immediately flee for their lives.

Judea is the territory that has been occupied by Israel since the 1967 War. This is also the territory from which many of the Palestinians launch their terror attacks.

After enduring suicide bombings for the last 20 months, Israel has finally decided she must build a wall separating the West Bank (Judea) from pre-1967 Israel. The wall will be 200 miles long and will use high-tech sensors to detect anyone attempting to cross it. Construction on this wall began June 16th.

There is one huge problem with this wall. There are 200,000 Israeli settlers living on the wrong side of it. The settlers feel they are being forsaken by their government and being placed in imminent danger. And they are right.

This is where the prophecy of Jesus comes into the picture. He specifically stated, 2,000 years ago, that the people of this area would come under horrible slaughter. It appears that Israel's building of this wall is creating the condition for the fulfillment of that prophecy.

President Bush's speech

In early June, it was announced that President Bush would make a speech pre-

senting his plan for peace in the Middle East. The speech was postponed twice because major suicide bombings poisoned the political climate.

When the speech was finally made, President Bush dropped a bomb that no one was expecting. He blatantly called for the ouster of Yasser Arafat as the Palestinian leader. He didn't call Arafat by name, but his message was unmistakable. "Peace requires a new and different Palestinian leadership, so that a Palestinian state can be born," he said. "I call on the Palestinian people to elect new leaders, leaders not compromised by terror."

Several months ago, Ariel Sharon had declared Arafat 'irrelevant' and refused to deal with him. With this speech, the most powerful nation on earth stated its agreement with this decision.

Then President Bush held out to the Palestinian people a promise. "And when the Palestinian people have new leaders, new institutions and new security arrangements with their neighbors, the United States of America will support the creation of a Palestinian state..."

He went on to bring the whole world into his plan, "If the Palestinian people actively pursue these goals, America and the world will actively support their efforts."

This part of the speech was vital, since

an international peace conference on the Middle East has been proposed, and the prophecy in the Bible indicates that the international community will be involved in confirming the covenant.

President Bush took a very strong stand on whose fault it was that peace had not yet come to the Middle East. He said, "I can understand the deep anger and anguish of the Israeli people. You've lived too long with fear and funerals, having to avoid markets and public transportation, and forced to put armed guards in kindergarten classrooms. The Palestinian Authority has rejected your offered hand and trafficked with terrorists."

Yasser Arafat has already announced plans for Palestinian elections early next year. But he has also announced that he will run again. Most people think that Arafat will be re-elected. If he is indeed re-elected, where will this put President Bush and the international community? Will Bush change his mind because of this election, or will he decide that any nation that would elect an incorrigible terrorist cannot be dealt with?

If the second scenario plays out, would this then cause President Bush and the international community to strike a deal with Israel to impose what they see to be a reasonable peace agreement on the area? It appears that this is where we are headed. We will soon see. □

"The Trojan Horse" is a French-produced video documentary that demonstrates, through exclusive footage of Palestinian leaders themselves — including Yasser Arafat — that their goal remains the eradication of the Jewish state.

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