

COUNTDOWN TO **ARMAGEDDON** **BY DAVID DOLAN**

December 20, 2004

A note from Pastor Kevin Lea follows this article.

To mark the premier this coming weekend of the History Channel program that I appear on (details below), along with the January 1st halfway point of the premier decade of this third millennium, I am sending out my promised assessment of current events in light of biblical prophecy. As I wrote last week, this type of material is a departure from what I usually send out on this Israel Update service, so if it is not to your taste, just hit delete!

This will be a relatively brief overview; mainly in recognition of the busy pre-Christmas bustle that many of you are undoubtedly engaged in this week (by the way, Merry Christmas to all who celebrate the Lord's birthday!). If you care to, maybe you can take time to ponder my printed thoughts sometime before the New Year begins? I hope to also see some of you at one of my scheduled meetings in several parts of the world during 2005, where I plan to elaborate on some of the points below.

Unlike some, I have never claimed to have any extraordinary insight into current events or eschatological prophecies. However, my three decades serving as a professional journalist, mostly here in the tumultuous Middle East, have sharpened my senses concerning contemporary world events. During that time and before, I have studied end-time writings by various scholars and authors, along with the primary source—the Bible. Those twin facts have hopefully left me with some insights that are worth sharing here.

THE INGATHERING GOES ON

In my estimation, the bedrock biblical prophecy that continues to unfold before our eyes is the constant influx of Jewish people into their ancient Promised Land—with the largest single Jewish community on earth now living in Israel for the first time in nearly 2,000 years. True, the number of immigrants has dropped substantially in recent years from the record levels reached in the 1990s after the floodgates swung open in the crumbling Soviet Union.

Indeed more Russian-speaking Jews migrated from the former Communist empire to Germany last year than to Israel, due mainly to a more generous absorption aid package offered by Berlin. On top of this, some Israelis continue to exit the Lord's special land for other nations, mostly because of the prolonged Palestinian attrition war and the resulting economic decline.

Nevertheless, many more Jews are still moving here each year than are departing. Increasing numbers are coming from wealthy Western nations, partly in response to escalating worldwide anti-Semitism. Although all Jews are obviously welcomed here, better educated and wealthier ones can usually contribute to the country's up-building more quickly.

SYRIA

As I spelled out in my 1995 novel, *THE END OF DAYS* (and left intact in the 2003 update edition), I expect that the next major prophesied event involving regathered Israel will be a devastating war with Syria. Detailed in Isaiah 17, the regional and international indications that this may be drawing very near are seemingly multiplying every day.

Various Israeli leaders have made clear in 2004 that they are becoming increasingly alarmed over the massive buildup of Hizbullah missiles aimed at their small country from the soil of nearby Lebanon. Syria is the main facilitator of this escalating armed threat, providing transit from Iran for new weapons shipments and vital political support for the radical Lebanese Shiite militia.

Many of you will recall that I warned of the current insurgency in Iraq before US and British forces entered the country in March 2003. I noted how similar the situation there was to Lebanon, where I worked as a journalist during the early 1980s. I wrote that in my estimation, the two main destabilizing agents in Lebanon in those years—Syria and Iran—would undoubtedly repeat their horrific terrorist sponsorship in Iraq after Saddam was overthrown (along with his own Baathist agents). That has sadly proved to be the case, with interim Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Alawi now openly fingering his two meddling neighbors as the main regional parties behind the destabilizing violence rocking his country every day.

Mideast analysts agree that after President Bush's substantial re-election victory in early November, the way is more open than ever for an American military response to Syria's insurgency sponsorship. This has been made increasingly clear in recent weeks, with several leaders, including the President himself, warning the Assad regime in

Damascus to halt this nefarious activity or face the consequences. Many—including myself—suspect that the White House will wisely involve Israel in any military response, which becomes almost a given in light of the heavy burden that stretched US forces are already bearing next door in Iraq.

Already coping with an ongoing revolt in his ruling Likud party over a perceived softening line concerning a Palestinian state and his unilateral Gaza withdrawal plan, Ariel Sharon would probably be glad to demonstrate that he has not really morphed into the lefty-trendy leader that many now suggest. Nothing would show this more plainly than a major clean-out operation against Hizbullah's tumorous outposts along the Lebanese border, and rear bases in the Bekaa Valley and elsewhere. This would undoubtedly involve a direct clash with occupying Syrian forces at some point, if not premeditated strikes on terrorist positions in and around Damascus (where Hamas and other radical Palestinian groups also have offices).

Would such a conflict fulfill Isaiah 17, which seems to foretell an end-time Syrian-Israeli clash that ends with the complete destruction of the Syrian capital city? Not necessarily, but it certainly has every potential to do so. As they say in my business, stay tuned...

IRAN

What about Israel and America's other main regional antagonist, Iran? Will President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon join forces as well in destroying the Shiite regime's nuclear weapons program? I doubt it very much. Along with Israeli military experts like Likud politician Yuval Steinitz, I have pointed out to some of my recent international audiences that taking on Iran would hardly be comparable to Israel's daring 1981 air strike that easily destroyed Saddam's French-built nuclear reactor. For one thing, the Iranian mullah's rule a country that is far more heavily armed and significantly larger in both population and landmass than Iraq, not to mention further away from Israel.

The United States, with possible assistance from Great Britain and Israel, would be in a better position to lead such an operation against Iran's widely scattered nuclear facilities. Will they do this? I doubt it. As difficult as it is to write the next words, I think it is much more likely that my homeland will suffer a non-conventional Al Qaida attack sooner than later, designed to trigger immediate economic chaos and a subsequent US military retrenchment around the globe.

As stated above, I suspect that Iran's proxy force in southern

Lebanon will be destroyed in the coming months or years, either by Israel acting alone or in conjunction with America (with quiet support from France!). But I also think it likely that the fundamentalist Shiite regime will remain in power and continue to build doomsday weapons, which may be deployed in the Gog and Magog invasion of “restored Israel” prophesied in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39. Persia, the ancient name for the area where modern Iran sits today, is said to be a major player in that “last days” (38:16) invasion, originating in the “remote parts of the north” (15) and led by the notorious “Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal” (38:3).

RUSSIA

I see no reason to abandon my long held assumption—postulated by many others before me of course—that “Gog” will turn out to be none other than Russia. Located over one thousand miles due north of Jerusalem, Moscow continues to recover from its humiliating loss of superpower status in the early 1990s. The man leading the forward charge is Vladimir Putin, who is worrying Western leaders every day with growing evidence of his Kremlin heyday-like machinations. The latest is the reputed poisoning by KGB-related agents of pro-Western Ukrainian presidential candidate Victor Yanukovich—leaving the politician looking like a literal ghost from the awful Soviet past.

Unlike many of my Bible prophecy-dissecting cohorts, I do not expect a Russian-led invasion to be the next major event on the Lord’s pre-recorded prophetic calendar. I think the textual evidence in Ezekiel 39 and Revelation 16 strongly suggests that the northern-led invasion, involving Iran and other Mideast powers listed in Ezekiel 38, will instead occur at the end of the 48 month reign of the Antichrist world ruler (Rev 13-14). This would be around the time of the final battle of Armageddon, and possibly spark it off.

Speaking of _____, when will the long-anticipated Antichrist appear, and from exactly where? Although I have some pet theories that I’ve elaborated on in another of my books, ISRAEL IN CRISIS, no one on earth can say for sure before he openly arrives on the scene. But indications are mushrooming that his appearance is not far off—given the dramatic developments here in the Middle East and elsewhere following the unprecedented 2001 terror attacks in New York and Washington. Personally I suspect he might jump onto the world stage in the wake of the Syria-Israel clash noted above, which may immediately precede or follow an even more devastating Islamic terror assault upon America.

COUNTDOWN TO ARMAGEDDON

Speaking of the final battle foretold in Revelation, it is included in the title of the History Channel production slated to debut this coming Sunday evening. If you live in North America, subscribe to that cable channel, and are interested in this topic, tune in at 8:00 PM EST on both coasts, 7:00 Central and 6:00 Mountain. The two hour special will be repeated later that same night, and again during primetime on Thursday evening, December 30, and at other times. Check out their website for these and other times: www.historychannel.com

One other parting prophetic pearl: The Jewish prophet Daniel foretold that the final world ruler mentioned above would come out of the successor empire to Persia, Babylon and Greece—the ancient Roman Empire, which had not yet even appeared in his day. Its modern incarnation is apparently the burgeoning European Union, which from May 1st of this year has stretched from Portugal and Ireland in the west to Estonia and Cyprus in the east.

With the Greek portion of Cyprus included in the May expansion, the EU now almost literally borders Israel. More significantly, the Israeli government recently approved an EU “Action Plan” that will make Israel a part of a select few satellite states designated as special partners of the expanding union. The “European Neighborhood Policy” was endorsed by the cabinet on December 12th. When fully implemented, it will insure that Israel and several other countries located around the EU will have “full and free access to goods, services, people and capital” inside the 25 nation union. It will therefore further tie modern Israel to its largest trading partner, possibly as relations with the United States decline as a result of domestic American conditions.

One absolutely final note: Keep looking up, for according to the Hebrew prophets, the End is just the Beginning for those who serve Israel’s Eternal King!

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

In the meantime, tune in if you can to the History Channel special after Christmas, and before that for my weekly Moody Broadcasting Network update on current happenings in Israel (including details about the latest crisis in Ariel Sharon’s prolonged attempts to re-build a stable coalition government). The 15 minute interview will air at 6:00 PM EST, 3:00 PST, which is 23:00 GMT, and is available live on line at www.primetimeamerica.org

PS: The above prophetic commentary is free for reprinting and

internet distribution. I only ask that my name be noted (and spelled correctly if possible) and that no significant textual changes be made, and that the essence of the tag below be included as well.

DAVID DOLAN is a Jerusalem-based author and journalist who has lived in Israel since 1980.

- [**HOLY WAR FOR THE PROMISED LAND**](#) (Broadman & Holman), his latest book, is an overview of the history of the Israel and of the bitter Arab-Israeli conflict that rages there, plus some autobiographical details about the author's experiences living in the land since 1980. It especially examines the important role that militant Islam plays in the conflict.
- [**ISRAEL IN CRISIS: WHAT LIES AHEAD?**](#) (Baker/Revell), which examines the political and biblical prospects for a regional attack upon Israel, settlement in the disputed territories, and related topics, is also available for purchase, **along with an updated edition of his end-time novel, [**THE END OF DAYS**](#) (21st Century Press).**

You may order these books at a special discount price by visiting his web site at www.ddolan.com, or by phoning 888-890-6938 in North America, or by e mail at: resources@yourisraelconnection.org

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*Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: David Dolan has spoken at our church two times (June 12, 2002 (**Israel in the News, Part 1 and 2**) and May 28, 2003 (**Roadmap to War in the Middle East**)). These teachings are posted as MP3 files on our website (www.calvarypo.org) under sermon archives/MP3 Topical.*

In his May 28 teaching, Dave warned that the U.S. would likely be run out of Iraq as the Israelis were from Lebanon during the 1982 war. We are beginning to see the insurgency in Iraq putting great pressure on our commitment to stay the course to bring democracy to an Islamic nation, something that many believe (including me) is impossible until fundamentalist Islam is destroyed.

As a thirty-year student of the Bible and its prophecies pertaining to the last days, I agree with David's assessments. Isaiah 17 (the complete destruction of Damascus) has never been fulfilled in the history of the world, and must therefore be a future event and I agree with David that it could be very soon. I gave a study on the coming destruction of Damascus, based on Isaiah 17, on October 22, 2003 that is posted on our website as an MP3 file under Topical.

I do differ from David on the timing of the coming Russian invasion of Israel as recorded in Ezekiel 38 and 39. David Dolan, Dave Hunt and other very respected prophecy teachers believe the war described in Ezekiel is an Old Testament version of the battle of Armageddon described in the Book of Revelation and elsewhere. There is another camp that believes this war will come soon after the destruction of Damascus and will bring about the peace treaty spoken of by Daniel. Since the Bible is not totally clear on the timing, there is some debate, but time will someday tell. For those interested in a teaching about this war and the reasons for the timing we have posted an audio study (from October 29, 2003) at the website titled, "The Coming Invasion of Israel."

We hope to have David Dolan as a guest speaker again on Sunday Morning, March 6, 2004.