

# ISRAEL UPDATE from David

Dolan

## Apocalypse Now?

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Shalom from Jerusalem,

We received our first light rain in Jerusalem this morning after months of typical dry summer weather—always a blessing to this dry and thirsty land. Heavier showers are forecast for this weekend. The partly cloudy weather comes as many Israelis are preparing to eat their last evening meal in their decorative succas, or booths, recalling the ancient exodus from Egypt and God's provisions for their ancestors on the long journey to the Promised Land. The booths also remind all of us that we are only temporary residents on this troubled planet, and that eternity is still ahead of us.

Given this week's celebration of the annual biblical Feast of Tabernacles, I thought it was appropriate to write my latest commentary for the World Net Daily web site on a spiritual theme. It was published today, and is included below. The idea was sparked by a rather hostile question I received during a recent speaking tour in the U.K. (just one among many friendly and challenging questions I might add), and also by an intriguing opinion survey on Israeli faith recently published by the country's largest daily, Yediot Ahronot. I hope you enjoy the commentary.

In the news, tension continues on the strategic Golan Heights after Syrian dictator Bashar Assad charged earlier this week that Israel is preparing to attack his country. Some analysts here feel this may be a Soviet-style attempt to pre-justify military action on his part, and therefore IDF troops in the area remain on high alert while quietly preparing for any possible cross-border Syrian assault.

Despite this, Jerusalem remains filled to the brim with overseas Christian and Jewish visitors for the annual feast. I spoke before hundreds of people Tuesday morning at an annual feast conference at the Ramat Rachel hotel in south Jerusalem, overlooking nearby Bethlehem. The International Christian Embassy of Jerusalem reports that a sudden last minute surge of pilgrims from across the globe, mainly from relatively nearby Europe, brought the numbers attending their annual feast celebration to near their average of some 5,000 people (from 80 countries), despite the recent war. Nearly 100,000 Israelis and foreign tourists paraded down Jerusalem's main street on Tuesday afternoon to mark the feast, on a beautiful cloudless day with pleasant temperatures. Wherever you are in the world today, I hope it is a good day for you.

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## Apocalypse Imminent? Look

# Around You

WorldNetDaily

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During a recent speaking tour in the United Kingdom, I was asked a question that frequently arises from secular folks in my audiences, and sometimes even from professing Christians and Jews.

"Why are you evangelicals so eager for the apocalypse to take place?" Usually the question is followed by a critical modifier such as "You are all so focused on violence and death," or "Why not work for peace instead of dwell on war and conflict?"

I replied that it is hard not to notice that the world is falling apart. After all, it is usually non-religious scientists and activists, not doomsday Christians, who are warning the global community every day that we are wrecking our planet's delicate ecological system with polluting automobiles and spreading smokestack industry, massive deforestation and slash burning, overpopulation, etc.

If you add soaring worldwide cancer rates, spiraling viral plagues like AIDS and other diseases, increasingly devastating earthquakes, floods and tidal waves, expanding deserts adding to growing famine, melting icebergs around the north and south poles, burgeoning international terror attacks, gang violence and murder rates, and mushrooming nuclear weapons proliferation – most recently in libertarian lights like Pakistan and North Korea, with radical Shiite Iran apparently also well along the way to owning The Bomb – you have good reason to sleep a little less soundly at night, evangelical Christian or not.

The ancient Hebrew prophets, including Jesus of Nazareth, foretold that the world would be engulfed by unprecedented political, military and ecological upheaval as history raced toward its final chapter. As I told my most recent questioner, this is simply a matter of fact, as any cursory reading of the Old and New Testaments will confirm.

Of course, other world religions duplicate this apocalyptic scenario, especially Islam, even if the details sometimes differ. Popular psychics and mystics like Nostradamus and Jean Dixon have long echoed this rather bleak prognosis of how human history will end.

The Hebrew prophets' contemporary Israeli cousins are feeling a little apocalyptic themselves these days. For the first time since just before the 1967 Six Day war, a Jewish prime minister has publicly voiced fears that the small state's continued existence is now in question.

In a statement to his fellow cabinet ministers in early October, Ehud Olmert spoke about Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's repeated vow in recent months that the world's only Jewish-run state would soon be completely obliterated by his theocratic Shiite Muslim country.

"From the point of view of seriousness, this tops the state of Israel's list," the prime minister laconically told his government subordinates, adding ominously that "It is potentially an existential threat." Olmert later reportedly admitted to visiting Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that the Iranian annihilation pledge "keeps him awake" at night.

Under widespread attack for his controversial management of the inconclusive summer war with rogue Hizbullah militiamen in Lebanon, the embattled Israeli leader confided to his cabinet ministers that he firmly believes President Bush will take care of the looming Iranian nuclear threat. But opinion polls show few Israelis expect the U.S. president – whose final-stretch popularity ratings are almost as low as Olmert's already are in his first months in office – will actually bite the radioactive atomic bullet.

This might mean that tiny Israel will end up having to defend the Free World all by itself against Hitler's Aryan clone; a nightmarish prospect at best.

But at least that would prove to the Israeli public that Dubya is not the Promised Messiah, nor the United States Israel's Ultimate Protector, as many now firmly believe.

Speaking of Messiah, a recent survey carried out by the Smith Institute for the country's largest daily newspaper, Yediot Ahronot, showed that a clear majority of Israelis believe he will come to rescue the country in its darkest hour, as the ancient prophets foretold.

Although the same poll showed that only one-third of the Jewish population bothers to visit a synagogue on a regular basis, a full 71 percent believe that the God of Israel actually exists. On top of that, 57 percent think that the long-expected Messiah will appear one day in Jerusalem. Most added that they are aware of the apocalyptic prophecies that strongly indicate that the day of his arrival may be drawing very near.

In light of this decade's horrific Palestinian terrorist attrition war that has so far taken the lives of over 1,000 Israelis, and the latest Lebanon conflict with Iran's proxy force that snuffed out another 160 lives and left the northern third of the country reeling from daily rocket bombardments, it is no surprise that 39 percent of the poll respondents testified that they have become closer to their ancestral faith in recent years. Only 9 percent said the decade's dramatic events have driven them further from God.

Since the Hebrew prophets foretold that Israel's salvation, not nuclear destruction, is the ultimate outcome of the monstrous upheaval predicted for the end of days, it should not be surprising that the turbulent events of recent years are apparently literally driving many in this special Promised Land to their knees. With medical science now confirming that possessing heartfelt spiritual convictions is healthy for mind and body, and with the prophets also forecasting a golden age of peace under Messiah's righteous rule, I am quite happy to mention the biblical last days in my international

lectures – scary or not.

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**DAVID DOLAN** is a Jerusalem-based author and journalist who has lived and worked 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 popular 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](http://www.ddolan.com), or by phoning toll free 888-890-6938 in North America, or by e mail at: [resources@yourisraelconnection.org](mailto:resources@yourisraelconnection.org)

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