

authorities are restricting traffic through the Bosphorus and delaying Russian oil exports to promote their plans to build pipelines across the country, acting Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Kalyuzhny said".³ The minister is quoted as saying: "A special alarm is being sounded consistently for political reasons to promote multiple oil pipelines . . . The straits are only at half their transit capacity. Inadequate traffic control is the only problem".

At around the same time that the conference was taking place, Abdullah Gul, Turkey's deputy prime minister and its minister of foreign affairs, was visiting Moscow. In commenting upon this visit, Rosbalt, a Russian federal news agency, stated: "The sticking point for Russian-Turkish relations remains the problem of the restrictions imposed by Turkey on the passage of tankers carrying Russian and Kazakhstan oil to the world market through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits".⁴ The agency reports the minister as saying: "We must in some way manage the ship traffic through the Straits . . . Limits are set to ensure the regular and safe movement of shipping". However, the Russian news agency sees things differently:

" . . . the true reason for the 'semi-closing' of the Bosphorus is not concern for the ecology and inhabitants of the region but the Turkish

authorities' attempt to force Russia's oil companies and the governments of the Caspian region to end the movement of 'black gold' by tankers and, instead, into the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which is now being built and that will bypass Russian territory".

Conclusion

The strategic importance of Istanbul and the waters of the Bosphorus is as great today as it was in 1453. As the country in control of these straits, Turkey is in a strong position to dictate the amount of Russian shipping traffic that is able to make its way into the Mediterranean from the Black Sea. As the Russian news agency cited above stated, this is the "sticking point" for relations between Russia and Turkey. It may be that a solution to this problem will be found and implemented by the two countries. However, we know that eventually Russia will inevitably occupy the straits as it moves south. As we look for signs that the final drying of the Turkish Euphrates power is drawing near, we would do well to watch how things develop in this regard.

3. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2004/02/27/042.html>.

4. <http://www.rosbaltnews.com/2004/03/11/65912.html>.

The powers of heaven shaken by Madrid bombing

Nigel Bernard

IN LUKE 21 the Lord Jesus said that "the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (v. 26). The phrase "powers of heaven" refers to rulers and governments. In Matthew 24:29 the phrase appears to relate to the Jewish political heavens in the first century, but in Luke 21 the context of redemption being near (v. 28) seems to give the phrase an application to the time of the end. The bombings in Madrid on 11 March provided an example of this prophecy being fulfilled.

At least 200 people were killed by bombs planted by terrorists on trains in Madrid. There is a number of ways in which governments have been shaken by these events. The BBC correspondent Paul Reynolds wrote that the bombs did "more than *shake* up Spanish politics. They

have *shaken* the coalition in the war on terror declared by President Bush" (my italics).¹ Politics were shaken in Spain because, in the election which was held three days after the attack, the Socialist José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero led his party to an unexpected victory following a massive drop in support for the Popular Party led by José María Aznar (who intended to hand over to a successor anyway if he had won). The American-led coalition has been "shaken" because the outgoing prime minister had been a close ally in the war on Iraq, but Mr Zapatero has been quick to condemn the invasion and is

1. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3512894.stm>.

threatening to withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq if the United Nations does not take control of the country.

Yet it is not just Spain and the American-led coalition who have been shaken. The BBC correspondent James Robbins stated: "All Europe's governments have been *shaken* by the scale of the Madrid attacks and may feel more vulnerable".² These words were spoken in the immediate aftermath of the bombings. Following the turnaround in the election, which most commentators attribute to the bombings, the feeling of being shaken has only been heightened. The possibility that terrorists could influence a na-

tional democratic election on such a scale has increased the feeling of vulnerability amongst governments.

Britain, the Tarshish power, looks to have lost an important ally in Europe. On the other hand, Europe appears to have gained because the incoming Spanish prime minister is keen to increase cooperation with Europe, especially with France and Germany. So although "the powers of heaven" have been shaken, we should remain steadfast and lift up our heads, knowing that our redemption is near.

2. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3500452.stm>.



Reviews

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Two creationist books: a cautionary note*

John Nicholls

THIS REVIEW concerns two recently published books by the same author defending the Genesis account of Creation. Whilst they both have much commendable material, they also present an unbalanced view of the age of the earth and contain several erroneous doctrines and some poor exposition.

The design argument

The first book, *Hallmarks of Design*, is in many ways the less unacceptable of the two. The author's basic thesis is the design argument, which is, of course, the argument of Scripture itself, for example in Romans 1:19,20 and Psalm 107:8,15, 21,24,31. He takes six hallmarks of organisms and their environment that could only be produced by an intelligent designer:

- irreducible mechanisms
- complete optimum design
- added beauty
- extreme similarity in features
- extreme diversity of kinds
- man-centred features.

The author, who is Reader in Engineering Design at the University of Bristol, makes a compelling case for the "irreducible human knee joint"—which is a four-bar mechanism—being the work of a designer. He argues that the sixteen essential characteristics of the knee joint could not possibly have evolved at one and the same time, and that they must therefore have been designed and brought into being by an intelligent Creator. He uses the same type of argument about flight mechanisms of birds, the earth's ecosystems and the abundant evidence of optimum design in living things. Many engineers strive to copy this latter feature, regarding nature as the perfect design handbook.

There follows his argument about added beauty in nature. By this he means features whose only purpose is to produce a beautiful effect,

* *Hallmarks of Design*, Dr. S. Burgess, One Day Publications, second edition, 2002, £7.99, and *He Made the Stars Also*, same author and publisher, 2001, £6.99.