

“The Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre”

Nigel Bernard

The capture of Israeli soldiers in Gaza and Lebanon find echoes in Bible prophecy. Both these countries will be united against Israel at Armageddon. Both will be involved in the trafficking of captured Jews.

IN PSALM 83:7 some of the nations who gather against Israel at Armageddon are listed: “Geba, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre”. The modern-day Gaza Strip corresponds to the land of the Philistines. Tyre still exists today, located in Lebanon just north of the border with Israel. Although they are separated by some distance geographically, it is significant that the Philistines and Tyre are mentioned together. In what sense, then, are “the Philistines *with* the inhabitants of Tyre”?

Solidarity

In Joel 3 the same areas are mentioned together again, with the addition of Zidon, modern-day Sidon, which lies between Tyre and Beirut:

“Yea, and what have ye to do with Me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render Me a recompence? and if ye recompense Me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head; because ye have taken My silver and My gold, and have carried into your temples My goodly pleasant things: the children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border” (vv. 4-6).

Joel 3 describes Armageddon when “all nations” (v. 2) will come against Israel. What unites Gaza and the cities of Lebanon is the way they will behave towards Israel when Gog attacks. They will take spoil and will be involved in the trafficking of captured Jews.

Signs of this prophesied link between Gaza and Lebanon are being seen today. In June, an Israeli soldier was captured by Palestinian militants from Gaza. On 12 July, two Israeli soldiers were taken by Hizbullah guerrillas in Lebanon during a raid into Israel. An analyst for the BBC stated the following about the incursion from Lebanon: “The raid was clearly a gesture of solidarity towards

the Palestinian militants in Gaza who have been holding an Israeli soldier since 25 June”.¹ The “solidarity” between the two militant groups is a precursor of the way the Philistines will be *with* the inhabitants of Tyre at Armageddon. That this involves the capture of Jews also echoes Joel 3, where it is prophesied that Jews will be sold into captivity.

Hizbullah

At the time of writing Israel is responding to the capture by making extensive attacks on both Gaza and Lebanon, including the cities of Tyre and Sidon. With regard to Lebanon in particular, Israel is seeking not only to rescue the soldiers but also to disarm Hizbullah. This organisation consists of Shia Muslims, and emerged in the 1980s with the goal of driving Israel out of Lebanon. Its military wing, the Islamic Resistance, essentially achieved this in 2000 when Israeli troops withdrew. It has strong influence in Lebanon today. Despite a UN Resolution calling for the disarming of militias in Lebanon, Hizbullah has not disarmed, and continues to launch rocket attacks against Israel. It has representatives in the Lebanese Parliament, and has been gaining support through the provision of social services and health care.

However, its presence in Lebanon is not welcomed by all Lebanese. The attack against Lebanon by Israel is blamed by many Lebanese on Hizbullah, but even those Lebanese who are against Hizbullah view the attacks by Israel as disproportionate. In Joel 3 it is the area of Lebanon as a whole that is against Israel, not just a fanatical minority. The current attacks by Israel will only serve to fuel the hatred that will be manifest by Lebanon as a whole when Gog invades.

All nations

Hizbullah has close links with Syria and Iran. At the time of writing, neither of these two nations has become directly involved in the current conflict. However, we know from prophecy that these two countries will be against Israel when

1. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/5180202.stm.

Tony Benson



The northern Israel port and industrial city of Haifa, where heavy attacks by Hizbullah Katyusha rockets have caused a number of deaths.

Christ returns. Likewise, both Russia (the dragon) and the Vatican (the false prophet) will be against Israel, and these have both criticised the attack on Lebanon. America has been supportive of Israel so far, which, as she is a young lion of Tarshish (Ezek. 38:13), is something to be expected.

Conclusion

The determination to rescue 'one of its own' as shown by Israel is something that can be traced back to the first Jew, Abraham. He too launched an attack northwards, to rescue his brother Lot: "And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And

he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus" (Gen. 14:14,15).

However, this was not simply a military operation based on confidence in the flesh. The men were "instructed" (AV mg.) by Abraham in the things of the Truth. Afterwards, Abraham made sure that the honour and glory was given to God (vv. 22,23). Whatever the short-term success of the current attacks by Israel, we know that they will yet be overwhelmed by the great invasion from the north. Then, just as Abraham and his men rescued Lot, so Christ and the saints will rescue the Jews who have been scattered and taken into captivity via Gaza and Lebanon.

Are there more earthquakes today?

Tony Benson

We often speak of great earthquakes being a sign of the times, but is there evidence to support this? A careful examination of earthquake records indicates an increase in major earthquakes since the beginning of the last century.

ARE THERE REALLY more earthquakes now than there used to be? After the Asian tsunami of December 2004 (caused by a massive undersea earthquake) and the Pakistani earthquake of October 2005, it is easy to conclude that there are. However, there have been times

before when several earthquakes have struck in a relatively short period of time but things have gone quiet again.

Two points are worth making before trying to come to a conclusion. Firstly, since the population of the world is far greater today than it was, let us say, 100 years ago, then earthquakes are bound to cause more damage than they used to. Secondly, this is the age of instant communications, and an earthquake in some remote part of the world is news headlines within hours, whereas in years gone by news could have taken weeks or even months to penetrate to other parts of the globe.