



Peace or war?

Cyril Blandford

TODAY THE NATIONS of the world are engaged in a war against terrorism, and that war involves every nation under the sun. Never before in the history of human conflict has such a situation arisen as that which confronts mankind at the present day, and the heart of the matter rests fairly and squarely in the age-old controversy between the descendants of the children of Abraham, between the Arab nations and the Jews.

Politically the matter is centred on a sharp difference of opinion within the United Nations assembly as to whether or not war should have been declared against Iraq for its defiance of a United Nations resolution which required it to destroy all weapons of mass destruction (of human life) within its arsenal. The United States of America, together with Britain and a number of other nations, attacked Iraq and removed by force its leaders, whilst France, Germany and Russia were opposed to such action. This is the present state of affairs that prevails between the political powers of the nations and their leaders.

In the light of this situation, worldwide rallies took place in nearly every major city on this planet against the use of war. Never before has such a cry for peace gone forth involving so many nations of the earth, and the fact that this controversy rests basically upon the quarrel between the Jews and the Arabs would seem to suggest that the outcome will be of supreme importance and will affect the whole of mankind.

Surely in the face of such a situation as this the words of warning issued by the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians should not be ignored by any whose faith is founded and centred in the Word of God and the way, the truth and the life manifested in His Son the Lord Jesus Messiah. The Apostle Paul wrote: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in

the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:1-3).

The Word of God through the prophet Jeremiah also should not be ignored. There God's judgement upon the nations of the world is plainly foretold in chapter 25. The primary application is that of the days of Jeremiah. God's words through the prophet leave us in no doubt that His words applied to "all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth" (v. 26), who, like Israel, were to be punished by the Babylonian invasions. The key to the understanding of the chapter is made clear in verses 15 and 16:

"For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me [Jeremiah]; Take the wine cup of this fury at My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them".

Verses 27 and 28 also use the analogy of drink:

"Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ye shall certainly drink".

There would be no escape for any of the nations of the world in this judgement, for it would be upon them all, as verse 29 also confirms:

"For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by My name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts".

The punishment of the nations in Old Testament times was to be a type of the judgement when Christ returns. Indeed, the latter part of

“But war is not displeasing to God any more than a rod is displeasing to him that uses it for correction. God instituted war when He put enmity between the serpent and the woman. It is a divine institution for the punishment of the transgressors of His law . . .”.

J. Thomas, *Elpis Israel* (eleventh edition), p. 112.

the chapter certainly seems to have a specific application to the last days. As Brother C. C. Walker in his book on Jeremiah wrote:

“The conclusion of the chapter is certainly not exhausted in its application to the subjection of the nations to Nebuchadrezzar. ‘The Lord shall roar from on high’ (verse 30) has a future and even more terrible application. See Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2; Isa. 42:13. These prophecies are associated with the salvation of Israel in the latter days, and the judgments upon another ‘Babylon’ (Rev. 17, 18)”.¹

In verses 30-33 the whole vision of the judgment is proclaimed:

“Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He shall mightily roar upon His habitation; He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground”.

The remaining verses of the chapter vividly portray the punishment of the shepherds of the flock, probably the leaders of the nations, and in

particular those religious leaders who have deceived their peoples with false teaching, claiming it to be truth. For these there shall be “no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape” (v. 35).

In Jeremiah 30 is seen the redemption of Jacob and the salvation of Israel, and the means by which it will be accomplished:

“Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, until He have done it, and until He have performed the intents of His heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it” (vv. 23,24).

The nations worldwide protested vigorously against war in many cities of the world, particularly on 15 February 2003. Was this a token of their refusal to drink of the cup of the fury of the Lord’s wrath in punishment for their sin? Whatever the answer of truth to that question may be, one thing is sure: they “shall certainly drink”.

The outworking of this dreadful scenario should not be expected to take place overnight, neither should the passage of time be reckoned from a natural or human viewpoint which is common to mankind. Instead it should be seen from a spiritual viewpoint which recognises “that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet. 3:8).

1. Walker, C. C. (1948, second edition), *The Ministry of the Prophets: Jeremiah*, Birmingham, The Christadelphian, (pp. 122-3).

No churches in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan has boasted that there will never be a church in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi brand of Islam known as Wahhabism is a severe form of fundamentalism of the worst sort based on a literalistic interpretation of the confusing Koran. However, in practice this means that converts to Christianity are put to death. This is the type of Islam that Saudi money is spreading by building mosques around the world, including in Britain. Prince Sultan is part of the huge Saudi royal family who regard themselves as the leading Wahhabis and the guardians of Mecca and Medina.—

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