

The Turbulent Middle East

Part I

Unrest in the Middle East — the Reason, the Solution

Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah had gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep (Jonah 1:1-5).

Would you like to know why unsettled, turbulent conditions currently exist in the Middle East, with seemingly no end to the matter? The answer to that question was foretold centuries before these conditions ever existed, over 2,800 years ago, in the opening five verses of the Book of Jonah.

Would you like to know the only solution to the existing problem in the Middle East? The answer to that question was foretold centuries before these conditions ever existed as well, again, over 2,800 years ago, in the continuing verses of the Book of Jonah (1:6-2:10).

In this respect, it would appear that man today might want to consult the centuries-old guide Book on the matter. But not so!

This Book has seemingly been relegated to the last place which man would turn for information on about anything these days.

Man's outlook or actions on anything regarding Middle East conditions though *changes nothing*. The Prophets have spoken (Jonah, among numerous other Prophets), and *that's the end of the matter*.

So, let's look at "*the why*" of the problem in the opening five verses of Jonah. Then we'll look at "*the only solution*" to the problem in the continuing verses of this book.

The Why of the Problem

Jonah, *in direct disobedience to the Lord*, booked passage on board a ship, paid the fare, went down into the ship's hold, and set sail — *fleeing from the Lord's presence*, traveling west toward Tarshish rather than east toward Nineveh, where he had been told to go.

Because Jonah had done this, the Lord sent "a great wind" and "a mighty tempest" out on the sea (the Mediterranean) of such a nature that the ship was about to be destroyed (vv. 3, 4; cf. vv. 7, 12b). And though the crew of the ship was *fearful* of that which seemingly was about to occur, Jonah, during all this time, was *asleep* down in the hold of the ship (v. 5).

The story of Jonah, a true account of past events pertaining to one of the Lord's Prophets (Matt. 12:38-40), has to do with events which occurred under the sovereign direction and control of the Lord in order that He, at a later time, might have these events to draw upon to teach His people the deep things of God.

In this respect, Jonah forms a type; and it is evident from this account that his actions foreshadow those of God's two firstborn Sons, *Christ* and *Israel*.

The overall story throughout all four chapters has to do more specifically with *Israel*, and the time that Jonah was in the belly of the great fish in the latter part of chapter one and in chapter two ("three days and three nights") has to do with both *Christ* and *Israel*.

(For information relative to the expression, "three days and three nights," seen in Jonah 1:17 [having to do with the length of time that Jonah was in the belly of the fish] and referenced by Christ in Matt.

12:38-40 [having to do with the length of time that He would be in the heart of the earth], refer to Appendix I, “Three Days & Three Nights,” in the author’s book, MIDDLE EAST PEACE — HOW? WHEN?)

God called Israel into existence for three main, inseparable reasons, connected with the nation exercising the rights of the firstborn in a particular land (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:5-21; Ex. 4:22, 23; 19:5, 6):

- 1) To give mankind the Word of God.
- 2) To give mankind the Saviour.
- 3) To be God’s witness to the nations, telling them about the Saviour, using the Word of God.

Israel gave mankind *the Word of God* and *the Saviour* (Ps. 147:19, 20; Isa. 9:6, 7), but Israel failed miserably as *God’s witness to the nations* (Isa. 43:1-11).

And the place where Israel failed in her calling is what the opening part of Jonah is about, in a type-antitype structure. *Israel, as Jonah, refused to go to the Gentiles with God’s message; Israel, as Jonah, went in an opposite direction* — a path which Israel persists in continuing to travel down to the present day and time; and, as in the account of Jonah, *God has acted accordingly*.

“The sea,” throughout Scripture, is used as a metaphor for the *Gentile nations*, also for the *place of death* (Rev. 13:1; 21:1), with both usages of the word seen in the opening two chapters of Jonah.

And Jonah on board the ship, removed from the sea, could only picture *one thing*. There is only *one place on earth* which can be seen as a place removed from the nations, and that place is *the land of Israel*.

And the sea raging after a manner which was about to destroy the ship and its crew could only have to do with *one thing* as well — with *unrest of a similar nature among the Gentile nations surrounding Israel*.

Thus, Jonah on board the ship, asleep in a place where he wasn’t even supposed to be, typifies *Israel in the land, asleep in a place where they are not even supposed to be*; and the sea raging typifies *unrest of a similar nature among the nations surrounding Israel*.

The Lord sent the great storm in the type because of *Jonah*, and the Lord has sent the great storm (unrest among the nations [with *the full unrest*, as will be shown, yet to occur]) in the antitype *because of Israel*.

Jonah was a disobedient Prophet, *asleep in a place where he wasn't supposed to be* (on board a ship rather than headed toward Nineveh). And *Israel* is a disobedient nation, *asleep in a place where the nation isn't supposed to be* (in the land rather than scattered among the nations).

Israel, because of disobedience (seen in *Jonah's* disobedience), was driven out among the nations to effect repentance. But a part of the nation has returned to the land (under a Zionist movement) *while still in their disobedient state, before repentance, asleep to their calling*.

And this is exactly what has been foreshadowed in *Jonah* through the disobedient Prophet being on board the ship (out of the sea), *in an unrepentant state, asleep in the hold of the ship, asleep to his calling*.

And, *exactly as in the type* (the Lord, because of that which *Jonah* had done, caused the sea to rage to such an extent that the ship was about to be destroyed), so in the antitype (the Lord, because of that which *Israel* has done, has brought about unrest among the nations to the same extent as seen in the type [the present unrest among the nations, though not as intense as the sea raging in *Jonah's* day, will culminate in one just as intense]).

The type has been set and CANNOT be changed!

Thus, the trouble among the Gentile nations in the Middle East today can be traced to *one thing*. It can be traced to actions which the Lord, in His sovereign direction and control of all things, has brought to pass because of *the presence of a disobedient and unrepentant Jewish nation in the land*.

EVERYTHING revolves around Israel! It always has, and it always will!

(It is widely taught in Christian circles today that a Jewish nation presently existing in the land of *Israel* [since May 14, 1948] has to do with God progressively fulfilling either part or all of His numerous O.T. promises to restore His people to their land.

From a Biblical standpoint though, *such is not at all possible*. A present restoration of the Jewish people [before the time], particularly under existing conditions [a disobedient and unrepentant people], would have *God acting contrary to His Word in numerous realms* — an impossibility.

To grasp an overall understanding of that which Scripture has to say in this respect, refer to the author's book, ISRAEL — FROM DEATH TO LIFE.)

The Only Solution to the Problem

The only solution to the existing problem in the Middle East (to bring an end to that which God, *because of Israel*, has caused to occur among the nations) is seen in the continuing account in the Book of Jonah.

Jonah told those on the ship *exactly what must be done*. *He must be cast into the sea (where God would then deal with him relative to repentance)*. *And, after Jonah had been cast into the sea, the sea ceased raging*.

Bringing that over into the antitype, to put a stop to the unrest among the nations, *Israel must be removed from her land and placed back out among these same nations* (where God had previously driven His people and where He had decreed that He would deal with them relative to repentance).

And after this has been done, in complete keeping with the type — *after Israel is in the place where God can deal with His people relative to repentance* — *unrest among the nations (for the reason that it had existed) will cease*.

The preceding may sound strange, but not so at all. *Unrest among the nations exists because of Israel's presence in the land*. This is what God has brought to pass because of Israel's present location (in a place where the disobedient nation is not supposed to be during the present time). And God can bring about a change *only when Israel has been removed from this place (Jonah from the boat, Israel from the land)*.

God, in His sovereign direction and control of all things, has set the whole of the matter forth in a perfect parallel form of this nature.

According to Scripture, Israel will remain in the land, out of place, until the middle of the coming Tribulation (Matt. 24:15ff; Luke 21:20ff). At that time, those forming the disobedient and unrepentant nation will be driven back out among the Gentile nations (as Jonah was cast out into the sea).

Then, exactly as in the type, God will bring about a change in conditions. The existing unrest among the nations will cease, for the reason why this unrest had occurred will no longer exist (as the sea ceased raging after Jonah had been cast overboard in the type, for the reason why it had raged no longer existed).

But, according to Jonah chapter two and related Biblical prophecy, another unrest among the nations at this time will replace the previous unrest, becoming far, far more tumultuous. *This though will be for an entirely different reason, but still having to do with Israel.*

Once *Israel* has been removed from her land, the previously existing catalyst for unrest among the nations will have been removed; but, because of *anti-Semitism on an unprecedented scale which will have begun to occur in connection with Israel's removal from her land*, a new catalyst will come into play, having to do with a far, far greater unrest among the nations than will have ever existed before this time.

And, in the end, the nations, brought to the brink of complete destruction, resulting from this unrest, will be prevented from destroying themselves *only because of the continuing presence of the nation of Israel.*

In little more than three additional years, the nations will be brought to the place seen in Matt. 24:21, 22:

“...except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake [*for Israel's sake*] those days shall be shortened.”

Thus, as seen in the preceding verse, or the Book of Jonah, or anywhere else in Scripture, Israel occupies a place at center-stage on every hand, at every turn, in complete keeping with the reason that God called this nation into existence.