



February 2008

## In the News

### Jan 19/08 International Aid for Palestinians Increases to \$7.6 Billion -- Ynetnews

PA Minister of Planning laments difficulty of fulfilling development plans in Hamas-controlled Gaza, despite willingness to allocate some 40% of new development budget to impoverished territory.

Ed. Note: see the extent of the world's disregard for God's purposes for His people Israel. If there was a will to really help the Palestinian refugees, and not just use them as a bargaining chip, their situation could be quickly and effectively solved.

### Out-of-Wedlock Births are Majority in France Bloomberg News

France became the first non-Scandinavian country in Western Europe to record a majority of out-of-wedlock births.

### Palestinians Fire Big Rockets Amid Peace Talks WND

In what would be considered a major escalation, Hamas has claimed to WND it fired Katyusha rockets from the Gaza Strip aimed at a strategic Israeli city.

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# Sound the Trumpet!

Joel 2:1

## A Recent Dramatic Change

In recent weeks and months we have seen a dramatic change of attitude in the political climate of the world.

Russia is growing increasingly more belligerent with a number of threats mounted. A Russian general has recently warned that they will use nuclear weapons if necessary, including preemptive action (first strike). Russian bombers recently test-fired missiles into the Bay of Biscay off the French and Spanish coasts. The Russian navy is now based in the Mediterranean Sea, with a Port in Syria.

Iran has threatened, with Syria's help, to blow up half of Israel, if attacked by Israel.

The Islamic world continues to ratchet up its threats against the West. Their hatred is so intense, these threats cannot be ignored.

NATO's senior officials and strategists have stated recently, "The West must be ready to resort to a preemptive nuclear attack to try to halt the imminent spread of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction". They further stated that, "we are living in an increasingly brutal world and a first strike nuclear option remains an indispensable instrument, since there is no realistic prospect of a nuclear free world.

### The Oil Factor:

The Middle East has become the centre of a desperate struggle for oil; demand exceeds supply as industrialized nations fight for economic survival.

In the looming Mid-East crisis, Western civilization could be brought to its knees by a serious disruption of oil supplies. Whether by terror attacks, nuclear exchange or an oil bidding war, it

could happen suddenly and without warning.

The point is that the whole world situation could rapidly be altered to facilitate the Biblical end-time events.

### Shifting Alignment of Nations:

Two significant alignments of nations are now taking place.

Alliance #1 - Russian, Turkey, Iran and their Muslim neighbors are forming an alliance to oppose the West and to destroy Israel! We have seen Russia, in recent months, bringing these nations together to advance her own aspirations for influence in the Mid-East.

This alliance is right out of Ezekiel 38 and 39. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand what is happening.

Alliance #2 - Suddenly and unexpectedly the US, the EU and Israel are coming together in a Western Alliance. In a move, which could only be described as prophetic, Israel's foreign ministry is working hard with her EU counterparts to cement ties to the EU.

The current move by Israel to forge ties with the EU is something no secularist could have foreseen. It is momentous in the light of Bible prophecy. Suddenly the possibility of a peace treaty is a viable prospect.

The stage continues to be set for the final drama in man's day.

### America's Decline:

It is no secret that Bible scholars have insisted that America plays no role in the end time prophetic scenario. Today we see America on the verge of withdrawal from the Mid-East, if not prior to the election, then certainly after it.

It is with great unease that we have watched the US, in recent months, turn against Israel. To watch the attempt to force her to give up the land God promised to

her and miraculously returned to her in 1948 and 1967. America has placed herself in danger of the judgment of God.

It is also with a sense of unease we watch as the US economy heads into deep recession. Will the world abandon the US dollar? Will the

US economy collapse? Will terrorists feed on such a collapse and devastate America with nuclear or biological terror? Will Russia launch a nuclear attack so feared in the cold war era?

We do not know the answer to those questions, only the Lord

knows. There is an ominous feeling by many that God is about to judge America. To judge this nation that has, in the past, known more of the blessing of God than any nation in history.

## The Tribulation Period

God's Word tells us about a time of great judgment that will come upon the world. Jesus described that time, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Matthew 24:21. From Scripture we discover God has **five** major purposes for this seven year period of tribulation.

**1. To punish sinners and remove them from the face of the earth.** Isaiah said, "Behold the Day of the Lord cometh, (tribulation period), cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners out of it". Isaiah 13:9 this is a clear statement, God hates sin and God hates disobedience and unbelief (see also Is. 13:11-3 & Ps. 7:11).

Understand, one second after the rapture, there will not be a living believer on the earth. Seven years later, plus a few days, there will not be an unbeliever alive on the earth (Matthew 25:32, 41).

Early in the tribulation period, one quarter of the earth's population will die (Rev. 6:8). By Revelation 9:15 another third will be killed, equaling over half of the people on the earth. After the vial judgments of chapter sixteen, probably over two thirds will be dead. Jesus said "... except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved:" (Matthew 24:22).

What a prospect this world faces. Do you think they need to know about it? Who will tell them if we don't?

**2. To bring about a world wide revival.** "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14. The context here is the tribulation. John tells us that 144,000 Jewish evangelists will preach the gospel, imagine 144,000 Apostle Pauls.

A. A great multitude will be saved and martyred. We see them in heaven in Rev. 7:9, 10, 14. These are not a part of the Church and they are not a part of Israel.

B. Another group of gentiles will be saved and survive to go into the millennial kingdom in their natural bodies to populate the kingdom Matthew 25:31-34. Later we read about these and their saved children in Revelation 21:24-26 and Revelation 22:2. These are not a part of Israel and not a part of the church.

**3. To Redeem Israel.** We read about this event, beginning in Zechariah 12:10. We see every living Jew being saved at the end of the tribulation period, never to turn away from the Lord again. The Lord will bring Israel through the fire of persecution to bring her to Himself. That process is even now beginning. Read more about it in Zechariah 13:8, 9. Hear those beautiful words, "I will say, it is My people: and they shall say, the Lord is my God".

What a grand and glorious purpose for the tribulation period!

**4. To judge apostasy and destroy apostate religion.** All down through the church age there has been apostate Christianity. Today it is on almost every street corner. Those who claim to represent Christ, but who oppose the gospel and attack the true church.

As the age comes to a close we have seen apostate Christianity growing exponentially. We see the vast ecumenical movement laying the foundation for the harlot church of the tribulation period.

During the tribulation period we see this counterfeit Christianity filling the whole earth (Revelation 17:5). This is the climax of Apostasy.

In Revelation 17:3 we see the union of apostate Christianity with the kingdom of antichrist. In Revelation 17:1 we see the purpose of God announced and in Revelation 17:15-17 we see that judgment carried out.

This is another great purpose of God for the tribulation period.

**5. The judgment of God upon the Gentile nations (Armageddon).** The Gentile nations began under Nimrod at the tower of Babel. From that day to this, man has sought to create his utopia on earth through human government, apart from God.

Human government has always been in rebellion against God and His Word. The climax of human government in rebellion against God is now about to occur.

God's purpose for this world is that Israel is to be the head of the nations. Today all the nations of the world are seeking to remove Israel from the land God has promised to her and to which God has restored her in 1948 and 1967.

The judgment of the nations is soon to take place, we read about it in Joel 3:2 "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead (judge) with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."

Today all of the nations of the world, in their pride and arrogance, are determined to set up a Palestinian state on the land God gave to Israel. If only they could see the ultimate consequences of this rebellion against God and His Word.

Let me give to you something that will help you to understand what God is doing in the tribulation period.

There are three great streams running through history and through God's Word, these three streams all reach a climax in the tribulation period.

**Stream 1 The Redemptive Stream:** The redemptive stream began as God provided a covering for man's sin in Eden. We see it on almost every page of Scripture. All down through history God has been revealing the unfolding of His plan to redeem men.

The plan was completed on the cross of Calvary, as God the Son was made a sacrifice for the sins of the world. The invitation to receive this redemption is open to all who will, in repentance and faith, receive the Saviour and His salvation.

This redemptive stream reaches a climax in the tribulation period when an innumerable host of men and women will be redeemed.

**Stream 2 The Judgmental Stream:** It also began in Eden as God put Adam and Eve out of His presence because of their sin. Like a great drum which never stops beating, the judgment of God has fallen on mankind all down through the ages. Man is cursed by sin, germs, disease, cancer, weeds, aging, hatred, personality disorders, war, pollution, etc., etc. All represent the judgment of God upon sin, though the man who has cancer may not be any more sinful than the one who does not, "all have sinned".

A greater judgment is the blindness God gives to those who turn away from the truth, blindness to the truth. The greatest judgment is the eternal lake of fire. This judgment will fall upon the world in a temporal way in the tribulation period. What an awful prospect!

**Stream 3 The stream of Apostasy:** Apostasy means to stand off, to stand away from, to fall away. Down through the ages men have been falling away from, departing from, the truth God has given them. Apostasy also began in Eden and will climax in the tribulation period. Both Israel and much of the church have consistently and persistently departed from God's truth. Today that apostasy is accelerating.

When the trumpet sounds all that is unregenerate in Christendom and all that is unregenerate in evangelicalism will be spewed into the tribulation period to become a part of the great harlot church which God will destroy. There is a great urgency to warn evangelicals of the deceitfulness of apostasy (Matthew 24:4, 5, 11, 24, 25).

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## A Shocking Confession from Willow Creek Community Church

Willow Creek has released the results of a multi-year study on the effectiveness of their programs and philosophy of ministry. The study's findings are in a new book titled REVEAL: WHERE ARE YOU? Co-authored by Cally Parkinson and Greg Hawkins, executive pastor of Willow Creek Community Church. Hybels himself called the findings "earth shaking," "Ground breaking" and "mind blowing. And no wonder: it seems that the experts were wrong.

The report reveals that most of what they have been doing for these many years and what they have taught millions of others to do is not producing solid disciples of Jesus Christ. Numbers yes, but not disciples. It gets worse, Hybels laments:

Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into, thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back it wasn't helping people that much. Other things that we didn't put that much money into and didn't put much staff against is stuff our people are crying out for.

If you simply want a crowd, the "seeker sensitive" model produces results. If you want solid, sincere, mature followers of Christ, it's a bust. In a shocking confession, Hybels states:

"We made a mistake. What we should have done when people crossed the line of faith and became Christians, we should have started telling people and teaching people that they have to take responsibility to become 'self feeders.' We should have gotten people to, and taught people, how to read their bible between services, how to do the spiritual practices much more aggressively on their own."

What Hawkins and Hybels have discovered are things which many churches have always known, although they have often been intimidated by the mega-churches into believing they were wrong.

☹ That nickels and noses do not tell us if we have a church that pleases God. The Lord never tells us the church membership or attendance of the local churches in the New Testament. The two churches out of seven, given great marks in Revelation 2 & 3, apparently were

small and poor (2:8-11; 3:7-13), while the churches that seemed to have it all together were rebuked severely by the Lord (3:1-6; 14-22).

⊗ That participation in programs does not produce authentic Disciples of Christ. While every church has programs the Scriptures teach it is the Word of God through the power of the Spirit that changes lives.

⊗ That unbelievers and baby Christians will attend a good show and even give high marks for the production, but those who hunger for true spiritual life will be disappointed.

⊗ That whatever is used to draw people must be continued to keep them. If you attract people through entertainment and superficial teaching, most will not hang around if you shift to solid exposition of the Word-of-God-honoring ministries.

### Blog excerpted from the internet:

I have been sent numerous links to the various stories regarding the supposed “repentance” of Willow Creek over its seeker methods. I will make this short and to the point. No pastor, truly repentant for his spiritual malpractice over the course of the last 30 years, would be bringing emerging heretic Brian McLaren to speak to his youth and youth leaders from around the country. Hybels claims that he wants to go forward, “rooted in Scripture” is fascinating, in that he’s bringing someone to address the young people of his church who accepts homosexuality, denies the doctrine of the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ, denies a literal hell, and calls hell and the cross “false advertising for God.” Willow Creek is bringing this fountainhead of theological and spiritual poison to teach the most vulnerable in the flock, the young people, at the April, 2008, “Everything Must Change” Conference. That’s some repentance, Mr. Hybels.

### In the News cont ...

#### Iran Plans on Destroying Tomb of King Cyrus, Friend of the Jews

Iran is planning on submerging the tomb of King Cyrus (Coresh), the Persian King known for authorizing the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Holy Temple. The Iranian ayatollahs are planning on destroying the tomb as a part of a general campaign to

sever the Persian people from their non-Islamic heritage.

Editors Note: Embarrassing that Iran’s very heritage and archaeological sites should confirm what they deny, that Jerusalem and the Temple Mount are the property and the heritage of Israel.

#### Bolton: Israel May Have to Strike Iran Soon [IsraelNN.com](http://IsraelNN.com)

Former American Ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton, hinted broadly Tuesday that Israel will have to strike Iran’s nuclear program on its own, and soon. Speaking at the Eighth Herzliya Conference, Bolton said an Israeli strike could be the last resort against Iran. Former Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz, who also spoke at the conference, hinted that the military option is growing more likely with time.

#### Russia Delivers Next Fuel Shipment to Iran Nuclear Plant [RIA Novosti](http://RIA Novosti)

Russia delivered on Tuesday the fifth fuel shipment to the Bushehr nuclear power plant it is building in southern Iran, the country’s mass media said, citing Iranian nuclear officials.

Russia has so far supplied a total of 55 metric tons of low-enriched uranium to the plant, which has been the focus of international attention over fears Iran is developing nuclear weapons.

⊗ That attempting to reach people for Christ through meeting their felt needs is a bottomless pit. Christ-centered people are not likely to be developed by creating programs that cater to their self-centeredness.

⊗ That churches based on the foundation of secular research, group opinion or surveys may produce a congregation which pleases people for a time, but it will not produce a church that pleases God. God has already given His design for the church in the New Testament; it is neither necessary nor right for us to ignore that design and create our own.

### New Testament Roots

*“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:13*

*It is really a blessed thing in our Christian Fellowship and in our congregations that God never asks whether it is a big church or a little church!*

*A young pastor, when introduced to a well-known church leader, said, “You do not know me. I am the pastor of a little rural church.”*

*I think it was a wise reply that came from the churchman: “Young man, there are no little churches: all churches are the same size in God’s sight!”*

*But, whether large or small, it must be an assembly of believers brought together through the Name of Jesus, to worship in God’s Presence; and with the right to receive all that God bestows.*

*With these roots, we should ask ourselves if we are truly interested in spiritual attainment as were the New Testament Believers. We must confess that the spiritual temperature among us may often be lower than in the early church. But we hold to the message that those who truly honor the Presence of the Savior are included in this relationship that goes back to the New Testament and to the apostles!*

*A. W. Tozer*