



# Issachar Comments Papers

Expounding biblical concepts on the world scene today

March 2013

## LIVING IN BABYLON

### Jerusalem

The destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC was a devastating experience for the people of Judah. The centre of their world disappeared; the centre of their religion, the centre of their culture and the political capital of the nation were all swept away as the Babylonians destroyed the Temple, the Palace, all the major buildings and even the walls of Jerusalem. Most of the leading citizens were taken in chains to Babylon. But Israel was a nation in a covenant relationship with God. Had he abandoned them; broken the covenant? Was this the end of their relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the end of their faith, the end of their culture and everything they believed?

### Britain

Many Christians in Britain today are worried that they are seeing the end of our Christian civilisation. One after another the pillars of society, established upon biblical principles, are being swept away. The whole character and composition of our culture, which for centuries has been based upon our Christian beliefs, is being despised and rejected. Church attendance is falling; secularism and atheism are rampant in the nation. Has God abandoned us? With the Psalmist we ask the despairing question, "*When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?*" (Psalm 11.3). But what is God saying to his people; to those who love him, hold firmly to his word and are constant in prayer? Is there any word from the Lord?

### The Great Shaking

The Bible promises that the day will come when God will shake everything - all the man-made structures of society. Everything that can be shaken will be shaken. Only the unshakable things of eternal value will survive the great shaking. The social revolution of the past 40 years strongly suggests that we are witnessing, in our lifetime, the great shaking that God revealed to his prophets many centuries ago. But Christians rely upon the promise of Jesus that he will never leave his people alone and unsupported. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not only the Creator but also the **Sustainer** of the world. He knows the end from the beginning and he is active in his world today.

God is never taken by surprise and those who have learned to listen to the Lord know that he has been warning for a long time that these days of shaking were coming upon us. The purpose of the great shaking is to expose corruption in all the institutions of our society. God is shaking out the dross from our corrupt civilisation. Of course, this has consequences for believers as well as unbelievers. As Jesus said, "*He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous*" (Matthew 5.45).

### Hostile Environment

Today, God is urging his people to prepare to live in Babylon for a season. Just as those who were exiled from Jerusalem and the land of their fathers had to learn to live in an alien environment where the majority of people were hostile to their faith and culture, we too are facing the prospect of living in an increasingly hostile spiritual, cultural and social environment. The 'Same-Sex Marriage' issue defines the 21st century battle for the soul of the nation. Although I will continue fighting against it with all the means at my disposal, prophetically I believe the secularists will win because long ago God said to our nation, "You have chosen the way you wish to go and I will let you go until you recognise the mess that you have made of everything".

We have a Prime Minister who is more concerned with votes and maintaining power than with the basic biblical principles of righteousness. We have reached such a level of deception in the nation that even many of those who profess to be Christians are deceived into believing that redefining marriage to include homosexuals is an 'equality issue' which is a lie of the enemy! The Bible states quite clearly that sexual relationships between men are "detestable to God" and all these regulations in the Bible were given for the health and well-being of human beings whom God created in his own image. If God does not bring judgement upon both the Government and the nation for their flagrant denial of the word of God he will have to apologise to Sodom and Gomorrah.

**Judgement is already beginning to happen.** Within days of the vote on the First Reading of the Same-Sex Marriage Bill in the House of Commons Britain lost its Triple-A status on the world money market and the Conservatives were trounced in the Eastleigh By-Election which they should have won easily. This is a clear sign of judgement upon David Cameron and the Conservatives despite more than half of his MPs voting against him in the Commons. It was also a shallow victory for the Lib Dems with a 14 percent drop in their vote following further revelations involving the Party leadership.

## Life in Babylon

If we want to understand what God is saying to us today we need to look at what he said to the people who were living in Babylon during the exile from Jerusalem. Ezekiel was a young man who was taken into slavery with the first wave of emigrants together with King Jehoiachin when Jerusalem surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar in 596 BC. Like Jeremiah, whom he must have heard many times in Jerusalem, he came from a priestly family but it was while he was in Babylon that God called him into the prophetic Ministry. He was the kind of prophet to whom God sometimes spoke in vivid pictures. In one of these prophetic revelations he found himself walking in a valley of dry bones. It was utterly anathema for a priest to come into contact with dead bodies, but God made him, not just look, *but walk among the bones!* He had to go "to and fro", for some time. Why was this?

Ezekiel had to experience the full horror of the exile before he could bring the word of God to the exiles. He had to experience the terrible alienation from God caused by apostasy and idolatry - of turning away from the word of God and embracing the values of the world, even to sacrificing babies to the gods of lust - just as we are doing in Britain and the Western nations today - despising centuries of biblical heritage.

## Can these bones live?

The question God eventually put to Ezekiel was "*Can these bones live?*" He was then commanded to prophesy to them and to call for the Spirit of God to come into them. He saw the miracle of new life coming upon the people there in Babylon! The people who believed they were cut off from God because they were separated from Jerusalem discovered that God had not left them - that he could speak to them and watch over them in an alien land. That was the first miracle. The second miracle was that the God who had allowed the Babylonians to conquer Jerusalem was sovereign over all nations and that it was his intention to use the exile as part of his purposes of cleansing his people from worldly corruption so that they could be his witnesses - a light to the Gentiles - to bring all nations to a knowledge of the One true and only God.

## New Life

This is what God is saying to his people in Britain and the Western nations today. He is taking us through a valley of dry bones that are representative of Britain and the church today through unbelief and contamination from all the worldly wickedness and sinful lust and corruption that has entered the church. But he will keep a faithful remnant and guard them as they walk through the valley of dry bones with the assurance that he will never leave them alone and that in due time the 'ruach' or 'power' of his Holy Spirit will bring new life. As the remnant of Judah returned to the land of their fathers, when even the trees joined in the rejoicing, so there will come a time of new life and great spiritual awakening as God works out his purposes in our time.

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