

A Strong Connection: Ancient Prophecy and Today's Middle East

In order to build a biblical framework for interpreting current events in the Middle East, it would be correct to examine the perspectives of the ancient prophets of Israel. Those prophets often spoke of God's will concerning "political" events in the Middle East.

There is a wide range of viewpoints within the prophetic Scriptures, which may confirm or contradict many political views today. On one side (perhaps the extreme right), we find **Joshua**. In his generation, the Israelites were commanded to kill all the inhabitants of Canaan and conquer all the land.

On the other hand (perhaps the extreme left), we find **Jeremiah**. In his generation, God passed judgment on Israel; the nation was destroyed and the people exiled. Neither the Joshua nor Jeremiah model fit all the circumstances of the Middle East today. (In the time of the early apostles, who preached in the generation leading up to the destruction of the Second Temple, the context of the prophet Jeremiah was quite relevant.)

There are other varying viewpoints. **Amos** called for justice on social and economic issues. **Jonah** was sent to preach to a Gentile nation. **Isaiah** described the coming of a spiritual kingdom with a divine Messianic king. His teaching might be comparable to an "evangelical" type message today. **Daniel** had visions of angels fighting wars over nations that would affect history for hundreds of years.

Particularly relevant for the Messianic community today are the prophets who spoke to the remnant in Israel after they returned from the exile in Babylon. Their message was one of

encouragement to keep building the nation, both spiritually and materially, despite the attacks of evil around them. Among those prophets were **Zechariah** and **Haggai**.

We who have received the Holy Spirit today, through faith in Yeshua, may be seen in some ways as a continuance of those early prophets. As the Messianic remnant in Israel today, we feel a certain spiritual identification with that remnant that returned to the land in the time of **Zerubbabel**, **Ezra** and **Nehemiah**.

Yet we must be careful when looking at ancient Scriptures and comparing them to ourselves. We must consider the full range of perspectives in the Gospels and the Prophets before we chose any one particular aspect to identify with. The writings of the Israelite prophets have a renewed significance for us today in the light of current events in the Middle East.

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