

Is North Korea a Smokescreen for a Potential Armageddon in the Middle East?

The threats of the North Korean dictator are frightening indeed and could well ignite a nuclear war, but they are part of a bigger picture of worldwide rebellion against the God of creation. On a more specific front, they're a smokescreen for a potential Armageddon in the Middle East as Russian-backed Iran and its allies move dangerously close to Israel's borders.

Only last week (Sept. 7) Israel carried out a daring air strike against an Iranian-run weapons factory in the heart of Syria, severely damaging (if not destroying) the facility where chemical and biological munitions as well as medium-range missiles are being developed. Syria has in turn warned about "dangerous repercussions".

The strike took place exactly 10 years after Israel—the only country in recent years that has stood up to North Korea until now—destroyed a Syrian nuclear reactor being built with the help of the rogue regime.

British politicians, while appalled by the antics of Kim Jong-un, are nevertheless shaking their fists at God in their own way as, with their atheist agenda, they question the existence of a divine order. Like the serpent in the Garden of Eden, they pose the subtle question: "Did God really create man and woman to procreate?" (See Gen. 3:1).

At the center of the earth today stands a small Jewish state. And what the world interprets as an ideological battle over a piece of land the size of Wales is in effect an Arab-Muslim challenge to the God of Israel, revealed to us through his Son Jesus Christ.

Their claim that the land does not belong to the Jews despite thousands of years of historical, archeological and biblical evidence was decisively countered by the 1947 discovery on the shores of the Dead Sea of ancient scrolls proving Jewish connection to the territory well before the emergence of Islam—and recognized as such by the United Nations that same year.

The findings in caves at Qumran included the entire original text of the Book of Isaiah, over 2,500 years old. This was found intact among hundreds of parchment scrolls hidden in the desert cliffs exactly as it is recorded in modern times—no Chinese whispers here, but God's authentic hand.

There is no doubt that the unearthing of these scrolls—along with much more archaeological evidence—fully vindicated Israel's claim to the land, quite apart from other political and biblical factors.

At the heart of all the saber-rattling going on now is a battle—not really over whether there *is* a God, but over *who* he is. And the Judeo-Christian position that formed the basis of Western civilization is that He is the God of Israel. When Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, threatened Jerusalem with destruction in ancient times (2 Kings 18 and 19), Judah's King Hezekiah prayed to the 'God of Israel' and the result was a resounding defeat for their enemies. The emphasis of his prayer was that his Lord would demonstrate that *He alone* was God (2 Kings 19:14-19).

Similar threats are heard today from those opposed to Israel. The former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, has been denied the chance "to promote dialogue and a better understanding of the Palestinian narrative" in the U.K. Parliament—thanks, it seems, to an 18,000-strong petition. But the barefaced nerve of a man who has called for the destruction of Britain to attempt to infiltrate its parliament with his poisonous lies takes some beating.

This man represents the same ideological ethos as Islamic State. We are investing so much in the prevention of terror, yet are pathetically slow to recognize such threats to our democracy. "We all worship the same God," I hear so many naïve people say—even in church pews. But Sheikh Sabri says that when he enters the Al-Aqsa Mosque (on Jerusalem's Temple Mount) he is "filled with rage toward the Jews".

Contrast this with Jesus' command to love our enemies and pray for our persecutors (Matt. 5:44). As the sheikh makes clear, Islam is a death cult committed to the destruction of 'infidels'. "The Muslim loves death and martyrdom," he says.

Part of the "Palestinian narrative" is that Israel is guilty of human rights violations and of being an apartheid state. But the absurdity of these accusations is underlined by the emergence of a transgender Arab Christian from Nazareth as a new secret weapon against BDS, the boycott Israel campaign. Talleen Abu Hana, winner of the first Miss Trans Israel pageant, was guest of honor at the Israeli Embassy in Washington during LGBT Pride month.

Abu declared: "I'm happy to be Israeli because being Israeli means being truly free." And when an American journalist questioned Israel's record on human rights, she replied: "Are you crazy? In what other country in the Middle East can I live my life openly."

Most Christians, including myself, do not agree with her lifestyle choice, but far more distasteful is the rank hypocrisy behind much liberal thought which sets politically correct agendas that are inevitably contradictory.

In any case, Israel's restoration—according to biblical prophecy—is not yet complete. A restoration to the land (i.e. a political rebirth) is what we are witnessing today; this will be followed by a restoration to their Lord and Messiah, which is in the process of happening but still in the early

stages.

One line of theological thought sees the “fig tree” (Matt. 24:32) as a symbol of political Israel while the olive tree is seen as representing a return to its original purpose as a nation under God.

The fig tree is certainly blossoming as Israel becomes a powerful nation once more, but many of its inhabitants are still in rebellion against the Almighty.

Christians are privileged to have been grafted onto the natural olive tree of Israel (Rom. 11:11-24). But the day is coming when all Israel will finally turn to their Messiah (Rom. 1:26).

All the hordes of hell are trying to stop that happening—hence the current battle—because it will usher in the Lord of glory who will crush the enemies of Israel and rule over the earth from Jerusalem for a thousand years of peace.

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Charles Gardner is a veteran Cape Town-born British journalist working on plans to launch a new U.K. national newspaper reporting and interpreting the news from a biblical perspective. With his South African forebears having had close links with the legendary devotional writer Andrew Murray, Charles is similarly determined to make an impact for Christ with his pen and has worked in the newspaper industry for more than 40 years. Part Jewish, he is married to Linda, who takes the Christian message around many schools in the Yorkshire town of Doncaster. Charles is also author of *Israel the Chosen* (Amazon) and *Peace in Jerusalem*, available from . He has four children and nine grandchildren, and can be reached by phone on +44 (0) 1302 832987, or by e-mail at chazgardner@.

This article originally appeared at .