

Russia! The Nations! What Next?

The eyes of the world are on the Soviet Union. Unquestionably, the events occurring there in the past few weeks are immensely significant. World leaders and the media are watching these events hoping to decipher their impact on mankind. We are blessed, as God's children, to have His word of truth. The Scriptures have opened our eyes to the real significance and impact of current events.

The Scriptural Context of Today's Events

The prophetic time context of today's events is that of The Day of the LORD. "The day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." "It is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion." Isaiah 63:4; 34:8 Thus the prophet Isaiah refers to that period which Daniel (12:1) describes as "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation"; of which Malachi (4:1) says, "Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble."

This is the day of the LORD wherein James (5:1-6) says the rich men shall weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon them; the day which Joel (2:2) describes as a day of clouds and thick darkness; of which Amos (5:20) says is "darkness and not light, even very dark and no brightness in it."

Our Lord Jesus refers to this day in Matthew 24:21,22 as a time of "great tribulation" so ruinous in its character that, if it were not cut short, no flesh would survive its ravages. But he will cut it short and flesh will be saved after the tribulation. Then he will turn to them and teach them a pure language that they may call on the LORD. Zephaniah 3:9

Nations Judged—Not Individuals

"Therefore wait ye upon me saith the LORD, until the day that I rose up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth (social order) shall be devoured with the fire

of my jealousy." Zephaniah 3:8

That the dark and gloomy day thus described by the prophets is a day of judgment upon mankind socially and nationally—a day of national recompenses—is clear from many scriptures. But, while noting these, we must bear in mind the difference between national judgment and individual judgment. While the nations are composed of individuals (who are largely responsible for the course their nation takes and who do suffer greatly in the consequences of that course) the judgment of the world as individuals is distinct from its judgment as nations.

The Apostle Peter says that Jesus Christ will be raised up as a prophet to the world after his second coming. Then during the times of restitution, when the Millennial Kingdom will bring earth's restoration, those individuals who "will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." Acts 3:20-23

Chief Cause of National Judgment

The day of vengeance stands naturally related to the benevolent object of its divine permission. That objective is the overthrow of the entire present order of things in preparation for the permanent establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, under Christ, the Prince of Peace.

The prophet Isaiah (63:1-6) viewing the present time saw a mighty conqueror clothed with authority and power riding forth victoriously over his enemies, with whose blood his garment is stained. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?"

Edom is the name given Esau after he sold his birthright to Jacob. Edom is an appropriate symbol of a group in this age who similarly sold their birthright; and that too for a reward as meager as the mess of pottage which influenced Esau. That reward has been respect of men, comfort and earthly power in the present time to the compromise of future rewards from God.

Edom is frequently used by the prophets in reference to the present so called Christian world or Christendom. By allying herself with the kings of earth, to prematurely establish Christ's Kingdom, the Church unfortunately played the harlot. The result of this illicit union was the "Holy" Roman Empire. The ensuing centuries of her reign were filled with ignorance, corruption and bloodshed on a massive scale. Far from being the light that lightens the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6,7) we refer to that period of history as The Dark Ages.

The prophet Daniel gives a vision of five universal empires. Four are of this present evil world. The fifth is God's Kingdom in Christ. These

empires rule earth uninterruptedly. Each succeeding kingdom is present before it overthrows its predecessor. In the seventh chapter of Daniel we see the rise of the "Man of Sin." II Thessalonians 2:3 This man, the "little horn" of verses 8 and 20, speaks great things, changes times and seasons and persecutes the true saints of the most high.

Notice that the little horn, the "Man of Sin," is obviously not the fifth universal empire—which is the true Kingdom of Christ. It is, however, part of the fourth, the dreadful (Roman) beast. Daniel 7:19,20 God is judging the nations now, but with particular emphasis on those that have claimed to be His kingdom. They have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. This great sin of nations will thus receive national punishment.

Russia and the Baltic States

The prophet Amos gives us a very exciting view of the past eighty or so years in a remarkably encapsulated form. "Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! To what end is it for you? The day of the LORD is darkness and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him." Amos 5:18,19

Those that prematurely desired the day of the LORD, thinking to establish themselves in power, will find a bitter fruitage awaits their actions. In our time we have borne witness to the empire of the lion—the universally recognized symbol of Great Britain. During the height of colonialism the sun never set on the British Empire. After World War I the British sun began to set. As men began to flee that colonial arrangement the bear met them.

All recognize the bear as Russia's national symbol. Truly, with the demise of the British Empire, the rise of communism out of Russia began. Now we see communism's collapse. The Soviet Union is dissolving. One by one the member states of the USSR have proclaimed their independence. One by one they are fleeing into the house. Nationalism is scripturally represented by a house. The various republics are fleeing into their houses of nationalistic pride. As they lean on the walls, as they trust in the strength of a nation, they are bitten by a serpent.

That old serpent, Satan, will deceive the nations.

What will the deception be? Will it be the uniting again of church and state? Will the nations succumb to creating another counterfeit kingdom of Christ? We must watch and pray lest we also be deceived.

Our Responsibility

We are espoused to Christ as pure and holy virgins of faith. We lament the

fall of the early church into fornication (Revelation 17:12) with the kings of the earth. Yes, the Church will reign with Jesus over all the earth, but it will be by God's power—not the power of earthly strength. The hope of our faith, to be joined with Christ and bless all the families of earth, will soon come to pass. Let us keep our faith and our patience in this hour of temptation. (Revelation 3:10) May we, by God's grace, stand strong in the promises of His word and His Divine principles—they are His keeping power.

We encourage you to read "The Battle of Armageddon" a powerful 656 page treatise on the passing of this world and the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth.

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