

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE TOWN OF TONAWANDA, NY

The Rev. Fr. Arthur W. Ward Jr.+ Rector

Scripture: Various

"America's Future in Light of Bible Prophecy"(part 2)

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Fr. Molison was scheduled to preach this morning but he and his wife Barbara had to leave yesterday to be with their son and daughter-in-law, Stacy. Stacy is expecting their fourth child but is having some physical complications. Not overly serious but still a concern nonetheless. Please keep them in your prayers.

So since I am preaching this morning, I thought I would return to the subject I began two weeks ago. If you recall we looked at some of what the Bible has to say about the future and if the USA has any role to play. While there is no direct mention of the United States in the Bible, we do know that every nation's future hinges upon the future of Israel. Simply put, to understand bible prophecy is to understand the role of Israel and its relation to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

BRIEF REVIEW

In part 1, we saw how the Bible indicates that the Jews will have returned to Israel and will be in control of Jerusalem when Christ returns. Most of the world's nations will come against Israel and will seek to conquer Jerusalem. This will be part of the final world war commonly referred to as Armageddon. The stage has been set for such events now that Israel is a nation (1948) and the Jews control all of Jerusalem (1967).

Thankfully over the last 200 years the United States has been a principle supporter of Israel. This support for Israel began with our Founding Fathers, continued in the 1800's by Christians both in the Church and the government, with William Blackstone and his book, *Jesus Is Coming*, playing a major role. US support continued with the establishment of Israel in 1948. But there is something else the US has been doing. We have been all too often very supportive of Ishmael (ie. the Moslem world). Recall that Moslems believe that God's promise is through Ishmael not Isaac. They believe that Jews and Christians have corrupted the truth and that they are true chosen people of Allah.

WHOSE SIDE ARE WE REALLY ON?

So we have a real dilemma - when push comes to shove, who will we support? As it stands now, we have pledged to support Israel. But it seems every administration straddles the fence. And our current administration is no different. Unfortunately, President Obama is enamored with the Moslem world, and plays down our Christian heritage. He has said on many occasions that we are not a "Christian" nation. He may be right in the true sense, but our heritage is grounded in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Although he claims to be a Christian, it is clear by his past statements that President Obama is one in name only. When it comes to Islam, however, he loves to talk about his Moslem background and extols the virtues of Islam calling it a "religion of peace." Earlier in the year he sent a taped message to Iran praising them for their culture and society. It was an attempt to get the Iranians to consider talking about ending their nuclear energy/weapons program. Their response? They basically told the president to take a hike!

Then in June, President Obama addressed many of the elite of Egypt at Cairo University. His address, while well written and thought-out, showed a total lack of understanding of Islam's true nature and intentions (you can read the entire text online). It begins with the presupposition that there should be no divide between the US and Islam.

Listen to the following quotes: ***"I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world; one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect; and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles - principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings."***

Really? Show me where the principles of justice, progress, tolerance and the dignity of all human beings is the norm in Islamic lands? This is simply ignoring the record.

President Obama also said, ***"Violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims. The attacks of September 11th, 2001 and the continued efforts of these extremists to engage in violence against civilians has led some in my country to view Islam as inevitably hostile not only to America and Western countries, but also to human rights. This has bred more fear and mistrust."***

Excuse me? The attacks on the US are not the only reason why people view Islam as hostile to America and the West. The last 60 years alone speaks volumes. Again look at the actions of the various Islamic governments toward their own people and Western nations. Look at the suicide bombers across the globe, the beheadings, the massacres, the torture, the oppression. And who can forget the "Death to America" rallies over the years and the attacks on our citizens around the world. Even if only 1% of Moslems believed that suicide bombing is justifiable that would mean 12 million people are open to it worldwide out of a population of an estimated 1.2 Billion Moslems. But polls have shown a much higher percentage of support. In fact, only 6% of Palestinian Moslems believe suicide bombing is never acceptable. That means 94% are willing to justify it! Do you see why we can't let nuclear weapons fall into the hands of such misguided individuals?

In conclusion President Obama said: ***"Too many tears have flowed. Too much blood has been shed. All of us have a responsibility to work for the day when the mothers of Israelis and Palestinians can see their children grow up without fear; when the Holy Land of three great faiths is the place of peace that God intended it to be; when Jerusalem is a secure and lasting home for Jews and Christians and Muslims, and a place for all of the children of Abraham to mingle peacefully together as in the story of Isra, when Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed (peace be upon them) joined in prayer."***

I agree with the President that too many tears have flowed and too much blood has been shed but there will never be peace in Jerusalem or in our world for that matter until the Lord Jesus Christ returns. While it may be nice to talk about such things, the reality is that Islam would accept no such arrangement and Jesus is not going to be praying with Mohammed!

The truth is while much in his speech is to try and bridge the gap between the West and Islam it reflects and presents a fantasy world. It is not a tiny minority of Moslems who believe that Islam should take over the world. It is a central teaching of the Koran.

Remember Libya and its President Gadhafi? They have been supposedly cooperating with the West assuring the US and Europe that they want to be our friends. Libya's Foreign Minister Abdel-Rahman Shalqam stated while in Washington last year, "We want a new friendship," before assuring America that Libya had no interest in backing militant Islam. "Our interpretation of Islamic heritage is completely different from the others who don't accept the philosophy of coexistence," he said (*Washington Post*, Jan. 3, 2008).

Yet a month earlier Libyan Prime Minister El-Mahmoudi, after meeting with Iran's vice president, stated, "We discussed the issues related to Iraq, Palestine and other issues, *and our views are identical on all those issues*" (African Press International, Dec. 27, 2007).

In fact, in April 2006, in a speech given in Timbuktu, Mali, Gadhafi stated that "*Mohammad's faith will conquer all other religions whether they like that or not.*" Muslims have America and Europe trapped, he said. These countries must accept the fact that they will be Muslim in due course because "*Islam is the fate of mankind and the faith of humanity.*"

Not only does President Obama extol the virtues of Islam and says that it is a religion of peace, but earlier this year he bowed down to the Sheik of Saudi Arabia, a dictator who oppresses his people. Do you know what goes on in Saudi Arabia? Executions, amputations, torture including the use of electro shock, floggings. It is illegal to practice Christianity and if a Christian is sharing his or her faith they will be imprisoned and even executed. And have we forgotten that it was Saudi Arabia who supported Al Qaeda initially and supports the most radical form of Sunni Islam - Wahhabism?

Now if I am President of the US, I don't need to bow down to these tyrants. But do you know why he does? He is sympathetic to Islam and they have much of the world's oil. Many of our former political leaders get kickbacks from the Saudis. What in the world does Saudi Arabia - their society, their government, their ways of doing things - have anything in common with the USA? It is a walking contradiction.

And then of course, we can look at the tragedy at Ft. Hood, one that should have and could have been prevented. Nidal Hassan was a ticking time bomb that slipped under the radar. The problem is the radar wasn't working. Back in 2007 he was supposed to give a medical presentation at the Walter Reed Medical Center but instead he gave a talk on Islam, Jihad and the dilemma of a Moslem soldier having to kill other Moslems. Can you believe that? I saw the presentation notes. It would be perfect for a mosque. But for a hospital? Could you imagine if some officer gave a presentation on Jesus and the Bible? Would they have promoted him or her to the next rank!?! I don't think so.

AMERICA - THE WORLD'S GREATEST CONSUMER AND DEBTOR

And then don't forget about the economy. The nation's debt is at \$12 Trillion and counting. You see, our nation and our government is living in a fantasy world. How else would you describe annual budgets both on the national level and the state level that are running high deficits? Sooner or later something has to give. I don't know how much longer the fantasy can continue. But it will end my friends.

1 trillion in bailouts and now another trillion for new healthcare. A trillion here, a trillion there, What's the big deal? It's only money. No, it's not only money, it represents the value of our nation. And sooner or later someone has to pay. During the Depression in the 1930's things were bad - we didn't have the safety nets that we do today. But something else was different. In 1930, America was a producer. During that year, the U.S. produced 70 percent of the world's oil, 60 percent of its wheat and cotton, 50 percent of its copper, 40 percent of its coal. Additionally, America held half of the world's monetary gold reserves. Today, America is a net consumer, relying on other nations for energy supplies and strategic minerals such as oil and copper to meet demand.

America also used to be a creditor nation. But it has gone from being the world's greatest lender nation to its greatest debtor—a situation that is getting worse by the day. America is spending money like it is going out of style. It has paid out more money combating the current recession than it has on any other event in history, including

World War 2. All the money might buy a little time, but it doesn't really change anything. A problem caused by too much spending and debt cannot be fixed by more of the same.

We may be able to get away with it now because we are the biggest guy on the block, but God forbid that ever changes. The truth is both parties (Democrat and Republican), the media doesn't get it, Hollywood - now there is a fantasyland - they don't get it, Wall Street, Madison Avenue, the NAE, the APA, no one gets it - except the Church and even the Church at times is AWOL.

When our Founding Fathers established our government, when they set up the new republic, they understood that it would only be successful if our citizens were a moral and Christian people. Listen to what President John Adams, our second president, said, October 11, 1798 in an address to our nation's military: ***"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."***

ONLY ONE TRUE RULER AND KING

We celebrate Christ the King Sunday today. The older I get the less faith I have in man and the more I see how we do need the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Every political system will fall short because of the heart of man. In fact, we all should have this verse written down in big bold plain letters somewhere in our homes where we can see it - **Jeremiah 17:9: *"The heart of is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?"*** It is a warning about ourselves. It is a warning about others. It is a warning about our government.

Technology can't change the human heart for good. Education can't change the human heart for good. Money can't change the human heart for good. All the laws in the world can't change the human heart for good. Religion can't change the human heart for good. There is only one thing that can change the human heart for good: the grace and power of the Lord Jesus Christ - only He can change us. Only He can save the human heart.

I believe for those of us who have been touched and changed by God's grace, our role as believers is to let our light shine and that means proclaiming the gospel to all who would hear (ie. the Truth - Jesus is the Truth, the Life, He is the only way- despite what Oprah says, despite what our President says, despite what the Episcopal Church and their like says), it means standing up for what is right (like the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church finally taking a stand against our government in a firm way against abortion,) it means doing what is right - we have to practice what we preach - you have to live it, and it means engaging in what I like to call damage control. St. Paul in 1 **Timothy 2:1-2** tells us ***"pray for your leaders and those in authority that we lead peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and dignity."*** And I might add, if you are disgusted with both candidates; don't simply not vote, but vote for the lesser of two evils.

As I stated in my last sermon, we stand at the crossroads. We are living in dangerous times. We must remain vigilant. Jesus said in **Lk. 21:34-36**, ***"Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; ³⁵for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. ³⁶"But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."*** May God indeed give us the strength to endure, may God give us the wisdom to know the difference between truth and error, and may God have mercy on us all! In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, AMEN!