

Are Christianity and the Bible Relevant?

Iran-Russia-Israel-Ezekiel

Pastor Chris Bayer, October 28, 2007

The following notes are from Joel Rosenberg, author of *Epicenter* and *The Ezekiel Option*. He was invited by the Pentagon recently to help them understand world events from a Biblical perspective.

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* To misunderstand the nature and threat of evil is to risk being blindsided by it. A new evil is rising in the world. Ahmadinejad is the new Hitler. Putin is a new Czar. Yet the West seems to be asleep to the implications of this dangerous new alliance.

* Ahmadinejad is a devout Shia Muslim. He began telling colleagues when he was first elected in the summer of 2005 that the end of the world was just two or three years away. He said the way to hasten the coming of the Islamic Messiah known as the "Mahdi" or the "Twelfth Imam" or the "Hidden Imam" is to annihilate two countries -- Israel, which he says is the "little Satan," and the United States, which he says is the "Great Satan."

* In September 2005, Ahmadinejad concluded his address to the U.N. by praying that Allah would hasten the coming of the Mahdi.

* Ahmadinejad returned to Iran after that speech and told Shia clerics that as he had spoken at the U.N. he had been surrounded by a halo of light, and that for 27 or 28 minutes not a single person in the General Assembly hall had even blinked, so mesmerized were they -- he said -- but what Allah was saying through him.

* In October 2005, Ahmadinejad gave his famous speech vowing to wipe Israel off the map. In the same speech, he urged the Muslim world to envision a world without the United States, and said this is possible -- a world without America and Zionism -- "when our holy hatred strikes like a wave."

* In December 2005, Russia signed a \$1 billion arms deal with Iran, selling high-speed missiles to the Ahmadinejad regime, on top of billions of dollars worth of other arms, submarines, and nuclear technology in recent years.

* In September 2006, Ahmadinejad returned to the U.N. and again concluded his address by praying for Allah to hasten the coming of the Mahdi. Throughout 2006 and 2007, he has continued to give regular speeches denouncing Israel and assuring Muslims that the Jewish State will soon "vanish."

* In August 2007, Ahmadinejad began shifting gears. He was no longer saying that the end of the world was two or three years away. Now he was saying the return of the Mahdi was "imminent."

* In September 2007, Ahmadinejad again spoke at the U.N., as well as at Columbia University in New York City. This time, rather than ending his speeches with a prayer, he began both speeches by asking Allah to hasten the coming of the Mahdi.

* For the past two years, Ahmadinejad has been feverishly trying to build, buy or steal nuclear weapons. He has specifically been building alliances with three nuclear powers, Russia, China and North Korea, in pursuit of his genocidal objectives.

* Despite the apocalyptic rhetoric coming out of Tehran, the military, political and economic relationship between Russia and Iran has intensified dramatically over the past two years. Putin doesn't seem bothered by the talk of genocide. Putin and Ahmadinejad have met regularly. Putin's visit this week to Iran was the first by a Russian leader since 1943.

* Putin didn't meet only with Ahmadinejad in Iran. He also held a summit with the leaders of several Central Asian/Caspian Sea nations and issued a threat to the U.S. not to intervene militarily to stop Iran's nuclear program.

* No one is entirely certain why Putin is building an alliance with such radical Islamic regimes. Russia is certainly making billions of dollars from their arms and nuclear deals. Putin clearly wants to rebuild the glory of Mother Russia. He is becoming a Czar, centralizing power to himself and now saying he will step down as president in 2008 but stay in power as prime minister.

* As an emerging Czar, Putin wants to expand Russia's borders and influence. But he can't go West, because NATO is moving East. Putin can't go East because he borders a nuclear China. He recently claimed sovereignty over the North Pole. But his real opportunity to build a global, anti-Western empire lies to the South. So Putin is feverishly working to build alliances with Islamic and Arab powers, including Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Libya, Algeria, and several Central Asian states, as well as Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world.

* Still, given Russia's experience in Chechnya, it doesn't really make sense that Russia would arm radical Islamic nations, or help them go nuclear.

* The Bible offers an intriguing clue to what could be happening. In Ezekiel 38-39, the Hebrew Prophet Ezekiel foretold a Russian-Iranian alliance that would form with a group of other North African, Middle Eastern, and Central Asian states in what the Bible calls "the last days." For most of the past 2,500 years since the prophecy was written, this had never happened. But it seems to be happening now.

* No one knows exactly when these prophecies will be fulfilled in their entirety. I certainly do not. My 2005 political thriller, *The Ezekiel Option*, was a fictional look at how these prophecies might play out, if they were to play in my lifetime. *Epicenter* is a non-fiction look (both the book and the documentary film) at these prophecies and the current dynamics in Russia, Iran and the rest of the region. It considers the possibility that we might actually be closer to the fulfillment of these prophecies than anyone in the political, business or media worlds has expected.

* One curious development worth noting: Ezekiel 36 and 37 have already come true in our lifetime. These are the famous prophecies that say that in the end times, Israel will be reborn as a nation, Jews will pour back into the Holy Land after centuries of exile, they will make the deserts bloom, they will rebuild the ancient ruins, and have an "exceedingly great army." Since these dramatic events have already happened, it begs the question: Could Ezekiel 38-39 -- what Bible scholars call the "War of Gog and Magog" -- also come true in our lifetime? This remains to be seen. But current events are raising lots of intriguing questions.