

Benjamin Netanyahu at the United Nations

Tom's Perspectives

by Thomas Ice

"In our time the Biblical prophecies are being realized. As the prophet Amos said, they shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them. They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine. They shall till gardens and eat their fruit. And I will plant them upon their soil never to be uprooted again. Ladies and gentlemen, the people of Israel have come home never to be uprooted again."

—Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu

The quotation above is how Benjamin Netanyahu concluded his speech on October 1, 2013 at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Netanyahu's speech was a warning to the rest of the world to not rush into some agreement with Iran that would let them off the hook in relation to their development of nuclear weapons. "Now I know: Rouhani doesn't sound like Ahmadinejad. But when it comes to Iran's nuclear weapons program, the only difference between them is this: Ahmadinejad was a wolf in wolf's clothing. Rouhani is a wolf in sheep's clothing, a wolf who thinks he can pull the wool over the eyes of the international community," warned Netanyahu. The Prime Minister said that Israel has two historic concerns learned over thousands of years of existence. First, Never give up hope, and second, always remain vigilant.

ISRAEL'S BASIS FOR HOPE

As Netanyahu notes at the end of his speech, the basis for Israel's hope is Bible prophecy. Simply put, the Lord says in a multitude of passages that Israel will experience a great time, future to our own day, of great blessing, prosperity, and spirituality. All the prophets except Jonah speak of a time in our future when the Jewish people will return to the Lord and the Lord will return them to their land forever. Netanyahu closed his speech by quoting from Amos 9:14–15 which declares: "'Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live *in them*, they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them,' says the LORD your God." In the very last sentence in Netanyahu's speech, after referring to the Amos 9 passage, he announced: "Ladies and gentlemen, the people of Israel have come home never to be uprooted again!" A little earlier, right before his reference to the Amos 9 passage, he claimed: "In our time the biblical prophecies are being realized."

Of course, when I heard these statements I perked up and was excited to hear the Prime Minister of Israel saying such things, in of all places, the U. N. General Assembly, one of the headquarters of Satan. Throughout his speech Netanyahu used the Bible as the basis for Israel's right to exist and to protect herself. He did not appeal to some secular standard such as International Law, although he could have. Netanyahu took it right to his audience with repeated references to the Bible.

Netanyahu began his speech by noting that the founding of the Jewish people originated almost 4,000 years ago through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The only place you learn about them is from the Bible. Next, he introduced the nation of Iran (known historically as Persia) via the Bible when he said, "Today our hope for the future is challenged by a nuclear-armed Iran that seeks our destruction. But I want you to know,

that wasn't always the case. Some 2,500 years ago the great Persian king Cyrus ended the Babylonian exile of the Jewish people. He issued a famous edict in which he proclaimed the right of the Jews to return to the land of Israel and rebuild the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. That's a Persian decree. And thus began an historic friendship between the Jews and the Persians that lasted until modern times."

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU

In the last year, especially, Netanyahu has become more of a Bible quoter than any of Israel's previous Prime Minister's, except perhaps for Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion who was a self-proclaimed atheist but an avid student of the Old Testament.¹ Netanyahu's wife, Sara, comes from a religious background and has provided religious training for her sons. In 2010 Avner, the older of their two sons, won the International Bible Contest, which indicates a strong religious upbringing. The competition in this event is stiff (over 12,000 contestants) and requires years of preparation in order to compete, let alone win against Jewish entries from all over the world. Sara competed as a child and so did her three brothers, each of the boys were winners of the contest. Further, it was announced in December 2011 that Netanyahu would host a regular Bible study at his residence in order to perpetuate love of the Bible. News reports said that Netanyahu was following the lead of former Prime Ministers David Ben Gurion and Menachem Begin.

While Netanyahu is not an orthodox Jew, it is certainly clear that he values and respects the Bible and believes it, at least to some extent. It is clear that Scripture provides for him a certain level of confidence concerning the future and the destiny for the Jewish people and the land of Israel. He appears to be growing in his confidence that the Bible is true and provides the prophetic roadmap for even the modern state of Israel. Apparently belief in biblical prophecy strengthens his resolve and gives him the courage needed to stand up against the Iranian nuclear threat and even the backbone to launch an attack against Iran, if that is deemed necessary in the future.

AMOS 9

Netanyahu's reference to Amos 9:14–15 is just one of many Old Testament passages that he could have noted to support his belief that the Jewish people and the nation of Israel has a great and glorious future, in spite of the Iranian threat. While I believe the context of Amos' statement from the Lord is that of the millennium, which we are certainly not living in at the present time; it does mean that the current nation of Israel will make it from today to that impending time of refreshing. However, for those of us who know the rest of the story taught in the Bible, the Jewish people must first endure the seven-year tribulation period that will result in their conversion to the Messiah—Jesus. This will provide them with the proper spiritual relationship with the Lord needed for Him to dwell with them in Zion.

The Lord tells the nation of Israel, through the prophet Ezekiel, that Israel was sent into worldwide dispersion "for their iniquity because they acted treacherously against Me, and *I hid My face from them*; so I gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and all of them fell by the sword. . . . *I hid My face from them*" (Ezek. 39:23–24). This is likely a reference to the A.D. 70 and A.D. 135 global dispersion of Israel at the hands of the Romans for their rejection of their Messiah—Jesus. The Lord has hidden His face from the nation during the last 2,000 years, which means that God is not dealing directly with His people Israel, He is letting them go their own way and not intervening on their behalf or protecting them. However, in conjunction with the Battle of Gog and Magog,

in connection with the tribulation the Lord will begin to deal with Israel again. “When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God . . . And *I will not hide My face from them any longer*, for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,” declare the LORD God” (Ezek. 39:27–29). God is currently bringing the Jews back to the covenant land of Israel in preparation for the events of Ezekiel 38 and 39. It would be foolish to think that He will not protect this process until He reaches His goal of revealing His face to His ancient people.

CONCLUSION

Certainty in God’s plan for the future provides a confidence that God will complete His preordained plan for history as outlined in the Bible. It provides for believers a confidence that God will preserve and protect His chosen people Israel, even if He must intervene directly in order to protect them. Just as we can be certain about what has happened in the past because God’s Word has explained it to us in the Bible, we can have full certainty and confidence in the future as well. God will bring His plan for history to pass!

This year’s Pre-Trib Study Group Conference will be a seminal event! It will be an important conference because we will be clarifying what the Bible teaches about the modern state of Israel and its preparation for end-time prophetic events. In fact, just such a burden is what provoked Tim LaHaye to come up with the theme for the 2013 Conference this December 2–4 at the Sheraton Grand Hotel, just north of the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport.² Our speakers will be examining and laying out what the Bible teaches about Israel’s future and the role God has in store for His chosen people and their land. We will be adding to the biblical foundation an analysis of important events in history and our banquet speaker, Dr. Jacques P. Gauthier a specialist in international law, will be demonstrating from international law why modern Israel has all the legal rights to Jerusalem and all of the land west of the Jordan River. This will be an event that you will not want to miss. Plan now on attending. Maranatha!

ENDNOTES

¹ In fact, when Ben Gurion died, it was found that he was reading a Hebrew translation of Hal Lindsey’s *The Late Great Planet Earth*.

² For more information about the 22nd annual Pre-Trib Study Group Conference go to the following web page: www.pre-trib.org/conference. To register for the conference go to: www.pre-trib.org/registration.