

# MID-EAST e-NEWS

An electronic journal of the Middle East, for those who want to be informed.

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Amman

## Contexts

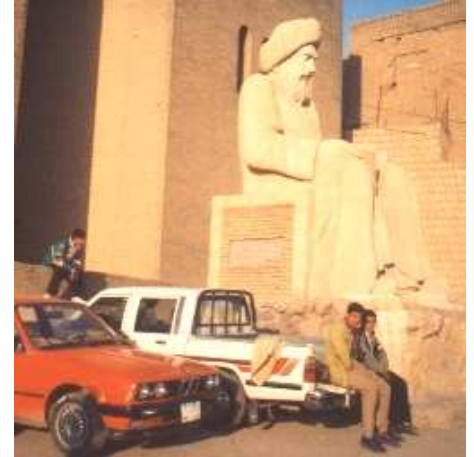
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## This month

Nov.		
1	S	
2	S	Isr ~100,000 at Rabin peace rally Irq US Helicopter shot down: 16 die
3	M	Irq Karbala: Blast near shrine, 3 die Irq Anti-Baath Judge assassinated SA 2 shot by security in Mecca
4	T	Irq Mortar attacks on US compound Pal Ashrawi nominated for peace prize
5	W	Irq 2 Iraqi generals captured in Fallujah
6	T	Irq 3 die (2 US, Pole) near Syria border SA US warns-attacks possible in Saudi
7	F	
8	S	SA Saudi apartment bomb – 17 die Isr Israelis, Arabs protest security wall. Isr Hizbollah prisoner swap approved
9	S	Irq Sistani faction quits Karbala council
10	M	Afg US opens major assault on Taleban Irn IAEA reports violations, cooperation
11	T	
12	W	Pal Qorei govt. cabinet approved Irq Italian police post bomb – 25 die
13	T	Irq US bombs Baghdad guerillas
14	F	Isr Israeli chiefs criticize government approach to conflict
15	S	Irq 2 US helicopters crash killing 17
16	S	Tur Istanbul synagogues bombs kill 23
17	M	
18	T	Irq Assyrian politician killed in Basra Isr 25 tanks in Gaza pre-dawn raid
19	W	Irq Bomb against Ramadi tribal leader Isr Bush criticizes Israel's fence
20	T	Irq Gunmen kill security guard at Jordan's new embassy Tur Consulate & HSCB hit by bombs in Istanbul – 27 die
21	F	Pal Hamas condemns Geneva Accord Irq Donkey cart rockets - hotel, ministry
22	S	Isr Sharon offers to remove some Gaza settlements Irq DHL plane damaged by rocket Irq Suicide bombs hit police stations- 18 die
23	S	Isr Israelis & Palestinians demonstrate against wall Pal Irq 2 US soldiers killed in Mosul
24	M	Last day of Ramadan
25	T	
26	W	
27	T	Pres. Bush visits troops in Baghdad Sistani promotes full elections
28	F	UN Fence will cut of 16% of WB land Mortars kill soldier in Mosul base
29	S	Irq Attack kills 7 Spanish agents Pal PM Qureia meets US rep. Burns in Jordan to discuss roadmap

## Welcome

In the first issue of **e-NEWS**, the byline above read 'for those who want information, rather than opinion'. By issue #2 I had removed the last phrase, partly because I did not want to sound patronizing (is that the right word?) but also because I recognized that at some point I would be venturing into areas of opinion myself. I wanted to tread lightly in that field, but knew it would be necessary to draw conclusions from information that presented here. The article on page 4, praying for the Middle East, is not exactly *information*, but arose out of a sense of frustration. I'm sure I'm not the only one who finds himself making assumptions about what God is doing in the Middle East; assumptions about timing, direction and method. Perhaps this article will help us participate more effectively in the battle.



Ancient philosopher and others seated

Communication in the Arab world has to be creative. Because of what many have been told about the truths we want to share, barriers to communication are often erected



even before we have a chance to speak. One approach takes advantage of the love Arabs have for simple proverbs, which they use frequently in conversation. They also respond to new expressions of wisdom, and when introduced to some, they want more. Books and Audio tapes of Solomon's proverbs are finding a ready audience in the Arab world, and serve as a gentle introduction to the

larger Word and its Author, the Source of wisdom. The article on page 3 – *An Old Proverb Says...* - is one of a series of four (so far) that have been translated into Arabic and Kurdish and published widely in newspapers in the north of Iraq.

Recently an ex-student of mine returned from Iraq. Perhaps next week I will include a piece he wrote on his reactions to what he saw there. The photos on this page were taken by him this week.



## The Ancient Church – Eastern Rite Churches

Eastern Rite Churches are a remnant from the Great Schism of 1054, (when the Bishops of Rome and Constantinople excommunicated each other). In succeeding centuries various dioceses acknowledged the primacy of the Pope, beginning with the *Maronites* and *Armenians* in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. These were followed by *Ukraine* (1596), the *Chaldeans* (northern Iraq, 1681), *Ruthenians* (1692), *Romanians* (1698) and *Melkites* (1724), with the *Antiochean Rite* (based in India) being readmitted to Catholicism as recently as 1930. Within the Chaldeans are included some *Nestorian* congregations. As an ethnic group they are known as *Assyrians (Asshuric)* in Mesopotamia, northern Iraq.

Each of the churches has its *Patriarch*, able to appoint bishops and redistrict their dioceses. These are based in Alexandria, Babylon and Cilicia, with three others in Syrian Antioch (now Antakya, Turkey).

One major distinction from the Roman rite is the tradition of having a married clergy. Another is the long-time practice of their liturgy being spoken in the vernacular of wherever they are located.

A branch of the Catholic church, ruled by their own Patriarch of Antioch, in Lebanon, the **Maronite** church has a delegate in Detroit, Michigan, for expatriates residing in the US. Of the estimated 1.3 million Maronites, the majority reside in Lebanon, with others in Cyprus, Palestine and Syria, and about 150,000 in the USA.

There is a Catholic **Armenian** Church which has its chief diocese in Beirut, the patriarchate of Cilicia. This group split with the church over the Council of Chalcedon, but reunited with the Catholic church, accepting papal authority, in 1439. A larger group refused to reconcile with the Catholic church and is now led from Yerevan in Armenia. The Catholicos there is head over the Armenian patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople. The two American branches of this church have about 100 churches with a combined membership of about 40,000.

The **Melkites** ('Melek' means king) were so named because they supported the Emperor at the Council of Chalcedon. They broke with the Catholic Church at the Schism of 1054, but a large proportion of them were reunited to Catholicism and are known as the Melkite (or Melchite) Catholic Church. They number around 300,000 in the region of Syria, based in Damascus, and another 200,000 worldwide, (with around 60,000 in the US). Services are in the vernacular.

The **Latin** church is a Catholic denomination that has a large congregation in Jordan, but just one church (in Baghdad) in Iraq. As with other branches of the various churches, the Latine church has its own school, the De La Salle School, in Amman.



## An Old Proverb Says...

An old proverb says, "Hard work brings prosperity; only fools idle their time away." The other day in one of the villages where Kurdish people are returning to farm their land, a man approached me with mud on his hands and a smile on his face. He was working hard at re-building his home. He stopped for a few minutes and we drank some mastow together and talked over the various projects in the area that need to be done. I also met another man, hardly a kilometer away, but he had a scowl on his face and wanted to know why the Americans were not building him a new home. This second man had been forced to leave his home by Saddam Hussein many years before, and now though the Americans had helped fight to set this man free, because the Americans were not building him a new home, he said things were better during the time of Saddam Hussein. Two men. Two different perspectives. One man was happy, one man was not. One man was working hard to make a better life. The other was fat, unhappy, and blaming others for his troubles.

Let us return to the old proverb, for it is from such wisdom that has been passed down over time, that we learn the truth about how to live on the earth. "Hard work brings prosperity," it says. Is this true? Or should men lie around doing nothing and expect good fortune to simply come their way? Those who scoff and mock at life and hard work will sneer and say, "We will lie around and wait. Why should we have to work?" It seems some people are so lazy they won't even lift a finger to feed themselves. But the old proverb says these men are but fools. Fools think they need no advice. But on the other hand, those who are wise, listen to others. Those who will listen will learn that it is hard work that brings a profit, but idleness leads only to poverty.

And did you ever notice that lazy people love to criticize those who work hard? They refuse to get their hands dirty like the first man mentioned above and do not seem to understand the honor that comes from perseverance and working hard. But where will these two men be five years from now? Who is likely to be prospering? The one who is diligent and works hard, or the one who whines and wastes the precious time he has been given to live on the earth? The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work. However, those who are industrious are filled with good things as the work of their hands rewards them, and when people work together, then prosperity can come to a whole nation. Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper and be satisfied.

Another old proverb asks, "Who can find a virtuous woman? She finds wool and flax and busily spins it. She is energetic and strong; a hard worker. Her hands are busy spinning thread, her fingers twisting fiber. She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy. When she speaks, her words are wise and filled with kindness. Reward her for all she has done. Let her deeds publicly declare her praise."

Each man and woman has to choose what he or she will do. We can sit around and waste time or we can get busy, being diligent in our businesses, working hard in our fields, and making the most of every moment of every day. One man was happy with a smile on his face. This contentment with life is also the product of hard work. Not only does working hard and being conscientious at our jobs bring prosperity, but it also brings a satisfaction in living. People are happy when they have done a good day's work. Their food tastes better for they are pleased with what they have done, and they begin to speak words of wisdom to their children and train them up in the way in which they should live. Their speech is filled with good words, words of peace, and the virtues of living the way God has intended people to live on the earth. When we do this, we are happy. When people do not do this, they are not happy, even if they have a lot of money, for prosperity is more than just money. It is a good life. For as another old proverb says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For wisdom will multiply your days and add years to your life."

Suliman

## How far back does it go? (Part 5)

In the last issue was a summary chart on our regress so far. Having taken five issues to cover 90 years our telescopic lens now allows us to view a couple of millennia, giving an overview of events since the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

### AD 70 Destruction of Jerusalem

This was done to quell rebellion and prevent further insurrection. It did not prevent the rebellion of Bar Kochba in 132 AD, however, and when Hadrian put this down and rebuilt the city he banned Jews from its gates. The Ashkenazim, descendants of Jews taken as captives to Rome in AD 70 eventually spread through north and eastern Europe.

They were not banned from the area, however, and varying numbers of Jews remained in Palestine and the region throughout the next two millennia. For many years, however, Roman dominance was the rule; either the western Roman empire (until its collapse in 476 AD), or the eastern empire (which we call Byzantine) until the Muslim invasion.

By the sixth century, more than 40 Jewish communities survived in Palestine, primarily on the coast (12) and in the Galilee (31), though others were to be found in the Jordan valley and east of the Jordan.

### AD 438 "The end of exile of our people"

When Empress Eudocia allowed Jews to worship again at their temple, in ruins since AD 70, they were optimistic. The Sassanid Persians may well have been assisted in capturing Jerusalem by Jews from the area, which then remained in Persian control for just five years before the Romans (Byzantines) returned.

Jews who moved westwards though north Africa during the Islamic conquests (known as *Sephardic* Jews) ended up in Spain, and were exiled from there in the 1490s by the Christian reconquerors. Some of their descendants moved to northern Europe, or the Balkans, and some – including the famous Maimonides, via Cairo – returned to Palestine.

### AD 638 The Islamic Conquest

Under Christian rule the Jews were frequently mistreated, and hence they welcomed the Muslim invasions. By now their main cities were Lydda, Ramle, Ashkelon, Caesarea and Gaza. Jericho also included a good number of Jews, many of them refugees from Khaibar, in the Hejaz. Early Muslim defeats had caused the emerging religion to recoil and completely wipe out two Arabian Jewish tribes there.

With the Arab invasion the ban on living in Jerusalem fell by the wayside, and Jews were free to live there. This situation continued until the Crusaders arrived in 1099.

Jerusalem's Jewish quarter was an area south of the Temple Mount, but this area was outside the rebuilt walls, so in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century (1033) they moved into the city and occupied an area in the northeast corner. This was where they were at the time of the first Crusade.

### AD 1099 The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem

The coming of the Franks had been reported ahead of their arrival. They had skirted many other major cities, and come directly to Jerusalem. The siege lasted five weeks until the city was taken. Jews had assembled in synagogues, for defense or mutual encouragement, and this was where the crusaders burned them. Survivors were used to dispose of the thousands of bodies – including the oriental Christian occupants of the city – the city still stank, 6 months later!

The newly instituted Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem banned Jews from the capital city. Only one Jewish family was allowed to settle there. They were dyers, and also served as hosts for Jewish pilgrims.

### AD 1187 Muslim Reconquest

With Saladin's conquest control of the city returned to the Muslims. Oriental Christians and others were allowed to resettle the city and regain their land. Non-Muslims over 15 were to pay a tax of 1 **bezant**.

Jews were exultant about the Arab reconquest. The event even excited Messianic fervor, with 300 Rabbis traveling to the area from France and Germany in about 1209.

In 1219, as the Third Crusade approached, the walls of Jerusalem

were demolished by the Arabs, and many residents departed. Not surprisingly, all of the Jews left. This Crusade, famous for the presence of Richard I, and Barbarossa, the Holy Roman Emperor, was ineffective, but a 1229 treaty ceded Jerusalem to the Crusaders for a 15-year period.

In 1268 the population of Jerusalem was 2000 (it had been 20,000 under the Crusaders) including 300 Christians, but no Jews. The desperate situation was such that new arrivals could appropriate ruins to set up home for themselves.

Rabbinical schools had existed in Jerusalem, Cairo and Damascus before the Muslim invasion. During the turmoil of the Crusades the



Jerusalem school seems to have moved to Tiberias, in Galilee. The settlements in Galilee suffered least from Crusader deprivations.

Muslim rule in Palestine continued with the Ayyubids (Saladin's tribe, from 1187) being succeeded by the Mamlukes (Egyptian-based military slaves, from 1250). They successfully repelled the Mongols (almost the only group that did!) at Ayn Jalut in 1260, and finally drove out the last of the Crusaders from Caesarea and Acre in 1291. A century later the Mongol leader Tamerlane, made amends for their earlier defeat by sacking Aleppo and Damascus, but coming no further south.

### AD 1517 Ottoman Empire

It is during this period that the southern Levant became a cultural and political backwater. The Ottoman empire had been years in construction, but it was in 1517 that Selim I unified the Islamic Caliphates for the first time in centuries. Prior to this, independent rule had existed in Spain, North Africa, and in the east.

The Turks deliberately defoliated the region, destroying ancient forests and failing to maintain vital irrigation and canal systems.

A papal Bull approved migration of Jews into Tiberias from the Papal States of Italy. In 1697 Nazareth was "an inconsiderable village" and Jericho a "poor nasty village."

In the late 1700s, one aristocratic explorer, expecting to find thousands of villages, reported only having been able to discover around 400. He was disappointed at the prospects for trade in the region: "how can we hope long to carry an advantageous commerce with a country which is precipitately hastening to ruin?" In 1817-1818 there was "not a single boat of any description on the lake Tiberias."

During the mid-1800s diplomats recommended that "the country is in a considerable degree empty of inhabitants and therefore its greatest need is that of a body of population." Mark Twain writes of some of his experiences at that time in Innocents Abroad.

*"There is nothing to be seen but a little of the old walls, which is yet Remayning and all the rest is grasse, mosse and Weedes much like a piece of Rank or moist Grounde"* (1590)

*Praying for the Middle East*

**What is the problem?**

The problems in the Middle East, whether in Afghanistan, Iraq or Palestine, are humanly intractable. They occur in a region that has, as a whole, been without knowledge of God for centuries. Human attempts to solve the problems of the region have at times been masquerades for their own territorial ambitions, at other times well-intentioned failures – and not always, even then, from the best of motives.

What we need to constantly remind ourselves of is that these conflicts are occurring in a land that God has selected for His special attention. It is not surprising that the evil one should want to create chaos in a land through which God brought peace to the whole world. It is surprising – and then maybe not – that people would think that intellectual effort and political activism could provide a resolution.

**So, why do we need to pray?**

Because there is a need. Because, without active, effective prayer, the problems we have seen over the last century, and can see in our history books (and in **e-NEWS!**) will continue to reinvent themselves. Because God calls upon us to be involved in this spiritual battle that is no longer in distant lands, but has been brought to our doorsteps.

**How can we be effective in these prayers?**

Almost our first reaction to this question might be “be informed”, “study the region”, “examine the issues”, etc. I submit that when we learn of a friend’s sickness, our first reaction would not be to study the disease, its origins, causes, symptoms and remedies. No, we would pray. If our prayers are guided by God, then they would be more effective than any education.

In its teaching about prayer (and I submit myself as the one who needs to learn about this the most) the Bible gives guidelines for effective prayer. No one can read these without realizing the need to do better.

**Righteous** (Jas. 5:16) – *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

**Regular** (1 Thess. 5:17) – *Pray continually*

**In Fellowship with Him** (Jn. 15:7) – *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.*

**Seeking His Will** (2 Chron. 7:14) – *if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

**In Agreement** (Matt. 18:19) – *Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.*

**Having Forgiven others** (Mk. 11:25) – *And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.*

The words are plain enough. For myself the key is “remain in me”. If I am *in Him* then my requests will not be driven by my desires. *Whatever I want* will be what he is guiding me towards.

**What attitude should we have?**

Praying for the Middle East means participating in spiritual warfare. There will be distractions, conflicts, misunderstandings and delays, since Satan does not want our involvement. He would prefer us to stay on the sidelines, watching on TV, anything but aiming prayer darts at him.

**Humble** – ready to listen, responsive to God

**Open** – not presuming upon God’s omniscience. He knows!

**Discerning** – alert to the Holy Spirit’s prompting

**Believing** – (Jas.1:6) God can do it! No matter how big it is!

**Listening** – (1 Jn.3:21) “...if our hearts do not condemn us...”

**Prompted by God** – (Rom.8:26) “we do not know what we ought to pray”

**But specifically, how can we pray for the Middle East?**

Let me make some suggestions as to what approach we should take.

<i>Be specific. Pray...</i>			
<i>for this region</i>	Palestine	Iraq	Israel
<i>that event</i>	suffering people	resistance	another bombing
<i>for a result</i>	better conditions reduced violence	peace	a cessation comfort w/o hate
<i>Be flexible. Should we pray...</i>			
<i>... with a) suggestions?</i>	Arafat should quit	UN troops go in	US show support for Sharon
<i>b)</i>	close the settlements	US troops leave	permanent occupation of West Bank
<b>or</b>			
<i>...for a solution?</i>	“Lord, deal with injustice”	“that people would want peace”	“that trust for a peace accord could be built”
<i>...asking God to act?</i>	Lord, speak to this people and heal this land.	Lord, save this people and heal their land.	Lord, call this people and heal this land.

Our Lord wants our participation, but, obviously, we have to leave the decisions up to Him. He does not need our recommendations, but He does want our involvement.

**Be focused** – don’t get deviated by events (Jas. 1:6, Luke 18:1)

Set your mind to what God prompts you to pray for. You will have your place on the front line; others will have theirs. Stick to it. Yes, react to other events, elsewhere on the battle line, with prayer, but don’t leave your position. God has put you there for a purpose you don’t know, opposed by an enemy you can’t see, but backed up by an army that won’t fail.

**Be persistent** – don’t change your mind, think you’ve got it wrong, when it doesn’t seem to be working.

Read the Old Testament, about the prophets and patriarchs who received promises and instructions from God, who faltered and were depressed at times, wanting to quit. God strengthened them – from Moses to Elijah, Nehemiah, and even John the Baptist and Paul – and their mission was successful.

But remember, it’s a **spiritual** battle. The enemy forces are not radical politicians, Ayatollahs or Mullahs, Baathists or Shiites, terrorists or freedom fighters, but “the powers of this dark world... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph.6:12). Our prayers have to be aimed at the enemy, not those who have been trapped by him.