

Then and Now

By Mick Wells



It's exciting to be a Christian in these end times, because God has given us insight into what's going on. As one songwriter wrote – "I just took a look in the back of the Book, and I know how the story ends." Each evening, I find myself in front of the TV with my Bible open to the map section, trying to follow events in the mid-East.

The story for mankind began in the very area of the world on which current events focus. Thousands of years ago, God formed man from the dust of the ground, breathed life into him, and put him in a garden in Eden. That garden was watered by a river with four headstreams - two of which were the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in what is today, Iraq. Here man walked with and enjoyed fellowship with God. Here mankind fell – and his fallen nature is all too evident in the events of that region of the world today. In modern Iraq, 150 miles northwest of the Persian Gulf, and approximately 100 miles from Kuwait, lies the site of ancient Ur -- where Abraham lived until his father moved the family to Haran over 2000 years before Christ.

Iraq's capital, Baghdad, is located on the Tigris river. Less than a hundred miles to the south is the site of ancient Babylon. A great walled city divided by the Euphrates river, it was here that the Israelites were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar 600 years before Christ. It was here that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered by the Lord from Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, and where God protected Daniel in the lion's den after he refused to pray to King Darius. It was here, in their exile, Daniel and Ezekiel recorded the great end-time prophecies which continue to unfold before us today.

When Jesus' followers asked Him "*... what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?*", Jesus indicated that "*you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. . . Nation will rise against nation . . . kingdom against kingdom . . . famines and earthquakes in various places*" (Matthew 24:6-7). These and many other signs of the approaching return of Christ are all around us.

While today our attention is on such places as Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Lebanon, Scriptures indicate that events leading to the culmination of human history will focus squarely on Israel (Luke 21:20; Ezekiel 38:8, 14-16).

As you pray for our leaders and our military forces, I urge you to also pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6-9). Yes, we do know how the story ends. Praises to our returning King!

* * * * *