

The Coming Middle East Trifecta

Egypt in Crisis: A Prophetic Perspective

“In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord near its border. And it will become a sign and a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the Lord because of oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Champion, and He will deliver them. Thus the Lord will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day.” (Isaiah 19:19-21a, NASB)

Egypt in the Present

Egypt is in the news. Mass public demonstrations against Hosni Mubarak's régime have turned violent as demonstrators, the majority of whom are against the current government, a minority of whom are for it, throw rocks and Molotov cocktails at each other. Mubarak has offered to step down in September after an orderly transition, but the demonstrating mobs want him out now. Sniper fire has also been heard from rooftops over Liberation Square (Tahrir) in Cairo, Egypt's capitol city. A few persons may have been killed; all of which is to say, the political situation in Egypt, a country formerly aligned with the United States and tolerant of Israel's existence, has turned dicey. Nobody, not even the expert talking heads on network newscasts, dare to forecast where this anarchical mess might lead. So far, the Egyptian military, having been trained in the West and carrying some western values, has remained neutral. How long it will remain so is unknown. But why, it might be asked, is all this happening?

Some point to the thirty years that the eighty-two-year-old Mubarak has been in power, an authoritative reign characterized by political corruption, ironhanded oppression and economic depression, a combination of factors that does not make for a contented citizenry, especially amongst the younger generation. And not wanting to let a good crisis to go to waste, sinister forces, like a pack of wolves sensing a kill, are lurking in the background measuring the moment when they might seize their political prey. As Hitchens observes: "Egypt does not have a western-type civil society waiting to step into the gap left when the Mubarak state falls." [1]

A worldwide and complex financial network funded mostly by petrodollars, the Muslim Brotherhood lies camouflaged and skulking in the shadows behind the current Egyptian crisis, awaiting its moment to seize its victim. Founded in 1928 by then elementary school teacher Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), the Muslim Brotherhood is a network of ideological/religious Muslim groups dedicated to spreading Islam and implementing *Sharia* law, the sacred law of Allah that, without exception, demands the submission of all citizens, especially in the Middle East. The Brotherhood also possesses messianic aspirations of spreading *Sharia* law worldwide. With its no-holds-barred-totalitarian bent, the Brotherhood is the enemy of democracy and the western way of life. To that end, the Brotherhood nurtures, releases and finances terrorists as they prey upon the "Christian" West. Their motto runs: "*Allah* is our objective. *The Prophet* is our leader. *Qur'an* is our law. *Jihad* is our way. *Dying in the way of Allah* is our highest hope." [2] Given these goals, the Brotherhood has become fertile soil for growing terrorists and launching terrorist attacks. Though outlawed by Mubarak's administration, the Muslim Brotherhood is established in Egypt through government representatives registered as "independents." Few however, question where the loyalty of these independents lies, and it's not with Mubarak, nor for that matter, with other western democracies, including Israel. As Peter Hitchens notes: "The

most potent opposition movement [against the current Egyptian régime] is the Muslim Brotherhood, and the most popular cause is enraged hatred of the neighbouring State of Israel.”[3] So what would a Muslim Brotherhood takeover of Egypt mean for Israel?

Ethan Bronner, a *New York Times* writer, poses that a Brotherhood run at Egypt will not only result in a stronger show of Islamic force in Gaza and the West Bank, areas currently under Palestinian control, but also threaten Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen as well; all of which would mean that, “Israel would feel surrounded in a way it has not in decades.”[4] A Brotherhood takeover of Egypt will complement the recent Hamas takeover of Lebanon and the residual hatred of Syria toward Israel. Increasingly, the prediction of Zechariah is playing out on the world’s stage. Twenty-five hundred years ago the Lord stated through the prophet:

Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. And it will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it. (Zechariah 12:2-3, NASB)

Egypt in the Past

Egypt, the land of the Nile, played a prominent role in Israel’s history. At the time of a famine, Abram, father of the Israelites, sought refuge there (Genesis 12:10). Feeling endangered, Abram lied to Pharaoh to hide Sarai’s identity as his wife (Genesis 12:11-20). From Egypt Abraham took Hagar the slave who later on became a surrogate mother to his son Ismael (Genesis 16:1-6) who became the progenitor of the Arabian tribes who caused and today continue to cause so much trouble for Israel. After his brothers sold him into slavery to a passing caravan, Joseph, Jacob’s eleventh son, ended up in

Egypt where he rose to prominence in Pharaoh's government. When famine struck Canaan, Jacob's family migrated to Egypt, first some of his brothers and then the entire family (Genesis 37-50). During the next four-hundred and thirty years in Egypt, the Lord God incubated Israel to become a great nation which Moses led out of Egypt at the Exodus (Exodus 1-19). To the Israelites, Egypt represented a place where they could seek refuge when famine or invading armies (i.e., the Lord's judgment upon them) threatened them in the Promised Land (Isaiah 30:1-3).

Egypt in the Future

Yet the prophet Isaiah envisioned a day when **"there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord near its border,"** a day when Egypt **"will cry to the Lord because of oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Champion, and He will deliver them"** (Isaiah 19:19-20).

In that day . . . the Lord will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the Lord . . . They will even worship with sacrifice and offering, and will make a vow to the Lord and perform it. And the Lord will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to the Lord, and He will respond to them and will heal them. (Isaiah 19:21-22)

Then the nations of Egypt and Assyria will travel on an open highway between them and join together to worship the Lord (Isaiah 19:23). Of this spiritual alliance, the Lord through the prophet announces:

In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance". (Isaiah 19:24-25)

When will this spiritual alliance between Egypt, Assyria and Israel be fulfilled? **"In that day"** . . . during that future time when Israel's Messiah, Egypt's *Savior and Champion*, shall institute His kingdom on Earth and bring Egypt, *His people*, Assyria, *the work of His hands*, and Israel, *His inheritance*, into spiritual oneness to worship and praise the Lord's great Name! Wolff comments: "The peace between Israel, Assyria, and Egypt will correspond to the peace between the natural enemies in the animal world ([Isaiah] 11:6-9)."[5]

A day is coming, that day, when according to the predeterminate plan of the solitary and sovereign God (Daniel 2:37; 4:17; 5:18-19, 21), Egypt will be delivered by her *Savior and Champion* from all oppressors, domestic and religious. That day, we conclude, may be closer than any of us might think . . . **Maranatha! O Lord Come.**

ENDNOTES

[1] Peter Hitchens, "Delusions amid the Pyramids," *Mail Online: Peter Hitchens's Blog*, January 27, 2011. Online: <http://hitchensblog.mailonsunday.co.uk/2011/01/egypt-protests-delusions-amid-the-pyramids/comments/page/2/>.

[2] "Muslim Brothers," *FAS: Intelligence Resource Program*. Online: <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/mb.htm>.

[3] Hitchens, "Delusions amid the Pyramids."

[4] Bronner quoted by Caitlin Dickson, "The Muslim Brotherhood: The Future of Egypt?" *The Atlantic Wire*, January 31, 2011. Online: http://news.yahoo.com/s/atlantic/20110131/cm_atlantic/themusli mbrotherhoodthefutureofegypt6780.

[5] Herbert M. Wolf, *Interpreting Isaiah: The Suffering and Glory of the Messiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985): 125.