**Maneuvering for Mediterranean Resources**

**Turkey’s Quest for Regional Dominance**

There is a potential conflict developing in what the Bible refers to as the “Great Sea.”

Turkey and its traditional rival in this region, Greece, are positioning themselves to claim various natural resources in Mediterranean waters adjacent to their coastlines and within the coastal waters of allies of each nation. In the past three months, both nations have signed exploration and resource development cooperation agreements with other nations including waterways, some international, some undefined, that intersect. Nations in the region are lining up in support of one faction or the other. They are even committing armed naval resources to the region to send a message that no one is motivated to acquiesce their claims to these waters. This struggle could be partially due to nationalistic pride driven by old grievances and partially due to a wealth of natural resources under the sea that could prove to make the difference within the struggling economies of both nations. The Turkish leader, Recep Erdogan, has made a pact with the Libyan faction that controls most of the western part of the nation. The Greeks have made a similar agreement not only with the Libyan regime that controls the eastern part of the county, but also with the Egyptians who favor those in the east over those Libyans running the west who share their border and are seen as hostile to Cairo. Those in agreement on the Greek side also include European Union members (notably France, Germany) plus Cyprus which has been an historical flashpoint between Turkey and Greece. For their part, the Greeks and Cypriots have indicated that the Turks are “continuing to provoke its neighbour(s) and displayed a neo-Ottoman ideology” in the region. The Turks have vowed not to abandon their search for energy sources in the eastern Mediterranean. Now the waters have naval presence from multiple nations within close proximity to one another, not even including Russia, Lebanon or Israel who also have open or clandestine naval operations in the sea at all times.

**Are There Implications for Israel?**

For a couple of reasons, Israel has taken a pro-Greek, pro-Cypriot position regarding the Mediterranean issues. Israel has cooperative agreements in place with both nations regarding exploration and commerce development in the sea. Turkey had been a reliable trading partner and a considered a “moderate” Islamic republic up until the last decade or so. In the last few years, however, under the leadership of Erdogan, the Turkish nation has become more authoritarian and more intentional in moving away from the secular identity it has had since the 1920’s. Turkey is coveting a role of pre-eminence within Islam internationally overall, and has had an increasingly more confrontational tone toward Israel concerning the Palestinian issue, Temple Mount stewardship and conflicting interests in Syria. We know that Israel will trend toward prosperity and those based on ancient biblical promises who partner with her, will do likewise.

**Is the Stage Being set for a Conflict Foretold?**

How are we to process the dynamics taking place in the Mediterranean through the lens of biblical interpretation. Does God’s Holy Word identify these nation-state actors based on their lineage? Does it give us a picture of what we should expect, hope for, and ultimately pray about?

Turkey is identified with Teman from scripture, who was a descendant of Esau, out of which the Edomite peoples were derived. There are ominous verses regarding the Edomites, especially when they are confrontational with God’s eternal promises and plans for the world through his covenant people Israel. These are some passages below that allude to the fate of Edom, some realized, some not yet fulfilled:

**Jeremiah 9:24-6 (Amp)**

 “*Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “when I will punish all who are circumcised [physically] and yet uncircumcised [spiritually]— Egypt and Judah, and* ***Edom*** *and the sons of Ammon, and Moab and all those who live in the desert who clip off the hair on their temples; for all these nations are uncircumcised (sinful, impure), and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.”*

**Ezekiel 32:29 (Amp)**

*“Edom is there also, her kings and all her princes, who for all their power and strength are laid with those who were slain by the sword; they will lie [in shame and defeat] with the uncircumcised and with those who go down to the pit.”*

**Isaiah 34:5-6 (Amp)**
*“For My sword is satiated [with blood] in heaven; Indeed, it will come down for judgment on Edom
And on the people whom I have doomed for destruction. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood [from sacrifices], It drips with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, With the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah (Edom’s capital city) And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.”*

There is also an extensive passage in Jeremiah 49:7-22 (Amp) that describes the ultimate demise of Edom. We do not want to get bogged down in prophetic scripture, but in verse 16 of this passage it states clearly that “The pride *and* arrogance of your heart have deceived you…” With reference to Turkey, we can certainly see in its activity in the Mediterranean, and even with its declaration that it will drive Syrian refugees into Europe in order to secure her own borders, no matter who takes issue with it, that there is an upward trend of *national pride* in operation. It appears that Turkey is moving away from her N.A.T.O. allegiance, while Israel has increased her military cooperation with many of these members in recent times. An official relational shift seems to be in the works, which might indicate a pivot in history pointing to God’s ultimate intention to resolve the conflicts in the region, Mediterranean Sea and otherwise, personally. We rest in His timing, pray for believers within Turkey, thank God for preserving Israel, and agree with God’s purpose to be realized in all the nations that we have referred to today.

Kim Brunson

Media Rep

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