



Issachar Comments Papers

Expounding biblical concepts on the world scene today

September 2013

JUDGEMENT IN WESTMINSTER

No more war! This was the verdict of the House of Commons when they were recalled to consider the situation in Syria in response to the Prime Minister's call for a military response against Syria following a suspected chemical weapons attack on the outskirts of Damascus on 21 August, in which hundreds of people are reported to have died.

Of course, it's unusual for Members of Parliament to be recalled from their summer holiday break, but more than 550 responded to the call. Like most members of the public they had been shocked by the scenes of terrible suffering on our TV screens.

Distress

The Panorama pictures of children hit by a bomb in a school playground had not even been broadcast. They were said to have been dropped by a fighter plane circling overhead and deliberately choosing its target. The children, whose bodies appeared to have been burnt by a napalm bomb or some similar substance, were clearly in terrible distress. If these scenes had been shown earlier in the day, before the vote in the House of Commons, would it have changed the way many of them voted?

This is a question to which there is no answer, but all those who spoke in the debate registered the horror with which the public in Britain are viewing the whole situation in Syria. The votes of MPs which rejected both the Opposition Amendment and the Government Motion calling for military action reflected the uncertainty in the whole nation on what can and should be done. Firing cruise missiles on Government targets in Syria is likely to kill more innocent civilians as well as "send a shot across the bows of Assad" as President Obama hopes.

Iraq and Afghanistan

MPs were clearly influenced by the ongoing tragedy in Iraq following military intervention from the West when Tony Blair joined forces with George W Bush launching an attack against Saddam Hussein. They know that if the West intervenes in Syria in what is clearly a religious war between two opposing factions of Islam they will be drawn into a bloody conflict which could last for decades. They do not

want to be drawn into another Iraq or Afghanistan neither of which can be solved by the imposition of Western-style democracy.

When we try to interfere in these complex situations we only compound the suffering of the innocent. There is no easy answer to the conflict in Syria, but interference from the West could inflame the situation which could rapidly escalate to involve the whole region including Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and Iran. That is something that needs to be avoided at all costs even if it means standing-by and doing nothing other than sending humanitarian help.

Lack of Confidence

On the British domestic front, the vote of MPs against both the Opposition and the Government is significant. It shows the lack of confidence in the present political leadership of the nation. In particular it shows the lack of confidence in the Prime Minister among his own backbenchers, 30 of whom voted against him when he recalled Parliament in what he considered to be a time of national emergency.

Lack of Judgement

This shows a serious lack of judgement on the part of the Prime Minister and his advisers which was reflected in the vote to legalise 'Same-Sex Marriage' when more than half of the Conservative MPs voted against redefining marriage. Most of those who voted against the Government did so on grounds of conscience because they know that marriage between a man and a woman is part of God's Creation and you cannot interfere with God's Creation without bringing judgement upon yourself. This is what David Cameron has done.

'Confusion'

One of the consequences of defying God's laws in Creation is defined by Moses as bringing 'confusion' into situations that require careful consideration (Deuteronomy 28.20). This is probably equivalent to the pagan saying "those whom the gods wish to destroy they first send mad". It is this 'confusion' that we are now seeing in the leadership of the nation which only repentance before God and a change of direction can remove.

It should be our prayer that the shock result of the votes in the House of Commons on 29th August 2013 rejecting Motions by both the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister will send shockwaves through the whole political establishment which will cause them to reflect upon their policies and seek the ways of righteousness and truth which alone will bring the blessing of God into the affairs of the nation.

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