

Biblical Events Upon the Iraqi Battlefield (Cont. from pg. 3) - Karkuk.

Early in the opening stages of the the war coalition special operation forces together with members of the Kurdish resistance worked to secure an important oil field near the city of Karkuk. About seven miles west of Karkuk lie the ruins of the Nuzi. Over 4000 texts have been discovered at Nuzi, which reflect legal practices common to many seen in the book of Genesis. At Nuzi we see examples of the transfer of one’s birthright in exchange for goods, and a father’s dying blessing treated as a legally binding declaration, both of which occurred with Jacob and



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Esau (Genesis 25:30-34). In Nuzi texts we also see handmaids given to a new bride, and given to a husband to bear children if the woman was childless. When Abraham and Sarah failed to trust God’s promise to give them a son they may well have simply followed the customs of their former homeland by bearing Ishmael through Sarah’s handmaid Hagar (Genesis 16:3).

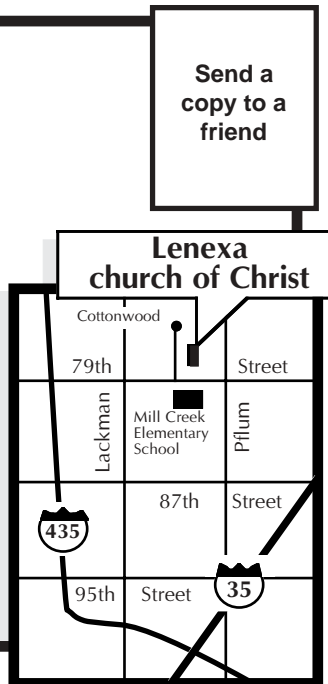


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...Let us pursue the things *which* make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.
– Romans 14:19

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Biblical Events Upon the Iraqi Battlefield

By Kyle Pope

Since coalition forces began their push to disarm the Iraqi regime, many have become glued to television, radio and newspaper following the events as they unfold. While consulting a map to track the stages of the war, I began to see that the places described hold a great deal of significance to students of the Bible.

Al Furat & Dijlah Rivers. Two rivers cut through the heart of Iraq, the Al Furat (or Euphrates) and the Dijlah (or Tigris) rivers. These two rivers are the lifeblood of this region, forming the “Fertile Crescent.” Virtually

all of the major cities of Iraq lie on, or are connected to these rivers. In ancient times the Persian Gulf came further inland covering the modern cities of Umm Qasr and Al Bosrah. The Bible, in describing a prelood

geography vastly different from what we know, describes the Euphrates and Tigris (or Hiddekel) as flowing from Eden (Genesis 2:8-14). This association with early human history is part of the reason this area is called the Cradle of Civilization. In the New Testa-

ment, Stephen mentions Abraham’s home using the Greek name for this area, Mesopotamia, meaning literally “between the rivers” (Acts 7:2-4).

An Nasiriyah. Early in the conflict coalition forces began to move against the Iraqi city of An Nasiriyah in order to establish a river cross-

ing on the march towards Baghdad. On the western side of the Euphrates some thirteen miles from Nasiriyah stand the ruins of the ancient city of Ur. Some scholars believe this site was the city of Abraham’s (Cont. on pg. 2)

The places described in the coverage of the war hold a great deal of significance to students of the Bible.

Biblical Events Upon the Iraqi Battlefield (Cont. from pg. 1) - birth.

The Bible states that God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, to go to a land that the Lord would give his descendants as an inheritance (Genesis 11:26-12:5; 15:7). The New Testament writer of the book of Hebrews offers Abraham's faithfulness as an example of seeking a better, "heavenly country" (Hebrews 11:8-16). The ruins near Nasiriyah are not universally accepted as the biblical Ur of the Chaldees. Some place Abraham's birthplace in northern Iraq or eastern Turkey.

As Samawah. Sixty miles north of An Nasiriyah in the town of As Samawah coalition forces encountered resistance in the early stages of the war. Twenty-one miles east of Samawah are the ruins of the town of Uruk (biblical Erech). The Bible says this city was built by Nimrod, a descendant of Ham, described as a "mighty hunter." He built a number of cities including Babel, Erech and Accad (Genesis 10:6-10). **An Najaf.** As coalition forces have pushed north, a suspected chemical weapons factory was seized near the city of An Najaf, about 96 miles south of Baghdad. About half way be-

tween Najaf and Baghdad are the ruins of the ancient city of Babylon. The Hebrew name for this city is *Babel*. Babylon is its the Greek name. When Assyria carried away the northern kingdom of Israel, residents of Babylon were brought to live in northern Palestine (II Kings 17:24). In part, these people would become the ancestors of the Samaritans of the New Testament. Not long after this Babylon would assume an ominous place in biblical history. During the time of the Judean



king Hezekiah, Isaiah prophesied a time when Babylon would destroy Jerusalem and carry off its inhabitants (II Kings 20:12-18). When Nebuchadnezzar rose to power this prophecy was fulfilled. In Babylon Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were brought to the royal court where they maintained their faithfulness (Daniel 1:8). In this city Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream of four earthly kingdoms destroyed by an eternal kingdom (Daniel 2:44). Christians believe that this kingdom is the church. Here Nebuchadnezzar was humbled when he exalted himself (Daniel 4:28-37) and Belshazzar, the final cooking of Babylon, saw a hand write his own judgment upon the wall. While Belshazzar drank from objects taken from the temple in Jerusalem, the Medes and Persians took the city (Daniel 5:1-30). The horror of Babylon was still remembered in New Testament times as the name became a code word for the oppression of Rome (Revelation 17:5,18). **Ad Diwaniyah.** Some coalition forces pushed north through the region between the Tigris and Euphrates coming to the town of Ad Diwaniyah. Twenty miles east of Diwaniyah are the ruins of the ancient city of Nippur. In ancient times (as today) a canal ran from Erech, north to the ancient city of Sippar, near modern Baghdad. The Bible calls

this canal the "river Chebar," after its Akkadian name *Kabaru*. Nippur sat on the shore of this canal. Although it is not mentioned by name in the Bible, it was to cities like Nippur, along the Chebar that many of the exiles from Judah were brought during the Babylonian captivity. Along the Chebar, Ezekiel received his vision recorded in the book which bears his name (Ezekiel 1:1-3). **Mosul (Al Mawsil).** In northern Iraq bombing has occurred regularly at a town on the western banks of the Tigris named Mosul.

In ancient times (as today) a canal ran from Erech north almost to Baghdad, which is called the "Chebar River" in the Bible.

According to the Bible, after Nimrod moved north of Babel and Erech he built two other cities near Mosul. Nineteen miles south, on the east side of the river, is Nimrud, called Calah in the Bible (Genesis 10:11,12). Just opposite Mosul, on the other side of the river, are the vast ruins of Nineveh. The

Bible tells us Jonah was told to go and preach to Nineveh (Jonah 1:1-3). Although he first ran in the opposite direction, he ultimately preached to them and they accepted his warnings (Jonah 3:1-10). Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire during the time of Sennacherib, who was murdered by his sons after returning from his Palestinian conquest (II Chronicles 32:21). The prophet Nahum declared God's judgment upon the city because of its corruption (Nahum 1:1-3; 3:5-7).

(Cont. on pg. 4)