

End of the Ottomans & WW1

1914-1918



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Key Bible References

Revelation 16:12, Daniel 11:40, Genesis 26:26-29

Overview of the period

The history of this period will show that the Bible focuses on events in the Middle East. The First World War changed the world entirely, both in terms of national borders and technology. Yet the Bible does not contain predictions of any events in France, Africa or India, rather it can be seen that events surrounding WW1 achieved outcomes predicted in just a few verses. Most significantly, a by product of the war was the end of the Ottoman empire. The end of the Ottoman empire led to the divided middle East of the modern world and allowed the declaration of a national homeland for the Jews.

The Gallipoli Campaign 1915

Bible References:

And at the time of the end shall the king of the South push at him: and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. (Daniel 11:40)

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. (Revelation 16:12)

History

The British led Gallipoli operation of 1915 is acknowledged as, at best, a fiasco, which led to the resignation of Churchill who planned it, and, at worst, a defeat. The great courage in adversity and lack of success by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corp (ANZAC's) led to the legend of their valour and sacrifice.

Events began when Germany declared war on France 3rd August 1914. Churchill prevented Turkey from taking control of two British made battleships Turkey had ordered, to be used instead to fight the Germans. The Germans seized the advantage and gave Turkey two of their battleships. Turkey and the Ottoman Empire ended up on the German side.

The campaign was aimed at achieving British and French control of the Dardanelles Straits, in effect separating Turkey from Germany. Churchill hoped to obtain control of Constantinople (Istanbul).

After the failure of a combined British-French battleship offensive in February 1915, a land offensive was launched on 25 April 1915. More landings were made at Suvla Bay on 6 August 1915. Though Ottoman Turkish casualties were much higher than those of the Allies, they held their positions.

From 10th to 20th December 1915 the 105,000 troops were evacuated from Anzac Cove and Suvla Bay. By 9 January 1916 35,000 men were evacuated from Helles. The evacuations were successful with only 3 casualties.

Britain was not able to advance toward Constantinople. The Gallipoli action led to a more confident Turkey who supported a German led attack against the British in 1916 in the Suez, causing high British casualties. This forced British war efforts in a new direction

Commentary:

Daniel's prophecy of the Romans and Egyptians struggle for Israel (chapter 11:40), has a break in events until "the time of the end". From time of the dominance by Rome to the Ottomans there has been only one "king" in the Middle East region not two.

In 1829 Egypt revolted from Ottoman rule to make a "king of the South". In 1838 Egypt began an offensive for Constantinople and advanced to Smyrna. Russia, Austria, Prussia and England forced Egypt to give Palestine back to the Ottomans. Britain then usurped the role of "King of the South". In 1875 debts forced Isma'il Pasha to sell Egypt's share in the Suez canal to Britain. After the British settled a civil war in 1882, the 1888 Convention of Constantinople gave the canal into the protection of the British.

The Gallipoli campaign was a "push" by a Southern based "King" against the Ottomans. During the first World War a "push" described a large-scale Allied attack on enemy positions. This precise word is used in the English translation of the prophet Daniel.

The conjunction of the first anniversary of the landing with Easter in 1916 saw the Australian and New Zealand people associate endurance with the sanctity of sacrifice and ensured that the first move, or "push" by Britain as king of the South to "dry up" the Ottoman empire is remembered. It was the first time Jews from Palestine fought as a unit, in the Zion Mule Corp. Significantly a mule, a symbol of the kings of Israel (1 Kings 1:3), is part of the ANZAC images of bravery.

There is providence at work, as it was unexpected that Britain should fight the Ottomans, as only 50 years before the British were supporting the Ottomans as a buffer against Russian expansion.

The Charge of the Light Horse Brigade, Beersheva, 1918

Bible Reference:

Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the LORD. (Genesis 26:26-29)

History

In 1916 on 23 April the British re-deployed ANZACs in a defensive battle for British self interest in the Suez. Then the government in Britain changed. It is possible the defeat at Gallipoli was a factor in Asquith's defeat by Lloyd George in the election. With Balfour now in government the defensive war in the Suez became an offensive war in the Sinai directed towards Palestine.

As France was bogged down on the Western Front, Britain took the leading role in Palestine. After the first British victories in this Sinai campaign, the Arabs shifted sides and revolted against the Ottomans. They attempted but failed to take Gaza. Due to this failure, on 2 April 1917, the order went out of the British War Cabinet to attempt to take Jerusalem.

In one remarkable day, 31 October 1917, the ANZAC Light Horse brigade, in the last successful cavalry charge, took Beersheva, and, prevented the Turkish troops from destroying the essential water wells. They had unexpected success due to a ruse (a false dispatch that indicated an attack on Gaza) and that the ANZAC attack came from the East, a direction the Turkish troops did not expect.

On October 31, at the same time the wells of Beersheva were being secured from the Ottomans and the horses were being watered, Balfour proposed to the War Cabinet that a move be made to establish a Jewish national home with some form of British, American or other protectorate, where Jews could “built up by means of education, agriculture and industry a real centre of national culture”.

By 11 December 1917 the Allies led by Allenby had captured Jerusalem. On the day Britain took control of Jerusalem, a New Zealander in an Australian uniform climbed the

citadel of David and flew the Zionist flag given to him by Cairo's Jews. The British command took it down. By the end of 1917 Palestine was freed from Ottoman control and the way was open for Israel's restoration.

Commentary:

The battle for Beersheba is very remarkable, indicating it was special in God's plan.

Isaac sojourned and built an altar there. Jacob returns there before going to Egypt, and is reassured they would come back out of Egypt to that place. Beersheba is the edge of ancient Israel, which was defined as being from Dan to Beersheba. To capture Beersheba from the Ottomans was to begin the conquering of Israel.

Beersheba means the “well of the oath”. It is the place where the father of Israel, Abraham dug a water well and made a covenant over that well with the inhabitants of the land to allow them to dwell as strangers (Gen 21:21-33). This was repeated by Abimelech with Isaac, who also dug a water well there. This covenant was suggested and brokered by those in possession of the land to the fathers of Israel who had been promised that Land.

On the very day of the victory at Beersheba the Balfour Declaration was made. The 'covenant', after striving for the wells of water, was re-enacted over Beersheba in 1917. The British offer was not that of an independent state. Note the parallel, the people possessing the wells of Beersheba (the British government and army) offer to the descendants of Israel a covenant that will allow them to dwell as sojourners there. In the same way as Abimelech asked Isaac to do them “no hurt”, so the British made the declaration to ensure Jewish support, in effect to “do us no hurt”.