

## FROM OUR PASTOR

September 3, 2016

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Sabbath Greetings to Everyone!

Syria's four-sided civil war has gone on so long that it is almost ignored in the media. On August 24<sup>th</sup> Turkey began a massive land invasion of Syrian territory—the largest intervention in Syria so far in the conflict. The date was no accident, Wednesday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 was exactly 500 years to the day from when the Ottomans began their historic control over the Middle East. On August 24, 1516 the Ottomans defeated the Mameluk Sultans at the Battle of Dabiq, near the town of Dabiq in Syria. It was the beginning of the Ottoman Empire that lasted until it was on the losing side in World War I.

In a speech ignored by the Western press, but reported by Walid Shoebat, Turkey's President Recip Erdogan described the invasion as the beginning of a new empire. He stated, "When we speak of Syria or the Balkans or the Caucasus, these were part of our [Ottoman] geography from 100 years ago. I believe we will overcome all the obstacles in front of us, which will be the will of Allah . . . Turkey has a massive power and will use it . . . We are more confident today about our future . . ." He also spoke of "achieving the 2023 target"—apparently a date for the conquest of former territory to be completed.

It appears that the areas targeted in this invasion are primarily the Kurdish areas. The Kurds are known as the largest ethnic group in the world without a nation. After World War I the British and French divided up the Middle East for their own benefit, in the process creating nation states such as Jordan and Iraq, but they ignored the Kurds who ended up living in areas that became parts of Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq. The result has been a century of conflict, persecution, and frustration for this people who now number over 35 million and just want to live in their own nation in peace. They have been an historical ally of the US in an area where friends are few and enemies abound. Many Kurds consider themselves descended from the Medes, an ancient Iranian people, and even use a calendar dating from 612 B.C., when the Assyrian capital of Nineveh was conquered by the Medes. Median descent is reflected in the words of the Kurdish national anthem: "We are the children of the Medes and Kai Khosrow."

While opinions vary, there are some strong warnings about what is taking place with Turkey.

Powderedwigsociety.com reported this week, ". . . the Kurds, who have been American's greatest regional ally in this basket of snakes, and who have now been thrown under the camel train by Barack Hussein (Obama) to appease his pal, Turkish President Recip Erdogan, who invaded his neighbor under the guise of fighting ISIS. Yet the rest of the world knows that his real aim is to destroy the Kurds and replace secular Assad with an Islamist regime."

Many Bible scholars believe that the Turkish people are the descendants of Edom, from Jacob's brother Esau. If that is true, then the shortest book in the Old Testament--Obadiah—is written about them. In the second verse Obadiah states, "Behold, I will make you small among the nations; You shall be greatly despised."

In the years ahead we may see these words come to pass. Erdogan's plans might not work out as he hopes.

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