

## Surreal Events

**The Wind is Changing**  
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We have had a busy couple of weeks of news recently. The news programs, newspapers, and Internet outlets are full of news and commentary about what's going on all over the world. We have the news of the Middle East, the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, and the resulting problem with the nuclear reactors there, the uncertain economy is still on everybody's mind, and what's being done (or not done) to fix it, the protests in Wisconsin are still going on—you might have heard just this past week that a county judge in Wisconsin did a cease-and-desist order on that legislation that they passed. When did a county judge every have authority over a state legislature? I mean, it's ridiculous.

And of course we have President Obama's rather strange disconnect with everything that is going on. Don't you remember that during the first 1-2 years, we saw him every day. He was always talking to us, always giving us some sort of speech from his teleprompter, always in front of everything. Then suddenly, the world goes just totally awry here in the last couple of weeks, and he's nowhere to be seen, except on a golf course. It is just kind of incredible that there is this strange reticence to say anything. Normally a President is supposed to be out there in front of things and trying to help us understand what is going on, and helping us solve some of the problems. But he's not there.

And that's just it. The commentary I want to give you today is more of a feeling that I am getting from what is going on in the news. I sense a strangeness about what's happening here in America and around the world. Maybe it's just me. Maybe it's that I haven't been sleeping well, or there are allergens in the air, or I don't know. Maybe I'm just off my rocker. But I feel that there are things going on in the world that make me go, "Huh? This does not compute." I look at the world scene, and it is almost surreal to me. It is as if things are out of phase from how they normally are—just a tick or two, but it is enough to get your attention and say, "Why? Why is this happening? Why are they doing that?" It's as if things are not functioning by the same rules any more. I am probably overstating this, but I am overstating this for a purpose, because there is a strangeness out there.

For example, let's look at the protests and turmoil across the Middle East. It has really only been a couple of months, and the whole region is upside down. It has taken on an entirely different tone and a whole new look. Just weeks ago, there was a balance there. It was not a peaceful balance necessarily, but at least there was a lid on things and things seemed to be going along OK. Now, just a few months later, it is completely off-kilter. No one seems to know what to do. Our allies in the region—Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Yemen—are in chaos. While they are going through this turmoil, they are distracted, and our concerns there are being ignored.

They want to bring peace back. They want to get their countries back together, and our aims in that region are at least secondary, if not further down the list. We are in uncertain territory, especially with the new leaders. And who are they? Who's this guy in Egypt now? We've been dealing with Mubarak now for 30-40 years, ever since Sadat was killed. Now we have someone new and we don't know quite where he fits. He belongs to the same regime, but it is going to take a while to establish a relationship with him. That is just one of them. There are many others in the region that we had good relationships with, but now it is like starting from scratch.

And what is the U.S. administration's response? What has the Obama administration been doing? We support them one day and then we back the opposition the next. Then we tell the leader to resign in four months, five months, sometime in September, and then we say, "Why not next week?" Then we say, "You're outta here; we back the other person"—the protestors, as long as "democracy" comes out the other end—like we are going to have a say in that. We pledge help one day and refuse it the next. We propose a no-fly zone, then we backtrack and reconsider. And then we support France and their UN resolution to go to implement one, and finally when it happens, we say, "Yeah, we're all in"—and then nothing happens. And when our one sure ally in the region—Israel—has an atrocity happen in one of its settlements (I don't know if you heard about this; Palestinians came in and slaughtered an entire family, decapitating the baby in the process), we say little and do nothing.

What is going on? This is not the way we normally act as a nation—as the world's superpower. It's like we are drawing back, like we are afraid to make any kind of remarks, or even propose something that has a little strength behind it. We are supposed to support our allies, not throw them to the crowd. We fight terrorism, not sit back and just let it happen. We stand by our word, not dither and then go back on it. We have a clear policy—or at least we did, and we followed it. But not any more. There was a lot of "What's going on?" reactions among the newspeople because President Obama said one thing, Secretary Clinton said on thing that was different, somebody else in the administration said something different from both of those, and they are saying, "Where is the unanimity, even among the administration? Who has the power? Who's policy are we going to follow here? Is this some sort of fight between Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Obama? What's going on here? Who's in control? Nobody? Looks like it." We are showing a very weak face toward the world.

Our policy is clear as mud. This is where you throw in, "Where is the President in this matter?" He's playing golf! He's headed to Rio! He's saying, "Let me be clear," and then mouthing some highly crafted diplomatic language that takes both sides of the issue, so that later he can come back and say, "Well, I supported this." Well, you did and you didn't. It's very weird. It's not how the United States normally reacts.

The reaction to the catastrophe in Japan has been strange too. Thousands of people have died as a result...of the radiation? No. Thousands died as a result of the earthquake and the tsunami. But what are we hearing about? "Nuclear reactor." "Radiation." "Go into your bunker." "Pull your covers over your head." "Take your potassium iodine." It's like our focus is being taken off the real catastrophe and put onto this other thing. I don't want to say much more, but it seems to me as if the environmentalist wackos in the news are trying to take down nuclear energy. It has been, over the last 40 years, the safest form of energy that we have, but they've always had a thing against it from early, early on. And you know what? The reactors around the world have been working just fine except in the Soviet Union. Those are the only reactors that have had big problems.

Three-Mile Island was a huge disaster for the nuclear industry. Do you know how much radiation got out and struck the average person in the area? This is incredible. The nuclear people have a metric on this, and it is called the B.E.D—the "banana equivalent dose." That is, it is measured in how much radiation is in a normal banana. It helps you to understand it. The average amount of radiation that a person who lived around Three-Mile Island received was  $1/75^{\text{th}}$  of a B.E.D. That's like eating  $1/75^{\text{th}}$  of a banana and getting the radiation from it—and  $1/75^{\text{th}}$  of a banana is about this long.

Three-Mile Island showed us that there were things we needed to do to make it safer. I'm not saying that what happened there was in any way good, except in the fact that it did give us some good intel

on how we should make radiation safer. The one in Japan is made of a different construction, and of course they built it on a fault (which was pretty stupid of them to do so). If what happened at Three-Mile Island is any indication, the only ones who are in real danger are the ones in the immediate area.

Now, it may get worse. I'm not saying it won't. But the possibility of us here getting any kind of radiation is almost nil. We are probably going to get more radiation flying in an airplane somewhere than we are to get the fallout from the Japanese reactor.

Anyway, I just want to say that I get the feeling that things are really being blown out of proportion—that we are being manipulated by fear-mongering in the media. In the case of the Middle East, we are being manipulated by chaos and uncertainty. In Wisconsin, we are being manipulated by thuggery on one hand and appeals to our sympathies on the other. It is the union thugs saying, "I'm going to kill you, governor," on the one hand, and then there are people saying, "Oh, these poor people. You're going to take away their livelihoods. You're going to take away their retirement. Don't you feel bad?" On the economic front, we are being lulled into a sense of unfounded trust in the government and our leaders' good intentions to dig us out of this huge hole. "Oh, we'll take care of it. All we need is another continuing resolution. Six billion dollars will do." That is another one of those B.E.D.-type of things. Here we've got this huge deficit, and we are taking 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1%, or whatever it is—minuscule amounts that aren't going to make much difference at all. But, "they're working on it."

Concerning Obama, we are being manipulated by his seeming unconcern to feel that he has everything under control. There is actually a political word for this. This is the "Eisenhower Syndrome," I think they cause it, because after the war, Eisenhower would be working furiously in the background to get things done, but in order to make people feel like he was a strong leader, he would go out and play golf. You would think, "If the president has time to go out and play golf, things must be OK." This was at the beginning of the Cold War. We were worried about nuclear bombs dropping on us from the Soviets, but he was calming things down and saying, "Look, you don't have anything to be afraid of."

Well, it is not working that way with Obama, if he is even trying to do the same thing. To me it comes across as Alfred E. Newman: "What, me worry?" When I see that, and I see him filling our his March Madness bracket, I get a little concerned that he does not have things necessarily in hand—that he's not concentrating on the right things.

This reminds me of Isaiah 5:20-21:

**Isaiah 5:20-21** Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! [Do you see the upside down nature of things? Good suddenly becomes evil. Evil becomes good. Darkness becomes light, light becomes darkness.] Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

What I get from this is that when things are turned on their heads, I become concerned because, as these verses say, God says that that's when woe begins. Woe begins when people start calling evil good, good evil, darkness light, and light darkness. When things are like this, things are changing, and not for the better. So, keep your eyes open.