East of Eden
Cain...was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. (1 John 3:12)
An ongoing tale of two...

Isaac & Ishmael
Jacob & Esau...
An ongoing tale of conflict...

Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob"

Gen. 27:41 RSV
This conflict has an end...

Isaac & Ishmael

Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in travail! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her that is married, says the LORD.

Is. 54:1-2
This conflict has an end...

Isaiah 54

For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your descendants will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.

(v 3)
But is it ended?

Isaiah 54

For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the LORD, your Redeemer.

(vv. 7-8)
There are compass points to this tale...

Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Gen 4:16 NAS
Consider Israel’s foes from the East...

Esau (Edom)
Moab
Ammon
Babylon (NE)
Assyria (NE)
Medes (NE)
Persians (NE)

Is this compass point coincidence?
Why should our eyes turn to the East today?

Several key Bible prophecies point us there!
Psalm 83

They say, "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!"

Ps 83:4 RSV
# The Geography of Psalm 83

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Direction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edom</td>
<td>East-Southeast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ishmaelites</td>
<td>Mainly Southeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moab</td>
<td>East</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hagrites</td>
<td>Further east</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gebal</td>
<td>North?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>East?</td>
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<td>Ammon</td>
<td>East</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amalek</td>
<td>South</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philistia</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyre</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assyria</td>
<td>East Northeast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children of Lot = Moab & Ammon (Gen 19:37-38)
Psalm 83

Assur appears to play a key role...
“the strong arm of the children of Lot” (v. 8).

Genesis 10 links Assur with:
Nimrod and Ninevah
And by association,
Canaan, Philistines, and other Canaanite peoples.
What is happening to the east today?

Disturbing things...

To say the least!
1. In what was by all accounts a rigged election, Ahmadinejad stays in power as Iran’s president.

2. Iran continues to defy the UN, US, and EU in continuing their nuclear development program.

3. They have been strong backers of Hezbollah in Lebanon—and have also built strong ties to Syria.

4. With nuclear weapons in prospect and civil unrest in the streets, it is volatile to say the least.
"How can we influence the future of the world? When and how will peace, tranquility and well-being for all come about? These are the fundamental questions before us."

October 2005
"From the beginning of time, humanity has longed for the day when justice, peace, equality and compassion envelop the world. All of us can contribute to the establishment of such a world. When that day comes, the ultimate promise of all Divine religions will be fulfilled with the emergence of a perfect human being who is heir to all prophets and pious men. He will lead the world to justice and absolute peace."

October 2005
"O mighty Lord, I pray to you to hasten the emergence of your last repository, the promised one, that perfect and pure human being, the one that will fill this world with justice and peace."
...one of his Iranian colleagues claimed to have seen a glow of light around the president as he began his speech to the UN. "I felt it myself too," Mr Ahmadinejad recounts. "I felt that all of a sudden the atmosphere changed there. And for 27-28 minutes all the leaders did not blink...It's not an exaggeration, because I was looking."
"They were astonished, as if a hand held them there and made them sit. It had opened their eyes and ears for the message of Islam..."

The Daily Telegraph, January 14, 2006
Who is the promised one?

The Mahdi.

“The most remarkable aspect of Mr Ahmadinejad's piety is his devotion to the Hidden Imam [Mahdi], the Messiah-like figure of Shia Islam, and the president's belief that his government must prepare the country for his return.”

‘Divine mission’ driving Iran’s new leader, Anton La Guardia, The Daily Telegraph, January 14, 2006
Who is the promised one?

The Mahdi.

“All streams of Islam believe in a divine saviour, known as the Mahdi, who will appear at the End of Days. A common rumor—denied by the government but widely believed—is that Mr. Ahmadinejad and his cabinet have signed a "contract" pledging themselves to work for the return of the Mahdi and sent it to Jamkaran.”

La Guardia
“Iran's dominant "Twelver" sect believes this will be Mohammed ibn Hasan, regarded as the 12th Imam, or righteous descendant of the Prophet Mohammad. His return will be preceded by cosmic chaos, war and bloodshed. After a cataclysmic confrontation with evil and darkness, the Mahdi will lead the world to an era of universal peace. This is similar to the Christian vision of the Apocalypse. Indeed, the Hidden Imam is expected to return in the company of Jesus.”

La Guardia
“Mr Ahmadinejad appears to believe that these events are close at hand and that ordinary mortals can influence the divine timetable. The prospect of such a man obtaining nuclear weapons is worrying. The unspoken question is this: is Mr. Ahmadinejad now tempting a clash with the West because he feels safe in the belief of the imminent return of the Hidden Imam? Worse, might he be trying to provoke chaos in the hope of hastening his reappearance?”
The International Atomic Energy Agency reported in June 2009 that some 5,000 centrifuges now are working in Iran, churning out low-enriched nuclear fuel, while another 2,000 or so could soon join them.

“The Institute for Science and International Security … estimates that at current production rates, Iran could [have] enough feedstock for two nuclear weapons by the end of February 2010.”

The strong arm of the children of Lot?
“Iran is now the strongest presence in Afghanistan and Iraq, after the US. It has turned Syria and Lebanon into its outer defenses, which means that, for the first time since the 7th century, Iran is militarily present on the coast of the Mediterranean. In a massive political jamboree in Teheran last week, Ahmadinejad also assumed control of the "Jerusalem Cause", which includes annihilating Israel "in one storm", while launching a take-over bid for the cash-starved Hamas government in the West Bank and Gaza.”

Amir Taheri, The Daily Telegraph, April 16, 2006
Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian president, called in his speech for “Israel to be wiped off the map.” He said that “there would be no Zionism in the world…

*Jerusalem Day*
October 26, 2005
Mehr News Agency
“the occupying régime [i.e., Israel] should be expunged from the world and the map of Palestine …”

“soon the Islamic world will erase the shameful stain of Zionism.”
Iranian leader denies Holocaust

“Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has courted further controversy by explicitly calling the Nazi Holocaust of European Jewry a “myth.” “They have created a myth today that they call the massacre of Jews and they consider it a principle above God, religions and the prophets,” he said.”

BBC News, December 14, 2005
"Following World War II," he continued, according to an official English-language text of his remarks, "they resorted to military aggression to make an entire nation homeless, on the pretext of Jewish sufferings and the ambiguous and dubious question of the Holocaust.

"So long as Zionist domination continues, many countries, governments and nations will never be able to enjoy freedom, independence and security," he said. "As long as they are at the helm of power, justice will never prevail in the world and human dignity will continue to be offended and trampled upon. It is time the ideal of Zionism, which is the paragon of racism, be broken."

Iranian: Israel is a Racist State, Edward Cody, Washington Post, April 21, 2009
Where is Ahmadinejad headed?
Isaiah 21

The burden of the wilderness of the sea (KJV).

The oracle concerning the wilderness of the sea (RSV).

An oracle concerning the Desert by the Sea (NIV).

Who is this???
Isaiah 21

Like whirlwinds sweeping through the southland, an invader comes from the desert, from a land of terror.

(v. 1 NIV)
A distressing vision is declared to me;
The treacherous dealer deals treacherously,
And the plunderer plunders.

Go up, O Elam!
Besiege, O Media!
All its sighing I have made to cease.
Isaiah 21

Therefore my loins are filled with pain; Pangs have taken hold of me, like the pangs of a woman in labor. I was distressed when I heard it; I was dismayed when I saw it. My heart wavered, fearfulness frightened me; The night for which I longed He turned into fear for me.

vv. 3-4 NKJV
Isaiah 21

They prepare the table, they spread the rugs, they eat, they drink. Arise, O princes, oil the shield!

v. 5 RSV
Isaiah 21

Who is being hit by this storm?

The prophet gives two important clues.

• His personal reaction to the vision.
• The threshing floor.
Isaiah 21

What would Isaiah see that would make him double over in pain?

What if this storm was headed straight for his own people?

Note birth pangs...compare “pangs” in Matthew 24.
O my threshed and winnowed one, what I have heard from the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, I announce to you.

Is. 21:10 RSV
The place of threshing

12 In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the LORD will thresh out the grain, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel. 13 And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

Isa 27:12-13 RSV
28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jeb'usite, he made his sacrifices there.

1 Chron 21:28 RSV

22:1 Then David said, "Here shall be the house of the LORD God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

1 Chron 22:1 RSV
There are disturbing tidings from the East.

• This should not surprise us.

• Is 21 and Ps 83 are but two of many prophecies that warn us to prepare for such events.
What lies ahead?

- Is Iran the “strong arm of the children of Lot?”

They are close—perhaps very close—to nuclear weapons, the first Arab enemy to reach this point.
What lies ahead?

• Is Iran part of the storm that will hit Israel?

Achmadinejad’s stated goal is to “wipe Israel off the map”—a goal entirely consistent with his Mahdi theology.
What lies ahead?

Iran’s firepower and its cauldron of Shiite Islam is a potent mix.

Is this God’s hand at work?

*It certainly bears watching!*
Is our faith prepared for God’s people to suffer under His hand?
Or, do we root for the “good guys” in their battles with the “bad guys?”
God’s hand is always at work in Israel...

He seeks faith in His people. If they will not offer it on their own...

*His skilled hands will create the conditions in which it will grow!*
For us the conclusion could not be more clear.

The night is coming when no one can work.

John 9:4 NKJV
Therefore...Count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation...and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  

2 Pet. 3:15, 18