

# Perspective

By L. Jim Tuck

September 3, 2026

## Turkey in Prophecy

Turkey is something of a mystery in relation to Europe. It sits between Europe, the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. NATO describes its location as strategically important to the alliance's southeastern flank. Turkey controls access through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean under the Montreux Convention. That gives Ankara an unusually important role in Black Sea naval access. It is one of NATO's three Black Sea littoral members, alongside Romania and Bulgaria. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Black Sea has become even more important to NATO. It hosts important NATO facilities, including Allied Land Command in İzmir, a NATO ballistic-missile-defense radar at Kürecik, and facilities supporting NATO air surveillance. Strategically, Turkey is a key defense link in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but it is being somewhat schizophrenic of late; it has become a key player in the recently formed Mecca Pact with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, which could become a type of Islamic "NATO" if it broadens its reach to other Muslim nations. Bible prophecy shows a strange and bizarre future for this important nation at the crossroads between Europe and the Mideast. What future events should we watch for regarding Turkey and biblical prophecy?

### A key partner in the Cold War with Russia

Turkey has been of prime importance to the U.S. during the long Cold War with the then Communist U.S.S.R. Turkey officially became a member of NATO on February 4, 1952. The U.S. operated a Strategic Air Command base in Turkey during the Cold War, specifically Incirlik Air Base, which was crucial for NATO operations and served as a deterrent against Soviet aggression. It is from a Strategic Air Command base in this nation that the U.S. Department of State admitted that the U.S. Government revealed constant U-2 spy flights were being made over Russia from bases in Turkey. The U.S. later dismantled and removed some of its important military installations in Turkey. On May 1, 1960, a United States U-2 spy plane piloted by Francis Gary Powers, having taken off from Peshawar in Pakistan, was shot down by the Soviet Air Defence Forces in Sverdlovsk, Russia.

### Every empire has its day!

It is fascinating to explore Turkey's history and how it has come to be the nation it is today.

Turkey stems from the ancient Ottoman Empire, which extended from Yemen on the south of the Arabian Peninsula to European Turkey bounded by Bulgaria and Greece. The Ottoman Empire held control of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, the islands in the Aegean Sea, the Anatolian Peninsula and Asia Minor.

The Ottoman Empire suffered defeat in WWI, and it was partitioned after the signing of the armistice in 1918. Many of the areas of the former Ottoman Empire were under British or French control after the war; most notably, Palestine, which was captured from the Turks by British General Edmund Allenby and his forces. It culminated in the occupation of Jerusalem on December 9, 1917.

Then came the revolution led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. He became the first President of Turkey after the revolutionary republic's birth in 1923. After the caliphate (spiritual leadership of Islam) was renounced in 1924, Turkey gradually achieved complete separation of Church and State, and began economic and industrial reforms which have steadily improved Turkey economically. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has ruled Turkey for over 20 years, becoming the first directly elected president of Turkey in 2014. Turkey is currently governed by a presidential system, not a parliamentary one, making it a presidential republic. This change centralized the power in the presidency, which now serves both as head of state and government ([dailysabah.com](http://dailysabah.com)).

### What does the Bible say about the origin of the Turks?

Most people would be shocked to find out that the Turkish people are related to the United States and Britain by blood through the patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac. Esau was the brother of Jacob and the first son of Isaac. Genesis 27 reveals the famous loss of Esau's birthright promises to his unlike twin brother, Jacob. As shocking as it sounds, Esau's descendants were first in line to be the birthright peoples, destined by right of birth. They were to become the holders of the richest and most desirable portions of this earth! However, Esau forfeited his birthright due to an impulsive decision motivated by his immediate voracious hunger, valuing a momentary meal of bread and lentil stew over his long-term inheritance rights as the bona fide firstborn. He cried bitterly: "*When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry...*" (Genesis 27:34)

Despite Esau's plea to his father, Isaac could not change the fact that Jacob received the birthright promises. Actually, this was God's intent from the beginning. Notice what Genesis 25:23 says about the birth of Esau and Jacob: *"And the LORD said to her: 'Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger.'"*

Through the trickery of Jacob and his mother, Rebekkah, Jacob secured the blessing from Isaac (Genesis 27). Esau despised his birthright — treated it as if it had no value (Genesis 25:34). Despite that fact, Esau hated Jacob from that time, and his descendants seem to have inherited his bitterness towards Israel.

We know that many of the Turks are descended from Esau, son of Isaac. In Genesis 36:1 and verse 8, we read clearly, *"Esau, who is Edom."* Esau was called Edom because of the red color of the porage or stew Jacob gave him when he was famished (Genesis 25:30).

### **Good news and bad news**

To this day, modern-day Edom or Turkey hates Israel. Generally, they are for the downfall of Israel. Brusselsmorning.com reported, "Turkey has shifted its support of Israel to openly opposing it, particularly during the past five years, especially regarding the Palestinian issue."

Let's look at Isaiah 34:5: *"For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; Indeed, it shall come down on Edom, and on the people of My curse, for judgment."* Verse 8 goes on to say, *"For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion"*

The tiny nation of Israel in the Mideast is chiefly of the tribe of Judah. Ezekiel 25:12-13 says, *"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because of what Edom did against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has greatly offended by avenging itself on them,' therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'I will also stretch out My hand against Edom, cutoff man and beast from it, and make it desolate from Teman; Dedan shall fall by the sword.'"*

Who is Dedan? Names.org says, "The name is linked to an ancient Arabian tribe and a region in northwest Arabia, now part of modern-day Saudi Arabia, known for trade and commerce, particularly in incense, ivory, and luxury goods." Interestingly, Saudi Arabia has only recently made a defence pact with Turkey.

Why does God make severe pronouncements on the modern peoples of Turkey? The book of Obadiah gives us insight into this question. Obadiah 1:1, *"Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom (We have heard a report from the LORD, and a messenger has been sent among the nations, saying, 'Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle'")"*

The Messenger here is referring to Jesus Christ. In connection with this, notice Isaiah 63:1: *"Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? — 'I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.'"* Clearly, this prophecy could only refer to Christ. He travels by His own greatness. The context of what Isaiah wrote is the end time, *"Indeed the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the world: 'Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.'"*" (Isaiah 62:11)

Obadiah 1:2-3: *"Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you shall be greatly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; you who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?'"* God will bring Turkey down for her arrogance.

Interestingly, Turkey is a key player in the new Islamic Mecca Pact, so far inclusive of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and could involve other nations. It certainly could be called a confederacy. Obadiah 1:7-8 warns Turkey: *"All the men in your confederacy shall force you to the border; the men at peace with you shall deceive you and prevail against you. Those who eat your bread shall lay a trap for you. no one is aware of it. 'Will I not in that day,' says the Lord, 'Even destroy the wise men from Edom, and understanding from the mountains of Esau?'"*

Obadiah 1:10-11 reveals the sin of Edom: *"'For violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever. In the day that you stood on the other side—In the day that strangers carried captive his forces, when foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem—even you were as one of them.'"*

The good news --- ultimately God will give life to Israel once again and restore it to greatness: Obadiah 1:17, *"But on Mount Zion there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." Verses 20-21, "And the captives of this host of the children of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath. The captives of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the cities of the South. Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the LORD's."*

The saviors spoken of here will be the saints who will be kings and priests in the kingdom of God and will help the peoples of Turkey come to see the plan of God to save all humankind (Revelation 5:10; 20:6)! God speed the day!