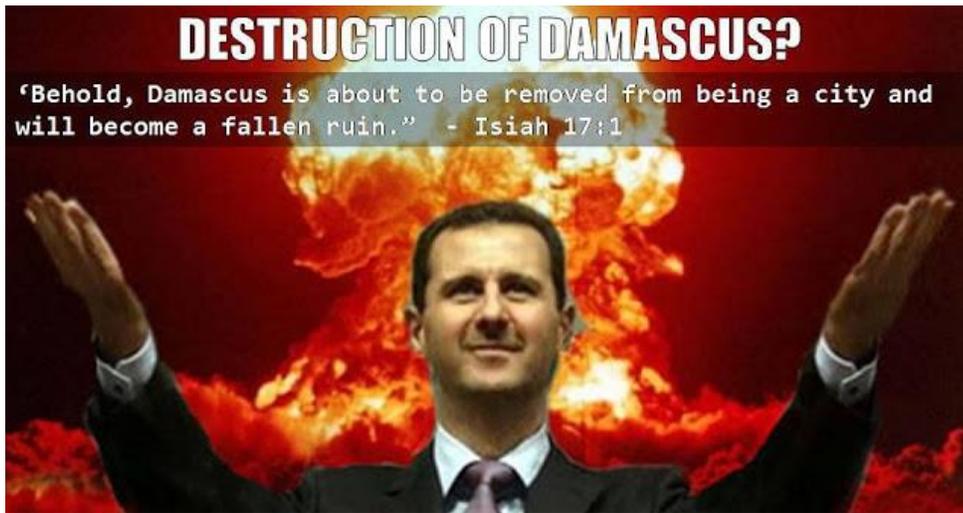


IS THE ORACLE OF DAMASCUS CLOSE?

Pastor Mike Taylor



1 "The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.

2 The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

3 The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the Lord of hosts.

4 And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.

5 And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.

6 Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord God of Israel.

7 At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel." (Isaiah 17:1-7)

Those who watch prophecy while it is being fulfilled before our very eyes, have contemplated and even wondered about when this scripture will be fulfilled. Note that in all of history, Damascus has been inhabited perpetually for the last 4500 years and is the oldest city in the Ancient world that has not been destroyed, or abandoned. So this prophecy is for the future and could be in the near future. Why do I say that?

This prophecy has only been partially fulfilled in the past, when the Assyrians defeated the Armeans in 732 BC and overran this city. Damascus has been conquered many times, and this is just one of them. The Israelites did in 1000 BC and as mentioned the Assyrians in 732 BC. Then in 606 BC she was conquered by the Babylonians, the Persians in 530 BC, the Greeks in 330 BC, the Nabeteans in 85 BC, the Romans in 63 BC, the Byzantines in 634 AD, the Marmadukes in 1250 AD and finally the Ottoman Empire in 1516 AD. So as you see, she was conquered numerous times, but the city herself has survived and continues to thrive with a population close to two million souls within her borders.

As you read the verses above, many wonder what the City of Aroer was located. Since the city today is much too far to be in relation to Damascus, some speculate that there was another city close by her. Some feel the translation in this passage should have been the "cities thereof shall be forsaken" as the Aroer is east of the Jordan River, but if that is true, then the passage could be speaking of the area inhabited by Hezbollah today, in a straight line from Damascus to Beirut. The verses above speak of the defeat of the Damascus and later the area of Samaria. Samaria was ultimately destroyed, but Damascus remains even today.

That's ancient history in an abbreviated fashion, but what about today of the city in Syria known as Damascus? What can be the reason for her eventual demise and the city not be inhabited again? Note that in this age the only thing that could make any city uninhabitable is either nuclear or chemical warfare that causes the area to be too dangerous for anyone to be in the same area.

Note my comment about the straight line that is occupied by Hezbollah right now in a straight line between Damascus and Beirut. Hezbollah has boasted by their “spokesman” Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of this avowed terrorist entity that they have enough missiles to reach every part of Israel, even their nuclear plant and their largest cities. The last war, Hezbollah had many missiles that were used, but waned in the final days of this last war found between them and Israel, but this time, Hezbollah has smuggled in right under the noses of the ineffectual U.N. Peace keeping army which turned a blind eye to their buildup a huge stockpile of advanced rockets from no other than Iran. It is believed that Lebanon through Hezbollah has been armed with some 120,000 surface-to-surface rockets and missiles, its firepower eclipses that of most states in the world. Dozens of its projectiles are long-range, and accurate. Hezbollah possesses hundreds of drones that it uses in combat against Syrian Sunni rebels.

In the 20th century, Syrian military formations were parked in Lebanon, projecting Damascus’s power on its weaker neighbor. Today, the situation is reversed, and it is Lebanese Hezbollah formations that are shaping events next-door in Syria – a sign of Hezbollah’s new role as a regional Shi’ite power. She has always been a terrorist organization, but she has elevated herself to a regional army.

“Seventy percent of Hezbollah’s billion-dollar annual budget comes from Iran, and it uses this money to build command-and-control and rocket-launch sites all over villages and towns in southern Lebanon. But Hezbollah has also invested in military infrastructure in northern Lebanon, spreading out its firepower across the country.

Hezbollah today is focused on acquiring accurate, guided projectiles, and seeks to import as many of these as it can, from both Iranian and Syrian weapons factories.

According to international media reports, Israel is engaged in covert actions to stop this weapons trafficking.” (Jerusalem Post, Hezbollah more powerful but stretched to the limit)

Hezbollah is gearing up for their next confrontation with the IDF and they are trying to tip the scales in their favor. In this next war, we can gather that there will still be a pending destruction against Damascus, by God, though it is not clear whether He will use Israel OR other nations OR His own supernatural manner to carry this out (well, for that matter, any combination thereof). It is also clear that it will be an evening strike and by dawn, Damascus will be a ruinous heap. This next war will completely destroy all the surrounding areas that have come against Israel. Is the Oracle of Damascus fulfilled within the prophesied coming Psalm 83 war, where all the surrounding Arab neighbors will again, once more, think to come and drive Israel into the sea.

1. “Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.
- 2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.
- 3 They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.
- 4 They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.
- 5 For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee:
- 6 The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes;
- 7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre;
- 8 Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. “ (Psalm 83:1-8)

Right now, where are the sorties by the IDF taking aim at destroying advanced weapons bound for Hezbollah with the planes and bombs? Yes, the ongoing attempt to keep these weapons out of the enemies hands have been aimed at Syria.

What we do know is that we need an intact Syria for Psalm 83 to be fulfilled, which Damascus is the lifeline of Syria and the surrounding countryside. Destroy Damascus and the area crumbles and the nations of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq or Lebanon come in to pick up the pieces for their own safety concerns.

ISRAEL MAKES BIG LAND EXPANSION

At the end of this war, Damascus is no more, the surrounding area will have been soundly defeated by God Himself, or using the IDF to gather land that has been promises to them since Abraham. From the Great River in Egypt, which must be the Nile, to the River Euphrates, north into Syria, and south in Saudi Arabia. Israel will

become the wealthiest Middle Eastern country of all time. She will have oil, natural gas, and untold natural resources that will drive the Arab nations into a schizophrenic fit.

BUT WHY DAMASCUS?

But why was only Damascus completely destroyed? Isaiah prophesied the destruction and abandonment of Damascus, Syria over 2,700 years ago. Yet the city continues today, despite so many Middle East wars and predictions that "this year" it will finally come to pass. So what's missing that has been holding this prophecy back? Israel's strike on Iran? Or perhaps the overlooked prophecy we spoke about in the Psalms about a future Arab war alliance targeted at wiping out Israel.

Short answer to why Damascus is destroyed is IRAN.

If you are into Bible prophecy, you probably have heard about the controversial nuclear program of Iran—and Israel's plan to strike Iran over it.

In 2002, it was revealed that Iran had secretly been enriching uranium with thousands of centrifuges. Enriched uranium is the key component of a nuclear bomb. Nobody wants an apocalyptic religious state like Iran to have nukes. Even worse, Iran resumed enrichment once President Ahmadinejad took office in 2005 and he refused to stop it, despite severe sanctions against Iran. Even after the extreme Ahmadinejad left office in 2013, the concerns over Iran's nuclear program have only increased.

It's no mystery who is most endangered by the prospect of Iran possessing nuclear weapons. Israel has threatened to make a preemptive strike on Iran's nuclear sites if sanctions continue to fail. This is no empty threat as Israel has bombed the nuclear sites of hostile nations in the past. Back in 1981, Israel bombed Iraq's nuclear reactor, receiving worldwide condemnation for it at the time. Then in 2007, Israel sent planes to bomb an alleged North Korean made nuclear reactor in Syria.

But for Damascus to be a ruinous heap is not what has happened in the past..Cities have been abandoned for many reason, but the buildings were left intact. I think of one city in Ukraine where the Chernobyl nuclear plant melted down. The whole city is now a ghost town with building intact, but the population is unable to live in the city for the radioactive poisoning that would result for any human being within that city. Same can be said for Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but they were different in that the bombs were detonated high above the cities and created low fall-out that would have developed with a ground explosion, so the Japanese rebuilt these cities, as they were not contaminated.

Damascus' predicted fate is distinct from either of these cities or perhaps any other. Its buildings and streets will not just be deserted, but they will be left as a "heap of ruins." I am not aware of a case in modern times of that happening to a city. There are cities that have been wiped out by tsunamis or even volcanic explosions, but they have been rebuilt and not left as heaps of ruins. The real estate still has value to former inhabitants and with a concerted effort they can achieve reconstruction of the city soon enough. I'm believing that the reason why she is a ruinous heap is Israel nukes her?

WHY WOULD ISRAEL NUKE DAMASCUS?

It is a well known fact, but never talked about in Israel's government, that she possesses a large arsenal of nuclear weapons. Israel has also been a frequent target herself from the like of Syria, and helping Damascus by proxy to do the same.

Importantly, Israel also has the will to use these weapons. Because Israel's enemies are so numerous and able to overrun the tiny nation so easily, Israel has adopted a nuclear policy called "The Samson Option." The name comes from the famously strong judge of Israel who took his own life by knocking out the support pillars of the temple he was in to avenge himself on his enemies around him. According to this policy, Israel would nuke the cities of her enemies if she was overrun or about to be defeated. Hitting the leadership of Syria at Damascus would be part of this retaliatory attack. What would be the cause of this retaliatory attack? Only one thing comes to mind. A large onslaught of missiles that come from within Lebanon or within Syria. Israel would be faced with this

“Samson option”...as she will have to use the “big guns” to wipe out her adversaries. Her war cry has always been “NEVER AGAIN” will she stand idly by and let her people be destroyed.

Israel takes a hard hit from this war in her northern part of the nation, as the verses above attest to...

4 “ And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.

5 And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.

6 Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord God of Israel.” (Isaiah 17: 4-6)

In this prophesied event, northern and central Israel are named as taking damage and casualties, although comparatively less than Damascus (Damascus loses the kingdom, but Israel only the fortress). War is never completely one-sided. If Israel is prompted to attack Damascus, they will certainly suffer casualties in the process. Going further in the prophecy we can see that, as has usually been the case, Syria will not be acting alone against Israel:

12 “Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!

13 The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

14 And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.” (Isaiah 17:12-14)

To make a better understanding, I believe this interpretation spells it out for us, better than the poetic KJV:

Isaiah 17:12-14 (HCSB) 12 “Ah! The roar of many peoples—they roar like the roaring of the seas. The raging of the nations—they rage like the raging of mighty waters. 14 In the evening—sudden terror! Before morning—it is gone! This is the fate of those who plunder us [Judah] and the lot of those who ravage us.”

God Almighty deals with these Arab nations in His own way.

A multitude of nations attack “us” or the nation that Isaiah addressed in his prophecies: the southern kingdom of Judah (as opposed to the northern nation of Israel). The Jewish people make up the modern State of Israel (which is why they almost called it the State of Judah). Therefore the description fits yet another Middle East war where Israel is attacked by her mainly Arab and Islamic neighbors such as Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and probably also Iran (who is not Arab). Yet, like before, Israel will be victorious—and probably even quicker than in the Six Day War of 1967. Notice in verse 14 that it takes only from one evening until the next morning to achieve decisive victory.

It sounds like Israel is faced with no other option, but the Samson Option and she brings out her nuclear weapons and Damascus is taken away from being a city, as she has been the lifeline for the continued attempts to destroy Israel.

It will mean the complete annihilation of her enemy armies and not to mention 10's of millions of civilian casualties. No wonder that Isaiah says that the situation shifts overnight from a terror for Israel and the tragedy for her enemies.

THIS WAR SETS UP THE COMING EZEKIEL WAR!

Israel will finally feel safe in her own country, as she has defeated all surrounding enemies. She has defeated the Palestinians, the terror group of Hamas, Hezbollah, and all nations that border hers in a decisive victory that may be shorter than the 6 day war of 1967, when she uses this Sampson option. Note that in Ezekiel 38 when they talk about the countries of modern day Arab nations, none of the inner ring of Arab nations are mentioned? Only ones

you will find will be the major suppliers that got the other nations destroyed by Israel and by God. Israel is now safe (for a little while)...she will become gloriously wealthy and the larger Arab nations, and the Persian nation of Iran who all are Muslim, will not let this stand. With large sums of arms, cash and weapons from Gog and Magog, which many believe is Russia, she will think an evil thought.

8 “After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.

9 Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.

10 Thus saith the Lord God; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought:

11 And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,

12 To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.” (Ezekiel 38:8-12)

This is just too much for the Arab nation, and the Communist nation of Russia to stand and not take what is not theirs. What are they wanting, both Russian and their confederation? The answer would be oil and gas. Israel will be the biggest oil and natural gas producer on the planet, save maybe the USA. She will think an evil thought to take what she desires and wants...the riches of Israel. Almighty God brings judgment, severe judgment on these nations that come against His people and His land.

18 “And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face.

19 For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;

20 So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

21 And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother.

22 And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

23 Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.” (Ezekiel 38:18-23)

Do you see how this war of Psalm 83, although possibly a short war, sets up an even greater war that will judge the nations who come against Israel? Those who have been pulled down to Israel as a fish with hook in its jaw, will be near totally destroyed. 5/6 of this army will be destroyed, and the plagues that destroyed them will follow them back to their home countries and more will die.

THE REVEALING OF THE ANTI-CHRIST

These wars were all covered to come to the crux of this message. With so many people slain, the God of Israel sanctified in the eyes of the world, and the world knows that Israel did not do this by themselves, it's an old Muslim trick to capitulate to the enemy until you are stronger in the future. So a man will come to confirm a covenant with Israel to bring peace to the world. Am I saying the man is Muslim? He could very well be. He will be the secular half of the One World Government and the One World Religion, come to confirm this covenant that has already been in place, but never enforced or ratified. He will proclaim a 7 year treaty.

27 “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” (Daniel 9:27)

So the Anti-Christ has just revealed himself, and from the time of Psalm 83 until Ezekiel 38-39, could be just a few years...we don't know, as the Bible is not specific. But if things are ratcheting up in the Middle East where we could see war after war come to pass and the total destruction of Damascus, the end of Psalm 83 war, into Ezekiel's war where Israel is victorious through the intervention of Divine fury and wrath from Almighty, the time of the Tribulation could be that close. Why is that important?

6 “And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (2nd Thessalonians 2:6-10)

The power that holds back unabated evil in this world is God's Holy Spirit and if He is pulled back to Pre-Pentecostal manifestations, those He indwells will be removed as well.

The Oracle of Damascus and the Psalm 83 War, gets the ball rolling to the coming Tribulation and it could be even tomorrow that this war will break out. We are told that we will NOT see this man, the Anti-Christ, as he will be revealed after the church is removed. If the AC is to be revealed in the next few years, the church can be removed anytime between now and then.

My spiritual sense tells me that we don't have much time to gather the harvest of souls for the coming of the Lord, and not making any predictions, but it could be even this fall, or the next, or the next. We don't know for sure. We just watch and wait and believe what Paul wrote:

15 “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (1st Thessalonians 4:15-18)

Make no mistake about it, the Middle East is shaping up for a catastrophic war coming, the world is about to implode, and the Anti-Christ is about to reveal himself. The signs are all around us, and the signs of the coming of our Lord grow louder and louder with each passing day.

Please as you read this, examine yourself and see if you be found in the faith. Don't make the mistake of discounting these words. Scoffers will have their sneers wiped off their faces when all of this comes to pass. Don't be one of them, as the time for repentance and being with Jesus for all eternity draws closer.

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” (Peter 1:10)

“ For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17, God sent not His Son to condemn the world, but that the world through HIM, might be saved.” (John 3:16-17) (my emphasis in caps)

This is Pastor Mike Taylor, praying you make yourself ready for the coming of the Lord, He is right at the door ready to burst forth. If you need prayer, counseling, or just a friendly listening ear, email me a realteam1999@sbcglobal.net, God bless you all.

TILL WE MEET AT JESUS FEET