

THE PROPHECY ABOUT DAMASCUS-PART 2
WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO DAMASCUS?
ISAIAH 17:1-14

Introduction

With all the news coming out lately regarding *Syria* and the possibility now of our nation getting involved in its civil war, I think its appropriate for us to be looking at the possibility that some Biblical prophecy could possibly be fulfilled before our eyes.

Damascus is the capital of *Syria* with much of the nation's population living in and around the city. *Damascus* is thought to be the world's oldest, continuously inhabited city with a 5,000 year history! (i.e. It dates back to the days of Abraham *Genesis 14:15*; Abraham's steward is called *Eliezer of Damascus* in *Genesis 15:2*.)

There is no record in ancient history of it ever being fully destroyed and this is significant because the Bible says that there will come a time when *Damascus* will be totally destroyed and becomes uninhabited.

Last week we looked at SOME PREVIOUS HISTORY OF DAMASCUS AND SYRIA AS IT RELATES TO ISRAEL.

There is a long history of *Syria* being hurtful to God's people, Israel.

We also looked at SOME MORE RECENT HISTORY OF DAMASCUS AND SYRIA AS IT RELATES TO ISRAEL.

How that *Syria* is the home of many Islamic terrorist groups and its army has invaded and has occupied *Lebanon* for almost 30 years. And how that currently, *Syria* and *Iran* are supporting the *Hezbollah* in southern *Lebanon* against Israel.

Syria, like the rest of Israel's Islamic neighbors, hates Israel! And has invaded and attacked Israel on several occasions since Israel became a nation in 1948, and have publicly called for the total destruction of Israel.

We also noted that recently an Israeli general, on commenting on the growing threat of *Syria*, said that the easiest thing to do to neutralize *Syria* as a mortal threat would be to drop a nuclear bomb on *Damascus*.

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The prophecies regarding *Damascus* can be found in three main passages in the Bible, all of them in the Old Testament and none written later than approximately 2,600 years ago. **We will be looking at these three passages found Isaiah 17, Jeremiah 49:23-27; and Amos 1:3-5.**

When we look at any prophecy, there are three important questions:

1. What is the prophecy about, (or what is going to happen)?
2. How and/or when will the prophecy be fulfilled?
3. Why was the prophecy given, or why will it be carried out?

We're going to try to answer these questions one at a time. For tonight, let's answer the question:

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO DAMASCUS AND SYRIA?

Let's begin by looking at Isaiah 17:1-2

As I said, *Damascus* is thought to be the world's oldest, continuously inhabited city with a 5,000 year history

Isaiah 17:1 indicates that one day it will cease to exist as a city—that has yet to happen! The word "*burden*" indicates this is a pronouncement of judgment.

The Area To Be Affected:

Understand that when a city is mentioned in Prophecy, **especially a capital city, it often refers to not only the city, but the entire surrounding area as well!** In this case, we could be talking about the whole country of *Syria*, or at the very least the cities and areas surrounding the Syrian capital of *Damascus*.

So when we read about the destruction of *Damascus*, it is very possibly not just the city that is going to be destroyed – it encompasses the entire region, maybe even the entire country.

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This idea can be proven by the names of the others cities and regions included in these Scripture passages – all of which are located in or are in some way connected with Syria.

For example, verse 2 refers to the cities of *Aroer*. The Strong's Concordance says that *Aroer* was the name of three places in or near Palestine.

Understand that the word *Aroer* actually means “ruins; naked, stripped, destitute”

So, there are some who believe that this is not speaking of an actual place named *Aroer*, but rather is a term encompassing all surrounding cities, which are reduced to ruins along with *Damascus*.

If that is correct, then the cities of ruin could include the *Hezbollah* stronghold in the *Bekaa Valley* of *Lebanon*, which is in a direct line between *Beirut* and *Damascus*.

The Hebrew word used for “forsaken” is “*azab*,” and means *abandoned, withdrawn, left behind, released, or neglected*.

Now let's look at Jeremiah 49:23-27

We see that the same idea of destruction of the entire area is continued here in the Jeremiah prophecy.

Hamath is the site of the modern city of *Hamah*, population 65,000. Located on the *Orontes River*, *Hamath* and *Arpad* are associated cities with histories traceable all the way back to what archaeologists refer to as the “Neolithic Period” – approximately 4-5,000 years ago.

Arpad was also the name of a northern Syrian province. Its inclusion denotes a major catastrophe of some sort that encompasses most of Syria.

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Although it is possible that this destruction may not reach as far north as *Hamath* and *Arpad*, because if you notice Jeremiah doesn't say that these cities are destroyed. He says that they heard the evil tidings concerning *Damascus* and became confounded and fainthearted.

Also, notice verse 24. *Damascus* is “waxed feeble,” or made weak, and “turneth herself to flee” is a picture of the inhabitants and especially those in power, forsaking her. Notice also it says, “fear hath seized on her.” Why? That's what a catastrophic event does! Notice next, “anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail.”

Lastly, let's look at Amos 1:4-5

Amos also agrees with the assessment of all or at least most of Syria being destroyed.

Hazael and *Ben-hadad* are the names of ancient Syrian kings. Notice the description of those affected in verse 5.

Breaking the *bar* of Damascus is speaking of the defenses of the city. But notice the inhabitants from the plain of *Aven* are cut off as well as the ones who hold the power in what is referred to as the *house of Eden*. (We'll get back to this in a minute.)

Then, the inclusion of the people of *Syria* shows that the judgment of God will descend on the inhabitants of the land as well as the cities.

And look what happens to the people who do survive this desolation. It says that the people of *Syria* will go into *captivity* (or exiled) to *Kir*. The exact location of *Kir* is unknown, but many scholars believe it is somewhere in ancient *Mesopotamia* in modern day *Jordan* or *Iraq*.

While preparing for this study, I came across a reference that said that *Kir* was in the ancient lands of *Media*. *Media* is in northern *Iran*.

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If this is the true location, then the Syrians who survive the destruction of Damascus and the surrounding area, may flee to *Iran*. This makes perfect sense because *Syria* and *Iran* are present-day allies.

When Amos speaks about cutting off the inhabitants from the valley of *Aven*. This is a valley or plain area believed to be in *Lebanon* near the modern city of *Baalbek*. This would be within the region of a *Hezbollah* stronghold.

And finally, Amos mentions cutting off him who holds the scepter from *the house of Eden* or *Beth-eden*. *Beth-eden* is an area near the upper *Euphrates River* valley in present day *Syria*.

Now, a *scepter* is a symbol of authority and usually the one who holds the scepter is the ruler or leader of the place named.

Who is the leader of *the house of Eden* or *Beth-Eden* who will be cut off? I don't know.

It could be a reference to the Syrian president Assad. It could be any number of terrorist leaders in the region or it may be all of them! We won't know the definite answer to this one until it happens.

So, in answer to the question, what is going to happen to Damascus and the cities surrounding it– I think that in this case it is safe to say that it will be completely destroyed. In fact, it will be so desolate that no one will ever inhabit it again!

Conclusion

So, what do we do with what we see in Scripture and what we are seeing unfold in the news?

If you are lost, its time to get saved!

If you are saved, its time to get right with the LORD and prepare to meet Him!