

Damascus Will No Longer Be a City

*“Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city,
And it will be a ruinous heap.”
- The Prophet Isaiah, chapter 17, verse 1¹*

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*"Go, Daniel! For the matters are obscured and sealed until the time of the End. They will be elucidated and clarified and refined by many [people]; the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand; but the wise will understand."
Daniel 12:9-10²*

Introduction

Some who study Bible prophecy believe the world's next prophetic event will be the destruction of Damascus prophesied in Isaiah chapter 17. This document presents a hypothetical scenario for the fulfillment of this prophecy based on biblical research and current events. Please note that Isaiah prophesied approximately 2800 years ago; perhaps this prophecy will not be fulfilled for centuries. Or perhaps God relented or will relent from allowing it to come to pass, depending on the actions of the people of Damascus.³ In studying Bible prophecy, times and dates generally elude us, and 20/20 hindsight is the general rule. However, it is interesting to ponder our current location on the prophetic timeline presented in the interwoven prophecies of the Bible. With that in mind, I present this document. Please do not take my reasoning too seriously, as my premises may be incorrect. Please test and refine this document with your own study of the scriptures. And please remember that a primary duty of believers is to spread the good news that Jesus died for our sins and arose, giving us eternal life.

Bible Prophecy

With perfect accuracy, the Bible predicted such events as:

The Babylonian captivity of the Jews:

"And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." (Jeremiah 25:11 NKJ)

The military campaigns of Alexander the Great:

"And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power." (Daniel 8:5-6 NKJ)

"The ram which you saw, having the two horns -- they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king." (Daniel 8:20-21 NKJ)

The crucifixion of the Messiah:

"For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." (Psalms 22:16-18 NKJ)

The destruction of the Temple after Messiah's first appearance:

"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." (Daniel 9:26 NKJ)

The international exile and dispersion of the Jews:

"So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds." (Ezekiel 36:19 NKJ)

The spread of the good news of the Messiah to all nations:

"Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'" (Isaiah 49:6 NKJ)

Jewish persecution, the Holocaust, etc.:

"And I will pursue them with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence; and I will deliver them to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth -- to be a curse, an astonishment, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them,

because they have not heeded My words, says the LORD, which I sent to them by My servants the prophets." (Jeremiah 29:18-19 NKJ)

The dispersed Jews' return from the nations to the land of Israel:

"In the latter years you will come into the land of those ... gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations..." (Ezekiel 38:8 NKJ)

Isaiah's Chronology: Two Events

Although many Bible prophecies have happened, others have not. Can we determine the sequence of future prophecies written by different prophets? Isaiah 17 has clues that appear to link it to Ezekiel 38-39, the prophecy of the Gog/Magog war.

Event 1: The Burden Against Damascus

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica:

"Among ancient cities of the world, Damascus is perhaps the oldest continuously inhabited. Its name, Dimashq in Arabic ... derives from Dimashka, a word of pre-Semitic etymology, suggesting that the beginnings of Damascus go back to a time before recorded history."⁴

Isaiah, however, prophesied that in the future Damascus will cease from being a city. Isaiah chapter 17 reads:

*The burden against Damascus.
"Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city,
And it will be a ruinous heap.
The cities of Aroer* are forsaken;
They will be for flocks
Which lie down, and no one will make them afraid.
(Isaiah 17:1-2 NKJ)*

* Aroer is in south central Jordan.⁵ Its inhabitants will abandon their cities.

The fortress also will cease from Ephraim,
The kingdom from Damascus,
And the remnant of Syria;
They will be as the glory of the children of Israel,"
Says the LORD of hosts.*

*“In that day it shall come to pass
That the glory of Jacob will wane, **
And the fatness of his flesh grow lean.
(Isaiah 17:3,4 NKJ)*

* The land of Ephraim is the central West Bank,⁶ home to many Palestinian Arabs.

**Jacob is Israel. The “remnant of Syria” and “the glory of the children of Israel” will simultaneously decline.

*It shall be as when the harvester gathers the grain,
And reaps the heads with his arm;
It shall be as he who gathers heads of grain
In the Valley of Rephaim.
Yet gleaning grapes will be left in it,
Like the shaking of an olive tree,
Two or three olives at the top of the uppermost bough,
Four or five in its most fruitful branches,”
Says the LORD God of Israel.
In that day a man will look to his Maker,
And his eyes will have respect for the Holy One of Israel.
He will not look to the altars,
The work of his hands;
He will not respect what his fingers have made,
Nor the wooden images nor the incense altars.
In that day his strong cities will be as a forsaken bough
And an uppermost branch,
Which they left because of the children of Israel; *⁷
And there will be desolation.
(Isaiah 17:5-9 NKJ)*

* “Which they left because of the children of Israel” indicates that the Israelites are combatants in this prophecy.

*Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation,
And have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold,*
(Isaiah 17:10 NKJ)*

* Above appears to be the reason God allows this prophecy to unfold.

*Therefore you will plant pleasant plants
And set out foreign seedlings;
In the day you will make your plant to grow,
And in the morning you will make your seed to flourish;
But the harvest will be a heap of ruins*
In the day of grief and desperate sorrow.
(Isaiah 17:10-11 NKJ)*

* This may suggest the time of year of this prophecy's fulfillment.

Event 2. Multinational Attack

Isaiah's discourse then transitions to an ensuing multinational alliance that rises against Israel to plunder and rob, followed by God's intervention:

*Woe to the multitude of many people
Who make a noise like the roar of the seas,
And to the rushing of nations
That make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!
The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters;
But God will rebuke them and they will flee far away,
And be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind,
Like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.
Then behold, at eventide, trouble!
And before the morning, he is no more.
This is the portion of those who plunder us,
And the lot of those who rob us.
(Isaiah 17:12-14 NKJ)*

Isaiah's clues indicate that the multinational attack that follows the destruction of Damascus may be the Gog/Magog war of Ezekiel 38-39.

Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops—many people are with you. (Ezekiel 38:1-6 NKJ)*

*Since the Hebrew word “rosh” means “head,” this could also read “the head prince of Meshech and Tubal...”

Gog is the leader of the multinational alliance. The only clue we have concerning his identity is in the book of 1 Chronicles.

“...the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. The sons of Joel were Shemaiah his son, Gog his son...”
(1 Chronicles 5:3-4 NKJ)

Gog was a descendant of Reuben, the firstborn son of Jacob, patriarch of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Messiah is called by the name of his forefather David in Ezekiel 37:24 (“...David my servant *shall be* king over them...”⁸), thus Gog may likewise be the forefather of the leader of the multinational attack.

Ezekiel describes Israel's condition at the time of the Gog/Magog invasion through God's prophetic words to Gog.

*“Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into **the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely.**”* (Ezekiel 38:7-8 NKJ)

The people living in the land of Israel now appear to fit the above description for the first time in history, but with one major exception: they do not live in safety. However, if the threat of invasion and terrorism by Israel's neighbors ceases, the Israeli state will fit the above description. This may be the Israeli state's condition after Damascus' destruction, prophesied in Isaiah 17.

Gog, the leader of the multinational alliance, devises a scheme and will say:

*... ‘I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates’— **to take plunder and to take booty**, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land.* (Ezekiel 38:11-12 NKJ)

As Ezekiel described above, the reason for Gog's multinational attack is “to take plunder and booty.” After the war in Isaiah 17 in which Damascus is destroyed, many nations will rise

against Israel to “plunder” and “rob.” Based on these clues, Isaiah 17 seems to transition into Ezekiel 38 and 39. After Damascus is destroyed, the Gog/Magog war appears to be next.

The Mystery Nation of Isaiah 18

Jewish commentators believe that Isaiah 18 gives further insight into the Gog/Magog war.

*"Isaiah... speaks to the nations involved in the wars of 'Gog and Magog.'"*⁹

Isaiah 18 mentions a nation that could be the Sudan, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.

*Woe to the land shadowed with buzzing wings,
Which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,*
Which sends ambassadors by sea,
Even in vessels of reed on the waters
(Isaiah 18:1-2 NKJ)*

* Ethiopia, or Cush, is an ally in the Gog/Magog war: “Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them...” (Ezekiel 38:5 NKJ)

Isaiah then describes a mystery nation to which messengers go. A riddle describes the nation.

*“Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth of skin,
To a people terrible from their beginning onward,
A nation powerful and treading down,
Whose land the rivers divide.” (Isaiah 18:2 NKJ)*

The above translation does not accurately interpret the Hebrew. Using a CD ROM of the Hebrew Masoretic Text, I exhaustively cross-referenced, via computer, each word that describes the mystery nation. Here is a better description:

"...a nation led along according to someone else's will, smooth (or hairless), a people feared from himself and beyond, a nation that stretched measuring lines and subjugated, whose land the rivers plundered."¹⁰

Let us try to identify the mystery nation.

The first clue is the Hebrew word "mushakh."¹¹ This word means "led along according to someone else's will." The people of this nation are not free.

The second clue is the Hebrew word "morat."¹² This word means smooth-skinned, or hairless. The people of this nation are either clean-shaven or they lack natural facial hair.

The third clue is the Hebrew phrase, "nora min-hu vahalea," which means "feared from himself and beyond." The Hebrew "nora" comes from "yare" which means "afraid," while "min... halea" means "from... beyond."¹³ The people of this nation are afraid of their government and the nation is feared beyond its borders.

The fourth clue is based on the Hebrew words "kav-kav" and "mevusa."¹⁴ These words indicate that this nation stretched measuring lines (as a carpenter does before cutting wood) and then subjugated, or subdued [people].

The fifth clue is based on the Hebrew verb "bazu." This verb is found nowhere else in the Old Testament. The word, however, is similar to the noun "baz,"¹⁵ which means "loot," or "plunder." The verb "bazu," therefore, means "looted," or "plundered." The passage indicates that rivers will have plundered, or carried off the wealth of this nation's land before messengers arrive. The rivers of the mystery nation will have severely flooded, causing costly damage.

Let's review. When messengers go to this 'mystery nation,' the nation:

- Is not free.
- Consists of people who lack facial hair.
- Consists of people who are afraid of their government.
- Is feared beyond its borders.
- Stretched measuring lines and then subjugated or subdued [people].
- Will have recently experienced costly river flooding.

If this prophecy is imminent, the mystery nation may be China or North Korea.

Isaiah 18 continues, apparently giving further insight into the Gog/Magog war.

*All inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth:
When he lifts up a banner on the mountains, you see it;
And when he blows a trumpet, you hear it.
For so the LORD said to me,
"I will take My rest,
And I will look from My dwelling place
Like clear heat in sunshine,
Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."
For before the harvest, when the bud is perfect
And the sour grape is ripening in the flower,*

*He will both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks
And take away and cut down the branches.
They will be left together for the mountain birds of prey
And for the beasts of the earth;
The birds of prey will summer on them,
And all the beasts of the earth will winter on them.
In that time a present will be brought to the LORD of hosts
From a people tall and smooth of skin,
And from a people terrible from their beginning onward,
A nation powerful and treading down,
Whose land the rivers divide—
To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts,
To Mount Zion.
(Isaiah 18:3-7 NKJ)*

** again the 'mystery nation' passage is better translated: "...a nation led along according to someone else's will, smooth-skinned (or hairless), a people feared from himself and beyond, a nation that stretched measuring lines and subjugated, whose land the rivers plundered." (Isaiah 18:2 & 7)*

In summary, Isaiah 17 appears to transition into the Gog/Magog war at the end of the chapter. Isaiah 18 continues, giving further insight into that war and describing a mystery nation that may be China or North Korea.

Ezekiel's Sequence: Three Events

Ezekiel, in chapters 36-43, gave an apparent sequence of three future events.¹⁶ The first event involves Israelites returning from international exile to the land of Israel (chapters 36-37).

For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. (Ezekiel 36:24 NKJ)

"... 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land (Ezekiel 37:21 NKJ)

The second event is the Gog/Magog war in Ezekiel 38-39.

"Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him..." (Ezekiel 38:2 NKJ)*

* Since “rosh” is Hebrew for “head,” “prince of rosh” can also be translated “head prince of...”

The third event is the appearance of a future Jerusalem Temple, described in Ezekiel 40-43. Ezekiel opens these chapters with a vision.

“...behold, there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze. He had a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand, and he stood in the gateway. And the man said to me, “Son of man, look with your eyes and hear with your ears, and fix your mind on everything I show you; for you were brought here so that I might show them to you. Declare to the house of Israel everything you see.” (Ezekiel 40:3-4 NKJ)

As the vision unfolded, Ezekiel saw and described, in detail, a Temple that has never existed. Previous Jerusalem Temples include Solomon’s temple, and the post-Babylonian exile Temple that King Herod later renovated. Ezekiel had a vision of a future Temple. Modern Jewish Temple movement groups are planning to build this Ezekiel Temple when the opportunity arises.¹⁷

Based on Ezekiel's sequence, Israelite exiles will return to the land of Israel (this continues to happen), then the Gog/Magog war will happen, and then the Jerusalem Temple will stand.

The Prophet Joel: The Porch and the Altar

The prophet Joel, in chapter two, further describes what appears to be the Gog/Magog invasion.¹⁸ In this chapter, Joel indicates that before the Gog/Magog war ends, two components of the Temple will exist: the porch and the altar used to sacrifice animals.

"Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar..." (Joel 2:17 NKJ)

This passage indicates that efforts to rebuild the Temple begin before the Gog/Magog war ends.

Isaiah’s Chronology Combined with Ezekiel’s Sequence

Here is Isaiah’s chronology:

1. Damascus ceases to be a city
2. Gog/Magog war

Here is Ezekiel’s sequence:

1. Israelites return from the nations to Israel
2. Gog/Magog war
3. The Temple stands in Jerusalem

Combining the above sequences yields the following:

1. Israelites return from the nations to Israel*

2. Damascus ceases to be a city
3. Gog/Magog war
4. The Temple stands in Jerusalem

* Since Israelites are already returning to Israel, we can place this item first in the combined sequence.

Based on the above sequence, Damascus' destruction may be on the horizon. How imminent are these events?

The Temple

The Red Heifer

Before Israel can hold ceremonies in a new Temple, an unblemished red heifer must be sacrificed when it is in its third year of life (between its second and third birthday).

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come.'" (Numbers 19:1-2 NKJ)

The red heifer's ashes must be mixed with water, and this mixture must be sprinkled on Temple priests to purify them.

In the late summer of 1996, a red heifer was born in Israel to a black and white cow and a brown bull.¹⁹ This red heifer, named Melody, was not born as a result of red heifer breeding efforts. Its birth was a surprise. Initially, Melody was thought to be the first flawless red heifer born in Israel in over 1,900 years and only the 10th in the history of the Jewish people.²⁰ According to the Temple Institute in Jerusalem, to qualify as 'flawless' under Halacha (Jewish law), a red heifer cannot have two white or two black hairs growing from the same follicle. This red heifer was originally thought to meet this requirement. Melody, however was found to be flawed and inappropriate for sacrifice.

Israeli Temple movement groups later set their hopes on a herd of Red Heifers bred in Nebraska, the United States.²¹

Are red heifer breeding efforts an indication that Temple construction is imminent? If so, then even more imminent are two events that precede the Jerusalem Temple: the destruction of Damascus, and the Gog/Magog war.

The Temple Institute

In the mid-1980s, the Temple Institute was founded in Jerusalem. As of autumn, 1997, this institute has built a collection of...

*"...vessels, implements and musical instruments associated with service at the Temple in Jerusalem. These artifacts are not mere models. They have been created in strict accordance with Halacha (Jewish Law) and historical sources. Each one represents close collaboration of the Institute's rabbis and scholars with respected artists and craftsmen. They have been reconstructed to be eligible for use in holy service at the Temple in Jerusalem, G-d willing. Of 93 artifacts used in the Temple service, 60 have been recreated."*²²

The remaining 33 artifacts are being recreated. The Temple Institute expects the 93 artifacts to be used in the Temple once it is built.

The Dome of the Rock

Currently, Israel cannot build the Temple without sparking a war. This is because Islam's Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque sit on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. However, if Islamic nations' military forces are neutralized, and if Israelis return to God, there will be few barriers to prevent Temple construction.

The Altar

In January, 1998, I phoned the Temple Institute, Jerusalem, Israel and asked whether the brazen altar (the altar of animal sacrifice mentioned in Joel 2:17, and discussed in "The Porch and the Altar" section above) has been built. A representative from the institute told me that the altar had not yet been built because it must be built in place on the Temple Mount, which is currently occupied by Muslims. I then asked whether the Israelis had the capability to construct the altar. The representative answered, "No problem." He went on to say that a replica of the future altar was already being used for rehearsals.

Conclusion

Three Bible prophecies may be upcoming, chronological events: the destruction of Damascus, the Gog/Magog war and the construction of the Temple. If recent initiatives in Israel to prepare for the construction and dedication of the Temple signify that its erection is imminent, then the destruction of Damascus and the Gog/Magog war may also be imminent.

Perhaps these events will not happen for centuries. Perhaps the reasoning in this article is flawed. Or perhaps God will prevent Damascus' destruction depending on the actions of its inhabitants.²³ Through further prayer and Bible study, may the Lord help us to refine our understanding of His prophecies.

Appendix

Israel's Neighbors

Psalm 83, Amos 1, Micah 5:5-6 and Isaiah 13-23 prophesy against Israel's neighbors including Edom (southern Jordan), Moab (south-central Jordan), Ammon (central Jordan), Philistia (Gaza), Tyre (Lebanon), Assyria (Iraq), Damascus, Egypt and Arabia. Psalm 83 unites some of these nations against Israel in a multinational attack that apparently fails after prayer and divine intervention. Meanwhile, Ezekiel 38-39, strangely, omits these hostile neighbors from the immense Gog/Magog alliance. However, Ezekiel 38:5 categorizes more distant nations—Put (Libya), Persia (Iran), and Cush (the Sudan or Ethiopia)—as Gog's allies. Ezekiel 38:8 and 38:14 describe the inhabitants of Israel as living in safety before the Gog/Magog war. Can this be possible unless Israel's nearby hostile neighbors are neutralized? Why didn't Ezekiel list Israel's hostile neighbors as allies of Gog? Perhaps those neighbors are neutralized when they unsuccessfully attack Israel in a series of wars and local multinational attacks described in Psalm 83, Amos 1, Micah 5:5-6 and Isaiah 3-23.

A Related Damascus Prophecy?

Some think Amos 1:3-5 is related to Isaiah 17. They surmise that Syria's attacks against Israel in 1948, 1967, and 1973 are the first three transgressions mentioned in Amos' passage, and that if Syria attacks Israel once more, God will allow Damascus' destruction prophesied by Isaiah.

Thus says the LORD:

*“For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four,
I will not turn away its punishment,
Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron.
But I will send a fire into the house of Hazeal,
Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.
I will also break the gate bar of Damascus,
And cut off the inhabitant from the Valley of Aven,
And the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden.
The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir,”
Says the LORD.
(Amos 1:3-5 NKJ)*

Gog/Magog in the New Testament

Aside from Ezekiel and 1 Chronicles, the Bible mentions Gog in one other place: the book of Revelation.

When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them

for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. (Revelation 20:7-9 NKJ)

I have difficulty reconciling the Revelation 20 context of Gog and Magog with the Ezekiel 38-39 context. In attempting to reconcile the two, it may help to note that Magog is a descendant of Japheth, Noah's son ("The sons of Japheth were Gomer, **Magog**, Madai... Genesis 10:2 NKJ). Thus, Magog was not only a person, but also the patriarch of the nation of Magog. Likewise, Gog, Reuben's descendant, may not only have been a person but may also be the patriarch of the nation of Gog who, according to Ezekiel, is "of the land of Magog" (Ezekiel 38:2 NKJ).

For more information on Bible prophecy and Damascus, browse the World Wide Web. Please test every article with the Bible.

<http://www.reocities.com/athens/parthenon/3021>
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Endnotes



¹ NKJ: New King James Version. Biblical texts researched in producing this document were the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia BHS (Hebrew Masoretic Text), the Byzantine/Majority textform Greek New Testament, and the following English Versions and translations: King James, New King James, New International, Revised Standard, the Stone Edition Tanach, and the New Jewish Publications Society Translation of the Tanakh. Many texts were accessed via Bushell, Michael S., *BibleWorks for Windows*. Big Fork, Montana: Hermeneutica Software, 1996 and *Logos Bible Software 2.0c*, The Logos Library System, Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996. In several instances, vague translations were clarified by extracting certain Hebrew words' meanings through exhaustively computer cross-referencing the words throughout a CD ROM of the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the Tanach (Old Testament) and viewing the words in various contexts.

² *The Stone Edition Tanach*. Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications Ltd. 1996 (A Jewish Translation of the Bible).

³ "At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it." Jeremiah 18:7,8 NASB

⁴ The Encyclopedia Britannica on the World Wide Web, at <http://www.eb.com/cgi-bin/g?keywords=Damascus+is+the+oldest+continuously>

⁵ Achtemier, Paul J., Th.D., *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1985.

⁶ *Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Chicago, Ill: Moody Press, 1985, map 4.

⁷ Bold, underlined and italicized print in this and other passages in this document are added for emphasis.

⁸ New King James Version

⁹ *The Stone Edition Tanach*. Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications Ltd. 1996, p. 984 (a footnote on Isaiah 18:1).

¹⁰ Hebrew Masoretic Text accessed via: Bushell, Michael S., *BibleWorks for Windows*. Big Fork, Montana: Hermeneutica Software, 1996.

¹¹ The word "mushach" is found in Genesis 37:28 "So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers **pulled** Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him..." (NIV); Exodus 12:21 "**Draw** out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover." (KJV); and Deuteronomy 21:3 "...take an heifer, which hath not been wrought in,

and which hath not **drawn** in the yoke." (KJV). (These passages are quoted from the NIV or KJV as annotated. They are cross-references for the Hebrew word "mushach" in the Hebrew Masoretic Text).

¹² The Hebrew verb "morat" means to remove hair (shave): Ezra 9:3 "When I heard this, I... **pulled** hair from my head and beard...". The Hebrew adjective "morat" means "polished", "smooth", or "burnished": 1 Kings 7:45 "the pots, shovels and...bowels...were of **burnished** bronze" (These passages are quoted from the NIV. They are cross-references for the Hebrew word "morat" in the Hebrew Masoretic Text). Therefore, when the adjective "morat" is used to describe a person, it probably means "clean-shaven", "smooth-skinned", or "hairless" (little or no facial or body hair).

¹³ Cross references for "yare:" Genesis 28:17 "And he was afraid, and said, How **dreadful** is this place!"(KJV); Exodus 15:11 "...who is like thee, glorious in holiness, **fearful** in praises..."(KJV). Cross references for "min...halea:" 1 Samuel 20:22 "...the arrows are **beyond** you..."; Ezekiel 39:22 "**From** that day **forward**..."(NIV) (These passages are quoted from the KJV or NIV, as annotated. They are cross-references for the Hebrew words "yare" and "halea" in the Hebrew Masoretic Text).

¹⁴ Cross references for "kav:" Isaiah 44:13 "The Carpenter measures with a **line** and makes an outline with a marker..."; 2 Kings 21:13 "I will stretch out over Jerusalem the **measuring line** used against Samaria..."; Job 38:4-5 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a **measuring line** across it?" Cross reference for "mevusa:" Isaiah 22:5 "The Lord, the LORD Almighty, has a day of tumult and **trampling** and terror in the Valley of Vision..." (These passages are quoted from the NIV. They are cross-references for the Hebrew words "kav" and "mevusa" in the Hebrew Masoretic Text).

¹⁵ The word "baz" is found in Isaiah 10:6 "...I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch **plunder**..."; and Isaiah 33:23 "Then an abundance of spoils will be divided and even the lame will carry off **plunder**" (These passages are quoted from the NIV. They are cross-references for the Hebrew word "baz" in the Hebrew Masoretic Text).

¹⁶ Please see footnote 4.

¹⁷ An Orthodox Jewish Rabbi (name withheld) in Wheaton, Maryland (the United States), informed me that there is a strong push within current Temple movement groups to build the Ezekiel Temple. Some, however, disagree, and want to build a replica of one of the ancient versions of the Temple.

¹⁸ Here is a summary of Joel 2: A huge army (verse 2), with aircraft (verse 5), invades Israel using battle tactics currently used by Russia and her allies (verses 3, 7, 8). The army originates from the north (verse 20), attacks from the west (deduced from verse 20), and retreats after an act of God (verse 20). The army's leading forces retreat east toward the Dead Sea (verse 20), and its trailing forces retreat west toward the Mediterranean (verse 20). God defeats the army when the nation of Israel returns to God, which happens during this invasion (verses 12-20). After the war, God pours his Spirit onto the people of Israel (verses 28-29) and performs wonders in the heavens and on earth (verses 30-31). Then the Day of the Lord begins, and God judges the military forces of all nations in a final end-of-the-age battle in the Middle East (chapter 3). By comparing Joel chapter 2 events with other prophecies, and by noting the Joel chapter 2 invasion's setting with reference to the surrounding sequence of prophetic events, one can infer that Joel 2 describes the Gog/Magog invasion. This war appears to be extremely important in God's eyes, perhaps because it marks the time when the Israelite nation finally returns to God forever. Perhaps this is why the war appears in several prophecies.

¹⁹ *The Boston Globe*, 4/6/97, p. A1. Article by Ethan Bronner, Globe Staff.

<http://users.aol.com/mkneisler/noah/naredhef.htm>

²⁰ *Hatikva 1997 Shavuot Update*. "Has the Red Heifer Appeared in Israel?" <http://www.hatikva.org/nlshvt97>

²¹ *The Messianic Times*, Volume 8, number 4, Winter, 1998, page 12. Rosen, David. "Unblemished" Red Heifer will be shipped to Israel. The Messianic Times, P.O. Box 1180, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010. www.messianictimes.com

²² The Temple Institute's home page on the Web, at <http://www.temple.org.il>

²³ "At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it." Jeremiah 18:7,8 NASB