

Prophecy in Perspective

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An Email Newsletter

Our Times - Prophecy in current events

Obama Hands Syria Over to Putin, The Prophetic Scenario Unfolds on Eve of Israel's Day of Atonement

It is reasonable to assume that Syria's Assad could not have used chemical weapons unless Russia gave permission to do so. We examined in the last issue of *Prophecy in Perspective* how President Obama was announcing his readiness to attack Syria because of Assad's gassing his citizens and how this might spark a war that would bring Russia into position to attack Israel in the prophetic battle of Gog and Magog. As events unfolded we see that Obama's threat brought America's political leadership and citizens into a state of great confusion. Israel was also waiting anxiously to see what would happen. Now, seemingly as a reprieve to all



Russian President Vladimir Putin penned an op-ed in The New York Times to counter President Obama's arguments about possible military strikes against Syria. (npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way)

the growing tension, Russia steps in like a benevolent big brother to assure us that they will remove Assad's ability to use chemical weapons. We should understand, however that Russian President, Vladimir Putin, will use this opportunity to further his own plans for Russia's expansion of power, influence and likely, its territory. This expansion is now being carried into Syria and will ultimately, according to Bible prophecy, move down upon Israel. Present day events, as we will see, show us that things are shaping up just as the Bible predicts and that Jesus is certainly coming soon!

In Daniel chapter 9, the prophet Daniel prays to the Lord, and states that His people, Israel, are in a state of **"confusion of face" (Daniel 9:7, KJV)**, this is also translated **"open shame" (NASB)**. This certainly describes Israel today, as well as America who counts millions of Jews as among its citizens. In

chapter 7, Daniel was given a vision of four distinct world powers that would dominate the political landscape as well as hold dominion over Israel until the second coming of Jesus Christ. The times of these four kingdoms are called in the Bible, the **"times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24)**. Jesus predicted: **"And they (the Jews) shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."** In this vision of the four beasts, or kingdoms, Daniel relates his vision of the fourth beast. This is a picture of the Roman Empire: **"While I was watching in the night visions, a fourth beast appeared, frightening and dreadful, and incredibly strong, with large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and it trampled with its feet whatever was left. It was different from all the beasts before it, and it had 10 horns." "While I was considering the horns, suddenly another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. There were eyes in this horn like a man's, and it had a mouth that spoke arrogantly" (Daniel 7:7-8, HCSB).**

Rome, which thrived in Jesus' day, will revive again as a ten nation confederation in the latter days. Out of this will come the Antichrist and his evil kingdom. (Daniel 7:8, 23, 9:27, Revelation 13:7) Roman dominion stretched even into Arabia where Islam originated in 610 A.D. Muslims are really Gentiles that are a part of the predicted trampling of Jerusalem which Jesus prophesied would occur until His return. They, as well as all other anti-Semitic religions come under the description of the "**forth beast**" of Rome.

Concurrently with the "**times of the Gentiles**," the Church Age is now running its course. During this time, Rome generally exists loosely among the nations, but is presently reviving among the nations of the United States of Europe. Rome, earth's final rebellious kingdom, and the Antichrist, Rome's final world ruler, cannot be revived and revealed as long as the church is on the earth, but after the rapture of the church, the Antichrist will rise out of a ten nation, or ten king confederation of the revived Roman empire. Once the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit is removed from the earth at the rapture of the Church, (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8) then the Antichrist will arise and be free to make a seven year peace covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27). This will be the beginning of the prophesied 70th week of Daniel. This is also known as the Tribulation period.

I believe that before this 70th week commences, there will be a war between Russia and her allies with the nation of Israel. This is called the Battle of Gog and Magog, which is an attack of Russia and Iran, as well as other Islamic nations against Israel. This attack will originate in the "north quarters," that is, from the far north of Israel (Ezekiel 38:6, 15, 39:2). Moscow is directly north of Jerusalem. Ezekiel 38:3 refers to "**Gog, the chief prince of Meshech (Moscow) and Tubal (Toblush, an area in the Ural section of Russia)**" Further, Ezekiel 38:16 says: "**And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.**"

Events in our days certainly indicate that this battle may not be far off. In view of recent developments it is undeniable how Russia is taking the lead in global affairs. President Obama seemed to be in a real fix in his design to fire missiles into Syria as punishment for Bashar Assad's use of chemical weapons. While the Congress was discussing the issues involved, the news media seemed oblivious to the obvious reality that Assad must have acted only upon Russia's, at least tacit, approval. Now, even our President cannot take action against Syria unless Russia's leader, Vladimir Putin, says so.

These are certainly exciting times for those of us who take Bible prophecy seriously. We are in the dawning of the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah (Sept. 6), and on the eve of Israel's Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur (Sept. 13). A news article reports the solemnity and significance of this time for Israel, and we can see the obvious prophetic significance:

This year, the holiday marks 40 years to the 1973 Arab-Israel War, which Israelis call the Yom Kippur War because of the surprise attack launched by the Egyptian and Syrian armies against Israel that year. The war is etched deep in Israel's collective psyche due to the heavy losses sustained in the fighting and because of the country's lack of preparedness. For Israelis, it is one of the most traumatic events in their history. Personal accounts of Israelis who participated in that war or who were scarred by its occurrence filled newspapers and talk shows ahead of this year's holiday.

The holiday also comes amid the crisis over reports of chemical weapons use in neighboring Syria's civil war. Israel is warily watching as the international community decides how to respond to the use of the deadly munitions that allegedly killed hundreds near Damascus last month. Washington and its allies say the Syrian regime of President Bashar Assad fired warheads in the Aug. 21 attack with a nerve agent, most likely sarin.

Israel has said it doesn't want to get involved in the fighting but has also warned it will not tolerate chemical weapons reaching violent groups sworn to its destruction, such as the Iranian backed Lebanese Hezbollah group or the al-Qaida affiliates fighting in Syria against the regime. For devout Jews, Yom Kippur is the most solemn day on the calendar where according to tradition, God weighs people's deeds and decides their fate for the next year. On Thursday night, thousands of Jews attended pre Yom Kippur prayers in Jerusalem at the Western Wall, a remnant of the biblical Jewish Temple compound and the holiest site where Jews can pray.



An ultra-Orthodox Jewish man slaughters a chicken as part of the Kaparot ritual in Jerusalem's Mea Shearim neighborhood, September 12, 2013, ahead of Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, which starts at sundown on Friday. Kaparot is an ancient custom connected to Yom Kippur, where white chickens are slaughtered as a symbolic gesture of atonement.

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Those observing the holiday refrain from food and drink and are to adhere to prohibitions that ban working, using electricity or operating any kind of machinery. The ban on drinking is especially tough in Israel where meteorologists have predicted the holiday this year will be the hottest here for decades. Medics are on alert around the country to deal with emergencies. ([newser.com /israel-prepares-for-yom-kippur-jewish-day-of-atonement-when-country-grinds-to-standstill.html](http://newser.com/israel-prepares-for-yom-kippur-jewish-day-of-atonement-when-country-grinds-to-standstill.html))

The fact that Israel is in their promised land to celebrate their Day of Atonement is a miracle in itself. One day, Israel will trust in Jesus Christ who died on the cross for them. In the context of Ezekiel 38 and 39, we see that the Lord predicted the re-gathering of Israel into their land in the vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37). There we see Israel gathered together as dry bones, then God will breathe new life into them. Thus, as Israel is now, they initially gather in unbelief and then they will come to know the Lord, as a people and as a nation.

Many Jews in Israel and around the world are coming to faith in Jesus Christ now, and many more will trust in Jesus Christ after the rapture and during the preaching of the 144,000 during the Tribulation period. And finally, many, many more Jews will come to saving faith in Christ at His return to the earth during the last days of the Tribulation (Revelation 7, Zechariah 12:10-14; 13:1, 9).

Middle East



I believe we can now see God's amazing prophetic End Times scenario shaping up through the current events regarding, the United States, Russia and Syria. It appears that our leaders have basically blundered and stumbled, through arrogant bluster and artificial "red-lines," into conceding authority to Russia to solve the complicated chemical weapons issue. Remember, this is an artificially created issue Obama has brought about. He generally had little to say about the tens of thousands who have been brutally killed, adults and

children, over the past two or three years in Syria. He seemed to telegraph to Assad (and shouldn't we say also, to the Russians?) when and why America would intervene. This delay gave al Qaeda, plenty of opportunity to infiltrate the Syrian Rebel movement, which would effectively negate any chance for America's intervention. This also served to give time for Russia to position itself as a strong military presence in Syria and for Iran to complete its development of nuclear capabilities sufficient to make good their threats to destroy Israel.

Now Russia has free access to strengthen its political position and military preparations for a future attack on Israel when they decide to do so. It is possible that Syria's war with the Rebels serves also to supply cover for Russia and Iran to prepare and position their assets and Russian, Hezbollah and Iranian troops in strategic locations to attack Israel. Likely, the very chemical weapons attack that sparked these recent developments was permitted by Russia and Iran to calibrate, or measure, how the world, especially America, would respond. It was certainly effectively used as leverage for Putin to gain the upper-hand over the United States! Arrogance mixed with an immoral world-view as we have witnessed in U.S. leadership will always result in weakness and vulnerability to God's enemies. This is the pathetic condition America is in today!

Prophetically speaking, Israel is the big fish that Russia and the Islamists are really after. Putin has succeeded in making Russia look like a hero in spite of the fact that Russia is likely one of the true instigators and supporters driving the events of the Syrian civil war. Russia is fearful of the Sunni, al Qaida type Islamist elements, coming up into Russia. But they seem to tolerate well the Shiite versions for their own ends. Thus, Assad (an Alawite Muslim which is a sect of Shiite Islam) and Shiite Iran are allies with Russia. Thanks to Obama's apparent willful denial and ignorance of Biblical realities, and even geo-political realities in the Middle-East from the standpoint of basic historical support of Israel, he has been "played" by the cagey former KGB leader, Vladimir Putin. Yet, for Mr. Obama, the ultimate results of these turn of events will actually achieve the same basic outcome that I believe he was seeking: A threatened, reduced and contained Israel, and a strengthened Islamic standing in the Middle-East. Now, Russia has moved to center-stage in latter day world affairs to help to achieve these ends. But, according to Ezekiel 38 and 39, God will intervene and Israel's enemies will meet with disaster and destruction (Ezekiel 38:18-39:1-7). The Bible proves, once again, to be the true and infallible Word of God!

How does America figure into the latter day Gog and Magog scenario? Probably as one of the **"young lions"** of the **"merchants of Tarshish,"** which will diplomatically, but feebly ask Russia when he attacks Israel: **"Have you come to capture spoil? Have you assembled your company to seize plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to capture great spoil?" (Ezekiel 38:13b)** Sad to say that the United States, one of the historically most ardent supporters of Israel and a world leader as a globally recognized "exceptional" nation, is now a declining nation. Even Putin has recently chided President Obama for saying America is an "exceptional" nation through our own newspaper, *The New York Times*. Through weak and liberal leadership in America which has not defended Israel and which has allowed thousands of children to be aborted and the family to be destroyed, we are now vulnerable to our enemies, and have now effectively come under the authority of a foreign power. As dismal as this looks, for the believer it shows that God's Word is true, and that Jesus is coming soon! Jesus promised:

"But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28).

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(Note: If you would like to interact with Dr. Downing concerning this newsletter, views, etc. you can "blog" with him at prophecyinperspective.com. If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter at no charge, please send your name and email address to: sgdowning@bellsouth.net. Also, you can purchase his book, "Good News From a Far Country", a study in the book of Daniel [\$15]; "Becoming Mighty in Spirit...through Revelation's Prophecies" [\$10]; or his latest book, "Becoming Mighty in Spirit...through Developing a Prophetic Walk...A study in the lives and ministries of Elijah and Elisha" [\$10] by contacting him.)