

Could Syria's Actions Trigger Biblical Prophecies?

Here are the latest developments from the Middle East:

- **"Syria loads chemical weapons into bombs; military awaits Assad's order," reads an NBC News headline.** Excerpts from the report: "The Syrian military is prepared to use chemical weapons against its own people and is awaiting final orders from President Bashar Assad, U.S. officials told NBC News on Wednesday. The military has loaded the precursor chemicals for sarin, a deadly nerve gas, into aerial bombs that could be dropped onto the Syrian people from dozens of fighter-bombers, the officials said. As recently as Tuesday, officials had said there was as yet no evidence that the process of mixing the "precursor" chemicals had begun. But Wednesday, they said their worst fears had been confirmed: The nerve agents were locked and loaded inside the bombs. Sarin is an extraordinarily lethal agent. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's forces killed 5,000 Kurds with a single sarin attack on Halabja in 1988."
- **U.S. weighs military options if Syria uses WMD** (Navy Times)
- **PM Netanyahu's Remarks on Syria's Chemical Weapons**
- **Reports of Imminent Chemical Warfare Keep Syria Trending On Social Media** (Fast Company)

In this context, is it possible that the Biblical prophecies regarding the future of Damascus come true in our lifetime? Are current events in Syria foreshadowing prophetic events? There are actually **two key Biblical prophecies** that explain that at unspecified time in the future, the city of Damascus will be completely destroyed—judged by God—and will not be inhabited again.

- **Isaiah 17:1-3** – “The oracle concerning Damascus. ‘Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city and will become a fallen ruin. The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they will be for flocks to lie down in, and there will be no one to frighten *them*. The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and sovereignty from Damascus....’”
- **Jeremiah 49:23-27** – “Concerning Damascus. ‘Hamath and Arpad are put to shame, for they have heard bad news; they are disheartened. There is anxiety by the sea, it cannot be calmed. Damascus has become helpless; she has turned away to flee, and panic has gripped her; distress and pangs have taken hold of her like a woman in childbirth. How the city of praise has not been deserted, the town of My joy! Therefore, her young men will fall in her streets, and all the men of war will be silenced in that day,’ declares the Lord of hosts. ‘I will set fire to the wall of Damascus, and it will devour the fortified towers of Ben-hadad.’”

These prophecies have not yet been fulfilled. Damascus is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities on earth. It has been attacked, besieged, and conquered. But Damascus has never been completely destroyed and left uninhabited. Yet that is exactly what the Bible says will happen. The context of Isaiah 17 and Jeremiah 49 are a series of End Times prophecies dealing with God’s judgments on Israel’s neighbors and enemies leading up to—and through—the Tribulation.

How exactly will Damascus be destroyed? When will exactly it be destroyed? What will that look like, and what will be the implications for the rest of Syria, for Israel and for the region? The honest answer is that the Bible does not say. I’m currently writing a novel entitled, *Damascus Countdown*, that envisions how these prophecies could come to pass. ***Damascus Countdown*** will be the third and final novel in the trilogy that began with ***The Twelfth Imam*** and ***The Tehran Initiative***.

Joel C. Rosenberg is the *New York Times* best-selling author of six novels—*The Last Jihad*, *The Last Days*, *The Ezekiel Option*, *The Copper Scroll*, *Dead Heat*, and *The Twelfth Imam*—and two non-fiction books, *Epicenter* and *Inside the Revolution*, with more than two million total copies in print. *The Ezekiel Option* was named by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association as the Gold Medallion winner of the “Best Novel of 2006.”