

Isaiah 17:1-14 The oracle concerning Damascus.

**“Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city
And will become a fallen ruin.**

Jeremiah 49:23-27, which also foretells the destruction of Damascus prior to the Day of יהוה .

Isaiah 7:8 For the head of Aram is Damascus and the head of Damascus is Rezin (now within another 65 years Ephraim will be shattered, so that it is no longer a people),

Isaiah 8:4 for before the boy knows how to cry out ‘My father’ or ‘My mother,’ the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria.”

Amos 1:3-5 Thus says יהוה , “For three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not revoke its punishment, Because they threshed Gilead with implements of sharp iron. “So I will send fire upon the house of Hazael And it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad. “I will also break the gate bar of Damascus, And cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, And him who holds the scepter, from Beth-eden; So the people of Aram will go exiled to Kir,” Says יהוה .

Zechariah 9:1-17 The burden of the word of יהוה is against the land of Hadrach, with Damascus as its resting place (for the eyes of men, especially of all the tribes of Israel, are toward יהוה), And Hamath also, which borders on it...

The Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser, did not fulfill this prophecy in 732 B.C. when he conquered Damascus and killed its king (2 Kings 16:9).

Tiglath-pileser did not make the city "a ruinous heap," he didn't erase it from history. He simply attacked the city and enslaved its people.

Included in the prophecy the cities of Aroer (located on the northern bank of the Arnon River just east of the Dead Sea) will be deserted (Isaiah 17:2). They won't be totally destroyed like Damascus; but deserted - they're deserted because the people flee out of fear.

There's going to be an onslaught of all fortified cities in northern Israel (Isaiah 17:3). Aram, a regional strike from the Israeli's on Syria - the Popeye, Delilah and Spike missiles landing just southeast of Damascus, will cause the same fate of these northern cities - total destruction (Isaiah 17:3).

Isaiah 17 threads to Psalm 83 - a sinister plot to wipe her out as a nation (Psalm 83:4). It's a conspiracy, a conspiracy of nations:

They seek to *"plunder and destroy"* Israel (Isaiah 17 and Psalm 83:3-5, 12).

The psalmist says, ***"O my Elohim, blow them away like whirling dust, like chaff before the wind!" Psalm 83:13***. This is the same way יהוה repels the invaders in Isaiah 17, where it says, ***"They will flee like chaff scattered by the wind or like dust whirling before a storm." Isaiah 17:13.***

Damascus is described by historians as one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities on the planet. Other ancient cities include Jericho (in the West Bank), Sidon (in Lebanon), and Byblos (also in Lebanon). Damascus is also considered the oldest capital city.

The city of Damascus is mentioned 56 times in the Bible.

First mention: Genesis 14:15. ***"When Abram heard that his relative [Lot] had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people."***

Abraham's most trusted servant, Eliezer, is from Damascus - Genesis 15:2.

King David conquered Damascus and the Aramaeans and built garrisons for his troops in Damascus in 2 Samuel 8.

In 2 Kings 5, we read that Naaman, a captain in the army of Aram, comes to Elisha the prophet of Israel to be healed of leprosy, but is initially enraged when he's told to wash himself in the Jordan River, saying, ***"Are not...the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?"***

"The cities of Aroer will be deserted and left to flocks, which will lie down, with no one to make them afraid."

The word “Aroer” is mentioned 16 times in the Bible, referring to a number of ancient cities in the Near East, none of which, however, are near Damascus.

“*There is no known Aroer in Aram.*” So is it a reference to Aroer in Gad... Josh.13:25?...I believe so, I **do** know there will be a desolation in the wake of the judgment of Damascus. **“The scene ‘of flocks, which will lie down, with no one to make them afraid’ is not one of pastoral bliss but of a landscape emptied of humankind.”**

Aroer (H6177) means “*ruins.*” It comes from the root word “Aroer” (H6176) which means translated “*naked, stripped or destitute.*” It’s sometimes translated as “*a tree or bush, probably a juniper or cypress.*”

There are three cities in the Bible that have the proper name, “Aroer,” including:

1. a city on the north bank of the river Arnon, the southern point of the territory of Sihon the king of the Amorites and later of Reuben; modern 'Arair';
2. a city in Ammon near the Jabbok belonging to Gad;
3. a town in southern Judah.”

Interestingly there were at least three cities named “Aroer” historically one was in the territory of Judah (I Samuel 30:28); and one was in what today is central Jordan, in the territory of Gad (Joshua 13:25); and one was in what today is southern Jordan, in the Valley of Arnon along the Arnon River in what was the territory of Reuben (Deut 2:36).

It can be translated as the “*cities of ruins.*”

Verse 2 the area will be “*forsaken*” in the future. The Hebrew word “*asav*” (Strong’s H5800) which in English Bibles is translated “*forsaken*” clearly means “*left, abandoned, forsaken, neglected.*”

“Her cities will be deserted forever; they will be for flocks, which will lie down, and none will make them afraid.”

Isaiah 17:3 “The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and sovereignty from Damascus and the remnant of Aram; they will be like the glory of the sons of Israel, declares the Lord of hosts.”

“Sovereignty” will “disappear” – or be removed – “from Damascus.”

This verse reveals a future trouble coming for Ephraim. יהוה is signaling that Damascus and the Syrians will face judgment and suffer great loss and lose their “glory” just like the children of Israel will face judgment and suffer great loss and lose their glory in the last days.

There will be great turmoil in the Middle East, *“the uproar of many peoples,”* and *“the roaring of the seas,”* and *“the rumbling of nations.”* (vs. 12)

יהוה will “rebuke” the nations “and they will flee far away.” (vs. 13).

The judgment will produce “terror” in the hearts of the people (vs. 14).

The Remnant harvest: a remnant of the people of Israel will finally turn to faith in the Elohim of Israel and turn away from idolatry and false religions. ***“In that day man will have regard for his Maker and his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel. He will not have regard for the altars, the work of his hands, nor will he look to that which his fingers have***

Jeremiah 49:23 ***“Concerning Damascus: ‘Hamath and Arpad are put to shame, for they have heard the bad news; they are disheartened. There is anxiety by the sea, it cannot be calmed.’”***

The focus of the prophecy is the future of Damascus.

In the future, something so terrible happens in Damascus -- something that brings:

“shame”

“bad news”

“anxiety”

“evil tidings:

The terrible event in Damascus causes the inhabitants of two cities to the north of Damascus – Hamath and Arphad -- to be deeply affected emotionally.

“disheartened” “fainthearted” “sorrow”

Hamath in Hebrew means “fortress.” [Strong’s H2574]

Arpad in Hebrew means, “I shall be spread out (or supported).” [Strong’s H774]

The two northern Syrian towns are not particularly far from one another, and are repeatedly linked in the Scriptures.

2 Kings 18:34

2 Kings 19:13

Isaiah 10:9

Jeremiah 49:23

The biblical town of Hamath is the modern-day city of Hama.

Hama is located about 130 miles north of Damascus, not far from the Mediterranean Sea.

Today, Hama has about 300,000 residents.

After rebels against the Syrian government fled into Hama in 1981, then-Syrian President Hafez al-Assad ordered his military to attack the city with airstrikes and artillery, so as to destroy the rebels and teach the residents of Hama (and the rest of Syria) a lesson not to ever harbor anti-regime rebels.

Thousands of civilians – men, women and children – died in the attacks - 20,000 people or more died.

Later, the city was rebuilt by the Assad government and is one of the five largest cities in Syria.

The city of Hama is not the same as the Syrian city of Homs.

The biblical town of Arpad is the modern-day city of Tell Rifaat (also written, “*Tall Rif’at*”). Arpad was an ancient Aramean city. ‘*Tell Rifaat*’ is located in the far-north Syria.

It is close to the border with Turkey, and not far from the Mediterranean Sea. Today, it has about 20,000 residents... “*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*”.

The text indicates that something catastrophic happens to Damascus.

The historically mighty city becomes “*helpless.*”

Her inhabitants are fleeing or trying to flee from the catastrophe.

The people are in “*distress*” and great pain.

The reference to the birth “pangs” of “childbirth” echoes the eschatological nature of the prophecy. (iMatthew 24:6-8 when Yahusha says, “***You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.***”

The prophecies refer to the the utter, catastrophic destruction of Damascus.

Both are eschatological passages, referring to End Times events that have yet to occur.

Isaiah’s prophecy was given to him in 715 BC, well after the conquering of Damascus in 732 by Tiglath-pileser.

Jeremiah’s ministry occurred between 626 BC and 586 BC, long after Tiglath-pileser conquered Damascus in 732 BC.

Damascus has certainly been attacked, conquered, and burned at various points in history, including Biblical history – but it is clear that the prophecies of Isaiah 17 and Jeremiah 49 have not yet been fulfilled.