

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09119

## ***Two Unfulfilled Prophecies***

August 5, 2009

Many things are happening in the world today that should give us pause and cause us to wonder how long we have until the end of our present wicked (evil) eon (age), as Paul called it (Galatians 1:4 CV). I continue to contend that 2010 is going to be a year of great significance. See article #18, February 2009, *When the Day Comes*.

There are many Christians trying to turn over every rock, so to speak, looking for signs in the news of the next great event in light of the prophetic word of God. From the perspective of the saints, the next great event is the first resurrection and transfiguration of the conquerors, the sons of God destined to reign with Christ for the next 1,000 years. See issue #02-08140, November 11, 2008, *The Next Great Event*. Being changed into the likeness of Christ should be the hope of every believer, but I wonder how many today truly have this hope. Well, that is another topic all unto itself that I have addressed in many of my writings.

Now, from the prophetic word, especially that which is given to us in the Old Testament, there are two prophecies pertaining to cities that have not been completely fulfilled. The first pertains to Damascus, the capital of the current state of Syria, and the second pertains to Jerusalem, the capital of the current state of Israel. Simply, both are destined for total ruin.

### **Damascus**

Damascus is acknowledged as the oldest, continuously populated city in the world. As such, it is generally, although not universally, believed that biblical prophecy about the fall of Damascus has yet to be fulfilled. Through Isaiah, the Lord declared that Damascus will become a fallen ruin.

**(1) The oracle concerning Damascus. “Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city and will become a fallen ruin. (2) The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they will be for flocks to lie down in, and there will be no one to frighten them. (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.** (Isaiah 17:1-3 NASB)

I stated that it is not universally accepted that this is an unfulfilled prophecy, for some believe it was fulfilled during the days of Assyrian rule. The *New Bible Dictionary*, Second Edition, 1984, InterVarsity Press explains:

When many Judeans were taken captive and brought to Damascus around 738 BC, Ahaz of Judah appealed to Assyria for help. The Assyrians responded by carrying out a series of punitive raids that “culminated in the capture of Damascus, as prophesied by Isaiah (17:1) and Amos (1:4-5). The spoiling of the city (Isaiah 8:4), the deportation of its inhabitants to Kir (2 Kings 16:9), and its destruction were cited as an object-lesson to Judah” (Isaiah 10:9f).

However, the fact of the matter is that, although the city was raided and captured, it never ceased to be populated and, in this sense, has never ceased being a city. For this reason, many believe that ultimate ruin awaits Damascus. Given the conflict between Israel and Iran, Israel's determination to protect its existence no matter the cost, and the fact that Syria is aligned with Iran, it is easy to imagine how Damascus could get caught in the cross-hairs of Israel's military. Just this past week there were some dire warnings issued by Syria to Israel. At any rate, this ongoing conflict between these two neighboring countries and the growing concern over Iran developing nuclear weapons is something to closely monitor. Such a conflict may be the ember that ignites the fire that brings down mystery Babylon.

## Jerusalem

This leads to the other city that, according to the prophetic word, faces destruction, and that is Jerusalem that sits at the center of world controversy. It is probably safe to state that many Christians do not believe that the ancient city of Jerusalem will ever be destroyed because they have been taught that it is the apple of God's eye. However, what many fail to understand is that God's heart is with New Jerusalem, not the old Jerusalem, for He is building a spiritual temple of living stones that is His new city, the new creation in Christ. It is vital to understand that not every reference to Jerusalem in the Old Testament is a reference to the earthly and ancient Jerusalem. Paul sums up the matter in Galatians 4:21-31. For more understanding, please see my series on *New Jerusalem*, starting with issue #03-0991, January 9, 2009. I have not added to this series since June but plan to continue it shortly.

The Lord has spoken solemn words against Jerusalem through both Isaiah and Jeremiah.

**(1) Woe, O Ariel, Ariel the city where David once camped! Add year to year, observe your feasts on schedule. (2) I will bring distress to Ariel, and she will be a city of lamenting and mourning; and she will be like an Ariel to me. (3) I will camp against you encircling you, and I will set siegeworks against you, and I will raise up battle towers against you. (4) Then you will be brought low; from the earth you will speak, and from the dust where you are prostrate your words will come. Your voice will also be like that of a spirit from the ground, and your speech will whisper from the dust. ... (6) From the LORD of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, with whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.** (Isaiah 29:1-4, 6 NASB)

**"Then you are to break the jar in the sight of the men who accompany you (11) and say to them, Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Just so will I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot again be repaired; and they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place for burial. (12) "This is how I will treat this place and its inhabitants," declares the LORD, "so as to make this city like Topheth."** (Jeremiah 19:10-12 NASB)

**"But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I made My name dwell at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. (13) And now, because you have done all these things," declares the LORD, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you but you did not answer, (14) therefore, I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave you and your fathers, as I did to Shiloh."** (Jeremiah 7:12-14 NASB)

Just as the Lord removed His name from Shiloh, so He also has removed it from ancient Jerusalem. We know this because, through John, the Lord Jesus has told us so. Today, His name is written upon His spiritual temple of living stones, the holy temple in the Lord, His dwelling of God in spirit (Ephesians 2:21-22 CV). To the one who conquers, the Lord promises: **I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name** (Revelation 3:12). His name is upon New Jerusalem, not the old Jerusalem, which cannot be repaired. In 70 AD, the old Jerusalem was totally destroyed, but a day is coming when it will be destroyed again, for God's name is not upon it. It must be judged, for John describes ancient Jerusalem as the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified (Revelation 11:8), and it is aligned with another great city called mystery Babylon that will fall in one hour (Revelation 18). It is easy to imagine a scenario in which a major conflict will arise between Israel and the axis of Syria and Iran in which both Damascus and Jerusalem fall into ruin, never to be repaired.

Dear brethren, as Christians, we need to be clear that the only answer for present-day Jews, Syrians and Iranians that continue to reject Christ and thus are enemies of the cross is in the One that they reject. No one gets a free pass just because they have a bloodline traceable to Jacob or to Abraham. **There is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all** (Colossians 3:11), **for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him** (Romans 10:12).