

Syria in Prophecy

Commentary for June 1, 2011 — Where God Will Dwell — for a Time

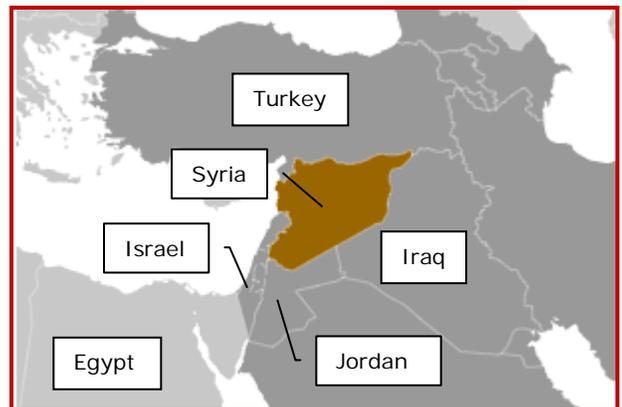
I reissued the article "The Damascus Phase of End-Time Prophecy" by Dr. Ernest L. Martin for June 2011 because Syria and its capital of Damascus have suddenly come into the news in a major way. Prophetic events will occur in Syria before end-time events. Some of these events will begin the sequence of prophecy beginning in Zechariah 9:1 through the end of Zechariah chapter 14. First read the "[June 2011 Newsletter](#)," then read or reread the article.

Although "The Damascus Phase of End-Time Prophecy" has been online on the ASK website since 1999, and was updated by Dr. Martin in 2000, I have added informational notes and highlighted important points that may soon have new meaning in light of current events.

Syria Today

Although a most ancient people, Syria achieved independence as a modern nation from France in 1947,¹ just 64 years ago. Today Syria has a population of only 22 million people, 35% of which are under age 15. The al-Asad family (father, sons, and other relatives) has been in power since 1970 with occasional sham elections being permitted.

The Golan Heights is a strategically important portion of Syria controlled by Israeli military forces. This high ground of southwest Syria was lost in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Since 1976 Syrian troops have been stationed in Lebanon, Syria's neighbor to the west. The troops were withdrawn in 2005 but Syria continues to greatly influence political events in Lebanon.



Recent protests have taken place in Syria, similar in nature to demonstrations that overthrew the governments of Tunisia and Egypt, and have occurred in Arab countries across the Middle East. Here is a description of the internal political situation in Syria:

"Influenced by major uprisings that began elsewhere in the region, antigovernment protests broke out in the southern province of Da'ra in March 2011 and spread to other Syrian cities. Protesters called for the repeal of the restrictive Emergency Law allowing arrests without charge, the legalization of political parties, and the removal of corrupt local officials. The government responded with a mix of force and concessions, including the repeal of the Emergency Law, but as of mid-April 2011 had not succeeded in quelling protests."

• "[Syria](#)," *CIA World Factbook*

¹ The Ottoman Empire ruled Syria for centuries. After World War I, Syria was administered by France.

Military and security forces have been deployed in several areas in the country and used coercive and even deadly force against reportedly peaceful protests, using snipers and tanks against demonstrators. On May 27, 2011, G-8 leaders² called upon the Syrian government to end the use of deadly force against citizens demonstrating against corruption and for liberty.

Syria in the Bible and Future

Damascus has long been the chief city of the area we call Syria today. Damascus is first mentioned in Genesis 14:15 when Abram was attacking the kings who kidnapped his nephew Lot. He caught up with the kings just north of Damascus. Syria is the Greek term for the Hebrew *'aram*. It is first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 25:20 as the land of Isaac's wife, Rebekah, and her brother Laban. They were Arameans. The last mention of Damascus and Syria are by the apostle Paul in Galatians chapter 1. The apostle Paul had a history in and around Damascus, as Dr. Martin relates in his article.

The current governmental, political, and religious situation in Syria must change for the prophesied events to occur. God changes leaders and boundaries of nations. He also modifies the attitudes of people within nations to cause the changes He desires. Liberty of thought and action will be the means by which the Syrian people will accept the changes God will bring.

When God intervenes again in world affairs He will cause people to have greater liberty of thought and action. He will begin in Syria. Happiness (and prosperity) comes from an availability of opportunity. Events taking place in Syria today may be a bridge from the present situation to biblically identifiable events. Dr. Martin's article gives background of the significance of Syria and Damascus in the past, and he explains future biblically prophesied events that involve Damascus and the people of Syria. Those events will be largely beneficial.

As the people demand liberty of thought and action, governments will have an increasingly difficult time suppressing those demands. In the houses, shops, coffee houses, and universities, the Arab people across the Middle East are asking each other: "Why can't we have political parties like other countries? Why are our elections a sham? Why is there so much corruption in dealing with government officials? Why does it seem impossible for me and my children to seek a better life?"

Technological innovation is increasingly available to poor people. Learning what the world is really like, millions in Syria and the Arab countries have greater expectations of better lives for themselves and their families. They no longer tolerate being treated like children, but they will expect and demand justice. When God opens the floodgates of knowledge about Himself, Arab people who have liberty and choice in their lives, along with opportunity for prosperity, will eagerly study and learn the truth about God from His Holy Scriptures.

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² The G-8 or "Group of 8" describes an economic forum of leaders of the world's 8 leading economies. Some G-8 countries are intervening for rebels against the government in Libya. If the Libyan rebellion and intervention is successful, Syria wonders if great powers will intervene on behalf of protesters.