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The Damascus Phase of End-Time Prophecy

by Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., November 1, 1999 (updated November 2000)
Edited by David Sielaff, March 2005, updated June 2011

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The western world (and particularly the United States) has been experiencing a period of unprecedented prosperity along with relative peace for the past 15 years.¹ All of you who have been reading my writings over that span (*and even before*) are aware that I have been stating that this time of prosperity and relative peace was prophesied to occur before the Second Advent of Christ. While that is true, and we still have a few years left of that phase of prophetic teaching, there is coming (and it is just on the horizon) a time of devastating natural disasters that will be a prelude to the major political upheavals predicted in the Book of Revelation.

In my view, these prophesied occurrences are as certain of happening as the rising of tomorrow's sun. This is because God is the One who has put His stamp of approval on the authority and validity of the writings of the Holy Scriptures. It is in that divine literature where you find these prophetic events described. When our present phase of prosperity and relative tranquility terminates, another period will occur.

It will start abruptly with a great tsunami (sometimes wrongly referred to as a "tidal wave") that will destroy the entire coastal areas of the eastern Mediterranean Sea from just south of Turkey all the way to and including Gaza. This will be the single event that will begin a countdown of prophetic teachings leading to the Second Advent. This new era can be called "The Damascus Phase of End-Time Prophecy." It is described in Zechariah chapters 9 to 14.

¹ These "past 15 years" were before 1999 when Dr. Martin originally wrote this article. DWS

Past Recognition of the “Damascus Phase”

Jewish theologians have known of this “countdown” prophecy for years. However, they applied it directly to historical events that started in 1034 AD and ended in 1071 AD (when they thought the Messiah was then to emerge). Because of the teaching in this “Damascus Phase” prophecy, the headquarters of the Jewish Academy in Jerusalem (the central governing body of the Jewish people) left the Holy City and moved to Tyre. Soon after, the Jewish academy finally moved to Damascus. They went to Damascus because of this “countdown” prophecy.

Damascus and its environment will play an important part in commencing the End-Time events of the Bible. The Jewish authorities in the 11th century AD moved to Damascus to await the beginning of this “Damascus Phase” which they could easily read in the Scriptures. They did this because that period of time was precisely 1000 years away from the generation that saw the destruction of the City of Jerusalem and the Temple of Herod in 70 AD. Though the Jewish authorities at the time believed that they could then begin the countdown to the arrival of the Messiah (whom they then expected), they were much too early in their prophetic calculations. This was because they failed to take into account the chronology that God the Father centered on His Son, Jesus Christ.

Since there were 4000 years that could be counted quite precisely within the Old Testament period up to an event in the life of Christ Jesus,² Christians became aware that it was to be 2000 years (NOT 1000 years) from the period of Christ for the countdown prediction of God called the “Damascus Phase” of prophecy in Zechariah chapters 9 to 14. This prophecy gives a catalogue of specific events that will occur in the Middle East leading directly to the Second Advent of Christ and the setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth with Christ’s headquarters finally being at Jerusalem.

We are now in that generation that is the prelude to the fulfillment of these “countdown events” that will progress steadily to the Second Advent. We should soon begin to witness in history the start of what is called the initial “Damascus Phase.” This will then culminate in the final “Jerusalem Phase” of prophetic events. So, what do I mean by the “Damascus Phase of End-Time Prophecy”? Let us look at the Holy Scriptures.

The “Damascus Phase” Described

What is called the “Damascus Phase Prophecy” is found in six chapters of the Bible. This section was written by the prophet Jeremiah.³ This single prophecy given in six consecutive chapters begins with a remarkable statement that seems almost unbelievable at first. Part of the problem in understanding this statement (for us modern interpreters in our western societies) is because the King James Version gives an awkward rendition of the Hebrew in the first verse of the prophecy. Let me translate directly from the Hebrew what it actually states:

“An Oracle. A word of YHWH against the Land of Hadrach. And Damascus [shall be] a resting place for Him [a place of repose or domicile for YHWH], for on YHWH [shall be] the eye of humanity [that is, all humans will turn their eyes toward YHWH in Damascus] and all of the Tribes of Israel [shall also turn their eyes toward YHWH in Damascus].”

• ***Zechariah 9:1, Hebrew, Dr. Martin’s translation***

² See my 1998 article “[Chronological Falsehoods.](#)” *ELM*

³ In Matthew 27:9 Jesus tells whose words are in this continuous prophecy of Zechariah chapters 9 through 14: **“Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy [Jeremiah] the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value,”** a quote from Zechariah 11:12–13. *DWS* These prophecies by Jeremiah were attached to the Book of Zechariah so that people would not forget these essential prophecies. *ELM*

Most people who love the Scriptures and its teachings are amazed (even shocked) to learn that God would ever take up a domicile in Damascus. Why would He do so? It is easy to read in the Bible how Jerusalem was selected by God to contain His “House” (or “Home,” called the “Temple”), but why would God want to live in the same fashion in Damascus? To discover the reason for this, look closely at the prophecy that Jeremiah wrote.

These six chapters of Zechariah 9 to 14 collectively can be called the “Damascus Prophecy,” but the divine oracle itself was directed to what is called **“The Land of Hadrach.”** As I explained in the [“October 1999 Newsletter,”](#) the **“Land of Hadrach”** answers to the land in the Middle East that was promised to Abraham and his progeny. In a word, it means the “Area of the Fertile Crescent” (from Egypt in the southwest to the head of the Persian Gulf in the southeast, and also including all the Arabian Peninsula).

This land is described in the prophecy in Zechariah 9:10 as **“from sea even to sea** [that is, from west to east which means from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean], **and from the River even unto the ends of the earth.”** That is, it extends north to south from the Euphrates River to the end of the Arabian Peninsula. That was the exact land mass that Solomon understood to mean the **“Land of Promise”** for Abraham and his children (Psalm 72:8).

The reason the City of Damascus was selected to head the prophecy is because Abraham stated in Genesis 15:2 that if Isaac had not been born to be his heir, a righteous Gentile named **“Eliezer of Damascus”** would have become the one to inherit all his property and the lands promised to Abraham. In Greek, “Eliezer” means “Lazarus,” the same “Lazarus” who was mentioned in Christ’s parable of “Lazarus and the Rich Man.”⁴ Had Isaac not been born and lived to manhood, it would have been Eliezer (Lazarus) who would have inherited this vast territory known as the “Land of Promise.”

The “Land of Promise” is the area of the earth that God desires to live in (symbolically) more than in any other. That is the Land in which God chooses to reside when He is on earth (symbolically or otherwise). If God would have allowed it to happen in history (that is, if Isaac had not been born), God’s capital on earth could just as well have been Damascus, not Jerusalem. But one thing is certain. We will see that ALL of God’s residences on earth (and there are several) are located in this **“Land of Promise.”** I will show where later on in this Prophetic Report.

The Beginning

Let us now look at this prophecy. We are told at the beginning that God’s residence is in Damascus at the time the prophecy is to be unfolded and made known to the world. The prophecy simply means that Damascus and its vicinity will become (or has become) **“a resting place for Him”** (a place where God will reside). Now let us understand this in a common sense way that many people have failed to realize. Though God’s favorite place of residence on earth is at the Temple in Jerusalem (and this is the only place He will allow Israelites to consider as His official residence and throne), God actually has other places within the **“Promised Land”** at which He prefers to live from time to time.

Indeed, most kings on earth (and remember God Himself is a king) have more than one home in which to live at various times. All kings have their normal home, then they have a “summer home,” a “winter home,” a “resort home,” and they normally have their own private residence where only close family relations are invited. This is precisely what the Presidents of the United States have. It is well known that the White House is the official government “House” for the President; downstairs is for the public and official meetings, while upstairs is very private and it is the sleeping quarters of the President and the First Lady. Their “summer home” may be at “Cape Cod” or other places that they fancy. The “winter home” may be at

⁴ See Dr. Martin’s article, [“The Real Meaning of Lazarus and the Rich Man”](#) for the identification of Lazarus within that intriguing parable. Of course, when Jesus gave this parable Lazarus was understood to be a Gentile. DWS

a ski area, or if they want sunshine, Palm Springs, etc. The official “resort home,” however, that even the United States government provides is “Camp David” in Maryland.

You may think I am joking when I say that God is no different, but I am not joking. The Bible shows that God has several types of “Houses” on earth for various usages depending on circumstances. Let us see how this works. For all official purposes God has only a single “House” especially for Israel and Judah. That “House” is the Temple at Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 16:1–8). That is the only place on earth that God has for His covenant people, the Israelites. As a matter of fact, this is God’s favorite place (symbolically) to reside on earth. Look at God’s appraisal of Jerusalem (which He calls “Zion”):

“Great is YHWH, and greatly to be praised in the City of our God, in the Mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion [the chief joy for all the earth and for God Himself is Jerusalem], on the sides of the north, the City of the Great King [God Himself or His elected human representative]. God is known in her palaces for a refuge. For, lo, the kings [of the whole earth] were assembled [before Mount Zion], they passed by together [in political union and harmony in obeisance to God].”

• *Psalm 48:1–4*

“For YHWH has chosen Zion; he has desired it [above all other areas] for His habitation.”

• *Psalm 132:13*

Indeed, God not only desires living in Jerusalem (when the people are in harmony with Him), but He loves all of Jerusalem and He considers every one of those seven hills of Jerusalem as being seven “Zions” and He calls all of them **“the Mountains [plural] of Zion”** (Psalm 133:3).⁵

You may be surprised, but there were other “Zions” on earth that God honors and loves dearly.

- One “Zion” is Mount Sinai. God said that anyone who climbed to the top of Mount Sinai found himself **“in the holy place”** (Psalm 68:17).
- God’s glory was also in Mount Carmel (where Elijah built an altar, 1 Kings 18:20–40).
- Another was the area of Sharon (Isaiah 35:2).
- Mount Tabor is graced by God’s name, just like Mt. Hermon (Psalm 89:12).
- Mount Hermon is also graced by God’s name (Psalm 89:12).
- There was even a “holy place” of God on the Egyptian border. The prophet Isaiah said that in the central area (north to south) of Egypt and at the beginning border with the **“Land of Promise,”** there will be an altar (a holy place) and a pillar that illustrates “God’s presence” in that area to the east from Egypt (Isaiah 19:19: **“In that day shall there be an altar to YHWH in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to YHWH”**).
- Even the early Arabs (long before the time of Muhammad) knew that Abraham had given to the twelve tribes of Ishmael (the son of Abraham by his Egyptian concubine Hagar) a holy site at Mecca with Mount Arafat on the eastern part of Mecca as their holy mountain.

In fact, the Arabs long ago thought of the Ka’aba to be the “House of God” that God loved for the Arabs, and it was also located in Arabia on the border of the sea in the **“Land of Promise.”** Where Muhammad made a mistake was imposing on the world a holy place meant only for Ishmaelites as the **“House of God”** to be honored by the world. In a sense Muhammad was correct, Mecca was a **“House of God,”** but it was **NOT** the prime “House.” God’s chief “House” was located in Jerusalem.

⁵ See Dr. Martin’s articles [“The Seven Hills of Jerusalem”](#) and [“The Expansion and Portability of Zion.”](#) DWS

Still, Mount Sinai and also Mount Hermon were “holy places” of God, and they were as important to Him as Jerusalem or Mecca in certain circumstances. Indeed, when the apostle Paul was converted as he approached Damascus and was baptized when he was within the City of Damascus (Acts chapter 9), the very next place Paul went was NOT to Jerusalem and the Temple, but to Mount Sinai in Arabia (compare Galatians 1:17 with 4:25). Paul knew that Mount Sinai was the early “holy place” and that is where he went first.

To what area did Paul then return and where did he continue to stay for a period of three years? From Mount Sinai Paul did NOT go to Jerusalem, but he went right back to Damascus (Galatians 1:17–18). And for over a thousand days (that is, for three full years) the apostle Paul stayed in Damascus and NOT ONCE did he go to Jerusalem, which was no more than three days’ journey from Damascus. True, he finally went to Jerusalem (Galatians 1:18). He went to see Peter and James. But for the first three years of his Christian life, Paul considered it more important to be in Damascus than to return to Jerusalem.⁶

But there were other reasons for Paul not to go to Jerusalem, and for staying in Damascus. Since Paul was one of the greatest of the early Jewish rabbis and trained at the feet of no less than Gamaliel the most eminent of the scholars in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3), there must have been some theological reasons for staying in Damascus (after all, to escape the Jewish authorities he could have returned to his home in Tarsus where he would have been safe). Why in the world did Paul shun (and turn his back on) Jerusalem for three long years (after a brief journey to Mount Sinai — God’s other “holy place”), and why did he continue to stay in the midst of Damascus? There must have a reason for this procedure of Paul, and there was!

Mount Hermon and Tradition

We now come to Mount Hermon. Damascus also had a “high place” as its own “holy place” and it was a legitimate “holy mount.” The people of Damascus had their own “holy mountain,” the highest of the mountains from the Euphrates in the north all the way south to Egypt and down to the center part of the Sinai Peninsula. That mountain was Mount Hermon.⁷ It was the greatest of the sacred mountains of the Middle East. It was considered the most holy mountain of the early Hittites, of all the Gentiles of Palestine and even by the Greeks and Romans.

Even in the Greek and Roman periods Mount Hermon’s sanctity was recognized as the central worship of all the Gods of the world (no matter who they were). Look at this fact. At the bottom of Mount Hermon on the southwest side was a place called Panias by the Greeks after the time of Alexander the Great (it is the modern day, Banias) which was Caesarea Philippi in New Testament times. This place was a very ecumenical “holy place” that was devoted **“to ALL the Gods of the whole world”** (NOT simply to the single “God” of any particular nation). Indeed, the word “Panias” at the foot of Mount Hermon in Greek meant that the place was devoted as a divine sanctuary to **“All the Gods.”**⁸

On the northeast section of this “divine mountain” was the principal city of the area. That city was Damascus whose people in ancient times looked directly toward their Mount Hermon as the center place of their religious beliefs (and, not only that, this very mountain was believed to be in the eyes of most early peoples on earth the most important of all mountains in the world).

The Book of Enoch⁹ in its sixth chapter mentions the occasion when the **“Sons of God”** came to earth (they had sex with **“the daughters of men,”** and Titans or Giants were born from the women similar to the

⁶ Indeed, Paul would have been killed by the authorities as soon as he returned because of his switch to Christianity. DWS

⁷ The word *hermon* in Hebrew means “sanctuary” or “separate” and it occurs in Deuteronomy 3:8–9, 4:48; Joshua 11:3, 17, 12:1, 5, 13:5, 11; 1 Chronicles 5:23; Psalm 89:12, 133:3; and Song of Solomon 4:8. DWS

⁸ See the articles “Hermon (Mount)” and “Panaas; Caesarea Philippi” in Avraham Negev, *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land*, 3rd ed. (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1996). DWS

⁹ The Book of Enoch is a non-canonical work composed about a hundred years before Christ but referred to favorably one time in the New Testament. See Jude verse 14. DWS

true account in Genesis 6:1–4), the place they entered into the earth’s environment was at the top of Mount Hermon. This incident was reckoned by early people as meaning that the “Gate to Heaven” where divine beings could come to earth or return to heaven was at the top of Mount Hermon. This is why it became a “holy place” for all people on earth.¹⁰

This means that Mount Hermon was considered to be a “Bethel”¹¹ or a “Zion” even before the Tower of Babel was built in the Land of Shinar (Genesis 11:1–9). When God destroyed the influence of the “Tower of Babel” in Shinar, some people simply focused again their attention back to Mount Hermon as the holiest place on earth. They made a connection with it to the “Tower of Babel” by calling Mt. Hermon “Senir” (a clear and simple variant of “Shinar”). Note what Deuteronomy 3:8–9 states: **“Mount Hermon (which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir)”** — that is, the main group of Amorites simply used a close variant of “Shinar” — Senir — to religiously connect Hermon to Babylon and its Tower.

Mount Hermon’s Importance

Why was Mount Hermon important to the early non-Abrahamic peoples right after the Flood of Noah? As noted above, Enoch records that the **“Sons of God”** who came from heaven to earth (and had sexual relations with the **“daughters of men,”** confirmed by the Bible itself in Genesis 6:1–4) entered earth at Mount Hermon.¹² “Mount Hermon” was the world’s first “Mount Zion.” Let us notice the Holy Scriptures that show this fact.

In a word, “Mount Hermon” (the mountain that the people of Damascus held holy and sanctified) was looked on at one time in the past as being the central “holy place” for all people on earth. It was reckoned the Gateway Upward to Heaven and it was Heaven’s gateway downward to Earth. When the Tower of Babel was destroyed, people of the earth turned to “Mount Hermon” as the central place where God communicated with mankind. The Greeks after the time of Alexander the Great called the springs that gave rise to the Jordan River the **“springs of salvation”** that issued forth from the bottom of Mount Hermon. This was reckoned to be the place where “All the Gods of the Earth” (that is, Panias, which means “ALL”) look toward as the holiest place on earth.

Even God Himself states dogmatically that Mount Hermon was the world’s first “Mount Zion,” long before Jerusalem was thought of by King David and Solomon to be the “Mount Zion” of God for Israel and Judah. In plain language, God reckoned Mount Hermon to be the original Mount Zion. Note it: **“Even unto Mount Zion; which is Hermon”** (Deuteronomy 4:48, the Christian spelling is “Sion”).

This reference shows that Moses himself under divine inspiration called Mount Hermon God’s holy “Mount Zion.” That’s right. Even Moses was well aware of the history of the world before his time that caused people of the whole earth to reckon Mount Hermon as the original “Mount Zion.” The text is certain on this matter, but modern scholars who know little of the early history of the world have tried numerous ways to change the text into something that makes sense to them. This is because they felt there was only ONE “Mount Zion” and that was in Jerusalem. But the scholars are wrong.

There was more than ONE mountain called “Mount Zion.” Indeed, every one of the seven different mountains that became the Jerusalem of Christ’s time was called a “Zion.”¹³ There were officially (in God’s

¹⁰ There is a direct association of members of the divine assembly in the heavens with both Mt. Hermon and Mt. Tabor in Psalm 89. Particular mention of those two mountains is made in verse 12. DWS

¹¹ A *bethel* is a “house of God” with *bet* being the common Hebrew word for “house,” and *el* being the word for God. DWS

¹² These unions produced progeny that were unusually evil. God punished mankind with a worldwide flood. However, no biblical text shows any punishment inflicted on those **“Sons of God”** at that time. They may have been forgiven, or their punishment was deferred, because later in Job 1:6 and 2:1 we find these **“Sons of God”** were in heaven before YHWH prior to the testing of Job. We do not read of the **“Sons of God”** being punished for their deeds in the time of Noah. Judgment of the **“Sons of God”** comes later in Psalm 82, due to their sins of unjust judgment of people in nations under their control. DWS

¹³ See note 5 above. DWS

eyes) seven different mountains surrounding Jerusalem and each of them could be legitimately called a “Mount Zion” (and this included the highest of the mountains around Jerusalem called the “Mount of Olives.” In fact, that mountain was the highest in Jerusalem of the “mountains of Zion.” Jerusalem had **“the mountains [plural] of Zion”** (Psalm 133:3).

But wait a moment! I already pointed out from Deuteronomy 4:48 that Mount Hermon was also called “Mount Zion” (and Mount Hermon had the chronological priority of being the first in the history of the world to be called God’s “Mount Zion”). Indeed, this gave “Mount Hermon” (the original “Mount Zion”) a distinct superiority over Jerusalem because that Canaanite City of Jebus (the early Gentile name for Jerusalem) was NOT called “Mount Zion” until the time of David — at least a thousand years after the mountain of Damascus, “Mount Hermon” had been called “Mount Zion” by God Himself. Again, Deuteronomy 4:48: **“... even unto mount Sion, which is Hermon”!**

Psalm 133 and Mount Hermon

To further show the superiority of Mount Hermon, God inspired the Psalmist in Psalm 133:3 to state that the sanctity of **“the mountains of Zion”** in the area of Jerusalem was holy and righteous. Most people will be shocked at what some have missed reading in the Bible showing the superiority of Mount Hermon to the seven mountains of Jerusalem. This is because God stated that it was **“THE DEW OF HERMON”** that descended upon **“the mountains of Zion”** at Jerusalem that gave the mountains of Jerusalem their sanctification in the eyes of God! Read it for yourself in Psalm 133:3.

True, Mount Hermon being the highest of the mountains in the Middle East had “dew” of a highest quality, but it was NOT the quality of the “dew” that God had in mind in Psalms 133:3. God meant that the cleansing power of His divine “dew” and the vital nourishment of spiritual grace from that “dew” from the first “Mount Zion” in the history of the world could also sanctify and make righteous the “mountains of Zion” at Jerusalem!

The fact is, when God decides to deal with the whole world (either in blessing or judgment), He does NOT think of “Mount Zion” in Jerusalem. The seven “Mount Zions” in Jerusalem are reserved for the people of Israel and Judah. And though God has stated to the world that He has chosen Jerusalem above all other areas on earth for His chief joy and pleasure; when it comes to dealing with the whole of the world, God returns to His first “Mount Zion” to issue His decrees and judgments. He returns to that chief mountain and to Damascus, because Damascus is **“the City of [God’s] Praise”** and **“the City of [God’s] Joy”** (Jeremiah 49:24–25)

That City of Joy is Damascus and its holy mountain, “Mount Hermon” which was the first “Mount Zion.” Look at Jeremiah 49:24–25. These verses speak of judgment on Damascus (like those judgments on Jerusalem and the cities of Israel), but God also admitted that He held Damascus to be **“the City of Praise [Renown]”** and **“the City of My Joy.”** Though at the time of Jeremiah, God had to bring judgment on Damascus, He also stated in the clearest of terms (with much lament) that Damascus and its vicinity was the place that He praised and honored and He accounted it as being **“the City of My Joy.”** God simply “loved” Damascus and He “praised” it as much as any area on earth because in its backyard was also “Mount Hermon,” the original “Mount Zion.”

As the world’s first “Mount Zion,” “Mount Hermon” was the world’s first holy mountain. So, when God wants to appeal to all people on earth, He will direct His attention to Damascus and its holy mountain. Even when God speaks of a harmony among all peoples on earth that is prophesied to come, God refers to Psalm 133. That harmony is like the life-giving dew from Mt. Hermon that flows to Jerusalem. Notice it:

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; AS THE DEW OF HERMON [Mount Hermon near Damascus] descends upon the mountains of Zion; for there [on Mount Hermon from which comes

the righteous dew that falls upon the seven “Zions” in Jerusalem] **the blessing, even life for evermore** [*olam*, for the age].”

• *Psalm 133:1–3*

Read Psalm 133 without the erroneous italics of the King James Version or in a modern translation.

The Most Important Event

Let us now look at an even more important event associated with none other than Mount Hermon (the Mountain of Damascus). The most significant event in the entirety of New Testament teaching (bar none) occurred on the summit of Mount Hermon, NOT in Jerusalem. Yes, what happened with Christ on the Mount of Olives (his death and crucifixion) was extremely important, but Christ and the apostles received their commission to do what was needed to be done in Jerusalem FROM GOD HIMSELF on Mount Hermon. Truthfully, the most important event in the history of the ministry of Christ Jesus took place at the summit of Mount Hermon, the world’s first “Mount Zion.”

I now appeal to all of you as brethren to follow me out to the end on this matter. I ask you to do this because what I will soon say may cause you to alienate me into heresy. Yes, this may be the case, but I know that all who love Christ Jesus with all your hearts will at least consider this issue. So get ready for some profound truth. I will make a statement that may at first sound to be the very antithesis of truth, but when you finally understand its validity, it will become the pillar of our faith in Christ Jesus as the very Son of God.

Here is the statement: though what Christ did for us on the tree of crucifixion was a very important event in human history, the justification for that action was given to all people on earth about one year earlier when God the Father Himself entered the human environment to commission His dear Son (Jesus of Nazareth) into a position of power and authority that no human ever received before. When Jesus said He would build His *ekklesia* on a “Rock,” He made that statement at the city of Panias at the bottom of Mount Hermon.

Now we come to that most important event in human history. Jesus took His prime disciples to the top of Mount Hermon (the first “Mount Zion”) and He was Transfigured before them (Glorified as He will be when He returns in Glory) and before God the Father Himself (and in vision, also before Moses and Elijah) on that very mountain.

How do we know that the Transfiguration of Christ took place at the summit of Mount Hermon? Read from Matthew 16:13 to the end of chapter 16. This all happened at Caesarea Philippi (our modern Baniyas, or anciently, Panias). That city is one of the sources of the Jordan River where water comes out of a cave at the base of Mount Hermon. Then read the last two verses of chapter 16. They state that there will be “some” (NOT all the apostles, but only “some”) who will NOT taste of death until they see the Son of Man in the Kingdom phase of His government. This means they will see Him in His glorification.

Continue directly to Matthew chapter 17. From then on a person will read the record of a VISION, as it is termed in Matthew 17:9. That VISION took place on **“a high mountain”** (Matthew 17:1). They were then at the foot of Mount Hermon (which is, of course, **“a high mountain”**).

But in Luke 9:28 (which gives a parallel version of the event — and Luke wrote for a Gentile audience that Paul preached to), the text gets more specific and says the event, the vision, will occur on **“THE mountain”** (the Greek has the definite article though the King James Version mistranslates it as **“a mountain”**). Indeed, there was only one “high mountain” in the area anyway, but Luke (writing for Paul) said they then went up **“THE Mountain.”** The vision of the Transfiguration (or Glorification) then takes place. Since all the discussion on this matter took place at the base of Mount Hermon at Caesarea Philippi, then **“THE mountain”** has to be, of course, Mount Hermon. Christ and three disciples then reached the summit.

The Transfiguration

When they arrived there, a most significant event took place when God the Father entered the human environment. It is most essential that we note that this intervention of God the Father (the Creator of the

whole universe) was NOT at Jerusalem. It was NOT at Mount Sinai. It was NOT at Mecca or any other “holy place,” but it was at the most prestigious “holy place” of the ancient world — it was at the summit of MOUNT HERMON (the holiest of mountains in the eyes of the earliest humans). That is the place where Christ was proclaimed to be the savior of the world. It was at that very spot (and at the earliest “Mount Zion”) that Jesus Christ (our Elder Brother) was ordained on earth to be our Savior by no less than God the Father. This is when God the Father said: **“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear you him”** (Matthew 17:5) Yes, Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection was most important, but this commission was the authority to make the latter actions of Christ Jesus in Jerusalem legitimate. All of this was accomplished on the first Mount Zion.



Damascus and Mount Hermon in Syria

Here is how God works. When the whole world is involved in an issue, God the Father retreats to the mountain on the back door-step of Damascus — **“the City of My Joy** [said God]” (Jeremiah 49:24–25). When God states that He is living in Damascus and He makes a decree, it will then have a worldwide relevance (NOT simply to Israel and Judah, which decrees involving them come from Jerusalem). And that is what we find in “The Damascus Phase of the End-Time.” When God gets ready to enter into affairs that involve the whole world, then is when He moves to Damascus.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Apostle Paul

Even the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls¹⁴ knew this teaching. Their writings show that they considered Jerusalem and the Temple to be corrupt in the 2nd century BC, so they began to call themselves “the People of Damascus,” referring to the meaning that they read in this very prophecy we are now considering. Though they recognized the original sanctity of Jerusalem, they considered it in their time to be abandoned

¹⁴ Most of the scrolls were found from 1947 to 1975 around the Qumran community ruins near the Dead Sea east of Jerusalem.
DWS

by God, so they turned their backs on Jerusalem and the Temple.¹⁵ They began to look toward where God was “in Damascus.” But they went even further.

The Dead Sea sectarians actually thought themselves to be a group (Greek: an *ekklesia*) very much like the apostle Paul later taught that Christians were reckoned to be. As a “group of people” they were a proper “Temple of God.” Indeed, it was no accident that Paul was called by God and Christ just outside and inside Damascus (Acts 9:1–9). After entering Damascus, Paul was baptized and commissioned to do his work in going to Israel and to the Gentiles (Acts 9:10–22).

Note the significance of the fact that the first teaching of the apostle Paul to Israelites and Gentiles was at Damascus. This event shows (through the nuance of the prophecy in Zechariah 9 through 14), that God was then displeased with Jerusalem and the Temple. Though He was still dealing with the two sections of Israel (Israelites and Jews), He was now going to turn as well to the Gentiles. He did this from “world headquarters” in Damascus (not, Jerusalem).

(Actually, Damascus is a part of the “Promised Land” but it is the area where other descendants of Abraham and his nephew Lot [and those of Laban] would live who are not the people of Israel and Judah. These others are Ishmaelites [Arabs], Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, etc. Mount Hermon was their Mount Zion. In fact, it was the “dew” from Mount Hermon that made the seven “Mount Zions” in Jerusalem [“**the mountains of Zion**”] to be holy, Psalm 133:3 quoted above.)

As a matter of fact, the reason the New Testament writers selected the prophecy about the thirty shekels of silver obtained by Judas in his ignominious selling of the Shepherd of Zechariah’s prophecy (the Messiah of the oracle, whom they identified as Jesus) was because Judas threw the money into the Holy Place of the Temple. It showed that in God’s eyes the Temple had become just like a place for the making and marketing of pots with the stinking kilns and furnaces at the site of the Temple (that is, making it a non-sanctified place). In God’s eyes, the Temple was then no more than a factory for making pots (Zechariah 11:12–13). To cap off the allegory as understood by the New Testament writers, the priests connected the money from Judas with the potter’s field (Matthew 27:3–10). This meant symbolically that God saw no holiness in the Temple at Jerusalem during Christ’s trial and crucifixion. The “tearing of the curtain” (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; and Luke 23:45) was to show God leaving the Temple, NOT that people could then have access to its Holy of Holies.

So, the selection of Damascus as the site for Paul’s conversion was no accident. YHWH was then reckoned to be “in Damascus” for a world audience (see Acts 9:3–8); He was no longer in Jerusalem and speaking only to Israel and Judah. God was then turning away from Jerusalem and the Temple. He was then in Damascus while His people Israel and Judah (from the point of view of God) were in rebellion to Him. Indeed, God is even now “in Damascus” so to speak. He will not return to Jerusalem until the people of the City (1) repent of their ways and (2) raise up a proper Temple in which He can reside. When Jerusalem becomes a righteous capital once again, and with the Temple functioning properly, God will then return to Jerusalem and make His abode with Israel and Judah (His covenant people).

What Does the Damascus Prophecy in Zechariah chapters 9 to 14 State?

The single continuous prophecy of Zechariah chapters 9 to 14 is a predictive account of how God will begin Israel’s redemption with God being “in Damascus.” But, God will finally end up in Jerusalem when He sends His Son to the Mount of Olives to restore Jerusalem. This prophecy gives the progressive way (from Damascus to Jerusalem) that Christ takes for His return.

This prophecy (to all those who live in “The Fertile Crescent”) begins with a time when Israel and Judah are reckoned to be in exile for their sins and when the Temple is not functioning properly.¹⁶ The prophecy is

¹⁵ See the speech of Stephen before his stoning, when Saul (later Paul) presided over his murder (Acts chapters 6 and 7). DWS

¹⁶ Indeed, the Temple had become so corrupted and defiled in the time of Jeremiah that the Sanctuary had become a place for

for the End-Time because it is a prediction of how God will in a step-by-step way again set up His domicile in Jerusalem. He gives events leading up to the seismic disturbances of Zechariah chapter 14 that accompany the return of God (in the person of Christ Jesus) to His residence in Jerusalem.

A Great Destruction, and the “Time of the End”

The prophecy begins with a great destruction of the whole seacoast of the Levant (the area from Hamath on the Euphrates in the far north), reaching southward to include all the Philistine (Palestinian) cities up to and including Gaza (Zechariah 9:2–8). It is God (not man or the armies of man) who does this prophesied destruction. It is no doubt an earthquake in the Mediterranean and its consequent tsunami (a large destructive ocean wave often called, wrongly, a “tidal wave”) that the prophecy is describing. It could also be the results of an asteroid¹⁷ with its consequent ocean waves of destruction. Note that only the coastal cities of the eastern Mediterranean are to be judged. Though such things have happened in history, this tsunami will be gigantic and almost beyond compare.

So, the first event ushering in the “Time of the End” will be a massive tsunami with a wave of ocean water hitting the eastern Mediterranean seacoast with probably a height of 100 to 200 feet (maybe even higher).¹⁸ Massive destruction on the seacoast will result. Since no elevated inland areas are mentioned in the judgment (such as Jerusalem at 2600 feet above sea level), a tsunami is most likely the means that will introduce the End-Time prophecy of Zechariah chapters 9 to 14. This seems to be what God is talking about. The truth depends on the proper interpretation of Zechariah 9:2–8. I do not claim to be a modern day prophet, but I am an interpreter of the Scriptures who understands (and believes) many of the traumatic historical events of the past that are found in the documents (including those of the Bible). So, in my view the judgment appears to me to be a tsunami.

This tsunami will be of great magnitude. It will hit the eastern Mediterranean coastline (giving widespread devastation for 10 to 20 miles inland depending where the “level land” is exposed to the coast). Tel Aviv (Israel’s largest city) will certainly have widespread ruins, along with all regions from the Turkish border in the north down to Gaza in the south. Though the judgment is for the “Land of Hadrach” (the Promised Land), such a tsunami would also include Egypt and its near sea level land mass from its Delta to Upper Egypt. Ezekiel 29:1–12 may be referring to this “destruction.”

When people of the world see on television and the internet this particular devastation in this area of the world, they will then be told of this very prophecy in Zechariah chapters 9 to 14 that God will be entering into world affairs. People all over the world will begin to repent almost wholesale and they will start to throw their idols away (Zechariah 10:2) just like the Byzantine emperors did in the 700s AD when a similar catastrophe occurred. This happened when a major volcano erupted with a consequent earthquake at the island of Santorini in 726 AD. This very eruption brought great social and religious changes in the eastern Mediterranean (and they are all recorded in history). But, for the past 500 years, the earth has been relatively quiet without any bursting forth of simultaneous worldwide natural catastrophes. Our “disasters” have been mild in comparison.

[continuing note from previous page]

the manufacture and the selling of pots, with kilns and other furnaces found even within the holiest parts of the Temple. See Zechariah 11:12–13. *ELM*

¹⁷ This object is NOT the millstone-shaped asteroid mentioned in Revelation 18:21. That event comes later, and it will be predictable and observable by scientists before it happens. Everyone will be able to see that object and know it is coming. See my articles, “[The Asteroid Destruction — Its Timing and Purpose](#)” and “[The Destruction of the World in Prophecy](#).” *ELM*

¹⁸ Yes, Dr. Martin is making a definitive and dogmatic statement that “the time of the end” will begin with the tsunami and not before! This is a very strong statement, but it is testable. If a tsunami never happens, then he will be wrong. If a tsunami does happen as Scripture describes and as Dr. Martin understood and explained the prophecy, then God be praised, “**the time of the end**” spoken of in Daniel 8:17, 11:35, 40, and 12:4, 9 will have begun and other prophecies will be more understandable. We will know that the prophetic sequence of Zechariah chapters 9–14 has begun. *DWS (June 2011)*

However, the time is soon coming when the earth will start (abruptly and without warning) its belching forth of earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, extreme weather conditions the like of which modern mankind has never seen before. This is all prophesied in the Book of Revelation, and it is shown in this introductory judgment by a massive tsunami to hit the eastern Mediterranean as recorded in the “Damascus Phase” prophecy of Zechariah chapters 9 to 14.

Such things are not new. In the 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries of our era we have records of tremendous natural disasters happening around the eastern Mediterranean that make our present hurricanes in Florida and last month’s terrible floods in North Carolina and in southern Mexico (along with the Turkish and Taiwan earthquakes)¹⁹ look like child’s play in comparison.

Examples: Disasters of the 6th Century

Indeed, at the time when Justinian was emperor of the Roman (Byzantine) Empire from 527 to 565 AD, in the midst of great prosperity, sudden disaster struck. Historical scientists have determined that in the early reign of Justinian (535–536 AD) volcanic activity was so intense and destructive in the area of Krakatoa that great changes in the weather took place throughout the earth. This and other catastrophic events resulted in crop failures, then plagues and famines with consequent wars of such percentages of harm to humans in the Mediterranean basin that percentage wise would make World Wars I and II as being in the minor leagues.

The Byzantine court historian Procopius who lived at the time showed the loss of human life to have been so vast that he used an outrageous figure to describe it (which means that probably 75% to perhaps 90% of humans perished). These disasters helped to bring on what historians call the “Dark Ages” that lasted almost 500 years.²⁰ It was no accident that a bunch of rag-tag Arab Bedouins from the Arabian Desert could spread their mostly untrained armies into a conquest that led them to central France and to the borders of India in a short hundred years. There was simply no population of people in the former Byzantine or Persian Empires to stop the spread of the Muslims. In many cases, the desert Arabs conquered defenseless cities that had small populations to defend them.

Look briefly at some of the disasters. In 546 AD at the beginning of the year Rome had over 500,000 people in it, but because of wars and plagues by the end of that year the city was a ghost town with only 500 people left in it.

Examples: Disasters of the 8th Century

In 726 AD the island of Santorini in the Aegean Sea exploded with an intensity that people thought the end of the world was happening. So strong was this natural phenomenon that the Byzantine emperors (who were being chided by the Muslim rulers for their idolatry) began what is known as the Iconoclastic Controversy when (for about 70 years) many eastern Christians gave up their idolatrous ways, crying out to God to forgive them for their sins.

The *Chronicle of Theophanes* recounts events in 749 AD. It says:

“In this year there was an earthquake and a great and fearful collapse [of ground] in Syria. Some cities were razed, others partially, and others shifted — walls, buildings, and all — from the mountains to the plains below, moving as much as six miles or even a bit more. Eyewitness observers say the land of Mesopotamia was torn asunder to a depth of fully two miles [a new

¹⁹ These were events that occurred when Dr. Martin updated this article in November 2000. DWS

²⁰ These disasters caused the loss of military and political control by the Byzantine Roman Empire over the Eastern Mediterranean basin. See Dr. Martin’s article, “[Earthquake](#).” The eruption of the Krakatoa volcano in Sumatra in 535–536 AD, caused the beginning of the Dark Ages: “[535 AD — The "Dark Ages" Begin – Scientific Growth Stops!: Volcano Krakatoa Explodes, plunging the Whole Planet into Darkness!](#)” Worldwide effects lasted for years. Of course, Krakatoa also exploded in 1883, again affecting the world’s weather for years. DWS

canyon was formed], **and from this depth new earth, very white and sandy, was brought up** [it quickly filled with sediment].”

• **Chronicle of Theophanes**²¹

This great seismic disaster occurred a little over 1250 years ago — well within our period of recorded history. Just imagine what this one event did. Some cities in Syria were dislodged from their former sites six miles and more. The new canyon that formed in northern Mesopotamia was half again deeper (not wider, but deeper) than the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

Then in the year 763 AD, Theophanes, as an eyewitness, said a bitter cold came from the north starting in October, the like of which had never been seen in history. The Black Sea (which is salty ocean water) began to freeze and finally froze to a depth of 45 feet for a hundred miles out from its north shore. Then in February, fierce winds blew the ice in the form of icebergs toward Constantinople. Those icebergs were so large and thick that they jammed the Bosphorus (the waterway between Europe and Asia) and all the area around. Theophanes said he and his companions could walk on the icebergs to the Asian shore of the Bosphorus.

Dear friends, those icebergs that came in great profusion occurred at the same latitude as about 100 miles north of San Francisco, California! The people of southern Europe were utterly stunned at those icebergs. That was quite a winter! All of the above information on these disasters comes from reports of eyewitnesses recorded by Theophanes.

Present Day, and the Book of Zechariah

For the past 500 years, the earth has experienced its most tranquil period in its tumultuous history. The Holy Scriptures speak of things happening at the Exodus that most people today consider as mere myths; yet they occurred! Ancient Greek literature is full of such catastrophic events that happened after the time of the Flood of Noah. And what do we find in Zechariah chapters 9 to 14? It catalogues the various other events leading up to Christ putting His feet on the Mount of Olives at His Second Advent.

- First, the whole of the eastern Mediterranean shore will be destroyed by the “sword” of God (not by man) — see Zechariah 9:2–8. This occurs when all in the world (“**the eyes of man** [*adam*]”) recognize that God is dwelling at Damascus (not in Jerusalem) — see 9:1.
- After this destruction (which will also include the coastal area of the present State of Israel), we find a great exodus of Jews from other countries going to Israel. This means the Jews of Judah (the Jews mainly from Arabic countries) and those of Israel (those of northern descent now called Ashkenazi who are mainly from Europe) will return in masse to the Land of Israel and re-settle the land and even throughout Jordan (9:9–10:12).²²
- The two divisions of the Jews will not get along with one another (Zechariah chapter 11). But before their brotherly “falling out,” they will be strong and powerful once again in Israel and the whole world (along with the Jews) will take up the issue whether Jerusalem should become the capital of the world (12:1–8). Many Gentiles and even Jews will be against this idea because of the biblical teaching that the Antichrist will first rule in Jerusalem.
- But God then [and not before] sends a spirit of grace and supplication to all in Jerusalem (Jews and Gentiles) — see 12:8–14 and then through to Zechariah 13:5. Israel will accept the one they “**pierced**”

²¹ Theophanes (d. 818 AD) was a Christian monk and chronicler born of high-ranking and wealthy parents. He was known for his outstanding devotion to his faith. See *The Chronicles of Theophanes: An English Translation of anni mundi 6095-6304 (A.D. 602-813) with introduction and notes*, translation and commentary by Harry Turtledove (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), pp. 115–116. DWS

²² Most Jews in the world will return to Israel to help rebuild. DWS

(Psalm 22:16; Zechariah 12:10–14; John 19:37), which means they will accept Jesus as their Messiah and Savior.

- They will start to build a new Temple when a new spring of water opens and points out the spot in Jerusalem (13:1) that will no doubt be on the Mount of Olives.²³ This will be a sanctified Temple.
- Then comes the Antichrist (13:6) whom God will turn against (13:7).
- The “Judah section” of the Jews will fight with the “Israel section” (those two sections of God’s chosen people mentioned in chapter 11), and only one third of the people will survive (13:7–9).
- The nations gather at Jerusalem to finally be put down with the Antichrist (14:1–2).
- Christ Jesus returns at His Second Advent (14:3–9).
- Christ’s arrival when His feet touch the Mount of Olives causes a great seismic disturbance, resulting in the Mount of Olives cleaving in two (14:4).
- Another sanctified Jerusalem and a new Temple will be raised up (14:9–21).
- God (in the person of Christ) will symbolically enter the Temple having moved from His “Damascus House” to His favorite place, Jerusalem.

God loves to live in Jerusalem. Why He does is a mystery to me. I ask why anyone in his right mind would want such a piece of real estate that has no beauty of mountains, streams, and forest reserves. I am from the Pacific Northwest of the United States that has the most beautiful creations of God’s divine hand that anyone can see, and these lands are my “Holy of Holies” that I love with all my heart. Why in the world would I give up such a wonderful area for the barren rocks of Jerusalem? I will not do so, but my dear Jewish and Palestinian friends who live in the area will defend their inheritance to their deaths. To them, those lands are God’s “Promised Land” and meant for them to enjoy. And what is amazing, God the Father and Christ Jesus agree with them!

In closing, let us realize that the first major event that will cause God to leave His abode at Damascus is the destruction of the whole of the eastern Mediterranean region down to and including Gaza. This appears to be the result of a gigantic tsunami. The whole world will see this and know that God is entering into world affairs. They will understand that Israel’s God is the true God and that Christ Jesus is His Son (these divine judgments will convince them). This is why the world will let the Jewish people return to Israel en masse and into Jordan. The events that follow will lead directly to the Advent of Christ.²⁴

Ernest L. Martin, November 1999, 2000
Edited by David Sielaff, March 2005, June 2011

²³ Two points: (1) Zechariah 13:1 may refer to a different kind of spring. See my article “[The Location and Future Discovery of King David’s Tomb](#).” (2) Dr. Martin’s idea that the next Temple will be on the Mount of Olives was an idea Dr. Martin developed in a book titled *The Place of the New Third Temple*. Dr. Martin withdrew that book from circulation and sale pending a complete review of the research from his later book *The Temples Jerusalem Forgot*. Therefore, Dr. Martin at the close of his life was not certain of the location of the next Temple that will be constructed before Christ returns.

Note also that Dr. Martin understood that the next Temple would be “sanctified” and legitimate (unlike some prophetic interpreters who feel a new Temple is not proper or lawful). The two witnesses will have authority to sponsor and guide the Temple’s propriety (Zechariah chapter 4 and Revelation 11:1–14). God will continue to honor the Temple (and be honored by it) until the antichrist’s abomination of desolation when he claims himself to be God and enters into the Holy of Holies within that new Temple (Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20). DWS

²⁴ I want to greatly encourage you to read my August 17, 2006 Commentary, “[The Bible and the War in Lebanon](#)” where I discuss three important keys to determining a biblically identifiable event. In other words, when can we know an event is biblically significant? I give three answers in that Commentary. DWS