## This Week's Developments

2024-11-30; 2024-12-07; 2024-12-14; 2024-12-21

- Russian forces seek refuge in Libya after Syria pullout\*
- Putin denies defeat in Syria, says Israel is the winner
- Israel drops 'earthquake bomb' on Syria\*
- Assad: Russia ordered me to flee Syria
- Israel strikes Houthi in Yemen after missile attack\*
- UN envoy to Syria warns "conflict has not ended yet"
- Additional & Supporting Articles

## Russian forces seek refuge in Libya after Syria pullout

The Times, December 19, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Russia is in talks with a Libyan warlord to move naval assets and military equipment in Syria to the north African country as the Kremlin seeks an alternative foothold in the Mediterranean, sources said. Khalifa Haftar, the general who controls swathes of eastern Libya, was propped up by Russian forces he enlisted in 2019 when he launched a war against the internationally recognised government in Tripoli. Haftar is now leaning towards accepting a Russian request, a Libyan source said, to move its navy ships from the Syrian port of Tartus to Tobruk in Libya. It has already begun flying equipment from its Syrian Hmeimim air base to Libya as it draws down its forces following the overthrow of President Assad. Syria had provided Moscow with its only airbase outside the former Soviet Union, as well as a naval base that gave Russia a foothold on Nato's Mediterranean flank.

#### COMMENT

"The challenges in Syria seem to be pushing Russia to ramp up its presence in eastern Libya, even if that wasn't part of its original plan just weeks ago," said Jalel Harchaoui, a North Africa specialist and fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, a defence think tank based in London. Events in Syria have shaken Putin and he is scrambling to shore up Russia's position in the region following the collapse of the Assad regime. Putin has turned to Libya where it already has bases and a close alliance with the leadership there. This is amazing in the light of Bible prophecy. Ezekiel 38 speaks of Gog (Russian leader) assembling a huge force that comes against Israel. Syria is NOT in that list at all. We have long said the reason is that Syria (at that point) is a failed nation state. But in that list is Libya. The very nation Putin is now turning to as its foothold in Syria slips...

## BIBLE QUOTE

And I will turn thee [Gog / Russian ruler] back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet:

(Ezekiel 38:4-5)

## Putin denies Russian defeat in Syria, says Israel is the main winner

Reuters, December 19, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Russian President Vladimir Putin denied on Thursday that Russia's nine-year intervention in Syria had been a failure, but expressed concern about Israel's military operations there since the toppling of his ally Bashar al-Assad. Putin played down the damage to Moscow from the fall of Assad, saying its military intervention in Syria since 2015 had helped prevent the country from becoming a "terrorist enclave". He said Israel was the "main beneficiary" of the current situation. Soon after Assad's fall, Israel moved troops into the buffer zone on the Syrian side of the dividing line with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and conducted hundreds of air strikes to destroy Syrian army weapons and equipment. "Russia condemns the seizure of any Syrian territories. This is obvious," Putin said, saying Israel had penetrated to a depth of 25 km (16 miles) and got as far as fortifications that were built for Syria by the former Soviet Union.

### COMMENT

Putin has been humiliated in Syria. He had personally backed Assad and used Russia's military machine to prop up the corrupt regime. But everything changed following Israel's war against Hezbollah. Hezbollah was a key component in Syria itself helping Assad hold back rebel forces. But Israel's obliteration of thousands of Hezbollah operatives in Lebanon forced many in Syria to head back there. Plus, Israel attacked Hezbollah directly in Syria for months on end. This opened the way for the rebels in Syria to overthrow Assad. Israel has now taken additional land from Syria around the buffer zones. Putin sees Israel as the main winner in all this. Putin's humiliation will give way to full blown indignation and rage. The stage is being set for Putin to decide to take revenge and to take a spoil from Israel who he sees as ruining his imperial ambitions.

## BIBLE QUOTE

Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou [Gog / Russian ruler] shalt think an evil thought: And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,

(Ezekiel 38:10-11)

## Israel drops 'earthquake bomb' on Syria causing huge mushroom cloud as Americans urged to leave

The Standard, December 19, 2024



### **EVENT**

Israel dropped a bomb on Syria so powerful it reportedly measured on the Richter scale. Video shared online showed the massive explosion as Israel bombarded northwestern Syria near the city of Tartus, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. "Israeli warplanes launched strikes' targeting a series of sites including air defence units and 'surface-to-surface missile depots'," the war monitor said. It said Sunday's bombardment was "the heaviest strikes in Syria's coastal region since the start of strikes in 2012". The size of the blast could indicate the presence of a large amount of stored weapons. It has been reported that the explosion was so large that it measured 3.0 on earthquake sensors. The US embassy in Damascus advised Americans to leave Syria, saying the security situation there continues to be volatile and unpredictable with armed conflict and "terrorism throughout the country".

### COMMENT

Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israeli troops will occupy a recently seized buffer zone in Syria for the foreseeable future. The Israeli prime minister made the remarks on Tuesday night while touring Mount Hermon. Mount Hermon marked the northern limits of the Promised Land conquered by Joshua. The question we might ask now is what comes next for Syria. The issue is that Syria is a melting pot of different rebel groups - mostly designated as extreme Islamic terrorists. On top of this the major powers of Russia, USA and Turkey have stakes in Syria. Israel's bomb that created a mushroom cloud above Syria could be a sign of things to come. Israel will not allow a terror group to form in Syria. When dictators fall (like Saddam) there is a time of turmoil not peace. We could be heading towards Isaiah 17 being fulfilled- the total ruin of Damascus...

## BIBLE QUOTE

The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid. The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria:

(Isaiah 17:1-3)

## Bashar al-Assad: Russia ordered me to flee Syria

The Times, December 16, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Bashar al-Assad has broken his silence after fleeing Syria for Russia following the collapse of his brutal regime, insisting that he only escaped Damascus after it had fallen and calling his country's new rulers "terrorists". The ousted president said he was evacuated to Moscow from a Russian airbase in the west of the war-torn country as it came under drone attack. Assad was a major Kremlin ally and the Russian military had propped up his regime since 2015. "I remained in Damascus carrying out my duties until the early hours of Sunday 8th December," Assad wrote in a statement posted on Telegram channel. It gave his location as Moscow. Assad is widely reported to have left the Syrian capital as rebels advanced on the city and not, as he now claims, after it had fallen. Moscow only said that he was transported to Russia "in the most secure manner".

### COMMENT

Putin knew the game was up for Assad. With Russian forces stretched in Ukraine he was not able to continue to prop up the regime in Syria. There are many reports that say the United States prepared a rebel force to join the offensive that overthrew the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Playing out in Syria is a conflict between the king of the north (Russia) and the king of the south (US). The original king of the north was based in Syria. Syria is the true territory of the king of the north. Assad has been deposed and Putin has rescued him. With the collapse of Syria and the demise of Assad, his benefactor (Putin), is now putting on the mantle of the king of the north. Syria is a failed nation and worse is to come. Amazingly in Jeremiah 49 we read that Damascus waxes feeble and turns to flee. It is exactly what we have seen. Assad's forces were feeble and he was forced to flee...

## BIBLE QUOTE

Concerning Damascus. Hamath is confounded, and Arpad: for they have heard evil tidings: they are fainthearted; there is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet. Damascus is waxed feeble, and turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on her: anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail. This has happened before our very eyes!!

(Jeremiah 49:23-24)

## Israel strikes Houthi targets in Yemen after missile attack

BBC, December 19, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Israel has said its fighter jets conducted a series of strikes against military targets in Yemen belonging to the Iran-backed Houthi movement in response to missile and drone attacks. An Israeli military spokesman said the targets included Red Sea ports and energy infrastructure in the capital Sanaa. Houthi-run Al Masirah TV reported that nine people were killed in the port of Salif and the Ras Issa oil terminal, which are both in Hudaydah province. The strikes came hours after a missile fired from Yemen was partially intercepted over central Israel. Part of the missile still hit a school in Ramat Gan on the edge of Tel Aviv, destroying a building. The Houthis, who control north-western Yemen, began attacking Israel and international shipping shortly after the start of the Gaza war in October 2023, saying they were acting in solidarity with Palestinians. Israel's military says about 400 missiles and drones have since been launched at the country from Yemen, most of which have been intercepted.

### **COMMENT**

This morning Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said: "After Hamas, Hezbollah and the Assad regime in Syria, the Houthis are almost the last arm of Iran's axis of evil. They are finding out, and will find out, the hard way that whoever harms Israel – will pay a very heavy price." He is listing out almost every element of the inner ring war around Israel. Israel has systemically dismantled the terror groups that surround her as God said they would. Where does Yemen fit in though? Yemen is 1300 miles away from Israel! Joel 3 mentions Yemen in relation to the inner ring war. Verse 3 says that God will bring judgement on Tyre, Zidon (Lebanon / Hezbollah) and coasts of Palestine (Gaza / Hamas). But verse 8 says they will be sold by Israel to the Sabeans (Yemen).

## BIBLE QUOTE

Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head: And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the LORD hath spoken it. The Sabeans is the area of Yemen – 1300 miles afar off!

(Joel 3:7-8)

## UN envoy to Syria warns 'conflict has not ended yet'

France24, December 17, 2024



### **EVENT**

Syria's "conflict has not ended yet," even after the departure of former president Bashar al-Assad, the UN's envoy to the country warned Tuesday, highlighting clashes between Turkish-backed and Kurdish groups in the north. "There have been significant hostilities in the last two weeks, before a ceasefire was brokered... A five-day ceasefire has now expired and I am seriously concerned about reports of military escalation," said Geir Pedersen, the UN's special envoy for Syria. "Such an escalation could be catastrophic." Western countries are wrestling with their approach to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which spearheaded the takeover of Damascus, and has roots in the Syrian branch of Al-Qaeda. It has largely been designated in the West as a "terrorist" group, despite moderating its rhetoric.

#### COMMENT

Syria is a melting pot of raging hostilities between many factions who have superpower backing. The Assad regime was supported by Russia, Iran and Hezbollah. But it only controlled part of the country. The "rebels" (HTS, Syrian National Army, Syrian Free Army) are supported by Al-Qeda, Turkey, Qatar. The Kurdish forces are supported by America. On top of this there is the Sunni v Shia Muslim antagonism. Assad was Shia but ruling over a Sunni majority nation. Iran is Shia hence it backing Assad. Turkey is Sunni. Hamas interestingly is also Sunni but Iran still aligned with Hamas because they are both aligned in hatred for Israel. Amos 1 speaks of Damascus being broken by God because of her sins. Incredibly it also speaks of Gaza being punished for her sins. Then it says Tyre (Lebanon) will be burned up because of their sins. All these areas are involved in the inner ring war raging around Israel right now. This is the time of the end.

## BIBLE QUOTE

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron: But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Benhadad. I will break also the bar of Damascus, It goes on to say Syrians will end up in captivity in Iran (Kir)(Amos 1:3-5)

## This Week's Developments

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- Assad's sudden fall, Syria faces seismic turning point
- Assad offered asylum in Russia after regime toppled
- Khamenei Loses Everything\*
- Israel carries out dozens of air strikes across Syria
- Why Israel captured Syria's tallest mountain\*
- The new carve-up of Middle East will not bring peace
- Additional & Supporting Articles

# Assad's sudden fall, Syria faces seismic turning point

The Telegraph, December 8, 2024



### **EVENT**

It took just 11 days to end the 13-year rebellion against Bashar al-Assad, an offensive so rapid that what unfolds next in Syria itself is, to an extent, anyone's guess. What is clear is that the dial of history is shifting again in the Middle East, not for the first time in the tumultuous 14 months since Hamas carried out its massacre in Israel on Oct 7 last year. Over the coming days and weeks, the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East will be redrawn further as power in Syria shifts from Assad's Alawite minority, a Shia offshoot, to the country's Sunni Arab majority. Both Shia Iran and Russia will lose their most important Arab client. The fall of the Assad regime, which Iran could do little to prevent, leaves Tehran shorn of its most important client state, one which acted as a vital landbridge between Iran and Lebanon through which it could rearm and resupply Hezbollah.

### COMMENT

The al-Assad regime has ruled Syria with a rod of iron since 1971. In the end the Assad regime was so hollow, corrupt and decayed that it collapsed in less than a fortnight. The entire world was astonished at the incredible speed at which the regime turned to dust. In the last days before rebels burst out of Idlib, it was widely reported that the US, Israel and the United Arab Emirates were trying to detach Assad's Syria from Iran. Israel had been launching increasingly heavy airstrikes against targets inside Syria it said were part of the supply chain Iran used to get weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Both Benjamin Netanyahu and Joe Biden have claimed credit for the fall of the Assad regime. What we are witnessing is the "inner ring war". The war that is step by step removing all Israel's surrounding enemies. This happens before Russia invades...

## BIBLE QUOTE

A prophecy: The word of the Lord concerning Israel. The Lord, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the human spirit within a person, declares: "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling.

## Assad offered asylum in Russia after regime toppled

The Telegraph, December 10, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Bashar al-Assad, the butcher of Damascus, fled to Moscow and was granted asylum on "humanitarian grounds" after rebels took control of the Syrian capital in a lightning offensive. Russian state media said Assad and his family had arrived in the capital on Sunday night after his palace was looted and thousands of his prisoners liberated in a swift end to his family's decades of rule. In Assad's wake, Israel seized territory on the border and bombed military targets amid fears over the growing power of the Islamist rebels now controlling large parts of Syria. In a matter of days, the Kremlin's Syria project has unravelled in the most dramatic circumstances, with Moscow powerless to prevent it. In a statement the Russian foreign ministry announced that Moscow was "following the dramatic events in Syria with extreme concern." The fall of the Assad regime is a blow to Russia's prestige. By sending thousands of troops in 2015 to shore up President Assad, one of Russia's key objectives had been to assert itself as a global power. In return for military assistance, the Syrian authorities awarded Russia 49-year leases on the air base in Hmeimim and naval base in Tartous.

### COMMENT

The fall of the Assad regime is a major blow to Putin who had backed him to the hilt during the uprising in 2015. Russia has developed military and naval bases in Syria all of which are under threat. Russia is scrambling to do a deal to keep its presence there. The reason that Russia was not able to defend Assad as it did before is that its resources are stretched fighting the war in Ukraine. Israel had been conducting major bombing raids against Iran's proxy forces in Syria stopping them from rearming. Putin has been humiliated. But this humiliation will lead to even more indignation....

## BIBLE QUOTE

And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. The King is Gog the Russia ruler. He feels increasing indignation / anger at his losses.

(Daniel 11:36 NIV)

## Khamenei Loses Everything

The Atlantic, December 8, 2024



### **EVENT**

When Hamas's Yahya Sinwar launched Operation Al-Aqsa Flood against Israel on October 7, 2023, he intended to deal a decisive blow against a powerful nation-state—and he succeeded. But the state his attack has devastated turned out not to be Israel, but Iran, his key sponsor. After suffering terribly on October 7, Israel has pulverized Hamas, ending the threat it posed as an organized military force. The challenge it now faces in Gaza is a humanitarian and administrative crisis, not a security one. Israel has likewise shattered Hezbollah in Lebanon, forcing it to accept a cease-fire after losing not only thousands of foot soldiers but much of its middle management and senior leadership. The biggest loser in all of this—after Assad, his family, his cronies, and possibly his Alawite sect—is Iran. Iran organized and trained thousands more in dozens of militias, including a Syrian Hezbollah, and various Shiite groups from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. All of them are now on the run.

## COMMENT

We have long said – with Bible in hand – that there would be an initial inner ring war around Israel involving the immediate surrounding enemies of Israel who want to destroy her. But again with Bible in hand it was clear that Israel was going to win this conflict. We read in Zechariah 12 that the nearby, surrounding peoples that conspire to remove Israel as a nation would themselves be burned up right and left. Psalm 83 says that Assur (Assyria) supports Israel's nearby enemies. Ancient Assyria covered Syria, Iraq and Iran. Iran itself survives the inner ring war to take part in the outer circle war that comes next when Russia invades Israel. But Isaiah 17 says that Syria is completely destroyed as a functioning nation. Everything is moving fast to this end...

## BIBLE QUOTE

The fortified towns of Israel will also be destroyed, and the royal power of Damascus will end. All that remains of Syria will share the fate of Israel's departed glory," declares the Lord of Hosts. "In that day Israel's glory will grow dim; its robust body will waste away. The whole land will look like a grainfield after the harvesters have gathered the grain.

(Isaiah 17:3-5 NLT)

## Israel carries out dozens of air strikes across Syria

BBC, December 9, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Syrian media reports say Israeli warplanes have carried out dozens of attacks across the country, including in the capital, Damascus. The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said there were more than 100 strikes on military targets. Israel will step up airstrikes on Syrian stores of advanced weaponry, Israeli officials said on Monday, and keep a "limited" troop presence on the ground, hoping to head off any threat that could emerge in the fallout of president Bashar al-Assad's overthrow. "We are taking all the actions necessary to try to ensure our security with regard to the new situation in Syria," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told reporters in a late-night press conference at his office without going into detail. Defence Minister Israel Katz said the military would "destroy heavy strategic weapons throughout Syria, including surface-to-air missiles, air defence systems, surface-to-surface missiles, cruise missiles, long-range rockets, and coastal missiles".

### **COMMENT**

The Assad regime has stockpiled chemical weapons in and around Damascus. It is not known where or how many chemical weapons Syria has, but it's believed former President Bashar al-Assad kept stockpiles and that the declaration he had made was incomplete. Israel is extremely concerned that these deadly weapons could fall into the hands of extremists. A research centre with suspected links to chemical weapon production was among the sites hit this week, according to local media reports. Israel is now fighting on many fronts. Gaza, Hezbollah, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iran. Israel is removing the pricking briers that surround her which leads to a temporary peace....

BIBLE QUOTE And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

## Why Israel captured Syria's tallest mountain just hours after Assad fell

CNN, December 14, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Israel wasted no time after Bashar al-Assad's fall to bomb all the Syrian military assets it wanted to keep out of the rebels' hands – striking nearly 500 targets, destroying the navy, and taking out, it claims, 90% of Syria's known surface-to-air missiles. But it is **Israel's capture of Syria's highest peak, the Mount Hermon summit, that may prove among the most lasting prizes** – though officials have insisted that its occupation is temporary. "This is the highest place in the region, looking upon Lebanon, upon Syria, Israel," said Efraim Inbar, director of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS). "It's strategically extremely important. There is no substitute for mountains." The summit of Mount Hermon lies in Syria, in a buffer zone that separated Israeli and Syrian forces for fifty years until last weekend, when Israeli troops took control of it. Until Sunday, the summit was demilitarized and patrolled by UN peacekeepers – their highest permanent position in the world.

## COMMENT

The summit of Mount Hermon lies in Syria, in a buffer zone that separated Israeli and Syrian forces for fifty years until last weekend, when Israeli troops took control of it. Until Sunday, the summit was demilitarized and patrolled by UN peacekeepers – their highest permanent position in the world. Mount Hermon was significant in the Bible for a few reasons. **Mount Hermon marked the northern limits of the Promised Land conquered by Joshua** (Deuteronomy 3:8; Joshua 11:17; 12:1; 13:5). Some scholars believe Mount Hermon was the site of Jesus' transfiguration. We are told it was a "high mountain." The traditional site is Mount Tabor. However, Matthew says Jesus was in the region of Caesarea Philippi,making Mount Hermon the closer site. This is significant

## BIBLE QUOTE

Now these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east:

(Joshua 12:1)

## The new carve-up of the Middle East will not bring peace

The Telegraph, December 14, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Mystery surrounds some of the final steps that led to the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad, but there is no doubting the giant importance of his fall for the Middle East and the world. The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said: "Something tectonic has happened here, an earthquake that hasn't happened in the 100 years since the Sykes-Picot Agreement." We are now seeing a new carve-up, as Netanyahu last week ordered the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) to advance in the Golan Heights, seizing part of the demilitarised zone formerly held by the Syrian army. **Euphoria over the fall of Assad is similar to catastrophically misplaced jubilation** over the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003, and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya in 2011. Both were dictators who did many bad things (though Saddam was far worse than Gaddafi). But the biggest mistake was not to see that they were both the symptoms as well as the cause of what was dysfunctional in their countries.

## **COMMENT**

While many Syria are celebrating the downfall of a family dynasty that ruled the country a with an iron fist, the situation on the ground remains in flux, with a number of different rebel groups controlling different parts of the country. Syria has for years been controlled by a patchwork of rebel groups and all of them have different agendas. So, what does the Bible says is the future for Syria? Does it end in a functioning democracy and peace? The answer is no. Isaiah 17 says that Syria as a nation ceases – comes to a complete end. We are also told that Damascus is removed from being a city. At the same time the "fortress shall also cease" in northern Israel. So we can conclude (as the article says) that any jubilation over the fall of Assad is catastrophically misplaced.



The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid. We have not seen the end of conflict in Syria.

## This Week's Developments

2024-11-30; 2024-12-07; 2024-12-14; 2024-12-21

- After Aleppo & Homs can rebels take over Damascus?
- Syria could be the next target of Israel aggression
- Assad's humiliating retreat is a blow to Iran
- UN: Russia, US clash over escalation in Syria fighting
- Russia is expanding its military foothold in Africa\*
- Russia fires hypersonic missile in Mediterranean Sea
- Additional & Supporting Articles

## After Aleppo & Homs can rebels take over Damascus?

First Post, December 7, 2024



#### **EVENT**

As Syrian rebel forces gain control over the crucial cities of **Aleppo**, **Homs** and Dara one of the biggest questions arising out of the situation is can capture the Syrian city of **Damascus**. Capturing of **Homs** raised fears about Damascus since it is the largest Syrian province which borders Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan. It is pertinent to note that part of **Homs** city was already controlled by insurgents until a bloody siege in 2014. The city is touted as the "gateway to **Damascus**" as well as Syria's coastal provinces of Latakia and Tartus, both bastions of regime loyalists. While it is still unclear if the rebels can take Damascus as swiftly as they took over **Aleppo**, the success of any such operation could expose the hollow nature of Assad's defence forces. Assad is already withdrawing his forces from Syria's east to reinforce those around **Damascus**.

### **COMMENT**

Events are moving at a pace in Syria. Last week we reported in the WWW that rebels had seized parts of Aleppo, Syria's second-largest city, from Russian-backed regime forces on Friday in a lightning advance. This week the rebels have moved from Aleppo and have now taken Homs. There is a growing sense of panic in Damascus as the capital city is next on the rebels target list. Two strategically-important Russian military facilities in Syria and Moscow's very presence in the Middle East are under serious threat from rapidly advancing insurgents. Russians in Syria have been urged to leave the country. What is amazing with these events is that Aleppo, Homs and Damascus are all mentioned in the same verse in Jeremiah 49. See verse below. Aleppo is Arpad, Homs is Hamath and Damascus is Damascus. There is fear in Aleppo and Homs and Damascus becomes feeble. All the men of war are killed in Damascus. Also in Isaiah 17.

## BIBLE QUOTE

Concerning Damascus. Hamath [Homs] is confounded, and Arpad [Aleppo]: for they have heard evil tidings: they are fainthearted; there is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet. Damascus is waxed feeble, and turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on her: anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail.

(Jeremiah 49:23-24)

## Syria could be the next target of Israel aggression after Lebanon truce

The New Arab, November 30, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Syria could be the next target of Israel's regional military offensive after a ceasefire for Lebanon was agreed this week, with the war against Hezbollah likely to be expanded beyond the Lebanese borders as Bashar Al-Assad rapidly loses support from his neutered patrons. Shortly after the Lebanon ceasefire came into effect on Tuesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a rare, direct warning to Bashar Al-Assad saying he is "playing with fire" and implicated the Syrian army in the Hezbollah-Iran network, raising the stakes for Damascus as the rebels advance in the north. While there is no Israeli hand in the Syrian rebel offensive on Aleppo, the opposition is likely emboldened by the weakness of the Iran-led regional alliance, which Assad has been reliant on for almost all if his successful campaigns against the rebels. While there is no Israeli hand in the Syrian rebel offensive on Aleppo, the opposition is likely emboldened by the weakness of the Iran-led regional alliance, which Assad has been reliant on for almost all if his successful campaigns against the rebels.

#### COMMENT

Israel is not directly involved with the rebels who are attacking the Assad regime. However, commentators believe that the weakening of Hezbollah and the constant strikes by Israel on Syria have emboldened the rebels to launch their own offensive. The events playing out in Syria have the potential to bring Israel into a Syrian war. The IDF now assesses the rebels may pose a real threat to the continuation of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's rule. Israel is concerned the rebels will advance down to the Golan Heights. When Damascus is destroyed northern Israel is weakened according to Isaiah 17. The inner ring war will see Syria completely fail as a nation state....

## BIBLE QUOTE

"See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins. The cities of Aroer will be deserted and left to flocks, which will lie down, with no one to make them afraid. The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim [northern Israel], and royal power from Damascus; Notice how Israel is weakened when the royal power is removed from Damascus. War is coming. (Isaiah 17:1-3 NIV)

## Assad's humiliating retreat is a blow to Iran

The Telegraph, November 30, 2024



#### **EVENT**

The rapid advance of Syrian rebels into Aleppo has proved a grievous blow to Bashar al-Assad's vile regime. It is clear that the situation is extremely fragile, and that Syria could easily extend into extreme chaos. While a great deal of focus is on these dynamics and the involvement of Russian forces backing the Assad government – with reports of airstrikes around Aleppo – perhaps just as significant is the damage dealt to Iran's ambitions in the Middle East. It seems increasingly likely that the barbaric October 7 assault, far from signaling the beginning of a new era of Iranian strength, was instead the high-water mark for Iranian influence in the region. Over the past year Tehran has had to watch its Hamas allies in Gaza be dealt defeat after defeat, and its Hezbollah proxies in Lebanon be decimated. This weakening of Assad's allies and their positions within his countries appears to have opened the door to the current offensive, and the prospect of what could be a significant loss of power for Damascus.

## COMMENT

This is a very interesting editorial in The Telegraph newspaper. It explains how October 7<sup>th</sup> Hamas attack on Israel has step by step led to the situation we now see happening in Syria. Israel has neutralised Hamas and to a great extent Hezbollah - both proxy armies for Iran. Iran has supported Syria and has its own forces including Hezbollah terrorists in the country. Israel has over the last year been attacking these pawns of Iran in Syria and slowly but surely weakening Iran there as well. We are witnessing the inner ring war which is playing out almost like a slow motion car crash for Israel's immediate enemies. Zechariah 12 explains that the surrounding enemies of Israel will be burned up right and left. The burning continues and will soon involve Syria as well.

BIBLE QUOTE "On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume all the surrounding peoples right and left, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.

## Russia, US clash at UN over escalation in Syria fighting

Reuters, December 4, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Russia and the United States clashed at the United Nations on Tuesday, accusing each other of supporting terrorism during a Security Council meeting convened over a sudden escalation of fighting in Syria. Syrian rebels captured Aleppo last week in an attack initiated by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. Formerly known as the Nusra Front, it was al Qaeda's official wing in Syria until breaking ties in 2016. It is sanctioned by the U.N. Security Council. Deputy U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Robert Wood called for a de-escalation of the fighting in Syria and the protection of civilians. He also expressed concern that the rebel offensive was led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. "The fact that HTS is listed as a terrorist organization by the U.S. and U.N. does not justify the further atrocities by the Assad regime and its Russian backers," he said. In remarks directed at Wood, Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said: "There are no illusions that Washington will ever be willing to sincerely combat international terrorism," he said. "To be frank we are pleased that we are on opposite sides of the barricades right now from you."

### **COMMENT**

In 2014, the United States officially intervened in the Syrian civil war with the stated aim of fighting the terrorist organization ISIS. The US currently continues to support some of the Syrian rebels. In 2015 Russia entered the Syrian conflict. The Russian naval facility in Tartus in Syria is Russia's only naval facility in the Mediterranean region and only remaining military facility outside the former USSR. Syria is becoming another flashpoint therefore between America and Russia. The ancient king of the north was based in Syria. When Syria fails as a nation Russia will come down and fill the void that is left...

## BIBLE QUOT<u>E</u>

Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, This is speaking of nations rushing in after Damascus is destroyed. The nations rushing in are Russian / Iranian etc (Isaiah 17:12-13)

The Telegraph, December 3, 2024

### Wagner Group troops are deployed in several African countries

Russian ambitions in Africa



### **EVENT**

Russia is landing military aircraft on newly refurbished runways under its control in Libya as the Kremlin quickly expands its footprint in Africa, satellite images show. Telegraph analysis of three Libyan air bases found Russian military transport planes, upgraded runways, bolstered perimeter defences and entirely new buildings – changes that all occurred this year. The upgrades suggest that Russia is significantly ramping up its military presence in Libya, thanks to a growing partnership with Libyan warlord General Khalifa Haftar, who controls the eastern and southern parts of the country. Libya serves as the core for Russia's fast-expanding operations in Africa, paving the way for greater access to countries including Sudan, Mali, Chad, and the Central African Republic. Experts say military control in Libya also allows Russia to draw an arc of power from the eastern Mediterranean – where it already controls coastal positions in Syria – down to the southern Mediterranean via Libya.

#### COMMENT

On Tuesday Russia's deputy defence minister, visited Libya to meet with Gen Haftar in his sixth visit since August 2023, underscoring deepening relations. Russia is using Libya as a strategic foothold to project its power across the African continent. Especially in the areas of Sudan and Libya. This is incredibly interesting with Bible in hand. Ezekiel 38 speaks of nations that are allied to Russia when it invades Israel. On the list of nations are some nations in Africa. Namely Libya and Ethiopia. Ethiopia in the original is actually the Hebrew name Cush. Cush actually corresponds far more closely with modern day Sudan than Ethiopia which is what the Authorised version of the Bible translate its as. And so this article is almost word for word taken from Ezekiel 38!

## BIBLE QUOTE

I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army—your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. Persia [Iran], Cush [Sudan] and Put [Libya] will be with them, all with shields and helmets,

(Ezekiel 38:4-5)

## Russia fires hypersonic missile in Mediterranean Sea

The Telegraph, December 3, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Russian forces test fired an advanced nuclear-capable hypersonic cruise missile during navy and air force drills in the eastern Mediterranean Sea on Tuesday. Photographs released by the Russian defence ministry show a Zircon launching from the decks of the Admiral Gorshkov, a frigate commissioned in 2018 and designed to attack land, surface and underwater targets. "On Dec 3, during an exercise to test the combined activities of Russian navy and air force troop groups, precision sea-based missiles were launched in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea," Russia's defence ministry said in a statement. The Kremlin claims that the Zirkon missile has a top speed of Mach 9 (6,000mph), which analysts have said would make it essentially invulnerable to even the best Western missile defence systems. According to Russian state media, Putin has said the weapon has "no analogues in any country in the world". Militaries across the world are scrambling to field hypersonic cruise missiles, as their extreme speed and maneuverability makes them difficult to intercept.

#### COMMENT

These Russian naval drills come as Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, Russia's biggest ally in the region, is facing the greatest challenge to his rule in years after rebel fighters captured the city of Aleppo in a shock offensive that began last week. Russia has had a naval base near the Mediterranean port city of Tartus. Naval analyst H I Sutton said that Russia's Tartus naval base was now under threat from rebel attack as the fast-moving front line closed in. "The dramatic shift in the front lines in Syria now puts the base at risk. There are indications that Russia may be evacuating its naval vessels," he said. We are seeing the nations prepare for a great conflict over Syria – it is coming...

## BIBLE QUOTE

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: Saul was the last person to see Jesus. Acts 9:27 says he "had seen the Lord". He saw him in the heavens in a bright light near Damascus. The preaching to the gentiles began then. Jesus might return in heaven when Damascus falls and the time of gentile preaching ends (Acts 9:3)

## This Week's Developments

2024-11-30; 2024-12-07; 2024-12-14; 2024-12-21

- Hezbollah to continue resistance despite ceasefire
- How Israel crippled the Iran-backed militia Hezbollah\*
- Assad troops in Aleppo as Syrian war reignites
- Russian ruble collapses as Putin's economy in trouble\*
- Zelensky: I'll give up Ukrainian territory to Russia
- MPs back proposals to legalise assisted dying
- Additional & Supporting Articles

## Hezbollah vows to continue resistance despite ceasefire with Israel

Sky News, November 28, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Hezbollah has vowed to continue its resistance to Israel after the ceasefire came into effect. Brokered by the US and France, the halt to fighting in Lebanon will see both Israeli and Hezbollah forces retreat. Its announcement was met by cheers on the streets of Lebanon, where people quickly began taking to the roads, streaming back to the warravaged south of the country. In its first statement since the ceasefire, the Iranian-backed militant group Hezbollah made no direct mention of it and vowed to continue resistance. Hezbollah said its fighters "remain fully equipped to deal with the aspirations and assaults of the Israeli enemy". While Hezbollah issued a strong statement, the group has been weakened by Israel, who have targeted its leadership and struck notable blows against it.

### **COMMENT**

A ceasefire has been agreed between Israel and Hezbollah. Hezbollah has been given 60 days to end its armed presence in southern Lebanon while Israeli forces must withdraw from the area over the same period. The agreement says the Lebanese army will "dismantle all infrastructure, and military positions, and confiscate all unauthorised arms." The ceasefire "could be short," Netanyahu said, noting that the IDF had already "enforced the ceasefire on its first day." There is no link in the agreement to Gaza where Israel continues to dismantle Hamas. Netanyahu said, "Hamas hoped that Iran would come to save it, it didn't happen, it hoped that the Houthis would come to save it it didn't happen; but above all, it hoped that Hezbollah would come to his rescue... [now] there is no Hezbollah." With Bible in hand we know that the pricking briers will be removed. The conflict is not over yet between Israel and her nearby neighbours....



And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

## How Israel took on Hezbollah: from pager bombs to ground raids

The Times, November 29, 2024



#### **EVENT**

Assassinations by walkie-talkies, airstrikes using 1,000kg "bunker-busting" bombs, and risky ground raids aimed at destroying infrastructure have left Israel's enemy Hezbollah battered and weakened — but not completely gone. As far as the war aims of the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, go — to push Hezbollah back from the Litani River, about 20 miles to the north, as well as return people to the north of Israel — his multipronged military strategy in Lebanon appears to have worked. Hezbollah is now a fraction of its former self when it comes to its military capability, said Lina Khatib, associate fellow at the British foreign policy think tank Chatham House. Israel pursued a military strategy that used a mixture of advanced military technology and surveillance to kill the majority of Hezbollah's high-level leaders, remove its long and mid-range missile capability, cripple its communication network, and destroy its military infrastructure in areas along the Lebanon-Israel border. "Hezbollah no longer poses a serious security threat to Israel's north," Khatib added.

#### COMMENT

Israel's war against Hezbollah has amazed the world for its ingenuity, intelligence and implementation. Hezbollah was seen as Iran's most powerful piece in its complex web of proxy army's that it uses to attack Israel. But Israel has managed to remove almost the entire leadership of Hezbollah and severely degrade its abilities. Psalm 83 speaks of Israel's nearby enemies coming to an end like Sisera. Sisera was commander of the Canaanite army of King Jabin. He was killed when Jael (a woman) hammered a tent peg through his head. In Psalm 83 we are being told that the commanders of Israel's enemies will be destroyed. This has happened – but there is more to come in this war.

## BIBLE QUOTE

She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

(Judges 5:26-27)

## Rebels storm Assad troops in Aleppo as Syrian war reignites

The Times, November 29, 2024



### **EVENT**

Rebels seized parts of Aleppo, Syria's second-largest city, from Russian-backed regime forces on Friday in a lightning advance. In the heaviest fighting for years, Russian and Syrian regime jets bombarded the rebels in an attempt to block the offensive. But in less than 72 hours, the rebels captured dozens of villages around the city before punching their way into the western districts of Aleppo with two suicide car bombings. Footage shared on social media showed the rebels streaming into the western suburbs as regime forces fled. The rebels are led by Hay'at Tahri Al-Sham, a Sunni Islamist group that controls Idlib, about 35 miles to the southwest. It was affiliated with factions supported by Turkey and al-Qaeda before severing its links. The rebels say they acted after the bombardment of Idlib by the regime. They appear to have taken advantage of the weakened positions of Russia and Iran, whose forces had helped President Assad to regain control of much of Syria over the past ten years.

## COMMENT

Back in 2015 Russia entered the Syrian war at the request of president Assad. Russia helped support Assad by sending troops etc to attack the rebels trying to overthrow Assad. Russia is now embedded into areas of Syria but this week rebels have managed to take hold of parts of Aleppo controlled by Syria and Russia. Russia said the offensive was "an infringement on the sovereignty of Syria". Over the past two years the Kremlin has diverted some of its airpower and soldiers to Ukraine so is left in a weaker position than before. The rebels are taking advantage of this. In last week's WWW we reported on Homs being attacked. We said that Homs is Hamath. We said Aleppo (Arpad) is also mentioned in the same verse. And now Aleppo is in the news!

## BIBLE QUOTE

Concerning Damascus. Hamath [Homs] is confounded, and Arpad [Aleppo]: for they have heard evil tidings: they are fainthearted; there is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet. Damascus is waxed feeble, and turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on her: anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail.

(Jeremiah 49:23-24)

## Russian Ruble Collapses As Putin's Economy in Trouble

Newsweek, November 27, 2024



#### **EVENT**

The Russian currency, the ruble, has plunged to its lowest rate against the U.S. dollar since the start of Vladimir Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine as sanctions continue to hurt his country's economy. After two months of depreciation, the ruble dropped on Tuesday to 107 against the dollar for the first time since March 2022, just after the start of the war that prompted Western-led sanctions, an exodus of companies from Russia and financial turbulence. The ruble is expected to weaken further with the beginning of the winter holiday season as companies import more goods to meet consumer demand. "The Russian ruble is weakening significantly as a result of the escalating conflict in Ukraine," Grzegorz Dróżdż, market analyst at Invest. Conotoxia.com, told Newsweek on Tuesday. "The currency's bad condition weakens the country's purchasing power." The freefall follows the U.S. Treasury Department's announcement on November 21 of sanctions on dozens of Russian banks,

## **COMMENT**

One of the banks the US sanctioned this week was Gazprombank. The U.S. had previously avoided sanctioning this bank to allow European countries to continue paying for Russian gas supplies. Losing this channel could mean a further decrease in revenues from gas, which has been the hardest-hit export for Russia. It further adds to woes for state natural gas giant Gazprom, which before the war was the largest company in Russia by market capitalisation but has since posted record losses. Putin is obsessed by gas and oil and the energy market. It makes up a huge part of Russian GDP. The collapse of gas sales will be part of what makes Putin want to take a spoil from Israel...

## BIBLE QUOTE

Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; [Israel] ...To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited,

(Ezekiel 38:10+12)

## Zelensky: I'll give up Ukrainian territory to Russia to achieve peace

The Telegraph, November 29, 2024



### **EVENT**

Volodymyr Zelensky said on Friday night that he was willing to cede territory to Russia to end the war for the first time. The Ukrainian president said his country could give up land temporarily in exchange for a "Nato umbrella" over the territory Ukraine still holds. He added that after a ceasefire was agreed, Kyiv could "diplomatically" negotiate the return of the territory in the east that is currently under Russian control. "If we want to stop the hot stage of the war, we should take under [the] Nato umbrella the territory of Ukraine that we have under our control," Zelensky said in an interview with Sky News. "That's what we need to do fast, and then Ukraine can get back the other part of its territory diplomatically," he added. The comments represent a considerable shift in his position. Kyiv has previously said it would continue to fight Russia until Ukraine was returned to its internationally recognised borders, which include the four regions annexed by Vladimir Putin in 2022, as well as Crimea. The shift comes as Donald Trump prepares to take office with a promise to end the war on "day one".

#### COMMENT

Zelensky said this week that he would be willing to consider ceding the Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine in exchange for the free parts of Ukraine to be brought under the "Nato umbrella". This would not mean full Nato membership but it would involve some protection from Nato. Trump is thought to be considering a plan that would call on European and British troops to enforce an 800-mile buffer zone between the Russian and Ukrainian armies as part of a plan to end the war. With Bible in hand we can deduce that the Ukraine war has come to an end by the time Russia invades Israel. Russia cannot fight two major wars at the same time. A ceasefire is coming...

## BIBLE QUOTE

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. It is possible a cry of peace and safety comes with the ending of the Ukraine war and the inner ring war around Israel (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3)

## MPs back proposals to legalise assisted dying

BBC, November 29, 2024



### **EVENT**

MPs have backed proposals to legalise assisted dying in England and Wales in a historic vote which paves the way for a change in the law. In the first Commons vote on the issue in nearly a decade, MPs supported a bill which would allow terminally ill adults expected to die within six months to seek help to end their own life by 330 to 275.. It followed an emotional debate in the chamber, where MPs from both sides shared personal stories which had informed their decisions. The bill will now face many more months of debate and scrutiny by MPs and peers, who could choose to amend it, with the approval of both Houses of Parliament required before it becomes law. Opening the debate, an MP said the current law was "failing" and needed to change to give terminally ill people choice at the end of their life. She gave examples of terminally ill people who had died "screaming for assistance" or taken their own lives because they were in uncontrollable pain. Opponents of the bill raised concerns that terminally ill people, particularly the elderly, disabled or vulnerable, could be pressurised into ending their own lives.

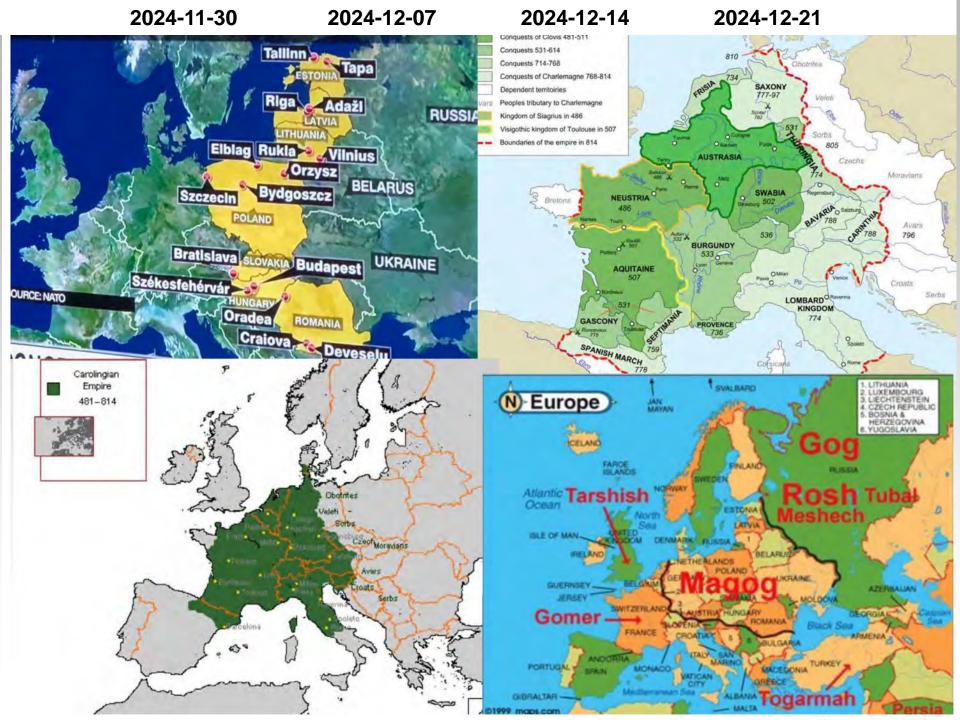
### COMMENT

Assisted dying is where a person with a terminal illness or incurable condition is helped to take their own life, especially by means of lethal drugs provided by a doctor for the purpose. Assisted dying is really assisted suicide. The taking of human life is particularly grievous and is condemned throughout the Bible. When Saul was wounded in battle he asked his armour bearer to kill him. He refused to do so even though Saul was king and had authority over him. Another man did comply with Saul's request and David ordered that he himself was killed as he should not have killed the Lord's anointed. The Psalms are full of raw and honest cries to God in the midst of pain but never approve of suicide.

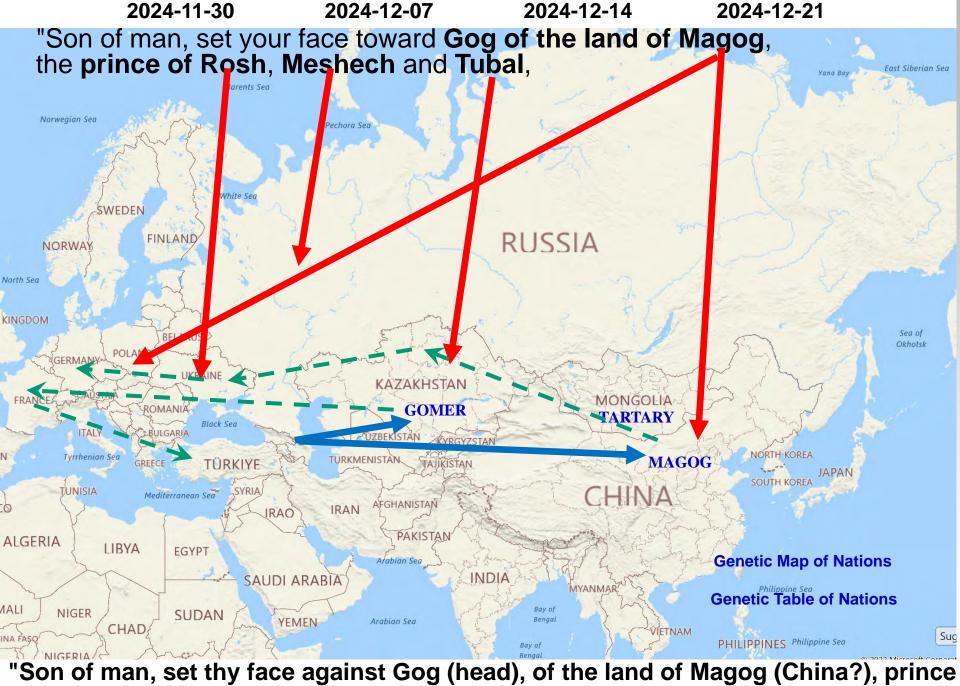
## BIBLE QUOTE

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. The clearly implied imperative is to love one's own body and to feed and care for it. Suicide is the opposite of care and love for one's body. It is an act of self-pity, rather than self-love. Jesus himself learned obedience by what he suffered. (Ephesian 5:29)

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of Ros (river in Ukraine) Meshech and Tubal (rivers in Russia)"?

