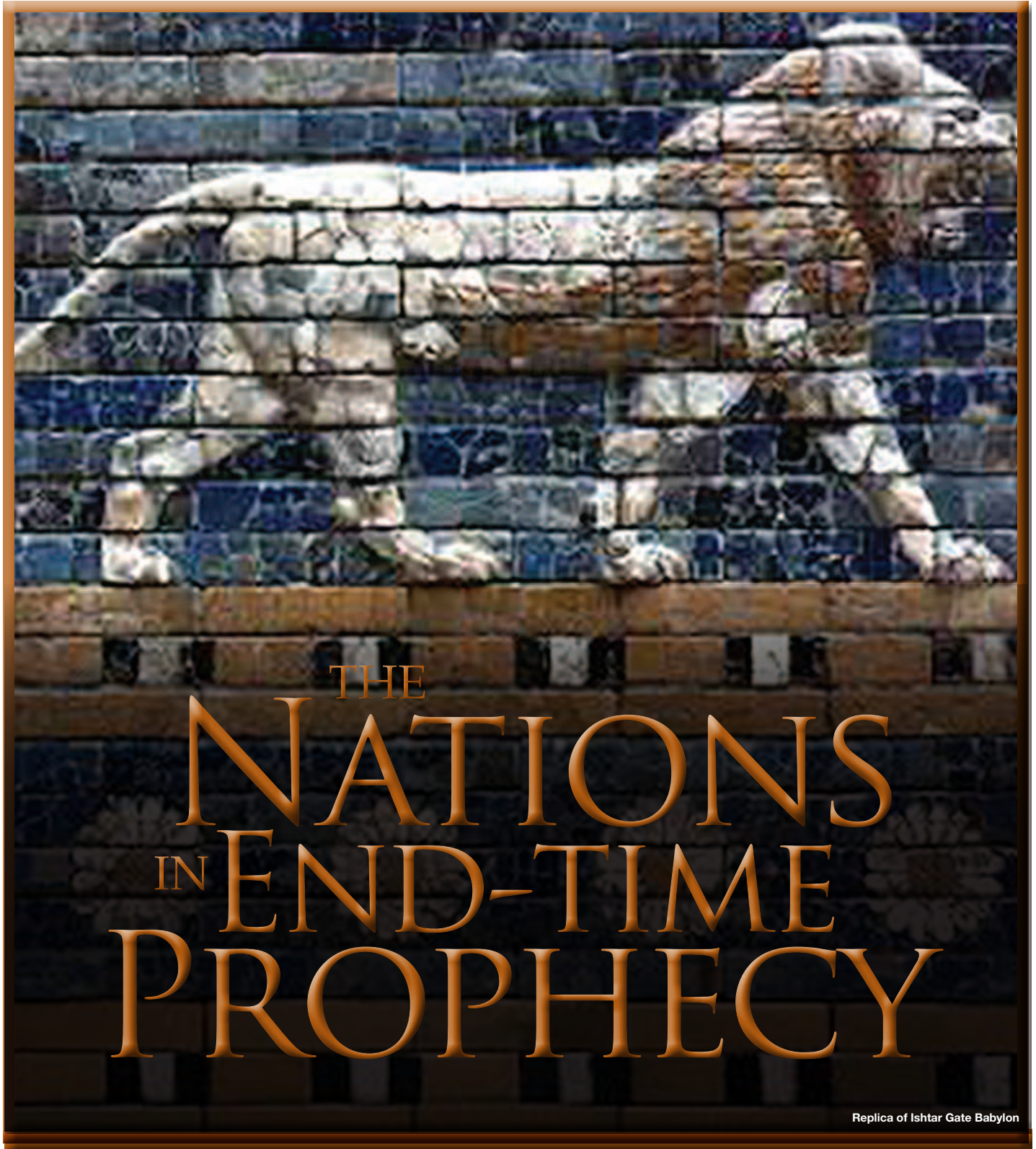


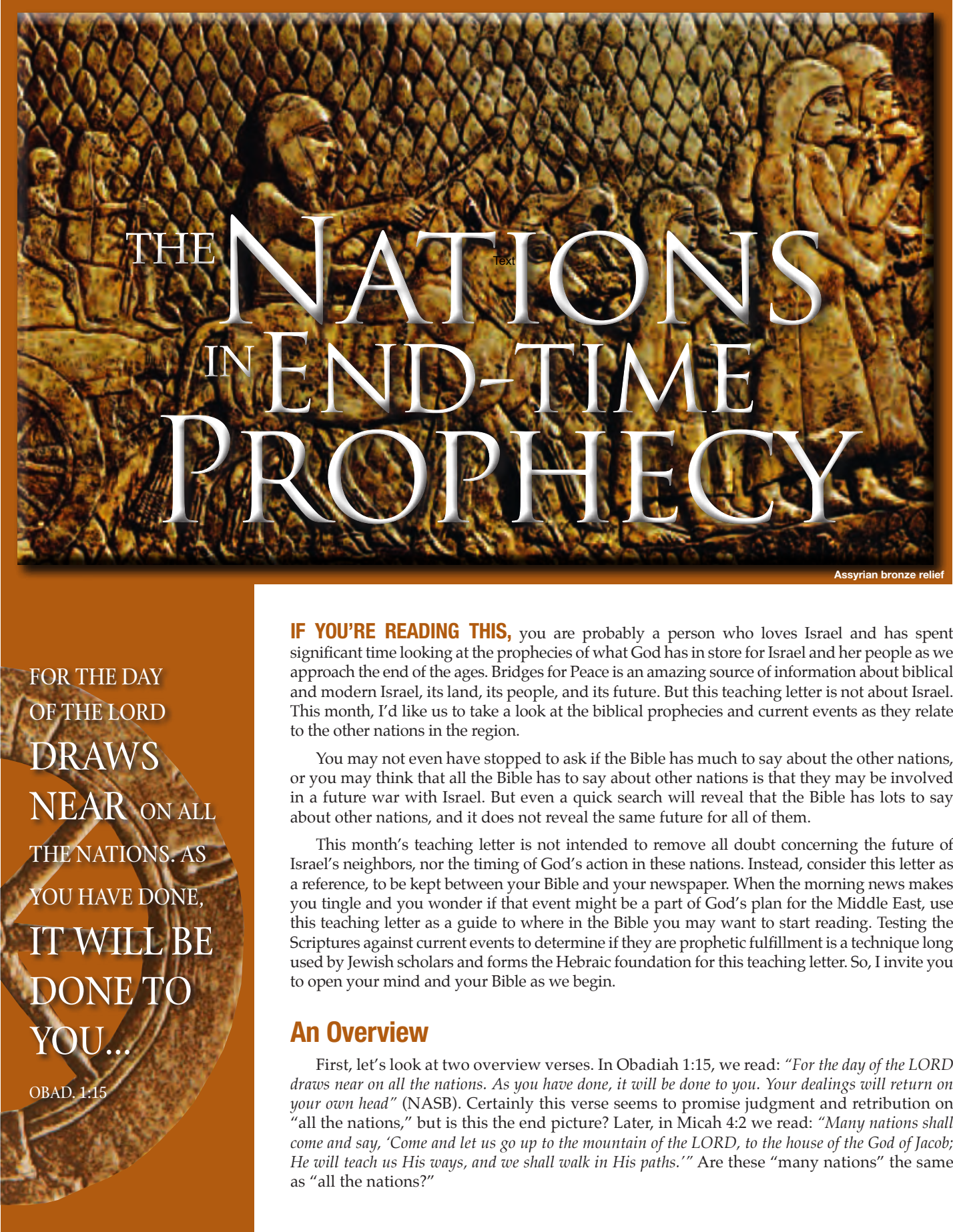
ISRAEL Teaching Letter

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Replica of Ishtar Gate Babylon



THE NATIONS IN END-TIME PROPHECY

Assyrian bronze relief

FOR THE DAY
OF THE LORD
DRAWS
NEAR ON ALL
THE NATIONS. AS
YOU HAVE DONE,
IT WILL BE
DONE TO
YOU...

OBAD. 1:15

IF YOU'RE READING THIS, you are probably a person who loves Israel and has spent significant time looking at the prophecies of what God has in store for Israel and her people as we approach the end of the ages. Bridges for Peace is an amazing source of information about biblical and modern Israel, its land, its people, and its future. But this teaching letter is not about Israel. This month, I'd like us to take a look at the biblical prophecies and current events as they relate to the other nations in the region.

You may not even have stopped to ask if the Bible has much to say about the other nations, or you may think that all the Bible has to say about other nations is that they may be involved in a future war with Israel. But even a quick search will reveal that the Bible has lots to say about other nations, and it does not reveal the same future for all of them.

This month's teaching letter is not intended to remove all doubt concerning the future of Israel's neighbors, nor the timing of God's action in these nations. Instead, consider this letter as a reference, to be kept between your Bible and your newspaper. When the morning news makes you tingle and you wonder if that event might be a part of God's plan for the Middle East, use this teaching letter as a guide to where in the Bible you may want to start reading. Testing the Scriptures against current events to determine if they are prophetic fulfillment is a technique long used by Jewish scholars and forms the Hebraic foundation for this teaching letter. So, I invite you to open your mind and your Bible as we begin.

An Overview

First, let's look at two overview verses. In Obadiah 1:15, we read: *"For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head"* (NASB). Certainly this verse seems to promise judgment and retribution on "all the nations," but is this the end picture? Later, in Micah 4:2 we read: *"Many nations shall come and say, 'Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.'"* Are these "many nations" the same as "all the nations?"

We will now take a look at each of the major nations surrounding Israel and a few beyond the immediate region that play a key in future events and which ones are discussed in detail in the Scriptures. Let me give two quick disclaimers. First, an in-depth look at all prophecy about all nations mentioned in the Bible would go well beyond the material we can cover in a single teaching letter, so look for this letter to whet your appetite for future study.

Secondly, good, competent, Bible-believing scholars don't all agree on what I am about to share with you. In fact, they don't even all agree about which modern nation is being referred to by which biblical prophecy. So, if your pastor or teacher sees some of this differently, please give each of us grace that we are doing our best to share with you the Scriptures as we understand them. Again, my hope and prayer is that any controversy here will engender further prayer and study over the Word and not animosity regarding any particular detail.

With the disclaimers and background behind us, let's start by identifying the nations that are referred to in the Bible and what they are called today. Our identification of these nations begins with the descendants of Noah and what is commonly called the "Table of Nations" in Genesis 10.



Ancient Country or People	Current Name or Region
Ammon, Moab and Edom	Jordan
Arabia	Saudia Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and some of Iraq and Jordan
Aram, Syria, Damascus	Syria
Assyria	Iraq
Canaan	Northern Israel and southern Lebanon
Cush	Ethiopia and some of Sudan, Somalia (and possibly more of Africa)
Decapolis	Northwestern Jordan and a small part of Israel
Dedan and Sheba	Saudi Arabia
Gomer	Ukraine as far west as Germany
Kittim (or Chittim)	Cyprus
Magog, (Rus, Rosh, Gog?)	Russia
Meshech and Tubal (Gog?)	Turkey
Midian	Western Saudi Arabia and southern Jordan
Mizraim	Egypt
Philistia	Gaza
Phoenicia	Lebanon
Persia	Iran and some of Iraq
Phut/Put	Libya and possibly Algeria and Tunisia
Scythia	Southern Russia
Togarmah	Parts of Turkey, Armenia, and the regions of Kurdistan and Turkestan
Tarshish and Islands of the Sea	Possibly the West (United Kingdom, United States, Canada)

We'll be using this chart (and the corresponding map on page 4) to identify which modern nation is related to which biblical name and Scripture reference. We won't go through each one in detail, but my intent is to give you a quick overview of the biblical prophetic perspective on eleven modern nations and to suggest that the Bible indicates that there will be three very different futures among these nations. The nations we will look at are Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Iran, Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan.

As you read, I encourage you to keep a pencil in hand and number each nation in the following way:

- 1** each nation that the Bible seems to tell us will eventually have peace with Israel
- 2A** each nation where the Bible seems to prophesy a future battle with Israel followed by the destruction of that nation
- 2B** each nation where the Bible seems to prophesy a future battle with Israel followed by peace with that nation
- 3** each nation where the Bible tells of destruction by God, but does not indicate a battle with Israel (At the end, I'll share how I marked each nation.)

Lebanon

"I will sow them [the Israelites] among the peoples, and they shall remember Me in far countries; they shall live, together with their children, and they shall return. I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt, and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, until no more room is found for them" (Zech. 10:9–10).

I WILL SOW
THEM AMONG
THE PEOPLES,
AND THEY
SHALL
REMEMBER
ME IN FAR
COUNTRIES...

ZECH. 10:9



Lebanon



Ruins of Babylon

BABYLON THE GREAT IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN, AND HAS BECOME A DWELLING PLACE OF DEMONS...

REV. 18:2

Syria

"The burden against Damascus. 'Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city, and it will be a ruinous heap. The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they will be for flocks which lie down, and no one will make them afraid. The fortress also will cease from Ephraim, the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria; they will be as the glory of the children of Israel,' says the LORD of hosts" (Isa. 17:1–3).

"Thus says the LORD: 'For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron. But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad. I will also break the gate bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitants from the Valley of Aven, and the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden. The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir,' says the LORD" (Amos 1:3–5).

Iraq

"A sword is against the Chaldeans,' says the LORD, 'against the inhabitants of Babylon, and against her princes and her wise men...Therefore the wild desert beasts shall dwell there with the jackals and the ostriches shall dwell in it. It shall be inhabited no more forever, nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation'" (Jer. 50:35, 39).

"And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.' And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities'" (Rev. 18:2–5).

But then there is a very different future painted for the northern portion of Iraq, which was part of ancient Assyria.

"In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, 'Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance'" (Isa. 19:24–25).

Jordan

Ammon

"Therefore behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will cause to be heard an alarm of war in Rabbah of the Ammonites; it shall be a desolate mound, and her villages shall be burned with fire. Then Israel shall take possession of his inheritance,' says the Lord... 'But afterward I will bring back the captives of the people of Ammon,' says the LORD" (Jer. 49:2, 6).

Moab

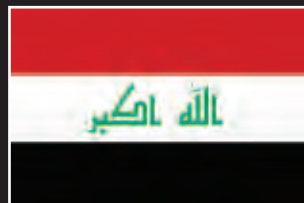
"Woe to you, O Moab! The people of Chemosh perish; for your sons have been taken captive, and your daughters captive. Yet I will bring back the captives of Moab in the latter days,' says the LORD. Thus far is the judgment of Moab" (Jer. 48:46–47).

Edom

"The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau shall be stubble, they shall kindle them and devour them, and no survivor shall remain of the house of Esau,' for the LORD has spoken" (Obad. 1:18).



Syria



Iraq



Jordan

“On that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the gentiles, who are called by My name,” says the LORD who does this thing” (Amos 9:11–12).

Saudi Arabia and the Nations of the Arabian Peninsula

“The burden against Arabia. In the forest in Arabia you will lodge, O you traveling companies of Dedanites. O inhabitants of the land of Tema bring water to him who is thirsty; with their bread they met him who fled. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow, and from the distress of war. For thus the LORD has said to me: ‘Within a year, according to the year of a hired man, all the glory of Kedar will fail; and the remainder of the number of archers, the mighty men of the people of Kedar, will be diminished; for the LORD God of Israel has spoken it’” (Isa. 21:13–17).

Egypt

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD will thresh, from the channel of the River to the brook of Egypt; and you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. So it shall be in that day: the great trumpet will be blown; and they will come who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem” (Isa. 27:12–13).

“And the land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts which He has determined against it. In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear by the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction. In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it. And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them. In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, ‘Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance’” (Isa. 19:17–25).

Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Iran, and Libya

“There are Meshach and Tubal, and all their multitudes, with all their graves around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living. They do not lie with the mighty who are fallen of the uncircumcised, who have gone down to hell with their weapons of war; they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities will be upon their bones, because of the terror of the mighty in the land of the living. Yes, you shall be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and lie with those slain by the sword” (Ezek. 32:26–28).

“Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, “Thus says the LORD God: ‘Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer, and all his troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north, and all its troops—many people are with you’”” (Ezek. 38:1–6).



Great Pyramid and Sphinx, Egypt

AND THE LORD
WILL
STRIKE
EGYPT,
HE WILL STRIKE
AND HEAL IT;
THEY WILL
RETURN TO
THE LORD.

ISA. 19:22



Saudi Arabia



Egypt



Russia

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"And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; and I will turn you around and lead you on, bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel. Then I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand. You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and the beasts of the field to be devoured. You shall fall on the open field; for I have spoken," says the Lord GOD. "And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I am the LORD"' (Ezek. 39:1-6).

So, what does all this mean?

How do we bring it all together? These questions have been studied and pondered by Bible scholars throughout the ages, so I will not even attempt an absolute answer. But let me share with you the categories where I put each nation:

- 1** Nations that the Bible seems to tell us will eventually have peace with Israel: Lebanon, Egypt (after a time of conflict), northern Iraq (Assyria)
- 2A** Nations that the Bible seems to tell us will eventually have war with Israel and then face destruction: parts of Jordan (Edom), Turkey (Meshech and Tubal), Iran (Persia), Ethiopia, Libya, Ukraine/Germany (Gomer), parts of Turkey, Kurdistan, Turkestan, and Armenia (Togarmah)
- 2B** Nations that the Bible seems to tell us will eventually have war with Israel and then peace: parts of Jordan (Ammon and Moab), Egypt
- 3** Nations that the Bible seems to tell us God will destroy: Syria (Damascus), Babylon/Chaldeans (?), and Saudia Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, some of Iraq and Jordan (Arabia)

Your list and categories may be different than mine, and of course, some of the categories may overlap. But, either way, you now have a tool to use as you ponder the daily headlines and the Bible. The nations surrounding Israel seem in more turmoil than ever before. Right now it seems that almost anything could happen. The Arab Spring has certainly not lead to instant peace and democracy.

In conclusion, I want to make four suggestions:

1. Keep studying.

These are deep waters that no one will totally understand until the Lord completes these prophecies, but they are a challenging area to continue to study. Remember that the Christian Scriptures encourage us to be sober and vigilant, making sure that we are correctly discerning the times we are living in.

2. Be humble and open-minded.

Let's stay humble in our own view of these things. Recognize that well-intentioned, well-studied people have different opinions on these prophecies. That may mean that I am wrong. It may mean that you are wrong. Let us not break the bond of love and peace over these matters.

3. Recognize prophecy when it happens.

Judaism spends much less time than Christianity on trying to figure out the details of prophecy in advance. The Jewish approach is much more that prophecy is given to us so that we can recognize events when they happen. There is some wisdom in incorporating this concept into our approach.

4. Pray for all these nations.

Some have a future, and eventually a positive relationship with Israel. The very idea of a peaceful, God-centered coalition of these nations seems impossible in today's political and spiritual world. That is even more reason to pray. God loves the whole world and seeks to reconcile all men to Himself. Be careful not to let our love for Israel cause us to forget to pray for these other nations.

By Jim Solberg, US National Director

All Scripture is taken from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

Bridges for Peace is a Jerusalem-based, Bible-believing Christian organization supporting Israel and building relationships between Christians and Jews worldwide through education and practical deeds expressing God's love and mercy.

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