

**Grace to Syria and Its Refugees in Prophecy and Bible History – God’s Heart, Our Part**  
*Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on September 15, 2013*  
[www.goldcountrybaptist.org](http://www.goldcountrybaptist.org)

I fear some evangelicals seem only focused on Syria prophetically (an alleged future Damascus doomsday they misinterpret from Isaiah 17 as soon or in the tribulation)<sup>1</sup> while others seem only focused on Syria politically. But these focuses miss God's heart in OT history and prophecy for the Syrian people, from the days of Genesis to the days of Jesus and beyond. The Word of God has much to say about God's care of refugees, widows, and orphans in general, and this country in particular. Syria has one of the worst refugee crises in decades and one of the greatest opportunities for Christian witness if the church will keep her focus on what Christ called His disciples to whenever they asked Him about prophetic signs of the end times or Israel’s future.

*Matt. 24:3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”<sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you ...<sup>6</sup> “You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.<sup>7</sup> “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.<sup>8</sup> “But all these things are merely the beginning...<sup>14</sup> “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come...<sup>46</sup> “Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.*

The context in v. 44-45 is a ready slave who doesn’t know when his Master will return, but he is a good and faithful serving slave who the Master Jesus will find doing what He asked him to do. Jesus will bless that slave (v. 47).

Our job isn’t to figure out what no human knows, not even the angels in heaven, our job is in v. 14: *to preach the gospel to all nations on the earth.* The kingdom to come won't come till the gospel of the kingdom goes to all. We’re not to sit and just watch the news and so-called prophecy experts on Christian TV and try to figure out the end of the world, we’re to tell the world the gospel, as chapter 28 says *make disciples of all nations to the end of the age*

The resurrected Christ is about to ascend to heaven and they ask a similar question again in Acts 1:6: *So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”<sup>7</sup> He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;<sup>8</sup> but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*

Don’t focus on the end of the world, bring the gospel to the end of the earth. It's not for us to know when the kingdom will be restored to Israel, it's not for us to look only on Israel, but beyond Jerusalem to the nations around them for gospel witness. Not to be experts in prophecy but evangelists to all. Somehow I’m not sure our witness to the Middle East is helped by writing articles that say Damascus is doomed to be wiped off the map forever soon, but some authors seem happy to use that message to sell you their book for \$25 to explain Syria’s end time demise

One writer wrote back in the 1970s (and I think the trends are worse today): 'Our preoccupation with the fulfilment of prophecy generally means that we have plenty to say *about* the Jews, but less to say *to* the Jews, and even less to say to the Arabs—particularly the Palestinians...The disciples put to Jesus a question about the status of the Jews in relation to their own land and to the occupying powers: 'Lord is this the time when you are to establish once again the sovereignty of Israel?' They were ... longing for the day when the Jews would have their own independent kingdom in the Promised Land.

And how did Jesus answer? 'It is not for you to know about dates or times, which the Father has set within his own control ...' The primary task of the disciples was to bear witness to Jesus to the ends of the earth. If Jesus did not want his disciples *then* to know about these dates and times, is there any reason why we as his disciples *now* in the [21<sup>st</sup>] century should expect to know the answer [or expect modern writers to know more than apostles]?

Christian interest in the fulfilment of prophecy has certainly strengthened the support for a Christian ministry among the Jews, but it does not seem to have led to any concern for Christian witness among Muslims in the Arab world. I cannot help feeling that much of our interest in the fulfilment of prophecy in contemporary events in the Middle East represents a reversion to the old attitude of the disciples and therefore stands in need of the same firm but loving correction from ... Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

In Acts 2 God begins to bring Acts 1:8 to pass as these Jewish disciples proclaim God's mighty work of salvation in the languages of the surrounding nations:

<sup>9</sup> *"Parthians and Medes and Elamites ... [area of modern Iran] ... and residents of Mesopotamia [modern Iraq], Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,<sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia [some of those are in Turkey, which has been a Muslim stronghold through the centuries], Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene [where Benghazi is, top news 9/11/2012], and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,<sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs ...*

Peter in v. 17 quotes the prophet Joel that in the last days God promised to pour His Spirit on all mankind. In v. 21 he declares everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And some 3,000 do repent and join the church as the end of the chapter says, Arabs with Israelis, Iraqis, Iranians, people from Benghazi or later Muslim strongholds in Christian brotherhood

<sup>44</sup> *And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;<sup>45</sup> and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.<sup>46</sup> Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,<sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with **all the people**. [including Arabs from v. 11 who converted to Christ]*

The church today needs to keep Acts 1-2 in mind. With all the political talk about Syria and Egypt and Israel and Iran and Russia, we need to remember there's real people in all those nations and more in great need. Millions of Syrians have lost property and possessions, and the church of Jesus has an opportunity to share to meet their needs and their greatest need (Christ).

According to the UN refugee agency, more than 6 million Syrians are now refugees as a result of their civil war. Over 2 million are registered with the UN agency in neighboring countries, and over 4 million are displaced still in Syria, living in tents or crowded homes ... At the end of

August, 716,000 Syrian refugees were registered in Lebanon, 515,000 in Jordan, 460,000 in Turkey, 168,000 in Iraq and 110,000 in Egypt [all places from Acts 2] ... Ray Offenheiser urged the US to ... concentrate on easing the humanitarian crisis in the region. "The Syrian refugees I've met this week are crying out for peace," he said.<sup>3</sup>

But what message are U.S. Christians giving to Syrians in Damascus? Not peace, some say Damascus is about to be annihilated by the promise of God, so everyone better get out of town: Isaiah 17:1 *The oracle concerning Damascus. "Behold, Damascus is **about to** be removed from being a city And will become a fallen ruin...<sup>3</sup> The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, And sovereignty from Damascus, And the remnant of Aram [NKJV/ESV "remnant of Syria"]...*

If you believe some Scripture sensationalists, Israel may soon hit Damascus with a nuclear bomb, making a lifeless crater or heap of ruins. WND article runs a headline "Biblical Doom of Damascus 'Right Before Our Eyes'" and it opens with the picture of an atomic mushroom cloud. It quotes Tommy Ice, who argues it won't be a nuclear holocaust for Syria by man, it will be Tribulation wrath from the Lord Himself who "not only judges and destroys Damascus, but all of Israel's historic enemies that surround her."<sup>4</sup> Is that the message NT Christians are to send Syrian people: God says you're going to get nuked or annihilated by God with all other Arab nations!

Why don't I read people talking about the grace promised to Syria in the rest of v. 3, glorious salvation for Syrians? v. 3b in ESV: '*...the remnant of Syria will be like the glory of the children of Israel, declares the LORD of hosts.*' That's language of salvation, the remnant of Israel was the true children of God, and Isaiah speaks of a Syrian remnant also like the glory of God's children of Israel. Isaiah 35:2 prophecies the land of Carmel (in biblical Syria) "*will see the glory of God*"

There is grace in the prophets but this prophecy of the defeat of Damascus in 17:1 was fulfilled in 732 B.C. (as *MacArthur Study Bible* notes say and responsible futurists<sup>5</sup> or standard reference works state). Isaiah's prophecies began in the year 739 B.C. and v. 1 says this is "about to" happen. This wasn't written to us but to Damascus when Assyria was *about to* remove it

Here's what the Assyrian King wrote then: 'I destroyed 591 cities from the 16 districts of Damascus like hills over which the flood had swept...'<sup>6</sup> That's what v. 1 said would happen, Damascus will be ruined, fallen. Not forever, but swept away or taken away. Isa. 8 said "*Damascus ... will be carried off by the king of Assyria ... the Lord is **about to** bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the River - the king of Assyria...*" (v. 4, 7). That's exactly the language of history as to what happened. Isaiah 17:3 says at the same time as the defeat of Damascus, Ephraim (Israel) would be attacked by Assyria. 17:4 says it would be "in that day" Assyria conquers Israel and Damascus. Everyone agrees Israel was conquered by Assyria in 732, so "in that day" for Damascus can't be referring to something more than 2,700 years later.

A parallel prophecy in Amos of Assyria's conquering Damascus says Syria would be taken captive to Kir (Amos 3:1-5). 2 Kings 16:9 is the fulfillment: "*Assyria went up against Damascus and...carried its people captive to Kir...*" Isaiah 17:1 doesn't say people would never live in Damascus again (a huge geographical area) just like v. 3 doesn't mean Israel would never be rebuilt. But v. 3 in the context of Assyria's invasion does say Israel's fortress/power in Ephraim would be taken and sovereignty from the kingdom of Damascus.

The ancient archives of Assyria say: “In 732 BC, the kingdom of Damascus lost its independence and existence, its holdings carved up into Assyrian provinces. Israel, on the other hand, was allowed to survive, albeit reduced to a fraction of its former size and cut off from the sea.”<sup>7</sup>

Exactly what Isaiah said was “about to happen” did indeed happen “in that day,” in their lifetime. One writer explains: ‘Isaiah and Amos prophesied concerning events that would take place during the lifetime of the audiences that heard their warnings, not about events that would take place...in the 21st century ... well-known leaders<sup>8</sup> are promoting the idea that current events involving Syria are about to lead to the fulfillment of Isaiah 17 ... One prophecy website even shows an aerial photo of the modern city of Damascus with the word “GONE!!!” posted above it in large letters, and Isaiah 17:1 posted beneath it. If we’re not careful, our failure to recognize fulfilled prophecy can actually give way to a desire to see the destruction of people and nations in our world and in our time, so that we can place check marks next to prophecies that were already fulfilled a long time ago. The Bible does not teach that Damascus and Syria are about to be destroyed. [They were in OT times but today] can experience the healing of the water of life<sup>9</sup>

Turn back to Gen. 12 and I want you to see *that begins in early OT times* with the first prophecy of gospel blessings from Israel to all the nations. The point of Israel’s continued existence through history is not the annihilation of other nations around them! It’s God’s plan to bring salvation to nations around them. God blessed Israel so they would bless Syrians, Arabs, and all: **12:1** *Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; <sup>2</sup> And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; **And so you shall be a blessing** [that’s the whole point]. End of v. 3 is prophecy “in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”*

Paul calls that the gospel to Abraham for all nations. This has always been God’s plan for the Jews. That’s why in the verses we read at the beginning, Jesus reminds Jewish disciples to proclaim the gospel to all before the end. The Great Commission is not a new mission, it’s a re-commission of what God always intended for Israel, to be witnesses in Judea, Samaria, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Egypt, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. And in Genesis, God begins to bring Syrians into His multi-ethnic family. The suffering people of war-torn Syria need to hear of God’s grace for them and spiritual children of Abraham (Christians) need to pray and proclaim it

Look at 14:14 when another war took captives into the area of Syria: *When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan [Dan was located in Syria of Bible times]. <sup>15</sup> He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of **Damascus**. <sup>16</sup> He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people.*

Does God care about displaced people in Syria, women affected by war? In the 1st mention of war and Damascus in the Bible, the answer’s a clear yes! Some maps of the biblical people of Dedan place them near Damascus. In Jeremiah 49, when God prophesies a coming judgment when many men will die, He says “*turn back...O inhabitants of Dedan...Leave your orphans behind, I will keep them alive; and let your widows trust in Me*” (v. 8, 11).

Inhabitants of Dedan, whether it covers the area of Syria or Jordan (Edom), or other Arabs (as other maps place Dedan in Arabia not in the north) whatever the exact geography is, the point is that God has grace for their refugees. He calls the widows of these people to trust in Him.

In Genesis 15:2 we find out someone in Abraham's household of faith is a native of the Syrian city of Damascus, one who would be heir of his house. Some think he had been adopted by Abram and others believe this Eliezer is the same trusted servant of Abraham in Gen 25 who is clearly a believer who is part of the household of faith, blessed in and with Abraham in fulfillment of the prophecy of Gen 12:3. If you look at Gen 25, other Syrian believers join Abraham's family of faith. 25:20 *"Isaac Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian"* (NKJV)

In Gen 28, Jacob also marries a Syrian/Aramean believer, so from the start of God's chosen people, God had been choosing Syrians for His family as part of the fulfillment of the Gen 12:3 prophecy. Syrians are blessed with Abraham and his descendants from the 1<sup>st</sup> book of the OT.

Jacob lived many years in Aram so God's Word calls him Aramean/Syrian. God tells Israel this as they gather to worship in Dt 26:5: *"You shall answer and say before the LORD your God, 'My father was a wandering Aramean [NKJV "my father was a Syrian, about to perish"], and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; but there he became a great, mighty and populous nation. <sup>6</sup> 'And the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, and imposed hard labor on us. <sup>7</sup> 'Then we cried to the LORD ...*

This is an OT message we should be giving Syrians, not wrenching an OT prophecy out of context about Damascus to make a buck and make enemies of those Jesus told us to make disciples of. God hates mishandling of His Word and especially when those he loves think He hates them because of what they read from American 'Christian' websites and bestselling books

God doesn't want Damascus or Syria to perish by the army of Israel, in fact, the Torah says Israel himself was once a "Syrian, about to perish," but God was gracious to Jacob (renamed Israel) and their descendants so that Israel would be gracious to others who were forced to wander or sojourn as well. The OT words in v. 5 very much fit modern Syrian refugees who have been displaced from their homes and forced to wander and live in foreign lands. Over 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the population of Syria from 2011 are in this same situation.

The words in v. 6 for harsh treatment and affliction very much describe the plight of millions in Syria, but there is grace to Syria here we need to share. In v. 7 God sees affliction and oppression and hears those who cry out. It was an estimated 2 million Israelites who were part of a mass exodus from the land where they grew up, which is also the current estimate of the mass exodus from Syria in this civil war, 2 million plus now outside the land they grew up in, wandering Syrians much like Jacob the father of Israel was, also about to perish if others don't help. This is a message of hope for Syrians!

When God blessed His people in this chapter (the context is 40 years of wandering refugees) it was so they would bless others, sharing of their food, firstfruits, or finances with other sojourners, refugees, orphans, and widows.

Verse 10 says after recounting Israel's history in Syria and its sojourning, in their worship in their homes in the promised land they were also to say this: <sup>10</sup> *'Now behold, I have brought the first of the produce of the ground which You, O LORD have given me.'* And you shall set it down before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God; <sup>11</sup> *and you and the Levite and the alien who is among [outside their land for whatever reason. Some might be refugees, others resident strangers] you shall rejoice in all the good which the LORD your God has given you and your household.* <sup>12</sup> *"When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, **to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied.*** <sup>13</sup> *"You shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred portion from my house, and also have given it to the Levite and **the alien, the orphan and the widow, according to all Your commandments ...***

Chapter 24 gives laws to God's people to provide food for the sojourner, the refugee, the widow, the fatherless (all of which Syrians are in great need of). Chapter 10 tells us God has a love for people like Syrians who have to take up residence in foreign lands. 10:18 says God *"loves the resident foreigner, giving them food or clothing."* Turn to chapter 14. How does God show His love to resident alien refugees? By giving food, clothing from God's people

14:28–29 *"At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit it in your town.* <sup>29</sup> *"The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, **and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.**" [God blesses those who share and care like that]*

It's not just for charity alone but for the witness of the Word: Deut. 31:12 *Assemble the people, the men and the women and children **and the alien who is in your town, so that they may hear and learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law.***

This is one way God fulfills the prophecy of Gen 12:3 for Syrians and other surrounding nations who are in need and come to towns of God's people or where God's people minister: feeding their stomachs and feeding their souls.

Some of these peoples still speak the old Syrian Aramaic language, what an opportunity to tell them that is the language Jesus spoke many of His words of love! In the gospels many times a writer explains the meaning of a word He said in Aramaic, which the KJV calls 'the Syrian language' (Isaiah 36:11). It was in Syria of NT times, in a place called Caesarea Philippi, that Jesus revealed His identity to Peter and gave His promise that He would build His church which the gates of Hades would not be able to prevail against (Matt 16:18) [nor can Assad's regime!]

When Jesus preached not too far from the border of Syria, He preached how the Syrian general Naaman experienced God's healing grace as Jesus brings up in Luke 4 how God gave grace to this Syrian but not others in Israel. In that same sermon in Luke 4 Jesus highlights God's grace to a Syrian widow.

How about we give *that message* to suffering Syrian widows today who lost a husband in the civil war! God has grace for suffering Syrians, for widows.

Let's speak like Jesus did in the NT, not speak OT doom on Syria to try and sell books while being a stumbling block to the gospel for Syrian refugees. Christians predicting the annihilation of Damascus by Jews or Jesus are not only being offensive to the mission field, they're being offensive to God in misinterpreting Scripture and misrepresenting God's heart for the Syrians!

Let's be more like Jesus who gave grace to a Syrian Phoenician woman who had great faith and he delivered her daughter from sin's dominion (Mark 7). Matthew 4:24 says of Jesus "*News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain ... the paralyzed, and he healed them.*" (NIV). Christians have a far better message to offer than destruction: come to Jesus, He can heal you!

The Syrians have heard enough about America's warpath toward Damascus, how about we tell them about peace Jesus brought on the road to Damascus to a man who wanted to kill Christians as much as modern Muslim Syrians? The guy who wrote almost half the books in the NT was saved in Syria and planted churches in Syria. The name "Christian" began in the land of Syria! It was home to church fathers Ignatius, Chrysostom, John of Damascus, etc. Syria became a center of Christianity spreading to the rest of the world. For the first 600 years of church history, some say Syria was 90% Christian at one time before it was overrun by Muslims. It may have been the first or closest nation to being a truly Christian nation.

Syrian Christians translated the Scriptures and sent missionaries to Ethiopia. Antioch in Syria became an important refuge for early Christians who fled persecution by Jews in Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> Christians have opportunity to return the favor to Syrian Christians fleeing Muslim persecution or unsaved refugees.

And some are: 'reports of bloodshed and destruction paint a grim picture of the Syrian refugee crisis, [but] indigenous ministry leaders are sending word of an unprecedented openness to the good news. "We have never had so many opportunities," reports one Lebanese leader. "We are asking fellow believers to leave their jobs and work with the refugees because there is such hunger for the gospel. And they are! Christians are leaving their jobs and going out by faith ..."

Another Lebanon-based ministry finds that an increasing number of Muslim parents are entrusting them to teach their children about Jesus. Of the 150 families they are reaching through Sunday school and women's Bible studies, 98 percent are Muslim.

But revival isn't only limited to Lebanon. A ministry leader in Iraq, home to 180,000 Syrian refugees, writes, "Christ's message is very effective in such circumstances, and we find as soon as we open our mouths, a listener is praying, asking the Lord with tears of repentance for divine intervention. Hundreds of people have surrendered their lives to the Lord through our door-to-door visits. We pray with them and invite them to a house church meeting." ... One ministry has gradually increased its outreach to 50 Syrian refugee families. They began by approaching ten families at a time, visiting them at their homes multiple times each week to listen, pray, offer material aid, and eventually share the gospel ...

Instead of becoming flustered by the amount of work to be done in the fleeting hours of each day, native missionaries are taking the time to sit and love the person in front of them—engaging in a personal encounter that means so much to someone lost and scared in a strange place. In this quiet way, lives are restored, hope is renewed, and the gospel goes forward. Against the backdrop of darkness, lights are appearing one by one.

What do these lights look like? Like the Syrian widow in Lebanon who gave her life to Christ when a native missionary discovered her a month after losing her husband in the conflict ... she and her three little boys slept on a single mattress inside a concrete storage unit. Sharing the gospel message and the love of the Savior, the missionary provided her with three additional mattresses and warm bedding-resources that were purchased with funds sent by Christian Aid donors.

The lights look like the Muslim couple who became Christians when an indigenous ministry provided them with the funds to pay for an operation needed by the husband after he was hit by a car. "We will not forget what you did for us-we are in debt to you for the rest of our lives," the wife told the ministry leader. He told her that she owed him nothing, but to thank Jesus, Who had seen them in their distress and loves them.

The lights look like the couple who escaped to Turkey with their two daughters. A native missionary assisted by Christian Aid visited them and found only a rug in their home on which the children slept. They'd left Syria without any possessions. The missionary returned with beds and food. Touched by the act of kindness, the wife read the New Testament left by the missionary to her family daily. They accepted Christ during one of the missionary's regular follow-up visits. The lights are the eight additional people this Turkish missionary baptized last month. Hundreds more lights shine forth, as native missionaries who focus on one life at a time are freeing "captives from prison, releasing those who sit in dark..." Isa 42:7<sup>11</sup>

Now that's a prophecy from Isaiah that does apply directly to our times.

To help Syrian refugees in Iraq through a Christian ministry there, go to:

<http://www.christianaid.org/Projects/2012/201210-444SHM.aspx>

Another organization I have given through is:

<http://www.worldcompassion.tv/i-am-syria/>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wnd.com/2013/08/biblical-doom-of-damascus-right-before-our-eyes/#Jwpbl9z68vJqvPLV.99>

<sup>2</sup> Colin Chapman, "Prophecy and the Gospel in the Middle East," *Evangelical Review of Theology* (1977): vol. 1, p. 65-67.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/middle-east/syria/130903/syria-refugees-two-million-united-nations-civil-war-assad>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.wnd.com/2013/08/biblical-doom-of-damascus-right-before-our-eyes/#Jwpbl9z68vJqvPLV.99>

<sup>5</sup> In addition to John MacArthur who has written much on prophecy, others such as John Walvoord who is one of the most prolific dispensationalist writers on end times and the middle east, wrote "the destruction of Damascus was fulfilled in history" (*Every Prophecy of the Bible*, 1990 paperback edition, p. 101. Mark Hitchcock, also from Dallas Seminary and author of many books on prophecy, wrote in his 2012 book *Middle East Burning: Is the Spreading Unrest a Sign of the End Times?* "I believe it makes more sense to hold that Isaiah 17 was fulfilled in the eighth century B.C." (p. 156). *The 1917 Scofield Reference Bible* on Isaiah 17:1 has this note "there was doubtless a near fulfilment in Sennacherib's approaching invasion ..."

<sup>6</sup> *Annals of the Assyrians*, 23:16'7'

<sup>7</sup> <http://kloposmasm.com/2013/09/08/the-bible-does-not-teach-that-damascus-syria-is-about-to-be-destroyed-2/>

<sup>8</sup> Joel Rosenberg is at least one exception who teaches Isaiah 17 is future but he has a heart for the gospel to Syrians and I would echo much of what he writes below:

[http://www.joshuafund.net/media/the\\_joshua\\_fund\\_blog/four\\_ways\\_christians\\_can\\_make\\_a\\_difference\\_during\\_the\\_syria\\_egypt\\_crises/](http://www.joshuafund.net/media/the_joshua_fund_blog/four_ways_christians_can_make_a_difference_during_the_syria_egypt_crises/) I'm not a fan of end times fiction and would disagree with futuristic interpretations of Isaiah 17 as I explained above, but I don't doubt Joel's heart or care for Syrians, and I gladly appreciate his blog prayer.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Much of this section is indebted to <http://www.twoagespilgrims.com/doctrine/?p=15285#sthash.IW58TuEt.dpuf>

<sup>11</sup> These stories are from [www.christianaid.org/News/2013/mir20130905.aspx](http://www.christianaid.org/News/2013/mir20130905.aspx)

See also <http://www.christianpost.com/news/syrian-refugees-hungry-for-message-of-jesus-christians-urged-to-help-102284/>