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Damascus

Mentioned first in the Bible in connection with Abraham rescuing his nephew Lot (Gen. 14:15), Damascus, the capital of **Syria**, is traditionally regarded as the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. In modern times the city was liberated from Turkish rule in 1918 by Arab forces and by British forces led by General Allenby. The city then came under the control of **France** through a League of Nations mandate, but by the end of World War 2 it had become the capital of an independent **Syria**.

In Isaiah 17 the "burden of Damascus" (v. 1) goes on to speak of a great invasion of many nations: "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, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the **mountains** before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind" (vv. 12,13). This invasion will come to pass at the time of the end when **Gog** invades the land of **Israel**. Just like the invasions of **Assyria**, **Babylon** and **Greece**, the invasion of **Gog**, it seems, will be a burden for Damascus. We can therefore expect Damascus to be overrun by the Gogian army as it heads through **Syria** into **Israel**.

In the Kingdom the territory of the tribe of Dan will encroach into the region of Damascus: "Now these are the names of the tribes. From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus northward, to the coast of Hamath; for these are his sides east and west; a portion for Dan" (Ezek. 48:1).

- **1516** Captured by Ottoman Sultan Selim I
- **1918** Arab troops enter with British forces under General Allenby
- **1920** Capital of a French Levant State
- **1925** Battles with French troops outside city
- **1941** Free French and British forces enter
- **1973** Bombed by **Israel**.

Dedan

There was a Dedan who was a descendant of Ham: "And the sons of Ham; **Cush**, and Miz-

raim, and **Phut**, and Canaan. And the sons of **Cush**; **Seba**, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah: and the sons of Raamah; **Sheba**, and Dedan" (Gen. 10:6,7). There was also a Dedan who was a grandson of Abraham: "And Jokshan begat **Sheba**, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim" (25:3). In both these cases there is a brother named **Sheba**.

In later passages the name Dedan is used to refer to a people who descended from Dedan, but it is not always easy to identify which Dedan is being referred to in each passage. However, it is thought that both peoples settled towards the south of **Israel** in the Arabian Peninsula. In Jeremiah 49 it is written: "Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him" (v. 8). Here Dedan is located in relation to Esau, or **Edom**, which was to the south-east of **Israel**. Ezekiel 25 also confirms this location: "therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out Mine hand upon **Edom**, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from **Teman**; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword" (v. 13).

In Ezekiel 27 it seems that the two peoples of Dedan are differentiated. One group, probably the Hamitic group, traded in ivory and ebony: "The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony" (v. 15). The other, presumably Abrahamitic, group traded in cloth: "Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots" (v. 20). Dedan corresponds to modern-day **Saudi Arabia**. Near the modern town of Al-Ola in **Saudi Arabia** are remains of a city known in ancient times as Dedan, which was at one time the second capital of the Nabateans.

Dedan is mentioned in Ezekiel 38 as questioning the Gogian invader: "**Sheba**, and Dedan, and the merchants of **Tarshish**, with all the **young lions** thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?" (v. 13). This shows that Dedan will have links with the **Tarshish** power, and it also shows that it will not be allied to the Gogian force when it invades **Israel**.

Dragon

The dragon represents a power from which come forth unclean teachings at the time of the end: "And I saw three unclean spirits like **frogs** come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the **beast**, and out of the mouth of the **false prophet**" (Rev. 16:13). The dragon first appears in Revelation 12: "And there appeared another wonder in **heaven**; and behold a great red dragon, having **seven heads** and **ten horns**, and seven crowns upon his heads" (v. 3). In Revelation 12 the dragon represents pagan **Rome**, with the **seven heads** relating to the seven hills of **Rome** (17:9) and the **horns** representing countries over which **Rome** ruled.

In Ezekiel 29 Pharaoh is likened to a dragon: "Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of **Egypt**, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself" (v. 3). It may well be that the crocodile is the particular creature being referred to in this passage, an animal which formed the basis for one of the Egyptian gods. Previously the Egyptians had sought to kill the Israelite male children at birth (Ex. 1:16). This is similar to the way the dragon seeks to destroy a child at birth in Revelation 12: "and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born" (v. 4), signifying the way the pagan rulers tried to prevent the 'Christian' Constantine becoming emperor. This similarity between **Egypt** and pagan **Rome** is no doubt one reason why pagan **Rome** is symbolised by a creature previously used of **Egypt**.

With the accession of the 'Christian' Emperor Constantine, the pagan dragon was thrown out of the political **heavens** (v. 9). In Revelation 13 the dragon comes to signify the secular military power in the eastern part of the empire, based around **Constantinople**, which gives support to

the western part of the empire centred around **Rome**, symbolised by a **beast**: "And the **beast** which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (v. 2).

Using Revelation 13 as a pattern, Revelation 16 uses the dragon to represent a power at the time of the end whose territory will match much of the old part of the Eastern Roman Empire, including **Istanbul (Constantinople)**. It will be military in character, in contrast to the religious character of the **beast**. Its political and diplomatic rhetoric, signified by the "unclean spirits like **frogs**" (16:13), will be humanistic, with roots going back to the teachings of the French Revolution.

As **Gog** invades south it will take on the role of the dragon. Fittingly, it will get as far as **Egypt**, the spiritual home of the dragon (Dan. 11:42). In fact, when the **king of the north** reaches **Egypt**, he will explicitly behave in a dragonlike manner. In Daniel 11 it is written: "But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many" (v. 44). The word translated "fury" is the same word used in Deuteronomy for the poison of dragons: "their wine is the *poison* of dragons" (32:33). **Gog** will storm out of **Egypt** like a crocodile in fury.

Whether symbolising ancient **Egypt**, pagan **Rome**, the secular and military aspect of the Eastern Roman Empire or the Gogian power at the time of the end, a common denominator linking all these powers is the way in which man joins together in an organised way to oppose the things of God. They are political manifestations of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 Jno. 2:16). During the millennial reign of Christ man will not be allowed to organise himself in this way. This is symbolised by the dragon being bound (Rev. 20:2). ([Refs. 10, 26](#))

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Earthquake

Earthquakes in Bible prophecy can be both literal geophysical earthquakes and also political earthquakes. Earthquakes were one of the natural disasters which the Lord Jesus said would come upon the earth in the years leading up to

the scattering of the Jews by the Romans around A.D. 70: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places" (Mt. 24:7; cf. Lk. 21:11). Fulfillments of this verse included the famine in the days of Claudius Caesar (Acts 11:28) and the earthquake