

Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990, USA

© ASK, January 2025 • Telephone: 503 292 4352

Webpage on the Internet: <https://www.askelm.com> • E-Mail address: [askoffice@askelm.com](mailto:askoffice@askelm.com)

Dear Associates and Friends,

January 2025

The January 2025 article is "[The Expansion and Portability of Zion](#)." The city of Damascus in Syria is in the news because a long civil war within Syria seems to have ended, with rebels gaining power, supported by the government of Turkey immediately north of Syria. Russia supported the dictator Bashar al-Asad who fled and is in exile in Moscow. It is always difficult to keep track of the combatants in Middle East international wars and politics.

This month's article follows from the research of Dr. Martin's 1999 article: "[The Damascus Phase of End-Time Prophecy](#)."<sup>1</sup> I reformatted and expanded it in 2011. I **highly** recommend you review the Damascus article before you read the January 2025 "Zion" article. Together, Dr. Martin's two articles will educate you in little-known prophecies of important events to occur in Damascus, but also in the neighboring areas of Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, and Israel. There will be a time of peace, prosperity ... and destruction. All will occur according to God's timetable. No one knows "when" these events will occur. Once they happen, it will be obvious.

It is not my desire to generate false hope, but a milestone of identifiable prophetic events may occur in the near future, beginning in the area of Damascus. We will live in "interesting" times ...

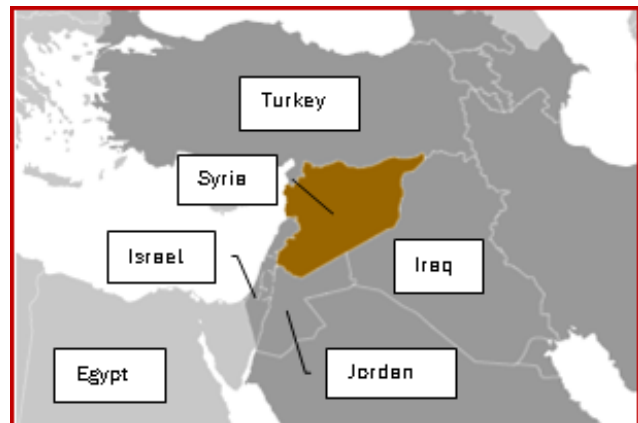
### *Syria's Present Turmoil*

The civil war in Syria that began in 2011 seems to be ending. Rebel fighters captured the Syrian capital of Damascus early on December 15, 2024. Government forces loyal to the country's president, Bashar al-Assad resisted only a few days before retreating. Damascus is the capital of Syria with over 2,600,000 people. Aleppo, a large city in the north Syria was captured days before Damascus was abandoned by Syrian government forces.

The Psalmist wrote: "**Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love you.**" (Psalm 122:6 KJV). We probably should also pray for the peace in Damascus. Dr. Martin's articles will explain why we should do so.

As I wrote in the June 1, 2011 Commentary, "[Syria in Prophecy](#)," my words were hopeful then, but no peace came for Syria. I am hopeful for peace again, 13+ years later:

*When God intervenes again in world affairs He will cause people to have greater liberty of thought and action. He will begin in Syria. Happiness comes from an availability of opportunity [and prosperity follows for a society]. Events taking place in Syria today may be a bridge from the present situation to biblically identifiable [prophetic] events. Dr. Martin's article gives background of the signifi-*



<sup>1</sup> Originally written in November 1999, Dr. Martin updated it in November 2000. I edited it in 2006, and updated it again in June 2011.

cance of Syria and Damascus in the past, and he explains future biblically prophesied events that involve Damascus and the people of Syria. Those events will be largely beneficial.

As the people demand liberty of thought and action, governments will have an increasingly difficult time suppressing those demands. In the houses, shops, coffee houses, and universities, the Arab people across the Middle East are asking each other: “Why can’t we have political parties like other countries? Why are our elections a sham? Why is there so much corruption in dealing with government officials? Why does it seem impossible for me and my children to seek a better life?”

### ***Still More Revelations of Catholic Clergy Child Abuse, and Payments to Victims***

In the “[December 2024 Newsletter](#)” I brought attention to news that the Los Angeles Archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church settled a lawsuit to pay \$1 billion to victims of child abuse by Catholic clergy. Since that information was reported, two other child abuse settlements went public.

A New York Diocese of the Catholic Church also settled lawsuit regarding clergy sexual abuse of children. That amount was \$200 million last year. Now another lawsuit has been settled in the same Diocese for even more: “[Court approves New York diocese’s record \\$323 million abuse settlement.](#)” These settlements severely affect the Diocese finances to the extent that they sought bankruptcy relief to obtain funds to pay the settlement. The court settlements allowed funds to be paid from “**contributions from insurers and diocesan churches.**”

Then a second news report went public: “[Vatican on the Brink of Bankruptcy Due to Dramatic Decline in Global Donations Under Pope Francis’ Leadership.](#)” There is a direct connection between the drop in contributions and court-ordered payments to survivors of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic clergy. People want their contributions to maintain and grow institutions, not to make payments for the (criminal) sexual sins of church leaders. The Roman Catholic Church is dying. See my 2002 Commentary: “[The Decline in the Churches](#)” and my 2006 article, “[Further Decline of the Churches.](#)” Frankly, I thought the institutional decline (and collapse) would occur sooner than it has.

### ***Receipts for Your 2024 Contributions***

Each year we remind contributors that you must request a receipt for us to send you a receipt for the entire year. I will remind you again in the February 2025 Newsletter. We wait until after the second week of January to make sure we account for all 2024 contributions.

### ***Thank You***

Some people ask, what is the will of God? The apostle Paul tells us in a certain sense:

**“Be rejoicing always. Be praying unintermittingly. In everything be giving thanks, for THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD in Christ Jesus FOR YOU.”**

• ***1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 CLV***

Yes, God’s will concerning you is that you give thanks in everything. Why? Because it has a positive effect upon you. We try to do the same. To paraphrase the apostle Paul: “whatsoever [we] do in word or deed, [we try to] do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks [for you] to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17). We try to express our thanks to you and to God. Thank you all.

We are thankful to all of you who contribute and sustain the work of ASK. We hope ASK has been such a benefit to you that you thank God that ASK exists and continues to flourish. ASK is unique in the information it presents. Thank you for your continued support. May God bless you by increasing His Spirit, knowledge, and understanding within you. Such is His love for you and your role in His creation, present and future, as a fully mature child of God.

David Sielaff  
[david@askelm.com](mailto:david@askelm.com)