

**Title:** *“The Apologetics of the fall of Damascus”*

**Sub-Title:** *“The Road to Destruction”*

**Key Verse of Isaiah 9:6** “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

**Key Verse of Apologetics: I Peter 3:15** “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:”

**Introduction:** Damascus is the capital city of Syria, the home town of Sodom Hussain. It once was one of the wealthiest and influential cities in Middle East. “In 1960, the richest per capita city in America, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, was Detroit. Today (2013) Detroit has filed bankruptcy, the largest city to do so.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rick Matthews, “Detroit Bankrupt: To See Detroit’s Decline, Look at 40 Years of Federal Policy,” Mic, <https://www.mic.com/articles/45563/detroit-bankrupt-to-see-detroit-s-decline-look-at-40-years-of-federal-policy> (accessed August 3, 2019).

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Damascus also was a much greater city, and of more significant importance. In fact, “Founded in the third millennium B.C., Damascus was an important cultural and commercial centre, by virtue of its geographical position at the crossroads of the orient and the occident, between Africa and Asia. The old city of Damascus is considered to be among the oldest cities in the World.”<sup>2</sup>

One may wonder what the significance is in learning about an ancient city in the Middle East, relative to the life of a Christian in the Western Hemisphere, in 2019 A.D? Well, I am glad that you asked! Let’s think about the old city of Damascus at one might think of the testimony of a believer over the course of a lifetime...Did this Christian have a better testimony for Christ in their twenties, than in their fifties, sixties, or seventies? Or did this Christian have a clear and consistent testimony for Christ to the very end of their earthly life?

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<sup>2</sup> Author Unknown, “Ancient City of Damascus,” United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/20> (accessed August 3, 2019).

Many Christians at the end of their lives may not only not have a good testimony for Christ, but may have a testimony that brings shame and regret on their name, and even the family name. We are warned against this very issue that Damascus found herself in ***Revelation 2:4*** ***“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”*** Damascus had turn her face from the One and only true God to dead, false gods. As a result Damascus suffered greatly. Let's see what else we can learn from this account in Isaiah chapter seventeen.

**Text: Isaiah 17:1-14** “The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.”

- A. **Jeremiah 49:23** 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.”
- B. **Amos 1:3** “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:”
- C. **Zachariah 9:1** “The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be the rest thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the LORD.”

**D. II Kings 16:9** “And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.”

- 1.) The city of Damascus had 365 streets in in and each street had a pagan god named after it. Damascus had wholly been given over to the worship of these pagan gods. Damascus had one pagan god for every day of the year.
- 2.) The account of the city of Damascus is a teaching moment for everyone one. An idol, or god, small g, may be defined as anything that comes before or between a person and their Creator and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**Vs. 3** “The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts.”

- **Isaiah 7:16** “For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.”

1.) Damascus was the capital city of Syria.

2.) The Israelites were deported from Syria in 722 B.C.

3.) God's remnant was removed from the idolatrous Syria that they may live in righteousness.

**Vs. 4** “And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.”

- **Isaiah 10:16** “Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.”

1). Damascus brought judgment upon themselves not blessing.

2). The Israelites had to suffer before they were let free from captivity.

**Vs. 5** “And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.”

- **Jeremiah 51:33** “For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.”

**Vs. 6** “Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel.”

- **Isaiah 24:13** “When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.”

**Vs. 7** “At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.”

- **Micah 7:7** “Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.”

1). The day of judgment everyone will recognize and reference the Lord Jesus Christ.

2). The Lord is merciful and will respond to the prayers of those that seek Him

**Vs. 9** “In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation.”



**Vs.10** “Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:”

- **Psalm 68:19** “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.”

**Vs. 11** “In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.”

**Vs. 13** “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.”

A. **Psalm 9:5** “Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.”

B. **Psalm 83:13** “O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind.”

C. **Hosea 13:3** “Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.”

1. **Apologetic argument one:** If God can judge Damascus and see the destruction of the oldest city in the world the Lord will judge your city and allow it to fall.

2. **Apologetic argument two:** If Isaiah's prophecy, “in that day,” came true and it did in 742 B.C. the day of the Lord that is in the immanent future will come to pass too.

**3. Apologetic argument three:** Those that committed idolatry in Damascus lost the blessing of God. If people today commit idolatry they will certainly not have the Lord's blessings.

**4. Apologetic argument four:** The judgment of God demonstrates His righteousness. Because He is righteous, He demonstrates His is good, and that character allows Him to love His people. The goodness of God proves to be the greatest force in the World.

## **Applications:**

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2. Download Knight's Notes on: Excellent Way.tv.
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