

**The Land of Asshur and The Land of
Nimrod...Micah 5:6
(Some Thoughts on Prophecy)**

And this [man] shall be Peace. When the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight princes of men. And they shall waste the land of Asshur with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof; and he shall deliver [us] from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders. Mic.5:5-6 JND.

This little study is a continuation of what was previously looked at under the article, *Four Blood Moons of 2014 and 2015*. Two are behind and two are before, at this point in the writing. And if these Blood Moons are significant signposts having the nation of Israel as their central focus, then it becomes us to take a closer look at what these signposts might be pointing towards.

To me, the rise of the Assyrian in the name of ISIS is and has been the one dominant force on the landscape that has captured worldwide attention. At the time of this writing they have just recently executed the two Japanese hostages, immolated that captive Jordanian pilot, and brutally beheaded those 21 Coptic Christians in Libya; and the fear of them has permeated the globe. Israel, as yet, does not appear in their crosshairs as the direct foe, but do we have any doubt that that little nation is not in their vision? The Assyrian as the King of the North figures prominently in events of the last days before the Lord's return, so one wonders if we are not seeing the first real stirrings of this mighty foe. Yet Scripture indicates a future blessing for the Assyrian nation, as it does for Egypt and others. To understand this and a little of the present situation we must take a journey back into history.

A New Beginning.

Noah is referred to as the 10th from Adam. Peter describes Adam's world as the world that then

was, which perished with the overflowing waters (2 Pet.3:6). Noah began what might be termed 'the world that now is' or, as Peter calls it, the heavens and the earth, which are now, which will have its end by fire. The year of The Flood is believed by many to be 2348 BC. In the hundred years between that event and the division of the earth by languages, 2247 BC, Noah's sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons had populated that area we now call southern Iraq. There were no others. It appears they remained a contiguous group until the confusion into the 72 or so language groups necessitated their branching off from one another. Three individuals figure prominently in that time period and it is here we need to focus our attention for here we have the beginnings of the same three entities that figure largely in closing events of the coming day.

Genesis 10 and 11.

Biblical students are generally agreed that the events in these two chapters are not chronological with chapter 10 happening before chapter 11 but that the former simply gives the natural generations of the three families stating, by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood, while the latter presents the why these divisions came about, indicating as well the line through which God would initiate another "new beginning" in the person of Abraham, the 10th from Noah, a mere 300 or so years into the future (called out of UR around 1936 BC, out of Haran about 15 years later).

During the first 100 post-flood years as described in chapter 10 we get to see the family a little through Noah's eyes. In blessing his sons he says, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, indicating possibly that it was his middle son who had most regard for spiritual things and thus effectually inherited the firstborn's birthright; he says of his eldest, Japheth, that God shall enlarge Japheth and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, again intimating the change in birthright while announcing that this "Gentile line" would be large, as it is. Ham receives no blessing, having dishonored his father, and receives instead,

via his youngest son, Canaan, a limited curse: the descendants of Canaan would be servants to both those of Shem and of Japheth.

But it is the grandson of Ham, through Cush, that garners the most attention in the chapter. With the earth slowly being repopulated with animals so soon after the flood, wild game was at a premium and, no doubt, in demand. Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord, rose to prominence as the chief provider of such fare to the yet undispersed group and it is very likely his exploits in pursuit of such game took him far from their then habitat. He found, no doubt, that the Plain of Shinar to the east was most commodious and that area became the beginning of his kingdom, eventually building four “cities” on that plain, Babel being the first and the prime, to which the whole group eventually came. Nimrod was also a mighty builder, an early merchandiser with an eye to making for himself a name in the earth, and became, it appears, a leader among his brethren and the initiator of the Tower that caught the eye of One who beheld from afar. And so He came near for a closer look.

Nimrod’s description of being before the Lord may mislead some to believe he was a man of faith and devotion. The opposite appears true: he may well have become the first “giant in the earth”, post-flood. His name means “we will rebel” or “we will revolt” and it is this that Babel speaks of. Many Bible scholars believe him to be a tyrant who set himself up in opposition to God, disobeying the command to go forth and multiply in the earth. He was of a different spirit. A verse in Job 15 might be used to describe him: Why doth thine heart carry thee away? And what do thy eyes wink at, that thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth?(12,13). In any event, that choice area along the Euphrates became the home of the Babylonian, Chaldea, and in time would result in a formidable empire, represented by the golden head of Nebuchadnezzar’s image which would be erected eventually on that very plain.

But before that takes place another power will have risen to ascendancy in a region just to the north,

along the Tigris River. Nineveh will have its beginnings there and we have to look in that same chapter 10 to find it so. Scholars are divided as to who established Nineveh, many giving credit to Nimrod because of the marginal reading of verse 11, he went into Assyria and builded Nineveh. Evidence, however, seems to favor Asshur, son of Shem, as the actual founder, and many translations, including the respected JND, leaves verse 11 as it is recorded in the King James, out of that land went Asshur, and builded Nineveh. To me, verses 11 and 12 constitute a parenthesis in the naming of the generations of Ham, giving attention to an event resulting from the confusion of languages that occurred at Babel (verse 10), when Asshur of Shem went forth northwards in the dispersion, settling along the Tigris, founding Nineveh in 2218 BC, some 30 years after the language change. I believe the Lord, in putting these two future powers together at this juncture, is setting the scene for what will be the two major influences on the third entity yet to come into view in this portion, another Semitic people who will become known as “the Hebrews”. There is other evidence for this claim as well.

Asshur was (likely) the second son of Shem, which means both he and his descendants, the Assyrians, are a Semitic people. However, the line of faith through Shem does not pass through Asshur but through another brother of whom very little is said. What is key however is what is said of Shem: he is described as the father of all the children of Eber, and Eber or Heber, is the great-grandson of Shem through his son Arphaxad and grandson, Salah. Thus it will be that the Hebrew children will garner attention post-Babel, as it is Heber who will outlive all the patriarchs, living past the life of Abraham, past the life of Isaac, and 99 years into the life of Jacob. It would appear the longevity of this old patriarch, the last of his line to live beyond the point where lifespans were cut in half for the second time [464 years], gave rise to the calling of all the children of Israel, Hebrews. Though he was their oldest living patriarch, there appears no evidence he ac-

accompanied them in their journey into Canaan, except that they carried his name.

Thus, in looking at this history lesson, we see the establishment of the three entities which will figure directly in future events, both historically as has been recorded, and prophetically, as has been foretold by the many prophets: the Babylonian, the Assyrian, and the children of Israel, the Hebrews. Both the Assyrian and the Babylonian will be used as ‘the arm of the Lord’ in removing the ten tribes from the land around 722 BC and later, the two tribes, around 588 BC. [It might be worth noting here that Heber had two sons: Peleg, in whose day the earth was divided by language, and Joktan, who I judge was born after that event, so the term ‘Hebrew’ may be used to describe both lines. All 13 sons of Joktan are named. But it would appear that common usage of the term accrued to the line of faith through Peleg to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob particularly, but I am open to correction on this.]

The Assyrian: A Semitic People.

Nineveh was to become a power first. The region of Assyria has long been in the thoughts and plans of God, it would seem. Even in Eden, one of the rivers that flowed out of it, the Hiddekel, is described as going toward the east of Assyria or, as the margin puts it, eastward to Assyria, and this long before it was known by that name. In giving warning to the scribes and Pharisees of His day, the Lord Jesus made reference to Nineveh and how the Ninevites responded to the preaching of Jonah, indicating they were still much central to His thoughts then as well. Two whole books of the Old Testament are devoted exclusively to the people of Nineveh, the Assyrians: the one, Jonah, warning of destruction for wickedness if not repentant [826 BC]; the other, Nahum [670 BC], outlining the Lord’s indignation against them because they exalted themselves in their cruelty against His people Israel. What is said of the Assyrian following their being used of the Lord to oust Ephraim, the ten tribes, is a direct parallel to what is later recorded of the Babylonian,

Nebuchadnezzar, following his successful victories over the remaining two tribes:

Isa. 10: 12-13. I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria...for he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man.

Dan. 4: 30-32. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, The kingdom is departed from thee...until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

Both rods are alike in the use to which they were put, alike in their self-glorification, and alike in their denunciation. And what has been recorded as happening to them historically will yet happen again prophetically. Both figure centrally in events to unfold in end times. Nor are Isaiah and Daniel alone in announcing the future treatment of these people as many other prophets were moved to speak of Nineveh and Babylon as well.

Nimrod may have stayed in the south country where he continued to expand his kingdom by building three other notable cities on that same plain of Shinar: Erech, Accad or Akkad, and Calneh. He continued to flourish in the region [Google “Akkadian”, for instance] and it would be from this area, but not from this people [the Babylonians were a mixed race], that the Lord God would return to call Abram to become a people unto Himself [born 1996 BC].

But first Asshur went out of that land...and builded Ninevah and it would appear the Lord was with him. Nineveh would become the first great power, it would appear, and in time would have a system of worship that was somewhat similar to the tabernacle in the desert. The following is from the Concise Bible Dictionary under the title, “Ninevites”:

They had their temple, with its inner and outer

courts, and a shrine to which only priests were admitted. A 'sea' of water was at its entrance, and winged bulls, called 'cherubs', protected the place. They had their 'sabbath' and their sacrifices, principally the bullock, part of which was burnt on the altar, and part eaten by the offerer, or given to the priest. This appears to have been a counterfeit of the tabernacle and its services.

But their mixed religious system with its rituals and prayers, much of it imported with them from Babylon, made light of their many sins and transgressions. For example, one such prayer would be: "Let the wind carry away the transgression I have committed. The transgression that I committed I knew not, The sin that I sinned I knew not". And, apparently, their sins and transgressions were plenty for they were a ferocious and cruel people from the beginning. It is recorded, "They impaled some of their victims, burnt others, and they even flayed alive the king of Hamath". Their cruelty is alluded to in Nahum 2: 12, The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin. Maltreatment of their fellow man in horrid ways appears to be the distinguishing feature of the Assyrian as time progressed. When the LORD instructed Jonah to Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, it was for this cause: for their wickedness is come up before me. That was nothing new to Jonah; he well knew the reputation of the Ninevite and the very last thing he wanted to see was compassion to be shown towards this already, apparently, ungodly and inhumane foe. Even after carrying out his mission he sat glumly on a hilltop overlooking the city, still exceedingly angry as he watched to "see what would become of the city".

As I pen these words, Feb. 5, 2015, my inbox contains many and varied accounts of what the current day Assyrian is doing to people in that region. I quote one source.

UN: ISIS Torturing, Murdering Iraqi Children.

"The UN says ISIS is systematically killing, torturing, and raping children and families from the

Yazidi and Christian communities. [They] have received reports of several cases of mass executions of boys. There are also reports of children being beheaded, crucified, and buried alive."

It would appear that not much has changed; the atrocities are on a par, and they believe that by doing such things to 'infidels' they are not sinning, but doing God service. It was the noted 15th century mathematician and theologian, Blaise Pascal, who said of religious man, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it with religious conviction". C. S. Lewis would have agreed: "Of all men", he said, "religious bad men are the worst". Can we be surprised the Lord still has an indignation against them, and must purge out the dross from the silver, and that right soon?

Another New Beginning: Abraham, the 10th from Noah.

At the end of the genealogical list of the 11 chapter we have the calling out of Abram from Ur of the Chaldees. 'Departure from the Lord' by all would seem to be a phrase worthy of describing conditions leading up to the Lord deciding to make of Abram a great nation...I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. In the 325 or so intervening years between the dispersion, 2247 BC, and the calling out of Abram from Haran, 1921 BC, it appears the different family groups had dispersed throughout the Prophetic earth, at least, and were well entrenched in their territories. Chapter 14 of Genesis gives an account of some of these peoples as they become tangent to Abram and his family. But the narrative follows principally the creating of the Hebrew children and not much, if anything, is given of the two rising powers in the fertile crescent until after the exodus from Egypt [1491 BC] and the establishment of the "children of Israel" in the land of promise [around 1450 BC]. By the Lord's mercies they had not only survived but prospered, and the fame, the fear, and the hatred of them and their powerful God have preceded them into that region.

But failure to go in and possess the land and drive out the inhabitant results in a weakened state and so, after the death of Joshua, the little nation goes through a roller-coaster ride of captivity and victory, in whole or in part, all the days of the Judges. Eventually, they copy the nations about them by desiring a king, but not the King, and so select one of their own choosing. But Saul fails as their champion and it isn't until David, the Lord's anointed, comes to the throne [around 1055 BC] that the little nation becomes a powerhouse in the region for the very first time, the victories of Joshua taken into account. King David's exploits became legendary.

But by the time David's grandson, Rehoboam, comes on the scene there is much declension, and infighting results in the dividing of the nation into the two tribes of Judah under Rehoboam centered in Jerusalem, and the ten tribes of Ephraim under Jeroboam [975 BC] centered in Samaria. Prophets, both major and minor, are sent time and again from the Lord but to no avail; they will not receive His word. He then brings against them powerful adversaries, extensions of His own arm, to afflict His people and get them to call upon Him for help and deliverance. Both tribes have their successive kings, some that do good in the eyes of the Lord, and He gives restoration; but most that do evil reaping the rewards of their infidelity.

Assyria.

It is during the time of the kings that the powerful Assyrian again comes into view. To this time they have largely passed from the sacred pages, but secular history chronicles their amazing story well. Nevertheless, the Lord's eye has been on them from the beginning and He has been following them closely. His desire is to bless them, as He does all mankind, but first there must be an acknowledgment and a repentance of their condition. Their wickedness is so great that in 826 BC the Lord consigns Jonah to deliver a 40-day notice of impending destruction unless they repent of their wickedness. One may wonder: Why this wicked Assyrian? Why would God choose this Semite out of

all the children of Shem, or the others for that matter, and show mercy unto him? But is it not just like our Lord to take the very worst of mankind, extend grace and mercy undeservedly to them, and "forgive them their trespasses" once they genuinely repent of their deeds? The Apostle Paul acknowledged this in his day, claiming the Lord had mercy on him, the chief of sinners. Here is what Paul says of himself in 1 Timothy 1: 14-15:

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

In treating the Assyrian in a similar manner, our God was sending a message to all peoples that, if He can be a merciful God unto those who they consider to be the worst of the worst, then He can be merciful unto all. The story in the Book of Jonah is remarkable in that from the king to lowest individual, even to the animals, throughout Nineveh, all fasted or were made to fast, clothed in sackcloth and sitting in ashes; there was an open display of contrition before the Lord the whole 40 days. And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he said he would do unto them; and did it not. [This is not salvation here as we know it, for it considers not the individual, but the avoiding of righteous judgment because of an outward display of righteousness, similar to how the 1000 year reign will be administered, except there it will be the individual as well].

Is it not striking that the first mention of the king of Assyria's invading Israel, the ten tribes, comes in the reign of Menahem, who Scott's Bible Handbook names "the cruel king"? II Kings 15 gives a brief account of his 10 year reign in Samaria: "Then Menahem smote Tiphshah, and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it; and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up."

The Lord used Pul, the then king of Assyria, to come against Menahem who in turn bribed the king

with a thousand talents of silver, successfully turning him that he stayed not there in the land [771 BC]. The prophet Hosea may have made mention of this deal made by Menahem at this time,

Hear ye this...O house of the king...When Ephraim saw his sickness...then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb [or the king that should plead, margin]: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion...I, even I, will tear and go away, and none shall rescue him, Hosea 5: 1, 13-14.

A brief 37 years following the reign of Menahem the Assyrian lion, under Shalmanezzar, would sweep into Samaria for the final time and three later in 721 BC, the deportation of the ten tribes would commence. The warnings of the prophets were in vain. As Nahum 2:12 declared, The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin.

It did not have to be thus. Four years before the carrying away of Ephraim, godly king Hezekiah ascended the throne of Judah. He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. In the 14th year of his reign the Assyrian lion in the person of King Sennacherib came at him also, boasting of his prowess and his power, not content to exact tribute only, but desiring to make Judah a satellite of Assyria as well. Hezekiah brings all before the Lord, acknowledging his weakness in the face of such an adversary in number and ferocity, and finds that the battle is the Lord's. The victory Judah won that day by not lifting a finger has gone down in the annals of history as one of the greatest miracles of all time, 2 Kings 18-19. The great English poet, Lord Byron, eulogized that famous victory in a poem he entitled, *The Destruction of Sennacherib*:

The Destruction of Sennacherib

BY LORD BYRON (GEORGE GORDON)

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold, And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and

gold; And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea, When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green, That host with their banners at sunset were seen: Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown, That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast, And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed; And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill, And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide, But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride; And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf, And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale, With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail: And the tents were all silent, the banners alone, The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail, And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal; And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword, Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

Hosea had already spoken of these two events, telling the people what the Lord was about to do:

For I will have no more mercy on the house of Israel; but will utterly take them away. But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, nor by horses, nor by horsemen, 1:6-7.

The Assyrian was used as the arm of the Lord against Israel but his resounding victory and result-

ant spoil emboldened him to move against Judah as well. He boasted himself as Isaiah records in the 10th chapter and he went forward to a crushing defeat at the hands of the Lord; the angel of death claiming 185,000 lives before morning broke. The prophet Nahum, around 670 BC, is then given a vision of the “burden of Nineveh”, a severe judgment resulting, no doubt, from the Assyrian’s self-exultation and his treatment of the ten tribes.

The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked...He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face, 1:3,2:1.

Destruction of Nineveh

The year 625 BC sees the final fall and destruction of Nineveh; a rising power just to the south has now come into view. Apparently the Babylonians under Nabopolassar and the Medes under Cyaxares joined forces to lay siege to Nineveh, then under King Saracus, but the walled city and defenders repulsed them until a mighty flooding of the Tigris swept away part of the walls and the

invaders gained entrance. In despair the king is said to have burnt himself in his palace; the whole city was then laid to the torch. Nahum records the following: by a flood will he make an utter end...the gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved, 1:8, 2:6. And thus it was.

A Calamity Yet to Come

The complete destruction of this first great power historically points to an even greater calamity yet to come. Just who in our day constitutes “the Assyrian” of old is difficult to tell, whether it be ISIS itself, which is unlikely, the Arab nations in general, the Islamic or Muslim peoples, it is hard to say. But to lump them all together and say the Lord has a controversy with all would be to overstep our bounds. The Lord’s desire is for the blessing of all peoples; out of every kindred and people and tongue and nation is the call. In the midst of the rise again of this formidable power in this region, highly charged against Christian and Jew alike, there is evidence of

a mighty work going on among the Islamic people everywhere. It is evident “the Lord’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save” and He is visiting these people via “dreams and visions” and calling them out to follow Him, through Jesus, in much the same way He must have called out Abram those many years ago.

Dreams and Visions

While writing this paper I have been given a book by a sister who knew not I was writing about those very people, entitled, DREAMS and VISIONS Is Jesus Awakening The Muslim World? I highly recommend it. The author, Tom Doyle, has much personal experience working among the people in these lands and has written a very compelling narrative about the miraculous work going on among those of the Islamic faith in the very strongholds of that faith, their holy cities Mecca and Medina and elsewhere. Many have come out boldly for Christ, preach Him among their fellow people, and many pay the ultimate price, becoming modern-day martyrs in most horrific ways.

This work of grace among the Islamic people today but parallels what the Lord will yet do when He again takes up the cause of His people, Israel, in a day fast approaching. Many of that nation will be called in that day, in rather quick succession I should think, to go forth preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and this preaching will result in multitudes from among the nation of Israel and the from among the Gentiles believing that gospel, setting the stage for end-time events as described in scripture. The unbelieving of Israel and of the nations, including the revived Assyrian in the role of King of the North will play out their final act in their hatred and opposition both towards the Lord and towards His faithful.

The specifics of the role of the Assyrian are not before me in this paper. That he will yet again be the arm of the Lord against His earthly people, Israel, appears to be beyond question. Others have outlined what they believe Scripture contains as to those details. Suffice it to say here that modern-day Jonahs

are being sent to that nation, some even raised from among their own, with the message that their wickedness is come up before the Lord and they must repent of their deeds. Unlike Jonah's message, the current one will not be received 'by king and country' but individuals only will come out from among them. Not all will flee from the wrath to come, no matter what the message. The prophet Zephaniah [around 640 BC], who speaks at length that the day of the Lord is at hand, gives the following notation concerning Assyria:

And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness... This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation.

Prophecies Concerning Assyria

Along with those already mentioned, the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel also have much to say about Assyria and the coming day. All are instructive. But it is the prophet Nahum that needs to be read carefully for it contains both historical and prophetic information regarding this Semitic race. Whereas chapter two is now largely history, it appears, chapters one and three may contain interesting elements of prophecy. For example, this verse from 1:11 has given the writer pause: There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the Lord, a wicked counsellor.

Micah [around 740 BC] who, in his vision concerning Israel and Judah prophesizes "for the transgressions of Jacob and the sins of Israel", makes reference to a counsellor as well: Now why dost thou cry out aloud? Is there no king in thee? Is thy counsellor perished? For pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail. [4:9]

Paul in writing to the Thessalonians a second time also describes the advent of such an entity: For that day shall not come, except there be a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition... shewing himself that he is God... and

then shall the Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming, 2: 3-8.

It is John in Revelation 13: 11-18 who presents the godlike qualities of this same entity, I believe, revealing also the counsel he will then give: And he had two horns like a lamb... and he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth... saying to them... that they should make an image to the beast... and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And causeth all... to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Herod the Great

Whether the wicked counsellor of Nahum is the same as that which is named by Paul and described by John is not for me to say. Surely there will be more than one in that day, but whether he is The one or not remains to be seen. Would it be that strange if it were so? When we consider the time of our Lord's first coming into this world we see a similar thing in place. Another Semitic person, Herod the Great, an Edomite [descendant of Abraham through Esau], was "king" of Judea at that time. A very cruel person in his own right:

He began his reign (37 BC) with blood: there were a few left of the Asmonaeon house, descendants of the Macabees; these were put to death and their adherents, and the whole Sanhedrim, except two, Concise Bible Dictionary, p.360.

Nevertheless he set out to ingratiate himself to the Jews by selling personal golden possessions during the time of famine [25 BC] purchasing corn from Egypt for the people to eat and for seed. More significantly, he gained immense favor by undertaking the costly enterprise of rebuilding the temple, materials for which he bought in advance of any preliminary destruction. The resulting white-marble edifice no doubt won over many skeptics, as they were ob-

viously proud of their new center of worship, telling the Lord Himself at one time that it took 46 years in the building [John 2:20]. Yet it was this same Herod, upon hearing from the wise men that a new King was born, set out with such abandon to destroy him, exacting cruelty upon the children of Rama in his attempt to do so. He was a deceiver and we know who was behind his deception, and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born, Rev.12:4, just as we know in a coming day it will be similar: And the beast which I saw...the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority, and the second beast too will have the same backing, and he spake as a dragon[Rev.13:2,11].

Thoughts from the Book of Daniel

There is yet another note of interest that we need to consider, one that I believe carries much weight. The prophet Daniel speaks at length about an historic figure in Ch.11:21-35, recognized in history as the last in a line of Kings of the North, one Antiochus IV. A look at this historic figure then, and what he introduced, might provide clues as to the identity, in personage if not in name, of the one of whom he is the type. To be brief: Upon the disintegration of the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great the kingdom was divided unto four generals, two of which rose to be the more prominent, and adversarial; those to the south with Egypt being the center, under the name Ptolemy, and those to the north with Assyria being the center, under the name Seleucus or Antiochus. The Ptolemy line were “Kings of the South” [of Judea], and the Seleucidae line were “Kings of the North” [of Judea], God’s land of Zion always being center.

From around 320 BC down to 161 BC [when Judea made an alliance with the next great power, Rome] the Kings fought a see-saw battle over Judea, each in turn holding on to it for a while before the other pushed him out. The figure Daniel refers to is known historically as Antiochus IV who called himself Antiochus Epiphanes, and he came into control

of the region around 175 BC. He came from the region we are now considering, Assyria, and I will let Daniel and the Concise Bible Dictionary explain his significance in the whole scheme of things past:

He was not the rightful heir. He ‘obtained the kingdom by flatteries’. He called himself Epiphanes, which is ‘illustrious’; but he was such ‘a vile person’ that people called him Epimanes, ‘madman’. [After invading Egypt] Antiochus returned to his land with great riches: his heart was ‘against the holy covenant’, and he entered Jerusalem and even into the sanctuary and took away the golden altar, the candlestick, the table of shewbread, the censers of gold, and the other holy vessels and departed. [After being stopped in his pursuits by Rome] in great anger he returned and vented his wrath on Jerusalem.

He sent an army there with orders to slay all the men and sell the women and children for slaves...the walls also were thrown down and the city pillaged and then set on fire. He then decreed that the Jews should forsake their religion, and all should worship the heathen gods. To ensure this at Jerusalem with the few that still clung to the place, an image of Jupiter Olympious was erected in the temple and on an altar sacrifices were offered to this god. This was in B.C. 168 on the 25th of the month Chisleu. Daniel relates “They shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.”

It is what this Assyrian did that bears significance: it was he who placed the image, the abomination that maketh desolate, in the holy place and decreed that the Jews should worship this image. Another, his anti-type, whoever he be, will do a very similar thing in a coming day and the deceived Jews, and others probably, will obey this counsellor in their worship of the image that then will be erected. The prophet Ezekiel provides us, I believe, with the very location of this offensive idol when he outlines the excessive idolatry of Judah in Jerusalem in that day, beginning with the house of God:

Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine

eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entrance.

He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? Even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go off from my sanctuary? Ezek. 8: 5-6.

The Anti-Christ

I have long heard that the man of sin, the Anti-Christ, would be a Jew because of his connection to the re-built temple: he would sit in the very temple of God, showing himself that he is God. The prophecy of Daniel, too, weighs heavily in favor of a Jewish person. Ch. 11:36, which many accept as speaking of this same future entity, states that he neither shall regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women [some taking this latter to refer to all Jewish women's desire to be the prophetic 'mother of the Messiah'] which makes this belief very credible. Still, there is enough to give one pause. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, the Samaritan woman declared to the Lord at the well, telling Him a little later, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ. Neither are the Samaritans nor Israel at large alone in their claim to Abraham as 'their father'. Many Muslims do as well. The important thing is not to be so taken up with the identity of this personage as to miss the significance of it: those faithful ones who will be most assuredly affected by him will be given to know in a time appointed.

Babylon.

The reader will notice that the verse quoted in Micah is connected with the mention of Babylon in the next verse and the import of the reference to counsellors may be gleaned by looking at this section dealing with Babylon. The endings of these two powers will be the reverse of their beginnings: in the future, it appears Babylon will be destroyed before the King of the North meets his demise. But there appears to be another difference as well: whereas

Assyria comes on the later stage as a people descendant of an earlier race, genealogically connected by birth and custom, Babylon does not. Babylon appears more as the great System of Men; that which man has created (i) in making a name for himself in the earth and (ii) as a system of religion in opposition to God and His Christ. Both are figured in Revelation it would seem: the first as Great Babylon, that great social, political, economic system of men; the second as Mystery, great Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth; a religious system. We will now follow this line for a bit.

We already considered Nimrod, the founder of the Kingdom of Babylon, and discovered his system, religious and otherwise, to be in opposition to that which God had ordered. Some have suggested that Peter's reference to the church that is at Babylon (She that is elected with [you] in Babylon, JND, 1 Pet.5:13) likely refers to the 'church at Rome'. If so, then Peter would be using the term to describe the then present system of men, the controlling power of his day, the Roman Empire centered at Rome, calling it Babylon. It would already have become an adjective, or a descriptive noun at least, used to identify that system man has put in place to rule his affairs, not in conjunction with, but in opposition to, his Maker.

Using this application then, it is understandable why the angel of Revelation 14:8, makes this prophetic announcement following the events of the second Woe, And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. That great system of men, that "great Babylon", that then reigning power [the revived Roman Empire, i.e., the political system principally here] is about to come into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath, [16:19].

Before this announcement is made, the second Woe has passed: (i) the four angels bound at the Euphrates have been loosed allowing those hordes to come through destroying in their wake the third

part of men[9:13-21]; (ii) the mighty angel of the 10th chapter has made the loins cry ushering in the seven thunders which remain a mystery to us even today, and (iii) the two faithful witnesses in Jerusalem have finished their testimony, have been martyred, have lain unburied in the streets for three and one-half days while their enemies rejoiced over them, have been bodily resurrected, and have visibly ascended up into heaven in a cloud, [Chapter 11]. The last of those who will have part in the first resurrection have been slain, and the one who was worthy to open the Sixth Seal, the Avenger of Blood, will now come forth in righteous judgment, For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? [6:12-17].

To help us understand what has transpired under the First and Second Woes [9:1 – 11:14] the Spirit of God takes us back in chapters 12:1-14:6 and brings before us the energizing forces behind the persecutions under these Woes. The enemy is allowed to have his way, for a while. The war in heaven resulting in Satan and his angels being cast out into the earth corresponds with the first Woe. It occurs mid-week and is characteristically demonic in nature and lasts five months only; the entities allowed only to torment men, not kill them [9:1-12]. Those held back at the river Euphrates will be brought in to accomplish this last [9:13-21]. Chapter 13 introduces us to the other two that make up what some have called the “trinity of evil”, the two beasts, which we have come to call the Beast and the False Prophet or Anti-Christ. Attention will now be directed to those faithful of the nation of Israel who either refused to worship the beast or refused to accept his mark or both. They will pay with their lives. To better understand what is happening we need to go back to the Land of Nimrod once again.

Nebuchadnezzar’s Image on the Plain.

Since I know you are all familiar with this image and its history I will only make allusion to it in the following way. Nebuchadnezzar, the proud reigning monarch of Babylon, effectively becomes a beast

in the 4th chapter and remains so till seven times shall pass over when he then will realize that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. It is to his image that the faithful remnant of three refuses to bow, and it is they who certain Chaldeans accuse before the one who has not yet become a beast. At the dedication ceremony an herald cried aloud the fate that would befall those who refused to bow down and worship the image.

Could there be a clearer picture of end time events then what we have here?

And he [the second beast] exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast...saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast...and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. Rev.13: 11- 15.

The response of the faithful remnant in that day will reflect, no doubt, the response the three made in Nebuchadnezzar’s day:

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Dan.3:17-18.

And we know the response of the future beast will be similar as well. The fury which will be unleashed upon the remnant during that Second Woe will know no bounds. The “trinity of evil”, the axis of all things wicked, will cause the furnace to be heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated and the faithful will be cast into it. The 11th of Revelation gives a vivid description of what transpires when that faithful remnant, the two olive trees, the two candlesticks, shall finish their testimony and the seal is lifted from off them:

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit [Satan being the root power, I take it] shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of

the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth.

Those that threw the three into the furnace in Daniel's day were consumed by that same fiery blast. When the king looks into the flames he makes a startling discovery:

Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and there is no hurt in them [margin], and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. 3: 24-25.

How remarkable! Daniel's friends, as a type, fall short in that they come out alive from the midst of that blast furnace. Their antitype, however, will acquire the martyrs' reward. The 14th of Revelation is interesting in that it allows us to look "into the furnace" as it were and when we do so we see those that had been sealed, loose and free with "no hurt in them" and with them the Son of God. It is a heavenly scene for they are part of the first resurrection:

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four [living creatures], and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth...These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb...for they are without fault before the throne of God. [14: 1-5].

Remarks on End Times

Satan and his emissaries have been allowed to have their way, actually His way, with the saints of God upon the earth and their blood cries unto Him from under the altar and elsewhere. The Avenger of Blood is about to make His personal debut. The Gospel of the Grace of God ended earlier at the rap-

ture; now the Gospel of the Kingdom is at an end also. An angel comes forth to announce that from henceforth only the Everlasting Gospel will be preached unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters [14:6-7].

What the "Lion of the tribe of Juda" is about to unleash under the 3rd Woe will be unlike in intensity and effect anything this world has ever experienced. The heavens, the earth, the sea, the fountains of waters will all be targeted under this final Woe [Ch. 16] wherein many will see and believe it to be the hand of God, will bow the knee and repent, while many more will blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and [repent] not of their deeds. A second angel announces Babylon is fallen, is fallen, speaking that which is soon to be as though it already is, while a third denounces with a loud voice those that have bowed the knee to the image and imbibed the system of the beast:

If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb...and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. [14: 8-11].

The 3rd and final woe ends with the pouring out of the 7th vial into the air, speaking I believe of universal judgment, towards the end of the 16th chapter. It is done means exactly that. All is over as to the judgments leading up to the Millennial reign. But what of the axis of evil and the great system of men that revolved around it? The details as to how the Lord deals with this trinity and those who associate themselves with them are provided in the upcoming chapters; they take us behind the scenes as it were to

show how things played out. The details are too many, when O.T. prophets are brought into play especially, so it must suffice to give a condensed version of events for this article.

Babylon of Revelation

The 17th chapter gives both the rise and demise of that great religious system of man, the counterfeit to the true church, which the JND translation describes in this way: and upon her forehead a name written, Mystery, great Babylon, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth. This I believe in contrast to the mystery that was given Paul to reveal once the Messiah had been totally rejected by Israel: that Christ would form His church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it.

The chapter presents Mystery's final hour as she is carried aloft by the beast in power until the ten horns grow weary of the charade, and in hatred turn against her and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, [Rev.17:16]. One judges that events will be so dire during the 3rd Woe that the waters... where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes and nations, and tongues, that the waters will cease to be controlled by the mother of harlots and thus she herself will provide no benefit to the beastly system that prevails and she will be shucked off and ravaged for her treasuries.

In the 18th chapter the system of Nimrod in its political and economic makeup comes into view as Mystery, great Babylon seems to morph itself into what JND describes as Great Babylon, [18:2]. It is a great earthly city now, in contrast to the heavenly city that will soon descend from heaven and be suspended over Jerusalem for a thousand years; judgment has arrived for like Sodom and Gomorrah of old of whom the Lord said, because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me [Gen.18:20], he now says of Great Babylon, For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

She is viewed as a great merchandizing city, trafficking in a host of 'precious' goods, glorifying herself and living deliciously, sitting as a queen and seeing no sorrow. In one hour does her judgment come for strong is the Lord who judgeth her, and the smoke of her burning ascends for all to see, bringing forth the cry, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city!...that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought, [Rev. 18: 10-17]. That great system of men which reached its political climax with the acceptance of the trinity of evil, its religious apex with the worshipping of the image, and its economic zenith with the mark of the beast, is finally brought to nothing:

Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all...The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. [18:21, 19:20, 20:2].

Summary.

In considering the above one has gone beyond the scope of one's initial quest: to take a closer look at what the 2014-15 tetrad of Blood Moons might portend for the nation of Israel proper, and ourselves and the whole world by necessity. But, like other tetrads in history this one may signify nothing at all, however hard that might be to believe given what appears to be the lateness of the hour and the climate that prevails. Whether ISIS is the King of the North or whether it is merely another step in the advent of the one who is [one rising from among the Islamic nations, for example, to nullify this global threat could catapult himself into that position], there can be no doubt his coming on the scene will be a game changer for Israel before long. The land of Magog (Russia) comes into play with the King of

the North we are told and this is currently significant as well. The Bear is stirring as we see events in the Ukraine creating a very unstable situation. Last night's global news (Feb.23/15) surveyed citizens of Russia as to these events: a full 81% of the people on the street believe it is the U.S. who is behind this problem, that the U.S. is the main cause of all their economic woes, and to a person, it seems, believe that Putin is their only hope against such aggression.

If the one on the White Horse has not yet shot his bow, signifying I believe distant warfare or instability among nations, then I think he has it at full draw. The land of Zion appears fairly quiet at the moment but if this tetrad of moons is portentous all that will likely change before the last two blood moons, April 4 and September 28, 2015 are past. As was said earlier, signs are not for us as signs are for sight not faith, and we are to live by faith. But the Jews seek after a sign and though they were told that they would be given no sign except the sign of the prophet Jonah, I believe that pertains to the day of Grace, for signs and wonders will mark the days ahead when the faithful of Israel, in the likeness of Moses and Elijah [Rev.11:6], will vie for believability against the powers of the enemy who doeth great wonders [13:13], in much the same way Moses sparred with Jannes and Jambres in Pharaoh's court.

As Micah says, the Assyrian will make his way into the land during that season, working his work and passing through to war again with the King of the South, just s he did historically. Others have written extensively on the order of things in that day. Suffice it to say here that the Lord Himself will raise a banner against him in the end and the seven shepherds and eight princes, whoever they might be, shall waste the land of Asshur with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof.

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

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