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The Parthians in Scripture and Prophecy

There is only one verse in scripture that may pertain to Parthians specifically. That is not clear because the verse is contained in a text of deep symbolism in the Book of Revelation concerning the first of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. We do know for certain, however, that the Parthians were a serious factor in the minds of the earliest Christians with respect to their thoughts about the last days.

Those thoughts did not come from Bible prophecy; they came from the Holy Spirit, who informed them that the Parthians related to many of the prophecies concerning the "kings of the East" that were to conquer the earth in the last days.

In that respect, the Parthian connection comes to the modern stage, because it is another issue that revolves around the two wars pitting West against East at the Euphrates river. Those two wars, both predicted by Daniel, delineate the earliest circumstances in his list of events marking the timetable for the End.

If our wars today are, indeed, the battles Daniel was discussing, then the Parthian's of vision have arrived, because both of those wars have occurred within the last 13 years. The fact that they were both fought and won by western troops that crossed the entire earth without touching the ground (exactly as Daniel had forecast) is a strong positive indicator that those two wars and Daniel's vision are related (Dan.8:5).

A second prophecy, detailing the establishment of western bases in a line of defense separating East from West at the banks of the Euphrates river has also now just about been fulfilled (see Jeremiah 46:1-2). It, too, relates to the Parthians, for it is across this line and this river that the invasion of the kings of the East is to take place according to scripture (Rev. 9:14-15).

In close association with these events, Daniel foresees the appearance of a military figure much like Alexander the Great, rising up to lead a western crusade against the forces of the East (Dan. 8:5). His prophetic connection with those two wars is quite evident in the Bible.

In history's documentation of the exploits of the original Alexander 2500 years ago, he is shown moving western forces from the Balkans through Iraq to the borders of India, a route of conquest virtually identical to boundaries repeated by American forces in modern times under President Bush.

According to Daniel, just like the former figure, at the height of his reign, and still in his youth, the Alexander of prophecy will come to a sudden end (Dan. 8:8). In the original Alexander's case, that end occurred in Iraq.

In the wake of that unexpected catastrophe, Daniel tells us the global power of the western world will disintegrate, scattered to the four winds. Out of that scattering, vastly different powers are to emerge-none like the one that passed away (Dan.10:4).

The smallest of these new powers will rise into an enormous world force that consists of ten independent nations (Dan.7:7), which in aggregate, project an image reminiscent of the Parthians of Roman times.

The Parthians were a people that came down originally from the Steppes of Asia (i.e., from an area which today encompasses the "stans"-Khazakstan, Ubekestan, Afghanistan, etc) to finally settle in the lands of Media and Persia (i.e., Iraq & Iran). Positioned as they are in Iraq and Afghanistan, our military forces stand today in lands controlled and fought over in Roman times by the Parthians. Our opponents there are composed of Parthian descendants.

These people were greatly feared by the Romans. They were, in fact, the only combatants in ancient times able to destroy an entire Roman legion at the height of its power (they wiped out the army of Crassus, the Roman general who had earlier crushed the Spartacus slave rebellion). Superb archers, the Parthian specialty of warfare consisted of firing with deadly accuracy fusilades of arrows at their opponents.

If the Parthians of prophecy have a like capability, their "arrows" are sure to take a more modern form, i.e., rockets and missiles.

A key maneuver employed by the Parthian cavalry in battle involved feigning defeat by retreating, thus luring their over-confident opponents into deadly ambush from which no escape was possible. The grisly Iraqi counterattack against unprepared American forces preparing to mop up in the current Gulf War is a classic example of such a "Parthian shot", the rocket grenades in today's fighting simulating the 'arrows' of their ancestors.

From the phrase 'Parthian shot' has been culled the more familiar phrase 'parting shot', and certainly in Iraq we are witnessing one form of it or the other; in either case, the Parthian connection remains firmly established.

The stories of Parthian prowess in battle were so compelling that the people of Rome during Nero's time harbored a deep sense of foreboding about these eastern warriors. So vicious were they and so malignant was Nero their own emperor, that when Nero died, a rumor swept throughout Rome that he would come back to life again, but this time in Parthia, not Rome. Amassing there a great Parthian army, the prediction asserts, he will then lead the East to Rome in conquest, returning himself to its throne, and erecting from it a regime far more sinister than anything previous.

So widespread was this nightmarish vision it pervaded early Christian prophecy and has persisted within it to the present day as an advance visage of a key circumstance in the life of the Beast called 666. Most ancient Christian scholars, noting the bow in the rider's hand, considered Revelation 6:2 a prophecy backing up their anticipation of the expected Parthian invasion.

A second possibility for this future Parthian leader would be a reincarnated Nebuchadnezzar. While the ancient Christian prophecy predicts that the eighth head of the beast will be a reincarnation of Nero leading Parthian forces to Rome, it could very well be a reincarnated Nebuchadnezzar leading those forces to Rome instead.

The only pre-requisite is that it has to be Rome. The reason for this is that Rome is the city whose conversion to Christ signalled the mortal wound to Babylon. Its rejection of Christ, therefore, will mean the healing of the mortal wound. This needs to take place in Rome. Prophecy has designated Rome the world's city.

No one would be better qualified to officially change Rome's name to "Babylon," once he had set up his throne there than Nebuchadnezzar. Babylon was his city in the first place. The name change would be dynamic

because it would unite the spiritual city of Babylon with a definitive allegorical counterpart.

Either way, the Parthians remain at the heart of the prophecy. Whether they are led by a reincarnated Nero or Nebuchadnezzar, the forces either would command have been firmly set in prophecy's East, proximal to the Euphrates river.

A close examination of Daniel's vision concerning the ten-nation confederacy itself, tells us that when that affiliation of nations reaches a certain level of maturity, a leader will arise within it who combines all of its troops, launching them unexpectedly in a swift and enormously successful invasion of the west across the Euphrates river (Jer. 46:6-10; Rev.16:12). The global extent of the victorious march of these troops following this invasion will change the entire world, shifting its rule from West to East (Dan.11:13-18).

The conquering hero leading all of those eastern forces will later be replaced, first by a short-lived extortioner, and then by the Beast himself (Dan.11:20-21). It is at that point that the wedding between the Parthian cavalry and the reincarnated Nero-figure is to take place, and all the prophecies concerning the malignancy of satan's regime come into clear focus as his chosen Rebel murderously navigates the world toward the battlefield of Armageddon.

If Daniel's prophecies are to be believed, all of this will follow in the wake of the sudden fragmentation of western global power, shattered by the unexpected extinction of the military commander on whose shoulders it all rests. According to Jeremiah, it is that single catastrophe which will be God's proof to the world of scripture's veracity concerning all that is written about what is to follow (Jer. 44:29-30).

According to Daniel, the collapse of the unity of western global power associated with the fall of the Alexander-like figure will occur in close association with the wars at the Euphrates. One will follow closely on the heels of the other (Dan.8:5-8).

With those two wars now ebbing toward history, it is fair to assume all of this is not that far away.

That proximity serves as a firm reminder of the pressing need for quickly turning from worldly pursuits to those dictated by Christ. That is the only

pathway that leads to salvation. Every other endeavor leads to disaster. No one should wait, because soon it will be too late and the door will be locked.

Prophecy tells us these things are sure to happen, and soon! According to scripture, Jesus is going to appear in all of our lives suddenly when we least expect it. It is imperative His Appearance not find us chasing after money instead of walking quietly in the footsteps of God.

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**"I Tell You Most Solemnly,
Whoever Keeps My Word Will Never See Death"**

John 8:51