END-TIME: ROME OR ISLAM? BIBLE STUDY BY JAMIE MCNAB 17.9.16

Most people will remember the early part of the year ... prior to Passover ... that we covered a lot of prophecy ... especially Daniel and Revelation ... offering an alternative view of whom the end-time events relate to.

Rather than our traditional view in the Churches of God of a revived Holy Roman Empire of 10 Nations ... I suggested a very plausible alternative (I believe a far better explanation!) is that God's warnings to us are not about Rome and Europe ... but about Islam and the major Islamic nations of the Middle East.

Many of us have spent decades following politics and developments in Europe and the Vatican ... looking for 10 nations of United States of Europe ... probably led by a powerful Germany ... perhaps with another "Fuehrer" ... in fact many are still looking for that outcome. That is where their eyes are focused.

The Living Church of God ... United ... PCG ... Restored ... and many traditional born-again, rapture-believing evangelicals also ... still looking towards Europe. It's a very popular view.

Well ... okay. But are we sure this is the right place? What if the prophecies are actually pointing somewhere else? And we're looking in the wrong direction? That would potentially be a problem.

I want to return to the topic for a few weeks. I have had a few requests to go over the material again (not overly technical I hope ... but the symbolism of prophecy can be a bit challenging with horns, statues, beasts, seals and so on can be a bit complicated).

Also ... rather a lot has happened since I finished that back in March. One of the key players we suggested was Turkey. Much has occurred there ... that looks rather ominous. Also ... Iran (or Persia as the Bible refers to it) ... there have been big changes there too. If we are looking elsewhere ... we may have missed them.

So ... we may have witnessed some significant steps towards fulfillments of these end-time prophecies.

It is worth summarising the key essentials so that we can remain alert. Just in case!

But equally ... remembering that prophecy can be tricky. Many churches and "experts" have got egg on their faces ... predicting events and dates. We'll do our best to stick to Biblical narrative ... see how world conditions fit in ... but accept that we probably see through a glass darkly. So ... we take care. We try to remain sensible.

I suppose one question: Should we bother with prophecy at all? Aren't there more important things for believers ... living right for example? Isn't prophecy a distraction? Should we even bother looking at prophecy?

Matthew 16:1-3 (NKJV)

1 Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. (Something that they could look at)

2 He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red';

3 and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' **Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face** of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. (Or interpret the signs of the times. What Jesus meant is there are things happening around them ... they should have been more watchful ... more alert)

We should be alert ... watchful ... able to put 2 + 2 together ... and determine the signs of the times in our day ... that are all around us. They are there to give us advance warning ... advance instruction.

Matthew 24:13-16 (NKJV)

13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

15 "Therefore when you see (something that you should be looking out for ... the prophecies that are in Daniel) the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Matthew 24:23-26 (NKJV)

23 "Then *(in this latter time)* if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.

24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

25 See, I have told you beforehand. (Warned beforehand ... that's prophetic!)

26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.

If we're not up with those prophecies ... what would be the reason for Jesus giving us a warning.

Matthew 24:32-33 (NKJV)

32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! (You wont see them if you're not being alert)

There are many places where Jesus explained what to look for. To be watchful and alert.

Hopefully ... we're looking forward to Jesus' return? We should get excited by the signs ... it should lift our hopes? This is it ... I think the signs are there. But ... we have to maintain a balance!

But ... what signs should we be looking for? Europe ... Rome ... Vatican ... Roman Catholic Church? Is that the place to focus our attention? Or ... perhaps ... Islam ... Iran ... Saudi ... Iraq ... Turkey ... Egypt? Where should we be looking?

There is always going to be some speculation when it comes to prophecy ... but we can examine and stick close to the Biblical narrative ... be very familiar with what the Bible says ... then test what we see against the Bible signs. We won't be perfect.

The traditional view ... that we're very familiar with ... is Rome ... well actually Europe as well. Why?

Essentially that comes from 3 Biblical passages. Let's look at them. Let's test our traditional views. Do they point to Rome?

The main one:

Daniel 2:31-45 (NKJV)

31 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendour was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.

32 <mark>This image's head was of fine gold,</mark> it<mark>s chest and arms of silver,</mark> its belly and thighs of bronze,

33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was

found. <mark>And the stone that struck the image became a great _</mark> mountain and filled the whole earth.

36 "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

37 **You, O king, are a king of kings**. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;

38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. (Babylon)

39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. (Meaning ... the part of the Earth which the prophecy relates to ... the Middle East)

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

The Tradition.Babylon ... Gold ... 625BC-538Medo/Persia ... Silver ... 558BC-330Greece ... Bronze ...333BC-31BCRome ... Iron ... 31BC-476AD

Then 10 resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire ... 9 already (Including Italy, Mussolini and Hitler, Germany) ... and one more soon to come. Germany in cahoots with the Vatican.

There are no real arguments over the 1/2/3 kingdoms ... but ... was the 4th ... iron... Rome? This is where the whole story of Europe come from. Does it fit with the Biblical narrative?

This is their key passage. It sets the direction.

Daniel 2:40 (AMPLIFIED)

40 <mark>And the fourth kingdom [Rome] shall be strong as iron, since iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things; and like</mark>

iron which crushes, it shall break and crush all these (others)

So ... at least one translation explicitly states Rome!! The Amplified Bible tells you it is Rome ... but that is not right.

Historically ... it was first identified as Rome ... by Hippolytus (c200AD) ... who states ... "the legs of iron ... expressed by the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at the moment". (He also thought that Jesus would return c500AD)

Another major author and Bible writer was Jerome ... c400AD ... "now the 4th empire which clearly refers to the Romans is the Iron Empire which breaks in pieces and overcomes all others."

Right up into modern times ... Hal Lindsey ... in the book "Late Great Planet Earth" ... the Seventh Day Adventists ... the Churches of God and lots of mainstream commentaries all believe it's Rome.

It has been a very popular view for 1,800 years! But ... what does the scripture actually say about the 4th Empire? ... The Legs of Iron?

Daniel 2:40 (GNB)

40 <mark>And then there will be a fourth empire, as strong as iron, which shatters and breaks everything. And just as iron shatters everything, i<mark>t will shatter and crush a</mark>ll the earlier empires.</mark>

Daniel 2:40 (HCSB)

40 <mark>A fourth kingdom will be as strong as iron; for iron crushes and shatters everything, and like iron that smashes, it <mark>will crush and smash all the others.</mark></mark>

This describes what the 4th kingdom will do. I think we know what that means.

The Hebrew word is Deqaq ... "break into pieces, be shattered".

So ... this 4th Iron Empire will crush ... shatter ... pulverise ... Babylon, Persia and Greece? Did Rome do this? Answer ... No! Problem. Rome never conquered Persia!! There were battles ... but Rome never had the victory.

Also ... though they conquered Greece ... they didn't pulverise. The Romans respected their culture ... religion ... architecture ... they borrowed and built on Greek ideals.

So. Rome doesn't fit?! They weren't that destructive.

It is easy to say Babylon/Persia/Greece/Rome. No ... it doesn't fit the example of Dan 2:40.

Rome was essentially Western Europe. Whereas Babylon/Persia were countries way to the east ... 1,500 miles east of the Roman Empire!

Rome didn't occupy territories of Babylon/Persia ... it didn't crush them.

At face value ... it doesn't fit. "Break in pieces" does mean just that. That's what God's Kingdom does to earthly kingdoms.

Daniel 2:44 (NKJV)

44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces (Deqaq ... shat t er ... pulverise ... smash) and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

So. What do you think? Does "break in pieces" mean God's Kingdom will leave the key nations out entirely ... honour and respect their

culture ... laws and religion? No. God's Kingdom brings them to an end! And that's what the 4th kingdom does ... to Babylon ... Persia and Greece. And Rome didn't do that.

But ... Islam did! Babylon = Iraq ... Islamic. Persia = Iran ... Islamic. "Greece" = Javan = Turkey and some countries around ... Islamic.

The Islamic Empire spread rapidly across the Middle East ... North Africa ... parts of Europe ... with its culture ... religion and laws.

This passage is far and away the most important passage in identifying the 4th empire as being the Roman Empire.

Shaky? If inaccurate ... then all the follow-up teachings about 10 resurrections of Roman Empire ... about United States of Europe being rebuilt in Old Roman Empire Territory ... all become highly suspect. Wrong?

Europe today is a very troubled continent ... economically ... politically ... struggling at all sorts of levels. There may be dramatic developments. The UK has voted to leave (Brexit). Others may follow.

However ... just because Europe is troubled doesn't mean the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are being fulfilled. That was the key passage. In my view ... Rome fails the test.

Another passage that people use to point to Rome.

Revelation 17:3-4 (NKJV)

3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

Revelation 17:9 (NKJV)

9 "<u>Here is the mind which has wisdom:</u> T<u>he seven heads are seven</u> mountains on which the woman sits.

There you are ... Rome! Rome is well-known as the city on 7 hills. Therefore proof positive (?) ... no need to look further (?).

In a GTA article, "Who Is The Antichrist" ... expressing the view of the Worldwide Church of God of the day ... "notice the incontrovertible evidence of her location, in Rev 17:9. Rome is famous for its 7 hills. Rome calls itself the Eternal City".

Incontrovertible? There are lots of cities on 7 hills ... San Francisco ... Seattle ... Jerusalem ... Mecca ... Istanbul (source Wikipedia).

But ... verse 7 says "7 mountains" ... not hills. They are different.

Mountains = oros (Greek) Hills = bounos (Greek)

The harlot sits on 7 mountains ... Rev 17:10 then tells us what mountains are.

Revelation 17:10 (NKJV)

10 **There are also seven kings**. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.

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Revelation 17:9-10 (NASB)
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9 ... The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, sits, 10 and they are seven kings; *(or 7 kingdoms, empires)*

Back in Daniel 2:35 "And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth". Talking of God's Kingdom. In prophecy ... mountain = kingdom.

So Rev 17:9 not identifying a location at all? To use it to "prove" Rome is desperately weak?

It wasn't just GTA and the Churches of God. It is a very popular part of traditional view. For example: Dave Hunt ... author of "A Woman Rides The Beast" ... "The woman is that great city ... furthermore she is built on 7 hills. Only one city has for more than 2,000 years been known as the city on 7 hills. That city is Rome".

No. Lots of cities are on 7 hills. These are 7 mountains. 5 fallen! One is. One to come!

So ... using these first 2 passages to identify Rome/Roman Empire ... is (to me) very very unconvincing.

Daniel 2 ... the 4th Empire of Iron crushed/smashed/pulverised all others. Rome didn't.

Rev 17 ... the 7 mountains explained in context as 7 kingdoms ... not a location ... not a city on "7 hills".

Then one other passage is used to point to Rome.

Daniel 9:24-27 (NKJV)

24 "Seventy weeks are determined (70 shabua = 70 "sevens" = 490 years)

For your people and for your holy city, (Jerusalem) To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. 25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; (the crucifixion) And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. (*Everyone knows it was the Romans?? European? German?) The end of it shall be with a flood. And till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then **he** (the wicked prince) shall confirm a covenant with many for one week: But in the middle of the week

He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,

Even until the consummation, which is determined,

Is poured out on the desolate."

So. Where does Rome fit in?

Daniel 9:26 (NKJV)

26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And <mark>the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.</mark>

The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

*Everyone "knows" that the Romans destroyed Jerusalem/Temple in 70AD. So "Prince" ... final antichrist ... will be Roman.

Superficially ... it looks plausible. It was the Roman Empire who occupied Palestine. The Jews frequently opposed ... revolted ... provoked. General Titus (latterly Emperor) brought his armies up to Jerusalem to restore order and Roman authority.

Things went wrong ... despite Titus' orders ... the Temple was torched ... his legions went out of control ... massive destruction. The Temple disappeared.

So? Clearly the end-time Prince ... the final antichrist ... Roman (European)?

No. "Prince" is said to come from "The people ... who destroy the city and the sanctuary". Question. Who were "The people" who actually carried out destruction? Who were the people? They were 4 legions ... V... X ... XII ... XV ... under Titus. The Romans didn't usually ferry people born in Rome around the Empire. Romans generally recruited locally for their campaigns. Many legions were not Romans by birth. They were local conscripts.

Josephus was an eye-witness. He identified these legions as Syrian ... Arabians. And Roman historical records show as Syrian and Egyptian in the main. Syrians/Egyptians/Arabs ... Islamic countries today.

So. If Dan 9:26 is identifying ethnic groups from whom the antichrist will come ... it will be more likely to be someone from Syria or Egypt

... at least an Arab country ... some Middle East country ... not Rome. So ... the prince to come is probably going to be Islamic.

So ... of the 3 main passages (Dan 2, Rev 17 and Dan 9) ... there is no real link to Rome or Europe ... though Dan 2 and Dan 9 do have very strong pointers towards the Middle East and Islam.

Despite the traditional view ... the popular view of focusing on Rome/Europe/Vatican ... is shaky!

I said earlier that the 4th Empire of Dan 2 is more likely to be an Islamic Empire. But ... I didn't offer any evidence.

You could try Google ... "images" ... "Islamic Empire of 750AD" ... "Ottoman Empire-1,500/1,600". The Islamic Empire covered all of North Africa ... all of the Middle East (including Babylon/Persia) ... all of Saudi Peninsula ... all of Turkey ... Greece ... Eastern Europe ... right up to Austria.

There is an estimated 270 million killed in Islamic Jihad.

Since 9/11 ... there have been 29,000 Jihadist attacks. All motivated by Islam.

The Islamic region has an imperative. The Quran states only 3 options. 1. Convert to Islam. 2. Accept humiliation and subjugation and pay a poll-tax (Jizya). 3. Be killed.

For devout Muslims ... who believe and follow the teachings of Mohammed ... the whole world must one day become Islamic (or 2 and 3).

Some Muslims believe in Islamic evolution over time ... gradually bring Islam to being the main religion in every country. Or some believe in violent revolution – by the sword. The end result is agreed.

The Bible was written/completed long before Islam arose. (After Mohammed's death ... circa 632AD) ... so it doesn't specifically mention Islam by name. But it does identify many countries in prophecy. And today we find the key countries ... and they are mainly Islamic.

A good illustration is a major prophecy which looks like it may be next on the agenda ... the prophecy of the Ram and the He-Goat.

Daniel 8:1-4 (NKJV)

1 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time.

2 I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai.

3 Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

So. Here's the Ram with 2 horns. Who?

Daniel 8:20 (NKJV)

20 <mark>The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the </mark> <mark>kings of Media and Persia.</mark> *(I ran)*

When?

Daniel 8:17 (NKJV)

17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to **the time of the end**."

Daniel 8:26 (NKJV)

26 "And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future."

So ... look on a map.

North = South Russia (Turkmenistan ... Uzbekistan) West = Iraq ... Syria ... Turkey South = Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf States (Critical region for oil! Any serious warfare there would lead to major economic problems world-wide.)

Iran is a Shia version of Islam. It believes it's the true version. All others ... Sunnis ... Apostates.

The Ram has 2 horns. Horns symbolise power/authority.

One horn? Supreme leader ... Ayatollah The other horn? The IRGC ... Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp ... major security organisation ... spy organisation ... fighting force ... supports other terrorist organisations.

Somewhere around the end-time ... we can look at Iran launching an attack across other Middle East countries. Soon? Could be.

For years ... Iran has been strapped for cash. The US led world-wide economic sanctions against Iran.

But thanks to Mr Obama it can now accelerate their vision. This year he entered into a deal ... if they agreed to slow down nuclear program by 10 years into "pause mode" ... he would end sanctions.

At least \$33.6 billion (some say upwards of \$150 billion) was released to Iran. A lot of money to a country that supports terrorism. Now ... it has been revealed that \$1.7 billion in bank notes were delivered in January by two planes. The suspicion is that the money may have been handed over to IRGC ... the recognised sponsors of terrorism. Senator Marco Rubio from Florida has been demanding answers this week from the Obama administration.

Also ... nuclear deal seems to be unravelling by the week. Iran hasn't complied with demands. There are lots of side-agreements (not published). They negate most of headline promises. One commentator says ... "colossal failure on every level".

So ... the Obama administration has now funded the prophetic Ram ... permitting it to more easily fulfil its regional ambitions on the back of a deal that appears to be one-sided.

That's all this year ... 2016. The Ram is free to go.

Another major player in Daniel 8 ... the He-Goat.

Daniel 8:5-8 (NKJV)

5 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.
6 Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power.

7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.

8 Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.

Who is the He-Goat?

Daniel 8:21 (NKJV)

21 And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. (Javan in Hebrew ... Yavan. The region is largely Turkey ... including parts of Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria and Greece) The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king.

End-time. Turkish-led coalition which will launch a major counteroffensive against Iran. Maybe quite soon.

Turkey is major Islamic nation. (Sunni) The 10th most powerful military in the world. The 2nd biggest military in NATO ... possibly 50 x B61 Nuclear Gravity Bombs (owned by the USA to help defend Europe). There are rumours that the US is moving the nuclear weapons out of Turkey to Romania.

Turkey is Sunni Islam. It is hostile to Iran's Shia Islam. It believes its version is true.

Turkey was the basis of the Ottoman Empire. From 1300-1932. It ruled most of the Middle East/North Africa/Eastern Europe. A massive empire ... full of pomp and glory. Many in Turkey today want to restore the Islamic Ottoman Empire.

However for nearly 100 years ... Turkey has been a very secular nation. That was deliberate. The form of government was set up by Kemal Ataturk. It kept Islam out of state rule.

In the past 2 or 3 years ... Turkey has been shifting back to Islamic influence. Its current president ... Recep Erdogan ... is a devout Muslim. He has a vision to bring Islam back as a ruling force.

Military normally intervenes to restore secular rule. But ... the attempted coup in July ... failed. Erdogan was victorious. He exclaimed that the coup was a "gift from God". He has been purging everyone who disagrees with his vision. 80,000-100,000 people have been suspended/jailed ... judges/military/academia.

He shows all signs of Islamic Dictatorship ... after a century of modern secular state.

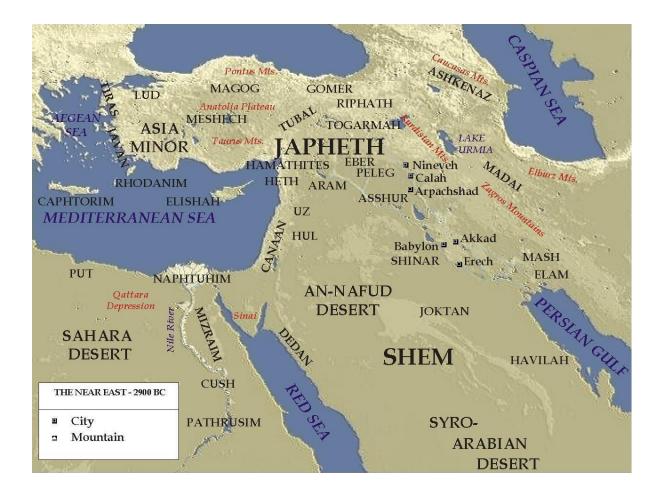
This week ... in Der Spiegel ... the cover story is ... "Turkey ... A country loses its freedom" and identified Erdogan as a dictator/despot.

Turkey is changing dramatically before our eyes. Erdogan could be the "notable horn" of verse 8 (if the events happen in the next 1-15 years). Speculation!!!

Daniel 8 shows Iran and Turkey in major warfare in the end-time.

As of this year ... with Iran's extra \$billions and Turkey's dramatic shift towards restoration of the Ottoman Empire ... the scene is set!!

MAPS AND PICTURES BELOW



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