

Arabian Spring

Fukushima

And what comes next?

An Analysis and a Key



What is Prophecy for?

**It is not just a question of knowing
what will happen in the future,**

but

**it is also a matter of rightly
understanding current events.**



“I would like to know what is going to happen in the future!”—this is a common expression, and an even more common thought. Biblical prophecy speaks about the future, about what is coming. But is it really just a question of our knowing what the future will bring?

Bible prophecy is a light in a dark place. It explains the times in which we live, and through it God invites us to view world events from a different angle. “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.” *Revelation 4:1*.

Biblical prophecy shows us how God sees the events in this world. But it also reveals the characters which form both world events and our own lives.

Prophecy is not concerned with classifying individual nations, churches, or any other groups into specific stereotypes. Rather, it enables us to make right decisions in our increasingly complex and confusing world.

And finally, Bible prophecy gives us comfort. When we see how prophecies are fulfilled before our eyes, our trust grows in an all-powerful God who rules over everything.

Revolutionary events

In 1755

a mighty earthquake hit Lisbon, the capital city of Portugal. It was 9:40 a.m. on the first of November—All Saints' Day. The churches were full. The earth shook for quite a time—between three and six minutes. It was followed by two huge aftershocks. This earthquake was felt in Europe, Africa, and America. Just a few minutes later a tsunami swept over the coasts of Portugal, Spain, and North Africa. A wave 18 meters high was reported from the port of Cadiz in Spain.

90,000 of the 275,000 inhabitants of Lisbon lost their lives—many of them in the collapsed and burned-out churches.

The Lisbon earthquake changed the world. The unlimited trust that had been put in human prowess suffered a severe blow, and religious interpretations that catastrophes especially hit the “wicked” were constrained to silence.

On April 26, 1986

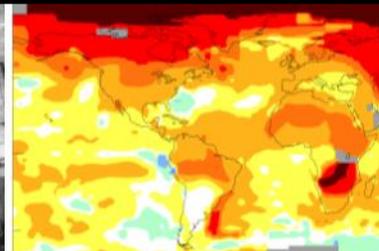
the nuclear power plant in Chernobyl exploded. The devastating effects of this catastrophe are still visible today. But of course, that was old Russian technology—and furthermore, it was in a godless country ...



Lisbon, 1755



Chernobyl 1986



Climate Change

But when, on March 11, 2011

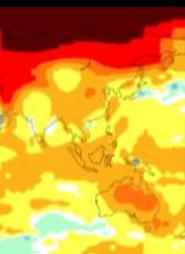
Japan was shaken by a massive earthquake and the ensuing tsunami rolled over the coastline, it resulted in a nuclear accident of inconceivable magnitude in the atomic power plant at Fukushima—a worst-case scenario in a highly developed country with the latest technology; in a country with one of the strongest economies on earth. And all the excuses were stifled.

The Japanese earthquake also changed the world. The unlimited trust in human prowess again suffered a severe blow. There is no real reason why this quake could not have also hit the west coast of America. Once again, the religious interpretation that catastrophes only hit the “wicked” had no foundation. The shocking news from Japan also made us more aware of other world-shattering events, including the tremendous changes in the Arabian world, the glaring climate change, and the economic crisis that is only held in check by huge quantities of injected money.

And what does Bible prophecy have to do with all this?

Prophecy not only reveals what will happen in the future, it also helps us to gain a right understanding of present events. But for this we need a key.

On the next pages we will examine this key.



Fukushima, March 2011

Arabian Spring

The key to understanding: the characters of the



“At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships.”

Daniel 11:40

Daniel was a prophet. He lived in the time when Israel was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Babylonians. He was appointed to be one of the closest counselors to the king because of his wisdom.

God opened Daniel’s eyes to see certain events that would come upon the earth. Two great powers were described, both of whom were to play

nations during the times of the prophet Daniel

a major part in the history of humankind until the time of the end: the king of the North and the king of the South. These two powers were involved in a continual battle for supremacy—and they also fought against Israel. But at the time of the end this contest will finally be decided.

“At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.” *Daniel* 11:40.

There was a kingdom to the south of Israel—Egypt. The king of the South was the king of Egypt.

There was also a kingdom to the north—Babylon. The king of the North was the king of Babylon. Actually, his kingdom lay to the east, but he always came out of the north when he attacked Israel.

These three nations (Babylon, Egypt, and Israel) and their relationship to each other are a key to understanding Bible prophecy in the present time.

During Daniel’s lifetime the Babylonian superpower was conquered by the Persians and became insignificant. So who became the king of the North then?

Today, neither Babylon, Persia, nor Egypt have any major political significance in the world. Other powers determine worldwide events. So, who or where is the king of the North today?

The key to understanding: the characters of the

Daniel knew the king of the North

Daniel knew the king of the North. He knew him from the writings of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah. And he personally knew Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. He was familiar with his character. So he understood God's meaning when He referred to the king of the North.

Through Isaiah, God had described the king of Babylon. "You will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: ... For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'" *Isaiah 14:4, 13, 14.*

Nebuchadnezzar had treated Daniel and the other prisoners from Judea very well. He wanted to integrate them into his kingdom, into the great Babylon that he had built. He did not fight against their religion—they were still able to exercise that. He just wanted to make his kingdom even greater through them. "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" *Daniel 4:30.*

The king of Babylon, the king of the North, wanted to be the greatest. He wanted to be like the Most High. He was a usurper, trying to steal the throne. That is the character of Babylon.

Daniel knew the king of the South

For Daniel, the king of the South was not just a geographical description. The prophet knew the peculiar characteristics of Egypt; its philosophy

peoples during the times of the prophet Daniel

and its religion. In the battle with Israel—the people of God at that time—this all climaxed during the Exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. It was then that Pharaoh, in his self-confidence, declared, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.” *Exodus 5:2*.

During the time of Moses, Egypt was the most important nation on earth. Huge, impressive architecture—built by the enslaved Israelites—embellished its reign. The Israelites themselves, however, carried no weight in society. They had no opportunity of worshiping God, keeping the Sabbath, or of exercising their religion in any other way. Nor did Pharaoh want them to. In fact he mocked them. For him Jehovah did not exist. He himself was the one who held the affairs of the world in his hand. He was an atheist. That was his character.

Babylon | the usurper; man puts himself in the place of God

Egypt | denies God; man does not need God

Israel was situated between these two powerful kings. When Israel was threatened by the Babylonians they turned to the Egyptians for help. But Jeremiah prophesied that Egypt would be conquered by the Babylonians. “Egypt is a very pretty heifer, but destruction comes, it comes from the north.” *Jeremiah 46:20*.

We will now apply this key to various episodes in human history.

The key opens our understanding The king of the North in history



“She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you ...”

1 Peter 5:13

Peter in Babylon

It could just as well read, “She who is in the kingdom of the North, elect together with you, greets you.” Where was Peter when he wrote this letter? He was not in Israel, and certainly not in Babylon. The kingdom of Babylon had been completely destroyed hundreds of years before this and was now a desert region.

Peter was in Rome. But the Christian church of his time understood that

when he wrote “Babylon,” he meant Rome. They understood how to apply the key. The same character ruled in Rome as it had done in the earlier Babylonian kingdom under King Nebuchadnezzar. This was what Peter wanted to inform the church about. He lived in Babylon. So then, the king of the North is determined by a certain character, not by a geographical location.

John and Babylon

While banished on the isle of Patmos, John the disciple was given a revelation concerning future world events. And once again Babylon is mentioned: “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” *Revelation 14:8*. Babylon no longer had any geographical meaning during John’s lifetime. It had already fallen hundreds of years previously. So why is it mentioned in the book of *Revelation*?

Babylon is a Character

Babylon stands for a character—for a particular nature. This nature has been especially revealed in individual nations or human organizations throughout history. That is why Peter greeted the church from Babylon, and that is why John had a vision about Babylon.

It is the character of Babylon to put itself in the place of God: “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.” *Isaiah 14:14*. “... the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” *2 Thessalonians 2:4*.

The key opens our understanding The king of the South in history



Egypt



The French Revolution



Communism

Egypt does not need a Redeemer

“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.” *Hosea 11:1*. We have already seen that Egypt was a country where the existence of God was denied. The Egyptians themselves were the masters, and they held the events of the world in their own hands. But God delivered Israel from this atheistic nation. It is trusting one’s own power and abilities that characterizes this Egyptian attitude. A Redeemer, a Saviour, is not needed. This is what Pharaoh expressed in his words to Moses: “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.” *Exodus 5:2*. This spirit of self-confidence continued to live throughout the many centuries that followed. It reached its height when the people completely lost trust in both the church and the king.

The great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt

“And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” *Revelation 11:8*.

In the *Revelation* that John was given on the Isle of Patmos concerning future world events, both of these great kingdoms are mentioned: Babylon and Egypt. For many years the Babylonian power—the king of the North—was to be the decisive spiritual power on this earth. The zenith of its ruling power was during the Dark Ages. This religious power, which put itself in the place of God, suppressed the Bible and personal religion for many years.

Then the tide turned: the king of the South arose. People rejected the oppression by the so-called Christian church. Religion, and everything connected with it, was forbidden, condemned, and ridiculed. God's existence was denied and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was considered to be an ordinary person.

This rejection climaxed in a public outburst during the French Revolution of 1789. The supremacy of the ruling church of that day and the aristocracy was brought to an end by the insurrection of the people. That was the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt. The God of heaven was no longer worshipped, but the god of reason was. The Bible was burned. Faith no longer had a place among the populace.

The influence of the French Revolution was far-reaching. This spirit of atheism, of denying God, continued in the countries of early communism and can still be seen today in the arrogance of the civilized world. It is not only manifest in an open rejection of Jesus Christ, but also in a humanistic security, which solves problems itself—"I don't need any help; I can do it by myself."

The key opens our understanding Israel in history

Who is the third nation—Israel?

“Out of Egypt I called My Son.” *Matthew 2:15*. We have already described the character of Egypt. But who is this Son called out of Egypt?

Initially it was Jacob’s family, the people of Israel, who were freed from Egyptian captivity through Moses. But once again, this does not concern just one family or one people. As in the case of Babylon, and in the case of Egypt, so in the case of Israel: this is about a character. Jesus Christ is the Son who is called out of Egypt (see *Matthew 2:13–15*). And so it concerns His character.

But what was His character? It was a character of selflessness. He did not want to exalt Himself, and He recognized and loved God, His heavenly Father. At every step, Christ’s life revealed His unconditional love to His neighbors. This character stands in complete contrast to the king of the North and the king of the South, because in both these kings self is first and foremost.

In actual fact, the real enmity does not exist between the kings of the North and South. In principle, both of them are very similar. Both are egoists who are interested only in their own advantage. Self has preeminence for both of them. The real, more profound, enmity exists between the selflessness revealed in the life of Jesus and the selfishness of these two kings. They do not want to lead a selfless life—they reject it, they fight against it.

Two thousand years ago, things were no different. Back then there were two influential, religious groups who held deep animosity towards each other: the Pharisees and the Sadducees. These joined forces against Jesus Christ and finally had him crucified. But Jesus Christ is God. His way

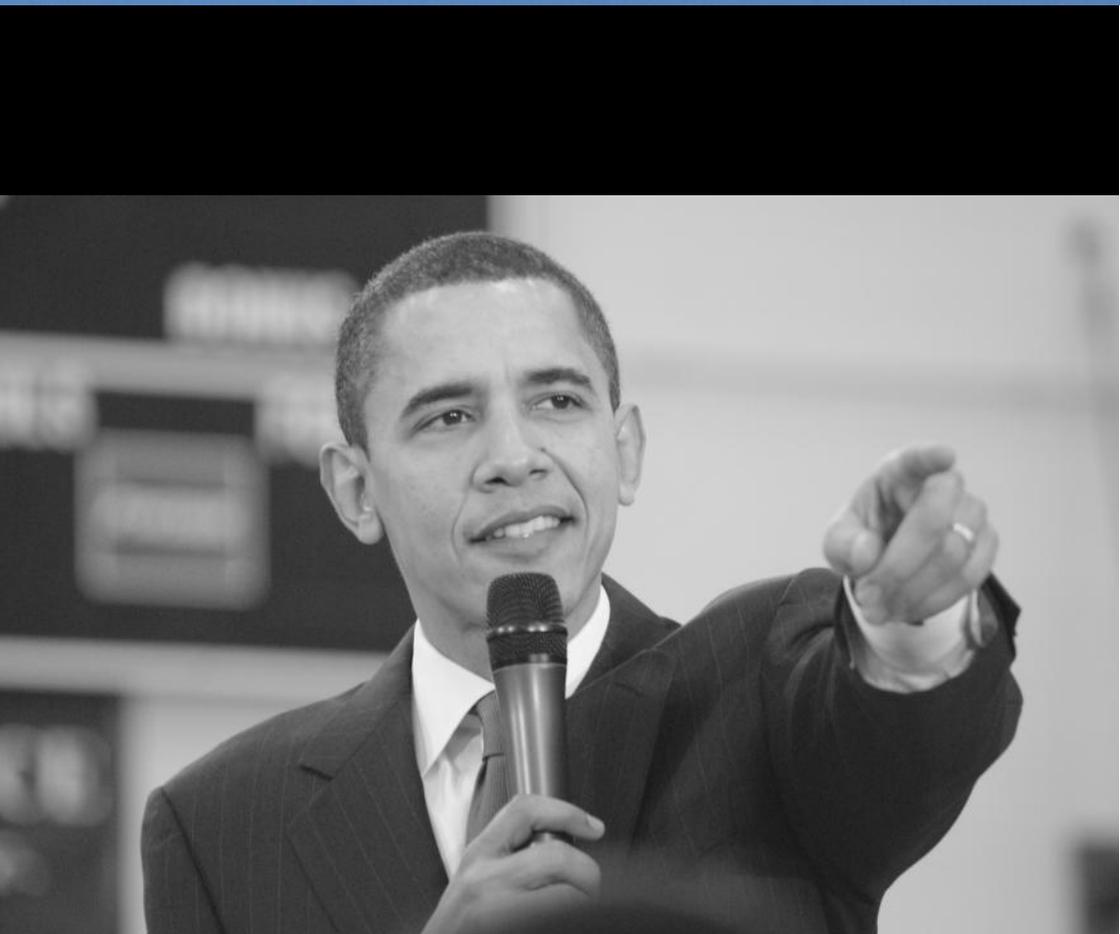
of selflessness is the only way that will remain. All other ways will perish. He Himself said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” *John 14:6*. This absoluteness led to the Pharisees and Sadducees’ unbridled hatred of Jesus.

The characters of these three powers can be summarized as follows:

Babylon	the usurper; man puts himself in the place of God
Egypt	denies God; man does not need God
Israel	selflessness; as revealed in the life of Jesus

Now we can apply the key to today.

“Yes we can!”—a short analysis



YES WE CAN!

In August 2004, as in previous years, American president George Bush said, concerning the fight against terrorism, “We will win.” *The New York Times*, August 31, 2004.

And President Barack Obama appeared with the self-confident slogan, “Yes we can!”—We can solve America’s problems.

“The risks of nuclear power are controllable,” said a leading German politician, Erwin Huber, on July 26, 2008.

And on March 23, 2011 the German newspaper, *Nürnberger Nachrichten*, wrote, “nuclear power stations are controllable and safe.” This sentiment was echoed by many scientists and politicians worldwide.

That is the character of the king of the South. He tries to build a secure world with human power. And Christ has no place in it.

The limits of this system have become apparent.

Terrorism—fear and the unpredictable horror—is more widespread today than in 2001. This war has in no way been won. Guantánamo has not been closed. There is no peace in Iraq or in Afghanistan. The problems of America have not been solved—“No we cannot!”

On March 11, 2007, the nuclear power plants at Fukushima in Japan were involved in a worst-case scenario nuclear accident. The catastrophe was classified as Level 7, the highest danger level of the INES scale. Nuclear power plants are not “controllable and safe.”

The correct interpretation of present events —



The fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989

“... you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place.”

2 Peter 1:19

In 1989 the world changed

Before 1989 the world was clearly structured: there was the Western world, the Eastern Bloc, and the so-called Third World. In the Eastern Bloc, religion was rejected and the Bible suppressed; atheism, the king of the South, ruled there. Then the system of communism fell under the common action of the western powers and the church.

What is the world like today?

In the so-called Western world and in the former Eastern Bloc, both kings ruled: the king of the South, who despises Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and the king of the North, who puts himself in the place of the Son of God.

The heavily populated and economically significant power of China continues to be ruled by a godless system—it stands under the king of the South.

The Islamic world does not deny God—its adherents are devoted to God. But for them, Jesus Christ is not God—He is only a prophet, a person. They do not subject themselves to Him. Faith in Christ, faith in the Son of God, is blasphemy for them. His way has no validity for them. For this reason Islam also belongs to the king of the South.

“At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.” *Daniel 11:40.*

The revolutions in the Arabian countries are a call for freedom and self-government, as is normal in the Western world. When the people in these Islamic countries ask the West for help, the king of the North gains an influence and will overwhelm these countries.

Today, the Western world stands for self-government and freedom, but an appalling egoism and an increasing religious intolerance is growing under the guise of this cover.

The correct interpretation of present events



Top left: Protest in the Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt

Top right: Demonstration in Tunis, Tunisia

Bottom left: Protesters demand the resignation of President Saleh in Yemen

Bottom right: Protests in Duma, Syria

We can expect the following events:

- The king of the South will lose his influence, while the power of an apparently Christian religion will increase.
- In China, the power of the king of the South will come to an end.
- In the Islamic world, the king of the South will be increasingly ruled over by the king of the North.

But how will the king of the North increase in power?

Superstition and faith—a view of the future

“... until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”

2 Peter 1:19.

At the moment, it seems that we still have everything under control. But in the face of catastrophes which reach beyond our comprehension and imagination, we grow pale. That is what happened in the terrible events which shook Japan in March 2011.

No, we cannot

Yet it did not take long before humanity rose again. “Yes we can!” No, we can’t. The ordinary person on the street has known this for some time. Our growth has limits, and so does our earth. The king of the South is losing his influence.

The opportunity for the king of the North

The sight of these horrific catastrophes and problems, and the great distress that follows in their wake, leads us to seek for a higher power. This is the opportunity for the king of the North.

- The weakness of the king of the South: humanity has reached its limits,
- the lack of a personal connection of individuals to God: we need somebody else who has a connection with the higher world,
- the false concept of God as a destroying, revengeful executioner of the wicked,
- and superstition—

all prepare the way for the king of the North.



“I believe that New Orleans had a level of sin that was offensive to God, and they were recipients of the judgment of God for that.”

John Hagee in an interview with Terry Gross, 2006.

It is hard to imagine such a thing in our enlightened world. But superstition drives people to strange religious concepts and actions: “the terrible judgments which God is pouring over the world must be stopped. An angry God must be appeased.”

This pattern has recurred throughout history time and again. Repeatedly, such superstition builds up a religious system which claims to represent God.

Superstition and faith

Cause and effect

It is more biblical and reasonable to see the connection between cause and effect, and to see a loving God who has protected and preserved us from catastrophes, disasters, and entire self-destruction for thousands of years.

It is so obvious: earthquakes do not just hit anywhere, but usually those areas of land which lie in earthquake territory. Tsunamis are a threat from the ocean, and nuclear catastrophes threaten those places where atomic power plants are endangered by natural causes or the human element. An act of God is not necessary for these catastrophes—they are either close at hand or home-made.

How does the king of the North gain his power?

- Through the weakness of the king of the South
- Because people do not seek for their own connection to God
- Because people have a wrong concept of God
- Through superstition

God wants to save

Nevertheless, these catastrophes lead us to see our own shortcomings. And if we become humble; if we see how God has protected us over the years and decades, how He has carried us through times of crisis—then such crises can lead to a change of our inner being, our heart. Then they have a purpose. When, instead of self-love, love for our fellow beings and for our Creator comes into our heart, then the foundation for a better world has been created—for the new earth, which God has foretold. Then the following verse from Daniel’s prophecy will be fulfilled.

“At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book.” *Daniel 12:1.*

If you would like to take a deeper look at this theme we recommend:



“World events in the light of prophecy” parts 1–6
Bible studies from Andreas Dura (www.srac.de)

“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”

2 Peter 1:19

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Publisher:

Sabbath Rest Advent Church

Waldstraße 37

57520 Dickendorf

Germany

E-mail: info@srac.de

Website: www.srac.info

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