

FROM OUR PASTOR

February 13, 2016

Greetings to everyone,

In Syria the Kremlin-backed regime of Bashar al-Assad is slowly crushing its opponents, thanks to prodigious military help from both Russia and Iran. Regime forces are closing in on Aleppo, Syria's biggest city with a population of two million. 50,000 civilians have already fled the city in panic.

While in the US most of our concern is about politics, sports, and "OILMAGEDDON" as the Citibank economists are calling the two-month collapse of worldwide oil and stock prices—and the media have apparently lost interest in the war in Syria. We better take notice.

The war in Syria is looking more and more like it is going to escalate into a war between Russia and Turkey—and Turkey is a member of NATO. Russia and Turkey, are ancient enemies who have warred many times over the centuries. The Russian Empress Catherine the Great waged a lengthy war on Turkey (1768-1774), and years later the English were brought into their conflict in what became known as the Crimean war.

It was reported this week that the Kremlin announced large-scale surprise military exercises in the regions of the country that are close to Turkey. Troops were moved to full combat readiness, the stage before a shooting war. This was probably a move by power chess-player Vladimir Putin to warn the Turks to stay out of Syria as they watch the carnage. Russians have in the past used military exercises as a cover for invasion. They did it for the August 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. 2016 is looking more like 1968 every day.

The people of modern day Turkey are identified by some scholars as Edom, descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother who lost his birthright. God's word has much to say about Edom. Jeremiah 49

says that at a point in the future God will punish Edom. The nation will suffer from plagues, desolation, and invasion.

The shortest book in the Old Testament, Obadiah, is about Edom. That prophet's message begins with a prediction of an invasion. "The Vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom (We have heard a report from the LORD, and a messenger has been sent among the nations, saying, "Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle"): "Behold, I will make you small among the nations, You shall be greatly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you. . ." Obadiah 1: 1-3 Will the Russian Bear of 2016 finally fulfill the desire of the adored Catherine? Watch and see.

*Rex Sexton
Pastor UCG Portland*