Contemporary Comments on the Adult Sabbath School Lesson

[Title] From Exalted to Cast Down
[Text] John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16, 17; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Deuteronomy 8:1-18; Isaiah 14:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:14
[Use] April 9, 2011

Mercurial. The dictionary defines it as "lively, clever, sprightly, animated, or quick-witted." It also defines mercurial as "volatile, erratic, unstable, flighty, fickle or changeable in temperament."1

CNN reporter Greg Botelho refers to Moammar Gadhafi (or Gaddafi) a "mercurial leader" in the second definition above:

(CNN) -- Once called the "mad dog of the Middle East," Libya's often flamboyantly dressed ruler, Moammar Gadhafi, has ruled the north African nation for 42 years. But Libya's 679,362 square miles and 6.4 million people have rarely seemed enough for Gadhafi, who in 2008 gathered a group of African tribal leaders and had them grant him the lofty title, "King of Kings."

It was part of his campaign for a unified Africa—a single federation with a million-man army at its disposal —a nation that he, naturally, would serve as president, said Ronald Bruce St. John, the author of seven books on Libya. "The Libyan stage is not enough of a playhouse for Gadhafi. It never has been," St. John said.

Gadhafi's "King of Kings" ploy was only another in a string of efforts by the mercurial leader to secure a larger-than-life place for himself on the world stage, efforts that have frequently landed him and his citizens in the harsh glare of an angry international community, according to St. John."2

In a Wikipedia article on Gadhafi, it states, "In 1979, he relinquished the title of prime minister, and was thereafter called "The Brother Leader" or "The Guide" in Libya's Socialist Revolution."3

For the Bible student, some of this language sounds strangely familiar. Certainly the desire of a leader to be known as a supreme ruler rings our "dictator" bell of other similar leaders in our world history. While we would be wise to not quickly pin "antichrist" to his shirt sleeve, perhaps we can see some comparisons with the fall of Lucifer (this week’s subject for our Sabbath school lesson) by considering the life of a man who plays big in the news.

It is a bloody path following the life of Gadhafi, from his military coup d'état in 1969, the political repression of his government, assassinations among his people as well as abroad, his approach to building weapons of mass destructions, his failed efforts to merge with other countries, his enormous wealth at the expense of his people, and massacres done in his name. Forty two years of abusive leadership are cracking apart. Perhaps, rebels pray, it will end soon.

We live on a planet hijacked, bombed, tortured, and decimated by a fallen angel who was once exalted, but was cast down. Like Gadhafi, he will be tried for crimes against humanity. This former "light bearer" will find his candle extinguished forever. Then, the true "King of Kings" will once more rule in peace. Our universe will be safe. Civil war will end. No more mercurial leaders.