ISLAM
the Cloak
OF
ANTICHRIST



JACK SMITH

FOREWORD BY TIMOTHY R. FURNISH, PH.D.



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Foreword

BACK IN ANOTHER age of the world—when the World Trade Center towers still stood, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was just the mayor of Tehran, and we could maintain the pretense that that history, or at least major international conflict, *had* ended with the demise of the USSR—Islamic beliefs about the end of the world were the province of a very few (rather eccentric) academic specialists on Shi`ism, and few, if any, Christians had ever heard of *al-Mahdi* or the Twelfth Imam. How times have changed. Now armchair apocalypticists (most woefully uninformed) opine on Islamic and Christian eschatology from a legion of websites, Muslim antagonists have begun to supplant Catholic or European ones in evangelical Protestant exegetical prognostications, and even some secular academics have come grudgingly to admit that Mahdism has been a force in Sunni as well as Shi`i Islamic history.

As an academic specializing in Mahdism and a conservative (Lutheran) Christian, I have watched the undeniable ratcheting up of Muslim eschatological fervor from Morocco to Malaysia with growing alarm. I have been hoping, largely in vain, that the ivory towers' denizens might come to acknowledge and take seriously the revolutionary and often violent potential that Mahdism holds for the near future (and not just analyze its influence in the past), while also despairing of the all-too-frequent tendency among orthodox Christians to simply, and alas ignorantly, twist the modern geopolitical scene into unrecognizable shapes in order to salvage the reconstituted Roman Empire paradigm of *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Secular analysts, while always learning, are rarely (if ever) able to acknowledge the

truth about Islam and its promised "rightly-guided one," and far too many Christian believers, on the other hand, seem to forget how much the Bible recommends knowledge.

It is time that the serpent-like knowledge of academia was wedded to the dove-like innocence of Christians, in order that the very real ideological, military, political, theological, and spiritual threat of Islam in general and Mahdism in particular might be understood and, God willing, countered. Some have taken up this challenge and produced works and writings that provide, at best, partial armor against Islamic eschatological doctrines. But in *Islam: The Cloak of Antichrist,* Jack Smith provides, as it were, the full armor of God against Islamic Mahdist stratagems. Whether or not Christians will don this armor is another story. Perhaps, like John the Baptizer in the desert, only some will listen and put it on. But they will not be able to say they were not told.

Jack Smith brings to bear not only excellent theological training (an M.Div. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) but also a secular degree in an empirical topic; furthermore, he has done several years of intense, personal self-education in the realms of Islamic history and theology (to which yours truly has modestly contributed). His informed analysis of the Jewish and Christian apocalyptic books (primarily Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation) in light of Islamic eschatological and Mahdist beliefs leads him to the following plausible positions:

- Islam fulfills the biblical prophecies of the "false religion" that will come to rule the world for a time before the end.
- The Antichrist of the New Testament is the 12th Imam al-Mahdi of Shi`ism, who will lead a global conquest and imposition of Shari`ah (Islamic law) after civil wars within the Islamic world bring him to power.
- The Mahdi's army of Iranians and Turks, assisted by Russia, will attack Israel.
- The rapture will occur in the midst of these eschatological hostilities.
- The Mahdi eventually will be defeated by the returned Jesus Christ.

Secularists and even some Christians may not like references to the rapture, but it's clearly described in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Likewise, there are those who can, and will, take issue with Smith's premillennial view—such as the many in the Catholic and Lutheran traditions who are amillennial. However, what all Christians should keep in mind as they read this excellent and well-researched book is this: pre-, a-, or even post-millennialism isn't the key issue; rather, how Christians will respond to Islam is. Unless one is

willing to state that all eschatological prophecy in the Bible already has taken place in the early church's persecution by the pagan Roman Empire, much of Revelation has yet to come to pass. Jack Smith's postulating that Islam, as personified in Shi`ism's (returned) 12th Imam, will fullfill these unrealized prophecies of global rule and persecution becomes more and more plausible every day, as the headlines attest. Perhaps St. James was warning of Islam when he wrote, "You believe that there is one God? Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder" (James 2:19).

—Timothy R. Furnish, Ph.D.
Author of *Holiest Wars: Islamic Mahdis, their Jihads and Osama Bin Laden*
Lent 2011

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Introduction

THE HEADLINES WERE riveting! *Boston Globe* reporting, *Bloomberg News*, March 12, 2007:

> Halliburton Co., the world's second-largest oilfield-services provider, will move chief executive David Lesar to a new corporate headquarters in Dubai to help the company expand in the Middle East and Asia …[2]

Why would Halliburton Company, the international, multi-billion dollar energy services giant, move its corporate headquarters from Houston, Texas, to Dubai? Nowadays, a multinational corporation can be managed from almost any city in the world. It's one thing to open a corporate office in Dubai, but to move the company headquarters there? But then, if you think about it, this once rugged, barren, desert region happens to be the basin for the world's largest petroleum reserves; and in just the last fifty or so years, it has been transformed from a desert wasteland to a petroleum Mecca. No wonder Halliburton chose it for its corporate headquarters!

There is something else this little corner of the world is known for. It is also the birthplace of the world's three major monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. And not too far from Dubai, Halliburton's new location, is Mecca, Islam's holiest city, where Muslims believe Abraham placed Ishmael on an altar as a sacrifice to Allah, only to be saved by Abraham's obedience and a ram caught in the thicket. This same area is the political and religious hotbed of the modern day. Every day our news is filled with the chaos and bloodshed of Iraq, Iran, the Gaza

Strip or the religious turmoil surrounding Jerusalem, the Temple Mount (to Jews) and the Noble Sanctuary (to Muslims), and the people of Israel. This hasn't just happened in the last one hundred years or so as the world became dependent on Mideast crude. It has been that way since the time of Abraham, patriarch of the three monotheistic faiths, and it will be that way until the end of time.

How is it possible that a book, the Bible, written thousands of years ago could begin with a story on the origin of humanity, Adam and Eve, whose Garden of Eden just happened to be located in the very center of the modern world's largest oil deposits? How is it possible that the birthplace of the world's three major religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, could be birthed in this very same region centuries before it became the modern world's religious and financial centerpiece? Seems a little too coincidental to me—*unless, the Bible is true*.

Let me show you a Bible passage that was penned no less than 2,500 years ago, well before Christianity or Islam came into existence, and certainly before Middle East crude was discovered:

> Thus says the Lord GOD, "This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the center of the nations, with lands around her."[3]
>
> —Ezekiel 5:5

Jerusalem—prophesied to be the "center of the nations" over 2,500 years ago! What does this say to the humanity of the modern age? What does it say about the accuracy of the Bible and the prophecies it contains? Here is what it says to me: *The Bible's prophecies are true*; and that is why this book's interpretation of those prophecies is important. This book interprets the Bible's prophecies and tells how it will all end and through which nation and religion the end will come.

The study of last days has been a passion of mine for years. Yet, recently, God has revealed some new things to me—things about the times we are in and how our times are written about in the Bible. I am not engrossed in daily prayer and meditations, just waiting for my next vision. Rather, beginning with the events of 9/11, I sought to understand Islam—its history and basic teachings. In the process, I had moments when a light was turned on. I will never forget the week I was preparing to lead a Bible study on 2 Thessalonians 2. I was trying to understand how the passage ever could be fulfilled since it talks about the "man of lawlessness [the Antichrist] … [who] takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thess. 2:3–4). How could this be fulfilled in the near future since all that remains of the first century Jerusalem temple is an outer wall used for prayer? What is

the likelihood of Israel rebuilding the temple in the near future? Next to impossible, given the present political and religious climate.

I took a break from my studies to glance at a book I had no recollection of ordering, about a topic that had little interest to me—biblical archaeology. I thumbed through the pages and found my eyes focusing on a black and white picture—actually, more a pen and ink drawing. The description under it read: "The location of the Holy of Holies in the Temple, showing possible sites for the Ark of the Covenant within the modern Dome of the Rock."[4] As I looked further, I came to another picture, this one of what appeared to be a large, bare rock within the Dome of the Rock. A rectangular shape drawn as a dotted line was superimposed on the large rock. The shape had a description: "The Foundation Stone," i.e., the foundation for the actual Ark of the Covenant in the first century Temple period.[5]

I was awestruck. I read the articles associated with the pictures. The Dome of the Rock, the Muslim religious shrine built to honor Muhammad's Night Journey and Islam's conquest of Jerusalem in 638 A.D., was constructed over the top of the previous location of the Holy of Holies. The Dome, in fact, "took its seat" in the very location where God had taken His seat.

It was at that moment I had one of those "*aha*" moments, when you know that God has just spoken to you. This was the prophecy of 2 Thessalonians 2 that I was preparing to lead. It already had been fulfilled. From that moment on, my research about Islam took on a different emphasis. I wanted to know if Islam was present in the Bible's prophecies of the last days. In the months that followed, I learned that the Dome of the Rock was Islam's statement of supremacy to Christians, of Muhammad's superiority to Christ. It was a statement made in the seventh century that has continued until the modern time.

When I first began this journey, I did not begin with Islam in mind. As I studied, my eyes were opened to see other fulfillments that had been hidden before. For many who read this book, what my eyes were opened to see will be offensive to you. It is not my purpose or my intention to offend you. I am a steward of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1). It is my intention to glorify God through an accurate interpretation of Bible prophecy. An interpreter is like a translator of foreign languages. He interprets from one language to another so that all can understand the thought of the originator. He does so without changing the words of the originator, regardless of the complexity or difficulty of the message to the hearer. So it is with this writing. The originator is God, and He has chosen to communicate in metaphors. As one of His many messengers, I am translating His metaphors into their literal, true meaning, as best I can understand them. It is what it is (see Ezek. 2:5–7).

It is my prayer that God will accomplish His work in this writing, that He will open the eyes of His Saints to what is about to take place. I pray that the eyes of Muslims will be opened to the One True Light of the only Begotten Son, Jesus the Christ. It is God who said through the prophet Daniel:

> "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase …" He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time."
>
> —Daniel 12:4, 9

The end time is now.

Defining Our Terms

WORDS HAVE DIFFERENT meanings to all of us. With this in mind, the primary terms used in this writing and a brief definition of each is shown below. Within the full body of the text, more thorough definitions will be found.

Al-Mahdi: "Al-Mahdi" will be interpreted as Shi'ah Islam's "promised one" and savior who will rise up at the command of Allah at the right moment in human history, according to Shi'ah prophecy (and Sunnis). Al-Mahdi is not a "savior" in the same sense that Christians consider Jesus Christ the Savior of the world. Christians believe Jesus gives eternal life to believers by virtue of His atoning death on the cross (see Isa. 53:5–6; John 3:16; 1 John 2:2). Muslims believe al-Mahdi will bring peace, justice, and harmony but only through submission to Allah. Shi'ahs believe al-Mahdi will avenge the wrongs committed against Shi'ahs by Sunnis throughout their history.

Antichrist: Antichrist has two meanings in the Bible. First, "antichrist" is a demonic influence that may or may not be incarnate in a particular individual but has the purpose of tempting humanity away from God and His Son, Jesus Christ (see 1 John 2:18). This demonic influence operates in human society to blind the minds of unbelievers so that they might not come to Christ as Savior (see 2 Cor. 4:4). Second, in the last days, "Antichrist" is an incarnate satanic spirit possessing supernatural powers that will lead a false religion in its quest for dominion of the entire world (see Rev. 13:7–8, 11–18; 17:8, 11). Islam's prophesied "Mahdi" will be interpreted as the Antichrist in the last days. When used in the second meaning, Antichrist

will use an upper case "A." The Antichrist will also refer to the last "False Prophet" in the Bible (see Rev. 13:11–18; 16:13; 19:20; Matt. 24:11, 24); both terms refer to the same end of times, anti-God spirit. He is also the second beast of Revelation 13.

Believers: "believers" will refer to those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and whose names have been recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life since the foundation of the world (John 3:16).

Holy people: the "holy people" will be interpreted as the Jewish people based upon Isaiah 62:11–12.

Islam: "Islam" is the second largest monotheistic religion in the world. Literally, "Islam" in Arabic means "submission." Muslims believe that to submit or surrender to Allah is to experience peace. Islam is a religion that also includes political dimensions.

First beast: The "first beast" is the "beast from the sea" of Revelation 13:1–10. He will be interpreted to be the supreme god of a false religion, whose authority comes directly from Satan (see Rev. 13:2). He is Allah.

Last days: The Bible describes the "last days" as beginning with the resurrection of Jesus Christ (see Heb. 1:1–2; 1 Pet. 1:20) and continuing until the second coming of Jesus Christ. This writing will use a more limited definition of the last days to include the modern day and beyond as humanity anticipates the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ: Jesus is the Savior of the world, whose death atones for the sins of the world (see Isa. 53:5–6). He is the incarnate God in human flesh, who preexisted with God before the earth was formed (see John 1:1–4; 14). Jesus is the Son of God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit of God in the womb of his human mother, Mary.

Millennium: The "millennium" will refer to the 1,000 year period described in Revelation 20:2. The millennium will be interpreted to begin immediately following the second coming of Jesus Christ (see Rev. 19:11–21). During this period, Satan is "bound" and no longer able to "deceive the nations" and bring them into world war. The millennial is not the subject of a detailed review in this writing.

Muhammad: "Muhammad" is the messenger of Allah (and Islam). Muhammad claimed to have received a revelation from Allah through the angel Gabriel in 610 A.D. This revelation was repeated to Muhammad's followers at different times over the next twenty-three years, eventually becoming the basis upon which the Qur'an was formed and Islam was born. A Muslim must believe Muhammad to be the messenger of Allah.

Muslims: "Muslims" are individuals who have submitted to Allah, the supreme being of Islam, and believe Muhammad to be the messenger of Allah.

Muslims are adherents of the religion of Islam. To Muslims, Muhammad is the messenger of Islam and Allah is the one true god.

Rapture: The "rapture" will be interpreted as the secret event described in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, when Christians are "taken away" by Christ prior to the ensuing of God's wrath upon humanity (see Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:37, 40–42; John 14:1–3; 1 Thess. 4:15–17).

Saints: The "saints" will be interpreted as believers in Jesus Christ, i.e., Christians, based upon Revelation 12:17 (those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus").

Second coming of Jesus Christ: The "second coming of Jesus Christ" will refer to that event prophesied in Revelation 19:11–21, when Jesus Christ returns to earth to wage war against the Beast, the False Prophet, the Dragon, and the nations aligned with them. This event is not to be confused with the rapture. The rapture and the second coming are two separate and unrelated events.

Shi'ahs: Shi'ahs are the minority sect of Islam, comprising approximately 10 percent of all Muslims. Shi'ahs predominate the populations of Iran (95 percent) and areas of Iraq (60 percent). Literally, "Shi'ahs" are "partisans" or supporters of Ali, the closest surviving male relative to Muhammad upon his death in 632 A.D.

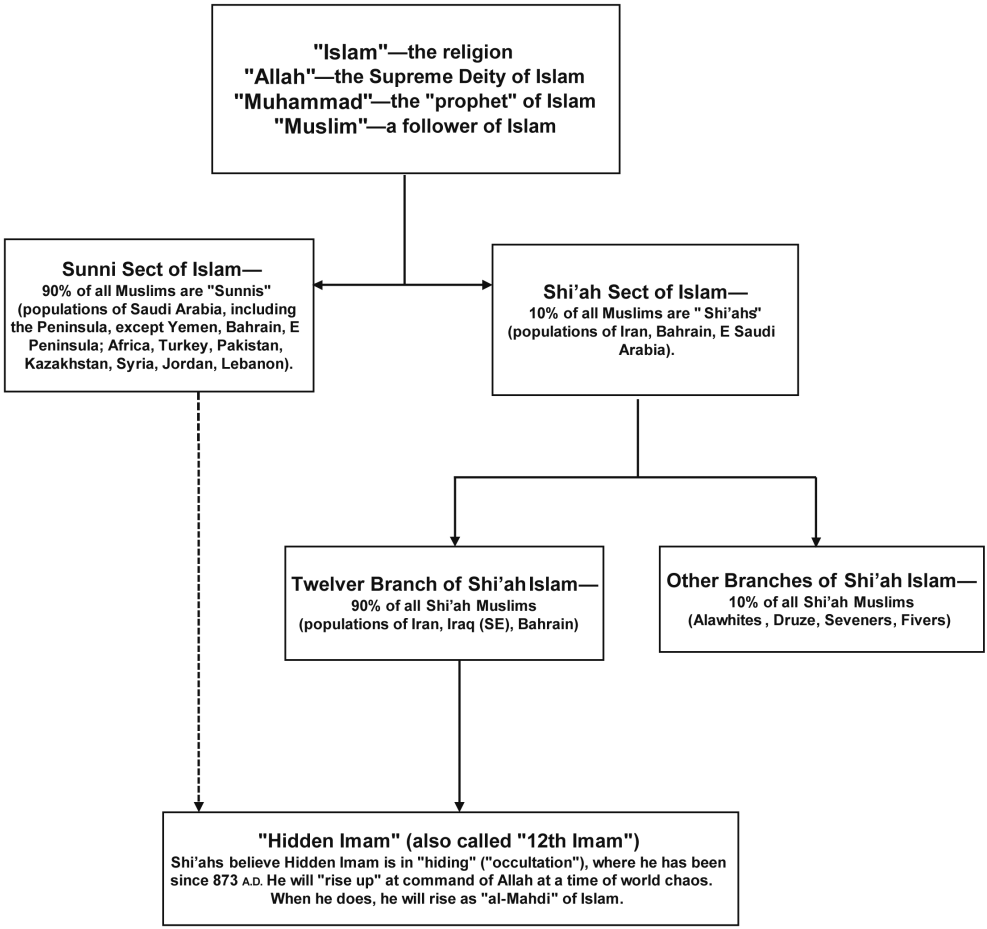
Sunnis: Sunnis are the majority sect of Islam, comprising approximately 89 percent of all Muslims.

Second beast: The second beast is the "beast coming up out of the earth" of Revelation 13:11. He will be interpreted as the Antichrist in the last days. Shi'ah Islam's al-Mahdi will be interpreted as the fulfillment of Revelation 13:11.

Sharia: "Sharia" is a term that designates the whole of Islamic law, including the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the Hadith. Since Islam makes no distinction between church and state, religion or otherwise, Sharia is the Islamic concept or law that governs all Muslim society, both political and religious. The Qur'an functions as the "constitution" of a Muslim state.

Tribulation: The "tribulation" will be interpreted as the seven-year period immediately preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ (see Dan. 7:25; 9:24–27; 12:9; Rev. 13:5, 7–8). The tribulation will be further defined as two periods of three-and-a-half years each, the first being the time of the wrath of Satan (see Rev. 12:17) and the second being the time of the wrath of God (see Rev. 14:10, 19).

Basic Definitions Within Islam



Interpretation Method

THIS WRITING WILL interpret Bible prophecy. Bible prophecy is often written in what is called "apocalyptic" language. "Apocalyptic" comes from the Greek word *apocalupsis* (noun form), meaning "to uncover, unveil, or reveal" (see *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Anaheim, CA: Foundation Publications, 1998. WORD*search* CROSS e-book). It is often filled with symbols, creatures, heads, horns, and similar "identifiers" that symbolize something else. The books of Daniel and Revelation are both filled with apocalyptic language.

The method of interpretation used in this writing for apocalyptic language will interpret the symbols, creatures, heads, or horns metaphorically first, rather than literally. That is, a "head" or "horn," etc., will symbolize something else. It is "figurative" of some person, place, thing, or event. After interpreting the metaphor, we will determine the literal truth behind the metaphor. Thus, if a "head" represents a "king," what "king" is represented? The exception to this method will occur with the interpretation of "time periods." Time periods will be interpreted literally, and I will discuss each of the time period interpretations in the body of the chapter in which each item appears.

This writing will also interpret Ezekiel 38–39. Ezekiel 38–39, although certainly filled with "prophecy," avoids the use of apocalyptic language within the text itself. It does not include symbols, creatures, or similar items normally associated with apocalyptic literature. Within Ezekiel 38–39, actual countries or nations are named without the text resorting to the use of symbolism to represent some other truth. Therefore, Ezekiel will not

be interpreted as apocalyptic literature; that is, the text will be interpreted based on its literal reading, in much the same way that one might interpret the gospels or a New Testament epistle.

The role of the interpreter of Bible prophecy is to identify the leader and/or his kingdom represented in the passage under review. For apocalyptic literature, the interpretation is done by interpreting the different characteristics given in each metaphor. The difficulty is that there are many passages that describe the last days and many characteristics given in each metaphor of the last days; and no one metaphor has all the identifiers. The only way we can properly identify the leader and his kingdom is to solve each metaphor, one by one, using the prior metaphors as confirmation of the next. Using this method, each interpretation acts as a foundation for the next, and each interpretation strengthens all those prior. The process is often tedious and laborious; and by the time you get to the end of one prophecy, you have forgotten your interpretation of the prior prophecy! Yet, in the end, the only way to interpret the Bible's prophecies is passage by passage, verse by verse.

Think about it this way: Bible prophecy is like a giant jigsaw puzzle; except, there is no picture on the box. Each piece of the puzzle can only be confirmed to be the "right piece" if it fits with the pieces around it, which then must fit with the pieces around them, and so on. Applying this to prophecy, one's interpretation is gained not just by the specific view of one passage, but by how this passage fits with the whole of one's interpretation of prophecy. In other words, all of the pieces must fit.

Further, each of us comes to prophecy with our own set of presuppositions. These presuppositions represent what we have been taught over the years. They are important to each of us. Unfortunately, our own interpretations act as roadblocks to our receiving a new interpretation of prophecy. Continuing with the metaphor of a giant jigsaw puzzle, if a new piece is inserted into an "old puzzle," it simply will not fit. The only way we can realistically assess if a new piece fits is to lay aside our old puzzle and give the whole of the new puzzle the possibility of being correct. We must come to the new interpretation with a mind free from presuppositions, almost like choosing to come to the text with a "blank sheet of paper" that is free from our preexisting ideas and views. That takes quite an effort.

This book will interpret last days prophecy using a new paradigm, a new "puzzle." The new paradigm has been referred to by some as the "Islamic Paradigm." The Islamic Paradigm interprets Islam to be the coming one-world religion prophesied in Revelation 13:7–8 and related passages. Allah will be interpreted as the first beast of Revelation 13. Islam's prophesied "messiah," called "al-Mahdi" by Muslims (Shi`ahs), will be interpreted as the coming Antichrist (Rev. 13:10–17; 17:8–11). To give this new paradigm a chance,

you have to put away your old puzzle. The pieces of the Islamic Paradigm will not fit in a "Revived Roman Empire" puzzle, but if you give the whole a chance, I think you will see how it fits.

Lastly, this writing is not an attempt to discuss all the different methods of biblical interpretation of apocalyptic literature, nor is it an attempt to discuss all the different interpretations of each prophetic passage. There are many other reference works available to interested readers. This writing purposely avoids the use of technical theological terms and language that only tends to limit understanding to those who know the meaning of the terms. At the close of each chapter, a table is provided that summarizes the significant points made in the chapter. This is done to help the reader comprehend a very complicated area of the Bible and to serve as a help in building upon each interpretation.

CHAPTER 1



A Slip of the Mask

INTRODUCTION

WE BEGIN WITH the event when darkness cast its shadow and claimed the lives of 2,976 men and women. The date was September 11, 2001:

> Five seconds later, Jarrah asked, "Is that it? Shall we finish it off?" A hijacker responded, "No, not yet. When they all come, finish it off." The sounds of fighting continued outside the cockpit. Again, Jarrah pitched the nose of the aircraft up and down. At 10:00:26, a passenger in the background said, "In the cockpit. If we don't, we'll die!" Sixteen seconds later, a passenger yelled, "Let's roll!" Jarrah stopped the violent maneuvers at about 10:01:00 and said, "Allah is the greatest! Allah is the greatest!" He then asked another hijacker in the cockpit, "Is that it? I mean, shall we put it down?" to which the other replied, "Yes, put it in and pull it down."
>
> The passengers continued their assault and at 10:02:23, a hijacker said, "Pull it down! Pull it down!" The hijackers remained at the controls, but must have judged that the passengers were only seconds from overcoming them. The airplane headed down. The control wheel was turned hard to the right. The airplane rolled onto its back, and one of the hijackers began shouting "Allah is the greatest! Allah is the greatest!" With the sounds of the passenger counterattack continuing, the aircraft plowed into an empty field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, about 20 minutes' flying time from Washington, D.C. at 580 miles per hour. Jarrah's objective was to crash his airliner into symbols of the American Republic—the Capitol or the White House. He was defeated by the alert, unarmed passengers of United 93.[6]

"Allahu Akbar!" "Allahu Akbar!" ("God is greater!" "God is greater!"[7]) When innocent people die?

This chapter introduces the Bible's portrayal of an almost endless spiritual battle between God and Satan. The two are never in direct conflict; rather, Satan wages his spiritual struggle against God by deceiving, tempting, and impacting the apex of God's creation, humanity. In so doing, Satan wounds the heart of God, much like a mother is wounded by the pain of her children. Further, Satan always wages his war in disguise. He never shows his face, but he operates unseen behind and through his instrument.[8]

Drawing the Battle Lines

Satan's first earthly struggle against humanity is pictured in the opening book of the Bible, in Genesis 3. God, after having created the world, places Adam in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it. The man is commanded not to eat the fruit of a tree in the center of the Garden. If he does, he will die. It is Satan who masquerades as the crafty serpent,[9] whose proclaimed intent is to give Eve the real story about the forbidden fruit (see Gen. 3:4–5). The woman eats, and so does the man with her. Satan's deception has placed a wedge between God and man so great that it will take the death of God's own Son to restore it.

The cosmic battle found in the opening book of the Bible can be found in the closing book as well—the book of Revelation. There the war waged by Satan is against God's children—specifically against those "who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17).

Here is a quote from a Shi'ah Islam scholar, the Ayatollah Ibrahim Amini. See if it does not sound like a war waged against those "who hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17):

> On seeing the fulfillment of many of the signs promised in the traditions, a large number of unbelievers will turn towards Islam. Those who persist in their disbelief and wickedness shall be killed by soldiers of the Mahdi. The only victorious government in the entire world will be that of Islam … Islam will be the religion of everyone … The Mahdi will offer the religion of Islam to the Jews and the Christians; if they accept it they will be spared, otherwise, they will be killed … It seems unlikely that this catastrophe can be avoided … War and bloodshed [are] inevitable.[10]

The Ayatollah is quoting Shi'ah Islam's teachings on the Mahdi, the Awaited One of Islam, who will rise at a time of world chaos and lead Shi'ah Islam in world domination. We will learn much more about al-Mahdi in the chapter entitled "Islam's al-Mahdi, The Biblical Antichrist," but maybe his statement will help open your mind to the possibility of a modern-day fulfillment—and to the seriousness of the topic at present.

Someone recently asked me if I really believe that all Muslims support the terrorists. I responded, "No. Absolutely not." The person then asked me if I really think American Muslims would join in any worldwide jihad. Again, I responded, "No. Don't think so." I then stated, "The question is not whether American Muslims will participate in jihad. The question is whether or not they will submit to it. Notice the quote from the Ayatollah above. 'On seeing the fulfillment of many of the signs promised … a large number of unbelievers will turn towards Islam.' What the Ayatollah is saying is that Muslims around the world who do not presently support jihad will see the success of jihad as the favor of Allah; and just like the Muslims of the seventh and later centuries, they will join the jihad because they will interpret it as the will of Allah. Those who do not submit 'shall be killed by the soldiers of the Mahdi.' Millions of American Muslims will not support jihad. Shi'ah Islam's prophecy is that they will die along with the unbelievers (infidels). 'War and bloodshed are inevitable.'"

Satan Always Masquerades Behind Another

Satan always works behind or through another. He never shows his real face.[11] One of the clearest examples is found in Revelation 13. There, a beast appears from the sea. As we will see in future chapters, this beast is not a literal beast, but it is symbolic of a deity that leads a false religion that will one day have dominion over the world. Satan is the Dragon (see Rev. 12:9), who gives the Beast his power. Verse 13:2 states that the "dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority." Satan is the force *behind* the Beast, and he acts through the Beast as he stands behind him.

Satan Always Uses a Disguise

In Matthew 16, Jesus and his disciples are together as Simon Peter, the leader among the twelve, has just proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God (see Matt. 16:16). The very next verses recount Jesus' warning to his disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, where He will suffer, be killed, and rise from the dead on the third day. Here is Simon Peter's immediate response to Jesus, followed by Jesus' words to Simon:

> Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." But He [Jesus] turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."
>
> —Matthew 16:22–23

Amazing. Simon Peter (the Rock upon which the church is built) becomes the mouthpiece of Satan to tempt Christ outside the will of God, i.e., to avoid death on the cross—the very purpose that Christ was born to fulfill (see John 12:27). Satan is so adept at his deception and Simon is so predisposed as to what Jesus' true mission is (see Matt. 16:23 and Luke 24:21, where the disciples understanding of Jesus' role is stated) that Simon became Satan's mouthpiece without even knowing it.

Satan Craves to be Worshiped as God

What Satan desires most is the worship that belongs only to God. In Matthew 4, Jesus has been fasting in the wilderness for forty days and nights in preparation for the beginning of His ministry. Satan joins Jesus, for the purpose of tempting Him to abandon His mission to humanity. The first two temptations are unsuccessful. The third and final temptation is Satan's effort to give it his last, best shot. The temptation goes as follows:

> Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"
>
> —Matthew 4:8–10

Satan was willing to give away all of his kingdoms (see John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and all of their glory for one thing: *worship*. Why is this so important to Satan? Because when Satan is worshiped, he places himself in the place reserved for God.

Now, return with me to Revelation 13. Notice how the text reveals the importance of worship to Satan:

> And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority … they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" … All who dwell on the earth will worship him.
>
> —Revelation 13:2, 4, 8

Satan has given the Beast exactly what he offered Jesus (but Jesus rejected it in Matthew 4:1–10), i.e., Satan's power, his throne, and his authority. Why is Satan offering his most precious possessions to another? To be worshiped in the place reserved for God.

Satan craves to be worshiped, even when the world does not know it is worshiping him; and even if he only receives worship while he stands behind another—in this case, the beast of a false religion, whom Scripture only refers to symbolically.

So where might we look for Satan's masquerade in the last days? Scripture tells us in 2 Corinthians 11:14: "No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."

What might be Satan's angel of light? Religion!

Islam Portrayed as a Religion of Peace

Is Islam really a religion of peace, justice, and tolerance, as many of its adherents profess, or is the peace, justice, and tolerance (that does occur in its name) a mask that covers the real identity of the creator of the faith? Father Theodore Hesburgh is President Emeritus of the University of Notre Dame. He is the namesake for TIAA-CREF's Hesburgh Award, and he served as Notre Dame University's President for more than thirty-five years.[12] I quote this well-respected and very spiritually minded man only to show the depth of confusion and disagreement about the things that we see and hear about Islam. Here is what he stated in a recent interview:

> We at Notre Dame are trying to bring in some top Muslim scholars who can put out the true story of the Muslim religion, speak about its goodness, not its cruelty or its aggressiveness. I think that would be a great favor to the Muslim religion, rather than come through as a religion led by these bomb throwers … I think the religion thing is completely overdone. It seems to me the very worst people are standing to represent the religion. And, many believe, masking their cause in religious rhetoric.[13]

Pope Benedict XVI in 2006 at a speech at Regensburg University in Germany *mentioned* (did not quote) fourteenth century Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologos. Manuel II's actual statement over 600 years ago went this way:

> Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.[14]

The reason why I quote the Pope is not because I agree with the Pope's mentioning of the name of the Byzantine Emperor (or to imply that the Pope disagrees with Father Hesburgh's statement, because Vatican officials expressed immediate regret over offending the Muslims[15]), but rather to use it as an example to show the problem that Islam has. Islamists around the

world were outraged at the Pope's statement. One Internet website included this posting: "You and the West are doomed."[16] Another stated (by video), "We will conquer Rome like we conquered Constantinople."[17] Another reported, "Istanbul is the capital of Turkey, not Constantinople." Enraged protestors marched in Indian- and Pakistani-controlled sectors of Kashmir; and in Indonesia, they burned an effigy of the Pope and flags of the United States, Germany, and Israel. An Italian nun was shot and killed in Somalia after an Islamic cleric there condemned the Pope's speech. An Italian diplomat and his wife were killed in Morocco, and Morocco recalled its ambassador to the Holy See in protest of the Pope's remarks.[18] Does that sound like the response of a peaceful, just, and tolerant religion?

See if the following sounds like rhetoric from the worst people of Islam or whether it represents the true teachings of the Qur'an (Islam's holy book). The statement is from the former Jordanian Minister of Religious Endowment, Sheik Ali Al-Faqir, from his recorded message on Arabic television, Al-Aqsa TV. His statement is a summary of the Islamic belief of a coming Islamic conquest of Rome and the world:

> Sheikh Ali Al-Faqir: "We must declare that Palestine, from the [Jordan] River to the [Mediterranean] Sea, is an Islamic land, and that Spain—Andalusia—is also the land of Islam. Islamic lands that were occupied by the enemies will once again become Islamic. Furthermore, we will reach beyond these countries, which are lost at one point. We proclaim that we will conquer Rome, like Constantinople was conquered once, and as it will be conquered again."
>
> Interviewer: "Allah willing."
>
> Sheik Ali Al-Faqir: "We will rule the world, as has been said by the Prophet Muhammad … We will face a battlefront that is broader and stronger. Its beginnings were in Palestine, in Iraq, in Afghanistan … What has begun will be completed. It will not stop … The Zionist entity reached completion, and it is beginning to decline, until it will wane and come to its end. Similarly, America has occupied, thundered, and foamed with rage, and proclaimed, like Pharaoh, 'I am your supreme God,' but it will come to its end, and they have begun to realize that their end is near. We have begun to read in American and European newspapers that 'our glory is on the wane, and there is nothing we can do about it.' This morning on Al-Jazeera TV, I saw American scientists and strategic theoreticians, who said that America would soon come to its end. They said it before about the USSR, and, indeed, it has come to its end, and we say now that America and the EU will come to an end, and only the rising force of Islam will prevail."[19]

Here is another quote on the opposite side of the aisle. This one from Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, while visiting Lehigh University in Pennsylvania on July 14, 2008:

Dalai Lama: "Wrong, Unfair" to Call Islam Violent

CBS News Interactive: About Islam, BETHLEHEM, Pa. (AP)
The Dalai Lama said Sunday that "it's totally wrong, unfair" to call Islam a violent religion. The Tibetan spiritual leader, appearing at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, offered a defense of Islam in response to a question about the rise of violent religious fundamentalism. He added that he has made a point of reaching out to Muslims since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.[20]

Whom do we listen to? It really doesn't matter how many times we hear that Islam is a religion of peace, whether spoken from the mouths of the scholars of Islam or read in the headlines of the next issue of the *New York Times* or spoken by modern spiritualists such as the Dalai Lama or Father Hesburgh. The actions of Muslims in the name of Allah, Muhammad, and Islam shout so loudly that we can't hear what the religious leaders are saying.

Consider another statement by a cleric of Islam in two live broadcasts on HAMAS' Al-Aqsa TV on February 4 and 14, 2010:

Special Dispatch No. 2845 … Egyptian Cleric Wagdi Ghneim on HAMAS' Al-Aqsa TV: "We Pray to Allah That We Be Terrorists, If Terror Means Jihad."

"We are a nation that excels in the production of the art of death … I will die anyway, so I should be creative to make sure my death is for the sake of Allah." Later, he said: "Brothers, we pray to Allah that we be terrorists, if terror means Jihad for the sake of Allah."[21]

The importance of this statement is in the person who is making it, and also, in the recurrent nature of the basic theme. The theme is from the Qur'an, and it doesn't matter what we call it or how we label it because it is founded upon the Qur'an and will reappear no matter what name we use to describe it.

The constant redefining of terms by our politicians is something most Americans are used to. Consider this statement by John Brennan, Deputy National Security Adviser for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, in a speech on Wednesday, May 26, 2010, where he stated that the term "terrorist" or "jihadist" should not be used to describe violent extremists:

During a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, John Brennan described violent extremists as victims of "political, economic and social forces," but said that those plotting attacks on the United States should not be described in "religious terms." He repeated the administration argument that the enemy is not "terrorism," because terrorism is a "tactic," and not terror, because terror is a "state of mind"—though Brennan's

> title, deputy national security adviser for counterterrorism and homeland security, includes the word "terrorism" in it. But then Brennan said that the word "jihad" should not be applied either. "Nor do we describe our enemy as 'jihadists' or 'Islamists' because jihad is a holy struggle, a legitimate tenet of Islam, meaning to purify oneself or one's community, and there is nothing holy or legitimate or Islamic about murdering innocent men, women and children," Brennan said.[22]

I suppose, according to Egyptian Cleric Wagdi Ghneim (above), it doesn't matter what America calls the Islamists; it will not stop their actions, violent or otherwise, for the sake of Allah. According to the cleric, it was Muhammad who stated that Islam would one day rule the world and jihad should continue to be waged until the entire world is Islamized.

Security Advisor Brennan also stated that the extremists are not jihadists or terrorists but victims of "political, economic and social forces" (see above quote). Does the following summary of a recent failed bomb incident in Great Britain sound like the perpetrators are all "victims of … social forces"?

> **NBC News and news services updated 8:09 p.m. ET, Sun., July 1, 2007**
>
> LONDON—British security sources tell NBC News that two of the five suspects in custody in connection with three recent terror incidents in Scotland and London are medical doctors and one may have assembled the bombs. Authorities also said they believe that most, if not all, of the suspects come from Middle Eastern countries, including one from Iraq.[23]

There is a reason why this book (and those similar to it) is written under a pen name. Islam knows no boundaries when it comes to real or perceived insults to Islam's messenger, Muhammad. These insults are frequently followed by some type of violent retaliation by Muslims, which necessitates the concealment of one's identity for personal safety. Consider what happened to a second grade school teacher, Gillian Gibbons, in Sudan in 2007, when her six-year-old students unintentionally insulted Muhammad by naming the class teddy bear Muhammad:

> **Sudan jails British "teddy" teacher for 15 days**. Nov 28, 2007. KHARTOUM (AFP)—Sudan on Thursday jailed for 15 days a British teacher charged with insulting Islam by allowing children to name a teddy bear Mohammed and ordered her deportation, her lawyer said. Gillian Gibbons, a 54-year-old mother of two, had faced jail, flogging and a fine after she allowed her six- and seven-year-old pupils to give the toy the same name as the Muslim prophet … "The 15-day sentence will run from the time of her arrest on Sunday, after which she will be expelled from the country," lawyer Kamal Jazuli said after a marathon seven-hour hearing … The maximum sentence

> for breaching Article 125 of the penal code—publicly insulting or degrading any religion, its rites, beliefs and sacred items or humiliating its believers—is six months in jail, 40 lashes and a fine … Abdulatif added. "She was arrested for five days for her own safety because Muslims felt that their faith had been attacked." … Lawyer Jazuli told journalists that Gibbons said in court that "it was not she who named the bear but the pupils." "If I offended anyone, I'm sorry. If I had any intention to offend Islam I would have been better off to have done it in Britain," Jazuli quoted Gibbons as saying.[24]

And finally, from Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam (actually, the stories are endless, and I could go on and on with example after example—I haven't even mentioned the cartoons of Kurt Westergaard in Copenhagen and the many threats upon his life[25]):

> **Saudi Arabia's Judiciary Defends Verdict Sentencing Rape Victim to 200 Lashes and Jail Time**. Wednesday, November 21, 2007, Associated Press. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia—The Saudi judiciary on Tuesday defended a court verdict that sentenced a 19-year-old victim of a gang rape to six months in jail and 200 lashes because she was with an unrelated male when they were attacked. The Shiite Muslim woman had initially been sentenced to 90 lashes after being convicted of violating Saudi Arabia's rigid Islamic law requiring segregation of the sexes. But in considering her appeal of the verdict, the Saudi General Court increased the punishment. It also roughly doubled prison sentences for the seven men convicted of raping the woman, Saudi news media said last week. The reports triggered an international outcry over the Saudis punishing the victim of a terrible crime. But the Ministry of Justice stood by the verdict Tuesday, saying that "charges were proven" against the woman for having been in a car with a man who was not her relative. The ministry implied the victim's sentence was increased because she spoke out to the press. "For whoever has an objection on verdicts issued, the system allows an appeal without resorting to the media," said the statement, which was carried on the official Saudi Press Agency.[26]

The woman was ultimately pardoned by the King of Saudi Arabia—*not because her sentence was unjust* but in the "best interests of the people of Saudi Arabia."[27]

A woman is raped by seven men, and she is sentenced to 200 lashes! Islamic law (called "sharia") stipulates ninety lashes because she was in the company of an unrelated male friend (not one of the rape assailants); but the judges gave her an extra 110 lashes because her lawyer took her case public. How is it possible for a rape victim to be sentenced to 200 lashes and the basis for the decision is the holy book of a religion? And what does it tell us about the holy book when its religious leaders see justice being served through such a sentence?

The Two "Heads" of Islam

Is Islam a religion of peace or of violence? Why is the answer to this question so difficult? The reason is because Islam has "two heads." Let me explain by using my own metaphor: A family has identical twin sons. One son is the "good" son. The other son is the "bad" son. The good son abhors violence and considers those who use violence to be misguided and wrong-headed. This son fears God and sees obedience to God as essential to his well-being. This son respects other religions, even if he does not agree with them. This son acts kindly towards others in his society, even with the family wealth. The bad son is prone to violence, even if it is against his own brother. In fact, he sees violence for his religion as a virtue that will be rewarded in the after-life. This son fears God and sees obedience to God as essential to his well-being and the well-being of society as a whole. This son sees it as his religious duty to bring the entire world under the dominion of his God, regardless of the cost to do so; and he will use all means to achieve this world dominion, even violence. The good son is afraid of his twin brother. He has learned that if he confronts his brother, he will pay the price, and someone will be hurt. People who know the family often times confuse the twins—they are identical in appearance, only in their actions are they different. In fact, most do not know there are two sons in the family.

I propose that Islam is just like this family. It has two "heads." The good "head" represents those within Islam that might be considered as moderate, non-violent Muslims, for example, most American Muslims.[28] The bad "head" represents violent Muslims, the so-called "radical Islamists," "terrorists," or whatever name American leaders might choose to label them.[29] The moderate Muslims have no intention of forcefully bringing the world under the dominion of Islam. They abhor violence in the name of Islam. In fact, they label violent Muslims as "hijackers" of true Islam.[30] Yet, they are afraid to confront their violent brothers for the same reason that the infidels (non-Muslims) are afraid to confront them. The violent Muslims, by whatever name they are called, *kill people in the name of Allah*.

An example of the claim that true Islam is being hijacked by the radicals can be seen in the following quote, which was taken from a United States metropolitan newspaper reporting on a failed bomb attempt in Baltimore, MD:

> Officials say terror threats are increasingly coming not from beyond U.S. borders but from within them. For whatever reason—perhaps anger over government policy or a search for a cause larger than themselves—people like Martinez [the "radical Islamist," whose Muslim name was "Muhammad Hussein"] are latching onto a religion that has been used by extremists as a vehicle for terrorism.[31]

The question we must ask ourselves is whether or not the hijacking of true Islam is something of the modern day only? If it is, then the claim that the radicalism is an aberration of true Islam is a valid one. If it is not, then the claim actually contributes to the presence of deception about the real nature of Islam in the modern day; and it has the potential to render non-Muslims more susceptible to the stated objective of Islamists to subject the entire world to Islam (see chapter entitled "Sharia in Bible Prophecy").

In the following quote, there are two "contradictory principles" described: the "authoritarian and quietist" principle versus the "radical and activist" principle. In our metaphor above, this is comparable to the "good" son versus the "bad" son. As the article states, it has been this way in Islam since its very beginning.

> From the earliest times, the reported events of Islamic history … reflect two distinct and indeed contradictory principles. The one we have called authoritarian and quietist; the other might be called radical and activist. For obvious reasons, the quietest principle was usually dominant, and for that reason among others, it is the best documented and the most studied. But the radical activist tradition is also old and deep-rooted, and is acquiring new significance in our day, with the emergence of the idea of an Islamic revolution, and of leaders and movements devoted to its accomplishment. While the predominant view among jurists in general supported the authoritarian tradition, *there was always another strand in Islamic thought and practice, which was radical and activist*, at times even revolutionary. *This tradition is as old and as deep-rooted as the first, and its workings can be seen through the centuries,* both in Islamic political thought and in the political actions of Muslims.[32]
>
> —Emphasis supplied

The root of the radical tradition first became apparent with the murder of the third Caliph Uthman on June 17, 656 A.D. by a follower of Imam Ali, the eventual head of the Shi'ah sect of Islam.[33] It has evolved since then in the two primary sects of Islam, Sunni and Shi'ah, that historically have opposed one another since this date.[34]

Which "head" will ultimately prevail, the "good" or the "bad," the "quietist" or the "radical"? The Bible prophesies that one day a false religion will subdue the entire world, requiring all to worship its false god. (Only those whose names are in the Book of Life of the Lamb that was slain do not worship this false god. See Revelation 13:8.) Therefore, the bad head, the violent son, the radical, will prevail. This book does not differentiate between the two heads of Islam. It will focus on the head that is prophesied to prevail—*the violent one*—for this head reveals the one who is *behind* the faith—Satan.

Will the Real Islam Please Stand Up!

So who really represents the true teachings of Islam? The issue is not really about majority rule, or even what we want Islam to represent, but what the Qur'an (Islam's holy book) and the Hadith teach (the Hadith are narrations of the original words and deeds of Muhammad as reported by Muhammad's closest followers and leaders [for Shi'ahs, the sayings include the sayings of Imam Ali and the Twelve Imams of Shiism]). In chapter three, we will look at a few of the more than 100 verses in the Qur'an on the specific question of the meaning of jihad. For now, we will close this chapter with a summation by author Ibn Warraq:

> Islam itself is not moderate. To pretend that Islam has nothing to do with Terrorist Tuesday is to willfully ignore the obvious and to forever misinterpret events. Not all Muslims or all Arabs are terrorists. Nor are they implicated in the horrendous events of Tuesday. There may be moderate Muslims, but Islam itself is not moderate. There is no difference between Islam and Islamic fundamentalism: at most there is a difference of degree but not of kind.
>
> Ibn Warraq, Statement by Ibn Warraq on the World Trade Center Atrocity (September 21, 2001).[35]

Conclusion

"Allahu Akbar!" "Allahu Akbar!" "God is greater!" "God is greater!" Allah's greatness in the death of the innocent reveals the presence of darkness; and the darkness shouts so loudly that only the one who chooses not to hear will be unable to. Was it not Jesus Himself who told us: "Beware the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (see Matt. 7:15)? Did Jesus not say that we would know the false prophets by "their fruit" (see Matt. 7:16), and that "every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit" (see Matt. 7:17)? Are death, violence, and Islam spread by the sword not "bad fruit"?

This writing is about the presence of darkness in Islam and how that darkness actually reveals a masquerade so complete that the entire world will one day be deceived.

We end this chapter where we began—just another location in the world.

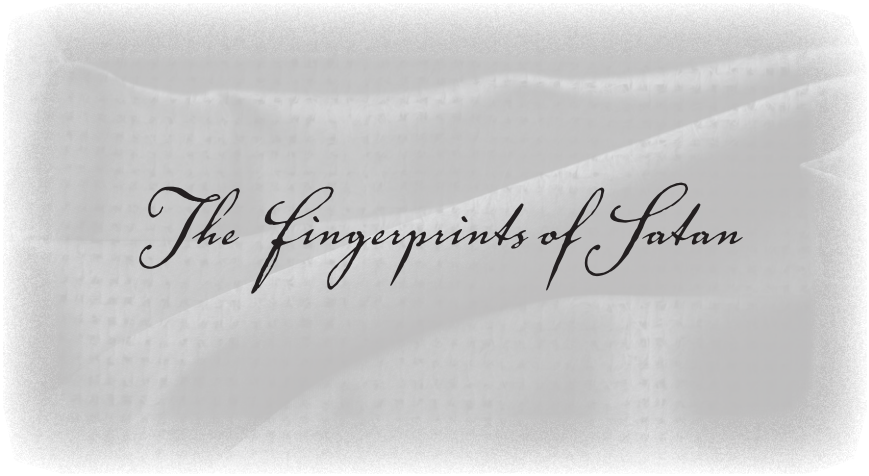
> **Last two foreign dead in Afghan murders identifie**d. By HEIDI VOGT, Associated Press Writer.
>
> KABUL, Afghanistan—A Christian charity [International Assistance Mission] said Monday that it had no plans to leave Afghanistan despite the murders of 10 members of its medical aid team and repeated that

> the organization does not attempt to convert Muslims to Christianity. The 10 team members—six Americans, two Afghans, one Briton and a German—were gunned down Thursday after they were accosted by gunmen after finishing a two-week mission providing medical care to impoverished villagers in remote Nuristan province. The Taliban have claimed responsibility and alleged the group were spies and tried to convert Muslims … "Our faith motivates and inspires us—but we do not proselytize," [Frans] said. Frans said it was likely that members of the group were carrying personal Bibles in English and German but not in Afghan languages as alleged by the Taliban.[36]

A *slip of the mask* is all we need to see who is really behind the mask.

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 1	
Point 1	A spiritual enmity between God and Satan began in Genesis 3 and continues until the closing chapters of Revelation. Satan wages this war against God by attacking God's children; as he does, he wounds the heart of God.
Point 2	Satan wages this spiritual war in masquerade. He never shows himself, but he always operates behind and through others. He is always in disguise, and his disguise is so complete that even those through whom he works do not know he is present.
Point 3	Satan craves to be worshiped. He will do whatever it takes to receive that worship, even if he receives it behind or through another.
Point 4	Islam is not a religion of peace; rather, it is a religion of destruction. Regardless of what some might say, the actions of Muslims reveal the real nature of the religion. It just takes a slip of the mask to be able to see the real darkness beneath the mask.

CHAPTER 2



The Fingerprints of Satan

THEY SAY EVERY crime leaves evidence behind. You just have to find it. It is the same with Satan. There is always evidence when he has been around.

> **President Says Light Surrounded Him During UN Speech**. Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, by Goldnaz Esfandiari, Iran; Prague, 29 November 2005.
>
> President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says that when he delivered his speech at the UN General Assembly in September, he felt there was a light around him and that the attention of the world leaders in the audience was unblinkingly focused upon him … Ahmadinejad said that someone present at the UN told him that a light surrounded him while he was delivering his speech to the General Assembly. The Iranian president added that he also sensed it. "He said when you began with the words 'in the name of God,' I saw that you became surrounded by a light until the end [of the speech]," Ahmadinejad appears to say in the video. "I felt it myself, too. I felt that all of a sudden the atmosphere changed there, and for 27–28 minutes all the leaders did not blink … I am not exaggerating when I say they did not blink; it's not an exaggeration, because I was looking," he says. "They were astonished as if a hand held them there and made them sit. It had opened their eyes and ears for the message of the Islamic Republic."[37]

Whose hand? Whose message? God's or Satan's?

The underlying purpose of this book is to lift the "cloak" of deception under which Satan hides. In the first chapter, we quoted 2 Corinthians 11:14, "For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." How does Satan disguise himself as an "angel of light"? How does he cloak himself?

The Bible describes the instrument through whom Satan performs his deceptions as "antichrist." The Bible actually gives us the specific ways the antichrist will function in society to perform his deceptions. This chapter will discuss these specific deceptions. We will call them antichrist "identifiers"; they are sort of like Satan's fingerprints left behind at a crime scene. Once we find Satan's fingerprints, we will be able to recognize the instrument through whom Satan wages his deceptions. This chapter also will discuss a related aspect of antichrist activities—the role and identity of "false christs and false prophets" according to Matthew 24:24 and related texts.

Who Is "Antichrist" in the Bible?

In the last quarter of the first century A.D., the apostle John used a word no other writer in the New Testament used:

> Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour … Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.
>
> —1 John 2:18, 22

"Antichrist" is translated from the Greek *antichristos*, and is defined by *Expositor's Dictionary of Bible Words* as follows:

> The term antichristos occurs five times [in the Bible] and denotes the archetypal enemy of Christ and his people, the embodiment of satanic opposition to Jesus Christ. The usage denotes not just one person, but rather the spirit of such a one indwelling all those who deny that Jesus is the incarnation of God in human form (cf. 1 John 2:18 ff.; 4:3; 2 John 7).[38]

This definition is reflected in John's use of the word as he describes two aspects of Satan's opposition to Jesus Christ:

1. As a spirit of deception operating within human society to foster a heretical view of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:18; 22–23)
2. The embodiment of that spirit in human form indwelling many antichrists and the embodiment of that spirit in the last days as an individual Antichrist (1 John 2:18).

According to the apostle John, the first meaning of the term "antichrist," i.e., as a spirit of deception in human society, can take three separate forms of deception:

1. The denial that Jesus was (and is) the Messiah (1 John 2:22)
2. The denial that Jesus was (and is) divine (1 John 2:22–23; 5:10–12)
3. The denial that Jesus was fully human (1 John 4:2–3; 2 John 1:7)

In addition to passages in 1 John, other New Testament passages prophesy of the embodiment of the spirit of antichrist in human form. However, these passages use another term to describe the same opposing force to Christ. The term used by these passages is "false prophet" or "false Christ" (Matt. 24:24). This writing will use either of these terms to refer to the same anti-god being.

Is the Spirit of Antichrist Heresy Found in the Beliefs and Teachings of Islam?

We have stated that the apostle John warns of three specific and separate forms of antichrist heresies of Jesus. These three antichrist heresies act as antichrist identifiers so that when the heresy occurs, it is as if the spirit of antichrist has just spoken against Jesus Christ. Muslims contend that the Qur'an contains the literal words of Allah, recited to Muhammad (by the angel Gabriel[39]), and that the original Arabic text of the Qur'an is the perfect, final (eternal), and immutable word of Allah (Qur'an literally translated means "recitation").[40,41]

When the words of the Qur'an deny Jesus Christ in any of the three ways contained in 1 John, the spirit of antichrist has just been identified. Thus, if Islam is truly the cloak under which Satan hides, then the Qur'an must specifically commit one or more of these three antichrist heresies.

1. Does the Qur'an deny that Jesus Christ was (and is) the Messiah?

The Qur'an refers to Jesus by his proper name in Arabic, "Isa," along with the title "Al-Masih" (the "Messiah").[42] This title is sometimes accompanied by the name Jesus and sometimes used by itself. In the Qur'an, the title Messiah means "anointed one," in the sense of a political-military leader.[43]

At first blush, it seems that Islam has not denied Jesus as Messiah since the Qur'an refers to him as "Al-Masih" (the "Messiah"). However, the correct answer can only be found by determining the meaning of Al-Masih to Islam and then comparing it with the meaning of Messiah according to the Bible. This is somewhat more complicated because the definition for most Jews is different from the definition for Christians.

In Judaism, "Messiah" is a title referring to a coming leader who will lead the Jews against foreign oppression. Hence, to Jews, Messiah has the general meaning of a political and military leader, much like Judas Maccabeus of the second century B.C., thought by many Jews to be the greatest warrior in

Jewish history. The historical Jesus of Nazareth, who lived in first century Palestine, was not a political/military leader but a leader of peace (see Luke 2:14). In fact, the Gospels record that upon Jesus' entry into Jerusalem during the week of His crucifixion, Jesus was mounted on a donkey (not a white steed) in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 and was heralded by the accompanying crowd as "THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest" (Luke 19:38). The Jews were under bondage to the Roman Empire in the first century. Jesus did not remove the yoke of Rome, nor did Jesus even attempt to remove this yoke. Some Orthodox Jews are still waiting for their Messiah today.

To Christians, Jesus is the suffering servant Messiah of Isaiah 53, who delivers humanity from sin (see Isa. 53:4–6). Jesus did this by dying on the cross as the human substitute for the sins of humanity. A person is saved from his or her sins through faith in Jesus as Son of God and Savior (see John 3:16; Eph. 2:8–10). The Bible states that Jesus was raised from the grave on the third day after His crucifixion, thereby declaring Jesus to be the Son of God and authenticating Jesus' own claims that He is the Son of God (see Matt. 26:63–64; John 10:36; 11:4; 20:31; Rom. 1:3–4). The peace that Jesus offers as Prince of Peace (see Isa. 9:6) is not a political peace; it is an inner peace that transforms an individual from the inside out (see John 7:38). One day a political peace will also be realized—but not until Jesus returns the second time and establishes His millennial kingdom on earth (see Isa. 9:6; Rev. 20:4–6).

The Qur'an uses the Jewish meaning of Messiah, not the New Testament meaning. Islam does not consider Jesus to be the Savior of the world who died for the sins of humanity. In fact, Islam does not even believe that Jesus was crucified. Here is Surah 4:157 (a "surah" is comparable to a chapter in the Bible):

> For their [Christians] unbelief, and their uttering against Mary a mighty calumny, and for their saying, "We slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of God"—yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them.
>
> —Qur'an 4:157[44]

Muslims do not believe in the Christian concept of "atonement," whereby the sins of humanity are atoned for by another person, i.e., Christ (or any other person, including Muhammad):

> Muslims do not believe in the Christian doctrine of Original Sin, so there is no theological need for the all-atoning sacrifice of Jesus through his crucifixion and resurrection. Muslims further believe that each of us will be held accountable before God for our own actions and thus responsible

> for our own salvation. Therefore, we will not be able to rely upon anyone else, not even Jesus or Muhammad, to save us from our sins.[45]

The Qur'an denies that Jesus was crucified. Therefore, Muslims do not consider Jesus as Messiah within the meaning of the New Testament, even though Islam may refer to Jesus as Messiah. This is precisely the heresy that 1 John 2:22 prophesied that the spirit of antichrist would commit against Christ.

2. Does the Qur'an deny that Jesus is the Son of God?

The Bible states that Jesus is the literal Son of God (see 1 John 2:22–23) and that anyone who denies this about Jesus makes God to be a liar since God declared Jesus to be His Son (see 1 John 5:10–12). Jesus is divine because He is the literal Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit of God (see Luke 1:35).

In the opening chapter of Luke's gospel, the angel Gabriel visits Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus, to announce the birth of Jesus. Verse 1:31 states, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb." The importance of verse 31 cannot be overlooked. The text states that the child will be *conceived* in the womb of Mary. The word "conceived" translates from the Greek word *sunelaben*. According to language scholar A. T. Robertson, "Luke uses this word eleven times and it occurs only five other times in the N.T. It is a very old and common Greek word. He alone in the N.T. has it for conceiving offspring (Luke 1:24, 31, 36; 2:21)."[46] What the text has in mind is the creation of life in the womb, the offspring being the result of the union of the Holy Spirit of God and the human person Mary. The text even goes so far as to emphasize that the reason the child is called the "Son of God" is because the "power of the Most High" will "overshadow" Mary (Luke 1:35), and the child will be conceived in that event.

In the modern day, we know that conception is not possible until the egg of the female is fertilized with a single sperm of the male, resulting in the single-cell embryo. In the first century, science did not know the "how" of conception. It only knew the result—a child was born. The first century text is specific in its description of how life occurred for the Son of God: "you will conceive in your womb," when the "Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power … will overshadow you …" (Luke 1:31, 35). The text is telling us that in some profound, supernatural way that we cannot understand, conception will occur in the womb of Mary by the action of the Holy Spirit of God.

The text is very clear to avoid words that might communicate a physical union or intimate knowing of the divine Spirit and the woman Mary. The word translated "overshadow" (Luke 1:35) comes from the Greek word *episkiasei*.[47] Greek scholar A. T. Robertson defines the word as "a figure of a cloud coming upon her." Robertson notes that the word is also used in

Acts 5:15 to describe Simon Peter's shadow, which fell upon people who were then healed.[48] No physical touch was involved in the healing, but the presence of God in Simon Peter was sufficient through Peter's shadow to somehow affect the supernatural, and people were healed. Similarly, in Matthew 17:5, the word is used to describe the bright cloud that overshadowed Jesus and his disciples at the transfiguration of Christ. And the voice of God exclaimed from the cloud, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!" (Luke 9:35).[49] A. T. Robertson continues, "… where the cloud of glory represents the presence and power of God."[50] Thus, in some mysterious, supernatural way, much like the hand of God in a supernatural healing, Mary was "with child" by the Holy Spirit of God. The single sperm was somehow of the Holy Spirit of God. The egg was of Mary, the mother. The child, Jesus, is, therefore, the Son of God by the merging of the two. Mary was a virgin before the supernatural act. She was a virgin after the supernatural act; both the Bible and the Qur'an agree on this fact (see Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:27; Surah 6:101).

To deny Jesus' divinity, then, is to consider Jesus as no different than any other human being. It is to consider Him a good man, a good teacher, a messenger, or a prophet of God, but not the Son of God. To deny Jesus' deity is to deny the Bible's claim that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit of God (Luke 1:35), the specific act that confers Jesus' divinity through the seed of God. It is the deity of Jesus Christ that raises Him above all human beings and renders Him an exact representation of the nature of God (see Heb. 1:3). Such a denial also includes the denial of the Holy Spirit as the substance of God and His Christ (see Rom. 8:9, 11). This denial includes the denial of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the "Three in One" (see John 15:26). Likewise, the denial of the divinity of the Son is a denial of the divinity of the Father, for the Bible says that they are one (see John 17:11, 22).

If there be any doubt as to the relationship of Jesus Christ to God, the gospel of Luke gives all the clarity one might need. Luke 3:22 says, "And the Holy Spirit descended upon Him [Jesus] in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, 'You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.'"

The Qur'an specifically denies that God has conceived a Son, thereby denying the divinity of Jesus. It states:

> Glory be to Him! High be He exalted above what they describe! The Creator of the heavens and the earth—how should He have a son, seeing that He has no consort [wife], and He created all things, and He has knowledge of everything?[51]
>
> —Surah 6:101

> People of the Book [Christians], do not go to excess in your religion, and do not say anything about God except the truth: the Messiah, Jesus, son

> of Mary, was nothing more than a messenger of God, His word, directed to Mary, a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers and do not speak of a "Trinity"—stop [this], that is better for you—God is only one God, He is far above having a son, everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him and He is the best one to trust.[52]
>
> —Surah 4:171

The Qur'an is specific about the nature of Jesus. "He was nothing more than a Messenger of [Allah] … [Allah] is far above having a son." The Qur'an also implies that for Christians to consider Christ to be the Son of God is to consider God to have had a partner, Mary, the mother of Jesus (Surah 6:101). This is the point of Surah 6:101 when it states, "… seeing that He has no consort [wife] … [how could he have a son] …" So important is this point in the Qur'an that Muslims are required to complete their daily prayers with a specific statement. When it is completed [prayer], one says, "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah; *He has no partner*; and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger"[53] (emphasis supplied).

Prayers are required daily for all Muslims, five-fold. With each prayer, a Muslim repeats this phrase so that over and over again in a Muslim's life, his or her daily prayers refute the fact that Christ is the Son of God (for "God has no partner") and affirm that Muhammad is the messenger of God. The Qur'an, therefore, denies the divinity of Jesus. In fact, the Qur'an explains Jesus' conception in His mother's womb as the result of God's spoken command, "Be" (Surah 4:171, 3:47). Surah 3:47 states, "She said, 'My Lord, how can I have a son when no man has touched me?' [The angel] said, 'This is how God creates what He will: when He has ordained something, He only says, "Be," and it is.'"[54]

Birth, by the command of God, does not confer literal sonship to Jesus; nor does it confer divinity. Sonship is only conferred by the fertilization of the egg of a woman with the seed of the father, in this case, the Spirit of God (Luke 1:35). How God conceived His Son without physical contact with the mother of the child is a mystery we cannot understand. The biblical plan for creation includes only one man who was spoken into existence by the command of God: Adam, the first man (see Gen. 1:26–27). If Christ were spoken into existence, the angel Gabriel would have stated so to Mary. When the Qur'an claims Jesus Christ was created in the same way as Adam, the Qur'an makes Adam equal to Jesus, since both would have been created by the command of God. The Bible's claims are to the contrary: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was not created by the command of God but by the seed of God through the action of the Holy Spirit by the overshadowing of Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus (see Luke 1:35). Christ was thereby conceived in the womb of Mary. This does not make Mary a physical partner ("consort")

with God or His Spirit (as the Qur'an claims would be the case in Surah 6:101); nor, in fact, do Christians claim Mary to have been a "consort" with God any more than Simon Peter was a "consort" with those persons healed by walking through his shadow (see Acts 5:15).

3. Does the Qur'an deny the humanity of Jesus?

Here is what the Bible says:

> For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.
>
> —2 John 1:7

> By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.
>
> —1 John 4:2–3

This third heresy about Jesus is the denial of Jesus' claim of being fully human, i.e., saying Jesus only appeared to be human but was not, in fact, fully human.[55] The spiritual significance of this claim is that if Jesus was not fully human, then He suffered no pain in his death on the cross. If He suffered no pain, then He cannot have taken the consequences of humanity's sin upon Himself in His death (see Isa. 53:4–6; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 2:2).

The Qur'an does not appear to deny the humanity of Jesus. It denies the divinity of Jesus. However, to properly interpret the Qur'an's claims about Jesus, we must look deeper into what the Qur'an actually states about the human Jesus and also what the Qur'an states about the human Jesus' relationship to Muhammad and other prophets of the Bible:

> Christ, the son of Mary, was no more than a messenger; many were the messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food. See how God makes His signs clear to them [Christians]; yet see in what ways they [Christians] are deluded away from the truth!
>
> —Surah 5:75

> He [Jesus] said: "I am indeed a servant of God. He has given me revelation and made me a prophet; He has made me blessed wheresoever I be; and He has enjoined on me prayer and charity as long as I live. He has made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable. So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life

> (again)!" Such was Jesus the son of Mary. It is a statement of truth, about which they (vainly) dispute. It is not befitting to (the majesty of) God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter, He only says to it, "Be," and it is.
>
> —Surah 19:30–35

Based on the above, Jesus was commanded into existence by Allah (not conceived by the Holy Spirit). As a human being, Jesus had the same needs as any other human being. He needed food and water, just like the rest of us (Surah 5:75)—the point being, according to the Qur'an, that if He was God, He would need neither. Jesus was made a prophet by Allah, not born the Son by the Holy Spirit (Surah 19:30). Lastly, as a prophet, Jesus was no more than any messenger of Allah; there were many other messengers that came before Him (Surah 5:75). According to the Qur'an, some of these prior messengers (prophets) were: Adam, Moses, Abraham, Ishmael, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Job, and Daniel.[56]

The claims of the Qur'an that Jesus was a normal human being, although a messenger of God, actually have the effect (and purpose) of lowering the divine person, Jesus Christ, to the status of human being. According to the Qur'an, Jesus is not distinguished from any other prophet named in the Bible (in spite of the fact that the Qur'an agrees that He was born of a virgin, a fact that no other human being in human history can claim). Christ's humanity makes him one prophet in a long line of prophets used by God in the Bible. This is contrary to the Bible's claims about Jesus. The Bible describes Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God (see John 3:16), not one Son from among many (see John 14:6). "Only begotten" (John 3:16) translates from the Greek *monogenes*, meaning: a unique, one-of-a-kind relationship of an only Son born to a Father, in this case, Father God.[57] If the Bible claims that Christ is the unique and only way to God, then how can Christ be one among many prophets as claimed by the Qur'an? The Qur'an denies Jesus' uniqueness as a human being and as Son of God, and therefore, commits another heresy against Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: The Qur'an claims that Jesus was human and, on its surface, appears not to commit this antichrist heresy. However, the effect of this claim is to equate Christ with any other human being, including any other prophet of God. In doing so, the Qur'an denies the truth of the Bible that Jesus Christ was a human being while at the same time uniquely the Son of God.

Identifying a False Christ or False Prophet According to the New Testament

Having concluded that the spirit of antichrist has been identified in the Qur'an's teachings about Jesus Christ, we now return to a related point. Is

the god of the Qur'an, i.e., Allah, or Muhammad, the messenger of Allah, a false christ/false prophet? To answer this question, we must address the teachings of the Qur'an and compare them to the definition of a false christ/prophet according to the Bible (see Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22; 1 John 4:1).

According to Bible scholar Donald Hagner in his *Word Commentary on Matthew*, there is no clear distinction in Scripture between a false prophet and a false christ.[58] Both have the intention of leading humanity astray from the one true God and His Only Begotten Son, Jesus.[59] Biblically, a "false prophet" or a "false christ" is anyone who leads another away from Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and to lead away from Christ is to lead away from God. The Bible says they are "one." However, for the purpose of clarity, we will use the term "false christ" to address the question regarding Allah and "false prophet" to address the question regarding Muhammad.

The foundational beliefs of Islam are found in five doctrines of Islam that are known as the Five Pillars. They are:

1. The Shahada or profession of faith.[60]
2. The Salat or Prayer.[61]
3. The Zakat or Charity.[62]
4. The Sawm or Ramadan.[63]
5. The Hajj or Pilgrimage.[64]

The Shahada or profession of faith is a statement that one makes to become a Muslim. Below is a translation of the statement:

> There is no god but God [Allah], and Muhammad is the Messenger of God [Allah].[65]

The Shahada is explained as:

> The first Pillar is called the Declaration of Faith. A Muslim is one who bears witness, who testifies that "there is no god but God [Allah] and Muhammad is the messenger of God." This declaration is known as the shahada (witness, testimony). Allah is the Arabic name for God, just as Yahweh is the Hebrew name for God used in the Old Testament. To become a Muslim, one need only make this simple proclamation. The first part of this proclamation affirms Islam's absolute monotheism, the uncompromising belief in the oneness or unity of God, as well as the doctrine that association of anything else with God is idolatry and the one unforgivable sin.[66]

Unless Allah and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are one and the same, the Qur'an, by the above statement alone, has rendered Allah a false

christ since Allah and God are two. The Shahada declares that there is no god but Allah. Therefore, if Allah is not God, then, certainly, Allah is a false christ and so is Allah's messenger, Muhammad, because the Shahada of Islam has denied the very existence of any other god but Allah.

There are many resources available to interested readers on this one, specific point.[67] From the perspective of this writer, Allah and God are not the same; one is the True God, and the other a counterfeit. Here is why. The supreme being of a faith is defined not by the name that he is called but by the doctrine and teachings that he advocates. That is, Allah is the Qur'an, and the Qur'an is Allah. The Qur'an is the book that records the statements of Allah about Allah, his nature, his will for humanity, and his role and actions in creation and human history. A scholar of Islam puts it this way:

> The center and foundation of Islam is Allah, whose name appears more than 2,500 times in the Qur'an. In a polytheistic society, Muhammad declared the sole existence of Allah, the transcendent, all-powerful, and all-knowing Creator, Sustainer, Ordainer, and Judge of the universe. … For Muslims, the Qur'an is the Book of God (kitab al-Allah). It is the eternal, uncreated, literal word of God (kalam Allah), sent down from heaven, revealed one final time to the prophet Muhammad as a guidance for humankind (Surah 2:185).[68]

We cannot separate Allah from the Qur'an and vice versa. They are one and the same. The same conclusion is true for God and the Holy Bible. The Bible declares in John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The central and abiding statement of Judaism is summed up in one verse. Deuteronomy 6:4 says, "Hear,O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" We cannot separate the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob from the Holy Bible. The Bible both defines and explains Him. The Bible and God are one and the same; and, in fact, we cannot separate the Son from the Father, for they are One (see John 1:1; 10:30).

The teachings of these two books differ drastically. We need only return to the teaching about Jesus Christ, for it is the single most important teaching. We have compared the Qur'an's teaching with the teaching of the Bible. They are the opposite of one another. How is it possible that the Qur'an can state that Jesus is not the Son of God and the Bible can state that *Jesus is* the Son of God—and both books be authored by the same author? How can the Bible declare that Jesus was crucified on a cross (see John 19:16–30 and many other passages) and the Qur'an declare that Jesus was not crucified (Surah 4:157) and both books be authored by the same author? Either God or Allah is a liar. Or, the two books are authored by two different authors, one of whom has declared himself to be god, when, in reality, he is not God, but a false god.

It should not surprise us that the Qur'an, Islam's holy book, makes pretty much the same conclusion but does so from the Quranic world view. The *Reliance of the Traveller* is a substantive and authoritative compilation of Islamic law (from the Shafi`i School of Islamic Law) and considered to be the classic manual of Sunni Islamic law among modern Islamic scholars.[69] Here is Book V (His Messenger), 2.1:

> Allah Most High sent Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace), the Qurayshite unlettered prophet, to deliver His inspired message to the entire world, Arabs and non-Arabs, jinn and mankind, superseding and abrogating all previous religious systems with the Prophet's Sacred Law, except for the provisions of them that the new revelation explicitly reconfirmed. Allah has favored him above all the other prophets and made him the highest of mankind, *rejecting any one's attesting to the divine oneness* by saying, "*There is no god but Allah," unless they also attest to the Prophet by saying "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*." He has obliged men and jinn to believe everything the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has informed us concerning this world and the next, and *does not accept anyone's faith unless they believe in what he has told us will happen after death*.[70]
>
> —Emphasis supplied

Notice what the Hadith states: if anyone does not attest that Muhammad is the "highest of mankind" and the "Messenger of Allah," then their faith in the "divine oneness" must be rejected. Christians do not accept Muhammad as "higher" than Jesus Christ. Therefore, their faith in the "oneness" of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is rejected by Islam; to Muslims, it is a lie.

"What about the Jews," you say? The Jews deny that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and yet they worship the same God as that of Christians. Jews call Him the same names as Christians, i.e., Yahweh and Jehovah, so how can Christians and Jews worship the same God if Islam and Christians do not? Because the Bible never declares that Jesus is not the Son of God, even though the Jews do. The Jews rejected Jesus as Messiah, but God did not reject Him (see John 1:11; 1 John 5:10). The Jews are the chosen people of God, as recorded by the Bible (see Gen. 12:1–3; 17:1–2). Abraham's son, Isaac (not Ishmael), is the son of promise (see Gen. 17:19; Rom. 9:7, 13) and the patriarch of the Jewish people. The Bible prophesies that one day the Jews will repent of their sin of rejecting Jesus as Messiah (see Zech. 12:10; 13:6; Rom. 11:25–27), but the sons of Ishmael and Edom will forever be enemies of God (see Ps. 83).

There are many other Bible passages that prophesy of Israel's coming to believe in Jesus as Messiah/Son of God. We will discuss this event in detail in future chapters. For now, suffice it to say that this will not take place until

the second coming of Jesus Christ at the close of the tribulation period, just prior to the Millennial Reign of Christ and His church.

If we compare the teachings of the Qur'an with the Bible, regarding the end of the age, here is what we find. The Qur'an prophesies that at the end of the age Jesus will descend from heaven and will join forces with Islam's prophesied Messiah, who is called the "Mahdi." Jesus will then proclaim Islam to be the one true faith and denounce Christians for having erroneously made Him the Son of God. Jesus will then follow the Mahdi and demand that all crosses from Christian churches be removed, all pigs be killed, and all Christians either convert to Islam or be killed.[71]

Does Islam's prophecy of the second coming of Christ agree with the Bible? No. It is the opposite. It is opposite as to the nature of Jesus as Son of God and opposite as to the return of Christ at the end of the age. The Bible prophesies that Jesus will return as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (see Rev. 19:11–18) and to exact judgment upon the "Beast" (interpreted to be Allah in this writing), the "False Prophet" (interpreted to be Shi'ah Islam's al-Mahdi in this writing), and Satan (see Rev. 19:20; 20:2, 10). Hardly the same prophecy as that of Islam.

An amazing aspect of Muslim eschatology regarding the second coming of Jesus is the location of an empty grave near the tomb of Muhammad in the present day Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, Saudi Arabia. The empty grave is reserved for Jesus, who, according to Muslim writings, will live for forty years after his coming and then be buried next to Muhammad upon his death:

> Some say that Jesus will return as a just judge. One prophecy says that he will descend in Palestine, where he will kill al-Dajjal [the devil]; he will then worship at Jerusalem, where he will kill both swine and those who disbelieve in him. He will die after a peaceful reign of some forty years and be buried in a spot beside the tomb of Muhammad in Medina that has been reserved for him.[72]

In the chapter entitled "Where is Allah and His Muhammad?" we will interpret Allah to be the "beast coming up out of the sea" of Revelation 13:1–10. This beast is prophesied to be *worshiped* by the entire world, other than Christians (see Rev. 13:8). This beast will blaspheme God, His name, and His tabernacle, i.e., those who dwell in heaven (see Rev. 13:6). We will conclude that this beast is not the king of a political empire, but rather the god of a spiritual empire. As we will see, this beast leads humanity away from Christ and away from the one true God. He is not the same God who loves the world and gave His only Son that we might know Him. He is another god, who leads humanity astray from the true God. According to the Bible,

this makes him a false christ because he leads humanity away from the true God and His Only Begotten Son, Jesus.

What About Abraham, His Two Sons, and Abraham's God?

Perhaps you are saying this: Abraham's sons included Ishmael, the father of the Arabic speaking nations whose descendants settled "to the east" (see Gen. 25:6), and Isaac, the father of the Hebrew nation (the twelve tribes of Israel were all from sons of Isaac's son Jacob). Both sons had the same father, and that father, i.e., Abraham, worshiped God (see Gen. 12:1–3) before Jews or Christians had a religion. How can we now say that the god of Islam and the God of the Bible are different since both sons had the same father, who worshiped the same God, who would one day give Himself the name "*Yahweh*" ["I Am"] (Exod. 3:14)?

Because God chose one of the two sons as the son of promise (see Gen. 17:21), and He rejected the other. God chose Isaac and rejected Ishmael. This rejection was not a rejection of the son Ishmael, but a rejection of Ishmael and his descendants as the line through which God would one day redeem humanity. The ultimate result of this rejection is that since Muhammad claims to be a descendant of Ishmael, Muhammad is rejected as the son through whom the promise of God will be fulfilled. The rejected son and his descendants must come to God in the same way that all others will come—through Yahweh and His future revelation, Jesus Christ, who was a descendant of David, according to the unbreakable promise of God (see 2 Sam. 7:16; Matt. 1:16, 20):

> Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly" . . But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year."
>
> —Genesis 17:1–2, 19–21

> Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac; but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east.
>
> —Genesis 25:5

The New Testament makes God's specific choice of Isaac very clear: the child of the free woman (Sarah, Abraham's wife) is Isaac. He is the son of promise. The child of the bondwoman (Hagar, Sarah's slave given to Abraham) is Ishmael (see Gal. 4:22–31). Ishmael is cast away (see Gal. 4:30). Why? Because that is God's plan. He is God. He is sovereign. Only one son can be the chosen son, the son of promise. Ishmael's sons must come to God the same way as the rest of the world comes; and, in fact, how Israel will one day come: through Jesus Christ.

We find the same choice of God present in another set of two sons, Jacob and Esau, who were twins born to Isaac and Rebekah. (Esau's daughter married a son of Ishmael [see Gen. 28:8–9]). God chose one of those sons, Jacob, the younger son, when God stated that the older son was to serve the younger son before either was born (see Gen. 25:23). In ancient Hebrew cultures, the older son was entitled to the greater inheritance and the greater blessing from his father. For the younger to receive that blessing (by the elder son serving him) would only happen by the gift, blessing, and chosenness of God.

Romans 9:13 is even more descriptive of God's having chosen Jacob over Esau. It states, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." Romans 9:11 is an important verse that gives understanding of God's choice of one son over the other. The text states, "… for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand," … it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." This verse makes it clear that God's choice of Jacob over Esau was made before either of the boys had committed his first good or bad deed, before either boy had breathed his first breath. Thus, God's choice was not because Jacob deserved it. It was so that God would be glorified in His having revealed Himself as God. God had chosen because God is God: "God's purpose according to His choice would stand" (Rom. 9:11). In other words, God is sovereign. He is over all, in all, and above all.

God's choice is more distinct because God chose the second born son rather than the firstborn son as the son of His choice. As was mentioned before, in ancient Semitic cultures, the firstborn son was entitled to a greater inheritance from his father for no other reason than that he was the firstborn son. Islam seeks to elevate Ishmael as Abraham's firstborn son (by Hagar) over Isaac (Abraham's firstborn son by Sarah) by interpreting Ishmael as the son placed on the altar of sacrifice by Abraham rather than Isaac (see Gen. 22:9–14):

> In the Qur'anic account, God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son but did not specify which one. Muslim tradition generally identifies the son to be sacrificed as Ishmael, rather than Isaac (Ishaq). Ishmael accepted the

> command due to his faith in God. … Today Ishmael is considered the father of the Arab nation, and the Isaac/Ishmael conflict is often used as a paradigm for the Jewish/Arab conflict.[73]

This Qur'anic belief continues to modern times in the Hajj or Pilgrimage to Mecca that is required of all Muslims. It is described below:

> At sunrise on the tenth day, the pilgrims proceed to the valley of Mina, where they reenact Abraham's rejection of Satan's temptation to disobey God's command to sacrifice his son, Ishmael, by throwing seven pebbles at a tall stone pillar (jamarah). Afterward, each pilgrim offers an animal sacrifice (qurban), commemorating the sheep that God accepted in place of Ishmael. Muslims throughout the world participate vicariously in this ritual by performing their own sacrifices at home on this day, the feast of Id al-adha.[74]

The Qur'an denies that Isaac is the son of promise in the same way that it denies that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. How is it possible that the Qur'an and the Bible are written by the same God? They cannot be. They are opposite to one another in the most central of beliefs. According to the Bible, there can be only one son of promise. He is Isaac, not Ishmael. Muhammad's claim as the seal of the prophets, the last and greatest prophet, is rendered a false claim by the Bible itself. Muhammad is not in the chosen line of promise.

Further Evidence of God's Choice of Isaac

By the time of Islam (seventh century A.D.), God's rejection of Ishmael can be seen in the religious climate of Arabia. The religious culture was polytheistic in nature, with multiple pagan deities being worshiped in the pre-Islamic society.[75] Hubal was the chief god among many of the pagan deities of Arabia. Hubal is thought to be the "moon god," one of 360-plus deities of the Arabian tribes in the seventh century A.D., the most common symbol of which was the crescent moon.[76]

The Arabian religious culture did include one group that rejected the polytheism of the many Bedouin tribes. This group is referred to in the Qur'an as the "Hanif." However, according to historian Ira Lapidus, although the "Hanif" believed in one god, they were not adherents of any one faith, particularly, the faith of the Jews.[77]

It is out of this polytheistic culture that Muhammad had his vision from Allah through the angel Gabriel. Muhammad's vision is reported to have occurred in a cave on Mount Hira, outside of Mecca, in the Arabian

Peninsula, in the month of Ramadan.[78] On the seventeenth day of the year 610 A.D., Muhammad, age forty, had made his way to the cave for a spiritual retreat. While sleeping that night, Muhammad had a dream. In the beginning of the dream, Muhammad was commanded "to read" and "to recite" what he had seen. Muhammad, who could not read or write at the time, replied, "I do not know how to read." The angel forced him to do what he could not do intellectually. To Muhammad (and Muslims), this was a sign from God. The following is Muhammad's account of the night's happenings (as reported partly in the Qur'an, Surah 96:3f):

> The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and again asked me to read, and I replied, "I do not know how to read." Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and asked me again to read, but again I replied, "I do not know how to read (or what shall I read?)." Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me and then released me and said, "Read! In the Name of the Lord, Who has created (all that exists). Has created man from a clot. Read! And Your Lord is Most Generous … (unto) … that which he knew not."
>
> —Surah 96:5[79]

Muhammad initially believed the Qur'anic revelations were not of God, but from "jinni," an Arabian form of evil. But his wife Khadijah convinced him they were from God; after all, Muhammad was a kind and good man—so the revelations had to be from God.[80] It was not until two years later that Muhammad believed that he had been visited by the angel Gabriel, sent from Allah.[81] The revelation he received that night became the first of many over the next twenty-three years that made their way into the Qur'an.[82] Muhammad's revelations eventually became the content of the Qur'an, and Muhammad's sayings and actions found their way into the Hadith.

What About Muhammad, the Messenger of Islam?

Muhammad proclaims Allah to be God and himself to be the true messenger of God. He directs humanity to Allah, much like the Holy Spirit directs humanity to Jesus Christ, the Son, and God, the Father (see John 16:13–15). In this role, Muhammad leads humanity away from the true God and offers himself as the true prophet of all prophets. This is precisely the definition of a false prophet, according to Matthew 24:5, 11, 23–24.

Here is what the Qur'an says: "Muhammad … is God's Messenger and the seal of the prophets: God knows everything"[83] (Surah 33:40).

The significance of the Qur'an's claim that Muhammad is the seal of the prophets cannot be underestimated. In the Qur'an's claim that Muhammad is the seal of the prophets, i.e., the last of the prophets, Muhammad brings the last word of Allah to humanity. To Islam, this word is a "corrective" word; and since the Qur'an claims to correct the words of the Bible, Muhammad's message bears greater weight than all messengers who came prior to him. Muhammad leads humanity away from the one true God, His Christ, and His message.

Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life;no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). We already have discussed the belief of Islam that upon the rising of al-Mahdi, Jesus will descend from heaven and denounce Christians for having made Him out to be the Son of God. He will then demand that all crosses be removed from churches, all pigs be killed, and all Christians either convert to Islam or be killed.[84] The Muslim teaching even states that Jesus will pray behind the Mahdi.[85] How then can Muhammad usurp the role of Jesus, Son of God; change the teaching of the Bible about Jesus, including the teaching of His being "conceived by the Holy Spirit," as well as the teaching of His second coming; and not be a false prophet according to Matthew 24:24?

Obviously, the only way that Islam can support claims is to label the Bible's teachings about Jesus as fabrications by Christians. But how can one fabricate the resurrection of Christ upon which Christianity is based? (See 1 Cor. 15:1–8; 12–14; Rom. 1:4). Quite honestly, if Muslims truly believe that Christians (and Jews) have actually fabricated verses of the Bible, why does the Qur'an, on occasion, refer to Jews and Christians using the somewhat positive phrase "People of the Book"?

Muhammad's Own Actions

The Qur'an and Hadith urge Muslims to model their lives after Muhammad. Muhammad urged his followers to "… slay the unbelievers wherever you find them …" (Surah 2:191). According to Muhammad's Companions, Muhammad also urged his followers to make the ultimate sacrifice—their very lives in the cause of Islam; and, in exchange, an eternal reward was promised that appealed to the flesh of man:

> Servants wait on them as they recline in silk robes on beautiful couches. Male inhabitants of the garden enjoy the attentions of the "huris," beautiful young women with eyes like pearls. The joys of paradise also include choirs of angels singing in Arabic and the ability to eat and drink 100 times more than one could normally hold.[86]

At the time of Muhammad's earliest revelations, there were numerous Jewish clans living in Arabia. In Muhammad's earliest vision, he was sent by Allah to all Arabians—Jews, Christians, and pagans, "to restore the purity of the faith already revealed, preach a renewal, and end the corruption that had crept into daily life."[87] In Mecca, Muhammad's earliest revelations instructed Muslims to pray facing Jerusalem (not Mecca, as is the case thereafter).[88]

However, the Jews and Christians living in Mecca rejected Muhammad's teachings and rejected Muhammad's claim of being a messenger of God. Over the course of struggles with the Jews of Arabia, Muhammad received new revelations that denounced the Jews for having broken their covenant with Yahweh. Historian Ira M Lapidus reports:

> The Qur'an now stressed that Muhammad was sent to restore the pure monotheism of Abraham. Bypassing the Jewish and Christian spiritual legacy, Muhammad's community would no longer include Jews and Christians, but would be a distinct religion superseding Judaism and Christianity. To carry out his mission, Muhammad went on to exile two of the Jewish clans, execute the male members of a third, and seize their property for his followers. By winning over the Medinan pagans and destroying his opponents, including the Jewish clans, Muhammad made all of Medina a Muslim community under his rule.[89]

It is important that we know the history regarding the formation of Islam. Muhammad initially included Jews and Christians in his revelation from Allah. Jews and Christians rejected Muhammad as a true prophet of God. Muhammad was found, in fact, to be a false prophet by his own contemporaries at the time of his revelation from Allah. Muhammad's response? He simply eliminated those who opposed him, formed his own religion, and declared that Jews (and Christians) had corrupted the Bible. Here is an account of Muhammad's elimination of one of the Jewish tribes, the Banu Qurayza:

> Thus some six hundred to nine hundred men from the Qurayza were led on Muhammad's order to the market of Medina. Trenches were dug and the men were beheaded, and their decapitated corpses buried in the trenches while Muhammad watched in attendance. Male youths who had not reached puberty were spared. Women and children were sold into slavery, a number of them being distributed as gifts among Muhammad's companions. According to Ibn Ishaq, Muhammad chose one of the Qurayza women (Rayhana) for himself. Qurayza property and other possessions (including weapons) were also divided up as additional "booty" among the Muslims.[90]

Perhaps the words of a former Muslim will help us to understand this point. Mus'ab Hassan Yousuf is the son of a former HAMAS leader, Sheik Hassan Yousuf. The son converted to Christianity and made the following statement in an interview on BBC Arabic TV, aired on March 12, 2010:

> In a recent interview, Mus'ab Hassan Yousuf, son of West Bank Hamas leader Sheikh Hassan Yousuf, said: "The Koran suffers from a split personality, and the God of Islam suffers from a split personality." The younger Yousuf, who collaborated with Israeli intelligence, converted to Christianity, and now lives in the U.S., said that it was "the terrorist and murderous character of Islam, which incites people, through the Koran, to kill people and blow themselves up." In the interview, which aired on BBC Arabic on March 12, 2010, Yousuf stressed that his problem is not with the Muslims themselves, but "with the God of Islam and with the Prophet of Islam." The Prophet Muhammad—"the supreme role model of the Muslims"—was, according to Yousuf, a "false prophet," who "killed the Jews of Khaybar, of Qureiza, and of Nadhir … killed their children and captured their women."[91]

Conclusion

Muhammad is a false prophet within the meaning of Matthew 24:24 and related scriptures because he puts himself over Jesus Christ and leads humanity away from the true God and His Son. Muhammad is also a false prophet since he is not a descendant of Isaac, the son of promise, according to Genesis 17:1–2, 19–21. This passage renders Muhammad's claim of being the seal of the prophets as a false claim and, therefore, renders Muhammad as a false prophet. Allah is similarly a false Christ since he is not the same god as Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Lastly, Muhammad is the supreme role model for Muslims. In this role, he serves as a model for suicide and death in the name of Allah, hardly characteristics worthy of a true prophet.

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 2	
Point 1	The Apostle John has given two meanings for antichrist in Scripture: a general spirit of antichrist, which acts within human society to foster a heretical view of Jesus; and the incarnation of that spirit in human form in the last days, i.e., the Antichrist.
Point 2	The Apostle John describes three specific antichrist "identifiers" that are all heretical views of Jesus Christ: the denial that Jesus was (and is) the Messiah; the denial that Jesus was (and is) the Son of God; and the denial that Jesus was fully human. When any of these three identifiers are present, the spirit of antichrist is present.

Point 3	The New Testament also prophesies of an embodiment of the spirit of antichrist in human form by using another phrase: false christ or false prophet. False christs/prophets are prophesied to proclaim themselves (or others) to be the Messiah so as to lead the world away from the true Christ, Jesus, the Son of God.
Point 4	The Qur'an specifically commits all three of the antichrist heresies about Jesus Christ: 1) the Qur'an denies that Jesus is the Messiah. 2) The Qur'an denies that Jesus is the Son of God. 3) The Qur'an acclaims Jesus to have been a human being born of the virgin Mary, but it labels Jesus as a prophet similar to other biblical prophets, e.g., Adam, Moses, and John the Baptist.
Point 5	The Qur'an claims that there is "no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." Allah and Jehovah God are not the same God. Allah is a false christ (Matt. 24:24) because he denies Jesus is the Son of God and claims Jesus Christ was only a prophet. The Bible and the Qur'an are opposite to one another in their teachings regarding Jesus Christ, as well as the identity of Abraham's true son of promise, Isaac. The Qur'an claims Ishmael is the son of promise, and the Bible claims Isaac is the son of promise. The two books cannot be authored by the same God since the teachings are opposite to one another regarding the identity of Jesus Christ and the identity of Abraham's son of promise, Isaac.
Point 6	Based on the claims of the Qur'an about Muhammad, Muhammad is a false prophet based on Matthew 24:24 and related scriptures. Muhammad is the prophet and messenger of a false christ, Allah. As such, he directs humanity to worship Allah, who is not God. The Qur'an also labels Muhammad as the "seal of the prophets," thereby elevating Muhammad above Jesus Christ, the true Messiah and only begotten Son of God. Muhammad is also rendered a false prophet by his personal actions as well as his own contemporaries, the Jews (and Christians) of seventh century Arabia.
Point 7	The spirit of antichrist has been identified in the teachings of the Qur'an. These words have rendered God a liar, for they deny the very words of God about His Christ in the Bible. These words identify the voice behind the Qur'an as the spirit of antichrist. That voice is the voice of Allah, the supreme being through whom the words of the Qur'an originated. This supreme being is the "cloak" of Satan.

Chapter 3



Introduction

Religious intolerance?

***Washington Post* reporting**. October 19, 2007, by Jacqueline L Salmon and Valerie Strauss, *Washington Post* staff writers:

> **U.S. Prodded to Shut Fairfax Saudi School—Federal Panel Wonders Whether Religious Intolerance Is Being Fostered**. A federal panel yesterday urged the State Department to shut down a Saudi government supported private school in Northern Virginia unless it can prove it is not teaching religious intolerance. … It leveled particular criticism at the Islamic Saudi Academy, which operates two campuses in Fairfax County, expressing "significant concerns" that the school is promoting a brand of religious intolerance that could prove a danger to the United States. … it is concerned about the textbooks used in the school because those used by schools in Saudi Arabia promote violence against Christians, Jews, Shias, and polytheists.[92]

WHAT DOES THIS have to do with the last days? Holy war will be waged in the last days. Find it being waged against Jews and Christians, and you will be able to find the antichrist on the other side. War in the name of religion is a key to identifying the cloak of Satan.

This chapter will be a historical overview of those who have waged holy war against Jews and Christians, beginning with the first century A.D. It will conclude with an interpretation of the identity of the religious empire that will dominate the world in the last days.

"Holy War" Versus Other Types of War

First, let's define some terms. For our purposes, a "holy war" is a war waged by the adherents of a religion on behalf of the supreme being of that religion, including a war waged because of a religious instruction or command within that religion. It is a war considered to be just by one's religion because the supreme being of that religion calls for it. The foe in a holy war is another religion (the war is waged against the followers of that religion), nation, or people group, and there is the intent of subjugation or conversion of the adherents of that religion.

For purposes of this writing, holy war includes two other aspects specifically required by Scripture. First, the war is waged against one of two specific religious groups the Bible refers to as the "saints" or the "holy people," and second, the war is waged by an unbelieving religious empire (unbelief refers to unbelief in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or His Christ) against the saints or the holy people. The "saints" are defined by Scripture as those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17); and the "holy people" are defined by Scripture as the Jews (see Isa. 62:11–12). The unbelieving empire is symbolized in Scripture in various ways, but in each case, the empire is at enmity with God or His Christ. In some cases, the unbelieving characteristic is revealed through specific blasphemies against God. In other cases, the characteristic is revealed by some antichrist factor, as we will see in the chapters that follow. Finally, holy war in the biblical context is not waged to preserve one's religion, but to advance it or to subjugate others to it.

In the first three centuries of Christianity, most Christians were pacifists by virtue of Christ's command to love one's enemies (see Matt. 5:44) or to turn the other cheek (see Matt. 5:39).[93] This was in spite of ten separate persecutions of Christians by the Romans, until the fourth century when Roman Emperor Constantine the Great was converted to Christianity. Also important in the fourth century was Bishop Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430 A.D.). Through the spiritual leadership of Saint Augustine, Christians reevaluated their stance on Christian involvement in war. Six criteria were developed, allowing Christians to participate in what became identified as "just war."[94] The so called "just war" criteria is not to be confused with the concept of "holy war" for the purpose of this writing. They are two separate and different concepts.

For example, President George Bush declared a "War on Terror" following the September 11, 2001, attacks on America. This included the receipt of Congressional authorization for the use of military force.[95] This declaration of war was not based on a religious reason, but rather the inherent right of a nation to defend itself, one of the six criteria of a just war.

Conversely, some within Islam looked at this war from an entirely different perspective. The war was a war waged by a religious empire against a pagan empire, i.e., America. It was a jihad against the Great Satan, America. Osama bin Laden described it this way:

> On that basis, and in compliance with Allah's order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims [a "fatwa" is a religious decree by an appropriate Islamic official that must be obeyed by all Muslims]:
>
> "… to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it … This is in accordance with the words of Almighty Allah … We—with Allah's help—call on every Muslim who believes in Allah and wishes to be rewarded to comply with Allah's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it. We also call on Muslim ulema, leaders, youths, and soldiers to launch the raid on Satan's U.S. troops and the devil's supporters allying with them, and to displace those who are behind them so that they may learn a lesson."[96]
>
> Praise be to God, who revealed the Verse of the Sword to His servant and Messenger in order to establish Truth and eradicate falsehood. Praise be to God, who has said: "When the forbidden months are over, wherever you find the polytheists, kill them, seize them, besiege them, ambush them—but if they turn [to God], maintain the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms, let them go on their way, for God is most forgiving and merciful." (Qur'an 9:5). … And prayers and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, who said, "I was sent with a sword in my hands so that only God Almighty is worshiped without equal. He put my sustenance in the shadow of my spear, and disgraced and humiliated those who oppose my order. …" (From the Hadith collection of ibn Hanbal, vol 5, book 3, no. 5,409). He also said: "Banish the polytheists from the Arabian peninsula."[97]

Consider this example of a call to holy war, which was issued by Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont, 1095 A.D. It inaugurated the Crusades. The call is reported by the chronicler "Fulcher of Chartres," who was one of four known chroniclers of the sermon by the Pope to his gathered bishops at Clermont. We will interpret below whether or not the Crusades fit the biblical definition of a holy war, but for now, this call serves as an example of the basic concept of a religious war:

> There remains still an important work for you to do. Freshly quickened by the divine correction, you must apply the strength of your righteousness to another matter which concerns you as well as God. For your brethren who live in the east are in urgent need of your help … For, as the most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered. … They have killed and captured many, and have destroyed the churches and devastated the empire. If you permit them to continue thus for a while with

> impunity, the faithful of God will be much more widely attacked by them. On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends … Moreover, Christ commands it. All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested. O what a disgrace if such a despised and base race, which worships demons, should conquer a people which has the faith of omnipotent God and is made glorious with the name of Christ! With what reproaches will the Lord overwhelm us if you do not aid those who, with us, profess the Christian religion![98]

Bible Prophecies of Holy War

The Bible includes a very narrow definition for *holy war*. The following Bible passages prophesy of a specific type of war, i.e., a religious war, waged against one of two specific religious groups, i.e., holy people (Jews) and/or Christians by an unbelieving empire:

> I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came … Thus he said: "The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. … He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time."
>
> —Daniel 7:21–23, 25

The battle waged by the fourth beast of Daniel 7 will be discussed at length following. For now, notice whom this battle is waged against: the saints, i.e., the followers of Jesus Christ.[99] Since the battle is specifically described as being waged against the adherents of a religion (as opposed to a nation or political kingdom), this battle has a religious motivation. Also, Daniel 7 describes this empire twice; first, in Daniel 7:7–8, where the empire of the fourth beast is introduced, and then in Daniel 7:21–26, which describes this empire in later conflicts at the end of the age. Also, Daniel 7:25 prophesies that the empire will blaspheme the Most High (God). This empire is unbelieving since it wages war against the saints and blasphemes the God of the saints.

In Daniel 8:21, a king is prophesied to wage war. Daniel 8:19 gives us the time period that this war will be waged: "the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end." The "final period of the indignation" will be interpreted in future chapters as the seven-year period of tribulation just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ. The war

that is waged is against the "holy people" (see 8:24), the Jews. This king is prophesied to "magnify himself in his heart … and … will even oppose the 'Prince of princes'" (see Dan. 8:25). The "Prince of princes" is a reference to Jesus Christ. The empire of Daniel 8 is an unbelieving empire since it opposes the King of Kings, Jesus Christ.

In Daniel 11:36, another king arises, who prospers "until the indignation is finished" (11:36). "At the end time" (11:40), he will enter the "Beautiful Land" (11:41) (Jerusalem or the land of Israel) and "pitch the tents of his royal pavilion [set up his headquarters] between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain" (the modern-day location of the Gaza Strip) (11:45). Once again, we find a war waged against either Jews or Christians. This empire appears to wage his war over an extended period of time, until the "indignation is finished" (11:36). That is, similar to the religious war described in Daniel 7, this war begins at an earlier period, only to be completed in the tribulation period, when the "indignation is finished." This king is prophesied to "magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods" (11:36). Clearly, the empire represented by this king is not an empire aligned with God but an unbelieving empire that blasphemes God.

In Daniel 12, an angel completes the telling of his prophecy to the prophet Daniel. Daniel asks the angel how long it will be until the prophecy is fulfilled. The angel replies, "… as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people" (12:7). The "holy people" are the Jews. The angel is prophesying of a religious war waged against the holy people. In this case, the Jews are the foe of the Empire, as was the case for Daniel 8 and Daniel 11, both of which described wars waged at the end of the "period of indignation," i.e., the end of the tribulation period, the last three-and-a-half years of the seven years preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ.

In Revelation 12, the great Dragon, Satan, wages war against a woman and her offspring. The woman is almost universally interpreted by Bible scholars to symbolize the true covenant people of Israel.[100] The woman's offspring are defined by 12:17: "And went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus."

The woman's "children" are defined as those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus." Once again, the text is specific. Just as the war waged by the fourth beast of Daniel 7 was against the saints, so also this war is against the saints, i.e., Christians. This war is not limited to the tribulation period, but it began with the birth of Christ, when Satan was thrown down from heaven (see Rev. 12:4, 8–11), and continues until the saints are no more, i.e., they are raptured. This warring kingdom is also an unbelieving kingdom since it is the Dragon, Satan, who wages the war.

In Revelation 13:1–10, a beast appears from the sea. The Beast is given the power, authority, and throne of the Dragon (Satan) (see 13:4). This Beast

also makes "war with the saints" (13:7). Once again, we find a religious war waged against one of two religious groups, Jews or Christians, by an unbelieving foe, the Beast. The word "worship" appears in the text five times (13:4 [twice], 13:8, 13:12, 13:15). Why use the word "worship" to describe humanity's response to the Beast? Members of the military respect those who are officers and demonstrate that respect by saluting and following orders. Officers might be revered as great leaders, even feared. But worshiped? I respect the President of the United States; but I don't worship him. Worship is what people give to their god, to the spiritual head of their faith, whomever that might be. How do we explain the references to worship unless the Beast is a metaphor for the spiritual head of a false religion? (See Rev. 14:11; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4.) Revelation 13 gives characteristics for this beast: he will be given a mouth, "speaking arrogant words and blasphemies … against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven" (13:5). Clearly, the empire represented by this beast is unbelieving since it blasphemes God and His Christ.

In Revelation 17, another beast appears. This one is scarlet in color. A woman, described as a "harlot," rides the scarlet beast. The Scriptures describe the woman as "drunk with the blood of the saints" (17:6). Why is she thus described? Because she has killed so many of the saints. The saints are the foes of the empire with which the harlot is aligned; and the empire is clearly unbelieving since it martyrs those who are Christian. Here is another scripture that describes saints who have been slain:

> When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.
>
> —Revelation 6:9–11

Notice who is named by the martyrs as the cause of their death: "How long … will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (6:10). The phrase "those who dwell on the earth" (6:10) refers to unbelievers in Jesus Christ, those whose names are not in the Lamb's Book of Life.[101]

The harlot who rides the scarlet beast has been interpreted by some to be the head of the Catholic Church, the Pope. The Pope is not an unbeliever in Jesus Christ. He cannot be interpreted to be the harlot because the harlot

is an unbeliever. Those who maintain this position support it by referencing the many who have been slain by the Catholic Church for the crime of heresy. We will look at the identification of the harlot in the chapter entitled, "Rebuilding Babel's Towers." For now, how can the Pope be the harlot when the text specifically describes those who have been slain as the saints and those who have committed this evil as "those who dwell on the earth" (17:2), i.e., unbelievers? The characteristic of unbelief has been present in each of the aforementioned prophecies for the purpose of supporting the conclusion that the empire that wages holy war is an unbelieving empire. The phrase "those who dwell on the earth" is never used in the Bible to describe the church of Jesus Christ and those who are a part of it. Rather, this phrase only describes those who never have received Jesus Christ as personal Savior. The Pope, and the Catholic Church, are not in this group.

In conclusion, throughout the prophecies of the last days, there is a thread that is present in every passage: a religious war being waged against the Jews or Christians by an unbelieving foe. That is, Jews or Christians are the foes in the war, and a metaphor is given in the text to represent the opposing kingdom of unbelievers that wages this holy war against them. All we need to do is find the kingdom that is represented in the metaphors, and we will be able to determine the identity of the instrument of the Dragon, i.e., Satan (see Rev. 13:4), in the last days.

Another interesting fact needs to be mentioned. In passages where the Jews are the foes in the religious war, the war includes an end of day's conflict that overpowers the Jews. Looking at the passages just reviewed, this takes place in Daniel 8:24; 11:41; and 12:7. In future chapters, we will see the same prophecy fulfilled in Ezekiel 38 and 39. These are all future prophecies. They have yet to be fulfilled relative to the Jews, and their future fulfillment will not necessarily be by those kingdoms that defeated the Jews prior to the time of Christ, i.e., the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, or Romans.

The Bible Describes a Holy War that Extends Over Many Years

As we will see, history is filled with wars that have been waged for religious reasons. Some of those waged during the medieval period include the French Wars of Religion (1562–1598) and the Thirty Years War (1618–1648). However, most of these wars do not extend over centuries, but they are shorter in duration. The holy war that the Bible pictures is a long-term war that is waged by different kings, but all of whom are of the same empire. One of the passages that causes us to conclude that this is a war of many years is Revelation 17. It describes the harlot who rides the scarlet beast. The beast has seven heads and ten horns. The text defines the ten horns for us: they are all ten kings who have "yet to receive their kingdom" (17:12). The seven

horns are defined as kings; "five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come" (Rev. 17:10). Looking only at Revelation 17, we can conclude that the period of reign for these different kings has to be over an extended period of human history. In fact, these passages, in total, represent human history subsequent to the birth of Christ (Revelation 1:1 states the prophecies are for the bondservants of Christ of the things which must "soon take place," i.e., after the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ). Thus, the holy war we are looking for is one that lasts for an extended period of time, includes many conquests and many kings, and encompasses all of the same unbelieving spiritual empires that will wage war against Jews and Christians.

Who Has Waged Holy War Against Jews and Christians in History?

With these factors in mind, i.e., first, war against Jews and Christians, and secondly, a religious war waged by unbelievers in God or His Christ, the field of potential candidates is narrowed significantly. Israel has, historically, had many enemies. The Assyrians (721 B.C.), Babylonians (586 B.C.), Greeks (350 B.C.), Romans (Ancient Roman Empire, 44 B.C.–476 A.D.), Byzantines (Eastern Roman Empire, 476 A.D.–453 A.D.) and the Muslims (635 A.D.–present). But which of these nations is predominantly composed of unbelievers and continues to the modern day at enmity with Christians *(or Jews)*? Lastly, which of these engages in that war as an act of religious duty, i.e., a holy war?

Rome, Byzantium, and Islam are the only ones of the aforementioned group whose dominion does not end prior to the birth of Christianity. Therefore, we can automatically eliminate Assyria, Babylon, and Greece because their dominion precedes the birth of Christianity, and what remains of these kingdoms today is actually reconstituted as nations/lands that are predominantly Islamic. The short list, therefore, includes Rome, Byzantium, and Islam, including those prior kingdoms that have now been absorbed by Islam. In addition, we must also add the modern-day Roman Catholic Church, not as a country, but as a religion. At first glance, we should be able to eliminate Byzantium and the Roman Catholic Church because both of these are Christian and the Bible prophecies of an unbelieving empire waging a religious war against Christians. Nevertheless, we will look at both of these groups and conclude whether or not they meet the biblical tests for a holy war.

Ancient Roman Empire (Rome through the fourth century A.D.)

Ancient Roman military conquests were not waged for religious reasons, but for non-religious reasons. Rome's conquests provided the economic power and resources (through an expanding tax base) that Rome needed to

sustain its existing populations and grow its military. Although the Roman Empire did not wage conquests against Jews or Christians for religious reasons, persecution of Christians occurred on numerous occasions under separate Roman Emperors.[102]

Historian Justo L. Gonzalez describes the first century religious context of Rome as multi-cultural in nature and composed of the worship of many gods. From a Roman perspective, the unity of conquered peoples was best insured as long as everyone believed that all worshiped the same gods, but with different names for those gods.[103] Christians and Jews stood out in this context because they believed in one God, to the exclusion of all other gods. Thus, Christians and Jews were seen as fanatics and exclusionists, impacting the uniformity and unity of Roman society. Thus, they had to be removed.[104]

From the time of Roman emperor Nero (54–69 A.D.) to the conversion of Emperor Constantine (early fourth century A.D.), Christians were persecuted (according to Historian Peter Stearns, this persecution was not constant[105]). Another reason for the persecution of Christians was the refusal of Christians to honor the emperor as God. According to Gonzalez, Romans saw the worship of the ruling Roman emperor as a means of fostering societal unity and a test of loyalty to the emperor. For Christians to refuse to worship the emperor (including the refusal to burn incense before the emperor's image) was an act of disloyalty that required condemnation and action by the Roman authorities.[106]

The Roman Empire (Western Empire) began its decline in power in the third and fourth centuries A.D. The Western Empire was forever impacted by Christianity, when, in the early fourth century, the Roman Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity (around 312 A.D.).[107] Historian Peter Stearns estimates that at the time of Constantine's conversion, 10 percent of the Roman Empire was already Christianized.[108] Constantine's conversion all but ended Roman persecution of Christians for the remainder of the duration of the Empire in the formal issuing in 313 A.D. of the Edict of Milan, a document jointly entered into between Constantine (the emperor of the Western Roman Empire) and Licinius Augustus, the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire (Constantine later became the sole emperor of both Western and Eastern Empires in 324 A.D.).[109]

With Constantine's conversion, Christianity continued its spread through the entire Roman Empire, which by the fourth century included Spain, Italy, Greece, the Middle East, Egypt, and North Africa. This spread continued after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire (generally accepted to be September 4, 476 A.D., when Romulus Augustus was deposed, and further defined by the defeat of the Romans at the hands of the Germanic peoples[110]). Historian Gonzalez reports that the decline and collapse of the Western Roman Empire did not result in the decline of Christianity within those

regions previously under the dominion of the Romans. Conquered Christians felt the need to evangelize the victors (the Germanics).[111] Following the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, the Eastern Empire (the Byzantine Empire) emerged, with its capital city, Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul, Turkey). The Byzantines, of course, were Christians (Eastern Orthodox Church), and Constantinople was the capital city of the church.

The Holy Roman Empire

In the late eighth century, Charlemagne (Charles the Great) of France led his armies to conquer the Saxons and Frisians. Forced baptism and conversion to Christianity was required by Charlemagne, resulting in the baptism of thousands of pagans, and included the death of those who refused baptism.[112] Charlemagne was crowned emperor on December 25, 800 A.D., by Pope Leo III, reviving the Western Roman Empire.[113] Thereafter, the Roman Empire was completely divided between the Empire in the West and the Byzantine Empire in the East. The revived empire (the Western Empire) was called the "Holy Roman Empire" because Pope Leo III declared King Charles as having been chosen by God as emperor.[114]

The Holy Roman Empire cannot be the prophesied foe of Christians since the conflict waged by the Empire required conversion to Christianity, not the other way around.

The Crusades

The Crusades occurred at a time when Christians of Palestine were being subjected to ever-increasing brutalities at the hands of the Islamic Seljuk Turks.[115] Following is a quote from a letter to King Henry IV of England from Pope Gregory VII (1074), describing the situation that ultimately led to the Crusades some years later:

> We hereby inform you that the bearer of this letter, on his recent return from across the sea [from Palestine], came to Rome to visit us. He repeated what we had heard from many others, that a pagan race had overcome the Christians and with horrible cruelty had devastated everything almost to the walls of Constantinople, and were now governing the conquered lands with tyrannical violence, and that they had slain many thousands of Christians as if they were but sheep. If we love God and wish to be recognized as Christians, we should be filled with grief at the misfortune of this great empire [the Greeks] and the murder of so many Christians. But simply to grieve is not our whole duty. … Therefore we beseech you by the faith in which you are united through Christ in the adoption of the sons of God, and by the authority of St. Peter, prince of apostles, we admonish

> you that you be moved to proper compassion by the wounds and blood of your brethren and the danger of the aforesaid empire and that, for the sake of Christ, you undertake the difficult task of bearing aid to your brethren [the Greeks]. Send messengers to us at once [to] inform us of what God may inspire you to do in this matter.[116]

Pope Gregory VII was unsuccessful in gathering sufficient forces to march against the Turks. However, almost twenty years later, Pope Urban II, Gregory's successor, issued a call to "retake the land" from the Amalekites (Muslims). This call proved to be successful and began the three-hundred-year-long Crusades. Pope Urban's initial appeal went out on November 27, 1095, at the Council of Clermont to a gathering of bishops (see previously quoted sermon in this chapter). Included within the call was the emblem of the cross attached to the uniforms of all soldiers. All priests were empowered by Urban II to give the sacred symbol and its promised blessing to any who joined the army, regardless of their allegiance to Jesus Christ. In fact, personal belief in Jesus Christ, his death on the cross, his resurrection on the third day, and his bodily appearance (1 Cor. 15:3–4) became irrelevant for one's salvation. Salvation was guaranteed to the warrior of the cross! In Pope Urban's sermon to his bishops, he stated:

> Moreover, Christ commands it. All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested.[117]

On June 13, 1099, the Crusaders launched their successful onslaught against the Muslims who held Jerusalem. Their victory was celebrated with unbridled vengeance against the Muslims as reported by a chronicler of the event as follows:

> Some of our men … cut off the heads of their enemies; others shot them with arrows, so that they fell from towers; others tortured them longer by casting them into flames … it was necessary to pick one's way over the bodies of men and horses. But these were small matters compared to what happened at the Temple of Solomon … Men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins. Indeed it was a just and splendid judgment of God that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers, since it had suffered so long from their blasphemies.[118]

The First Crusade was the only successful Crusade during the next three centuries of battle for the Holy Land, and Jerusalem was held by the Crusaders for eighty-eight years over the next 900.[119] When the city eventually returned to the Islamic powers under Salah al-Din (1187 A.D.), it remained under Muslim dominion until the twentieth century.[120]

Were the Crusades "Holy War"?

Certainly, the Crusades were holy war since they were waged by Christians to retake Palestine in the name of Christ and Christianity. In fact, the Pope offered salvation to all who gave or shed blood in that effort. However, the Bible prophesies of holy war waged against Christians by unbelievers, not by Christians against unbelievers. We have looked at scripture after scripture and found this characteristic present in every passage. The Crusades may have constituted holy war when they were waged, but they do not constitute holy war within the meaning of the Bible prophecies. This factor cannot be overlooked if we are going to properly identify the kingdom used by Satan in the last days.

Roman Catholic Church's Persecutions of Christians

History is filled with many instances of the deaths of those considered heretics by the Roman Catholic Church. Early in its history, the Roman Catholic Church began a century's long practice of confronting what it deemed to be heresy through a series of inquisitions. The Inquisitions were begun, first, against the Donatists (in the fourth century) and then later, against the Cathars and the Waldensians (twelfth century and later). The Church had jurisdiction only over baptized members of the Church (which encompassed most of the population).[121] Other than the heresies of the fourth century, the Inquisitions generally included four different, separate historical occurrences: the Medieval Inquisition, the Spanish Inquisition, the Portuguese Inquisition, and the Roman Inquisition. A review of these persecutions is beyond the scope of this writing.

It is important to note that the Protestant Church also had its own inquisitions. Some of the most notable leaders in medieval Protestant Christian history, e.g., Martin Luther (1483–1546) and Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), supported the killing of Christians considered to be heretics. The Protestants viewed the Anabaptists (from the Greek word meaning "re-baptizers") as heretics because Anabaptists believed in believer's baptism by immersion following conversion. Anabaptists (forerunners of the Amish and Mennonite faiths) believed infant baptism was not valid and that the combination of church and state was wholly destructive to the church. Martin Luther's position on the Anabaptists follows:

> [Anabaptists] are in no case to be tolerated. … These are thieves and murderers of whom Christ spoke in John 7, persons who invade another man's parish and who usurp another man's office. … They must neither be tolerated nor listened to, even though they seek to teach the pure Gospel, yes, even if they are angelic and simon-pure Gabriels from heaven. … "If he refuses [to keep his mouth shut] … consign the scamp into the hands of his proper master. … Luther, then, advocated that Anabaptists be hung

> for heresy, the only proper punishment for a treasonous wretch. There was no other option for the radicals for they were a threat not only to society; but to Christianity in general.[122]

The first Christian killed for the crime of re-baptism was Felix Manz, who was drowned in Lake Zurich on January 5, 1527, by the Zürich council after it had passed an edict that made adult re-baptism punishable by drowning. Manz was the first Swiss Anabaptist to be martyred at the hands of Protestants.[123]

In conclusion, the Roman Catholic Church has certainly put to death those it considered heretics within Christianity; yet, such actions by the Church were not to wage holy war but to protect the Church from those the Church considered a threat. Whether or not we agree with their actions is not the point. The holy war we are looking for is waged by an unbelieving empire at enmity with Christians (or Jews). The Roman Catholic Church is not an unbelieving empire, and it has not taken the lives of Christians because they were Christians. Rather, they have taken life, from their perspective, to preserve Christianity. Notwithstanding the Church's actions in the past, the Roman Catholic Church today is perhaps society's loudest voice in defense of the Kingdom of Christ. How is it possible to interpret the Catholic Church today as the instrument of Satan to destroy the Church when the Catholic Church does all it can to preserve the Church!

If one interprets the Roman Catholic Church as having participated in holy war within the meaning of the Bible, so must the Protestant Church be included. The Protestant Church also put to death those it considered heretics. Anabaptists were drowned for their refusal to practice infant baptism. Certainly, the Bible cannot be prophesying that Christians, whether Protestant or Catholic, will be the empire under which Satan will destroy Christianity. We are looking for the biblically defined *unbelieving empire* that wages holy war against Jews or Christians in the last days. This empire cannot be the Roman Catholic Church or the Protestant Church since neither of these groups is made up of unbelievers in Jesus Christ.

Has Islam Waged Holy War throughout its History?

In 610 A.D., around the age of forty, the Prophet Muhammad received his first revelation of the Qur'an while on retreat near Mecca.[124] For twenty-three years following this night, Muhammad remembered aspects of this revelation and applied them to actual occurrences in his life and the lives of his followers. These recollections of Muhammad over the ensuing years were collected after his death in the Qur'an, the holy book for Muslims. By the year 622, the new religion had grown within the Bedouin desert clans. Muhammad and his small

band of desert tribesmen became a threat to the leading tribe of Mecca, the Quraysh. On September 17, 622, Muhammad and his followers fled for their lives to Medina. This celebrated journey is known as the *Hijra* (emigration) and is considered by Muslims to be the first year of Islam and the beginning of the Muslim calendar.[125]

In the years following 622, Muhammad was able to achieve a feat that no human being has achieved either before or since: he was able to unite the entire Arabian Peninsula under a single banner. However, in the year 632, only ten years into the Islamic era, Muhammad died.[126] Because of the suddenness of his death, Muhammad had not selected a successor (referred to as caliph) to lead Islam upon his death. This important task was left to his inner circle of followers, known as his "Companions." There were two possible choices: Ali ibn Abi Talib (hereafter "Ali"), Muhammad's son-in-law and husband of Muhammad's daughter Fatima, and Abu Bakr as-Sadiq (hereafter "Abu Bakr"), a close companion of Muhammad and his first convert to Islam. Ali was the closest male relative of Muhammad, and many followers (the "shi'at Ali," the "faction of Ali," later known as "Shi`ites" or "Shi'ahs") believed he should be caliph by virtue of his blood relationship to Muhammad. However, others believed that Ali was too young and leadership was of critical importance due to the likelihood of desertion among the Bedouin tribesmen who had aligned together under Muhammad's leadership. Ultimately, the majority chose Abu Bakr as the first caliph of Islam.

When Muhammad died unexpectedly in 632 A.D., Islam was in crisis. Islam's founder had died, and Muslims saw their alignment as contingent upon Muhammad's continued leadership. With his death, many left the faith, becoming apostates. The job of returning the apostates to Islam became the primary role of the first caliph of Islam, Abu Bakr.[127] The Ridda Wars ("Apostate Wars") ensued.[128] At first, Abu Bakr had little success in returning the apostates to Islam. Raiding parties were sent outside Arabia to procure subsistence for the struggling band of Muslims. Surprisingly, these *raiding parties were successful*. Victory after victory occurred, and an unintended result was the consequence. The apostates returned to Islam; the booty was all they needed to realign with the teaching of Muhammad.[129]

Historian Ira Lapidus describes the first Arabian conquest of the Middle East and surrounding regions as follows:

> The Arab conquests are popularly understood to have been motivated by a lust for booty or a religious passion to subdue and convert the world to Islam. Whatever the motives involved, they were in part the outcome of deliberate state policy and in part accidental. … At first the small tribal groups were mainly searching for booty … What began as inter-tribal skirmishing to consolidate a political confederation in Arabia ended as

> a full-scale war against the two empires [Arabia and Byzantium]. In the wake of the battle of Ajnadayn, the Arabs moved against the Byzantine province of Syria. They took Damascus in 636. Baalbek, Homs, and Hama soon surrendered. The rest of the province, however, continued to resist. Only in 638 was Jerusalem taken. Caesarea fell in 640. Finally, in 641, the Arabs took the northern Syrian and Mesopotamian towns of Harran, Edessa, and Nasibin. … The next Byzantine province to fall to the Arabs was Egypt [in 641].[130]

Historian Bat Ye'or describes the eighth century Arabian conquest of Babylon and Persia (modern-day Iraq and Iran):

> Led by brilliant and fearless leaders, the Muslims overcame the Persian armies and seized Babylonia, Susiana, Mesopotamia, Armenia, and Persia, pushing on as far as the Sind (713) and beyond the Syr-Daria (751). In the West, they conquered all the Christian provinces of the eastern Mediterranean, from Syria and Palestine to Egypt, North Africa and through Spain, before suffering defeats at Narbounne (720) and at Poitiers (732).[131]

By the end of the tenth century, the first wave of Islamization of the Middle East, North Africa, and Egypt had reached its zenith. The second wave of Islamization was in the lands of the Turks in the thirteenth century. Yet, unlike the first wave of Arabic conquest, which met resistance at every turn, the Turks embraced Islam. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Islamized Turks plundered their way across Europe and the Balkans, beginning an occupation that would last 500 years.[132] Constantinople, the "Rome of the East," would not fall until 1453, but fall it did, and Istanbul became the name of this once great Byzantine city. With the fall of Constantinople, the mighty Byzantine Empire, the successor to the Western Roman Empire, ended. Next, Serbia was conquered in 1459, then Bosnia in 1463, and Herzegovina in 1483. Turkish expansion continued with the conquest of Wallachia, Moldavia, and eastern Hungary and was only checked in Vienna in 1683 and Poland in 1687.[133]

Perhaps the clearest evidence of Islam's advance against Christians (or Jews) of the Middle East, Egypt, North Africa, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor is seen when we consider the religious heritage of these areas in the centuries after the birth of Christ but before the beginning of Islam in the seventh century A.D. Prior to the Muslim advance, these areas were predominantly Christian; certainly, with different beliefs within Christianity, providing the religious climate for much conflict, but nevertheless, predominantly Christian. These areas are now predominantly Muslim. The land that Christ had walked, the churches that the apostle Paul had planted, were now under the dominion of Islam.

Historian Philip Jenkins in his book *The Lost History of Christianity*, describes the lost religion of Christianity in the Middle East as follows:

> Given that the destruction of Christianity has not been much studied, we can make certain general observations, stressing above all the role of states. Though churches may lose political influence under Christian states or in predominantly Christian societies, though they might be secularized, they do not vanish. … In most of these cases, churches collapsed or vanished because they were unable to cope with the pressures placed upon them by hostile regimes, mainly Muslim. While religions might sicken and fade, they do not die of their own accord: they must be killed.[134]

Note Jenkin's words above: "… churches do not vanish … they do not die of their own accord: they must be killed." Christianity did not vanish from the Middle East. It was "killed." How did that death occur? In various ways, some violent and some nonviolent, but all leading to the conversion or subjugation of Christians (and Jews) of the Middle East. In time, this area of the world was completely Muslim.

Was the Islamization of these areas the result of violent holy war? For many peoples of the Middle East, yes. For others, no; at least, not sudden! Here is historian Bat Ye'or's account:

> By the time the Prophet died (632) nearly all the tribes of the Hijaz [western Arabia] had rallied to Islam, idolatry had been vanquished in Arabia, and the Peoples of the Book, Jews and Christians, were paying tribute to the Muslims. … After unifying the peninsula, he [Abu Bakr, who succeeded Muhammad] carried the war beyond Arabia. The jihad provided non-Muslims with an alternative: conversion or tribute; refusal forced the Muslims to fight them till victory. Arab idolaters had to choose between death or conversion; as for Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, if they paid tribute and accepted the conditions of conquest, they could buy back their right to life, freedom of worship, and security of property.[135]

As Bat Ye'or points out, Muslims offered non-Muslims the option of surrender and conversion before the beginning of a conflict. If surrender was chosen, non-Muslims, other than Jews, Christians, or Zoroastrians, were required to convert to Islam or face death. Jews, Christians, or Zoroastrians, referred to as "Ahl al-Kitab" ("People of the Book")[136] could pay tribute (a tax called "jizya"), along with accepting the conditions of Islamic dominion, and they would retain their right to life, freedom of worship, and security of property. The tax was paid annually at a public ceremony, requiring the conquered to demonstrate, publically, subjection to their Muslim conquerors (Qur'an 9:29). As we will see in our next chapter, the *Ahl al-Kitab*, i.e., the "People of

the Book," became known as "Dhimmis." In many cases, particularly in the Middle Ages, the annual tax (jizya) was required to be paid with the children of the conquered. Among the conditions of the Dhimmi contract was the rule that the People of the Book could not maintain their houses of worship or build new ones; nor could they evangelize others to their faith. The result of accepting Dhimmitude was that the lives of People of the Book living at the time of Muslim conquest were spared, but within one to two generations, their houses of worship were in shambles, and their children had been claimed by the Muslims for tax payment ("janissaries" were armies of the children of Christians who had been claimed by the Muslims in payment of the jizya. Their role in jihad was to provide personal protection to the sultanate). What was the result of dhimmitude to Christians and Christianity? It killed it, not suddenly, but slowly, within one or two generations.

Consider this comment by Phil Jenkins in his book *The Lost History of Christianity* as he describes the impact upon a religion that no longer has a place to worship or a priest to lead in that worship:

> And yet this older Christian world perished, destroyed so comprehensively that its memory is forgotten by all except academic specialists. During the Middle Ages, and especially during the fourteenth century, church hierarchies were destroyed, priests and monks were killed, enslaved, or expelled, and monasteries and cathedrals fell silent. As church institutions fell, so Christian communities shrank, the result of persecution or ethnic and religious cleansing. Survivors found it all but impossible to practice their faith without priests or churches, especially when rival religions offered such powerful attractions.[137]

Was the Muslim conquest violent or nonviolent? Does it matter? The result was the same. The people were Islamized either at the time of conquest upon conversion or over an extended period of years as their lives were literally worn out as Dhimmis.

Have Islam's Wars Been Religiously Motivated, i.e., Holy Wars?

It is impossible for this writing to posit example after example of Islam's religiously motivated holy wars throughout its history. Some examples have been provided, and each chapter will provide others. Regardless, the place where we must make the determination of a religious motivation is not history alone; in fact, the words of the Qur'an are the key to this determination. The Muslim word for "holy war" is "jihad." Here are some definitions from experts in Islam.

Historian Bernard Lewis defines "jihad" as follows:

> The term so translated is "jihad," an Arabic word with the literal meaning of "effort," "striving," or "struggle." In the Qur'an and still more in the Traditions, commonly though not invariably followed by the words "in the path of God," it has usually been understood as meaning "to wage war." The great collections of Hadith (Traditions) all contain a section devoted to jihad, in which the military meaning predominates … According to Muslim teaching, jihad is one of the basic commandments of the faith, an obligation of the Muslim community as a whole; in a defensive war, it becomes a personal obligation of every adult male Muslim. In such a situation, the Muslim ruler might issue a general call to arms. The basis of the obligation of jihad is the universality of the Muslim revelation. God's word and God's message are for all mankind; it is the duty of those who have accepted them to strive unceasingly to convert or at least to subjugate those who have not. This obligation is without limit of time or space. It must continue until the whole world has either accepted the Islamic faith or submitted to the power of the Islamic state.[138] (Arabic transliterations omitted from quote.)

Key to our understanding of jihad is Lewis's description that it is an unceasing striving to convert or subjugate all those who have not accepted it. Therefore, jihad is perpetual. It is not necessarily violent, because striving is not always violent; but it is necessarily unending.

Author Bat Ye'or adds the following:

> The aim of jihad is to subjugate the peoples of the world to the law of Allah, decreed by his prophet Muhammad. Mankind is divided into two groups, Muslims and non-Muslims. The former compose the Islamic community, the "umma," who own the territories of the dar al-Islam governed by Islamic law. Non-Muslims are "harbis," inhabitants of the dar al-harb, the lands of war, so called because they are destined to come under Islamic jurisdiction, either by war ("harb"), or by the conversion of their inhabitants. … Consequently, the jihad is the means whereby possessions considered illegally usurped by non-Muslims are restored to Muslims. That is why every act of war in the dar al-harb is legal and immune from censure. As the jihad is a permanent war, it excludes the idea of peace but authorizes temporary truces related to the political situation ("muhadana").[139]

Perhaps this quote from the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran sums up best the concept of jihad incumbent upon all Muslims:

> Islam makes it incumbent on all adult males, provided they are not disabled or incapacitated, to prepare themselves for the conquest of [other] countries so that the writ of Islam is obeyed in every country in the world. … Those who know nothing of Islam pretend that Islam counsels against war. Those

[who say this] are witless. Islam says: Kill all the unbelievers just as they would kill you all! Does this mean that Muslims should sit back until they are devoured by [the unbelievers]? Islam says: Kill them [the non-Muslims], put them to the sword and scatter [their armies]. Does this mean sitting back until [non-Muslims] overcome us? Islam says: Kill in the service of Allah those who may want to kill you! Does this mean that we should surrender [to the enemy]? Islam says: Whatever good there is exists thanks to the sword and in the shadow of the sword! People cannot be made obedient except with the sword! The sword is the key to Paradise, which can be opened only for the Holy Warriors! There are hundreds of other [Qur'anic] psalms and Hadiths [sayings of the Prophet] urging Muslims to value war and to fight. Does all this mean that Islam is a religion that prevents men from waging war? I spit upon those foolish souls who make such a claim.[140]

But what does the Qur'an say?[141]

- "Fighting is prescribed for you, and you dislike it. But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knows, and you know not" (Qur'an 2:216).
- "Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. To him who fighteth in the cause of Allah, whether he is slain or gets victory soon shall we give him a reward of great (value)" (Qur'an 4:74).
- "Seize them and slay them wherever you find them: and in any case take no friends or helpers from their ranks" (Qur'an 4:89).
- "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know. Whatever ye shall spend in the cause of Allah, shall be repaid unto you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly" (Qur'an 8:60).
- "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of truth, from among the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued" (Qur'an 9:29).
- "But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular Prayers and practice regular Charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Qur'an 9:5).
- "When you meet the unbelievers, strike off their heads; then, when you have made wide slaughter among them, carefully tie up the remaining captives" (Qur'an 47:4).

We return to *Reliance of the Traveller*, the substantive and authoritative compilation of Sunni Islamic law (from the Shafi`i School of Islamic Law), for its definition of jihad. There we find the distinction of the "lesser jihad" (holy war) from the "greater jihad" (spiritual struggle) from the commentary of Sheikh Nuh Ali Salman (Book o9.0):

> *Jihad* means to war against non-Muslims, and is etymologically derived from the word, *mujahada*, signifying warfare to establish the religion. And it is the lesser jihad. As for the greater jihad, it is spiritual warfare against the lower self (nafs), which is why the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said as he was returning from jihad, "We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad."[142]

And from the *Reliance of the Traveller,* as related by Sahih Bukhari (considered authoritative by Muslim scholars), we find this saying of Muhammad:

> I have been commanded to fight people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and perform the prayer, and pay zakat. If they say it, they have saved their blood and possessions from me, except for the rights of Islam over them. And their final reckoning is with Allah …[143]

And likewise from *Reliance of the Traveller,* as related by Sahih Muslim (considered authoritative by Muslim scholars),

> To go forth in the morning or evening to fight in the path of Allah is better than the whole world and everything in it.[144]

A modern example of jihad is found in the Palestinian organization known as "HAMAS." HAMAS is an acronym for the Arabic words translated "Islamic Resistance Movement." HAMAS is the Sunni Islam organization that at times has controlled a majority of seats in the elected legislative council of the Palestinian National Authority. In the January 2006 election, HAMAS took 76 of the 132 seats and Fatah took the remaining 43 seats.[145] HAMAS' charter includes the following: "There is no solution to the Palestinian question except through Jihad."[146]

The slogan for HAMAS is:

> God [Allah] is its target, the Prophet is its model, the Qur'an its constitution: Jihad is its path, and death for the sake of God [Allah] is the loftiest of its wishes.[147]

HAMAS believes that "the land of Palestine is an Islamic *Waqf* (trust) consecrated for future Muslim generations until judgment day," and as such, the land cannot be negotiated away by any political leader.[148] HAMAS' covenant states that "so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement, stating that there is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad."[149]

Ishmaelites as the Enemies of God

Psalm 83 prophesies that the sons of Ishmael will be neverending enemies of God (see verse 83:2). They have "made a covenant" against God (see verse 83:5), and the unending covenant of the Ishmaelites includes wiping Israel off the face of the earth (see verse 83:4).

> For behold, Your enemies make an uproar, And those who hate You have exalted themselves. They make shrewd plans against Your people, And conspire together against Your treasured ones. They have said, "Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, That the name of Israel be remembered no more." For they have conspired together with one mind; Against You they make a covenant: The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab, and the Hagrites; Gebal and Ammon, and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assyria also has joined with them; They have become a help to the children of Lot.
>
> —Psalm 83:2–8

This is a perpetual, unending war that will continue until the return of Jesus Christ. It is an unbelieving empire committed to eliminating Israel. It is holy war within the meaning of the Bible.

Conclusion

Only Islam has a history rooted in enmity toward God's people, whether Jews or Christians. The Bible prophesies of a spiritual kingdom that will be established and that will wage a spiritual war against God's people. Islam is actually composed of the descendants of Ishmael and Esau of Psalm 83, the Old Testament passage that prophesies of a neverending conflict with the covenant people of God. In the last days, this kingdom will continue their jihad that began more than 3,000 years ago.

Why is it important to identify the enemy of God in the interpretation of Bible prophecy? Find the unbelieving empire that wages holy war against Jews and Christians, and you will have found the hand of Satan in the last days. Islam is that hand.

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 3	
Point 1	Biblical "holy war" is war waged by an unbelieving religious empire (unbelief in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or His Christ) against either Jews or Christians for the purpose of conversion or subjugation to the unbelieving empire.
Point 2	Biblical holy war is prophesied to be waged specifically against one of two religious groups: Jews or Christians. Daniel 7:21–22, 23–25; 8:24; 11:36, 45; 12:7; Revelation 12:17; 13:7; 17:6, 8, 14 all include one of these two groups as the foe of an unbelieving religious empire that wages the holy war. To identify the instrument of Satan in the last days, one need only to find holy war being waged against one or both of these two groups, Jews or Christians. The agent of that war, if religious in nature, fulfills multiple Bible prophecies, each of which identify it as the instrument of Satan in the last days.
Point 3	The Ancient Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the Crusades, the Inquisitions by the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant Church, and the wars or killings by them do not constitute biblical holy war because they were not waged by an *unbelieving empire* against Jews or Christians.
Point 4	Islam has waged holy war, i.e., jihad, against Jews, Christians, and others throughout its history. The Middle East, Asia Minor, Egypt, and North Africa, were, prior to the seventh century A.D., predominantly Christian. These areas are now Muslim. Conversion to Islam may have been sudden (as in a holy war conflict) or extended over years through the persecution and taxation imposed by Islam upon Dhimmis, along with the prohibition by Islam of evangelization by Christians or maintenance of houses of worship. Regardless of how Islam has replaced Christianity in the Middle East, it has replaced it. Islam fulfills multiple Bible prophecies of the last days, which identify it as an instrument of Satan.
Point 5	The Qur'an is filled with verses that authorize forced conversion or subjugation of non-Muslims to Islam.
Point 6	The Ishmaelites have been enemies of God and the Jewish people since ancient times. Psalm 83:2–8 prophesies of a neverending effort to remove the Jewish people from the face of the earth.
Point 7	Why is it important to identify the empire at enmity with God in the interpretation of Bible prophecy? Find the unbelieving empire that wages holy war against Jews and Christians, and you will have found the hand of Satan in the last days. As we will see, Islam is that hand.

Chapter 4



Feet of Clay

Introduction

We have identified Islam as an unbelieving empire that has waged holy war against Jews and Christians since its beginning in the seventh century A.D. We have reviewed verses in the Qur'an that describe a perpetual jihad that continues until the world has either converted to Islam or become subjugated to Islam. We now move to specific Bible passages to determine whether or not Islam fulfills other criteria contained in those passages that will either confirm or deny Islam as the empire of the last days that will be used by Satan to wage his war against the children of God.

The book of Daniel includes two chapters that are essential to interpreting Bible prophecy in the last days. Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 each use a metaphor to describe an empire in the last days that will wage holy war against the kingdom of God. These two chapters are filled with no less than thirteen separate characteristics given to identify Satan's instrument—his hand—in this war. A statue is presented in Daniel 2, and a ten-horned beast is presented in Daniel 7; both of these symbolize kingdoms relevant to the last days. Separate characteristics of each metaphor standing alone are not sufficient to conclude who this instrument might be. But taken together, their combined weight all pointing to the same instrument, makes the identification almost irrefutable. This chapter will identify the empire symbolized by the feet of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of Daniel 2 and the empire symbolized by the fourth beast of Daniel 7.

In addition to Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, we will also look at Daniel 11. There, a king and his kingdom appear that have relevance to the last days. We will find identifiers that, once again, Islam uniquely fulfills. Each time Islam is identified, the cloak under which Satan hides will be lifted, and the combined revelation will identify Satan's instrument in the last days.

King Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (Daniel 2)

The statue was impressive. It towered above the earth in the King's dream. None of the King's magicians or sorcerers could fulfill the King's request. Not only did the King demand an interpretation of his dream, but also the magicians and sorcerers had to tell him the dream itself. If they couldn't, they would be "torn from limb to limb" (Dan. 2:5)! Not a good time to be a magician! Daniel was the Hebrew slave who saved the day. His interpretation of the dream coined a phrase used even to the modern day—"feet of clay," so strong, but deceptively, so weak.

The year of the King's dream is thought to have been in the early seventh century B.C.[150] Daniel, then perhaps as young as fifteen, was an Israelite captive in exile in Babylon. He came forward to both reveal the dream and to provide its interpretation.

A single statue appears in the dream. The head of the statue is made of gold (see 2:32). It has breast and arms of silver (2:32), belly and thighs of bronze (see 2:32), legs of iron (see 2:33), and feet that are partly of iron and partly of clay (see 2:33). In the dream, a stone is cut out of a mountain, without hands, and strikes the statue on its feet, crushing the feet of iron and clay (see 2:34). Then, the entire statue disintegrates into the ground. The wind sweeps the prior kingdom away without leaving a trace behind (see 2:35). The stone that struck the statue becomes a huge mountain and fills the whole earth (see 2:35).

Daniel then provides the King the interpretation of the dream. The first three parts of the statue—the head of gold, breast of silver, and thighs of bronze—represent three kingdoms, each of which will defeat the next.[151] The legs of iron represent a fourth kingdom, which will be as strong as iron (see 2:40). This kingdom will crush the other kingdoms, just as iron crushes and shatters everything (see 2:40). In the time of these kingdoms, God will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed (see 2:44). This kingdom will be the stone "cut out of the mountain without hands" (see 2:34, 45). This kingdom will put an end to all these kingdoms (see 2:44), and it will endure forever (see 2:44).

For the statue of Daniel 2, we must interpret the identity of the kingdom that will be in dominion over the prior kingdoms; and we must interpret the kingdom that endures forever.

The Feet of Iron and Clay

The traditional interpretation of Bible scholars is that the kingdoms represented in the statue of Nebuchadnezzar are as follows (see Stephen Miller, *Daniel,* pages 92–102, for a thorough discussion of each characteristic):

1. Babylon—the head of gold; Babylon destroyed Jerusalem, 586 B.C., in three separate exiles (605 B.C., 597 B.C., and 586 B.C.); Daniel 2:38 names Babylon as the head of gold;
2. Medo-Persia—the chest and arms of silver (539–331 B.C.);
3. Greeks—the belly and thighs of bronze (331 B.C.–146 B.C.);
4. Rome—the legs of iron, including feet of iron and toes of iron and clay (146 B.C.–476 A.D.).[152]

The above interpretation is supported by history. Medo-Persia defeated Babylon in 539 B.C. and continued its dominion of Babylon until 331 B.C., when it was defeated by the Greeks, led by Alexander the Great.[153] The Roman Empire (Ancient) defeated the Greeks in 146 B.C. and continued its dominion until the division of East and West Roman Empires in 395 A.D. The last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustus (Western Empire), was deposed in 476 A.D., and the Eastern Roman Empire continued until 1453 A.D.,[154] when the Muslims overwhelmed the Byzantine Empire in the fall of Constantinople. The Muslims had previously defeated the Byzantines in Palestine in the seventh through tenth centuries A.D.

Stephen Miller continues the traditional interpretation of the fourth kingdom as follows:

> Virtually all equate the fourth empire with Rome; however, there is a difference of opinion concerning the identification of the feet and toes of the statue. Some scholars construe the feet and toes of iron and clay to be a further allusion to ancient Rome, whereas others consider this part of the image to be symbolic of an empire that will arise in the last days.[155]

The Kingdom that Endures Forever

Thus far, we are pretty much in agreement with the traditional interpretation of the parts of the statue. Historically, the four kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome succeeded one another in dominion, each

over the prior. This is precisely the meaning of Daniel 2:38–39, which tells us that beginning with Nebuchadnezzar, who is the head of gold (Babylon, his kingdom), we need only look to the historical kingdoms, successive in their dominion, to identify the remaining parts of the statue. That is, Medo-Persia defeated Babylon—they are the second part of the statue—the chest and arms of silver. The Greeks defeated Medo-Persia. They are the third part of the statue, the belly and thighs of bronze. The Ancient Roman Empire defeated the Greeks—they are the fourth part of the statue, the legs of iron.

We move now to identify the kingdom that will endure forever. This enduring kingdom is prophesied to ultimately crush the kingdom that remains of the earlier kingdoms. In the end time, i.e., the tribulation, the seven-year period just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ, the kingdom that remains will be at enmity with God. This is important because it helps us to identify the likely kingdom that represents the feet of the statue crushed by the stone. The stone is the kingdom that endures forever (see 2:44).

The enduring kingdom is defined by the scripture as a kingdom set up by God "in the days of those kings" (2:44). This is a reference to Christianity, first century A.D., which God set up when Jesus Christ was born in the "days of those kings." This event occurred when the Ancient Roman Empire was in dominion of the Jews of Palestine in 146 B.C., through the year of the birth of Christ (4 B.C.), continuing through His death in 30 A.D. The Ancient Roman Empire is the successor kingdom to the Greeks, the Babylonians, and the Medo-Persians. Since Christianity was set up by God under Rome's dominion (first century A.D.), Rome is identified as the fourth kingdom in Daniel's statue that is represented by the legs of iron.

The Final Kingdom at Enmity with God at the End of Days

The scripture moves from the prophecy of the fourth kingdom to a later period as it states, "You continued looking" (Dan. 2:34). The time is the end of days because the text states that when the feet are crushed by the stone, the wind carries "them away so that not a trace of them is found" (Dan. 2:35). In this event, Christianity will "put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever" (Dan. 2:44). None of these kingdoms endure after the stone crushes the feet. This is a reference to the final victory of Christ over the nations as prophesied by Revelation 19:11–19. Thereafter, the Bible prophesies that Christ establishes His reign forever on earth (see Rev. 20:4).

When the stone (Christianity) crushes the feet of the statue, what kingdom is represented by the feet? As stated, Ancient Rome is the fourth empire, represented by the legs of iron. If it is now represented by the iron in the feet, then Rome will have to be *revived* as a kingdom in the tribulation period

in order to fulfill the prophecy. If revived, it must be revived as a kingdom at enmity with God, since Christianity is the foe of this kingdom. Suppose, however, that the feet are a separate empire all together, a final kingdom that is composed of two parts symbolized by the iron and clay in the toes of the feet?

The Final Kingdom Symbolized by the Feet (and Toes) of the Statue

Notice how many parts of the statue are crushed by the stone:

> Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found.
>
> —Daniel 2:35

There are five parts of the statue crushed, not four![156] Notice that clay has been added to the four primary parts, even though not previously included as a primary part. If Rome, symbolized by the legs of iron, is revived in the last days, why list the clay at all since Rome is already present in the iron? The addition of clay to the four primary parts has no meaning unless the last kingdom is not Rome. If revived, Rome is the last kingdom crushed by Christianity. The text would have read, "Then, the iron, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were all crushed." The clay has been added as a part of the statue that is crushed, and it has been added because God is telling us the last kingdom will not be Rome, but another final kingdom. The feet (along with the toes) are a primary and separate part; and the feet are composed of two parts, one part symbolized in the iron, and one part symbolized in the clay. This final kingdom will be the kingdom in dominion of the others, which is why when the feet are crushed, the entire statue crumbles!

Who is this divided, two-part kingdom that has absorbed the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, the Greeks, and the Ancient Romans? Islam. The two parts? Sunni and Shi'ah, the two predominant sects of Islam. The ancient kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, the Greeks, and most of the Roman Empire (Eastern Empire and the collapsed Western Empire previously in dominion of the Middle East) are now all Muslim. As we will see in future chapters, Revelation 13:7 and Daniel 7:23 both prophesy of this accomplished event but on a worldwide scale at the end of the tribulation period. This is the reason why the entire statue collapses when the stone crushes its feet. The prior kingdoms have been absorbed by Islam, along with an expanded worldwide Islam; and when the statue is crushed, the remainder is blown away by the wind. In the Millennial Reign of Christ, Islam, as a religion, will be no more (Dan. 2:35).

Where is Rome?

Rome is missing because in the seven-year tribulation period, Rome will not be a kingdom at enmity with God, nor will Rome be in the dominion of Babylon, Medo-Persia, or the Greeks. In the year 312 A.D., Emperor Constantine of the Western Roman Empire converted to Christianity. In the year 313 A.D., the Edict of Milan was executed by both Western and Eastern emperors, ending persecution of Christians. Thereafter, Rome (Western and Eastern) was Christianized, until Islam overcame what remained of the Ancient Roman Empire, beginning in the seventh century A.D. In the tribulation period, Rome will not be a kingdom at enmity with God (unless, as we will discuss in the next chapter, Rome has become Islamized). In fact, Rome will be on the side of God, which is why it is absent from the statue when the statue is crushed by Christianity.[157]

The Final Kingdom at Enmity With God Will Be a Divided Kingdom

Daniel 2:41 states, "In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom."

The word "divided" is translated from the Hebrew *palag,* meaning "to split or divide."[158] According to *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, the word is used in four places, referring to the dividing of the earth in the sense of divided people groups. One of those uses is found in Genesis 10:25: "Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan."[159] Scholar Stephen Miller similarly interprets the word to mean "divided."[160] The word does not translate as "mixed" as some of the "Roman view" advocate. (We will discuss the "Roman view" in our next chapter.) Thus, this empire will not be a united empire, but a kingdom divided into two parts.

The cover story for *Time* Magazine, March 5, 2007, describes the very characteristic that verse 2:41 has in mind:

> **Sunnis vs. Shiites, Why They Hate Each Other;**
>
> **What's really driving the civil war that's tearing the Middle East apart?**[161]

We may not know much about Islam, but one thing we know. It is divided. Sunnis against Shi'ahs. Sunnis are the majority sect (85–90 percent) and Shi'ahs the minority (10 percent). This division runs so deep that Sunnis do not consider Shi'ahs as true Muslims. Consider the following statement made by author Stephen Schwarz:

> Today, the Saudi [Sunni Islam] school systems, following Wahhabi tenets, teach their children and other Muslims throughout the Umma (Islamic community) that Shi'a Islam was invented by an imaginary Jewish convert, that Shi'a theologians are liars, that their legal traditions are false, and that they are not Muslims at all.[162]

The Dividing Event in Islamic History

The roots of the dividing event in Islamic history can be traced all the way back to the choosing of the first caliphs ("caliph" is the title held by those who succeeded Muhammad as rulers of the Islamic world.[163]) and the resulting divide between competing individuals for that rulership. You may recall that the two choices for caliph upon Muhammad's death in 632 A.D. were Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (hereafter "Abu Bakr") and Ali ibn Abi Talib (hereafter "Ali"). Abu Bakr was Muhammad's first convert to Islam, and Ali was the closest surviving member of Muhammad's immediate family (Ali was the first cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad through Ali's marriage to Fatima, Muhammad's daughter). Ali, in spite of being the closest male member of Muhammad's immediate family, was passed over in favor of Abu Bakr.[164]

Ali was passed over for caliph two additional times, when Umar ibn al-Khattab (634–644; hereafter, "Umar") was chosen as the second caliph upon the death of Abu Bakr and when Uthman ibn Affan (644–656; hereafter, "Uthman") was chosen as the third caliph upon the death of Umar. Uthman was then assassinated by a follower of Ali. Ali was elected caliph upon Uthman's death, but Uthman's clan, the Umayyads, refused to recognize Ali as caliph. A powerful leader arose from within the Umayyad clan—Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan (hereafter "Muawiya").[165] The two opposing forces met in battle. No clear victory was won by either in spite of months of fighting between the two forces. Muawiya meanwhile demanded that Ali hand over the murderers of Uthman, while at the same time seeking the caliphate for himself. Ali refused, and deadlock between the two groups resulted. Ali eventually lost, but not by the direct hand of Muawiya. From within his own camp, dissension occurred. In the year 661, Ali was stabbed to death in the mosque at Kufa by a clansman from within his own camp.[166]

Ali was survived in death by two sons, Hasan and Husayn, both through his wife Fatima, Muhammad's daughter. Hasan succeeded his father as caliph for six months but was forced by Muawiya to cede the caliphate to Muawiya under threat of death.[167] Hasan died a few years later. According to the Shi'ah view, he was poisoned by his wife, who had received a promise of marriage from Yazid, Muawiya's son and successor to Muawiya.[168]

After the death of Muawiya and the ascension of his son Yazid to the caliphate, Husayn attempted to lead an insurrection against Yazid. Husayn

was invited to Kufa by Muslims of Kufa with the intent of Husayn gaining the caliphate from Yazid. Husayn's small force included eighteen of his own family members and another sixty or so followers. Husayn was urged by several surviving companions not to attempt the conquest of Yazid, as his forces were severely outnumbered (Husayn's forces numbered less than 100). Husayn refused this counsel, expecting the people of Kufa to join him in battle. They did not. The battle between the two forces took place at Karbala, in modern-day Iraq, in the year 680 A.D. Husayn's forces were cut off from water for eight days.[169] His tragic death at the hands of troops of Yazid is described as follows:

> With his six-month-old son Ali Asghar in his arms, the Imam (Husayn) cried out to the enemy that as this innocent babe had defiled none, at least he should be spared and a little water given to him to allay his thirst. But the reply was an arrow shot at the child's neck which pinned it to his father's arm After returning the cruelly murdered child to its sorrowing mother's arms, the Imam returned to pay the last of the sacrifice with his own blood. Arrow after arrow followed piercing his body into a sieve until, when the aged Imam fell from his horse his body did not touch the ground but was held off the ground by the arrows that were sticking out of his body. Shamr (one of the Umayyad soldiers) who has earned everlasting shame for himself, after deriding the fallen hero, cut off his head. Ruqaiya, Husayn's young daughter, weeps over the death of her father whose head is then brought into her presence whereupon she falls upon it moaning and sobbing until she, too, dies of sorrow, prostrate over the severed head.[170]

The Battle of Karbala in 680 A.D. is the dividing event in Islamic history between Sunnis and Shi'ahs, the two predominant sects of Islam. The death of Husayn is still remembered today by Shi'ahs in their annual Ashura festival. Shi'ahs commemorate Husayn's martyrdom through flagellation and other acts of personal suffering during a ten-day festival.[171]

Islam is a divided kingdom. Daniel 2:41 prophesies of a divided kingdom. The cloak under which Satan hides is Islam.

The Final Kingdom at Enmity with God Will Combine with One Another in the Seed of Men

Daniel 2:43 states, "They will combine with one another in the seed of men."

Shi'ahs, the minority sect of Islam (10–15 percent), are followers of Ali (literally, "partisans of Ali"). Ali was the closest living male relative of Muhammad at his death. Bloodlines matter to Shi'ahs. Through them, true religious guidance is determined:

> The focal point of Shiism is the source of religious guidance after the Prophet; although the Sunnis accept it from the "sahabah" (companions) of the Prophet, the Shi'ah restrict it to the members of the "ahl al-bayt" (the people of the house of Ali).[172]

The Shi'ah recognize only blood descendants of Ali as the true "source of religious guidance" after Muhammad's death. Shi'ahs believe Muhammad actually chose Ali to be his successor prior to his death, a fact Sunnis do not accept. To Shi'ahs, Ali was the rightful successor to Muhammad by virtue of his being chosen by Muhammad and his being the closest blood descendant to Muhammad. Describing Shi'ah Islam, *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* states:

> The Quran describes the prophets as particularly concerned with ensuring that the special favor of God bestowed on them for the guidance of people be maintained in their families and be inherited by their descendants. Thus, Abraham prays to God to continue his guidance and special favor in his (Abraham's) descendants so that His divine purposes would continue to be fulfilled. The Quran refers to prophetic progeny with four key terms: "dhurriyah" (direct descendant), "al" (offspring; house, dynasty), "ahl" (family, progeny), and "qurba" (relation, nearest of kin). When these words are used with reference to the Prophet, the commentators of the Quran have interpreted them as meaning Muhammad's nearest of kin: his cousin and son-in-law Ali, his daughter Fatimah, and their sons Hasan and Husayn. The Shi'ah also extend the status of "ahl al-bayt" to the descendants of Hasan and Husayn.[173]

For Shi'ahs, the rightful successor (referred to as "Imam" by Shi'ahs[174]) to Muhammad had to meet two criteria to be considered legitimate. First, he had to be a male blood descendant of Ali and his wife Fatima ("ahl al-baht," literally, "people of the house of Ali").[175] Second, he must have been "designated" ("nass"), i.e., "named," by the predecessor Imam before the predecessor's death. This appointment is considered by Shi'ahs to be a divine appointment by Allah, revealed to the predecessor Imam.[176] This means that divine authority, as Imam (successor), is passed from father to son by the father's designation[177] (as opposed to elected by consensus as is the case for the caliph in Sunni Islam[178]). Shi'ahs consider their Imam to be an infallible, sinless, spiritual guide by virtue of the bloodline of Muhammad passed from one Imam to the next. Shi'ahs, therefore, combine with one another by virtue of their belief that the only true source of divine guidance comes through the bloodline of Muhammad passed through Ali and Fatima and their descendants thereafter.

The phrase "combine with one another in the seed of men" (Dan. 2:43) refers to this distinguishing requirement for Shiism, i.e., guidance comes only through the "ahl al-bayt," the people of the house of Ali, the bloodline of Muhammad. To combine in the seed of men parallels the Shi'ah belief that legitimate leadership requires a blood relationship to Muhammad, and only the descendants of Ali and Fatimah qualify.

Islam "combines with one another in the seed of men." Daniel 2:43 prophesies of a kingdom that will combine similarly. The cloak under which Satan hides is Islam. This identifier is very important. It not only points to Islam but also to a sect within Islam that will rise up in the last days to fulfill biblical prophecy: Shi'ah Islam.

The Final Kingdom at Enmity with God will Not adhere to One Another

Daniel 2:43 states, "But they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery."

The three main branches of Shiism are:

> There are three main branches of Shias today: the Zaydis, the Ismailis (Seveners), and the Ithna Asharis (Twelvers or Imamis). The Zaydis (followers of Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn) are located in Yemen, Iraq, and parts of Africa. They represent the activist groups who believe that the imam ought to fight for his rights and be a ruler of state. The Ismailis (Seveners) are named after the seventh imam, Ismail. They founded the Fatimid Empire (909–1171) and represent esoteric Shiism. The Ithna Asharis (Twelvers or Imamis) are the largest and most moderate group.[179]

Each of these three branches of Shiism, i.e., Fivers, Seveners, and Twelvers, are separate branches. The most predominant difference among them is their disagreement on who the legitimate Imam really is. Throughout Islamic history, Sunnis have persecuted Shi'ahs, particularly the leaders of Shiism, because Sunni caliphs saw Shi'ah Imams as a potential threat to their leadership. Blood relationship to Muhammad served an almost mythical characteristic for leadership, so much so that Shi'ah Imams were murdered for no other reason than this characteristic. This resulted in constant persecution and untimely death for many of the Shi'ah Imams. As stated, in Shiism, the living Imam is required to designate ("nass") his successor prior to his death. Sunni persecution of Shi'ah Imams resulted in some of the Imams not being able to designate the next Imam because of their unexpected death at the hands of Sunnis. The different branches in Shiism reflect the fact that the surviving Shi'ahs could not agree on who the legitimate Imam should be.

"Seveners" or "Ismailis" (the second largest sect of Shi'ahs) consider Ismail, the elder son of Ja'far, to be the rightful successor as sixth Imam. However, Ismail died before his father's death, and Seveners believe that Ismail's son, Muhammad bin Ismail, should be the rightful seventh Imam. Hence their name, "Seveners." Twelvers believe that Ja'far designated his younger son, Musa, as the seventh Imam and that the true line is through Musa not Ismail, believing that Ismail died before he was designated by his father. Twelvers continue the line of Imams through Muhammad ibn Hasan, the twelfth Imam, who disappeared in 874 A.D. Twelvers believe that the twelfth Imam is in hiding (occultation) and is still alive. They believe he will "rise" in the last days as a Messianic leader called "al-Mahdi" and will bring peace and justice to the world.[180] (Sunnis also believe in al-Mahdi, but they have a different perspective than that of Twelvers. We will discuss both beliefs in a future chapter). Shi'ah Islam also includes a major branch known as "Zaydis" ("Fivers"). "The Zaydis favored Zayd ibn Ali, grandson of Husayn, as fifth imam due to his activist revolutionary position against the Umayyad dynasty."[181]

To summarize the major Shi'ah branches, Twelvers (primarily located in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Kuwait) agree on a line of twelve divinely appointed, infallible individuals who are legitimate Shi'ah Imams. Seveners ("Ismailis," located in Egypt, North Africa) agree on a line of seven divinely appointed, infallible, individuals who are legitimate Shi'ah Imams, and it is similar for Fivers (located in Yemen, Iraq, and parts of Africa).[182] None of these Shi'ah branches consider the other Shi'ah branches' Imams as legitimate. To illustrate the inability of the groups to agree or unite, a Twelver prophecy holds that when al-Mahdi rises, he will issue an order to have all Shi'ahs of the Fiver branch killed.[183]

Muslims, particularly Shi'ahs, do not adhere to one another. Daniel 2:43 prophesies of a kingdom "that will not adhere to one another." Once again, the cloak under which Satan hides is Islam.

The Final Kingdom at Enmity with God will Be Composed of Both Strong and Brittle (Weak) Parts

For most of us, our understanding of Islam is limited to what we see on our television sets. We see sectarian violence almost without end. One day it is the Sunnis against Shi'ahs. The next day it is Shi'ahs against Sunnis. Neither side seems to gain the upper hand, and everyone seems to hate the West. With this jaded view of Islam, we could quite easily miss the characteristic being described in verse Daniel 2:42, "Some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle" (weak). Yet, this is precisely the historical situation for Islam. The Sunni sect is by far the larger, stronger, more powerful sect, and it has been since the beginning of Islamic history

(they comprise 90 percent of Muslims). The dividing point of the two sects has already been discussed: the Battle of Karbala in October, 680 A.D. But this victory by Sunnis over Shi'ahs did little to stop Sunni violence against the weaker sect; and history did not change which sect would remain the victor. Sunnis have always been the victor, and they have always seen Shi'ahs as unbelievers whom they have blamed for problems experienced by the ruling majority sect. Consider this quote from author Vali Nasr:

> To the Sunni majority, (Shi'ahs) increasingly looked like an errant interpretation of Islam, mistakenly bestowing larger than life importance on the progeny of Ali … The fear that the Shi'ah Imams instilled in the caliphs resulted, not surprisingly, in persecution. … The Umayyads [Sunni] caliphs … and the Abbasids (750–1228), who ruled from Baghdad, imprisoned and killed Shi'ah imams. … When in 971 C.E., Roman forces attacked the Abbasid domain, the first response of the caliph's forces … was to blame the Shi'ah. Shi'ah houses in al-Karkh (in today's Iraq)—which had become a refuge for Shi'ahs who escaped persecution in Bagdad—were torched as the attackers chanted, "You [Shi'ahs] are the cause of all evil." … By the middle of the eleventh century, persecuting the Shi'ah of al-Karkh had become a custom; every Saturday, Sunni mobs would show up at Shi'ah mosques and shrines before looting the town, saying, "You blasphemers! Convert to Islam!"[184]

In more recent history, the dominance of the Sunni sect can be seen in the powerful Wahhabi sect of Sunni Islam. (The Final Report of the 9/11 Commission attributed the "inspiration" of Islamic terrorism to the founders of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia.[185]) Author Stephen Schwartz describes the origin of the House of Saud and the Wahhabis of Sunni Islam in this observation:

> In 1792, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab died, and Abd al-Aziz took over the leadership of the Wahhabi-Saudi alliance, extending their raiding over the next three years to Medina, Syria, and Iraq. These campaigns saw mass murder and rape of Shi'a Muslims as well as adherents of the Hanafi and other legal schools rejected by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. The Wahhabis [Sunnis] had an extraordinary hatred of Shi`ism, which became an early target of their violence … Whatever its source, bile against the Shi'as has remained a constant throughout Wahhabi-Saudi history.[186]

Shi'ahs throughout their history have been forced into quietist roles in order to survive the persecution by the stronger Sunnis. Shi'ahs even went so far as to formulate a doctrine called "taqiyyah," which allows them to conceal their Shi'ah identity from Sunnis to protect their lives. This doctrine allows the deliberate "concealing or disguising [of] one's beliefs, convictions, ideas, feelings, opinions, and/or strategies at a time of imminent danger, whether now or later in time, to save oneself from physical and/or mental injury."[187]

Islam has a strong sect and a weak sect. Daniel 2:42 prophesies of a kingdom in the last days that will have a strong part and a weak part. The cloak of Satan has once again been identified in Islam. Shi'ahs are the weak part. Sunnis are the strong. In the last days, it will be the Shi'ahs that distinguish themselves, not the Sunnis.

Here are the identifiers of Islam that are prophesied by Daniel 2:

1. The kingdom will be a divided kingdom. Sunnis and Shi'ahs are the two predominant sects in a divided Islam.
2. The kingdom will combine with one another in the seed of men. Shi'ah Islam combines in the seed of men ("*ahl al-bayt*," the "people of the house of Ali").
3. The divided kingdom will not adhere to one another. Sunnis and Shi'ahs do not adhere to one another; Shi'ahs adhere to other Shi'ahs even less. Seveners, Fivers, and Twelvers are the three predominant branches of Shi'ah Islam, none of which considers the Imams of the others to be legitimate.
4. The divided kingdom will be composed of strong and weak parts. Islam's strong sect is the Sunni sect. Its weak sect is the Shi'ah sect.

The Prophecy of Daniel 7: Daniel's Dream

The book of Daniel moves us forward to our next important prophecy—this one from the seventh chapter. It is not the king who has a dream, but Daniel, who receives a night vision. It is now the first year of King Belshazzar (553 B.C.) of Babylon (see Dan. 7:1). Daniel observes four great beasts coming out of the sea. The first beast is a lion with wings of an eagle (see 7:4). The second beast is a bear. It is raised up on one side, and three ribs are in its mouth (7:5). The third beast is a leopard. It has four wings like a bird and four heads (see 7:6). Daniel continues looking, and a fourth beast appears, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong. It has large, iron teeth. It devours, crushes, and tramples down the remaining beasts with its feet. It is different from all the beasts before it (see 7:7).

While Daniel is thinking about the vision, another horn, a little one, comes up among the ten, and three of the ten horns are pulled out by the roots. This little horn possesses eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts (see 7:8). As Daniel continues to look, that horn overpowers the saints; even the entire world becomes subject to his dominion (see 7:21, 23). Daniel continues to look until thrones are set up. The Ancient of Days takes his seat on the throne, and books are opened (see 7:9–10). The fourth beast is slain, and its body is destroyed and given to the burning fire (see 7:11).

Who is the fourth beast? What empire does he lead? Is the fourth beast the same kingdom as the fourth part of Nebuchadnezzar's statue from Daniel 2, i.e., Rome? Are the first three beasts of Daniel 7 the same three kingdoms of Daniel 2? That is, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and the Greeks?

The prevailing and traditional view is that the four beasts of Daniel 7 represent the same four kingdoms of Daniel 2, each the chronological victor over the prior in history.[188] Stephen R. Miller sums up this traditional view as follows:

> What do these four animals from the sea represent? In V. 17 the angel explains that they symbolize "four kingdoms" that will rise from the earth ("sea"). They are the same empires represented by the statue's four parts in chap. 2. Daniel 7 merely provides more detailed information concerning them.[189]

For a thorough review of the traditional interpretation, see Stephen Miller and the sources quoted there. This writer concurs that the first three beasts are properly interpreted as Babylon, Medo-Persia, and the Greeks. It is the fourth that does not follow the traditional view; the fourth is not Rome, but Islam, the final kingdom, the kingdom represented by the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's statue in Daniel 2.

The Ten Horns Are Symbolic of Ten Leaders

The fourth beast has ten horns. The ten horns are a metaphor for ten kings (see Dan. 7:24). When a horn of a beast is symbolic of a king, this does not mean that the particular leader is literally a "king." Rather, the horn is symbolic of a leader that we might liken or compare to a king of a kingdom. Also, the king and the kingdom he leads are often used interchangeably in prophetic scriptures. That is, the kingdom is the embodiment of the king that leads it. For example, in Daniel 7:17, the text tells us that the four beasts are symbolic of four kings, and in Daniel 7:23, the text tells us the fourth beast is a fourth kingdom.

Here is an interesting fact about these ten leaders: they all reign at the same time.[190] We know this because all ten horns are present on the fourth beast when Daniel first views the beast. They do not come up one after the other as one might expect if the leaders were successive in their leadership.[191]

According to a hadith or "narration" of Muhammad as reported by his followers, Muhammad is said to have promised Paradise to ten of his earliest, closest, and most important leaders (called "Companions").[192] These "Ten Promised Paradise" were the highest group of followers, comprising the *Sahaba,* those who had seen Muhammad and interacted with him in some way during his life.[193] This eminent group of ten were said to be Muhammad's closest followers, who kept frequent company with him and

strove to assimilate his teachings.[194] Upon Muhammad's death in 632 A.D., this group elected Muhammad's successor (caliph), and when a caliph died, this group chose the next successor. From these ten leaders, the first four caliphs of Islam were named: Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (632–634 A.D.; hereafter, "Abu Bakr"), Umar ibn al-Khattab (634–644; hereafter, "Umar"), Uthman ibn Affan (644–656; hereafter, "Uthman"), and Ali ibn Abi Talib (656–661). All of these ten were alive at the same time. The first four of this group, all of whom were chosen as caliphs, are known by Sunnis as the "Rightly Guided Caliphs" because they "followed the right path" ("*Rashidun*").[195] All of these leaders were from the Quraysh clan, the clan of Muhammad.

The ten horns of Daniel 7:7 represent Muhammad's Companions, known as the "Ten Promised Paradise." They are the ten leaders of Islam who surrounded Muhammad until his death in 632 A.D. and thereafter, served as Islam's leadership, responsible for appointing Islam's caliphs and recalling the apostates through the Ridda wars.

It just so happens that the fourth beast also has ten horns. Coincidence? Only if it stood alone in the characteristics of the fourth beast. It does not.

The cloak of Satan has, once again, been identified in Islam. Ten leaders led Islam in its earliest days as a kingdom.

The Fourth Beast Is at Enmity with God

The fourth beast of Daniel 7 has a characteristic found in many of the metaphors of the last days. He symbolizes a kingdom that will be at enmity with God in the last of the tribulation period (see Dan. 7:21, 25). We found this same characteristic present for the feet (and toes) of the statue of Daniel 2. In addition, the fourth and final beast commits blasphemy against God and His kingdom, a characteristic found in last days Bible prophecy to represent a kingdom at enmity with God (see Dan. 7:20, 25).

The Fourth Beast at Enmity with God Will Be Different from the Prior Three Beasts

Daniel 7:7 states, "And it was different from all the beasts that were before it."

The text gives us an important criteria that must be met by the fourth kingdom: the kingdom is different from all the kingdoms before it. Scholars have offered little explanation of the meaning of "different" other than to suggest this beast will be extraordinarily violent, and somehow, its violence will distinguish it from the prior three kingdoms.[196] If the Ancient Roman Empire is the fourth beast, how is it that this empire is somehow more violent than those preceding it, i.e., Babylon, Medo-Persia, or the Greeks? The Greeks

were the only one of the three kingdoms that Rome actually defeated, and neither Babylon nor Medo-Persia were in dominion in the time of Roman conquest. So how could one conclude that Rome was different by virtue of its inflicted level of violence on the prior three kingdoms, particularly to the point that this level of violence distinguished it among the three other kingdoms?

The Greeks were led in their military conquests by Alexander the Great. Consider this brief quote of his military exploits, which is offered only to remind us of the basis upon which Alexander and his Greeks are remembered in history:

> He was one of the most successful military commanders in history, and was undefeated in battle. By the time of his death, he had conquered most of the world known to the ancient Greeks.[197]

At the time of Roman conquest, Alexander's empire had been split into four different parts, each led by a general of Alexander's army. Nevertheless, the Greeks that survived Alexander's death could hardly be described as less violent than the Romans that defeated them. The presence or absence of violence does not seem to be a distinguishing factor for any of the four kingdoms, including the Ancient Roman Empire. They were all violent.

Suppose we add a fifth empire to the group, Islam. What is different about Islam from all the other kingdoms?

Islam, alone, is first and foremost a religious empire. It is different from Rome, the Greeks, Medo-Persia, and Babylon. As a religious empire, Islam is distinguished from the others. This difference is supported by the text, which gives us a further clue about the meaning of "different." Daniel 7:21 states, "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them." The enemy of the fourth beast is the saints. The saints are a religion, not a political empire. The most likely conclusion, then, is that the fourth beast must also be a religious empire. In this factor, Islam is different from all those kingdoms that preceded it. Islam has once again been identified in prophetic scriptures.

A Little Horn Comes Up Among the Ten Horns and Pulls Three Out by the Roots

Daniel 7:8 states, "Behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it."

Here is what the verse means: A leader considered "little" by the others will arise after the original ten kings. This little one will usurp three prior kings. It will be as if they did not exist, for the text tells us that he will pull out three of the ten by the roots.

The Companions of Muhammad included Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, who was married to Muhammad's daughter, Fatima. Ali was the closest surviving male blood relative to Muhammad from among the Companions. When Muhammad died suddenly in 632 A.D., he had not named a successor. The Companions first order of business was to name a successor to their deceased prophet. They chose Abu Bakr, the first convert of Muhammad and a very close friend and follower of Muhammad, rather than Ali, because Ali was *considered too young*. The Companions felt someone of more maturity and leadership skills was the proper choice. Ali was passed over by the Companions two additional times, when Umar was elected caliph in 634 (second caliph, 634–644) and Uthman in 644 (third caliph, 644–656). Ali was finally elected caliph in 656, but he was never accepted as such by all of the Companions.

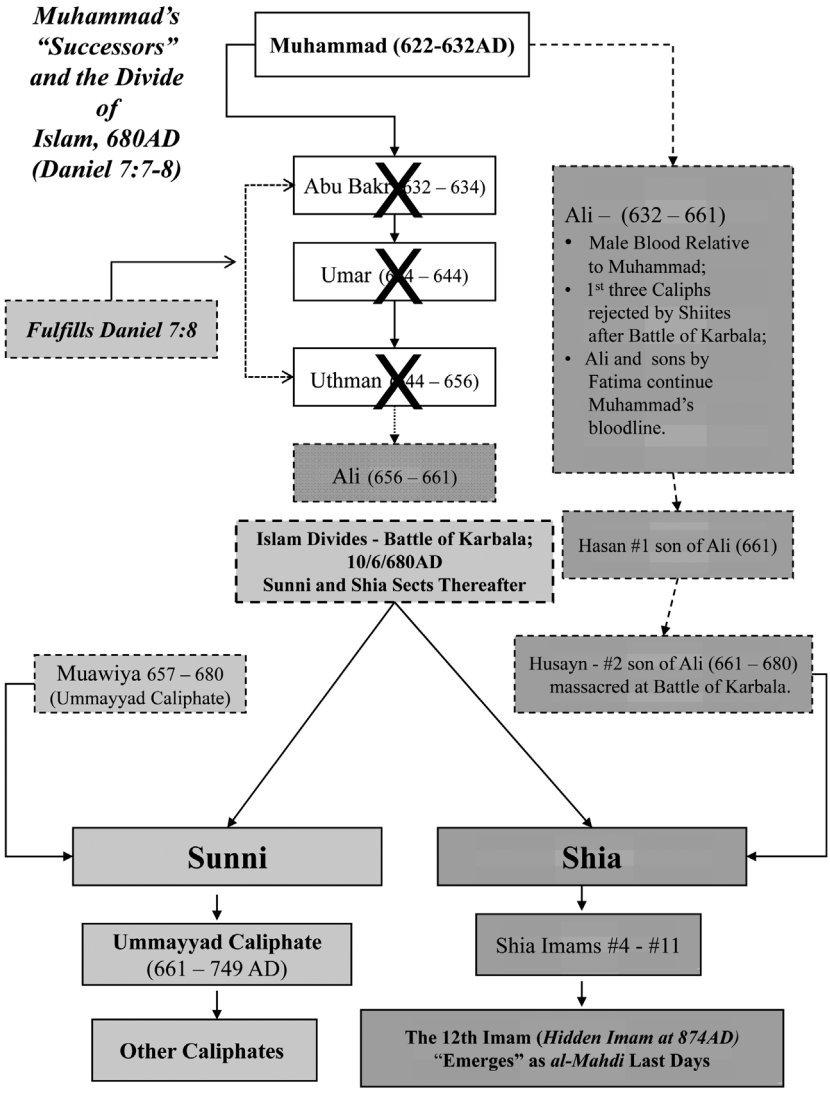
As has been stated, after the Battle of Karbala in 680 A.D., Shi'ahs and Sunnis divided into two sects. From that point on, Ali and his descendants by Fatima, Muhammad's daughter, were considered by Shi'ahs to be the only legitimate successors to Muhammad.[198] Ali was, for Shi'ahs, retroactively made the first successor to Muhammad, effective with Muhammad's death in 632, *thereby eradicating the first three caliphs of Islam for Shi'ahs*. This retroactive appointment by Shi'ahs was made even though Ali was already dead (Ali was assassinated in 661, and the irrevocable divide between Sunnis and Shi'ahs did not occur until 680 at the Battle of Karbala). Shi'ahs literally rewrote their history by electing Ali as the first legitimate successor to Muhammad, followed by Ali's two sons, Hasan and Husayn, as the second and third Imams (successors for Shi'ahs) of Shi'ah Islam. Hasan and Husayn were also already dead at the time of the retroactive election, just as their father had been. (Husayn was killed in the Battle of Karbala,[199] and Hasan was thought to be poisoned before the Battle of Karbala.[200])

The first three caliphs, Abu Bakr (632–634), Umar (634–644), and Uthman (644–651), were originally accepted by all Muslims, but after the Battle of Karbala, when Husayn and his followers were massacred by Sunnis, Shi'ahs no longer considered them legitimate, effective as of Muhammad's death. It was as if they never had been elected because Sunni caliphs never met the conditions of Shi'ahs to be considered legitimate—they were not related by blood to Muhammad and had not been designated by divine word through the prior blood descendant. In fact, Shi'ahs do not accept *any* Sunni caliph as a legitimate successor to Muhammad. The phrase "pulled out by the roots" fulfills what happened historically.

Shi'ahs actually never defeated the Sunnis. They simply annulled the caliphates of the first three caliphs and refused to accept any Sunni leader thereafter as legitimate. See the chart below, "Muhammad's Successors and

the Divide of Islam, 680 A.D.," for a diagram of what happened historically for Islam and its two sects and their leaders.

Islam has, once again, been identified in prophetic scriptures.



Eyes Like the Eyes of a Man and Mouth Uttering Great Boasts

Daniel 7:8 states, "And behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts."

Why does the text tell us this horn has characteristics *like a man*? Consider what the text stated about the first three beasts:

First Beast

Daniel 7:4: "The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle."

Second Beast

Daniel 7:5: "And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear."

Third Beast

Daniel 7:6: "After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard."

In each of the first three beasts, a metaphor is given that likens an animal to the literal empire it represents. The characteristics of the animal are only given to help us identify the empire. The empire is not an animal! We are not trying to find a literal lion, bear, or leopard, but kingdoms that are likened to these animals by their inherent characteristics.

Up until this point, horns represented kings, i.e., they represented the individual leaders of this fourth empire. So why does the text tell us that the little horn is *like* a man, unless the little horn is not a man? That is, the reader is led to postulate that the little horn *appears* to be a man; but don't be fooled, because he is not! He is something other than a man, even though he has characteristics normally possessed by a man.

In Shi'ah Islam, the first three Imams were all dead when they were made Imam. The doctrine of the Imamate formulated at this time by Shi'ahs required a bloodline through Muhammad and a designation for legitimacy. Imams were considered to be divine-like in nature because of the bloodlink to Muhammad and the divine appointment by Allah (as revealed to the predecessor Imam). Shi'ahs consider their Imams to be infallible, sinless, spiritual guides who possessed divine knowledge.[201] Further, Shi'ahs (Twelvers, the majority branch of Shi'ahs) believe this divine-like nature to be continued to the present day through their twelfth Imam, the Hidden Imam, whom Shi'ahs believe went into hiding in the tenth century A.D. Yet, they believe *he still lives*, but is simply hiding. Shi'ahs believe he will return one day as their "long-awaited one," the "Mahdi."

Shi'ah Islam's first three successors to Muhammad were "like a man," but not a man. The successors to the first three Imams took on a divine-like nature, which continues through the present day to the twelfth Imam, the Hidden Imam, who will rise in the last days with the name al-Mahdi. The Mahdi is also "like a man," but not a man. How could he be a man if he is still alive after 1,200 years? As we will see in future chapters, the Mahdi is the Antichrist. He will one day indwell the body of a human being, who is prophesied by the Bible to unite Islam within itself and then take dominion of the world. He will be a spiritual being of Satan, incarnate in human flesh.

Islam has, once again, been identified in prophetic scriptures.

The Fourth Beast at Enmity with God Will Be Exceedingly Violent

Daniel 7:7 states, "… and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet."

The violent nature of the fourth beast has been one of the characteristics linking the Ancient Roman Empire with this beast.[202] As we have stated, Rome does fulfill this characteristic, however, so do the preceding empires—they were all violent.

We must consider other Bible prophecies to help identify the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Genesis 16:11 and 12 includes a prophecy relevant to the last days. It states:

> And you shall call his name Ishmael … He will be a wild donkey of a man,
> His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him;
> And he will live to the east of all his brothers.

Islam considers Ishmael to be the rightful blessed son of Abraham. Islam considers Ishmael to be Abraham's intended sacrifice on the altar, not Isaac, who is the father of the Jewish nation.[203] The significance of Ishmael to Islam is that Muhammad claims his bloodline through Ishmael.[204] Biblically, Ishmael is prophesied to have his "hand against everyone." This prophecy has proven itself true with Islam.

A similar prophecy is found in Psalm 120:5–7: "Woe is me, for I sojourn in Meshech, For I dwell among the tents of Kedar! Too long has my soul had its dwelling with those who hate peace. I am for peace, but when I speak, They are for war." Kedar was the second son of Ishmael (see Gen. 25:13). His heirs have fulfilled the prophecy of hating peace and loving war. Consider also, the various references in Daniel's prophecy to iron or metal (Dan. 2:40–42; 7:19). Notably, Islam refers to itself as the "religion of the sword"

and Muhammad as the "Prophet of the Sword."[205] *Oxford's Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* provides the following for the "sword verses":

> Muslim tradition describes several different verses of the Quran as the "sword verse" (usually given in the Arabic singular "ayat al-sayft"). These include Quran 9:5, the verse most commonly designated the sword verse par excellence, because it is believed to contain the command revealed by God and because it proclaimed at the pilgrimage of the year 631 C.E. that polytheism would henceforth be proscribed and that all Arabian polytheists, at least, would henceforth be required to embrace Islam. Verses 2:191, 193; 4:89, 91; 8:39; 9:29, 36, 73, 123; and 66:9 all likewise appear to mandate an unlimited military struggle until the superiority of Islam is acknowledged, either by submission to a tax in the case of followers of organized scriptural religions (9:29), or by adoption of Islam in the case of the Arabian polytheists.[206]

Revelation 20:4 states, "Then I saw thrones … and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God." This verse references the war of Revelation 12 that is between the Dragon (Satan) and those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus" (12:17). Note: The text specifically refers to those who have been beheaded. Beheading is a primary means of execution used by Islam throughout its history.

Consider Islamic history:

> The practice of beheading non-Muslim captives extends back to the Prophet himself. Ibn Ishaq (d. 768 C.E.), the earliest biographer of Muhammad, is recorded as saying that the Prophet ordered the execution by decapitation of 700 men of the Jewish Banu Qurayza tribe in Medina for allegedly plotting against him. Islamic leaders from Muhammad's time until today have followed his model. Examples of decapitation, of both the living and the dead, in Islamic history are myriad. Yusuf b. Tashfin (d. 1106) led the Al-Murabit (Almoravid) Empire to conquer from western Sahara to central Spain. After the battle of Zallaqa in 1086, he had 24,000 corpses of the defeated Castilians beheaded "and piled them up to make a sort of minaret for the muezzins who, standing on the piles of headless cadavers, sang the praises of Allah." He then had the detached heads sent to all the major cities of North Africa and Spain as an example of Christian impotence. … The Ottoman Empire was the decapitation state par excellence. Upon the Ottoman victory over Christian Serbs at the battle of Kosovo in 1389, the Muslim army beheaded the Serbian king and scores of Christian prisoners. At the battle of Varna in 1444, the Ottomans beheaded King Ladislaus of Hungary and "put his head at the tip of a long pike … and brandished it toward the Poles and Hungarians." Upon the fall of Constantinople, the Ottomans sent the head of the dead Byzantine emperor on tour to major cities in the sultan's domains. The Ottomans even beheaded at least one

> Eastern Orthodox patriarch. In 1456, the sultan allowed the grand mufti of the empire to personally decapitate King Stephen of Bosnia and his sons—even though they had surrendered and, seven decades later, the sultan ordered 2,000 Hungarian prisoners beheaded. In the early nineteenth century, even the British fell victim to the Ottoman scimitar. An 1807 British expedition to Egypt resulted in "a few hundred spiked British heads left rotting in the sun outside Rosetta."[207]

The practice of beheading has continued to modern times. We can see this through the death sentences seen on television sets and broadcast by Al-Jazeera, one of Islam's satellite TV stations. Witness the February, 2002, decapitation of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl:

> The (Daniel Pearl) murder and video catalyzed the resurgence of this historical Islamic practice. In Iraq, terrorists filmed the beheadings of Americans Nicholas Berg, Jack Hensley, and Eugene Armstrong … Scores of Iraqis, both Kurds and Arabs, have also fallen victim to Islamist terrorist's knives. The new fad in terrorist brutality has extended to Saudi Arabia where Islamist terrorists murdered American businessman Paul Johnson, whose head was later discovered in a freezer in an Al-Qaeda hideout. A variation upon this theme would be the practice of Islamists slitting the throats of those opponents they label infidels. This is what happened to Dutch film maker Theo Van Gogh, first gunned down and then mutilated on an Amsterdam street, and to an Egyptian Coptic family in New Jersey after the father angered Islamists with Internet chat room criticisms of Islam.[208]

In fact, the seal and national flag of many Muslim countries includes a sword.[209] Muhammad, on his death bed, is reported to have made this statement: "Two religions should not co-exist on the Arabian Peninsula."[210]

In 640 A.D., Caliph Umar, the second caliph of Islam after its prophet, invoked the desire of the prophet upon both Jews and Christians of the Arabian Peninsula: he expelled them from the Arabian Peninsula.[211] Thereafter, uninvited Christians or Jews were not allowed to step foot on the Arabian Peninsula—except under penalty of death.

The words of the late Osama bin Laden drew directly from the Qur'an as he stated in a message to Muslims in Iraq:

> May the words of God Almighty stay in your mind: "A prophet should not take prisoners until he has ensured his dominance in the land" (Qur'an 8:67). And "When you meet the disbelievers in battle, strike them in the necks" (Qur'an 47:4). Your reprimand to the Crusaders should be just as the poet said: "All there is between you and me is the piercing of kidneys and smiting of necks."[212]

We have mentioned Shi'ah Islam's prophecy that the Hidden Imam will return at a time of world chaos to restore peace and justice. Shi'ah Islam's prophecy is that the Hidden Imam will rise as al-Mahdi, who will subdue the world and convert it to Islam. He is referred to in Shi'ah prophecy as the "Master of the Sword." The Mahdi, as Master of the Sword, will use his weapon to bring Islam under one banner and the world under Islam. Shi'ahs believe he will do so without mercy:

> Al-Baqir is reported to have said, "I can see your religion mixed with blood … However, al-Qa'im [the Mahdi] will not follow the Prophet's example of gentleness and flexibility and winning over the people by uniting them; … He will also not follow the example of 'Ali, who adopted the path of forgiveness and benevolence in his dealings with the people, … His state of affairs will be the sword. …"[213]
>
> Groups such as Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi's Al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad (Unity and Jihad) and Abu 'Abd Allah al-Hasan bin Mahmud's Ansar al-Sunna (Defenders of [Prophetic] Tradition) justify the decapitation of prisoners with Qur'anic scripture. Surah (chapter) 47 contains the "ayah" (verse): "When you encounter the unbelievers on the battlefield, strike off their heads until you have crushed them completely; then bind the prisoners tightly." The Qur'anic Arabic terms are generally straightforward: "kafaru" means "those who blaspheme/are irreligious," although "Darb ar-riqab" is less clear. "Darb" can mean "striking or hitting" while "ar-riqab" translates to "necks, slaves, persons." With little variation, scholars have translated the verse as, "When you meet the unbelievers, smite their necks."[214]

Islam is an exceedingly violent kingdom. So the fourth beast is prophesied to be. Islam has, once again, been identified in prophetic scriptures.

The Remainder that Is Trampled and Crushed

Daniel 7:7 states, "It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet."

What kingdom is known historically to have "trampled down the remainder" kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and the Greeks, as well as the successor kingdom to the Greeks, the Ancient Roman Empire?

The Greeks defeated and absorbed Medo-Persia and Babylon in 331 B.C., led by Alexander the Great. Upon Alexander's death in 323 B.C., his kingdom was divided into four parts.[215] By the first century B.C., the Romans had succeeded the Greeks. The Ancient Roman Empire defeated the Greeks in 146 B.C. and absorbed what remained of the Greeks, Medo-Persia, and Babylon. The Ancient Roman Empire flourished through the second century but then began to wane in its power and influence. By the fifth century A.D., Germanic

invaders were successful in their conquest against the once powerful Empire. The Roman Emperor Romulus Augustus was deposed in 476 A.D., officially ending the Western Roman Empire.[216]

The Germanic peoples that led to the collapse of the Empire settled in the lands formerly occupied by the Ancient Roman Empire and eventually became Christianized.[217] While the Western Empire collapsed, the Eastern Roman Empire (the Byzantine Empire) made modest advances. The emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, Justinian (525–567), rebuilt Constantinople restoring it to its grandeur under Constantine's reign. By the seventh century, the Byzantine Empire (Romans) included what remained of the Western Empire in Palestine, modern-day Turkey and Greece. The Byzantine Empire (the Eastern Roman Empire) never succeeded in bringing the Persians under their dominion.[218]

The Persian Empire in the third through seventh centuries (226–637) were the Sassanids. The Sassanid Empire was founded by Ardashir I, who defeated the last Parthian leader, Artabanus IV.[219] The Parthian empire was led by the Arsacid dynasty, which reunited and ruled over the Iranian plateau, after defeating the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire, beginning in the late third century A.D., and intermittently controlled Mesopotamia between 150 B.C. and 224 A.D.[220]

Thus, in the early seventh century A.D., the "remainder" of the world empires once under the dominion of the Babylonians, Medo-Persians, and Greeks was then controlled by two world empires: the Byzantines (what remained of Rome in the West and the Eastern Empire) and the Persians (the Sassanids). Their world territories extended from North Africa through Palestine, Iran, Iraq, modern-day Turkey, and Greece.

What happened to the Greeks and specifically modern-day Turkey, the modern-day location of all seven of the churches of Revelation? As we will see in a future chapter, the Ottoman Turks defeated Constantinople in 1453 A.D., thereby cutting off the entire Middle East from the kingdom of Jesus Christ. All of modern-day Turkey, Iran, Iraq, the Middle East, North Africa, and Saudi Arabia is now populated by one or more sects of Islam.

What kingdom ultimately had dominion over the remainder of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and the Greeks? The Islamic kingdom. Daniel 7:7 is, in fact, uniquely fulfilled by Islam. What about the Ancient Roman Empire? The Ancient Roman Empire is interpreted by many to be this fourth kingdom. However, Rome never defeated the Sassanid Persians.

Islam has, once again, been identified in prophetic scriptures.

The Feet that Trample the Remainder

Daniel 7:7 states, "And [the beast] trampled down the remainder with its feet." Why feet? In an earlier verse, the text told us that the lion was "made

to stand … like a man" (Dan. 7:4). This referred to Nebuchadnezzar, who, in the latter part of his reign, became insane and then was restored mentally by God to continue his reign (see Dan. 4). Likewise, the bear had three ribs in its teeth, interpreted to be Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, the three kingdoms defeated historically by Medo-Persia (see 7:5). Finally, the leopard had four heads, interpreted to be the four generals of Alexander who replaced him at his death amid the division of his kingdom into four parts (see 7:6). Each of these added details are in the text for a reason. They are all clues to tell us the identity of the beast in each metaphor and the kingdom symbolized in the metaphor. The interesting thing about Daniel 7's fourth beast is this is the only time the word "feet" is used (7:19 repeats this verse)! So, then, if the trampling is by the feet, there is meaning.

The "feet" are defined for us by Daniel 2! We interpreted the "feet of iron and clay" to be a divided Islam. In the last days, that is the final kingdom. In Daniel 7:7, we see the feet again; both prophecies use the same metaphor because both prophecies are pointing to Islam, the last kingdom that succeeds those prior. It is not talking about the fourth in chronological terms, i.e., Rome, but the last is symbolized by the feet, which must be Islam.

Islam has, once again, been identified in prophetic scriptures.

A Leader Will Arise in the Last Days Who Will Be Different from Prior Leaders. He will Appear Larger than His Associates.

We move now to the latter period of Daniel's vision. The phrase, "I kept looking," alerts the reader that time has passed in Daniel's vision (Dan. 7:13). A key figure rises from within the fourth kingdom in the latter period of human history. He is referred to as the "other horn" (Dan. 7:20).

The "other horn" of Daniel 7:20 is not the same horn as the "little" horn of Daniel 7:8. The two horns are described differently, and they arise in different periods. First, Daniel 7:20 tells us that the "other horn" is "larger" in appearance than its associates, and 7:8 tells us that the horn in the earlier period was the "little one." Second, Daniel 7:24 tells us that the "other horn" is "different" from the ten horns, and Daniel 7:8 tells us that the fourth beast is "different" (from the three other beasts), not the little horn. Third, Daniel 7:24 tells us that the little horn will "subdue" three horns from the ten horns. Yet, Daniel 7:8 tells us that three of the ten horns were "pulled out by the roots" by the little horn. To "subdue" has a different meaning than to "uproot." To "subdue" means to defeat. It is translated from the Hebrew word *shephel*, meaning "to humble or make low."[221] To "uproot" means to "pull out by the roots" and is translated from the Hebrew word *aqar*.[222] How can these two verses be referring to the same individual, the same "little horn"? They don't!

The two passages are referring to two different individuals and two different time periods of Islamic history. Verses 7–8 are referring to one individual—Ali, the first Imam of Shiism and the sect of Islam from which he was Imam, i.e., Shiism, in its beginning history. The purpose of Daniel 7:21–26 is different than that of 7:7–8. These verses do not refer to the beginning history of Shiism, but to the latter period, the time known as the tribulation period. This latter period occurs just prior to the second coming of Christ, as inferred by Daniel 7:26, which prophesies of the coming judgment of the other horn following his having worn down the saints for a "time, times and half a time" (see Dan. 7:25). At this time, "another" (verse 7:24) will rise from Shiism. This one will be different than all his associates. He will be "larger in appearance" (Dan. 7:20), not because he is bigger, but because he will do things no human being can do. He will be Satan incarnate, endowed with supernatural qualities. In Islam, he is al-Mahdi, Shi'ah Islam's prophesied leader, who will "rise" at a time of world chaos to avenge Sunni wrongs against Shi'ahs and to subject the world to the law of the Qur'an and the Hadith (the traditions and sayings of Muhammad) of Islam. Here is a modern-day quote from one of his most ardent followers.

> **Ahmadinejad Criticized for Saying Long-Ago Imam Mahdi Leads Iran**, By Thomas Erdbrink, Washington Post Foreign Service, Thursday, May 8, 2008; A13
>
> TEHRAN, May 7—Several leading Iranian clerics criticized President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Wednesday for saying that the last imam of Shiite Islam, a messianic figure who Shiites believe was hidden by God 1,140 years ago, leads modern-day Iran. "We see his hand directing all the affairs of the country," Ahmadinejad told theological students in the city of Mashad. … "A movement has started for us to occupy ourselves with our global responsibilities. God willing, Iran will be the axis of the leadership of this movement," Ahmadinejad said. … The belief in the coming of the Mahdi is deep-rooted among Iranians. Every Tuesday night, the predicted evening of his arrival, thousands of Iranians gather at the shrine of Jamkaran in the city of Qum. They write wishes on pieces of paper and throw them in a well where the imam is supposed to have appeared.[223]

This one will be the biblical Antichrist. We will look at the biblical prophecies of his coming in the chapter entitled *Islam's al-Mahdi, the Biblical Antichrist*. He is prophesied biblically to possess supernatural qualities, and he will lead a false religion, i.e., Islam, to "wear down the saints" (Dan. 7:25), to "devour the whole earth, and tread it down and crush it" (Dan. 7:23). He is the other horn, who is different from all his associates. He is different because he is demonic, yet in human form.

Islam has, once again, been identified in a prophetic scripture, a very important one!



Jamkaran Mosque, Qom, Iran
(Courtesy of Mahdiwatch.org)

The Fourth Kingdom Will Speak Out Against the Most High

Daniel 7:8, 25 states, "And behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts … 'He will speak out against the Most High.'"

Another word the Bible uses to describe speaking out against the Most High is "blasphemy." It is used in many of the Bible's passages about the last days, each of which describes an end-times Beast that will rise up against God and His people and speak out against God and His Christ. *Easton's Bible Dictionary* defines blasphemy:

> In the sense of speaking evil of God, this word is found in Psalm 74:18, Isaiah 52:5, Romans 2:24, Revelation 13:1, 6, 16:9, 11, 21 … They who deny his Messiahship blaspheme Jesus, Luke 22:65, John 10:36. … Others

> regard the expression as designating the sin of attributing to the power of Satan those miracles which Christ performed, or generally those works which are the result of the Spirit's agency.[224]

Allah, the god of Islam, is known by ninety-nine names collectively. Those are called the "Divine Names" or "the Most Beautiful Names" (Qur'an 7:179). The names are divided into Names of the Essence, Names of the Qualities, Names of Majesty, and Names of Beauty. The name "Allah" is called the Supreme Name, and it stands alone. A Hadith states, "To Allah belong the ninety-nine Names …"[225]

We have said that blasphemy occurs when one identifies himself as equal with God or attempts to take credit for what only God can do. Listed below are some of the ninety-nine names that the Qur'an ascribes to Allah; listed beside them is the biblical reference wherein the term is applied to God.

1. The first, the last: Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 22:13
2. Holy One: Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 43:15
3. Creator: Isaiah 40:28; 43:1
4. Wise: Proverbs 3:19; Jeremiah 10:12; Revelation 7:12
5. Powerful: Exodus 13:2; Psalm 29:4; Jeremiah 51:15
6. Almighty: Genesis 17:1; 35:11; Exodus 9:16; Psalm 91
7. Merciful: Genesis 18:26; Luke 6:36
8. Peace: Romans 15:33; 16:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20
9. Forgiver, All Forgiving: Psalm 86:5; 103:3; 130:4
10. All knowing: Psalm 33:13; 37:18; 44:21; 1 John 3:20
11. Provider: Genesis 8:22; 22:14; Psalm 65:9
12. Just: Exodus 34:7; Deuteronomy 10:17; 32:4
13. Judge: Genesis 18:25; Deuteronomy 10:17; Romans 2:6,11
14. Most High: Numbers 24:16; 2 Samuel 22:14; Psalm 7:17
15. The Loving: Deuteronomy 7:7–9; Isaiah 43:4; Hosea 11:1; John 3:16
16. The Truth: Exodus 34:6; Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 Samuel 15:29
17. The Eternal, Everlasting: Genesis 21:33;Psalm 100:5; Isaiah 44:6; 46:4; Revelation 1:4
18. Compassionate: Exodus 34:6; Psalm 100:5
19. The Light: Psalm 27:1; 119:105; Isaiah 60:19; John 1:4; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5
20. Propitiation: Romans 3:25;1 John 2:2; 4:10
21. Patient: Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9

The Qur'an and its god have committed blasphemy against the true God by comparing Allah to God and ascribing names to him reserved for God.

Islam has, once again, been identified in prophetic scriptures.

The Fourth Kingdom Will Intend to Make Changes in Calendar and Law

Daniel 7:25 states, "He will intend to make alterations in times and in law."

One of the Islamic prophecies of the coming al-Mahdi is that he will return Islam to the true teachings of Muhammad, and having conquered the world and having brought it under the dominion of Islam, he will enforce the teachings of the Qur'an as modeled by its prophet, Muhammad. This means that the world as we know it will be irrevocably changed. The free world will no longer have constitutions and related laws and privileges to govern its citizens. Rather, the world will be governed by the teachings of the Qur'an. The world will be a Sharia state, much like other Muslim countries in the world. We will discuss this characteristic in great detail in our chapter entitled "Sharia in Bible Prophecy."

The "other horn" is prophesied biblically to do the same thing.[226] If the world as we know it were to be governed in the way the citizens of Saudi Arabia are governed today, we would have little trouble ascribing this prophecy as fulfilled.

Islam has, once again, been identified in prophetic scriptures.

In conclusion, the feet of clay are not so weak after all. The feet in the statue of Daniel 2 and the fourth beast of Daniel 7 reveal the presence of a final kingdom at enmity with God in the tribulation period. We have identified no less than fourteen separate characteristics, each of which identifies Islam, and many of which identify Shi'ah Islam as the sect within Islam specifically fulfilling the characteristics of the clay. The balance of this chapter will focus on Daniel 11. Daniel 11's characteristics just add more clarity to the identity of Satan's cloak already shown to be Islam.

The Prophecy of Daniel 11:36–39: Islam Is Present, Once Again

Daniel 11:36–39 describes a king who "will do as he pleases." This one is the Antichrist/False Prophet. He is also the "other horn" of Daniel 7:24–25. Daniel 11:36 describes a period known as the "indignation." As we will see, this refers to the tribulation period, the seven years preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ. We will review this term in the chapter entitled "The Reaping." We already have discussed many of the characteristics in Daniel 11 in our review of Daniel 2 and 7. We will address only those not fulfilled by Daniel 2 or 7.

He Will Show No Regard for the "Desire of Women" (Daniel 11:37)

Due to the difficulty of the Hebrew text, Daniel 11:37 has been interpreted in many ways by Bible scholars, and consensus has yet to be found.[227] This writer sees the passage fulfilled in Islam's treatment of women. The phrase "he will show no regard for the … desire of women" does not mean that the king has no desire for women (or related ideas); rather, this king (and his kingdom) will not regard what a woman desires as important or valued. Consider the Qur'an 24:31 (Haleem translation and commentary in parenthesis):

> And tell believing women that they should lower their glances, guard their private parts, and not display their charms beyond what [it is acceptable] to reveal … they should not let their head-scarves fall to cover their necklines and not reveal their charms except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their womenfolk, their slaves, such men as attend them who have no sexual desire, or children who are not yet aware of women's nakedness; they should not stamp their feet so as to draw attention to any hidden charms. Believers, all of you, turn to God so that you may prosper.[228]

Islam Treats a Woman as Inferior to a Man

A Muslim woman is not to look a man in the eyes. A Muslim woman cannot raise her face to the level of a man's face. A Muslim woman cannot wear garments that expose any part of her anatomy other than her eyes.

Consider the following quote by the current President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, in opposition to the burqa being worn in France by Muslim women (the burqa is the gown worn by Muslim women in Sharia states that covers every part of their bodies except a small slit for their eyes). The quote is from a *New York Times* article, dated June 22, 2009, as reported by www.Infidelsarecool.com.

> VERSAILLES—From the royal grounds of Versailles, President Nicolas Sarkozy of France on Monday addressed a restive parliament about his vision of France that included a withering critique of burqas as an unacceptable symbol of "enslavement." Taking up a divisive issue that has sparked intense debate in the country, Mr. Sarkozy said there was no room in the French republic for the burqas, garments that envelope women and mask their faces. "The issue of the burqa is not a religious issue, it is a question of freedom and of women's dignity," Mr. Sarkozy said in a sober address in which he frequently looked at his notes. "The burqa is not a religious sign, it is a sign of the subjugation, of the submission of women."[229]

Women, according to the Qur'an, are inferior to men. In fact, it takes the testimony of two women to equal the testimony of one man:

> Women who are divorced shall wait, keeping themselves apart, three (monthly) courses. And it is not lawful for them that they should conceal that which Allah hath created in their wombs if they are believers in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands would do better to take them back in that case if they desire a reconciliation. And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them. Allah is Mighty, Wise. (Qur'an 2:228)

> … and have two men act as witnesses; but if two men are not available, then a man and two women you approve, so that in case one of them is confused, the other may prompt her. (Qur'an 2:282)

Again concerning the value of testimony, the testimony of one man is equal to that of two women. From a Hadith, we read:

> The women asked, "O Allah's Apostle! What is deficient in our intelligence and religion?" He said, "Is not the evidence of two women equal to the witness of one man?" They replied in the affirmative. He said, "This is the deficiency in her intelligence …"[230] (Volume 1, Book 6, Number 301: Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudr)

In Muslim lands governed by Sharia, it is virtually impossible for a woman to prove she has been raped without the eyewitness testimony of another person. This is because it takes the evidence of two women to equal the evidence of one man. When there is no witness, the man can deny the charge because the woman's account is inadmissible against the man unless corroborated by another person. Further, the woman, having admitted that she has been sexually violated, places herself in great risk for the charge of adultery. According to one report, as many as seventy-five percent of the women in prison in Pakistan are there because of the crime of being a victim of rape.[231] That is, the man having denied the woman's allegation, the woman is jailed for having admitted to having sex.

Here is one example of the many that could be offered. The Muslim woman in this case was from Nigeria:

> 2001-SEP: Nigeria: A teenage single mother, Bariya Ibrahim Magazu, claimed at trial that she was raped by three men. The court assumed that she was guilty, because she could not prove that her father pressured her to engage in sexual activity with the men. She was found guilty of two offenses: having pre-marital sex, and bringing false charges against the

men that she claimed were responsible. Her sentence was 180 lashes. "When nongovernmental groups ramped up pressure to free the girl, the government immediately carried out the sentence, ignoring a promised appeal process. The local authorities said they wanted to put an end to the controversy."[232]

An added danger to a Muslim woman who has been raped is the risk of being killed by a family member who believes it necessary to remove the stain upon the family's honor because she has been violated. Here is a summary of how Islam justifies honor killings:

These killings, which occur with shocking regularity in certain parts of the Middle East and South Asia, target women whose actions—actual or suspected—violate the honor of their family, an *honor which is thought to depend on the sexual purity of its female members*. Anything from speaking with an unrelated man, to rumored pre-marital loss of virginity, to an extra-marital affair can be cause for an attack, often carried out by a father or brother. In some especially tragic instances, even women and girls who have been raped are slain to remove the stain from the family honor. As with other forms of intimate violence against women, perpetrators are seldom punished.[233]

Here is a recent case (August 12, 2009), where the woman raped was killed by her uncle for the family honor:

A 41-YEAR-OLD Jordanian man was charged with premeditated murder after his raped teenage niece was shot dead on Tuesday to "cleanse" the family's honor, police said. "The man was arrested and charged after he shot the 16-year-old girl eight times in different parts of her body," in the Nasser area east of Amman, a police source said. "The suspect, who was arrested while carrying his gun, confessed to the crime, saying that he wanted to cleanse his family's honor after his niece was raped last year. She gave birth to a baby boy two months ago and her family kept the child."[234]

But family honor is not only at stake for rape. Here is another case that was reported by *Canadian Press,* March 22, 2009, of a daughter who was killed because she wore makeup and was talking to a stranger. The father and two brothers of the young woman were the killers:

Jordanian Beats Daughter to Death for Wearing Makeup in "Honor Killing" by Infidelesto on March 22, 2009. "Jordan's prosecutor has charged a man and his two sons for the premeditated murder of his 19-year-old daughter Saturday, in the latest 'honor killing' to take place in this conservative desert kingdom. The man and his two sons were charged with beating to death the daughter for leaving the house in makeup and talking to a stranger, according to prosecutor Salah al-Taleb's indictment sheet. The father

> brought his daughter to the hospital after she lost consciousness and turned himself in. Autopsy showed severe injuries to the head which caused brain hemorrhage and the body was covered with bruises. The man comes from the eastern Jordanian town of Zarqa, home of slain Iraqi al-Qaida leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and known for its conservatism."[235]

A practice so offensive that I will mention it only briefly is that of "female genital mutilation" ("FGM") in Muslim societies. The practice is based on a statement in the Hadith that is the subject of disagreement among Muslim scholars and clerics. The following is an explanation of the practice by a Nawal El-Saadawi, a Muslim victim of FGM:

> The importance given to virginity and an intact hymen in these societies is the reason why female circumcision still remains a very widespread practice despite a growing tendency, especially in urban Egypt, to do away with it as something outdated and harmful. Behind circumcision lies the belief that, by removing parts of girls' external genital organs, sexual desire is minimized. This permits a female who has reached the dangerous age of puberty and adolescence to protect her virginity, and therefore her honor, with greater ease. Chastity was imposed on male attendants in the female harem by castration which turned them into inoffensive eunuchs. Similarly female circumcision is meant to preserve the chastity of young girls by reducing their desire for sexual intercourse. [236]

If there ever was a practice that precisely fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel 11:37, "he will show no regard … for the desire of women …," FGM does so!

Sexual abuse in marriage is rampant in Sharia states as well. Here is a report of such from Bahrain, June, 29. 2009:

> **Bahrain Offers Women No Protection from Spousal Rape** by Saud Hamada, Bahrain—"Getting a divorce and custody of one's children is very difficult in Bahrain, even in cases where a husband sexually attacks his wife. The issue was exposed to the public last year, when an Arab woman married to a Bahraini was granted a divorce by the courts after she lost part of her breast during a violent sexual encounter with her spouse. A medical report submitted during the case citing the need for corrective surgery was valid enough evidence for the judge to call off the marriage. Though such cases are rarely highlighted in the media here, the plight of this woman made top headlines in many regional newspapers. Similar to almost all Arab and Islamic countries, Bahrain offers women no protection from their sexually abusive husbands. Only in cases of physical injury will the courts grant a divorce. For those who bear no physical marks, victims of sexual abuse feel helpless, as marital rape isn't penalized in this part of the world. … In many parts of the Islamic world, hardliners and social misconceptions promote

> this submission—wives are instructed to never deny the sexual demands of their husbands, as disobedience is perceived as a violation of Islamic principles. But there is something terribly wrong with this interpretation of Islam—no woman should have to tolerate sexual abuse from her husband or be told that she won't get into heaven if she doesn't."[237]

The reason for the prevalence of spousal abuse is rooted in the Qur'an's commands concerning the role of a wife in relation to her husband's desires (as opposed to hers). Muslim husbands are given permission to beat their wives when the wife is disobedient, based on the Qur'an 4:34:

> Husbands should take good care of their wives, with … [the bounties] God has given to some more than others and with what they spend out of their own money. Righteous wives are devout and guard what God would have them guard in their husbands' absence. If you fear high-handedness … from your wives, remind them [of the teachings of God], then ignore them when you go to bed, then hit them. … If they obey you, you have no right to act against them: God is most high and great[238]

What might it mean for a wife to "disobey" her husband? Here is an excerpt from a sermon by Egyptian cleric Galal Al-Khatib, which aired on Al-Rahma TV on December 24, 2008, as translated and reported by MEMRI:

> Galal Al-Khatib: One of the husband's rights is to discipline his wife if she is disobedient. What does the word "disobedience" mean? Disobedience is to leave the house without the husband's permission, to refuse to obey the husband in bed, to speak to the husband impolitely, or to do the opposite of what he likes. All these are forms of disobedience.[239]

Muslim husbands have quite the privileges when it comes to their sexual and other desires. The Qur'an states, "Wives are your fields, so go into your fields whichever way you like" (Qur'an 2.223, Haleem trans). A Muslim husband is allowed to marry at least four wives, and have sex with slave girls (captives that your "right hand possesses"[240]—see Qur'an 4.3). The number of wives, however, seems to be a number without real limitation or, at least, without certainty. Muhammad had many wives, with lists numbering from eleven to thirteen.[241] His youngest was Aisha, whom he married at age six and consummated the marriage with when she was nine.[242] Islam credits Muhammad with a sexual appetite unlike that of ordinary men. A Hadith states that he said, "Gabriel brought a kettle from which I ate, and I was given the power of sexual intercourse equal to forty men."[243]

Women are seen as pieces of property that have no rights because inherently women are less intelligent than men, and women are also evil.

It should be no surprise that Islam's prophet Muhammad describes hell as being predominantly occupied by women:[244]

> … Allah's Apostle … went out to the Musalla (the place of prayer). After finishing the prayer, he delivered the sermon and ordered the people to give alms. He said, "O people! Give alms." Then he went towards the women and said. "O women! Give alms, for I have seen that the majority of the dwellers of Hell-Fire were you (women)." The women asked, "O Allah's Apostle! What is the reason for it?" He replied, "O women! You curse frequently, and are ungrateful to your husbands. I have not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence and religion than you. O women, some of you can lead a cautious wise man astray."[245] (Volume 2, Book 24, Number 541:Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri)

Islam's determination of the inferiority of a woman can be seen in various ways, one of which is with inheritance laws. The Qur'an 4:11 states, "Concerning your children, God commands you that a son should have the equivalent share of two daughters. If there are only daughters, two or more should share two-thirds of the inheritance, if one, she should have half" (Haleem trans). Muslim men are also entitled to heavenly rewards that are specifically enumerated in the Qur'an. It just so happens that all of their rewards are women who have not been "deflowered" and have "swelling breasts." From the website www.Answering-Islam.org, we find the following:

> Surely those who guard (against evil) are in a secure place, In gardens and springs; They shall wear of fine and thick silk, (sitting) face to face; Thus (shall it be), and we will wed them with Houris pure, beautiful ones. They shall call therein for every fruit in security … (S. 44:51–57 Shakir)
>
> Therein are maids of modest glances whom no man nor ginn has deflowered before. Then which of your Lord's bounties will ye twain deny? As though they were rubies and pearls. (S. 55:56–58 Palmer)
>
> Surely for the godfearing awaits a place of security, gardens and vineyards and maidens with swelling breasts, like of age, and a cup overflowing. Therein they shall hear no idle talk, no cry of lies, for a recompense from thy Lord, a gift, a reckoning … (S. 78:31–36 Arberry)

These passages are obviously male-centered, focusing on the rewards that the men receive without any reference to rewards for the believing women. The texts speak of men, and even *jinn*, being wedded to beautiful maidens, or *houris*. These verses specifically address the men. The problem is that there are no matching verses for the women. There are many verses that make exclusive promises to men, but none that make specific, let alone exclusive, promises of eternal rewards for women.[246]

In conclusion: Does this mean that all Muslim men abuse their wives? No. Does this mean that all Muslim men are rapists? No. But that is not the point. We have provided verses from the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the foundation of Islam. It must stand upon its own merits, its own doctrines, regardless of whether or not Muslim men and women follow those doctrines, be they good or bad (actually, we have provided many modern-day examples of *obedient* Muslims). Daniel 11:36 simply tells us what to look for in the doctrines of a false religion in the last days.

He Will Worship a God His Fathers Did Not Know

Daniel 11:38 states that this king (and his kingdom) shall worship a god his "fathers did not know."

Much has been written about the origin of Islam in 622 A.D., of Muhammad's night vision in the year 610, when the Angel Gabriel is said to have commanded Muhammad to read when he did not know how to read (as reported in Qur'an 96.1–5). We also have heard much of how in years following that night, Muhammad remembered different parts of the revelation, so as to apply it to a situation brought before him. We have read how Muhammad himself first thought the revelation to be at the hand of Satan and had to be convinced by his elder wife (of fifteen years), Khadijah, that the vision had to be from God since Muhammad was a good man.

But the question before us is this: is Allah the same god that was worshiped by Muhammad's ancestors? If he is not, then another of Daniel's prophecies is fulfilled by Islam. Who was the god of Muhammad's ancestors? Was he Allah? Historian Ira Lapidus describes Islam as a new religion when it entered the spiritual milieu of Arabia:

> Though elements of the Quranic teaching resembled Jewish and Christian beliefs, Muhammad's unique religious vision and the formation of a community based upon that vision made Islam a new religion … The new religion was affiliated with the old, but it claimed to be the final revelation of God's full and correct will. In the realm of society, the early teachings of Islam at first involved Jews and Christians as well as pagans; but in the end, it was redirected toward pagan Arabians, with the object of establishing a new community.[247]

We discussed in an earlier chapter that when Muhammad first received his revelation, he attempted to Islamize the people of Mecca and then Medina. At that time, new believers in Islam were to direct their prayers facing Jerusalem. However, Christians and Jews rejected Muhammad as a true prophet. Muhammad thereupon changed the direction of prayer to the Kaaba in Mecca. A clear break was made with the monotheistic faith of Jews and Christians

when Muhammad did so. To this writer, to break with the religion is to break with the god of that religion, no matter what name he may be called.

Actually, the gods of Muhammad's ancestors were multiple in number. As a member of the Quraysh tribe, Muhammad was born into the capitalism of Meccan culture and the many gods related thereto. Lapidus describes the polytheistic pagan religious culture in Arabia that existed at the time of Muhammad's revelation and the advent of monotheism by the "foreign influences":

> The Arabian bedouin was an animist and a polytheist who believed that all natural objects and events were living spirits who could be either helpful or harmful to man. The universe of the Arabs was filled with "jinn" (demons), who had to be propitiated or controlled and defeated by magic. … The bedouins also worshiped ancestors, moon and star gods, and gods in the form of stones or trees placed in protective sanctuaries.[248]

Hubal was the chief god of the pagan deities of Arabia that centered at the Kaaba in Mecca. Hubal is thought to be the moon god, one of 360-plus deities of the Arabian tribes in the seventh century A.D., the most common symbol of which is the crescent moon. At the time of Muhammad, Hubal was a senior of the multiple deities worshiped at the Kaaba. Here is one description of the worship of Hubal and its origin:

> At the Kaaba the idol of Hubal was made of red agate, and shaped like a human, but with the right hand broken off and replaced with a golden hand. When the idol was moved inside the Kaaba, it had seven arrows in front of it, which were used for divination. According to Karen Armstrong, in her book *Islam: A Short History,* the Kaaba was dedicated to Hubal, and contained 360 idols which probably represented the days of the year, and Hubal's was said to be the grandest of the idols. As an infant, Muhammad was brought before Hubal by his grandfather Abd al-Muttalib, at-Tabari records in "The History of the Prophets and Kings" 1:157. When Muhammad conquered Mecca in A.D. 630, he ended the Quraysh's tradition of idol-worship by smashing the statue of Hubal along with the other 360 idols at the Kaaba, and re-dedicated the structure to Allah, the one God.[249]

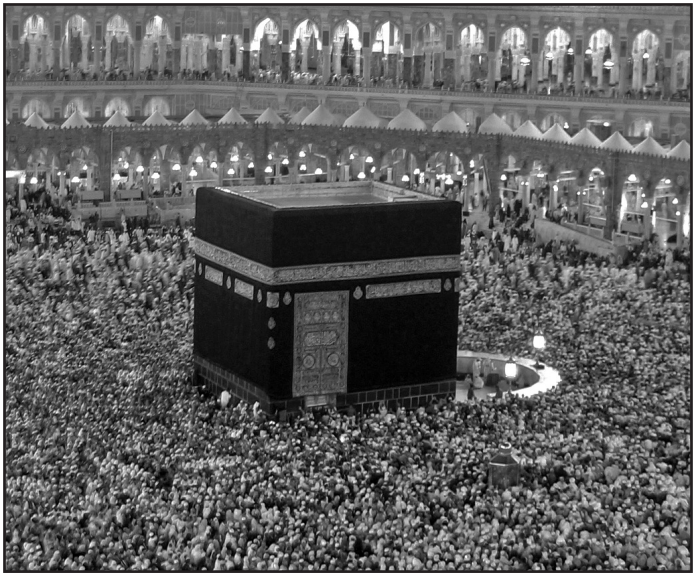
My point? When Muhammad brought Islam to Arabia, he brought a "new" religion. The faith of Jews and Christians, although monotheistic, did not accept Muhammad's revelations, considering Muhammad to be a false prophet. Muhammad, likewise, rejected the People of the Book, and when he did, he rejected the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God who revealed Himself in the Bible.

Further, Muhammad brought a monotheistic faith to a land that was polytheistic in its faith history. To Islam, Allah is not one among many, but one

among one. Muhammad's revelation necessitated the worship of one god, Allah, as revealed by Islam's messenger, Muhammad. In fact, the creedal statement for conversion to Islam (which one must state in the presence of two witnesses to become a Muslim), referred to as the "Shahada", is as follows: "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."[250] The creedal statement standing alone fulfills the prophecy of Daniel 11:38. Muhammad did not exist before the seventh century A.D., and his name is included in the creedal statement to become a Muslim. Clearly, Islam is a religion that worships a god "his fathers did not know." Daniel 11:38 has been fulfilled by Islam.

He Will Honor a God of Fortresses

Have you looked at a picture of the Kaaba in Mecca? Of Muslims circumambulating the huge cube-shaped stone structure that encloses the black stone ("circumambulating" is the process of continuously encircling a holy object)? The Hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam, is the pilgrimage to Mecca, in which Muslims are required to participate. Muslims circumambulate the Kaaba seven times, finishing with the ritual of kissing the black stone within the Kaaba. Do you think this resembles a people "honoring a god of fortresses" as they go round and round and within the Kaaba?



Muslims at Kaaba, Mecca

In a following chapter, we will discuss in detail the Dome of the Rock that is located on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The building serves no functional purpose as a worship center. The Dome is a religious shrine commemorating Muhammad's night journey and ascension. As we will see, the decorative walls of the Dome are covered with verses from the Quran, declaring Jesus *not* to be the Son of God and Muhammad to be the messenger of God. The Dome's octagonal-shaped footprint and its elaborate Dome likewise serve no functional purpose. They exist to cover the giant Foundation Stone that previously served as the stone upon which the Ark of the Covenant resided. It is this stone that Muhammad stepped from as he made his night journey to heaven with Allah. The Dome was constructed in 691 A.D., following the surrender of Jerusalem to the Muslims in 638. As we will see, the Dome stands as a public witness of Islam's superiority to Christianity (and Judaism) on the site of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the holiest city in the world.

Have you noticed the tall, distinctive spires that rise hundreds of feet in the air that are surrounding most mosques? "Minarets" serve the purpose of the daily "call to prayer" of Muslims. However, many believe the real purpose is not about the call to prayer, but about a religious statement proclaiming Islam's superiority. Modern evidence of this view is found in the November, 2009, decision on the part of an overwhelming majority of Swiss voters who approved a constitutional ban on the building of future minarets in Switzerland. From Fox News, we quote the following:

> The referendum by the nationalist Swiss People's Party labeled minarets as symbols of rising Muslim political power that could one day transform Switzerland into an Islamic nation. The initiative was approved 57.5 to 42.5 percent by some 2.67 million voters. Only four of the 26 cantons or states opposed the initiative, granting the double approval that makes it part of the Swiss constitution. … "The minaret is a sign of political power and demand, comparable with whole-body covering by the burqa, tolerance of forced marriage and genital mutilation of girls," the sponsors said. They noted that Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has compared mosques to Islam's military barracks and called "the minarets our bayonets."[251]

Daniel 10:38 is fulfilled in Islam. Islam uses religious architecture to communicate messages that are more important than the functional purpose of the structures as religious worship centers.

Islam has fulfilled another Bible prophecy of the last days' kingdom at enmity with God.

He Will Give Great Honor to Those Who Acknowledge Him … And Will Parcel Out Land for a Price

Perhaps the following quote attributed to Sultan Mehmet II as he led his Muslim armies in the defeat of Constantinople in 1453 will suffice to fulfill this part of the prophecy (the quote is long but well worth the read):

> There would be the traditional rewards for storming a city: "you know how many governorships are at my disposal in Asia and in Europe. Of these I will give the finest to the first to pass the stockade. And I shall pay him the honours which he deserves, and I shall requite him with a position of wealth, and make him happy among the men of our generation." All major Ottoman battles were preceded by the promise of a graduated series of stated honors designed to spur the men on. There was a matching set of punishments: "but if I see any man lurking in the tents and not fighting at the wall, he will not be able to escape a lingering death." It was one of the psychological ploys of Ottoman conquest that it bound men into an effective reward system that linked honor and profit to the recognition of exceptional effort. It was implemented by the presence on the battlefield of the sultan's messengers, the "chavushes," a body of men who reported directly to the sultan. Their single account of an act of bravery could lead to instant promotion. The men knew that great acts could be rewarded. Mehmet went further. In accordance with the dictates of Islamic law, it was decreed that since the city had not surrendered, it would be given to the soldiers for three days of plunder. He swore by God, "by the four thousand prophets, by Muhammad, by the soul of his father and his children and by the sword he strapped on, that he would give them everything to sack, all the people, men and women, and everything in the city, both treasure and property, and that he would not break his promise."[252]

As we will see in the following chapter, the defeat of Constantinople (the capital city of the Eastern Roman Empire and Christendom in the fifteenth and prior centuries) in 1453 by the Ottoman Turks is a key event in the fulfilling of the prophecy of Daniel 9:26. However, it is also significant for fulfillment of this element of prophecy in Daniel 11:36. When Constantinople was defeated by the Ottomans in 1453, the population of the city was around 50,000–60,000. This once glorious city and crown of Eastern Christendom was but a glimmer of the glory it once had. After the Muslims defeated the city on May 29, 1453, Sultan Mehmet II repopulated the city as described following:

> The single greatest state project was the reconstruction of Istanbul [Constantinople prior to defeat by the Muslims] to satisfy the glory of the Sultan and the needs of administration and trade. At the time of the conquest,

> Constantinople probably had a population of between 50,000 and 60,000 people. To repopulate it, the Ottoman government obliged Muslim merchants from Bursa, Konya, and other Anatolian places and the Balkans to move to Istanbul. The government gave land, houses, and tax concessions to the new migrants. Numerous villages in the vicinity of the city were laid out and settled with slaves, prisoners, and deportees from the Balkans. According to the census of 1478, there were about 9,000 Muslim, 3,100 Greek Christian, 1,650 Jewish, and about 1,000 Armenian and gypsy dwellings in Istanbul. Thus the population was about 60 percent Muslim, 20 percent Christian and 10 percent Jewish, and totaled less than 100,000. Within a century it would rise to over 700,000, more than twice the population of the largest European cities of the time.

Islam has fulfilled another Bible prophecy of the last days.

Here are the additional prophecies fulfilled by Islam, as required by Daniel 11:36–39:

1. He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers.
2. He will show no regard for the desire of women.
3. He will honor a god of fortresses.
4. He will honor a god his fathers did not know.
5. He will give honor to those who acknowledge him and cause them to rule over the many.
6. He will parcel out land for a price.

Conclusion

We have interpreted Daniel 2, 7, and 11. Islam has fulfilled every characteristic of these three critical chapters in Bible prophecy. The characteristics have been provided to us by God so that we will be able to recognize the religion of Satan and the Antichrist in the last days. They are but the beginning of our recognition.

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 4	
Point 1	The kingdom represented by the feet of the statue of Daniel 2 is a final kingdom that follows the fourth kingdom (the legs of iron). Rome is represented by the "legs of iron," but not the feet. The feet are the kingdom that will rise up against the kingdom that "endures forever," i.e., Christianity. This final kingdom will be at enmity with God. Rome is not this kingdom. Rome is on the side of God in the last days.

Point 2	The final kingdom at enmity with God will be a "divided" kingdom. Islam is a divided kingdom, and Sunnis and Shi'ahs are the two primary sects that fulfill this prophecy. See Daniel 2:41.
Point 3	The final kingdom at enmity with God will "combine with one another in the seed of men." Shi'ah Islam combines in the seed of men, the "people of the house of Ali" ("ahl al-bayt"). Ali was the closest family member of Muhammad. He married Muhammad's daughter, Fatima, and Shi'ahs believe only descendants of Ali and Fatima qualify as legitimate Imams. See Daniel 2:43.
Point 4	The final kingdom at enmity with God will "not adhere" to itself. Islam, particularly Shi'ah Islam, does not adhere to itself. Shi'ah Islam has numerous branches, each formed due to differing beliefs in the true line of legitimate Imams. See Daniel 2:43.
Point 5	The final kingdom at enmity with God will be composed of both strong and weak parts. Islam is composed of a stronger sect, Sunnis, and a weaker sect, Shi'ahs. Sunnis have persecuted Shi'ahs throughout Muslim history, and in fact, many Sunnis consider Shi'ahs unbelievers. See Daniel 2:42.
Point 6	The final kingdom at enmity with God will have ten horns ruling simultaneously. Islam had ten leaders, the Companions, the Ten Promised Paradise, who were said to be promised paradise by Muhammad. After Muhammad's death, these ten elected the successors to Muhammad by consensus. See Daniel 7:7.
Point 7	The final kingdom at enmity with God will be "different" from the prior three kingdoms, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and the Greeks (see Dan. 7:7). Islam is different from the three prior kingdoms. It alone is a spiritual kingdom, rather than a political kingdom similar to Babylon, Medo-Persia, and the Greeks.
Point 8	The final kingdom at enmity with God will have a "little horn" that comes up among the ten horns and pulls three of the ten out by the roots (see Dan. 7:8). Shi'ah Islam retroactively made Ali its legitimate successor (Imam) to Muhammad after the Battle of Karbala, 680 A.D. In this action, Shi'ahs usurped the prior three caliphs of Islam, Abu Bakr (632–634), Umar (634–644), and Uthman (644–651), who had been elected as caliphs subsequent to Muhammad's death, 632, by Sunnis.

Point 9	The final kingdom at enmity with God will include one who will have "eyes like the eyes of a man," uttering great "boasts" (see Dan. 7:8). Shi'ah Islam's first three successors to Muhammad were "like a man" but not a man. They were already dead when they were retroactively made Imams by Shi'ahs. Imams that followed these three through the twelfth Imam (Twelver Shi'ahs) were all considered to have divine like characteristics. Twelvers believe the Twelfth Imam (the Hidden Imam) is still alive today but in hiding after 1,200 years of continuous but hidden existence.
Point 10	The final kingdom at enmity with God will be a violent kingdom (see Dan. 7:7). Islam is a violent kingdom that is known and identified by the sword.
Point 11	The final kingdom at enmity with God will trample the remainder with its "feet" (see Dan. 7:7). Islam has been identified as the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, which had defeated the prior kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and the Greeks (see Dan. 2:35). This kingdom reappears in Daniel 7 as the feet that trample the remainder of these prior kingdoms, i.e., the Byzantines and the Persians (Sassanids).
Point 12	The final kingdom at enmity with God will include a leader who will "arise" in the last days, who will be "different" from prior leaders (see Dan. 7:21, 24). Shi'ah Islam's al-Mahdi is prophesied by Islam to be a "different" leader; he is the Hidden Imam who has been in hiding (concealment) for over 1200 years, and who will emerge at the command of Allah at a time of world chaos. The Bible identifies him as a supernatural, demonic incarnation in human form. As we will see in future chapters, he will be the Antichrist.
Point 13	The kingdom at enmity with God will include a leader who will "speak out against the Most High" (see Dan. 7:25). Islam blasphemes the name of God through its ninety-nine names ascribed to Allah, many of which are the same names the Bible ascribes to God.
Point 14	The kingdom at enmity with God will intend to make changes in calendar, times, and law (see Dan. 7:25). Shi'ah Islam's al-Mahdi is prophesied by Shiism to restore Islam to the true teaching of Muhammad. Islam has already inaugurated its own calendar as well as Sharia, Islamic law, according to the Qur'an. When al-Mahdi comes, the entire world is prophesied by Islam to come under Sharia law.

Point 15	Islam "shows no regard for the desires of women," a prophecy of Daniel 11:36 that is fulfilled by Islam.
Point 16	Islam was a new religion when it came into being in seventh century Arabia, and Muhammad's revelation was from "a god whom his fathers did not know," both characteristics prophesied by Daniel 11:38 and fulfilled by Islam.
Point 17	Islam honors a "god of fortresses," a prophecy of Daniel 11:38 that is fulfilled by Islam.
Point 18	Islam historically has shown great honor to those who acknowledge the caliph of Islam through the use of their swords. This is another prophecy of Daniel 11:36 fulfilled by Islam.

Chapter 5

A Revived Roman Empire?

Introduction

We have laid the foundation that Islam fulfills multiple prophecies of the final world empire at enmity with God. We have several more passages to cover, but before we do, we must address the traditional view held by many experts in Bible prophecy. This view interprets Rome as the fourth (and also final) kingdom to be at enmity with God in the last days. This view generally holds that a "revived Roman Empire" will arise in the last days to be led by the Antichrist, who brings the world under a one-world religion and a one-world currency. (In this chapter, we will refer to the "revived Roman Empire view" as the "Roman view.") We will not do an exhaustive study of this view, as there are many resources available to this end. (Do a Google search, using the words "revived Roman Empire," and the resources available will be plentiful.) This chapter will present reasons why a Roman view does not fulfill Bible prophecy of the last days. In fact, it is because of the absence of fulfillment that so many variations of this view are present—all of which require a future fulfillment because the historical past is without fulfillment.[253]

In reviewing the Roman view, we will look at several primary scriptures used to support this view: Daniel 2:33, 40–45; 7:7–27; 9:26; and Revelation 12. The chapter will be divided into two parts. The first part will review the Roman view, using the modern-day European Union as the revived Rome. (The European Union has some characteristics found in Bible prophecy.) The second part will interpret Revelation 12 and the role the Ancient Roman Empire has in fulfilling this prophecy.

To Summarize the Roman View

It is the prevailing view of many Bible scholars from the earliest days of the church that the four beasts of Daniel 7 are the same four traditionally interpreted in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar of Daniel 2 to be Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and the Ancient Roman Empire.[254]

St. Jerome was one of the early church's most prominent scholars. He was the first translator of the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate). His translation was the authorized version of the Catholic Church until Vatican II in the twentieth century.[255] St. Jerome's commentary on Daniel, written in the early fifth century (Jerome died in 420, before the complete collapse of the Roman Empire in 476), states what has become the traditional view, even from the earliest of the church's scholarship:

> We should therefore concur with the traditional interpretation of all the commentators of the Christian Church, that at the end of the world, when the Roman Empire is to be destroyed, there shall be ten kings who will partition the Roman world amongst themselves.[256]

Thus, according to St. Jerome, "all the commentators of the Christian Church" interpreted Rome (Ancient) to be this fourth kingdom that would rise to power, again, at the end of the world. As we discussed in the preceding chapter, this view of Rome as the fourth beast of Daniel 7 is chronologically supported by history predating the time of Christ. Rome conquered the Greeks (146 B.C.) after the Greeks had conquered Medo-Persia (331 B.C.), and Media-Persia had conquered Babylon (539 B.C.). Thus, Rome was the successor empire to the Greeks in the Middle East and the fourth in dominion of these four successive empires, beginning with Babylon—thus fulfilling a chronological interpretation of the four empires in Daniel 7 and the four parts of the statue of Daniel 2. Rome was also the kingdom in power when Christianity began, 30 A.D. (see Dan. 2:44).

Rome continued its dominance until Rome's (Western) collapse in 476. In the century before the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, the Eastern Empire had chosen Constantinople as the capital of the Roman Empire (330 A.D.). The Western Empire was, in some respects, revived when, in 800 A.D., Charlemagne was named Emperor by the Pope. To many theologians, the Holy Roman Empire (the revived Western Empire) and the Eastern Roman Empire fit the divided characteristic of Nebuchadnezzar's statue of Daniel 2:41. Similarly, the melding of politics and religion fits the characteristic of feet "partly of potter's clay and partly of iron" of Daniel 2:41.[257] In addition, Daniel 9:26's reference to the "people of the prince who is to come" was interpreted to be Rome because, historically, the Romans defeated the Jews and destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D., a clear fulfillment of the

phrase "will destroy the city and the sanctuary."[258] It was as if Daniel 9:26 sealed the Roman view completely. Who could interpret any empire other than Rome as the fourth empire since Rome had destroyed the Temple in 70 A.D., after "the Messiah [was] cut off" (see Dan. 9:26)? Having started down this path, to depart from it thereafter became near to impossible for interpreters. If one dared turn back from the traditional Roman view (or the second minority view, the Greeks and the successors of Alexander[259]), he (or she) was received with a theological obstinacy impossible to overcome!

Other modern-day scholars summarize the Roman view similarly. For example, John Walvoord describes this fourth and final empire of Daniel 2 as "Gentile world powers":

> This prophetic revelation makes clear that the kingdom from heaven is not a spiritual kingdom which by spiritual processes will gradually conquer the earth, but rather a sudden catastrophic judgment from heaven destroying the political kingdoms of the Gentiles. This will pave the way for a political millennial kingdom which will begin with the second coming of Christ. The revelation gives no support to either the amillennial view that the kingdom is a spiritual kingdom now on earth or to the postmillennial view that the kingdom will gradually gain control over the earth spiritually in a thousand years or more. The destruction of the *Gentile world powers* is an event, not a process and will be fulfilled by Christ in the Second Coming.[260]

To Walvoord, "Gentile world powers" is further defined by Daniel 7:7. There, the ten horns of the fourth beast are interpreted to be the ten future leaders of the future Roman Empire.[261]

Another modern-day interpreter, David Reagan, the founder and director of Lion & Lamb Ministries, in responding to Joel Richardson's book *Antichrist: Islam's Awaited Messiah* (which holds to the Islamic Paradigm), states as follows:

> There are other serious problems with Richardson's scenario that he does not acknowledge. How, for example, does he explain the miraculous resurrection of the Roman Empire in the form of the European Union? It's a development that prophecy experts have been telling us to watch for, and those alerts go back several hundred years. Is the revival of the Roman Empire just an accident of history? I think not. It is going to serve as the platform for the ascension of the Antichrist.[262]

The Modern Variation of the Roman View

The problem with the Roman view is that history, until the twentieth century, provided no possible fulfillment of it. This was in spite of the many

interpreters who for hundreds of years had been telling us to watch for its revival. Constantine made Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) the capital of the Roman Empire in 330 A.D. To the modernist, Rome, Italy, would never again serve as the seat of world power. In the twentieth century, however, a partnering of the countries of Europe caused interpreters to begin to fill in the blanks and identify the European Union as the revived Roman empire of the last days. According to David Reagan in his response to Joel Richardson (above quoted), the European Union is the "miraculous resurrection" of the Roman Empire that we have been looking for. A website on this topic states similarly:

> This final world kingdom, we believe, is far along in the process of coming together today in the form of the European Union (EU). The fifth world empire symbolized in the statue is prophesied to be an extension of the fourth kingdom. That is exactly what the EU is, an extension of the ancient Roman Empire. It is, we are convinced, the feet and toes of the man-image, the reviving of the unity that was once Europe in all its power and glory.[263]

If the European Union (EU) is to be the fulfillment of the fourth (and also final) empire of prophetic scripture, it must conform to Bible prophecies in its origin as well as in its evolution to its modern-day status. Interpreters can no longer enjoy the luxury of waiting for the future to fulfill the characteristics of the final kingdom at enmity with God since the EU has a history. The EU must fulfill Bible prophecy in its history. If it fulfills Bible prophecy in its history, then it is a candidate for fulfillment in the future. As we will see, it does not qualify in most respects.

The Unfulfilled Characteristics of Daniel 2

In our preceding chapter, we interpreted Islam to fulfill all of the characteristics of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. In this chapter, we will review how Rome fails them. We will begin with a brief history of the EU.

The European Union has evolved to its present twenty-seven member nation status (2010)[264] after having been formed in 1951 by *six* European countries. The Inner Six (Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and Netherlands) executed the Treaty of Paris (or the Treaty of the European Coal and Steel Community) on April 18, 1951, and formed the European Coal and Steel Community.[265] Since then, the EU has evolved from this six-member group to add many more countries and sign several additional treaties, both new and amended. The European Economic Community and the European Energy Community were added in 1957.[266] The EU itself was not formed until 1992 by the Treaty of Maastricht (formally, the Treaty on European Union). This Treaty was signed on February 7, 1992, by the members of the

European Community in Maastricht, the Netherlands, and was put into force on November 1, 1993. This Treaty created the European Union and led to the creation of the single European currency, the euro. (Those who hold to the Roman view see this as a partial fulfillment of Revelation 13:17.) The Treaty of Maastricht also created the "three pillars" of the EU.[267] The three pillars are the three primary areas within the European community for which the EU takes responsibility: the European Community Pillar, the Common Foreign and Security Policy Pillar, and the Justice and Home Affairs Pillar.[268]

The twenty-seven member states that presently comprise the EU also include the former, ten-member Western European Union, the defense arm of the European member states formed with the execution of the Treaty of Brussels on October 23, 1954. The Western European Union was formed by five full-member nations on March 17, 1948: Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. On October 23, 1954, two more nations were added to the Western European Union, Germany and Italy. In November of 1988, Portugal and Spain were added, and in 1992, Greece was added, bringing the total number of full member nations in the Western European Union to ten. Through the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU's three pillars were merged to become one person, and the operational capabilities of the Western European Union were transferred to the EU on January 1, 2002, eventually bringing an end to the operations of the Western European Union. The Treaty of Lisbon, the current governing document for the EU, went into force on December 1, 2009.[269] The reason for the enactment of the Treaty of Lisbon is summarized on the website of the EU as follows:

> In a constantly changing, ever more interconnected world, Europe is grappling with new issues: globalization, demographic shifts, climate change, the need for sustainable energy sources and new security threats. These are the challenges facing Europe in the 21st century. Borders count for very little in the light of these challenges. The EU countries cannot meet them alone. But acting as one, Europe can deliver results and respond to the concerns of the public. For this, Europe needs to modernize. The EU has recently expanded from 15 to 27 members … The treaty signed in Lisbon on 13 December 2007 sets out to do just that. When European leaders reached agreement on the new rules, they were thinking of the political, economic and social changes going on, and the need to live up to the hopes and expectations of the European public. … As a result, the EU is more democratic and its core values are better served.[270]

The Treaty of Lisbon is so new that the official website of the European Union (at May 28, 2010) has not been updated for its recently enacted laws. Also, there seems to be quite a difference of viewpoints on what the Treaty of Lisbon has really done for the EU (according to the many Internet options

available from a Google search), including the impact on the sovereignty of the member states of the EU.[271]

A Divided Empire

Daniel 2:41 states that the final empire at enmity with God will be a divided empire. The EU is not a divided empire, but an organization of independent countries seeking to empower the whole through their unification. The EU is an economic and political union of countries that has chosen to combine with one another to gain a singular strength through their combination. Decision-making is delegated to member states so that decisions made benefit the whole, rather than individual members. This is the opposite of the characteristic of Daniel 2:41. Consider the following quote from the official website of the European Union:

> The European Union (EU) is not a federation like the United States. Nor is it simply an organization for co-operation between governments, like the United Nations. It is, in fact, unique. The countries that make up the EU (its "member states") remain independent sovereign nations but they pool their sovereignty in order to gain a strength and world influence none of them could have on their own. Pooling sovereignty means, in practice, that the member states delegate some of their decision-making powers to shared institutions they have created, so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level.[272]

They Will Not adhere to One Another

Daniel 2:43 further defines the "divided" nature of the final empire when it states, "They will not adhere to one another." The metaphor for "not adhering" is the composition of the feet and toes of the statue with iron and clay (or pottery). Iron and clay are two types of matter that have characteristics opposite to one another—they will not adhere or stick to one another. However, the kingdom will still be one kingdom, but its parts will not be united.[273] *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance* defines the Hebrew word *debeq* as "to cling," and the *New American Standard Bible* translates it as "adhere."[274] Similarly, *Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew Lexicon* defines the word as "to cling."[275] Thus, from a biblical perspective, the text is telling us that this one empire will be composed of two parts, but the parts will not adhere to one another; they will not be united.

The European Union does not meet this characteristic. According to the EU, it is by the pooling of individual sovereignty that the group of European nations combine. Each member, having chosen for the benefit of the whole rather than the separate parts, finds its benefit in combining with the other nations.

To fulfill the requirement of Daniel 2:41, the history of the EU would have to include the inability of the nations to form a union. The history of the EU is the opposite of the divided requirement of Daniel 2:41 as well as the "failure to adhere" requirement. The fact that it has grown from an original six members to its present group of twenty-seven is irrefutable evidence that the EU fails the requirements of both Daniel 2:41 and 2:43.

The Empire Will Combine in the Seed of Men

Daniel 2:43 states that the final empire at enmity with God will "combine with one another in the seed of men." The Aramaic word is *arab*, and the *New American Standard Concordance* defines the word as "to mix."[276] *Brown Driver Briggs* defines it likewise.[277] On what basis could the EU ever fulfill this prophecy? The combination of the EU has nothing to do with the mixing of the seed of men. Bible scholar Stephen Miller quotes Daniel Driver, page 30, that this phrase possibly refers to "contractual matrimonial alliances."[278] If so, on what basis could the EU ever fulfill this prophecy? Are we to conclude that in the future, the EU will change its admission requirements so that future admission to the EU will be based upon matrimonial alliances of sons and daughters of nonmember nations to member nations? Hardly possible.

The Empire Will Be at Enmity with God

The final world empire symbolized by the feet of the statue is prophesied by Daniel 2:35, 45, to be destroyed by the stone that is cut out of the mountain "without hands" (Dan. 2:34). This phrase means that God will be the one who destroys this final kingdom (only God can cut without hands), and when He does, the millennial kingdom of Christ will be the event that is brought in (see Dan. 9:24). The enduring kingdom will be that of Christ and His saints (see Rev. 20:4).

Those who hold to the Roman view, point to the recent action on the part of the EU to remove all references to God or Christianity from the preamble of the proposed Constitution of the EU. Quoting from the Conference on this question:

> Recalling, among other things, Europe's cultural, religious and humanistic inheritance, and invoking the desire of the peoples of Europe to transcend their ancient divisions in order to forge a common destiny, the Preamble largely addresses the same themes as addressed in the Preambles to the existing Treaties. New themes are also added, such as humanism and the reason and national identity of peoples. The issue of whether the Preamble should contain any reference to God or to Christian values and the Greco-Latin heritage was debated long and hard by the Convention.

> A consensus was reached, so that the Preamble ended up containing a reference to Europe's cultural, religious and humanistic inheritance, a formula which was acceptable to all the Convention members.[279]

In other words, all references to God or Christianity were removed from the Preamble of the Constitution and replaced with the words "cultural," "religious," and "humanistic inheritance." Therefore, according to this view, the EU is likely to become that instrument led by the Antichrist in a humanistic one-world religion because God and Christianity have been removed from the organizing documents of the EU (now making it more likely to be at enmity with God).[280] This view is an incorrect interpretation of the prophecy. When the EU removed religious language from the proposed EU constitution, its actions were to remove it further from consideration as a possible fulfillment of Daniel 2. The future empire will be one that includes religious language in its foundational documents and does not exclude this language. The actions of the EU serve to make it religiously neutral. The final empire will not be religiously neutral. In fact, based on Revelation 13:8, the world will worship the Beast that leads this empire. If the world is prophesied to worship the Beast, then certainly some form of religion, some form of spirituality, will be a central part of this final empire that the Beast leads.

The Final Kingdom Is Prophesied to Be Composed of Parts that Are Strong and Parts that Are Weak (Brittle)

Daniel 2:40 describes the fourth kingdom as being "as strong as iron inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things." Daniel 2:42 continues to describe the toes of the feet as composed of iron and pottery, interpreted to mean some of the kingdom will be strong and some of it will be brittle (easily broken). Consider the history of the EU. We have stated that the EU evolved out of the European Coal and Steel Community and the execution of the Treaty of Paris in 1951 by the "inner six": Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, and Luxembourg. Out of this six, which might be the strong of the group? Which is the superpower? Do you see a Russia, China, or United States in the group?

The same might be said for the ten-member group of the Western European Union formed in 1954 by the Treaty of Brussels. The initial union of the Western European Union (WEU) was created by the Treaty on Economic, Social, and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defense signed at Brussels on 17 March 1948 (the Brussels Treaty).[281] The primary purpose of the WEU was self-defense within the context of World War II being waged in Europe. The official website gives the following history, explaining the purpose for the creation of the WEU:

> The Brussels Treaty was signed by Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Conceived largely as a response to Soviet moves to impose control over the countries of Central Europe … Its main feature was the commitment to mutual Defense should any of the signatories be the victim of an armed attack in Europe. In September 1948, military co-operation was initiated in the framework of the Brussels Treaty Organisation. A plan for common Defense was adopted, involving the integration of air defenses and a joint command organization.[282]

The WEU was the defense arm of the five nations of Europe formed in response to Soviet aggression in Europe. The five founding nations of the WEU were Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Of this five, and in relation to this five, which is the superpower nation qualifying it to be as strong as iron? Which is the "brittle," i.e., easily broken, in comparison to the others? In the post-World War II history during which the EU was created and has existed, these nations are of the same relative strength one to the other. This is, in fact, the foundational reason for the existence of the union(s) of these nations. This is particularly the case when one compares any of the EU members to a modern-day superpower such as the United States, Russia, or China. It is only in their union that they become a superpower. Individually and separately, the nations are relatively the same in power.

So how can the EU fulfill this requirement? It can't. It is not composed of strong and weak parts.

The Final Kingdom Is Prophesied to Be a "Different Kingdom"

We move to Daniel 7:7, which includes the characteristic that the fourth beast will be different from the three that precede it. In our previous chapter, we discussed the meaning of "different" for both Daniel 7:7 and also Daniel 7:19. We concluded that the fourth kingdom would not be a political kingdom as the prior kingdoms had been, but rather, a religious kingdom. This conclusion is further supported by the many references to worship in Revelation 13.

Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome were all political kingdoms. The European Union is a union of sovereign political countries, just as these prior kingdoms were. The official website of the European Union states:

> The European Union (EU) is not a federation like the United States. Nor is it simply an organization for co-operation between governments, like the United Nations. It is, in fact, unique. The countries that make up the EU (its "member states") remain independent sovereign nations but they

> pool their sovereignty in order to gain a strength and world influence none of them could have on their own. Pooling sovereignty means, in practice, that the member states delegate some of their decision-making powers to shared institutions they have created, so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at the European level.[283]

The nations comprising the European Union join together for the purpose of "… gaining strength and world influence none of them could have on their own." The European Union is no different than the empires of the Babylonians, Medo-Persians, Greeks, or Romans, except that they are many nations aligned together for a political or related purpose rather than a single nation. Because we have more than one nation joining with other nations for the same political purpose, it does not make the organization of the nations different than the individual nations of Babylon, Media-Persia, the Greeks, or Rome. The EU in its present form fails this prophetic requirement.

The Fourth Kingdom Will Have Ten Horns

Daniel 7:7 states that the fourth beast has ten horns. All of these horns are present when the beast first appears in Daniel's vision. They do not come up chronologically, one after the other, as would be the case if the ten represented ten successive leaders. (In Revelation 17:10, horns come up at different times. The text states the reason is because the kings will reign at different times, successive to one another.[284]) This is significant in Daniel 7 because one of the horns (the little horn) is distinguished by its coming up "after" the ten. Thus, the text is careful to reflect the "when" of leadership for these ten leaders as well as for the little horn after them (see Dan. 7:7–8). Applying this criteria to Ancient Rome's history fails to bring a match. Historically, there is no group of ten Roman emperors (or leadership council) that reigned simultaneously. Rome, past, fails to fulfill this requirement.[285]

As we have stated in the history of the creation of the predecessor groups to the EU, this requirement is also not present for these groups. Neither the WEU or the European Coal and Steel Community were formed by ten nations coming together at the same time. The WEU was formed by five; the European Coal and Steel Community was formed by six. As the WEU (the defensive arm) grew, it eventually had ten members, but not in its beginning.

The Three Horns Uprooted

Daniel 7:7–8 represents the fourth kingdom in the beginning of its days. Daniel 7:21–28 represents this same kingdom at the end of the age, probably the tribulation period, the seven years preceding the return of Christ. We

know time passes from the inception of this empire because of the phrase, "I kept looking …" This phrase begins verse twenty-one and alerts us that time has passed since the earlier event in Daniel's vision. Also, we know time has passed because Daniel 7:23 prophesies that this fourth kingdom will "devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it." Daniel 7:23 has not been fulfilled yet. Thus, to Daniel, there is a parenthesis of time between the beginning of the fourth kingdom (7:7–8) and the end of the fourth kingdom (7:21). For the EU to fulfill this passage, there must have been an uprooting of three kingdoms by a fourth kingdom (of the ten kingdoms) at the beginning of its history. The EU fails this characteristic. Three kingdoms of the ten have not been uprooted by a fourth.

What if Europe Becomes Predominantly Muslim?

Suppose, however, that modern-day Europe (composed of those countries that made up the Roman Empire) one day becomes governed by Sharia, i.e., the Qur'an? In other words, suppose in the future the populations of the separate European countries become predominantly Muslim and because of the Muslim majority, changes are made in the governance of the countries of Europe? Consider the following highlight from *Pew Forum* on the changing demographics of modern-day Europe:

> Throughout Europe today, it is not uncommon to see women wearing headscarves and men with skull caps and beards. On many European streets, shops now sport signs in Arabic and other Near Eastern languages and sell an array of exotic looking products from the Middle East and other parts of the Islamic world. Indeed, in the space of a few decades, whole neighborhoods in cities like Birmingham, Rotterdam and Paris have been transformed. Streets that have witnessed hundreds of years of European history are now playing host to a decidedly non-Western people and culture. This is the new Europe, one in which a rapidly growing Muslim population is making its presence felt in societies that until recently were largely homogeneous. Muslims are still very much minorities in Western and Central European countries, making up roughly 5 percent of the European Union's total population. But a number of demographic trends point to dramatic change in the years ahead. Islam is already the fastest-growing religion in Europe. Driven by immigration and high birthrates, the number of Muslims on the continent has tripled in the last 30 years. Most demographers forecast a similar or even higher rate of growth in the coming decades.[286]

And, similarly, from the Brookings Institute:

> Islam may still be a faraway religion for millions of Americans. But for Europeans it is local politics. The 15 million Muslims of the European Union (EU)—up to three times as many as live in the United States—are

> becoming a more powerful political force than the fabled Arab street. … Today, the Muslim birth rate in Europe is three times higher … If current trends continue, the Muslim population of Europe will nearly double by 2015, while the non-Muslim population will shrink by 3.5 percent.[287]

And finally from Professor Philip Jenkins of Penn State University:

> In most European nations, Muslim communities have birthrates three times larger than their non-Muslim neighbors. France, Germany, and the Netherlands could by the 2030s have Muslim minorities of around 20 to 25 percent of the population, and those proportions will grow as the century progresses. Moreover, while Islam is undeniably growing, Christianity—at least in terms of active practice—is clearly shrinking. … Some observers see Europe making a wholesale transition into the Muslim world. Bernard Lewis remarked in a 2004 interview that, "Current trends show Europe will have a Muslim majority by the end of the 21st century at the latest. …" Bat Ye'or (the pseudonym of British author Giselle Littman) envisages an emerging Muslim-dominated subcontinent of Eurabia in which remaining Christians and Jews might enjoy some tenuous kind of second-class status not unlike Ottoman dhimmitude, and writes of the emerging Euro-Arab axis.[288]

Whether by conquest or population growth, if Muslims replace the democracies of Europe with Sharia (governance based on the Qur'an), the end result is the same. The revived Roman Empire model will become a viable option to fulfill Bible prophecies of the last days. A Muslim Europe will meet the "different" characteristic as well as the other characteristics of Daniel 2, including "divided," "strong and weak," and "combines in the seed of men." Islam may not conquer the world by jihad, but it will have achieved dominion all the same.

The People of the Prince Who is to Come

Daniel 9:26 includes a very important prophecy that must be interpreted relative to the Roman view. This verse frequently causes interpreters to conclude that the Antichrist will rise from a revived Roman Empire to lead the world in a one-world religion and currency. The text states:

> Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.
>
> —Daniel 9:26

The prevailing interpretation is that the "people of the prince who is to come" are the Romans. Rome (Ancient) destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D.,

including the complete destruction of the temple. This destruction is a historical fact, so how can the interpreter posit any view other than a "revived Rome" as the city of the Antichrist future?[289]

For most interpreters who hold to the Islamic Paradigm, the "prince who is to come" is Muhammad, and the "people" of this prince are the Persians and Arabs who are said to have comprised much of the Roman army that attacked Jerusalem in 70 A.D. [290] The soldiers of Arabic and Persian descent were paid mercenaries of the Romans and were of significant numbers to meet the requirement of the text as "the people of the prince who is to come." This writer follows the Islamic Paradigm and also identifies the "prince who is to come" as Muhammad. The "people of the prince who is to come" are Muslims, but not for the reasons aforementioned.

In a future chapter, we will discuss the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24–27. However, for now, we need only address the meaning of one part of Daniel 9:26. In part, the text states, "Then, *after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah* will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary." The only identifier of the "people of the prince who is to come" is the dating in history when the Messiah is "cut off" and the "city" and the "sanctuary" are destroyed. If the event is the crucifixion of Christ in 30 A.D., followed by the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., then the Roman view is the correct view, since the Romans destroyed Jerusalem on this date. But suppose the "cutting off" of Messiah is not fulfilled at the crucifixion of Christ, and suppose the destruction of the city and the sanctuary are not fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D. by the Romans?

When Was Messiah "Cut off"?

The only reference to time in Daniel 9:26 is the phrase "after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing." The word "after" used in the text tells us that sometime subsequent to Messiah being "cut off" other things will happen. If we determine when Messiah will be "cut off and have nothing," then we will have a beginning point for the "after" to begin. How can it be said that Messiah was "cut off" and had "nothing" at the one time in human history that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself and was about to begin His church (see 2 Cor. 5:18–19)?

Jesus was not, in fact, "cut off" and "had nothing" when He was crucified. The church began with twelve apostles, eleven of whom were living at the time of the resurrection, and all of whom were living at the time of the crucifixion. Then, within forty days of the resurrection, 120 people gathered in a small room, awaiting the power of the Holy Spirit, just after the ascension of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:15). The Holy Spirit indwelt these 120 people to birth the church of

Jesus Christ, a church that one day would become the largest religion known to humanity. How, then, can this period be what Daniel 9:26 is referring to as a time of being "cut off" and "having nothing"? What Christianity did have was the promise of the Father in the soon coming of the Holy Spirit. Christianity also had 120 believers waiting for the coming of the Spirit; and from these 120, the church was already born, that birth having occurred at the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Hardly what we would declare as "nothing"!

Christianity in 30 A.D. and years following was like a seed that the followers of Christ continually sowed. Christianity extended through the entire Middle East, North Africa, and Asia, and then the entire world.[291] It was during the years of Nero (60 A.D., in Rome) that persecutions of Christians began by the Romans. When the persecutions did begin, the persecutions actually spread the faith to far greater lands, eventually reaching Rome through the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in 312 A.D. At no time did the Roman persecution of *Christians* result in the destruction of Jerusalem or the temple in Jerusalem. That event occurred against the Jews (not the Christians), and when it did, it would be a mistake to say that this event resulted in the Messiah "having nothing." Jews were "cut off," but not Christians, and if not Christians, then not Messiah. It is important that we keep the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem separate from what happened to Messiah Jesus and His followers. If the Messiah is "cut off and (had) nothing," then Christianity must be similarly affected. Christ is the head of the church and the church is the body of Christ (Col. 3:18). The two are irrevocably connected. Christ is the "firstborn" of many brethren (see Rom. 8:29), and His church is the "church of the firstborn" (see Heb. 12:23). In order for Messiah and His followers to be "cut off," the prophecy would only apply to the three days that Christ was in the grave and His followers thought He was a victim of the Jewish spiritual leadership.

Also the text tells us that the destruction of the "sanctuary" and the "city" are the consequence of the Messiah being "cut off and having nothing."[292] Therefore, when Messiah is "cut off," the "people of the prince who is to come" will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The two events in the text are linked, one happening simultaneously and as a result of the previous. How can this refer to the crucifixion of Christ and the destruction of the temple when those events are separated by forty years? The destruction of the temple was in 70 A.D., and it had nothing to do with Messiah being crucified in 30 A.D. These two events are not linked, historically. They are separate, unrelated historical events. Likewise, nothing similar happened to Christians at the time of Jerusalem's destruction in 70 A.D. by the Romans. The only effect on Christians living in Jerusalem was that some of them became victims of another man's war!

The "Cutting Off" of Christianity from the Middle East

Daniel 9:26 is not referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., but to the destruction of Constantinople, the last great Christian city east of Europe in the fifteenth century A.D. [293] Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, was defeated by Sultan Mehmet II and his Ottoman Turk forces on May 29, 1453, using new gunpowder siege artillery.[294] The capture of the city communicated to Christendom and to the world the superiority of Islam over Christianity—a triumph that had been sought by Islam for almost 800 years.[295] Historian Roger Crowley's account of this epic city and its battle follows:

> For a thousand years Constantinople was quite simply **the** city: fabulously wealthy, imperial, intimidating—and Christian. Single-handedly it blunted early Arab enthusiasm for Holy War; when a second wave of Islamic warriors swept out of the Asian steppes in the Middle Ages, Constantinople was the ultimate prize: "The Red Apple." It was a city that had always lived under threat. On average it had survived a siege every forty years for a millennium—until the Ottoman Sultan, Mehmet II, twenty-one years old and hungry for glory, rode up to the walls in April 1453 with a huge army, numberless as the stars. … For fifty-five days a tiny group of defenders defied the huge Ottoman army in a seesawing contest fought on land, at sea—and underground. During the course of events, the largest cannon ever built was directed against the world's most formidable defensive system, Ottoman ships were hauled overland into the Golden Horn, and the morale of defenders was crucially undermined by unnerving portents. At the centre is the contest between two inspirational leaders, Mehmed II and Constantine XI, fighting for empire and religious faith, and an astonishing finale in a few short hours on 29 May 1453—a defining moment for medieval history.[296]

Daniel's 9:26 reference to the "sanctuary" that is destroyed is not the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the Romans, but the great Cathedral Hagia Sophia, the Church of the Holy Wisdom, located in Constantinople and hailed as the largest church in the world for literally hundreds of years. The church was desecrated and converted to a mosque on May 29, 1453, by the Ottoman forces. Everything of Jesus Christ and His saints was destroyed, removed from the holy sanctuary, never to be used in the service and worship of Christ again.

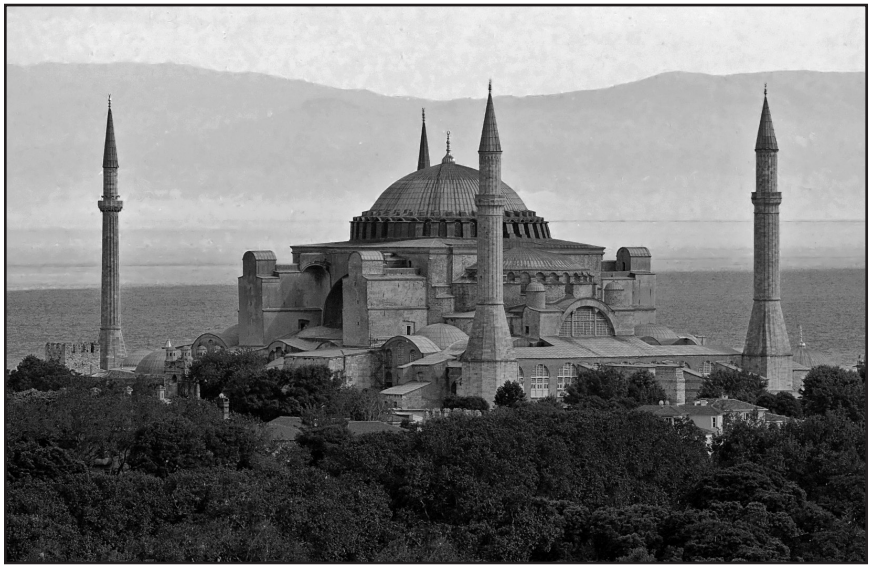
Constantinople, the capital city of the Eastern Roman Empire, is thus described:

> The capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, the city that was identified with the life of Byzantine empire, was founded by the Roman Constantine I …

> The city was founded on 8 November 324, and it was inaugurated on 11 May 330. The capital was named "New Rome" … and later was renamed Constantinople …[297]

And further:

> It was the possibilities of this site—what it offered for trade, defense, and food—that made Constantinople the key to imperial destinies and brought so many armies to its gate. "The seat of the Roman Empire is Constantinople," wrote George Trapezuntios, "and he who is and remains Emperor of the Romans is also the Emperor of the whole earth."[298]



Hagia Sophia Church, Istanbul

Hagia Sophia (also referred to as "St. Sophia"), the great church of Christendom in the East, served for over 900 years as the seat of the Patriarch of Constantinople.[299]

Hagia Sophia was to Christianity what the temple was to Judaism. One historian relates an account of the Hagia Sophia from a visitor to the city:

> Anchored in the center of the city like a mighty ship was the great church of St. Sophia, built by Justinian in only six years and dedicated in 537. It was the most extraordinary building in late antiquity, a structure whose immensity was matched only by its splendor. The huge levitated dome was an incomprehensible miracle to eyewitnesses. "It seems," said Procopius,

> "not to rest upon solid masonry but to cover the space beneath as though suspended from heaven." It encased a volume of space so vast that those seeing it for the first time were left literally speechless. The vaulting, decorated with four acres of gold mosaic, was so brilliant, according to Paul the Silentiary, that "the golden stream of rays pours down and strikes the eyes of men, so that they can scarcely bear to look," while its wealth of colored marbles moved him to poetic trance. They looked as though they were "powdered with stars … like milk splashed over a surface of shining black or like the sea or emerald stone, or again like blue cornflowers in grass, with here and there a drift of snow."[300]

The description of the epic battle between Christians and Muslims at Constantinople was ultimately a battle not over a city but a battle between two faiths. This is precisely what Daniel 9:26 is referring to in the phrase "the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing." The statement has little to do with bricks and mortar, but with the cutting off of the people of the Middle East, the land that Christ first walked, and westward through Turkey, from Christian Rome, in the West. Asia Minor and Eastward to Jerusalem were thereafter in the control of Islam. Historian Roger Crowley describes the isolation of Constantinople and Christianity from the West when the Muslims defeated neighboring Varna:

> It was a significant moment in the holy war between Christianity and Islam. After 350 years the defeat at Varna extinguished the appetite in the West for crusading; never again would Christendom unite to try to drive the Muslims out of Europe. It confirmed the Ottoman presence in the Balkans and left Constantinople emphatically isolated as an enclave within the Islamic world, reducing the likelihood of Western help in the event of Ottoman attack.[301]

The pre-conquest plight of Christians in Constantinople is similarly described by historian Ira Lapidus, who tells of mass conversions of Christians to Islam in Anatolia towns and cities:

> The absorption of the former Byzantine Empire by Turkish-Muslim conquerors led to the eventual conversion of Anatolia and thus added new territories to the domain of Islam. Before the Turkish migrations, the vast majority of the Greek, Armenian, Georgian, and Syrian populations of Anatolia had been Christian. By the fifteenth century more than 90 percent of the population was Muslim. Some of this change was due to the immigration of a large Muslim population, but in great part it was caused by the conversion of Christians to Islam. These conversions were basically due to the breakdown of Anatolian Christianity through the weakening of the Byzantine state and the Greek Orthodox Church, and the collapse of Anatolian society in the face of

> Turkish migrations. In the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Turks excluded bishops and metropolitans from their sees. Church revenues and properties were confiscated. Hospitals, schools, orphanages, and monasteries were destroyed or abandoned, and the Anatolian Christian population was left without leadership and social services. The remaining Christian clerics had to turn to Turkish authorities to handle internal disputes on terms that only further weakened Christian institutions.[302]

Constantinople, the city named after the first Roman Emperor to convert to Christianity was thereafter known as Istanbul, the name the city carries to this day. Historian Crowley describes the conflict as one between spiritual foes and not between nations or political interests:

> The Muslims referred to their adversary as "the despicable infidels," "the wretched unbelievers," "the enemies of the Faith"; in response they were called "pagans," "heathen infidels," "the faithless Turks" (by the Christians). Constantinople was the front line in a long distance struggle between Islam and Christianity for the true faith. It was a place where different versions of the truth had confronted each other in war and truce for 800 years, and it was here in the spring of 1453 that new and lasting attitudes between the two great monotheisms were to be cemented in one intense moment of history.[303]

When Constantinople fell to the Muslims, the entire country of Turkey and everything eastward from Europe all but ceased to exist as a land inhabited by Christians. The seven churches of Revelation all were located in modern-day Turkey. None of them exist today, clear evidence that Christianity was effectively "cut off" with the fall of Constantinople. Hence, Christianity was not cut off with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., but with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D.

Historian Philip Jenkins describes the impact of the fall of Constantinople on Christianity:

> The traumatic religious implications can be suggested if we imagine a world in which Christians or Jews annexed and converted the cities of Mecca and Medina, demolishing the Ka'ba and turning the Great Mosque into a splendid cathedral or synagogue. The very thought would be blasphemy for pious Muslims; and for Christians throughout eastern Europe and the Middle East, *likewise, the fall of Constantinople was "the day the world ended."*[304]
>
> —Emphasis supplied

Here is a description of the Muslim destruction of the city. See if the destruction described does not fulfill the remainder of the prophecy of

Daniel 9:26, which states, "And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined":

> (Sultan) Mehmet then progressed into the heart of the city to inspect the buildings that he had visualized so clearly from afar. … He was probably sobered rather than impressed by what he saw. It resembled a human Pompeii more than the City of Gold. Uncontrolled, the army had forgotten the edict to leave the fabric of the buildings untouched. They had fallen on Constantinople, according to Kritovoulos, with a measure of exaggeration, "like a fire or a whirlwind" … the whole city was deserted and emptied and appeared ravaged and charred as if by fire … the only houses left had been devastated, so ruined that they struck fear in the hearts of all that saw them because of the enormous devastation. Although he had promised his army three days of looting, it had effectively been picked clean in one. … Long lines of captives were being herded into makeshift tents outside the fosse. Almost the whole population of 50,000 had been led away to the ships and the camp; maybe 4,000 had been killed in the day's fighting. Separated from their families, children could be heard calling out for their mothers, men for their wives, all "dumb founded by such a catastrophe." In the Ottoman camp there were fires and festivities, singing and dancing to pipes and drums. Horses were dressed in the robes of priests and the crucifix was mockingly paraded through the Ottoman camp, topped with a Turkish cap. Booty was traded, precious stones bought and sold. Men were said to become rich overnight "by buying jewels for a few pence," "gold and silver were traded for the price of tin."[305]

The desecration of Hagia Sophia described in like manner:

> The soldiers then turned their attention to the fabric of the church. They hacked the icons to pieces, stripping away the valuable metal frames and seized "in an instant the precious and holy relics which were kept safe in the sanctuary, the vessels of gold and silver and other valuable materials." Then rapidly all the other fixtures and fittings followed, things that the Muslims considered both idolatrous affronts to God and rightful booty for soldiers—the chains, candelabra, and lamps, the iconostasis, the altar and its coverings, the church furniture, the emperor's chair—in a short time everything was either seized and carried off or destroyed in situ, leaving the great church "ransacked and desolate," according to Doukas. The great church reverted to a shell.[306]

I could go on and on. The "prince who is to come" is Muhammad. The "people of the prince who is to come" are the Muslims. The sanctuary and city that were destroyed *after* the sixty-second week were not Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D., but Constantinople and Hagia Sophia on May 29th, 1453. And why does it matter? Because in the Seventieth Week, another will



Hagia Sophia Church, Interior

come from this same "people of the prince who is to come" (see Dan. 9:27). This one will be the Antichrist. He will arise from within Islam, the religion of the "people of the prince to come," not from Rome.

Part 2—Where Is Rome in Bible Prophecy?

So where is Rome? The powerful ancient Roman Empire and her infamous legions were victorious over the third beast of Daniel 7, the Greeks, the successor kingdom to Babylon and Media-Persia. Rome seems quite naturally to fulfill the prophecy of the fourth beast of Daniel. After all, Rome was the next in line of succession to Media-Persia. It was the fourth in that line; so how can Rome not be in the biblical texts of the last days? Plus, Rome continued its dominion through the time of Christ's crucifixion. Pilate, the Roman Governor at the time, actually ordered Christ's execution. What's just as important is that persecution of both Jews and Christians occurred during Roman dominion. So, Rome must be in prophetic scriptures—or, we've missed something!

Rome is there; it's just not where we have been looking. Rome is in the New Testament book of Revelation, chapter 12, not in Daniel 2, 7, or 9; Revelation 13 or 17. As we will see, Revelation 12 is a prophecy that has both been fulfilled and is still being fulfilled. Rome had a very significant role in this fulfillment (but not all). Rome's role was fulfilled with Rome's dominion in the first through fourth centuries, in the persecution of Jews and Christians subsequent to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This persecution ended after Constantine became sole emperor of the Roman Empire through a miraculous victory over his Western rival, Maxentius. Following the battle, Constantine converted to Christianity, which ended persecution for Christians.

The miracle that led to Constantine's conversion occurred at the Battle of Milvian Bridge (312 A.D.), when Constantine's forces encountered those of Constantine's Western rival, Maxentius, outside Rome (312 A.D.).[307] Maxentius (West) and Constantine (East) were vying for sole claim to the office of Roman Emperor. The armies of each gathered outside of Rome in a battle to decide who would be sole emperor. Constantine's forces were heavily outnumbered by those of Maxentius. On the day before the battle, Constantine and his army saw a cross of light imposed over the sun. Attached to it, in Greek characters, were these words: *In this sign you shall conquer*. The sign included the first two letters of the Greek word translated "Christ."

That night, Christ appeared to Constantine in a dream and told him to make a replica of the sign he had seen in the noonday sky and place it on the armor of each of his soldiers. Constantine's army placed this sign on their shields prior to their battle with Maxentius, and against all odds, Constantine's army was successful. Constantine soon became the sole

Emperor of the Roman Empire. It also resulted in Constantine's conversion. It was the miracle that revealed the reality of the risen Christ and His finished work on Calvary some 300 years before. At the Battle of Milvian Bridge, the risen Christ appeared to Constantine, much as He had to Saul (the Apostle Paul, Acts 9:1–9) on the Damascus Road; and now Christ did so in a language that Constantine could understand—a miraculous victory over a heavily out-manned force. Thus, this event proved to be the end of persecution of Christians by the Romans. Eventually, Rome was Christianized, with this event being the seed that filled the entire known world of Constantine's day with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 12 and the Apostle John's Vision

In Revelation 12, the apostle John is given a sign. A woman is about to give birth to a male child. The woman is clothed with the sun, and the moon is under her feet. On her head is a crown of twelve stars. Then John receives another sign. A great red dragon appears, having seven heads with seven diadems, and ten horns. The Dragon stands before the woman to devour her child. The woman gives birth to her son, but amazingly, the Dragon, although standing before the woman, is unable to destroy the child. The son is caught up to heaven (see Rev. 12:5), and the woman is persecuted by the Dragon. The woman receives divine nourishment "in the wilderness" for "one thousand two hundred and sixty days" (see 12:6). The Dragon, seeing that he has only a short time (see 12:12) continues his persecution (see 12:13), but now it appears to include the offspring of the woman (see 12:11), that is, those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus" (see 12:17). The "two wings of the great eagle" are given to the woman that she might fly to the wilderness, where she is nourished from the presence of the Dragon for a "time and times and half a time" (see 12:14). The Dragon responds by pouring a river of water out of his mouth (see 12:15) to drown the woman. The earth saves the woman by swallowing up the river of water (see 12:16). Finally, the Dragon, enraged with the woman, continues his persecution of her. The text is now specific as to against whom the war is waged: "[Those] who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (12:17).

Here is what some of the symbolism in the text represents: The Dragon is Satan, the serpent of old (see Rev. 12:9). The male child is Jesus Christ, as implied in 12:5, and named in 12:11, 12:17. When the text states, "The child was caught up to heaven" (see 12:5), it is referring to the ascension of Jesus Christ to the right hand of God following His crucifixion and resurrection in A.D. 30. The woman is a metaphor of the nation of Israel, the covenant people of God. Our interpretation that the woman is national Israel is supported by several Bible scholars, all of whom note that an almost identical description of Israel is

found in Joseph's dream that is found in Genesis 37:9.[308] The "offspring of the woman" is Christianity (those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus," Rev. 12:17).

The Seven Heads And Ten Horns Of The Dragon

The text of Revelation 12 has two specific groups that the Dragon persecutes—Jews and Christians. Therefore, the heads and horns must symbolize the instruments through whom Satan will accomplish his persecutions. We already have seen this in other passages. In Daniel 7, horns represented kings or the kingdoms that they led (see Dan. 7:24; 8:20). In Revelation 12, we have two groups that are persecuted. Since two groups are persecuted, then each group of heads/horns must represent the kings through whom Satan waged his persecution against these two groups. To know which represents which group, we need look at history to find a match with seven persecutions and ten persecutions for either the Jews or Christians. Here is an interesting coincidence. The Jews have historically been persecuted by the following primary nations/kingdoms over its history (excepting the Germans in World War II):

1. Egypt (1200 B.C.?)
2. Assyria (722 B.C.)
3. Babylon (586 B.C.)
4. Media-Persia (539 B.C.)
5. Greece (350 B.C.)
6. Rome (146 B.C.)
7. Islam (638 A.D. and following)

As we will see, Christians were persecuted by ten Roman Emperors until the time of Constantine, 312 A.D. We have seven persecutions of the Jews in their historical past and ten persecutions of the Christians. Coincidence? Not to me.

Also, the Christian persecutions are, of course, post crucifixion of Christ, and therefore the Romans are the primary group that fulfills this aspect of Revelation 12. The Jewish persecutions include the time before Christ. The text supports a pre-Christ look back because what John sees in heaven is already present. It is a sign to him of what already exists (the woman) and what is going to exist (Christian persecution). The first sign uses the metaphor taken from Joseph's dream of Genesis 37, which supports the interpretation that, relative to Israel, we are not to limit our interpretation to periods prior to Christ, but to all of Israel's history.

Revelation 12 is unlike Daniel 2, 7, and 9. In each of these other passages, multiple characteristics were given to help identify the instrument through

whom the persecution was waged. Why is Revelation 12 absent of any such characteristics? The interpreter is given no help to identify the seven heads and ten horns. Why not? The same thing might be said for the Child in Revelation 12. How do we know that the Child is Christ? And how do we know that when He is "caught up," that text is referring to the ascension of the Lamb to the right hand of God? Because the text has already told us these things in earlier chapters of Revelation. Revelation 12 does not stand alone in Bible prophecy; it is not the first chapter of Bible prophecy. The reason why no characteristics are given to identify the heads and horns in Revelation 12 is because the interpreter is to use those characteristics already given (in Daniel and other places in the Bible) as the basis upon which to interpret Revelation 12.

For example, in a later chapter entitled "Where is Allah and His Muhammad?", we will interpret Revelation 13. We will see that Revelation 13:3 includes the three beasts of Daniel 7, i.e., the lion, bear, and leopard, but now they are three parts of one beast, the beast from the sea of Revelation 13. It is as if they have become incarnate in the beast from the sea. Why? Because Revelation 13 looks to Daniel 7 for its proper interpretation. Likewise, Revelation 12 looks to Daniel 2 for its interpretation. The heads of the Dragon are defined in the parts of the statue of Daniel 2. We interpreted the statue of Daniel 2 to symbolize the five nations, beginning with Babylon and continuing through Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Islam. Historically, the Egyptians made Israelites slaves, perhaps as early as 1200 B.C. The Assyrians already had defeated the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. Thus, if we add these two earlier dominions that occurred prior to the first listed in Daniel 2, i.e., Babylon, we come to seven kingdoms that persecuted the Jews.

The conclusion thus far? The persecutions of Israel are symbolized by the seven heads of the Dragon. The persecutions of Christians are symbolized by the ten horns of the Dragon. We will later discuss the Christian persecution, but we must first discuss the metaphor given that tells us the Jews will be saved from the Dragon. At this point in Israel's history, Rome is represented by the sixth head of the Dragon.

Who Is "The Great Eagle"?

Revelation 12:14 states, "The two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman." Who is this "great eagle"? The imperial eagle was the insignia of ancient Rome. It was carried on standards held by those leading the way for the Roman army.[309] Eric Cline, Professor of Anthropology at George Washington University, describes the significance of the imperial eagle to the Roman legion:

> The eagle standard was the most important of all those carried by each Roman legion. On the pole of the standard, which bore a golden eagle at its top, was affixed the abbreviation "SPQR," which stood for "senatus populusque romanus"—in English, "the Senate and the people of Rome." The ultimate disgrace for any Roman legion was to have its eagle standard captured in battle. That happened only very rarely, and an eagle's loss usually meant that the legion had been annihilated.[310]

Thus, the great eagle represents the imperial insignia of the mighty Roman Empire. When Revelation 12:14 states that the "wings of the great eagle" were *given to the woman*, the text is telling us that God will provide a way of escape for the woman from the Romans. The wings are a metaphor of this escape. The great eagle, Rome, will not be successful in its quest to annihilate the woman. We will see this in more detail in the sections following.

An alternate interpretation sees the "two wings of the great eagle" to represent Constantine's conversion before his battle with Maxentius. As stated, Constantine and his men saw a cross in the noon sky that was formed by the first two Greek letters of "Christ." The message, "In this sign you shall conquer," was a part of the noonday vision. That night, Christ appeared to Constantine in a dream and told him to place the two Greek letters as an emblem on the armor of each of his soldiers. He did so. Against all odds, Constantine and his men were successful against Maxentius and his army. From this point forward, the persecutions of Christians ended. The "two wings of the great eagle" quite likely are referring to the conversion of Constantine followed by the protection the Roman Empire afforded to Christians following this event. The problem with this view, of course, is that the "wings of the great eagle" are given to the woman (12:14), not the offspring of the woman.

First Jewish Rebellion—the Great War with Rome

Revelation 12:6 describes a period of "one thousand two hundred and sixty days" whereby "the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days." This period of three-and-a-half years is the same time period as two separate Jewish rebellions against the Romans in the first and second centuries. The first rebellion is referred to as the "The Great War with Rome"[311] (66–73 A.D.) and the second as the "Second Jewish Revolt" (132–135 A.D.) (or, the "Bar Kokhba Revolt").[312] The first rebellion included the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus (Emperor Vespasian's son), culminating in the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem's complete destruction and fall in A.D. 70. This rebellion began when Florus, the Roman

procurator based in Caesarea, took seventeen talents from the sacred treasury of the temple in the year 66 A.D. [313] The Jews rebelled, seeing Florus' action as another in a long list of sacrileges against their faith and specifically their Temple. Conflict ensued and escalated, with many Jews being killed by the Roman legion, followed by several victories of the Jews over the Romans (the greatest was over the Twelfth Legion led by Cestius [the Twelfth Legion's eagle standard was lost to the Jews during this battle, an event considered a disgrace to a Roman Legion.][314]). Next, civil war erupted *within the Jewish people* in Jerusalem, between those who wanted peace with the Romans regardless of the reason and those who wanted deliverance from the Romans regardless of the cost.

The culmination of the First Jewish Rebellion was the arrival of Titus to begin a siege of Jerusalem with his Roman army, estimated at 65,000 strong. The details of the Roman siege of Jerusalem is beyond the scope of this writing, but a quote from historian Josephus of the burning of the temple is evidence of the horror of the event:

> While the holy house was on fire, everything was plundered that came to hand, and ten thousand of those that were caught were slain; nor was there a commiseration of any age, or any reverence of gravity, but children, and old men, and profane persons, and priests were all slain in the same manner; so that this war went round all sorts of men, and brought them to destruction, and as well those that made supplication for their lives, as those that defended themselves by fighting. The flame was also carried a long way, and made an echo, together with the groans of those that were slain; and because this hill was high, and the works at the temple were very great, one would have thought the whole city had been on fire. Nor can one imagine anything either greater or more terrible than this noise; for there was at once a shout of the Roman legions, who were marching all together, and a sad clamor of the seditious, who were now surrounded with fire and sword. The people also that were left above were beaten back upon the enemy, and under a great consternation, and made sad moans at the calamity they were under; the multitude also that was in the city joined in this outcry with those that were upon the hill. And besides, many of those that were worn away by the famine, and their mouths almost closed, when they saw the fire of the holy house, they exerted their utmost strength, and brake out into groans and outcries again. [315]

The date the temple was consumed with fire was August 28, 70 A.D. (the ninth of Abib, Jewish calendar). Interestingly, this was the same date that Solomon's Temple (the first temple) was burned by the Babylonians six hundred and fifty years earlier (586 B.C.).[316]

Masada—An Extension of Time for Three-and-a-half Years

Following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., Jewish zealots known as "Sicarii" fled to the remote and fortified mountain fort of Masada outside Jerusalem, where other zealots had previously taken control from Roman soldiers garrisoned there. Emil Schurer describes as follows:

> The Sicarii, under the leadership of Eleazar, … had established themselves in this fortress at the very beginning of the war, and since then controlled it. The siege was extremely difficult, since the rock on which the city was built was so high and precipitous on every side that it was almost impossible to bring up siege instruments. … But the Romans managed to overcome this obstacle also by the use of fire. When Eleazar saw that there was no longer any hope of resisting the assault, he addressed the garrison, asking them first to kill their own families, and then one another. This was done. When the Romans entered, they discovered with horror that no work remained for them to do. Thus the last bulwark of the revolt was conquered, in April of probably, A.D. 74.[317]

The Jewish holdout at Masada lasted from shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 until A.D. 74, a span of three-and-a-half years, or 1,260 days (Rev. 12:6). Masada was located in the mountains outside Judea in the wilderness. According to historian Josephus, Masada was built by Herod the Great in 37–31 B.C. as a refuge for himself in the event of a Jewish revolt against his leadership. Interestingly, the fort was actually used by the Jews as their fortress, having been prepared by God for them (through the work of Herod) as a place of survival (Rev. 12:6). With the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the Jewish revolt against Rome all but ended, save for Masada.[318] Masada acted as a fortress of protection against the Romans for 1,260 days.

What did Masada accomplish for the Jews, particularly, since those zealots who sought to extend the Jewish Roman War all died at Masada? The three-and-a-half years served as a distraction to the Roman military stationed in Palestine. It allowed those few Jews who survived the fall of Jerusalem, plus those who lived in surrounding towns and villages, a reprise. Notice also that Revelation 12:6 states that the "place prepared" for the woman was a place for her to be nourished. That is, Israel recovered from its wounds while the Romans focused all their attention on the Jews at Masada. In the process, the promise of God that was given to His covenant people so many years before was fulfilled: a remnant was preserved from annihilation by the Gentiles. In this case, the second possible annihilation was not from the Babylonians in 586 B.C., but a successor kingdom to them, the Romans. In any event, God did not save the Jews from the Babylonians only to have them destroyed by the Romans (see Ezek. 6:8)!

Second Jewish Revolt

The Second Jewish Revolt, the Bar Kokhba Revolt, occurred sixty-two years later, under Roman Emperor Hadrian. This second revolt resulted from Emperor Hadrian's acts of founding a city of his own at Jerusalem, on the site of the ruined one, calling it "Aelia Capitolina."[319] Aelia came from Hadrian's gentile name, "Aelius," while Capitolina came from Hadrian's dedication and erection of a temple to his god Zeus.[320] This temple was erected by Hadrian on the Temple Mount, amidst the ruins of Herod's Temple (destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.). To Jews, this was considered an abomination of desolation similar to that occurring when Antiochus IV Epiphanes attempted to replace Judaism with Hellenism, the Greek religion, in 167 B.C.

Antiochus's act is prophesied in Daniel 11:31, some 400 years before it occurred. It was an act to end Judaism—the religion of God's covenant people. Had Antiochus been successful, Israel would have ceased to exist, for it is her religion and her relationship to *Yahweh*, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (renamed "Israel" by God in Genesis 32:28), that distinguished Israel among the nations. The Jews preferred death rather than allowing their faith to cease to exist. The Jewish revolt known as the Maccabee Revolt was the Jewish response. Approximately three-and-a-half years later, the Maccabean Revolt was successful in restoring the temple to Jewish hands and incompletely defeating of the Seleucid forces led by Antiochus.[321] The annual eight-day celebration of Hanukkah still commemorates the rededication of the temple as a result of the Maccabean Revolt.[322]

Fast forward to the year 132 A.D.: the Jews are once again faced with an abomination of desolation, but this time, at the hand of Roman Emperor Hadrian. In addition to building a pagan temple on the ruins of the Temple Mount, Hadrian forbade the practice of circumcision, the celebration of the Sabbath, and the study of the Torah by Jews.[323] Thus, the issue the Jews faced was the same issue that occurred with Antiochus in 167 B.C.—the continuance of their faith. Although their temple no longer existed, their religion did; circumcision, the study of the Torah, and the celebration of the Sabbath had all sustained the faith.[324] Once again, the Jews preferred death rather than allowing their faith to cease to exist. They revolted in the Bar Kokhba Revolt, 132–135. The Jews were led in their revolt by Simon Ben Kosiba (whose name was changed to Bar Kokhba by Rabbi Akiba[325]), who they acclaimed as their Messiah, the prophesied "star of Jacob" (see Num. 24:17), who would restore their land taken by the Roman oppressors. But unlike the Maccabean Revolt of 167 B.C., the Bar Kokhba revolt failed, completely.

In the aftermath of the failed Bar Kokhba Revolt, Jews were no longer allowed to live or even visit Jerusalem until Constantine's conversion in the fourth century. Constantine allowed Jews to visit Jerusalem once a year

to commemorate the destruction of Herod's Temple in A.D. 70.[326] From the time of the failed Bar Kokhba Revolt until Constantine's conversion in the fourth century, any Jew seen in Jerusalem could be punished by death.[327]

The Second Jewish Revolt also concluded in a fort in the wilderness. This second fort is not as well-known as the first, Masada. The second fort was called Bether. Schurer gives this description:

> The last refuge of Bar Kokhba and his supporters was the strong mountain fort of Bether, not very far from Jerusalem according to Eusebius, and in all probability on the site of present-day Bettir, 10 km south-west of Jerusalem. … After long and stubborn resistance, this bulwark too was taken in the 18th year of Hadrian, 134/135 on the 9th Abib, according to rabbinical tradition. … With the fall of Bether, the three and a half years of war (A.D. 132–135) were at an end.[328]

The Second Jewish Revolt lasted the same length of time as the holdout at Masada sixty-two years earlier: three-and-a-half years! This is the same time period as that identified in Revelation 12:6, 14. The reason why the Scripture uses two different ways to refer to the same duration of time, i.e., three-and-a-half years, is because it is referring to two separate historical events. Also, it is interesting that the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians, the destruction of Herod's Temple by the Romans, the defeat of the Jews at Masada, and the defeat of the Jews at Bether all occurred on the same calendar date, ninth of Abib, the first calendar month of the Hebrew calendar.

But what is the point? Both Jewish revolts ended differently than the successful Maccabean Revolt. The zealots were defeated at both Masada and Bether; yet, Israel survived, and Judaism continued. Even though both of the three-and-a-half year revolts ended in defeat, neither the woman, Israel, nor her covenant relationship with Jehovah God ended. The religion of the Jewish people continued! This is in spite of the fact that the temple, destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans, was no more.

Israel was spared from annihilation. Against all odds, the Romans were unable to destroy her; the remnant was protected by the very hand of God.

Who Are the Ten Horns of the Dragon?

In Foxe's *Christian Martyrs of the World*, author John Foxe names ten separate persecutions from the ascension of Christ (A.D. 30) to the conversion of Constantine in the fourth century.[329] The persecutions were not successive persecutions under successive Roman emperors; rather, they total ten persecutions in number. In those ten persecutions of Christians, the words of the Revelation are fulfilled (Rev. 12:10–11).

The Serpent (Dragon) Pours Water out Its Mouth and the Earth Swallows up the Water

The woman is Israel, the covenant people of God (see Rev. 12:15). The Dragon is Satan (see Rev. 12:9). The phrase "poured water like a river out of his mouth" (12:15) symbolizes Satan's persecutions of the Jewish people from the conversion of Roman Emperor Constantine (312) through the present day. The water is a metaphor for the spirits of demons (see Rev. 16:13–14) that act as Satan's instruments of persecution within humanity against the Jews.

These spirits of demons (coming out of the mouth of the Dragon) are the spirits which have persecuted the woman, Israel, for almost 2,000 years. Having lost her homeland, Jerusalem, to the Romans in 70 A.D. (and then again in 135 A.D.), the Jews were "scattered to the nations" in what Bible scholars have come to describe as the "second diaspora."[330] That is, from the time of the Second Jewish-Roman war, the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 135 A.D., the Jewish people were permanently banished from Jerusalem. They were scattered throughout Asia, Europe, and the entire world. Everywhere the Jews went, Satan "poured water like a river out of his mouth" after them. Yet, the people and their religion survived Satan's persecutions. The survival of the Jews and Judaism is what the text is referring to when it states the "earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the Dragon poured out of his mouth" (12:16). The survival of the Jewish people is by the hand of God, in the same way that God saved a remnant of the Jews when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. (see Ezek. 6:8, 11:1). God was their sanctuary then; and He was, and is, her sanctuary in the Second Diaspora among the nations (see Ezek. 11:16).

This is precisely what God promised to do for his covenant people, Israel, since the time of Abraham. God always saved the remnant in times of national crisis and promised that He would one day bring them back to Jerusalem from their scattered places (see Isa. 11:11–12). The prophecy of Isaiah 11:11–12 was fulfilled in the twentieth century, when Israel was granted status as a homeland for the Jewish people by the United Nations. The decision was codified in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948, by the United Nations.[331] The Jews later enacted the Law of Return, which provided a solution to the Jewish people's problem—to reestablish a home for the entire Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel. Thus, from the Bar Kokhba Revolt, 135 A.D., to May 14, 1948, the Jewish people were scattered among the nations as the earth swallowed up the Dragon's river of persecution. The prophecy of Ezekiel written almost 2,600 years before was fulfilled (see Ezek. 34:11–13).

Satan's Continued Persecution of Jews

Remember our thread in last days Bible prophecies? Holy war. Holy war waged against the children of God, i.e., Jews and Christians, by a kingdom at enmity with God. Find holy war, and you will find Satan's instrument. Rome was Satan's instrument in the days following the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ; but now, we have found another thread: anti-Semitism, i.e., any act against the religion, the culture, the ethnicity of Jews, including an action to eliminate Israel's right to exist.

We saw the thread of anti-Semitism when Antiochus attempted to replace Judaism with Hellenism in 167 B.C.; again, when Rome destroyed the temple and all of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.; and lastly in 135 A.D., when Emperor Hadrian built a pagan temple on the ruins of the Temple Mount, including his prohibition against circumcision, Sabbath observance, and the study of the Torah. All of these efforts were an attempt to destroy the Jewish people and the Jewish religion—and all were unsuccessful.

We see the exact same effort taking place ever since then and up to modern time by Islam's neverending struggle to eliminate Israel. As an example of Islam's anti-Semitism, here is the summary from the book flap of *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism*, written by Andrew Bostom:

> This comprehensive, meticulously documented collection of scholarly articles presents indisputable evidence that a readily discernible, uniquely Islamic antisemitism—a specific Muslim hatred of Jews—has been expressed continuously since the advent of Islam. Debunking the conventional wisdom, which continues to assert that Muslim animosity toward Jews is entirely a 20th-century phenomenon fueled mainly by the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict, leading scholars provide example after example of antisemitic motifs in Muslim documents reaching back to the beginnings of Islam. The contributors show that the Koran itself is a significant source of hostility toward Jews … Numerous complementary historical accounts illustrate the resulting plight of Jewish communities in the Muslim world across space and time, culminating in the genocidal threat posed to the Jews of Israel today.[332]

When it comes to evidence of Islam's anti-Semitism, we need only look at the Qur'an itself (Abdel Haleem translation):

- Qur'an 5:60: Say, 'shall I tell you who deserves a worse punishment from God than [the one you wish upon] us? Those God distanced from Himself, was angry with, and condemned as apes and pigs …
- Qur'an 2:65: You know about those of you who broke the Sabbath, and so We said to them, "Be like apes!"

- Qur'an 7:165–166: When they ignored [the warning] they were given, We saved those who forbade evil, and punished the wrongdoers severely because of their disobedience. When, in their arrogance, they persisted in doing what they had been forbidden to do, We said to them, "Be like apes! Be outcasts!"

Does that sound like anti-Semitism to you? Jews, the descendants of "apes and pigs"?

The point? Find a nation advocating the end of Israel's existence and you have just found the hand of Satan. It's not a revived Rome we are looking for. Rome was one of Satan's early hands. God removed Satan's Roman cloak when Roman Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity. Satan has now cloaked himself in another, in Islam, the ancient sons of Ishmael (see Ps. 83). God will remove that cloak as well, but not as he did with Rome's cloak. The cloak of Islam will eventually be removed; Satan will be judged. Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet will all be thrown into the Lake of Fire for eternity.

In conclusion, Rome, before Constantine's conversion, is Satan incarnate in the Dragon of Revelation 12, but only in part. The seven heads and seven diadems symbolize the seven kingdoms that persecuted the Jews, beginning with the Egyptians through Islam. The ten horns symbolize the persecution of Christians from the time of Nero, 64 A.D., until the time of Constantine's conversion, 312 A.D. The two wilderness nourishments of the woman for approximately three-and-a-half years each symbolize the continuation of life given to Israel during two specific historical revolts necessitated by a threat to its national and spiritual existence. These revolts allowed Israel to be nourished by God so that she might be sustained. The water poured out of the mouth of the Dragon symbolizes the demonic persecution of Jews, which scattered them to the nations. Yet, the earth swallowed up the water; the Jews were sustained as God became their sanctuary wherever they lived. The prophecy of the returning scattered peoples of Ezekiel 34:11–13 and Isaiah 11:11 was fulfilled when, in 1948, Israel became a state, and Jews from all over the world returned to Jerusalem.

The Dragon is still "pouring out water" to drown the Jews; he just has a different spigot—Islam!

Forget Rome. Rome will not be rising from her ashes in the last days.

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 5	
Point 1	Rome fails to fulfill key prophetic characteristics to enable it to be the last days' kingdom at enmity with God.
Point 2	The "great wings" of the eagle are a metaphor for the wings of God that saved the woman from Roman persecution.
Point 3	The "wilderness," which allowed the woman, Israel, to be nourished in two separate periods of three-and-a-half years each, symbolizes two separate Jewish revolts against Rome, each of which threatened Israel's right to exist. God acted on both occasions to spare Israel from destruction.
Point 4	The "seven heads" of the Dragon symbolize seven kingdoms that have persecuted the Jews since the days of Egypt through the modern time. Islam is the last of the seven kingdoms to do so.
Point 5	The "ten horns" of the Dragon symbolize ten persecutions of Christians, beginning with Roman Emperor Nero (64 A.D.) and ending with Roman Emperor Diocletian (303 A.D.). Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 312 brought the persecutions to an end.
Point 6	The "water" poured out of the Dragon's mouth symbolizes Satan's persecutions of the Jews since the time of Constantine to the present day. The "earth" that swallowed the water symbolizes the act of God to protect the scattered Jews throughout the nations, until their return to their homeland in 1948.
Point 7	Islam's anti-Semitism can be seen in Old Testament scriptures of the sons of Edom and the sons of Ishmael, who sought to eliminate Israel. The sons of Edom and the sons of Ishmael are the ancestors of the Muslims of Arabia today.
Point 8	The return of the Jews to Israel in 1948 and the establishment of the Nation of Israel by act of the United Nations is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of Isaiah 11:11–12 and Ezekiel 34:11–13. In this event, God recovered the remnant of His people a second time.

Chapter 6



Just Read the Graffiti

Introduction

Seemed pointless. I looked at the picture again. Solid rock shaped in different rectangular shapes—and a flat stone.[333] Was it a foundation for a future construction? The rock structures were encircled by beautiful marble columns from floor to ceiling, with intricate designs on the columns, all symmetrically arranged in an octagonal shape. What appeared to be Arabic script adorned the woodwork on the ceiling, almost like borders around the interior walls. Yet, the rock was rugged, barren. It seemed out of place in the midst of the grandeur of the structure that enclosed it. The most striking feature was the space—empty space, above and around the rock. *Seemed pointless.*

The Dome of the Rock, Islam's shrine; I suppose one might liken it to a sanctuary of sorts, except, as we will see, it's certainly not a mosque or similar place of worship. No, this bare Rock (hereafter, "Rock" will be capitalized when speaking of the interior Rock that is enclosed by the Dome) and its Dome covering are not about the worship of Allah. Its purposes are otherwise.

We will first begin with ancient Jewish history on the temple (the Dome of the Rock is located on the Temple Mount, the location where the temple once stood) and move from there to more recent Muslim history (seventh century).We will look at the purpose that Islam seeks to communicate through the design and location of the structure. Finally, we will look at the Bible's prophecy of a coming blasphemy in the last days that has specific reference to the temple of God.

Ancient Jewish History about the Temple

The story begins in ancient biblical times. In Genesis 22:2, Abraham, patriarch of both Jewish and Muslim faiths, is commanded by God to bring his son Isaac (Muslims believe Abraham brought Ishmael, not Isaac[334]) for sacrifice on an altar to God. Abraham obeys the command of God, but when Abraham has a knife raised high in the air to slay his son, God stops him. God acknowledges Abraham's act of obedience. A lamb is mysteriously caught in the thicket, and the lamb becomes Abraham's sacrifice in lieu of his son Isaac (Gen. 22:13).

Many scholars believe the location of Abraham's intended sacrifice was Mount Moriah,[335] and Mount Moriah is the location upon which King Solomon eventually built his magnificent temple in the tenth century B.C.[336] Solomon's Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. A second temple, smaller in size, was rebuilt seventy years later, under the leadership of Nehemiah (Neh. 2:1ff). Finally, beginning in 20 B.C., Herod the Great restored the second temple to the grandeur of Solomon's original temple. Herod's Temple was destroyed by the Romans, under Titus in 70 A.D. [337] It was this event that Jesus prophesied about when He said that not a stone would be left standing (Luke 21:5).

When Solomon's Temple was rebuilt by Herod the Great, beginning in 20 B.C., it was built on the Temple Mount (referred to as the "Noble Sanctuary" by Muslims) and consisted of several levels or courts, each rising above the other. The lowest court was the Court of the Gentiles. Gentiles (non-Jewish people) were restricted to this lowest level. Next was the Sacred Enclosure, three feet higher than the Court of the Gentiles. The Court of the Women was the next court. It was three feet higher than the Sacred Enclosure. Women were restricted to the Court of the Women. The Court of Israel followed, ten feet above the Court of the Women. Only men were allowed entry into the Court of Israel. The Court of the Priests was three feet above the Court of Israel, and only priests were allowed entry into this Court. Finally, the House of God was eight feet above the Court of the Priests, divided into two compartments, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

Priests were selected by lot to enter the Holy Place on a daily basis, where they performed offerings and prayers. The Holy of Holies included the age-old treasure of the Jewish people, the mystical Ark of the Covenant, a rectangular, box-like structure that was covered with pure gold. The Ark contained three items as reminders of God's provision and care of the Jews during forty years of wandering in the wilderness: the rod of Aaron, which miraculously budded, a golden jar filled with the manna that fed the people during their wilderness wanderings, and the tablets containing the Ten Commandments (Heb. 9:4).The cover over the Ark included two solid gold

cherubim sculpted to face one another with outstretched wings. The area between the cherubim, over the top of the ark, was referred to as the "Mercy Seat." The Spirit of God dwelt between the two cherubim (Exod. 25:22).

Entry to the Holy of Holies was forbidden except for one day a year, the Day of Atonement. Only the High Priest was allowed entrance on that day. The reason was clear. God was holy. No one was to approach His holiness without first complying with specific cleansing rituals. If any of those cleansing rituals were violated or omitted, death of the offending individual resulted (Exod. 28:35, 43; 30:20–21; Lev. 10:7, 9; 22:9; Num. 4:15, 19–20).

According to Leen Ritmeyer, former chief architect of the Temple Mount excavations and director of Ritmeyer Archaeological Design in England, the Rock within the Dome is the ancient foundation for the Ark of the Covenant, which was located within the Holy of Holies of the first century Jerusalem temple.[338] The *Mishnah*, the Jewish Book of Collections of Rabbinical teachings, refers to this solid rock structure as the "Foundation Stone."[339] It is *the specific stone upon which the Ark of the Covenant was secured*—that location where God Himself dwelt.[340] To Jews, it was the holiest of all locations because it was the literal dwelling place of God on earth.

Islam's History of the Dome of the Rock

The Dome of the Rock was built by Caliph Abd al-Malik in the Muslim year 72 (691–692 A.D.)[341] and is physically located on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. (The Al-Aqsa Mosque is also built on the Mount. The Temple Mount is referred to by Muslims as the "Noble Sanctuary.") Except for eighty-eight years during the Second Crusade, the Temple Mount has been under Muslim control ever since the Islamic conquest.[342]

In the twentieth century, the Temple Mount came under Jordanian rule (1948–1967), and Jews were forbidden from entering the area. After the Israeli forces gained control of the Old City in the 1967 Six-Day War, non-Muslim visits to the site resumed on occasion. Most Orthodox rabbis regard entry to the compound as a violation of Jewish law. This restriction is based on the belief that even though the temple was destroyed centuries ago, the precise location of the Holy of Holies, the sanctuary for the literal presence of God, entered by the High Priest only once a year, is not known. Hence, the restriction to Jews by their Rabbis is applied to the entire compound.[343] The Israeli government has granted management of the site today to a Muslim Council, and access to the site is now strictly regulated by the Muslim Council but allowed at specific times during the year. Non-Muslim prayers within the structure are strictly prohibited by the Muslim Council.[344]

The Rock itself is a relatively flat, solid-rock area, measuring fifty-six feet by forty-two feet.[345] In addition, there is a crack in the Rock.[346] As will be



Dome of the Rock

discussed, Muslims believe the crack was caused when Muhammad ascended to heaven. The Rock wished to accompany him; but he would not allow it, so he held his hand behind him to keep the Rock from ascending with him, and the Rock cracked.[347] The Dome has not been used by Muslims as a worship center for prayer or worship. There is no place for prayer to be held or for worshipers to congregate.[348] Even circumambulating (the process of encircling a central religious object multiple times—as is the case for the Kaaba in Mecca) was problematic, as people would have been entering and exiting simultaneously at every door.[349]

Arabic inscriptions taken from the Qur'an adorn the structure, both inside and outside. The inscriptions on the inner octagonal walls are (Don't skip this part—these inscriptions are critical!):

> In the name of Allah, the Merciful the Compassionate. There is no god but Allah. He is One. He has no associate. Unto Him belongeth sovereignty and unto Him belongeth praise. … Muhammad is the servant of Allah and His Messenger. Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. … The blessing of Allah be on him and peace be on him, and may Allah have mercy. O People of the Book! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was

> only a Messenger of Allah, and His Word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and say not "Three"—Cease! (it is) better for you!—Allah is only one God. Far be it removed from His transcendent majesty that He should have a son. … The Messiah will never scorn to be a servant unto Allah, nor will the favored angels. … Oh, Allah, bless Your Messenger and Your servant Jesus son of Mary. Peace be on him the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the day he shall be raised alive! Such was Jesus, son of Mary, (this is) a statement of the truth concerning which they doubt. It befitteth not (the Majesty of) Allah that He should take unto Himself a son. Glory be to Him! When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is. Lo! Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So serve Him. …[350]

The Arabic script on the outer octagonal walls is more of the same.

Islam's Account of Muhammad's Night Journey and Ascension

It happened at night. Beginning in Mecca sometime before the *Hijra* (the beginning of the Islam faith on or about 9/17/622), Muslims believe that Muhammad was transported to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem by the angel Gabriel on a winged horse named "Buraq."[351] At the time of Muhammad's Night Journey, the temple still lay in ruins, having been destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. A ladder was brought, and Muhammad and Gabriel climbed through the first of seven heavens to the throne of God. At each of the seven stages, Muhammad was encouraged onward by one of the Bible's prophets. Adam presided over the first stage or the first heaven. Jesus and John the Baptist shared the second heaven; Joseph, the third; Enoch, the fourth; Aaron and Moses, the fifth and sixth; and finally, Abraham, the seventh heaven, the threshold of God's abode.[352] Upon arrival, Muhammad ascended to the throne room of God, where he received divine counsel on the number of prayers Muslims are to pray daily.

Muslim Imam al-Bukhari (810–870) relates the details of Muhammad's rendezvous with God. In this event, prayer ("*Salat*") was made obligatory to Muslims. Portions of al-Bukhari's account follow:

> Muhammad … was led to a mysterious spot in heaven where he heard the creaking of the pens, and there God enjoined fifty prayers on Muslims. When Muhammad was returning to earth, he passed by Moses, who asked him about the number of prayers imposed on the Muslim community. When Moses heard it was fifty a day, he asked Muhammad to go back and ask God for reduction, "for your followers will not be able to bear it." Muhammad did as he was told, and God reduced the number by half, and Moses once

> again informed him it was still too much. Muhammad went back and forth between God and Moses until God granted him five daily prayers, which Muslims could tolerate. [353]

This event in Muslim history is referred to as the "Night Journey" and the "Ascension." It is celebrated annually by Muslims in the seventh lunar month of the Muslim calendar, the twenty-seventh day.[354] It is this journey that the Dome of the Rock was built to memorialize.

How does a Muslim shrine end up in Jerusalem? Islam's birthplace is Medina, on the Arabian Peninsula. Its holiest city is Mecca, not far away. Yet, the Dome of the Rock is in Jerusalem, many miles to the West. Why did Gabriel bother to take Muhammad to Jerusalem in the first place? Why not just ascend from Mecca or Medina? If the purpose of the structure was to assist Muslims in the worship of Allah, or even to help them to exalt Muhammad, why not construct it next to the Kaaba in Mecca? Wouldn't that still have accentuated the supremacy of Islam over all religions: Judaism and Christianity, as well as Zoroastrianism, the ancient religion of the Persians? These religions all existed at the time of Muhammad's revelation from the angel Gabriel. What's more, why construct such a mammoth, empty religious structure, which serves no religious purpose in and of itself? And why build the structure over the top of a giant slab of protruding Rock? Because it's about a lot more than the worship of Allah or the exaltation of Muhammad. It's a statement of spiritual superiority to the entire world!

Blasphemy Against Jesus Christ

We have the history. Now let's apply the Scripture to it. Does the Bible prophesy of a coming blasphemy against Jesus Christ by a standing structure? 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4 states:

> Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.

Notice verse 2:7, "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work …" The text is telling us that before the man of lawlessness appears in human form, he will be present in spirit form. In spirit form, he will work his "mystery

of lawlessness," i.e., his antichrist, anti-god teachings, and his blasphemies against both. One of those blasphemies will be his "taking his seat" (2:4) in the place reserved for God. The Dome of the Rock just happens to be his chair!

In fact, the Dome of the Rock is not so much about Muhammad as it is about Islam's declaration of who Jesus Christ is not. Return with me to the Qur'an's verses on the inner walls of the Dome:

> … There is no god but Allah. He is One. He has no associate.
> … The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a Messenger of Allah,
> … say not 'Three'-Cease! (it is) better for you!
> … Allah is only One God.
> … Far be it removed from His transcendent majesty that He should have a son.
> … The Messiah will never scorn to be a servant unto Allah,
> … Oh Allah, bless … your servant Jesus son of Mary.
> … Such was Jesus, son of Mary, (this is) a statement of the truth concerning which they doubt.
> … It befitteth not (the Majesty of) Allah that He should take unto Himself a son.
> … Glory be to Him! When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is.

The real purpose of the Dome of the Rock? It is to sit in that place where God once sat and declare to the world who Jesus Christ is not. Just read the graffiti. It's all over the walls!

Muhammad's Ascent as a Blasphemy of Jesus Christ

If you ever wanted an example of one-upsmanship, you have it in Muhammad's ascent to heaven. Seven stages of heaven, ascending from the Foundation Stone to the throne of God in heaven, and Jesus is on number two stage *shared* with John the Baptist. Muhammad? He not only clears the second stage but also keeps right on moving through stage seven. So secure is Muhammad in his rendezvous with God that he follows Moses' counsel to return time and time again to secure a reduction in the number of daily prayers for Muslims from fifty (Allah's first instruction) to five.

The prophecy of 2 Thessalonians 2:4 is fulfilled in the event the Dome of the Rock commemorates. Islam exalts Muhammad above Christ in Muhammad's ascension. Christ, who is only able to make it to the second stage, is left behind, as only Muhammad is worthy to journey all the way to the throne room of God.

This fact is similarly reflected in the Qur'an's designation of Muhammad as the "seal of the prophets" (Qur'an 33:40), the last and greatest of the

prophets. As discussed in a prior chapter, Islam considers Jesus ("Isa" is not the crucified Savior of Christianity since Islam does not consider Jesus to have been crucified, much less risen from the grave) as a prophet. However, since Muhammad came after Jesus, Muhammad is the greater prophet. Thus, to Islam, Jesus is a prophet whose claim to divinity was a corruption by Christians.

Blasphemy Against Christianity

In the Old Testament book of Judges, Gideon, an Israelite, is told by God to tear down an altar to Baal, a foreign deity that had been built by the people of Israel. Once it is torn down, Gideon is to rebuild an altar to God on top of the ruins of the altar to Baal. Gideon is to use the wood from the former altar (Judges 6:26) as the building material for the new altar. Why was Gideon told to build an altar on top of the ruins of the altar to Baal? Why was he instructed to use the wood from Baal's altar to build the altar? Because God wanted everyone to know who was the one true God.

Did you ever play "King of the Mountain" when you were a child? I did. We made our way to the highest hill. Then we fought to take everyone else down. The last one standing was king of the mountain.

The Dome of the Rock is Islam's tangible reminder to the world that it is "king of the mountain." It is no accident that it is built on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the world's holiest city. This was God's chair. Now, Allah and his messenger sit in it.

Blasphemy Against God and those Who Dwell in Heaven

The Bible says that no one can see God and live. The Bible records Moses' request (of God) that he might see God. God's response to Moses is found in Exodus 33:20, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" How is it possible that Moses is warned that to see the face of God is to die, and yet Muhammad visits God and lives to tell about it?

The prophet Isaiah has a vision of the heavenly throne room. He sees God, but only in His vision. His response to having seen God follows. "Then I said, 'Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.' Then one of the seraphim flew to me, with a burning coal in his hand which he had taken from the altar with tongs. And he touched my mouth with it and said, 'Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven'" (Isa. 6:5–7). How is it possible that

the prophet Isaiah is ruined because he sees God in a vision, yet Muhammad is able to stand in God's presence over and again and petition God each time to change His mind for Muhammad's better plan for Muslim prayer? Does not this action in and of itself fulfill the prophecy of 2 Thessalonians 2:4, "… who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God?"

Muhammad's visit with the divine is a blasphemy against God and His holiness. The Bible says that no one can see God and live, no one can stand in the presence of this holy God and live. Yet, Muhammad has, and the Dome of the Rock is the standing blasphemy to this end.

The Abomination of Desolation and Christianity's Pact of Silence

Matthew 24:15 states:

> Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let Him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house.

Jesus is speaking these words as He and His disciples are walking on the Temple Mount, admiring the beauty of the temple. Jesus remarks that the day is coming when the temple will be completely destroyed. In fact, destruction will be so complete that the temple will be dismantled stone by stone (Matt. 24:2).[355] The disciples are incredulous at Jesus' statement. They ask Him when these things shall take place (Matt. 24:3), to which Jesus foretells of perilous times that are coming (Matt. 24:16).

The key phrase is in Matthew 24:15, "When you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place …"[356] The text is referring to a building or similar structure. Why else use the phrase "standing in the Holy Place"? Further, notice the parenthetical comment in verse 15, "let the people understand." To the audience of the first century text, it is as if Jesus has just winked at them. They were quite aware that the event Jesus is referring to had already taken place in the second century B.C. (167 B.C.), almost 200 years before Jesus' remark. The Greek military leader Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the King of Syria, attacked and plundered Jerusalem, including the sacrifice to Zeus of a pig on the altar (12/25/167 B.C.).Thereafter, Antiochus prohibited the sacrifices of any animals in the temple for a period of approximately



Interior, Dome of the Rock, Foundation Stone Under Scaffolding

three-and-a-half years.[357] Antiochus's purpose was to replace Judaism with Hellenism—the Greek religion. Antiochus prohibited all forms of Judaism from being practiced.[358]

What Jesus was saying to the disciples (in the first century) is that an event likened to the abomination of desolation that had occurred at the hand of Antiochus (in 167 B.C.) would take place again in a future time period. This abomination would render the people "desolate" from their God because it would do the same thing that Antiochus did—prohibit the practice of Judaism, including the worship of Jehovah God. Jesus said that when this occurs, the people of Jerusalem should flee to the mountains for their lives.

Another New Testament passage reinforces this interpretation. Mark 13:14 states, "But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

Again, the text is clearly referring to some type of standing structure, i.e., a building; but notice the next clarifying phrase: "… standing where it should not be …" The Dome of the Rock was constructed on the Temple Mount, the former location of the temple. The temple enclosed the Holy of Holies, where the Spirit of God literally resided between the two outstretched wings of two golden cherubs (angels) facing one another (Exod. 24:17–24).Because of the presence of God's Holy Spirit, the entire structure was rendered holy. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year, and then

only if he complied with specific rituals; failure to do so would result in his death. God is holy, and He could only be approached in the awareness and posture of this holiness. The Temple Mount was likewise rendered holy by the presence of God's Holy Spirit. Much like the ground was rendered holy by God's presence in a "burning bush" (Exod. 3:5), so also the Mount upon which the presence of God rested was rendered holy. Thus, anything located on the Temple Mount, other than a temple to Jehovah God, did not belong there! To be there was to be in God's place; and if God wasn't there, then nobody else was to be there either!

The Dome of the Rock is standing where it should not be!

Christianity's Desolation of Silence

The abomination of desolation that had occurred at the hand of Antiochus IV Epiphanes was an attempt to wipe out Judaism and to replace it with the Greek religions. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 by Titus was a similar event. It destroyed the temple, the central feature of worship for all Jews, thereby rendering Jerusalem desolate from the worship of Jehovah God. The abomination of desolation that occurred at the hand of Emperor Hadrian was similarly an attempt to wipe out Judaism, including the practice of circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, and the study of the Torah. All three of these events had the same spiritual purpose—they attempted to wipe Judaism off the face of the earth and to render Jews desolate of their God. One last abomination of desolation was going to occur, but not against Jews—against Christians.

Enter Islam, seventh century. At this time, the population of Jerusalem was predominantly Christian. Having gone through several periods of building since the time of Constantine (fourth century), the city was filled with Christian worship centers. In the second century, when Emperor Hadrian changed the name of the city to "Aelia," he built a temple to Zeus on the site thought to be the location of the crucifixion of Jesus. In the fourth century, Constantine razed this structure, replacing it with the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.[362]

Eric Cline, in his work *Jerusalem Besieged*, describes several building programs, including the Church of St. Sion (referred to as the "Mother of All Churches"), and the New Church of St. Mary.[363] Cline gives the following description of Jerusalem, pre-Islam:

> The part of the western hill known as Mount Zion was rebuilt, and the population of the city grew to about sixty thousand. Jerusalem's population would not be so large again until the twentieth century. Among Justinian's most important additions to the city was the New Church of St. Mary …

> Thus Jerusalem once again became a religious center, this time for Christian pilgrims rather than Jews. The Christians, like the Jews before them, believed that they alone possessed knowledge of God's final revelations. Another prophet (Mohammed) and another religion (Islam) would soon challenge them in this belief.[364]

Byzantine Christians in the Holy Land surrendered to Islam in 638. The Dome was built in 691, some fifty years later. In its building, it stood as a witness that Islam was here to stay and Christianity was no more the majority faith of the land. In fact, Christianity was all but absent from the land of Palestine. How so? Actually, not by the sword of Muslim's holy warriors; although, certainly that was the result for many (there are relatively few Christian historical sources, only Muslim sources). No, the land was rendered absent from Christianity because of what Christians agreed to: evangelical silence. It was in their silence that the abomination of desolation occurred for Christians. The Pact of Umar was the vehicle. Let me show you.

Islam's Treaties with Conquered Peoples

Conquered peoples were required to enter into a Pact or Agreement (the "Dhimma") that required their evangelical silence, submission, and humiliation before all Muslims. This Pact is known historically as the "Pact (or Covenant) of Umar."[365] (Umar was the second caliph of Islam. Historians differ as to whether or not Umar was the actual author of the Pact, even though it bears his name.[366]) This Pact became the model for future agreements throughout Islam's history.[367] Those conquered who entered the Pact were referred to as "dhimmis."[368]

Here are a few highlights of the Pact of Umar (the "we" in the contract refers to the conquered peoples, i.e., non-Muslims, who are petitioning their Muslim lords through the agreement):

1. We will not erect in our city or the suburbs any new monastery, church, cell or hermitage.
2. We will not repair any of our church buildings that may fall into ruins.
3. We will not make a show of the Christian religion nor invite any one to embrace it.
4. We will not prevent any of our kinsmen from embracing Islam, if they so desire.
5. We will honor the Muslims and rise up in our assemblies when they wish to take our seats.
6. We will shave the front of our heads (to be distinguished as dhimmis).
7. We will not display the cross upon our churches.
8. We will strike the clappers in our churches lightly.

9. We will not recite our services in a loud voice.
10. We will not carry Palm branches [on Palm Sunday] or our images in procession in the streets.
11. We will not chant loudly or carry lighted candles in the burial of our dead.[369]

Examples of broadened restrictions in later centuries include:

1. If a dhimmi (a non-Muslim) raised a hand against a Muslim, even if in self-defense, he was sentenced to death.[370]
2. The dhimmis … were required to endure public humiliation by Muslims. Dhimmis were not allowed to own houses that were larger in appearance than their Muslim neighbors. Dhimmis were not allowed to ride a horse or camel, only a donkey. When passing Muslims, they were required to dismount, "for a Christian must only appear before a Muslim in a humiliating position" (this restriction existed into the twentieth century in Yemen, where until 1948, it was specified that a Christian had to sit sidesaddle when riding a donkey).[371]
3. Dhimmis had to walk with their eyes lowered and pass to the left of the Muslims, who were encouraged to push them aside. When standing before a Muslim, a dhimmi was required to speak in a lowered voice and only when authorized to do so.[372]
4. Many laws existed regulating the clothing that dhimmis could wear (color, shape, and dimensions). According to Sunni Muslim author Abu Zakaria Mohiuddin Yahya Ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi, thirteenth century,[373] the dhimmi, "… has to make himself distinguishable by a piece of yellow cloth and a belt over his clothing." If he enters a bath house where there are Muslims, or if he undresses elsewhere in their presence, the infidel has to wear an iron or lead ring on his neck or else some other sign of servitude.[374] Until 1875, the Jews of Tunisia could only wear a blue or black burnous (shawl or head covering).A twentieth century description by a woman of Yemen provides that the men had to wear a white cotton shirt with stripes of black.[375]
5. Under the Ottoman Sultan Orkhan (1326–1359), the *devshirme* was instituted. This practice consisted of a levy or tax equal to *one-fifth of the Christian children* from the conquered Balkan regions.[376] Author Bat Ye'or states: "These youngsters, aged between fourteen and twenty, were converted to Islam and entered the corps of janissaries, military militias formed almost exclusively of Christians. … At a fixed date, every father had to gather with his sons at the central place of the village. The recruiting agents, themselves janissaries, then selected the handsome and most robust youth in the presence of the qadi (ruling judge of Islamic law) … These levies gave rise to further abuses, the recruiters taking a surplus of children in order to sell them back to their parents. … Removed from their families, hardened by painful

experiences, and turned into fanatics by their education, these soldiers became the cruelest weapon against their own people."[377]

6. The dhimmi was required to pay two taxes, the *kharaj* and the *jizya*. The *kharaj* represented the "Islamic community's rights of ownership over the conquered lands of non-Muslim peoples."[378] The *jizya* represented a poll tax which was assessed at three rates in accordance with the economic condition of each individual male above puberty.[379] Not only was payment of the tax required by all males, but the payment process required an act of humiliation be endured by the payee. Bat Ye'or describes the humiliation process: "… this poll tax was to be paid by each person individually at a humiliating public ceremony in which the dhimmi, while paying it, was struck either on the head or the nape of the neck."[380]

One final point about the dhimma (the contract): it could be broken or changed at any time, but only by the Muslims. Consider this quote attributed to Caliph Umar in 640: "The land belongs to Allah and his Messenger. The Messenger of Allah can annul his pact if he so wishes."[381]

Silence Was the Desolation

Jerusalem and the Christians who lived there were rendered desolate from their God when they gave away their right to testify of their Savior. Unlike the Jews in the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanies (167 B.C.), Jews in the time of Titus (70 A.D.), or Jews in the time of Hadrian (135 A.D.), Christians capitulated to their foe. Christians agreed to Islam's terms in the dhimma contract. In so doing, they rendered the land that Christ had walked in as one that no longer was a place of many followers (Acts 18:10) and Christianity, future, absent of adherents. When Christians capitulated to Islam and agreed to the Pact of Umar, they agreed to a pact of *silence*. The significance of silence can only be understood when one remembers how Christianity was spread from the land of Palestine. It was spread by the personal testimony of believers in Jesus. That is, their testimony, their story about who Jesus Christ was and what Jesus Christ had done in saving them was the fire that spread the faith. When Christians agreed to the Pact of Umar, they gave away "the word of their testimony" (Rev. 12:11). In one generation, two, at the most, the silence was all but deafening to the world. The prophecy of Matthew 24:15 had been fulfilled.

Perhaps this quote by Sir William Muir in his work written at the turn of the nineteenth century best sums up the desolation symbolized by the standing Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount:

> The abomination of desolation stood in the Holy place. The cradle of Christianity, Zion, the joy of the whole earth, was trodden under foot, and

> utterly cut off from the sight of its votaries. And all is told by Byzantine writers in a few short lines. The pen of the Christian annalist might well refuse to write the story of cowardice and shame.[382]

The Dome of the Rock symbolizes the abomination of desolation that still stands in the Holy Place of Palestine. No longer of Christian majority, the land that Jesus once walked in was rendered by Islam all but desolate of the Savior who gave His life that others might live.

Seem pointless anymore? A Dome covering empty space? Just an exposed Rock? Not quite. Blasphemy—against God, against Jesus Christ, against the temple, and against Christianity as a religion.

Just *read the graffiti.*

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 6	
Point 1	The Dome of the Rock stands as a blasphemy against Jesus Christ. The Arabic script that adorns its interior and exterior walls is more about who Jesus Christ is not, than it is about who Muhammad is. Over and over again, the Qur'anic verse declares Jesus not to be the Son of God and to be a prophet born to the virgin Mary by command of God.
Point 2	In Muhammad's Ascent to heaven (Night Journey), he bypasses Jesus, Son of God, and also many prophets of the Bible. Muhammad alone is worthy to have a personal audience with God. In so saying, Islam blasphemes Jesus Christ as Son of God. This blasphemy fulfills 2 Thessalonians 2:4, which prophesies of one who will exalt himself above all others.
Point 3	The Dome of the Rock stands as a blasphemy against God and those who dwell in heaven. In Muhammad's Night Journey, Islam claims that Muhammad had a personal audience with the living God who is enthroned in heaven. Yet, the Bible states that no one can see God and live. Muhammad not only sees God, but also he has many visits with God to determine the number of times Muslims should pray. This act blasphemes God and makes Him a liar since the Bible says no can see God and live. It blasphemes Christians since the Bible says that Jesus is the only way that anyone can enter heaven. Muhammad has no right to stand with God apart from Jesus Christ as the "way, the truth, and the life …"

Point 4	The Dome of the Rock "stands" in the Holy Place (on the Temple Mount), which formerly held the temple and the Ark of the Covenant within the Holy of Holies. The presence of God rendered the ground upon which the Ark of the Covenant rested holy ground. The Dome of the Rock does not belong there; only God does. By its standing there, it is a blasphemy to God and Christianity.
Point 5	The Dome of the Rock is the "abomination of desolation" prophesied in Matthew 24:15. Christians gave away their testimony of Christ when they agreed to the required silence of dhimmis, conquered peoples of Islam. The land that Christ once walked in was filled with Christians in the seventh century. This land was rendered all but desolate from the Savior who died on its hill. In one generation, perhaps two, Christianity was replaced with Islam in the Middle East. The result was the same abomination of desolation that Antiochus Epiphanes accomplished in 167 B.C., when he prohibited the practice of Judaism and sacrificed a pig on the temple altar. Islam has committed the same desecration to Christians and Jews by its Dome of the Rock standing on the Holy Mount.

Chapter 7

Sharia in Bible Prophecy

Introduction

SHARIA. WHEN I first began my research, I only saw it in one passage, Daniel 7:25. Even in that passage, it seemed out of place. Daniel 7:25 states, "He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time." This passage applies to the tribulation period, the seven years preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ. Daniel 7:7–27 actually prophesies of three different time periods. The first time period is at the beginning of the empire of the fourth beast (Dan. 7:7–8); the second time period is during the tribulation period (Dan. 7:19–25); and the third time period is the divine judgment of the fourth beast and his kingdom (Dan. 7:9–14, 26–27). We have interpreted Islam to be the fourth beast of Daniel 7:7–8 that arose in 622 A.D. Since Daniel 7:25 applies to the tribulation period, why would Sharia be referenced in the tribulation period rather than in the first period when Islam was established (Dan. 7:7–8)? This chapter will answer this question. It will also identify Sharia in other Bible prophecies of the last days. It is the primary purpose of this manuscript to discuss the religious dimension of Islam in the last days. However, this chapter will broaden the focus to the political dimension so that we can properly interpret the Bible's warning of Sharia in the last days.

Definition

The Arabic word "Sharia" literally means "a *straight path*" (Qur'an 45:18). It is the term used to describe the rules of the lifestyle (*deen*) ordained for us by Allah. In more practical terms, Sharia [sometimes transliterated "shariah"] includes all the dos and don'ts of Islam.[383] That is, Sharia is the "perfect expression of divine will and justice and thus is the supreme law that must comprehensively govern all aspects of Muslims' lives, irrespective of where they live."[384]

To help us better understand the concept of Sharia, we will look at the definition of the religion, Islam, as defined by one from within its own ranks, Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi (1903–1979), an influential jihadist writer once referred to as the "greatest revivalist of Islam in the twentieth century."[385] Maududi stated the following:

> The truth is that Islam is not the name of a "Religion," nor is "Muslim" the title of a "Nation." In reality, Islam is a revolutionary ideology and programme which seeks to alter the social order of the whole world and rebuild it in conformity with its own tenets and ideals. "Muslim" is the title of that International Revolutionary Party organized by Islam to carry into effect its revolutionary programme. And "Jihad" refers to that revolutionary struggle and utmost exertion which the Islamic Party brings into play to achieve the objective … Islam requires the earth—not just a portion but the whole planet—not because the sovereignty over the earth should be wrested from one Nation or several Nations and vested in one particular Nation, but because the entire mankind should benefit from … [Islam] which is the programme of well-being for all humanity.[386]

Emphasis should be placed on several of Maududi's phrases in the above quote: "Islam is not the name of a 'Religion' … Islam is a revolutionary ideology … which seeks to alter the social order of the whole world and rebuild it in conformity with its own tenets and ideals … Islam requires the earth … the whole planet … because the entire mankind should benefit from … [Islam] which is the programme of well-being for all humanity."

Another twentieth century revivalist, Seyyid Qutb, explains Sharia in his renowned work, *Milestones*, as follows: "The basis of the message is that one should accept the Sharia without any question and reject all other laws in any shape or form. This is Islam."[387] Qutb continues:

> By the Shari'ah of God is meant everything legislated by God for ordering man's life; it includes the principles of belief, principles of administration and justice, principles of morality and human relationships, and principles of knowledge. … It also includes legal matters (this is what today is

> referred to as the "Shari'ah," while the true meaning of the "Shari'ah" in Islam is entirely different). It deals with the morals, manners, values and standards of the society, according to which persons, actions and events are measured. It also deals with all aspects of knowledge and principles of art and science. In all these guidance from God is needed, just as it is needed in legal matters.[388]

Consider the full impact of the above statements. Islam is not limited to an individual's religious views, whether they be submission to Allah or the belief in Muhammad as his messenger. It is not limited to how one prays or how many times one prays during the day or the direction in which one faces when he or she prays. It is not limited to how much one donates to charity, to fasting during Ramadan, or to the required Hajj to Mecca, if one is able. Islam is an ideology, the body of doctrine that governs an entire society, as defined by the Qur'an and the religious texts and interpretations that support it, along with the actual practices of Muhammad, its messenger. This ideology includes religious, political, legal, financial, and social dimensions, and one is a Muslim, according to Qutb, when one, "accepts Sharia without any question and reject(s) all other laws in any shape or form."[389] Further, to a Muslim, Islam is for the *well-being* of all humanity, and therefore, any non-Muslim governance or political system must be removed so humanity *can benefit* from Islam. Qutb puts it this way:

> It is in the very nature of Islam to take initiative for freeing the human beings throughout the earth from servitude to anyone other than God [Allah]; and so it cannot be restricted within any geographic or racial limits, leaving all mankind on the whole earth in evil, in chaos and in servitude to lords other than God [Allah]. It may happen that the enemies of Islam may consider it expedient not to take any action against Islam, if Islam leaves them alone in their geographical boundaries to continue the message and its declaration of universal freedom within their domain. But Islam cannot agree to this unless they submit to its authority by paying the *Jizyah* [humiliation tax of Dhimmis], which will be a guarantee that they have opened their doors for the preaching of Islam and will not put any obstacle in its way through the power of the state.[390]

Qutb continues:

> In short, to proclaim the authority and sovereignty of God means to *eliminate all human kingship* and to announce the rule of the Sustainer of the universe over the entire earth. In the words of the Qur'an: "He alone is God [Allah] in the heavens and in the earth." (43:84) … This universal declaration of the freedom of man on the earth from every authority except that of God [Allah], and the declaration that sovereignty is God's [Allah's]

> alone and that He is the Lord of the universe, is not merely a theoretical, philosophical and passive proclamation. It is a positive, practical and dynamic message with a view to bringing about the *implementation of the Shari'ah of God [Allah] and actually freeing people from their servitude to other men* to bring them into the service of God [Allah], the One without associates [Jesus or the Holy Spirit]. This cannot be attained unless both "preaching" and the "movement" [holy war] are used.[391]
>
> —Emphasis supplied

The result is that democracy or any other non-Muslim political system is not in the best interest of humanity, who are, as Qutb states above, "in servitude to other men." Therefore, non-Sharia must be removed and replaced by Sharia so that humanity can benefit from the sovereignty of Allah. Otherwise, all humanity will not be benefitting because it is not under the sovereignty of Islam. Until state authority is taken from the non-Muslim authority and replaced with Islamic authority, jihad must continue.[392]

Sharia, therefore, is the term that defines the law of Islam as well as all that exists in a society governed by Sharia. It defines how that societal order will be guided, enforced, and directed by the Qur'an and related Islamic texts. "Sharia law is Islamic law. Sharia is the basis for every demand that Muslims make [in a] society."[393] These demands are based upon the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Finally, the Qur'an is considered by Islam to "… exist beyond the mundane sphere as the eternal and immutable word of God."[394] That is, the Qur'an *does not change*. Islam, therefore, is an ideology that is not progressive or flexible. It does not change as times change, since the Qur'an is the immutable and eternal word of Allah upon which Islam is based. Neither does Sharia change, since Sharia is the summation of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam, practices a strict version of Sharia.[395] Other countries composed of large Muslim populations do not practice this same strict version of Sharia. Turkey, for example, highly populated by Muslims, has declared itself to be a "secular state," not governed by the Qur'an.[396]

In the chapter entitled, "Islam's Al-Mahdi, the Biblical Antichrist," we will interpret al-Mahdi, Shi'ah Islam's prophesied "messiah," to be the Antichrist, who will lead Islam in a revived caliphate to claim dominion over the entire world in fulfillment of Bible prophecies. The significance of this interpretation is that the Mahdi is prophesied within Shi'ah Islam by scholars as one who will impose the strictest version of Sharia upon the world and that he will do so "without mercy."[397] Thus, it is this version of Sharia that non-Muslim societies in the last days must become knowledgeable about. According to Muslims, "Islamic law is perfect, universal, and eternal."[398] Further, many Muslims, particularly those who live in Sharia states, see a

free society, such as the United States, in this way: "The laws of the United States, for example, are temporary, limited and will pass away. It is the duty of every Muslim to obey the laws of Allah, the Sharia. U.S. laws are man-made; while Sharia law is sacred and comes from the only legitimate god, Allah."[399]

In a Sharia state, here are some of the societal areas that differ from non-Muslim societies:

- The loss of freedom of speech, thought[400]
- The loss of freedom of the press[401]
- The loss of freedom of artistic expression (art is prohibited in Islam)[402]
- Cinema, theater, and television are censored[403]
- All non-Muslims are considered "kafirs" (third class citizens subject to the contract of a Dhimmi and the humiliating status of a Dhimmi).[404]
- The loss of equal rights for women[405]
- Non-Muslims cannot bear arms.[406]
- The constitution of a democratic state is replaced by the Qur'an.[407]
- Wives can be beaten by their husbands for not performing sexually.[408]
- Four wives are permitted for Muslim husbands.[409]
- Slavery (of non-Muslims) is permissible for Muslims.[410]
- Consumption of alcohol is prohibited.[411]
- Homosexuality is prohibited[412] and, in fact, is punishable by execution in most Muslim states today.[413]
- Gambling is prohibited.[414]

Bible Prophecies of Sharia in the Last Days

In the Introduction to this chapter, we mentioned Daniel 7:25, which prophesies of coming "alterations in times and in laws." It is the view of this writer that the "alterations in … law" described by Daniel 7:25 are the changes that will be necessitated by the implementation of Sharia law in the societies and governments of the non-Muslim free world.

In a related prophecy, Daniel 9:27, the Bible describes a "firm covenant" entered into between the Antichrist and the "many" during the tribulation period. The tribulation period will be discussed in detail in our last chapter, *The Reaping*. For now, we will focus on the "firm covenant" described in Daniel 9:27. It is the view of this writer that this is a reference to the dhimma contract entered into between Muslims and non-Muslims (as discussed in the previous chapter, "Just Read the Graffiti"). Dhimmitude is the contractual relationship established between Muslims and conquered non-Muslims who have chosen not to convert to Islam, but rather, to become subject to Islam. This relationship of servitude requires the conquered non-Muslims to visibly demonstrate public humiliation and subjection to their Muslim masters, along with the annual payment of the humiliation tax, the *jizya*.

Upon entering this relationship, the conquered are allowed to continue the practice of their religion, within limitations and boundaries, and are granted certain rights of protection as dhimmis.

Author Bat Ye'or states, "In the context of war, the dhimma [the contract between the conquered and the conqueror] constituted a protection pact granted by the conquerors [Muslims], assuring the vanquished [non-Muslims] an institutional legal framework which would guarantee their religious freedom, rights, and duties. For the victors, it assured a political and economic supremacy."[415] Thus, Islam provided protection in exchange for subjugation (not conversion), humiliation, and the payment of the humiliation tax, the *jizya*, by the non-Muslim.

The Hebrew word used in Daniel 9:27 and translated there as "firm covenant" is the word *berith*.[416] It is the same Hebrew word used in Joshua 9:6 to describe a "covenant" entered into between Joshua and the Gibeonites (see Josh. 9:6, 7, 11, 15, 16). The Gibeonites deceived Joshua into granting them safety, provided they became servants of the Israelites (see Josh. 9:11).

The Gibeonites had been living in the land divinely promised to the Israelites, and therefore, the people and everything within the land was subject to the "ban," meaning all of them were to be killed by the advancing Israelites (see, for example, Josh. 6:16–21).The Gibeonites successfully deceived Joshua into believing that they were traveling nomads who did not live in the Promised Land and, therefore, should be taken in by Joshua as slaves rather than killed. Joshua agreed and entered into *berith* (covenant) with them, thereby establishing a permanent relationship of servitude for the Gibeonites in exchange for their safety (see Josh. 9:8, 21). Because of the deception of the Gibeonites, Joshua was unable to fulfill God's command of annihilation of the inhabitants of the Promised Land. Even after learning of the Gibeonites' deception, Israel could not "touch them" because *berith* had been entered (see Josh. 9:19). This covenant was not a covenant between equal parties, but between a superior party (the Israelites) and a submitting party (the Gibeonites).

The covenant between Israel and the Gibeonites is similar to the dhimma contract between Muslims and non-Muslims. It also is similar to the *berith* ("firm covenant") described in Daniel 9:27. There it is entered into between the Antichrist and the "many" in exchange for certain rights, the only one of which specifically mentioned is the continuation of the practice of one's religion. We know this because in the "middle of the week," this specific right is taken away (see Dan. 9:27). It is the view of this writer that the text is prophesying that the Islamic Antichrist will force dhimmi status upon the submitting non-Muslim world to *begin* the tribulation period. However, in the "middle of the week," i.e., in the middle of a seven-year tribulation period, the "rights" granted to

dhimmis will be revoked. Conversion to Islam will be required for the world for the last three-and-one-half years of the seven-year tribulation period.

We make this conclusion by virtue of an event in history that fulfilled the phrase "put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering," also found in Daniel 9:27, and that serves as a "type" for the future. This phrase looks to the second century B.C., when the Jews were prohibited from the practice of their religion by the Greek leader Antiochus Epiphanes IV, who was in dominion of Israel at the time. Antiochus sought to enforce the Greek pluralistic religion upon the Jews, refusing to allow the Jews to practice the rite of circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, or the reading of the Torah. Those Jews who refused were killed. The prohibition reached its high point when in 167 B.C., Antiochus sacrificed a pig on an altar erected to Zeus in the Jerusalem Temple, thereby desecrating the temple and rendering Israel desolate of its Jehovah God. This sacrilege was the "abomination of desolation" referred to in Daniel 11:31 and later by Christ in Matthew 24:15. No further temple sacrifices to Jehovah God were allowed by Antiochus and the temple was rendered unclean by Antiochus's action. This prohibition continued until Antiochus's death in 164 B.C., a period of almost three-and-a-half years, and led to the successful Maccabean Revolt of the Jews against Antiochus's Greek forces.

What occurred under Antiochus Epiphanes IV is a "type" that will repeat itself in the Seventieth Week, i.e., the seven years of the tribulation period. The phrase "put a stop to sacrifice and grain offerings" refers to the end of all religions other than that of the Antichrist. *This event will not occur until the mid-point of the seven-year tribulation period* since the Antichrist does not break the firm covenant until the mid-point of the seven years (see Dan. 9:27).This also tells us that when the seven-year firm covenant is initially entered into, religions existing at that time are *allowed* to continue to be practiced, subject to the specific provisions of the dhimma (contract).

This interpretation is supported by the view of Seyyid Qutb, above quoted regarding Sharia. Once the political system of the non-Muslim society is replaced by Sharia and Islam's dominion is established, Islam will be offered, but not required, for the conquered society. Thereafter, citizens who choose not to convert to Islam but to practice their own faiths, will be allowed to do so, provided the *jizya* is paid and humiliation is established. Qutb states, "… [provided] they submit to its authority by paying the *jizyah* [humiliation tax of dhimmis], which will be a guarantee that they have opened their doors for the preaching of Islam and will not put any obstacle in its way through the power of the state."[417]

However, in the mid-point of the seven years of the tribulation period, *compulsion in religion will be implemented.* That is, conversion to Islam will be required of everyone, as prophesied by Daniel 9:27. This annulment of the

firm covenant, i.e., the dhimma, is also supported by Sharia. As stated in the preceding chapter, the dhimma can be annulled at any time, *but only* by Islam.

Caliph Umar (634–644), one of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, annulled the dhimma with the Jews and Christians from the Hijaz, basing his action upon the example of Muhammad, who had done likewise with the Jews of Khaybar. Muhammad is reported to have stated, "The land belongs to Allah and his Messenger, the Messenger of Allah can annul his pact if he so wishes."[418] And, "By Allah, and Allah willing, if I take an oath and later find something else better than that, then I do what is better and expiate my oath."[419]

Here is a Shi'ah Islam prophecy of the Mahdi who will require conversion to Islam of the entire world:

> The first thing that will occur under the rule of the Mahdi will be the Islamicizing of the whole world. The followers of all other religions will embrace Islam and profess faith in one God [Allah], just as He said in the Qur'an: "… to Him submits (*aslama*) whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly and unwillingly, and to Him shall they be returned" (3:82). *Consequently, there will be no place on earth where testimony, "I bear witness that there is no god but God" and "I bear witness that Muhammad is the Apostle of God," will not be heard.* … However, the Qa'im [the Mahdi] will not follow the Prophet's example of gentleness and flexibility and winning over the people by uniting them; rather, the Qa'im will kill, in accordance with the text of the testament (*wasiyya*), which each Imam, beginning with 'Ali to the Mahdi, was required to follow. He will also not follow the example of 'Ali, who adopted the path of forgiveness and benevolence in his dealings with the people … His state of affairs will be the sword … and he will not accept repentance from anyone, nor will the rebuke of his adversaries deter him from carrying out the command of God [Allah].[420]
>
> —Emphasis supplied

Notice the phrase above, "Consequently, there will be no place on earth where testimony, 'I bear witness that there is no god but God' and 'I bear witness that Muhammad is the Apostle of God,' will not be heard." Dhimmitude in Islam's historical past has not required the conversion of all those it conquered. Dhimmitude was only offered *after* submission and subjugation had been established, either through the killing of the conquered or by surrender to Islam before the conflict. Where surrender did not occur, the killing of the conquered was the inducement to the surviving to submit to Islam. The Qur'an states, "A prophet should not take prisoners until he has ensured his dominance in the land" (Qur'an 8:67). Thereafter, dhimmitude could be offered. Not so when al-Mahdi, the Antichrist, rises to establish his caliphate and lead Islam to world dominion. The last three-and-one-half

years of the tribulation period will be absent of any purchased rights afforded to dhimmis to continue the practices of their own religions.

Authority of the Beast

We find another allusion to Sharia in the prophecy of Revelation 13:4–7, as follows:

> They worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" There was given to him … authority to act for forty-two months … And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, … It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.
>
> —Revelation 13:4–7

Notice the word "authority" found in the quoted verses above. The beast is not only prophesied to be worshiped by the entire world (Rev. 13:3–4) but also to be given "authority" over the entire world. The word "Islam" literally means to "submit" in Arabic. Consider the following definition:

> The Arabic term "Islam" is derived from the root s-l-m, which means submission or peace. Muslims are those who surrender to God's will or law … Thus, [Muslims] have both an individual and corporate religious identity and responsibility or duty to obey and implement God's will in personal and social life.[421]

Thus, Islam presumes one's submission to the authority of Allah in religious, political, and all areas of life. When one submits to the authority of Allah and acknowledges Muhammad as its Messenger, one becomes a Muslim (see chapter 2, "Finding Satan's Fingerprints," for the Five Pillars of Islam). Revelation 13:7's prophecy of the Beast's "authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation" is describing the total dominion of Islam within the meaning of Sharia. Seyyid Qutb puts it this way:

> It is not the intention of Islam to force its beliefs on people, but Islam is not merely "belief." As we have pointed out, Islam is *a declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men.* Thus it strives from the beginning to *abolish all those systems and governments which are based on the rule of men and the servitude of one human being to another.*[422]
>
> —Emphasis supplied

Islam seeks first to remove all human kingship by the removal of the societal structures and governments that serve as the basis of the rule of political law in human societies. When Revelation 13:7 prophesies that "… authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him," the text is referring to the removal of those societal and political structures throughout the whole earth. The fulfillment of this prophecy occurs only as Sharia is implemented throughout the entire world by virtue of the authority given to the Beast (Allah).The worship of the Beast (Allah) (vv. 13:4, 8) is only one aspect of Islam's fulfillment of the prophecy. The other fulfillment is the political fulfillment, i.e., the entire world will come under the authority of Islam, politically, as Sharia includes political and religious and all dimensions of one's life.

This interpretation is also supported by Revelation 13:11–18. There, a second beast comes up "out of the earth" (Rev. 13:11), whose role is to cause those who dwell on the earth to worship the first beast (Rev. 13:12). In future chapters, we will interpret this second beast to be the Antichrist, Shi'ah Islam's al-Mahdi. Revelation 13:12, 16–17 states:

> He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. … And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the freemen and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.
>
> —Revelation 13:12, 16–17

Notice the condition the second beast imposes upon humanity: "No one will be able to buy or sell, except the one who has the mark of the beast" (v 13:17). In chapter 14, "The Reaping," we will interpret in greater detail the meaning of the phrase "mark of the beast." For now, consider the phrase as a metaphor for a person having converted to the religion of the Beast (Allah), something that Christians will refuse to do (see Rev. 13:8). Thus, Revelation 13:17 above is prophesying that in order for an individual to fully participate in the new Islamic society, i.e., by being able "to buy or to sell" (v 13:17), the individual must convert to Islam. Those who do not convert will not be allowed the privileges of citizenship in the new Islamic society of the Beast. In fact, many will be killed (see Rev. 13:15) as an inducement for the remainder to submit to the dominion of Islam.

Osama bin Laden made this statement, quoting from the Qur'an, "A prophet should not take prisoners until he has ensured his dominance in the land" (Qur'an 8:67).[423] The result is that both Revelation 13:1–8 (prophecy of

the first beast, Allah) and Revelation 13:11–18 (prophecy of the second beast, the Antichrist) both have a religious dimension and a political dimension. Islam uniquely possesses both of these dimensions.

Revelation 13:16–17, which prophesies that only a person who has the "mark of the beast" will be able "to buy or to sell," is very similar to the prophecy found in Daniel 9:27. The only difference is that Daniel 9:27 denies the right to worship freely and Revelation 13:16–17 denies the right to buy or sell, i.e., the right to participate in society. These rights are those normally afforded dhimmis in Sharia states (but not without humiliation and other public demonstrations that Islam is master and the dhimmi is slave). Both prophecies are that these rights will be denied in the latter half of the tribulation period. The reason must be the same. In the mid-point of the seven-year tribulation period, the Antichrist will require the conversion of all peoples to Islam. The heretofore rights offered dhimmis will no longer be present in a world subject to Sharia.

Deception Will Prosper

A final passage that describes another element of Sharia is Daniel 8:19–26. This passage prophesies of a coming leader, who is described as "insolent" and "skilled in intrigue," who will use his influence to deceive others (Dan. 8:23–25). This leader is likely the Antichrist, and the time period being referred to is the "appointed time of the end," that is, the seven-year tribulation period (Dan. 8:19). The specific verse that we need to address is Daniel 8:25:

> And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; and he will magnify *himself* in his heart, and he will destroy many while *they are* at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency.
>
> —Emphasis provided

When the text states, "… he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence," it is referring to the doctrine of Sharia called "*taqiyya*." *Taqiyya* is the Sharia sanctioned doctrine of intentional deception. *Taqiyya* is a concept in Islamic law that translates as "deceit or dissimulation," particularly towards infidels. It is based on Qur'an 3:28 and 16:106, as well as *hadiths* that permit and encourage precautionary dissimulation as a means of hiding true faith in times of persecution or deception when penetrating the enemy camp.[424] It allows a Muslim to intentionally deceive another person, if, in so doing, Islam is advanced or the individual's life or safety is preserved in the deception. An authoritative Arabic text, *Al-Taqiyya fi Al-Islam*, states the following regarding *taqiyya* in the modern-day era:

> Taqiyya [deception] is of fundamental importance in Islam. Practically every Islamic sect agrees to it and practices it. We can go so far as to say that the practice of taqiyya is main stream in Islam, and that those few sects not practicing it diverge from the mainstream. … Taqiyya is very prevalent in Islamic politics, especially in the modern era.[425]

Robert Spencer, renowned author and expert on Islam, describes *taqiyya* as follows:

> It's unfortunate, but true: Islam is the only major religion with a developed doctrine of deception. Many believe this doctrine, called taqiyya, is exclusively Shi'ite, but actually it is founded upon Koranic passages. Chief among these is this one: "Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers rather than believers. If any do that, in nothing will there be help from Allah: except by way of precaution, that ye may guard yourselves from them" (3:28). Ibn Kathir explains … "However, exempted from this rule were … those [Muslims] who in some areas or times fear for their safety from the disbelievers [non-Muslims]. In this case, such [Muslims] are allowed to show friendship to the disbelievers [non-Muslims] outwardly, but never inwardly …" This practice is also sanctioned by the Koran's warning to Muslims that those who forsake Islam will be consigned to Hell—except those forced to do so, but who remain true Muslims inwardly.[426]

In other words, Muslims can lie if it is to their benefit to do so, or if for the benefit of Islam in war (below). This is the fundamental issue for *taqiyya*. *Taqiyya* was also practiced by Muhammad, the messenger of Islam (upon whom Muslims are to model their lives). Consider the following statement by Raymond Ibrahim, Associate Director of the Middle East Forum:

> Muhammad—whose example as the "most perfect human" is to be followed in every detail—took an expedient view on lying. It is well known, for instance, that he permitted lying in three situations: to reconcile two or more quarreling parties, to placate one's wife, and in war. (see Imam Muslim, "Kitab al-Birr wa's-Salat, Bab Tahrim al-Kidhb wa Bayan al-Mubih Minhu," Sahih Muslim, rev. ed., Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, trans. [New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 2000]). According to one Arabic legal manual devoted to jihad as defined by the four schools of law, *"The ulema agree that deception during warfare is legitimate … deception is a form of art in war."* Ahmad Mahmud Karima, Al-Jihad fi'l Islam: Dirasa Fiqhiya Muqarina (Cairo: Al-Azhar, 2003), p. 304, author's translation). Moreover, according to Mukaram, this deception is classified as *taqiyya*: "***Taqiyya in order to dupe the enemy is permissible.***" (Mukaram, At-Taqiyya fi 'l-Islam, p. 32.)[427]
>
> —Emphasis supplied

The *Reliance of the Traveller* is a substantive and authoritative compilation of Islamic law (from the Shafi`i School of Islamic Law) and considered to be the classic manual of Sunni Islamic law among Islamic scholars.[428] Here is one example of how it describes situations where lying is not only permissible, *but obligatory*:

> This is an explicit statement that lying is sometimes permissible for a given interest, scholars having established criteria defining what types of it are lawful. … When it is possible to achieve such an aim by lying but not by telling the truth, it is permissible to lie if attaining the goal is permissible … *and obligatory to lie if the goal is obligatory.* When, for example, one is concealing a Muslim from an oppressor who asks where he is, it *is obligatory to lie about his being hidden*.[429]
>
> —Emphasis supplied

Why might this doctrine of deception matter in the last days? Because "deception during warfare is legitimate" (above quote), and Islam is in a perpetual jihad to impose itself upon the non-Muslim world. In fact, Islam is described by many Muslims as a religion of peace; and those Muslims who are violent are described as terrorists or extremists. Those who advocate that Islam is not a religion of peace are labeled as Islamaphobic, as spewers of hate, bigots, or simply ignorant of the true nature of Islam.[430] Which statement is true, particularly, in light of *taqiyya*? Islam is either a religion of peace or it is not.

Take, for example, the recent controversy concerning the building of the Ground Zero Mosque in New York City. Muslim supporters of the building of the Mosque made many statements that to build the Mosque would foster reconciliation between Americans and Middle East Muslims.[431] The New York Times reported:

> The location was precisely a key selling point for the group of Muslims who bought the building in July. A presence so close to the World Trade Center, "where a piece of the wreckage fell," said Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, the cleric leading the project, "sends the opposite statement to what happened on 9/11." … "We want to push back against the extremists," added Imam Feisal, 61 … The mayor's director of the Office of Immigrant Affairs, Fatima Shama, went further. "We as New York Muslims have as much of a commitment to rebuilding New York as anybody," Ms. Shama said. Imam Feisal's wife, Daisy Khan, serves on an advisory team for the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, and Lynn Rasic, a spokeswoman for the memorial, said, "The idea of a cultural center that strengthens ties between Muslims and people of all faiths and backgrounds is positive."[432]

Is the Ground Zero Mosque a "cultural center that strengthens ties between Muslims and people of all faiths" as Lynn Rasic advocates in the preceding quote, or is it really an act of Islam to establish its supremacy and claim its dominion on the soil of the Great Satan, America?

Consider the informed response of Sam Solomon, a former Muslim, to the prospects of the Mosque serving as a means of reconciliation between Americans and Muslims:

> First of all, the sponsors and supporters of the Ground Zero Mosque insist that the significance of the building of this mosque is that it constitutes a refutation of the radical "fringe" within Islam, and as such, is a gesture of peace and reconciliation toward America and the victims of 9/11. But, it is ludicrous for anybody to accept that this is a gesture of peace in the Western sense—rather it is a different definition of "peace." It is the Islamic definition of "peace" as a suspension of "struggle" which is ultimately said to emerge once opposition ceases, and Islam reigns supreme as Muhammad has stated, "Islam rises and nothing rises above it."
>
> The rationale of the sponsors is that acts of terrorism are being carried out by misguided "radicals" rather than true Muslims and that as a consequence, Islam itself has been victimized and defamed and needs to be defended. Their solution is to appear to decry all "radicalism," and to take the bold symbolic act of erecting a 13 to 15-story Mosque—ostensibly representing true Islam—on the site itself, in their words, to "bridge and heal this divide." So, if allowed to be built, this mosque would consolidate, solidify, and embody a fallacious and pernicious interpretation of what really happened at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. (See "The Mosque and Its Role in the Society," [www.Pilcrowpress.com]). In one fell swoop, it will be a re-writing of American history with American cooperation, and will achieve another major Islamic goal of setting a high profile beachhead at a strategic location in the seat of American economic power.[433]

Don't think for a moment that the building of the Ground Zero Mosque is the first time in history that Islam has erected a building to memorialize its superiority. In our preceding chapter, we reviewed the history of Islam's building of the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount in 691. The act was clearly to establish Muhammad's claim as the greatest prophet and to declare Jesus Christ not to be the Son of God. The Dome of the Rock, situated on the Temple Mount, the holiest land in the world to Jews and Christians, declared to the world that Islam was superior to all other world religions, particularly to Christianity, the faith that surrendered to Islam some fifty years prior.

Consider what happened at Constantinople in 1453, when the Muslims overtook the city under Sultan Mehmet II. The first act following the overcoming of the walls of the city was the desecration of the Hagia Sophia Church and its conversion to a mosque. The act of desecration is described as follows:

> Throughout the siege, the Holy Liturgy and Prayer of the Hours were performed at the Hagia Sophia, and the church formed a refuge for many of those who were unable to contribute to the city's defense. Trapped in the church, congregants and refugees became booty to be divided amongst the invaders. The building was desecrated and looted, and occupants enslaved or slaughtered; a few of the elderly and infirm were killed, and the remainder chained. Priests purportedly continued to perform Christian rites until stopped by the invaders. When the Sultan and his cohort entered the church, one of the Ulama climbed the pulpit and recited the Shahada, transforming at once the church into a mosque.[434]

After Sultan Mehmet's destruction of the city and the conversion of the church to a mosque, the building served as a mosque from 1453 until 1925, when it was converted to a museum (Istanbul [Turkey], the location of the mosque, repealed Islamic law in 1924, resulting in it being converted to a museum in 1925).[435]

In each of these two events, Islam sought to establish its supremacy over an area previously inhabited and controlled by Christians that Islam had defeated in holy war. Similarly, the destruction of the World Trade Center by jihadists is heightened by the location of a mosque on the land claimed by Islam in this epic and tragic event. This is precisely what happened in the building of the Dome of the Rock and the conversion of the Hagia Sophia to a mosque. Once again, we return to a quote from former Muslim Sam Solomon (as quoted by Dr. Timothy Furnish, History New Network[436]):

> The basic principle is, that a mosque, totally unlike a church or synagogue, is a "sign" and a "symbol" of the establishment of "authority"—both religious and political—not just a place of worship for its adherents. A mosque is the symbol of the establishment of an Islamic authority, and an announcement of the beginning of the "rightful restoration" of the land according to Islamic claims that the "whole world is a mosque," and is echoed in Muhammad's words, "the whole earth has been declared unto me a mosque." Therefore it is a matter of "restoring" rather than "claiming" the land to Islam, as any land not in current submission is at virtual war with Islam, and must be brought "back" according to the Qur'anic version of history.
>
> This process of "bringing back" has a name, it is called "Islamisation," and is implemented progressively though immigrating, segregating, gaining rights, and slowly asserting the supremacy of Islam politically, socially and even culturally. So, yes, the Ground Zero Mosque would be a beachhead—and an important one...If built, the Ground Zero Mosque will be the most influential sign and symbol of Islamic authority in the Western World.[437]

A very important aspect of *taqiyya* (and Sharia) is what is known as "non-violent jihad." Non-violent jihad seeks to manipulate the thoughts and opinions of non-Muslims living in a non-Sharia society. It seeks to manipulate their thoughts through deception so that Islam is looked upon favorably, thereby weakening that society for a later violent jihad, should such be necessary.[438] The practice was first referred to as "civilization jihad" by the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan* in Arabic), the largest organized Sunni entity in the world, which is exclusively dedicated to the implementation of Sharia worldwide and the revival of the Islamic state throughout the world (the caliphate). The Muslim Brotherhood's creed is: "Allah is our objective; the Qur'an is our law; the Prophet is our leader: jihad is our way; and death for the sake of Allah is the highest of our aspirations."[439] The Muslim Brotherhood is active in the United States, and its agenda in America was recorded in a written document entered as evidence in the 2008 *United States v. Holy Land Foundation* terrorist finance trial. The document entitled "The Explanatory Memorandum" was written in 1991 by Mohammad Akram, a senior Hamas leader resident in the United States and a member of the Board of Directors of the Muslim Brotherhood in North America.[440] The document is summarized as follows:

> The document makes plain that the Islamic Movement is a [Muslim Brotherhood] effort, led by the Ikwan [Muslim Brotherhood] of America. The Explanatory Movement goes on to explain that the "Movement" is a "settlement process" to establish itself inside the United States and, once established, to undertake a "grand jihad" characterized as a "civilization jihadist" mission that is likewise led by the Muslim Brotherhood. Specifically, the document describes the "settlement process" as a grand jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and "sabotaging" its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated …[441]

Did you catch the last sentence? The Muslim Brotherhood's plan is to eliminate and destroy Western civilization from within. *This is a non-violent jihad.* It seeks to destroy Western civilization through a "civilization jihad." This jihad will seek to deceive the minds of Americans into believing that Islam is an ideology of peace and a better way for all society and that there is little difference between Sharia and the United Sates Constitution.

Recently, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, the cleric leading the building of the Mosque, stated this about Sharia: "90 percent of Sharia law is fully compatible—not only compatible—it's consistent or compatible with American constitutional law and American laws. The areas of difference are small and minor."[442] Do you remember the list of differences between Sharia and the free

West at the beginning of this chapter? Do you consider that list of differences to be minor? Have you read about life in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, or Saudi Arabia, which are all under varying interpretations of Sharia? Why would Imam Rauf make such a statement when clearly Sharia is not compatible with the United States Constitution? Perhaps it is because he is practicing his own version of *taqiyya*?

Consider two recent examples of many that could be offered of the differences between a Sharia state and the United States Constitution. The first example is of a former Muslim who converted to Christianity and now is a pastor in Iran. He is currently sentenced to die by hanging for his apostasy from Islam:

> "**Iranian Pastor Accused of 'Thought Crimes' to Die by Hanging**," by Michael Ireland for Assist News Service, November 13:
>
> TEHRAN, IRAN (ANS)—An Iranian court has passed down a death sentence on a Christian pastor, who was found guilty of so-called "thought crimes." According to www.presenttruthmn.com, the official verdict has now been delivered in writing to Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, stating that he is to be hung for the crime of apostasy. …[443]

Then there's this example of a Christian woman in Pakistan who is alleged to have made derogatory comments about Muhammad:

> **Christian Woman Sentenced to death in Pakistan.**
>
> LAHORE, Pakistan (AFP)—A Pakistani court has sentenced to death a Christian mother of five for blasphemy, the first such conviction of a woman and sparking protests from rights groups Thursday. Asia Bibi, 45, was sentenced Monday by a local court in Nankana district in Pakistan's central province Punjab, about 75 kilometers (47 miles) west of the country's cultural capital of Lahore … Bibi's case dates back to June 2009 when she was asked to fetch water while out working in the fields. But a group of Muslim women laborers objected, saying that as a non-Muslim, she should not touch the water bowl. A few days later the women went to a local cleric and alleged that Asia made derogatory remarks about the Prophet Mohammed. The cleric went to local police, who opened an investigation. She was arrested in Ittanwalai village and prosecuted under Section 295 C of the Pakistan Penal Code, which carries the death penalty. Sentencing her to hang, Judge Naveed Iqbal "totally ruled out" any chance that Asia was falsely implicated and said there were "no mitigating circumstances," according to a copy of the verdict seen by AFP.[444]

Here is a quote from the Hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari, one of the six canonical collections of Sunni Islam. It is a saying attributed to Muhammad

himself and is the basis for the sentence of death in both of the above referenced real life examples. Muhammad said:

> A Muslim who has admitted that there is no god but Allah and that I am His prophet may not be killed except for three reasons: as punishment for murder, for adultery, or for apostasy.[445]

In recent years, Sharia is making its way even to America, where it threatens, ever so slowly, to usurp the United States constitution. For example, a New Jersey circuit judge refused to grant a restraining order to a wife who alleged that her Muslim husband had raped her repeatedly. The Muslim man did not deny the allegation, but claimed that "he had behaved according to his Muslim beliefs." Circuit Judge Joseph Charles cited the husband's Muslim beliefs as the reason for the judge's *denial of the wife's request* for the restraining order.[446] The circuit court decision was overturned by New Jersey's Appellant Court, stating, "The husband's religious beliefs were irrelevant and that the judge, in taking them into consideration, was mistaken."[447] However, for the circuit judge to have made the decision in the first place, shows evidence of the danger of a "creeping" Sharia in America. In fact, the 2010 election, Oklahoma voters approved by a seventy percent margin an amendment to its constitution that prohibits its judges from making decisions of law based on Sharia.[448]

Why mention these examples taken from America? Certainly, in America, Muslims and non-Muslims live alongside one another with rare incident between the two groups (consider, for example, Dearborn, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, where the Muslim population comprises nearly forty percent of the total population of 100,000). Yes, at present, there is little conflict in America between Muslims and non-Muslims. However, the Bible warns of a "deception" that will succeed in the last days, and in the process, many people will die. Oklahoma's decision (although presently under review by Oklahoma judiciary) to take an offensive approach to Sharia should give hope to those, like myself, who perceive the danger of Sharia to be real and worthy of preemptive legal action.

The reason why Americans need to take special notice of Sharia is that America makes herself particularly vulnerable to the threat of Islam's deception. We have elevated multiculturalism, political correctness, and tolerance to be virtues above all others, including truth. Our actions put blinders on the minds of Americans, thereby allowing the deception to succeed because we deny the reality of the danger right before us.

In the recent study entitled *Shariah, the Threat to America*, *an Exercise in Competitive Analysis Report of Team B II*, an entire panel of experts sought to alert the leaders of America to the potential threat to the United States

Constitution of Sharia. Experts on the panel included Lieutenant General William G. "Jerry" Boykin, United States Army (retired); Lieutenant General Edward Soyster, United States Army (retired); Ambassador Henry F. Cooper, Chairman of the Board of Directors of High Frontier and Chairman Emeritus of Applied Research Associates; Stephen C. Coughlin, Esq, attorney, and specialist in Islamic Sharia Law; Frank Gaffney, Founder and President of the Center for Security Policy in Washington, DC; Joseph E. Schmitz, fifth Senate confirmed Inspector General of the Department of Defense; and many other experts in security and related activities. Here is one statement of many that could be drawn from the study:

> Truth—as supported by facts, history, and logic—has been vanquished by "politically correct" efforts to impose on this country and its institutions an understanding of Islam that hides the centrality of shariah, jihad, and Islamic supremacism, even though these are defining imperatives that pose an existential threat to Western-style liberty … Judgment, no matter how discerning, is now tarred as "prejudice" and, therefore, a neo-barbarous act to be repressed and suspended all together.[449]

How is it possible that any Muslim (particularly one who is an American citizen) could ever conclude that the building of the Ground Zero Mosque on soil proximate to the prior location of the World Trade Center—and, in fact, identified with the World Trade Center by being the location of the landing gear of one of the planes that destroyed the World Trade Center—how is it possible that this Muslim could ever conclude that such a Mosque could be an instrument of reconciliation between Islam and the West? The statement itself defies all logic and evidences a complete lack of sensitivity to the victims killed in this disaster and the country humiliated by this disaster. To the one who has eyes to see and ears to listen, it is evidence of the presence of America's blinders to reality, of multiculturalism and tolerance gone awry. It is also evidence of our arrogance. We see ourselves as beyond prejudice, as beyond distinguishing people by the color of their skin, the direction of their prayers, or the size of their pocket books. After all, we are not like the rest of the world that distinguishes others by these very factors. Our strength is in our blindness, we believe. In reality, *our strength has become our weakness*, and we have become blind to the dangers that are at our front door.

And what does this have to do with Bible prophecy? We began this last point with Daniel 8:25. What does *taqiyya*, i.e., deception in Islam, have to do with Daniel 8:25? The passage states, "He shall cause deceit to succeed …" The NIV translation puts it this way, "He shall cause deceit to prosper." How does *deceit* prosper? It is interesting that the text does not state that the Antichrist will prosper, but that "deceit [will] prosper"

(Dan. 8:25 NIV). Somehow the leader's influence, either through his status, importance, or the way he *spins the story*, will cause *deceit* to be successful; and the people will be destroyed while they "are at ease" (Dan. 8:25). I propose that the text is prophesying of a time when *taqiyya* will have succeeded in convincing the world that Islam is a religion of peace that need not be feared and that its only purpose is to bring peace and justice to a world so desperately in need of both.

That deception has not occurred, *yet*. It did not occur in the first period described in Daniel 7:7–8 (except on the Arabian Peninsula), which is why the text is absent of any mention of Sharia *until the third period,* described in Daniel 7:19–25. The third period is the time of the Tribulation, the seven years preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ. The prophecy is that during this period, *deceit* will prosper, it will succeed, and when it does, "many" will be destroyed "while at their ease" (Dan. 8:25). After all, as Seyyid Qutb stated, "It is in the very nature of Islam to take the initiative for freeing the human beings throughout the earth from servitude to anyone other than God [Allah]."[450] It is a deception—one that the Bible prophesies will allow Islam to deceive, destroy, and subjugate the entire free world. It is not freedom that Islam will bring; it is slavery.

Summary of Key Points for Chapter 7	
Point 1	Islam is a revolutionary ideology that includes both religious and political spheres. Islam seeks to alter the social order of the entire world and rebuild it in conformity with the Qur'an and Sunnah. Sharia is the summation of the Qur'an and Sunnah, which a Muslim is to accept without any question. To accept Sharia is to reject all other laws in any shape or form.
Point 2	Islam is a proclamation of the sovereignty of Allah, which entails the elimination of all human kingships so that humanity might submit to Allah. According to Islam, when humanity comes under the dominion of Islam through Sharia, humanity will experience the freeing from servitude to other men so that they might, for their own benefit, serve Allah. To Islam, this is for humanity's benefit, and Islam is under the obligation and duty to remove human kingships to enable humanity to benefit from servitude to Allah.
Point 3	According to Muslims, the Qur'an is the immutable, eternal word of God. It does not change; it is eternal. Therefore, Sharia does not change. It is not progressive or flexible as societies change.

Point 4	Daniel 9:27 prophesies that a "firm covenant" will be entered between the Antichrist and "the many" in the seven-year tribulation period. This "firm covenant" is interpreted to be a reference to Sharia, including the practice of dhimmitude, which requires the humiliation and subjection of non-Muslims, along with the payment of the humiliation tax, the jizya. In the middle of the seven-year tribulation period, the Mahdi (the Antichrist) will revoke the dhimma. Conversion to Islam will be required from that point forward, until the second coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the tribulation period.
Point 5	Revelation 13:2–10 prophesies that the first beast (Allah) will impose the authority of Islam upon the entire world. This "authority" is a reference to the political dimension of Islam, which requires the removal of all forms of government and politics other than that of Sharia so that the sovereignty of Allah will be established. Revelation 13:16–17 prophesies that only those who have the mark of the Beast (have converted to Islam) will be able "to buy or to sell." This phrase, "to buy or to sell," is a reference to the Antichrist's requirement that all non-Muslims must convert to Islam or be excluded from the rights and benefits of the Muslim society.
Point 6	Daniel 8:25 prophesies that in the final period of the Indignation (the tribulation period), the Antichrist will "cause deceit to succeed" through his influence. The phrase "cause deceit to succeed" is a reference to the doctrine of deception (*taqiyya*) in Islam that allows a Muslim to intentionally deceive others if, by so doing, his own safety is preserved or Islam is advanced through that deception. The deception includes the claim that Islam is a religion of peace. Daniel 8:25 prophesies that this deception will be successful. The deception will enable Islam to succeed in its dominion of the world, over the democracies of the free world. In the process, the many who are "at ease" (Dan. 8:25) will be killed.

Chapter 8

Where Is Allah and His Muhammad?

Introduction

PROPHECIES ARE FOR the future. By their very definition, prophecies predict events not yet fulfilled. Often received in the form of metaphor, prophecies are replete with cryptic symbols and multi-limbed creatures that are depicted in conflict between forces representing good and evil. We found this with the Old Testament book of Daniel, and we will find the same with the New Testament book of Revelation.

It is to the thirteenth chapter of Revelation we now move. The apostle John describes a most distressing scene. A seven-headed beast with ten horns and ten diadems comes up out of the sea. His body is that of a leopard, with feet like a bear, and a mouth like a lion. One of the beast's seven heads is slain. The Beast suffers a head wound as this head perishes. Yet, the Beast recovers. In time, he wages war against the saints and overcomes them. Lastly, the world comes under his dominion and is in awe of the Beast. It worships him whether voluntarily or by subjection.

Our questions for this chapter? We interpreted the ten-horned fourth beast of Daniel 7 to be Islam. Is Daniel's fourth beast the same as the beast of Revelation 13? If so, we should expect Bible prophecy to include a reference to Muhammad, the "prince" (see Dan. 9:26) of Islam. Muhammad is to Islam what Joseph Smith is to Mormonism! If Muhammad is not there, then we have misinterpreted the prophecies thus found to be about Islam. If Muhammad is there, then Allah must be also. Allah is the spiritual being that either gave or sent to Muhammad the recitation that became the Qur'an; both must be present for our previous interpretations to be accurate.

Allah is there, and so is his messenger. This chapter will show us where, and in the process, it will lift a corner of Satan's cloak.

Muhammad's Untimely and Unexpected Death—632 A.D.

According to the traditional biography of Muhammad, Muhammad died unexpectedly in 632 after complaining of headaches.[451] Within ten years of the *Hijra* (migration from Mecca to Medina and beginning of the Islamic era), Muhammad had conquered all of the Arabian Peninsula and united the many Bedouin tribes of Arabia under the religion of Islam and a single community (*Ummah*). At that time, the Arabian Peninsula was filled with fiercely independent, nomadic Bedouin clans. Throughout their histories together, they had been in almost constant tribal conflict. In the ten years that Muhammad led Islam, he united the desert tribes under one banner—the banner of Islam, a banner that superseded bloodlines. Out of this unexpected result arose a related concept that Muhammad was somehow able to communicate to the fiercely independent clans of Arabia. It was the concept of "community" (*Ummah*). The community was elevated in purpose beyond ancient ancestral bloodlines and histories. The concept is summarized below:

> Muslims believe that they are members of a worldwide Muslim community, known as the "Ummah," united by a religious bond that transcends tribal, ethnic, and national identities. This belief is based upon Quran 2:143, which declares that God created the Muslim Ummah to serve as witnesses of God's guidance to the nations. Islam was revealed in a time and place in which tribal loyalty was considered a person's most important identification. The individual's status was based upon membership in a particular tribe. Islam declared the absolute equality of all believers. The primary identity of the Muslim was as a Muslim, rather than as a member of a tribe, ethnicity, or gender.[452]

Bernard Lewis adds, "The Ummah thus had a dual character. On the one hand, it was a political organization, a kind of new tribe with Muhammad as its Sheikh, and with Muslims and others as its members. Yet at the same time, it had a basically religious meaning. It was a religious community, some would say a theocracy."[453]

Finally, author Malaise Ruthven summarizes the importance and impact of *Ummah* that replaced the ancient tribal society of Arabia:

> The old tribal system had been at the root of Arabia's problems, barring the road to future development … Yet tribalism could not be eliminated overnight … The new solidarity provided by Islam was the Ummah, a super-tribal entity whose loyalty was to Allah, the super-tribal deity. All

> other allegiances, symbolized by inferior deities or tribal totems, were either abolished or so subsumed within the new allegiance to the Prophet's community that in due course they could be expected to "wither away."[454]

The *Ridda* Wars

In spite of Muhammad's having united all of Arabia under Islam, at Muhammad's death in 632, the unity of Arabia under Islam was short-lived. A crisis erupted. Muhammad had not appointed a successor prior to his death. The Islamic empire was composed of Bedouin nomads, whose history together as Muslims was short-lived and predicated upon Muhammad's continued leadership as messenger of Allah.[455] Historian Peter Stearns describes the situation this way,

> But when Muhammad died suddenly in 632, it appeared that his religion might disappear. … Many of the bedouin tribes that had converted to Islam renounced the new faith in the months after Muhammad's Death, and his remaining followers quarreled over who should succeed him. Although these quarrels were never fully resolved, the community managed to find new leaders who directed a series of campaigns to force those who had abandoned the faith to return to the fold (the Ridda Wars).[456]

Historian Marshall G. S. Hodgson describes the same period:

> Of the Bedouin tribes that had submitted to Muhammad, many felt themselves free of any further obligation, and with or without new prophets to turn to, refused to send any further obligation and, with or without new prophets to turn to, refused to send any further zakat [taxes] to Medina …[457]

Some within Islam had a different view. Islam was not just about obeying God but also about being bound to other members of the Muslim community. Muhammad's death did not end the commitment to God or to the Muslim community.[458] Abu Bakr was one of those who led this effort. He was elected the first caliph (literally, "successor") of Islam. Historian Bernard Lewis describes the crisis Abu Bakr faced:

> The first task of the new regime was to counter by military action a movement among the tribes known as the Ridda … This word, which means apostasy … [signified] the refusal of the tribes to recognize the succession of Abu Bakr. [It was, in effect,] not so much a relapse by converted Muslims to their previous paganism, but rather the simple and automatic termination of a political contract by the death of one of the parties. … To restore the hegemony of Medina, Abu Bakr had to make new treaties. While some of the nearer tribes accepted these, the more distant

ones refused, and Abu Bakr was compelled to make military subjugation of the tribes a prelude to their reconversions.[459]

Jihad Outside Arabia

During the months of the *Ridda* wars, Abu Bakr's efforts to restore the apostates to Islam was impacted by an unintended occurrence. Islam achieved unprecedented success in its raiding parties into non-Arabian lands, including Persia, Syria, and parts of Palestine. Their initial purpose for jihad was purely survival—the army had to have food. Pillage of Arabia's neighbors was the chosen means to acquire what they needed. They were successful, amazingly so, and each victory bred another victory. The successful conquest of non-Arab lands motivated the apostate Arabs to return to Islam. They saw success as the favor of Allah and the possibility of prosperity through plunder of their enemies as a uniting force greater than their tribal hatred of one another.[460]

Historian Ira Lapidus summarizes it very succinctly as follows:

> At first the small tribal groups were mainly searching for booty, but when Arab raids forced the Byzantines to send a major expedition into southern Palestine, the raiding parties had to concentrate their forces east of Gaza, and there, under the leadership of Khalid b. al-Walid, sent by Abu Bakr from Iraq to take the generalship of the Arab clans, they defeated a Byzantine army at the battle of Ajnadayn (634). This was the first battle that the Arabs acted as an army rather than as separate raiding parties. With this victory, their ambitions became boundless; they were no longer raiders on the soil of Syria seeking booty, but contenders for control of the settled empires. What began as inter-tribal skirmishing to consolidate a political confederation in Arabia ended as a full-scale war against two empires … They took Damascus in 636 … in 638 was Jerusalem taken … Caesarea fell in 640. Finally in 641, the Arabs took the northern Syrian and Mesopotamia towns …[461]

To sum it up, when Muhammad died in 632, Islam should have disappeared. The message of Allah had come to only one man—Muhammad—and he was dead. There would be no further revelations, no further recollections of that night when the angel Gabriel revealed the Qur'an to Muhammad. The powerful, charismatic leader who had subdued the nomadic tribes of the Arabian Peninsula was no longer present as the driving force of Islam. As the Messenger had died, so would the faith—at least, that was the expectation. But it was not to be the case. Islam not only did not disappear, but also it flourished—through jihad. It conquered lands that the Arabs had only dreamed of conquering before. To the world of the seventh century, an astonishing event had occurred. Islam not only came back from the brink of death, but also it came back to overcome the entire known world of its day!

Where Is Allah in Prophetic Scripture?

Revelation 13:1 brings us to another vision for the apostle John. A seven-headed beast with ten horns and ten diadems comes up out of the sea. His body is that of a leopard, with feet like a bear, and a mouth like a lion (see Rev. 13:2). One of the Beast's seven heads is slain (see Rev. 13:3), but the Beast's fatal wound is healed (see Rev. 13:3). The Dragon (Satan, Rev. 12:9) gives the Beast his "throne," his "power," and "great authority" (see Rev. 13:2). The whole world is "amazed" at the Beast and worships him (see Rev. 13:3–4). The Beast blasphemes God, and he is given "authority" for forty-two months (see Rev. 13:5). The Beast "opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven" (see Rev. 13:6). It is given to the Beast to "make war with the saints and to overcome them and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation" (see Rev. 13:7), and all who dwell on the earth will worship the Beast, except those whose name has been written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world (see Rev. 13:8).

This beast from the sea is referred to as the "first beast" (see Rev. 13:12). Scripture refers to him as one of the three demonic creatures that make up what some have called the "trinity of evil," which includes the Beast (the first beast), the False Prophet (the second beast of Revelation 13:11–18), and the Dragon (Satan). This first beast is a composite of the first three beasts of Daniel 7 (the lion, the bear, and the leopard), all of which were defeated by the fourth beast of Daniel 7:7 (see Rev. 13:2). In Revelation 13:2, the first beast has now absorbed these three, just as the fourth beast of Daniel 7 had devoured and crushed the prior three of Daniel's vision. As we will see, the first beast is the same beast as the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Both beasts have two time periods depicted in Scripture: a beginning period, when the empire that the beast represents comes into existence, and an ending period when the beast wages war against the world and the saints, only to be overcome by Jesus Christ at His second coming.

Here are common characteristics that lead us to conclude that the fourth beast of Daniel 7 and the first beast of Revelation 13:1–10 are one and the same beast:

1. The first beast of Revelation 13 absorbs the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Babylon (the three kingdoms of Daniel 7:1–6), just as the fourth beast of Daniel 7 had devoured them.
2. The first beast also blasphemes God, as did the fourth beast of Daniel 7 (Dan. 7:8, 25). The first beast does so in three specific ways (13:6). He:

a. Blasphemes God and His name.
b. Blasphemes the tabernacle of God.
c. Blasphemes those who dwell in heaven.

3. The first beast makes war with the saints and overcomes them (Rev. 13:7), just as the fourth beast of Daniel 7 overpowered them (Dan. 7:21).

We have discussed each of these identifiers in prior chapters. We will not discuss them again. They were sufficient to conclude Islam was the fourth beast of Daniel 7, and they are sufficient to make the same conclusion for the first beast of Revelation 13. Revelation 13 adds additional characteristics, each of which is uniquely intriguing. As we will see, Allah and Muhammad are revealed in these additional characteristics.

The First Beast

The first beast is the spiritual head of a religion at enmity with God. Although not critical to our interpretation, this writer interprets the first beast to be a spiritual being, not a human being. He is a demonic force within the meaning of 2 Corinthians 11:14 (an "angel of light"). The first beast gets his power and throne and authority directly from the Dragon (see Rev. 13:2–4). One spiritual being is giving another spiritual being something he possesses—his worldly kingdom. Consider another passage that we looked at previously:

> Again, the devil took Him [Jesus] to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." (Matt. 4:8–9)

When Satan offered the kingdoms of the world to Christ, Christ refused them (Matt. 4:10). What Christ refused, the first beast will not. We have already noted the many references to worship of the beast. The many references to worship are because God is telling us to look for a religion. Verse 13:4 states, "They worshiped the dragon." Why does the text tells us that Satan is worshiped when he has given his power and throne to the first beast? The text then states, "They worshiped the beast …" The first beast is the deity that the world worships. He is another pathway Satan has offered to the world to keep humanity away from the one true Path, Jesus Christ (see John 14:6). He has a name. His name is Allah. The followers of Allah believe that he is also the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but he is not. We discussed this in an earlier chapter and will not repeat the arguments here. The point?

Satan is "behind" Allah. The followers of Allah think they are worshiping in the "straight path," when, in fact, they are worshiping the demonic being that created Allah, who poses as a god of mercy, justice, and peace.

Another point to support this view is found in Revelation 19:20. The first beast never dies. He goes directly to the Lake of Fire, along with the second beast (the False Prophet, who is the Antichrist) and the Dragon (Satan) without experiencing death. He bypasses death. Why? Because he is not a human being, but a spiritual being. Satan is judged in the Lake of Fire in Revelation 20:3. The trio are shown together in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10), where they are tormented forever.

The first beast is a spiritual being as real as Satan is real. To humanity, his name is Allah. Yet, he masquerades as an "angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Allah is a masquerade for the first beast of Revelation 13.

The Ummah of Islam

The followers of the first beast submit to the Beast, i.e., Allah, and through the Beast, they unknowingly submit to Satan. They form a religion by virtue of their submission to the first beast. We cannot separate the head of the false religion, Allah, from his followers. They are one and the same, as each receives its life through the other. We have briefly described the concept of "community" (*Ummah*) for Islam. The *Ummah* is symbolized by the body of the first beast, i.e., the adherents of the faith who submit to the Beast. The first beast has been given authority over them.

Revelation 13:7 states, "And authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him." The first beast is given dominion over the earth, and all but believers in Christ worship the first beast (see Rev. 13:7–8). To be given authority is to be given control, dominion, or power over another. Islam is a religion wherein its adherents submit to Allah. Islam, in fact, literally means "submission to Allah" in Arabic.[462] *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* puts it this way:

> The Arabic term islam is derived from the root s-l-m, which means submission or peace. Muslims are those who surrender to God's will or law and as a result, Muslims believe, are at peace with themselves and with God. To embrace Islam is to become a member of a worldwide faith community (Ummah). Thus, believers have both an individual and corporate religious identity and responsibility or duty to obey and implement God's will in personal and social life.[463]

The authority of the first beast will be used in the tribulation period to bring the world to submission or, for those who refuse its dominion, to death (see Rev. 13:15). Those who are spared will be unable to buy or sell

(or work) unless they likewise submit to the first beast. A "mark," 666, will be given them to indicate they have submitted to the dominion of the first beast, Allah (see Rev. 13:17). Does that sound like voluntary submission to you? Either submit (to Allah) or you die.

Characteristic of Islam's conquest over the centuries and the requirement of conversion and submission to "Allah" is this letter drafted to a "Hormuz, Satrap of the Delta" by an early leader of Islam, Khalid b. al-Walid. The letter was delivered to Hormuz just prior to the Arabs beginning their successful battle against him. It is characteristic of Islam's "last chance" offer to those it is in conflict with just prior to the beginning of the conflict:

> Accept the faith and thou art safe; else pay tribute, thou and thy people; which if thou refusest, thou shalt have thyself to blame. A people is already on thee, loving death, even as thou lovest life.[464]

Islam has not been advanced through the centuries on the part of evangelists sharing the message of Allah and the Qur'an, but on the part of the Muslim soldier offering conversion or submission along with a tax or death.

Where is Muhammad?

The first beast has seven heads (see Rev. 13:1). One of these heads dies, resulting in a near-fatal wound to the Beast (see Rev. 13:3). This head symbolizes Muhammad, who died in 632 A.D., after Islam was only eleven years old. The death of Muhammad almost ended Islam as a religion. The Ridda Wars, Islam's Apostate Wars, brought apostate Arab tribesmen who had deserted upon Muhammad's death back to Islam. It was the success of jihad outside Arabia that brought them back to the fold. It is the first beast that almost dies, not the head of the beast. Verse 13:12 states, "… to worship the first beast, whose … wound was healed." And verse 13:14, "telling those who dwell on earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound." The wounded beast is Islam. The head that dies is Muhammad. The text is describing what happened to Islam when Muhammad died. His death was near fatal to the faith; but Islam recovered, as symbolized by the first beast recovering from his near-fatal wound.

The Amazement of the Whole Earth

Notice another factor the text gives us (13:3): "And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast." The text is describing exactly what happened when Islam's raiding parties succeeded outside Arabia. The "whole earth was amazed" represents the Arabians who had deserted the faith only

to return in amazement after seeing the success of the raiding parties, and it also represents those populations outside Arabia that were succumbed by the avalanche of Arabian power unleashed upon the remaining Byzantine and Persian Empires of the seventh century. As we have seen, it was the success of the raiding parties that brought the Muslim apostates back to Islam, not the desire to submit to Allah. The apostates saw the success of the raiding parties as the blessings of Allah, and they wanted to participate in the booty more than they wanted the pre-Islamic desert life to which they had been accustomed.

The Wound of the Sword

But what about the *wound of the sword* (13:14)? Muhammad's traditional biography describes his death to be the result of headaches, not a wound of the sword. First, remember it is not the head, i.e., Muhammad, that has the wound of the sword. The head dies just as Muhammad died. The Beast has the wound, and it is the Beast that recovers. The text states, "The beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life" (Rev. 13:14). The sword must be a metaphor that likens the death of Muhammad to a sword being thrust into the body of a living beast; yet, somehow it survived.

The Seven Heads of the Beast

The text states, "I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names" (Rev. 13:1).

We interpreted the first beast to be Allah. In the same way, the seven heads and ten horns of the first beast represent the regimes (or dynasties) that led Islam during the periods subsequent to Muhammad's death in 632. As we will see, each head of the beast will not represent one leader (caliph) but rather the regime or tribe of Islam that historically claimed leadership of the *Ummah* (community) during consecutive periods in Islam's history. As we will see, at times, two different regimes within Islam claimed to be caliph at the same time. They ruled from two separate geographical areas and ruled simultaneously. They both professed to be "the true caliphate" of Islam. Where dual regimes led Islam parallel to one another and at parallel times, I have counted these two caliphates as one caliphate for purposes of "counting heads" of the first beast.

The difficultly and danger in dividing history into seven parts is that history takes different turns that are led by different leaders at different geographical locations. What might be a change in history in one area of the world might not even be known in another part. What might seem extraordinarily important in one area of the world might seem relatively

unimportant in another. The world in the seventh century was much bigger than it is today (determined on the basis of the span of time in communications). Happenings in one area were not known or realized for quite some time in other areas. Marshall G. S. Hodgson describes the problem of "periodization" in a way that might assist our understanding:

> When we are studying a total civilization, we can no longer follow a single chain of events from key point to key point, as is possible when we are tracing the origin of particular components of culture. We must see how the society developed simultaneously in many parallel and interconnected spheres. We must take whole chunks of time at once, that is, presenting first one sort of activity, then another, in the given period. … We must stress what most stands out in that particular time span.[465]

Here is my point: In my review of Islamic history, I have stressed what most stands out in a survey of Islamic history. The following seven historical caliphates of Islam represent the major changes within Islam in Islamic history. They are not an attempt to represent smaller or temporary changes in Muslim leadership, which by and large did not change the direction or tribe of the caliphate. Nor does the following list attempt to reflect independent caliphates established in more remote areas of the world outside of the heart of Islam.

Consider the following list of seven successive historical Muslim dynasties that ruled Islam, beginning with Muhammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

Caliphate Periods of Islam	Muslim Regime that Claimed the Caliphate of Islam
1	1st Caliphate Period: **Muhammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs (Quraysh tribe)**[466]—Muhammad (632–634); Abu Bakr (632–634), Umar (634–644), Uthman (644–656), and Ali (656–661); referred to in Islam as the "Rashidun" (632–661), the "Rightly Guided Caliphs"[467]
2	2nd Caliphate Period: Begins with the divide of Sunnis and Shi'ahs at the battle of Karbala: **Umayyads**[468]—Syria (661–749): *Caliphs*: Muawiya I, Yazid I, Marwan II
3	3rd Caliphate Period: **Abbasids**[469]—Baghdad (749–932): *Caliphs*: Abu Abbas, al-Saffah

Caliphate Periods of Islam	Muslim Regime that Claimed the Caliphate of Islam
4	4th Caliphate Period: Baghdad: **Buyids**[470] (or Buwayids[471]) (932–1055): *Amirs*: al-Qahir, al-Qaim 4th Caliphate-Egypt: **Fatimids**[472] (Ismailis) (909–1171): *Caliphs*: Ubayd Allay
5	5th Caliphate Period: Baghdad: **Seljuk Turks**[473] (1055–1258): *Sultans*: al-Muqtadi, al-Mustasim 5th Caliphate Period: Egypt: **Ayyubids**[474] (1169–1260) *Sultans*: Saladin
6	6th Caliphate Period: Baghdad: **Mongols**[475] (1258–1350) *Sultans*: Genghis Khan 6th Caliphate Period: Egypt: **Mamluks**[476] (1260–1517)—Egypt and Syria Caliph: Baybers
7	7th Caliphate Period: **Ottomans**[477] (1342–1924): *Sultans*: Murad I, Mehmed II, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk[478]

For the historians among us, a short history of each regime is found in the endnotes to the chapter.

The seven heads of the first beast symbolize seven caliphal periods of Islam, beginning with Muhammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs. You may wonder why we are including the Rightly Guided Caliphs with Muhammad as the first head of the beast. Why not make each of them a separate head? Historically, the first four caliphs ruled by their "personal connection to Muhammad."[479] None of their individual reigns constituted a dynasty of Islam, but together, they are known historically as the "Rashidun," the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Also, all four of these men, including Muhammad, were members of the Quraysh tribe originating in Mecca, and the Quraysh regime ruled in the first period of Islam's history, all of which were connected to Muhammad.[480]

After the Battle of Karbala in 680, the Sunnis and Shi'ahs divided. The Ummayyads were the first regime following the divide and are often labeled in Islamic history as the "first caliphate" of Islam (Sunnis).[481] As mentioned above, the fourth, fifth, and sixth caliphal periods included dual, competing

regimes for caliphate. I have counted the two competing regimes as one regime since we are counting "regime periods" not regime leaders. Again, the two caliphates are counted as only one because each ruled *simultaneously* with its counterpart, one in Baghdad and the other in Cairo, and each regime considered itself to be the true caliphate of Islam for the same time period.

To Make Sure You Have the Point

The Beast from the sea has seven heads. Islam has seven historic periods of leadership, beginning with Muhammad and the Quraysh tribe (the Rightly Guided Caliphs), followed by six caliphal regimes and caliphal periods, counting from the first regime through the seventh regime, the Ottomans.

Ten Diadems on Ten Horns

Remember those ten horns? The ten diadems on the horns? Revelation 13:1 states:

> And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

Ten diadems. Ten horns. Not seven, but ten. Which horns go on which heads? There are three horns left over. How do we decide which heads to put them on? If the seven heads symbolize the seven historic periods of leadership, beginning with Muhammad, followed by six separate regimes, what do the ten horns and ten diadems symbolize?

Count them yourself. Go back to the table. This time, also count the separate caliphates in Cairo. The fourth, fifth, and sixth heads have two caliphates, not one. They total ten in number! The three heads with two horns are shown in the table by two caliphs competing with one another—one from Baghdad, the other from Egypt. The diadems on each horn signify the representative caliph of each caliphate, whether ruling from Baghdad or ruling from Cairo.

It wouldn't surprise me if you thought I was forcing this interpretation. Actually, I found it by accident. The same thing for the seven regime periods. I didn't read it anywhere and didn't try to make it work out. I noticed it one day as part of my research. I found seven consecutive regime periods, and sometime later I noticed that if you count all the regimes, whether they are competing as dual caliphates or not, you get ten. I certainly am not dogmatic about this interpretation. I am also aware of other views within the Islamic Paradigm that count the heads and horns of the beast in ways similar to the interpretation I used for the heads and horns on the Dragon (Rev. 12).

However, if we remember that heads and horns represent the instruments through whom Satan and his associates wage their spiritual war, this view makes a lot of sense. If we conclude that the first beast represents Allah (and Islam), then quite naturally, the heads and horns should represent the history of Islam and its jihads since its origination in the seventh century. This is the case with the above view. It might seem so tight that it looks as if it is forced, but to me, it's so tight because it is right.

Conclusion

We have identified Allah as the first beast and Muslims as the religion embodied by those who worship the first beast. The head of the first beast that dies symbolizes Muhammad, who died in 632, almost ending Islam as a religion. Yet, the first beast, i.e., Islam, recovers from the wound of its principal head through the success of the Ridda Wars. Six caliphate periods later, Islam is still waging war against the saints. Islam overcame the saints in the seventh and following centuries. The Bible tells us it will do so once again. We will see this in a later chapter. For now, we have lifted another corner of Satan's cloak!

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 8	
Point 1	The first beast (from the sea) (Rev. 13:1–10) and the fourth beast of Daniel 7 are the same beast.
Point 2	The first beast is a spiritual being in the same way that Satan is a spiritual being. He is the deity of a false religion. We have interpreted the first beast to be Allah. He is Satan's appointee, who masquerades as an "angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14).
Point 3	The first beast has seven heads, one of which dies and nearly kills the first beast. The head that dies symbolizes Muhammad who died in 632 A.D. His death should have ended Islam. It did not. The first beast, i.e., Islam, recovers and flourishes.
Point 4	The seven heads of the first beast symbolize Muhammad and the Quraysh regime, followed by six successive regimes and six caliphal periods of Islam.
Point 5	The ten horns of the beast symbolize the ten caliphates of Islam that reigned during these caliphal periods. Three of the periods included two caliphates, bringing the total to ten.

Chapter 9

Islam's al-Mahdi—The Biblical Antichrist

Introduction

THE DAY WAS September 17, 2005. The President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was addressing the Sixty-First Session of the United Nations General Assembly. He closed his speech with these remarks and a prayer:

> Dear Friends and Colleagues,
>
> From the beginning of time, humanity has longed for the day when justice, peace, equality and compassion envelop the world. All of us can contribute to the establishment of such a world. When that day comes, the ultimate promise of all Divine religions will be fulfilled with the emergence of a perfect human being who is heir to all prophets and pious men. He will lead the world to justice and absolute peace. … Oh mighty Lord, I pray to you to hasten the emergence of your last repository, the promised one, that perfect and pure human being, the one that will fill this world with justice and peace.[482]

Read it again. Slower. Notice these phrases: "perfect human being," "lead the world to justice and absolute peace," "hasten the emergence of your last repository," "the promised one."

Each of these words/phrases has a specific meaning to Shi'ah Islam; and when Ahmadinejad used them before the United Nations, it was not because he was petitioning Allah to bring about peace and the laying down of arms by the nations of the world. Ahmadinejad sees this peace as possible only after Islam has world dominion. On that day in 2005, Ahmadinejad told only

half the story. He didn't mention that absolute peace under the leadership of this perfect … promised one, will come only, according to Shi'ahs, through a time of world chaos, resulting in the deaths of many, beginning with those of the Sunni sect of Islam. This so-called promised one will emerge, not with an olive branch in hand, but with the sword of Muhammad.

This chapter will name *al-Mahdi,* Shi'ah Islam's promised one, as the biblical Antichrist, who appears in the tribulation period of the last days. Why does he matter? Because he is prophesied to come with an economic sword as well as a military one. He will be able to accomplish the miraculous and deceive and bring humanity under the will of his god. We have already interpreted Allah as this false god. We will now interpret al-Mahdi to be the Antichrist incarnate, who will be the biblical Antichrist/False Prophet, and who will lead Islam in its final jihad.

Antichrist as an Individual—the Bible's Prophecies

In prior chapters, we discussed the fact that the word "antichrist" is found in only four verses in the Bible, all in 1 and 2 John (see 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7). In these verses, John uses the word in two ways: as a general spirit of deception that is anti-Christ and anti-God in human culture; and, secondly, as a demonic incarnation in a specific individual. Scholars have broadened the use of the word "antichrist" through interpretation of several other passages that also refer to him as Antichrist. In addition, the Bible often uses the phrase "false prophet" to describe the Antichrist. The last false prophet is prophesied in the following passages. Each of these refers to the same Antichrist incarnation, who will appear in the last days:

1. The "different" horn of the fourth beast of Daniel 7:20–22, 24–25;
2. The "man of lawlessness" of 2 Thessalonians 2:8–10;
3. The "second beast," who comes up out of the earth in Revelation 13:11–15;
4. The "eighth head" of the "scarlet beast" of Revelation 17:3, 8, 11;
5. "Abaddon," the "angel" of the "abyss" in Revelation 9:11;
6. The king of the latter period, who will be "insolent and skilled in intrigue," told of in Daniel 8:23–25;
7. The "one who makes desolate" that is made "desolate," told of in Daniel 9:27;
8. The king that "does as he pleases" and exalts and magnifies himself above every god, as shown in Daniel 11:36–45.

The above list can be very confusing, and it does not include all those included in Scripture that have been referred to as "antichrist" by scholars (some also include the first beast [from the sea] of Revelation 13:1–10 and the little horn of Daniel 7:8). The length of the list can be imposing. Also, we are interpreting prophecy, which, for this writer, always begins with metaphor and then seeks a literal truth behind the metaphor. The good news is that all of the above metaphors refer to the same incarnation, i.e., the Antichrist, and not to different demonic incarnations. Most of these we have covered or will cover.

For now, here is the point most critical to our interpretation: there are only three literal satanic figures behind all of the biblical metaphors for Satan or his two associates. Here is how we know this: there are only three satanic figures in Scripture that are individually and separately judged by God in the Lake of Fire. All creatures in all metaphors must be interpreted to be one of these three literal spiritual beings, because only theses three are judged by God. The three spiritual beings were introduced in our last chapter as we interpreted one of the three, the Beast (the "first beast" of Revelation 13). The three have been referred to by some as the "trinity of evil," simply because there are three in number and all are related to Satan, the prince of demons, who is one of the three. All three play an important and related role in Satan's timeless struggle against God.

Trinity of Evil

The trinity of evil gets its name from three related creatures of darkness found in prophetic scriptures. These three alone are judged, individually and separately, by God in the Lake of Fire. The trinity of evil includes:

1. The Dragon. He is Satan (Rev. 12:9).
2. The Beast. He is the "first beast" (Rev. 13:1, 12) of two beasts in Revelation 13. We have interpreted him to be Islam's supreme being, Allah. We refer to him as the first beast in this writing.
3. The False Prophet. He is the last false prophet. He is generally referred to as the Antichrist by scholars. We will refer to him in this writing as the "Antichrist/False Prophet" or the "second beast" (Rev. 13:11).

We have stated that the Bible judges only these three, alive, in the Lake of Fire (see Rev. 19:20; 20:10). Therefore, all other creatures must be one of these three (or a human being and not Satan incarnate). The member of the trinity of evil we will be discussing in this chapter will be the Antichrist/

False Prophet. We will not review all of the passages that refer to him; that would take too much paper! We will look at one of the key references, the eighth head of the scarlet beast. As you read, be certain not to confuse the eighth head of the scarlet beast with the beast from the sea (see Rev. 13:1–10), the first beast. We have already interpreted the first beast to be Allah. The Antichrist will *serve the first beast*, by pointing or directing humanity to the first beast. Revelation 13:12 states the second beast "exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence." In other words, the second beast has no power unless he supports the first beast.

We will first provide Shi'ah Islam's prophecies of the coming al-Mahdi. Then, we will compare the Bible's prophecies of the coming Antichrist/False Prophet (and discuss why we are not comparing Sunni prophecies).

The Antichrist Will Be the Hidden Imam of Twelver Shiism

Muhammad b. Hasan, born 872 A.D., was the son of the 11th Imam, Hasan al-Askari, of Twelver Shi'ah Islam.[483] (Shi'ahs are the minority sect of Islam [ten percent]. Twelvers are the majority branch of Shi'ah Islam.) Since Islam's historic divide in 680, Sunnis have been the dominant and controlling sect of Islam. The result has been the continuous persecution of Shi'ahs by Sunnis, particularly, Shi'ah Imams. Shi'ah Imams were considered a threat by Sunni caliphs because Shi'ah Imams were blood descendants of Muhammad through Ali and Fatima. The Sunni caliphs saw Shi'ah Imams as contenders for the caliphate and, as such, did all they could to insure the elimination of this threat through death or imprisonment.[484] This was the case for the eleventh Imam, who was poisoned by the reigning Sunni caliph.[485]

Because of the danger to the Imam and his descendants, when Muhammad b. Hasan was born, his father, the eleventh Imam, hid his son from public view. Only a few Shi'ahs were even aware of his son's existence.[486] At his father's death (873), when Hasan was only seven, and by divine command, he went into hiding, an event Twelvers refer to as "occultation."[487]

The doctrine of occultation (*ghayba*) is summarized[488] as follows:

> Occultation (*ghayba*) is a state chosen by God for the Imam who is in danger of being slain by his enemies. Thus the twelfth Imam, Muhammad b. al-Hasan … went into occultation in the year 873–874 and will continue to live in this state for as long as (Allah) deems it necessary. Then He will command him to reappear and take control of the world in order to restore justice and equity. During this period of concealment, the Imam is not completely cut off from his followers but has spokesmen, in the person of learned jurists, who can act on his behalf and guide the Shiites in their religious matters.[489]

Twelvers believe that Muhammad b. Hasan, the twelfth Imam, whose body was never found, never died. He lives today, still in hiding, after more than 1,200 years. According to Twelvers, he still lives because Allah will not leave humanity without divine guidance; and as the sole surviving Imam heir of Muhammad through Ali and Fatima, he is the only one who can give this guidance.[490] He continues to provide divine guidance to Shi'ahs through their spiritual leaders, thereby enabling them to instruct Shi'ahs in the performance of their required religious duties.[491] The twelfth Imam will continue to live in hiding until Allah decides the moment he will rise up and commands him to do so.[492] He is also known among Shi'ahs as the "Master of the Age," an infallible, sinless leader and protector of the religion.[493]

Twelvers believe the Hidden Imam lives continuously among the people[494] but is concealed from their view; and every year he attends the *Hajj* (annual pilgrimage to Mecca) alongside them. Mecca is not only the place where his rise will commence at the end of time, but also (as many Shi'ahs believe) his residence. Shi'ahs assert that he comes for the pilgrimage to Mecca every year. The Imamite sources on the twelfth Imam are full of such traditions, which emphasize one thing, that every year the hajj is being attended by the one closely related to the Prophet, who is also the promised one to appear in the future.[495]

Twelvers also believe that when Hidden Imam rises up, he will not be rising from the dead (as Christians believe Jesus Christ did following his crucifixion[496]). To have died requires a *ceasing to exist;* and the Hidden Imam as the "proof of God" has never ceased to exist.[497] Rather, the Hidden Imam's rising is more likened to an "appearing," "emerging," or "coming forth" out of his deathless state of "concealment."[498]

When the Hidden Imam rises, he will appear not as the Hidden Imam or the Twelfth Imam but as "al-Mahdi."[499] Mahdi literally means "rightly guided one": It is reported on the authority of Abu Basir, a companion of Ja'far al-Sadiq [the sixth Imam], that when the Imam was asked, "Why was he named Mahdi?" He answered, "Because he guides to the secret things."[500]

As the risen Imam, al-Mahdi will continue the bloodline of Muhammad through Ali and Fatima (Muhammad's daughter).[501] Muhammad is reported to have stated, "The world would not continue, but for that day wherein Allah will send a man from the family of my house."[502] "The Mahdi will be from my family, from the descendants of Fatima."[503]

Al-Mahdi Al-Muntazar

The Mahdi is known among Shi'ahs as "al-Mahdi, al-Muntazar," the "Awaited One."[504] He receives this title by virtue of the Shi'ahs long wait for one to rise up who will redress the wrongs committed against them by the

ruling sect, the Sunnis. With Ali having been passed over as caliph in 632, with Husayn's martyrdom in 680, and with the failure of Shi'ahs thereafter to reclaim the caliphate from Sunnis (with the exception of the Fatimids [Ismailis] ruling simultaneously in Egypt—909–1171 A.D.[505]), Shi'ahs were forced into quietism to stay alive.[506] The fifth and sixth Shi'ah Imams, Al-Baqir and Al-Sadiq, foretold of this awaited one as a means to keep Shi'ahs of the eighth century and later from losing hope that they would be delivered from their oppression by Sunnis.[507] Al-Mahdi, when he emerges from occultation, will be that deliverer.

Al-Mahdi Is Called "Al-Qaim"

According to Shi'ahs, al-Mahdi is also called al-Qaim, the "redresser of wrongs." Shi'ahs believe, "It is the promise of God, that he will raise the cry of al-Qaim for those who killed al-Husayn, and He will take vengeance against those who wronged him."[508]

Dr. Timothy Furnish adds, "All Shi'ah groups do, however, agree that a Hidden Imam will reveal himself before the last days as al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, the Awaited Mahdi, who will not only create a worldwide socioeconomic and just Islamic state (a point on which they agree with the Sunnis), but he will also rebuke the Sunnis for their stubborn refusal to admit their historical mistake of rejecting the Shi'ah Imams."[509]

Al-Mahdi Is Called the "Master of the Sword"

Some Shi'ahs believe that al-Mahdi will bring about peace and justice, but only through his sword.[510] That is, peace will not come through the surrender of conquered peoples (as dhimmis, i.e., conquered peoples of Muslims, with a tax along with submission required in exchange for one's non-conversion to Islam), but by bloodshed and forced subjection to al-Mahdi's version of Islam. The Mahdi, as Master of the Sword, will use his sword to bring Islam under one banner and the world under one religion, Islam. Some Shi'ahs believe he will do so without mercy:

> Al-Baqir is reported to have said, "I can see your religion mixed with blood … However, al-Qaim will not follow the Prophet's example of gentleness and flexibility and winning over the people by uniting them … He will also not follow the example of 'Ali, who adopted the path of forgiveness and benevolence in his dealings with the people … His state of affairs will be the sword."[511]

As Master of the Sword and redresser of wrongs, Al-Mahdi will avenge the acts of Sunnis against Shi'ahs and is prophesied to be especially severe on

Arabs. He will not accept repentance from anyone, nor will he receive rebuke from any contemporary.[512] He is prophesied to rise with a new teaching of Islam:

> Al Qaim will rise with a new authority, a new Book, and a new order, which will be severe on the Arabs (his main supporters, according to some traditions, will be the non-Arabs). His state of affairs will be the sword (he is known as the sahib al-sayf, Master of the Sword), and he will not accept repentance from anyone, nor will the rebuke of his adversaries deter him from carrying out the command of God.[513]

Al-Mahdi, according to Shi'ah traditions, is prophesied to appear at a time when the entire world is in chaos:

> According to another tradition, a person who had met the twelfth Imam in Mecca asked him about the time when he would appear. The Imam replied that the sign of his appearance would be total turmoil and chaos in the world.[514]

Do you remember our opening quote from Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of Iran? According to Ahmadinejad, this long-awaited one, will be "benevolent, fair, and just, perfect and pure, and will bring peace and justice." How will he do this? According to Shi'ah prophecy, he will do so only by his sword. Ahmadinejad is Shi'ah. It seems he only told us half the story!

The Eighth Head Of the Scarlet Beast

Revelation 17 brings us to another vision for the apostle John. He is carried away into the desert wilderness, where he sees a woman riding a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns (17:3). We will discuss who the woman is in a following chapter; for now, it is the eighth head of the scarlet beast we are focusing on. The text gives us specific information about the scarlet beast. It states in Revelation 17:11, "The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction." Thus, the scarlet beast will be the eighth king of the kingdom represented by the scarlet beast.

The Eighth Head of the Scarlet Beast

The text gives us very detailed, unique characteristics about the eighth head of the scarlet beast. The characteristics are very specific and will lead us to know whether or not we are interpreting the leader of the kingdom or the kingdom itself. Revelation 17:8 states, "The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction."

Here are the four clues the Bible gives us in Revelation to identify the eighth head of the scarlet beast:

1. The eighth head of the scarlet beast "was" (17:8, 11).
2. The eighth head of the scarlet beast "is not" (17:8, 11).
3. The eighth head of the scarlet beast is "about to come up out of the abyss" (17:8, 11).
4. The eighth head of the scarlet beast is about to come up out of the abyss and go "to destruction" (17:8, 11).

We will first apply the four biblical requirements to al-Mahdi, using the Shi'ah prophecies we have reviewed.

The Biblical Antichrist—The Eighth Head of the Scarlet Beast "Was"

The first requirement of the eighth head is that he existed in the past as a historical person (Rev. 17:8), i.e., he "was." Muhammad b. Hasan, the twelfth Shi'ah Imam and son of Hasan al-Askari, the eleventh Imam,[515] was a historical person. He lived in the ninth century, and Shi'ahs record him as their twelfth Imam. He is the Hidden Imam to Shi'ahs. Muhammad b. Hasan, the Hidden Imam, "was."

The Biblical Antichrist—The Eighth Head of the Scarlet Beast "Is Not"

Remember the doctrine of occultation for the Hidden Imam? According to Shi'ahs, Muhammad b. Hasan, the twelfth Shi'ah Imam, went into a deathless state of existence in the ninth century. This state is referred to by Shi'ahs as "occultation." In this deathless state, Shi'ahs believe that the twelfth Imam is still alive, but concealed or hidden from humanity. While concealed, he is absent from humanity but still in existence. This is why the twelfth Imam is referred to by Shi'ahs as the Hidden Imam. He is hidden and cannot be seen, even though he continues to exist. The Hidden Imam "is not."

The Biblical Antichrist—The Eighth Head of the Scarlet Beast Is "About to Come up"

According to Shi'ahs, the Hidden Imam will rise at the command of Allah at some date in the future.[516] The Hidden Imam will "rise up" from his concealed, hidden state and emerge in plain sight of humanity. This is a

future event and cannot occur, according to Shi'ahs, until Allah commands the Hidden Imam to "rise up":

> In another tradition, al-Sadiq [6th Imam of Twelvers] is reported to have explained that the Qaim is known as such "because he will rise after his death for an important task, and will rise by the command of God." … Qaim and the Mahdi are one and the same person … He will rise for an important task.[517]

The Hidden Imam is "about to come up."

The Biblical Antichrist—The Eighth Head of the Scarlet Beast is About to Come up "From the Abyss"

Revelation 17:8 describes the place from which the eighth head will come up as the "abyss." This term is a biblical term that refers to the *place of incarceration for demons*.[518] "Abyss" translates from the Greek word *abussos* and is defined by A. T. Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament*:

> Of the pit of the abyss. … "Abussos" is an old adjective …, the bottomless place. It occurs in Romans 10:7 for the common receptacle of the dead for Hades (Sheol), but in Luke 8:31, a lower depth is sounded (Swete), for the abode of demons, and in this sense it occurs in Revelation 9:1–2, 11; Revelation 11:7; Revelation 17:8; Revelation 20:1, 3.[519]

Abussos is used nine times in the New Testament, all but two times are found in Revelation. A revealing passage is found in Luke 8:31, when Christ is about to deliver a man possessed by many demons. The demons express this plea to Jesus: "And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss." Clearly, the demons recognize the abyss as the logical place for them to be dispossessed. Why else plea that they not be sent (or return) there?

Another revealing passage is found in Revelation 20:2–3: "And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time." Thus, the abyss is some type of prison, holding place, for the demonic (whether literal or metaphoric).

As we move to Revelation 9, we find the same Greek word, *abussos*, but there it is translated "bottomless pit." The opening verses depict the unleashing of demonic creatures from this pit (see Rev. 9:1–3). Revelation 9:11 gives us

the name of the angel of the abyss, the king of the demonic. He is Abaddon (Hebrew) and Apollyon (Greek) (see Rev. 9:11).

Finally, look at how Revelation 17:8 identifies the place from which the scarlet beast will originate. "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction." Thus, the scarlet beast's origin, the place from which he will come up, is this same demonic prison.

Now compare the Bible prophecy with that of Islam. The Bible prophesies of a demonic figure coming up from the abyss, the abode of demons. When he comes up, he will lead his kingdom. Islam's Hidden Imam is prophesied by Islam to have been in hiding for 1,200 years, to still be alive while in hiding, and that one day, he will rise as al-Mahdi. When he does, he will lead Islam to dominate the world in the name of Allah. That's the same prophecy as that of the Bible, except the Bible uses a metaphor for this leader. He is the beast from the earth (the second beast of Revelation 13), the scarlet beast (Rev. 17), and the king of the Abyss (Abaddon, Rev. 9).

Perhaps you are wondering if I actually believe that Islam's Hidden Imam actually exists? After 1,200 years, how is that possible? How can any intelligent human being in the twenty-first century actually believe in such a far-fetched idea? If the Bible says he exists, then so far as I am concerned, he does. The eighth head of the scarlet beast is a metaphor for the Hidden Imam. One day he will "rise from the abyss."

The Biblical Antichrist—The Eighth Head of the Scarlet Beast is About to Come up from the Abyss and "Go to Destruction" (Revelation 17:8)

Not only does the eighth head rise "from the abyss," the abode of demons, but also the eighth head does not die. Rather, instead of experiencing death, he experiences judgment. According to Revelation 17:8, he is about to "go to his destruction" in the Lake of Fire. He goes, alive, to his destruction in the eternal Lake of Fire (see Rev. 19:20). There he will be joined by the two other demonic/satanic beings, the Beast and the Dragon—all of them by-pass death and experience eternal judgment (see Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). By the process of elimination, the scarlet beast is the Antichrist/False Prophet. We know that because he cannot be the first beast. The first beast is the head of the false religion, whom we have interpreted to be Allah. The scarlet beast is not the Dragon, Satan. The only one of the trinity of evil left is the Antichrist/False Prophet. This is the eighth head of the scarlet beast.

The Hidden Imam, also prophesied by Islam not to have died, will rise from the abyss as the last false prophet. This one will be al-Mahdi, the Antichrist. He will never die, but rather, he will "go to destruction" in the Lake of Fire.

The Biblical Antichrist—Four Conditions, All of Which Must Be Met Simultaneously

There is one very important final requirement that must be met if we are to properly interpret the text. The text gives us four conditions to identify the eighth head of the scarlet beast. The first three of these must be met simultaneously. The fourth can only be met in the future. If these conditions cannot be met simultaneously, they have little meaning. In fact, not to require a simultaneous application of the first three characteristics of 17:8 is to strip the text of its specific, unique requirements and render the requirements without meaning. Consider them once again: the eighth head (17:11) of the scarlet beast:

1. "was," (17:8, 11)
2. "is not," (17:8, 11)
3. "is about to come up out of the abyss" (17:8)
4. and, "go to destruction." (17:8)

First, remember what the text told us about the eighth head of the scarlet beast. The head of the beast is a metaphor for a *king* (Rev. 17:10).The text interprets the head as a king, not a kingdom. As a king, the eighth head of the scarlet beast must meet the first three requirements simultaneously (the fourth is a future requirement that occurs only after he comes up). Applying the first three requirements to al-Mahdi provides a fulfillment so unique that it is astounding. If we try to apply the same three requirements to an empire (a kingdom), then the requirements lose all of their uniqueness. In fact, applying the three to an empire results in almost any past empire meeting the requirements of the text simply by holding that one day the empire will be revived. For example, since Rome existed in the past as an empire (it "was") and since it is not at present an empire (it "is not"), then it can easily meet the third condition (it is "about to come up"), provided we interpret Rome as a revived Rome for a future time. If we interpret the eighth head as a kingdom, this interpretation violates the unique complexities of the prophecy and thereby renders the complexities without meaning or merit.

On the other hand, if the eighth head is a king (as Revelation 17:10 states) and not an empire, then the threefold requirements are uniquely met by the Hidden Imam/al-Mahdi. No human being can possibly meet the requirements of the text: how can a human being exist in the past ("was"), not exist in the present ("is not"), and yet, be about to "come up" at some future time? That is the point. This king will not be a human being. He will appear in human form, but he will not be human. Rather, he is one of Satan's kind. Only appearing to be human, he will actually be demonic, and in all likelihood, he is Abaddon, the prince of the abyss (according to Revelation 9:11).

The Mahdi meets these three conditions and meets them all simultaneously. The Mahdi meets them right now and has met them since Islam began prophesying of his future rising almost 1,200 years ago. The Hidden Imam "was," "is not," and "is about to come up from the abyss." When he does, he will carry Islam's banner as al-Mahdi, the Awaited One. He will be the biblical Antichrist.

By the way, how can Rome, the Empire (or any human empire), come up from the abyss, the abode of demons? An empire is the sum of its individual citizens. It can hardly, as an empire, exist in the abode of demons. Individuals can; but empires can't.

The Biblical Antichrist—The Beast from the Earth Will Appear as a "Lamb," Yet He Will Speak as a Dragon

The interpretation that the eighth head of the scarlet beast will be a demon incarnate is also supported by other passages that warn us the Antichrist will have superhuman abilities. The second beast, the beast from the earth, is described in Revelation 13:11, "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon."

Notice the warning: the beast will have *two horns like a lamb*, but he will *speak as a dragon*. The text is using a lamb as a metaphor to tell us how this one will present himself to the world. A lamb is harmless. In fact, as a member of the animal kingdom, sheep have literally no way to defend themselves from prey. Yet, the text adds a second metaphor: "he will speak as a dragon." So how can this one who appears to be a lamb actually be harmless if he speaks as a dragon, i.e., Satan? Because he will not be what he appears to be! The picture is one of deception. The beast will hold himself out to be one who can be trusted, to be one who will make the world a better place, one who will bring peace and justice—for he has "two horns like a lamb."

Does "two horns like a lamb" sound like Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's "perfect and pure human being" who will "lead the world to justice and absolute peace"?

Other Relevant Twelver Prophecies of the Mahdi

Before concluding this chapter, it will be helpful to briefly mention some of the remaining and yet undiscussed Islamic prophecies of al-Mahdi.

- *"Emerge" in Mecca, in the Ka`ba:* Al-Mahdi will appear in Mecca, the birthplace of Islam, in the Ka`ba, between the "Rukn and Maqam," the two holy spots.[520] He emerges from Mecca rather than Kufa (the site

of the battle of Karbala and Husayn's martyrdom) because al-Mahdi rises for all people (not just Shi'ahs).[521] A Shi'ah tradition states:

> At that time he would come to Mecca and would be in the Ka'ba, when the people would be demanding that an Imam be appointed for them. A discussion would follow until a person would get up among this group and would look at the Imam, and then would say, "O people, this is the Mahdi, look at him," and they would take his hand and place it between the Rukn and Maqam, two spots in the sanctuary of the Ka'ba, and would pay allegiance to the Imam, though until then they had been on the point of despair.[522]

- *He will rule from Kufa (located in modern day Iraq).* Al-Mahdi will govern from Kufa, assisted by 313 of his close associates.[523]
- *He will lead an army from the East,* from the area of Khurasan (northeast Iran and western Afghanistan), carrying the black flag of Islam[524], to liberate Jerusalem from the Jews and to liberate the Arabian Peninsula.[525]
- *He will reign for seven years.*[526]

Shi'ah Versus Sunni Al-Mahdi

I have given you only the Shi'ah prophecies of al-Mahdi. What about the Sunni prophecies? Do the Sunnis believe in the Mahdi as well? Yes, but certainly not in all of the Shi'ah prophecies of al-Mahdi. For example, the Sunnis do not accept that al-Mahdi will emerge as "al-Qaim," who will avenge the Sunni wrongs committed against Shi'ahs throughout Islamic history. Nor do they accept elements of the Shi'ah prophecy regarding al-Mahdi's occultation. Dr. Timothy Furnish, in his book *Holiest Wars, Islamic Mahdis, Their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden* discusses eight Sunnis in Islamic history who have claimed to be the Mahdi. His book, along with that of Joel Richardson, *Antichrist, Islam's Awaited Messiah*, both include a complete source of references for Sunni prophecies.

So why does this writing discuss Shi'ah prophecies and not Sunni prophecies? In our earlier chapter, we looked at the prophecies of Daniel. The fourth beast of Daniel pointed us to Shi'ah prophecies, not Sunni. It was in Shiism that we found, for example, a little horn that uprooted three others; and this horn possessed "eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts" (Dan. 7:7–8). The text in Daniel has Shiism in mind. Similarly, the text in Revelation 17:8 has Shiism in mind. It is in Shi'ah prophecies of al-Mahdi that we find fulfillment of the Bible's prophecies.

The Prophecy of the Assyrian

One final note regarding a very interesting Bible prophecy of a coming Assyrian. Micah 5:3–6 says:

> Therefore He will give them [Israel] up until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel. And He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth. This One will be our peace. When the Assyrian invades our land, when he tramples on our citadels, then we will raise against him Seven shepherds and eight leaders of men. They will shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, the land of Nimrod at its entrances; and He will deliver us from the Assyrian when he attacks our land and when he tramples our territory.

Biblical Assyria was located in modern-day Iraq, north of modern-day Baghdad, and extended east to include much of modern-day Iran. Assyria was a mighty nation that conquered many nations, including the Northern Kingdom of Israel (the ten lost tribes of the people of Israel), Phoenicia, Philistia, and Idumea.[527] The ancient and prosperous city of Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. Assyria was defeated by a coalition of the Babylonians and Medes (north to central Iran) in 625 B.C.[528] Its defeat is prophesied in Isaiah 10:5–19. Yet, Micah's prophecy regarding an invading Assyrian, appears to be for a period of time later than that which prophesied of Assyria's defeat in Isaiah 10.

Micah's prophecy is of a time after the coming of Jesus Christ (see Micah 5:3). "Therefore, He will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child." Thus, God will "give them up," i.e., the people of Israel, until the time of Jesus Christ; some time later, the "remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel" (see 5:3). The text is telling us that after Israel returns to Jerusalem from having been scattered among the nations in exile, God will act in this time against an Assyrian who will invade Jerusalem. Israel returned to Jerusalem in 1948. In the future, an Assyrian will invade Jerusalem.

Assyria includes parts of Iraq and Iran (Kufa, from where al-Mahdi is prophesied by Shi'ahs to rule, is in modern-day Iraq). The populations of both countries are predominantly Shi'ah Muslim. When Saddam Hussein was removed from power in Iraq, the minority Sunnis (forty percent) were in control. At present, the new government in Iraq is predominately Shi'ah.

Also, Iran's population is ninety percent Shi'ah. Ahmadinejad of Iran has publicly stated that Israel should be "wiped off the map." We conclude

that the "Assyrian" refers to one from Islam who will be from the land of ancient Assyria—most of Iran is in ancient Assyria.

Conclusion

When we compare the Shi'ah prophecies of al-Mahdi, he fits hand in glove with those of the Bible. Al-Mahdi "was," al-Mahdi "is not," al-Mahdi is about to come up "from the abyss," and al-Mahdi will one day go "to his destruction" as Antichrist/False Prophet. The Bible warns us that even though he may perform the miraculous, and even though he may appear as a lamb, we should not be deceived. He is a force of the Dragon—the Antichrist version. His present biblical name is likely Abaddon, the king of the abyss, and his fate is reserved in the Lake of Fire, where he will suffer eternally with his two companions, Satan and the Beast.

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 9	
Point 1	The Bible prophesies three separate demonic creatures, each of which does not die, but is judged by God in the Lake of Fire for eternity. This trinity of evil includes: 1) Satan, 2) the Beast (from the sea), and 3) the False Prophet (the Antichrist). All other last days creatures are metaphors for one of these three.
Point 2	Islam prophesies of a supernatural creature that will emerge at a time of world chaos as their long-awaited one. This long-awaited one is the Hidden Imam of Shi'ah Islam, who is "al-Qaim," the "redresser of wrongs" committed against Shi'ahs by Sunnis. He is Shi'ah Islam's "master of the sword," prophesied by Shiism to lead Islam to bring the entire world under Islam.
Point 3	The eighth head of the scarlet beast is the last false prophet, the Antichrist. Shi'ah Islam's al-Mahdi meets the fourfold requirement of Revelation 17:8, 11 as this last false prophet: he "was," he "is not," he is about to "come up out of the abyss," and "go to his destruction." All but the last of these requirements must be met simultaneously. Al-Mahdi does this. He will be the biblical Antichrist.

Chapter 10

The Revived and Last Caliphate

Introduction

Indonesian news sources, The Times of India reporting. August 12, 2007.
JAKARTA: More than 70,000 members and supporters of the hardline Hizbut Tahrir Muslim group on Sunday held a massive gathering at a sports stadium in the Indonesian capital. Almost all but one seated area of the stadium was packed with members and supporters of Hizbut Tahrir, … The event, touted by the group's spokesman, Muhammad Ismail Yusanto, as an international conference entitled, "It is Now Time for the Caliphate to Reign," is hearing several speakers, including foreign invitees. Hizbut Tahrir advocates the return of a caliphate—Islamic rule—to govern the world.[529]

DID YOU CATCH the last line? "… the return of the caliphate—Islamic rule—to govern the world."

The Bible says that in the last days a kingdom will arise that will dominate the entire world. We have interpreted that kingdom to be spiritual in nature, and Satan will use it to cloak his war against God. In our last chapter, we identified Shi'ah Islam's coming al-Mahdi as the prophesied Antichrist of the last days. Al-Mahdi met the fourfold requirement of Revelation 17:8, 11, as the eighth head of the scarlet beast. We also introduced the concept that as eighth head of the scarlet beast (Antichrist), al-Mahdi will lead Islam in its subjection of the world. This chapter will give us the Bible's chapter and verse to support that conclusion.

As we move into these next chapters, we will begin the process of refining the time period that we are talking about in the last days. The last days will

conclude with a seven-year period known as the "tribulation," just prior to the return of Jesus Christ. This period will be a time of great distress the Bible describes as having "never occurred since there was a nation until that time" (Dan. 12:1).

The Caliphate of Islam—A Brief Review

When we use the word "caliphate," we are talking about a united Islamic community (*Ummah*) led by a single religious, political, and military head referred to as "caliph" (or sultan, emir, king[530]) and governed according to *Sharia* (the law of Islam as revealed in the Qur'an). The caliph's "kingdom" is the entire community of Islam, and the kingdom he rules is referred to as the "caliphate." The last caliphate of Islam was the Ottoman caliphate (modern-day Turkey, until 1923), which repealed *Sharia,* as well as eliminated the office and role of caliph.

The Contemporary Relevance of the Revival or Return of the Islamic Caliphate

Consider what the contemporary experts have said relative to the importance of a revived caliphate of Islam. Dr. Bruce Lawrence, Professor of Religion at Duke University,[531] in his compilation of the statements of Osama bin Laden, makes the following statement:

> For many radical Islamist movements who identify the root cause of the Muslim world's problems as a decline in spirituality and religious observance, the restoration of the Caliphate is a priority.[532]
>
> Since the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate, no country has replaced Turkey as the Muslim world's center. According to Sayyid Qutb [the late Egyptian intellectual whose philosophy is thought to be the foundation of Islamic belief of Al-Qaeda[533]], in order to bring about a new Caliphate governed by God's law there must be a revival in one Muslim country, enabling it to attain that status. When the Taliban captured Kabul in 1996, Afghanistan became an official Islamic state, or emirate, ruled by shari'a, and in the view of bin Laden and others, the strongest candidate for a new Caliphate.[534]

Dr. Timothy R. Furnish adds:

> In recent years, there has been a growing debate among Islamists about the need to restore the caliphate. One international Islamist movement, Hizb at-Tahrir ("the Liberation Party"), has kept this idea alive intellectually for over fifty years by publishing tracts on the subject. Members of the party,

> and those Islamists influenced by them, argue that a prerequisite for the empowerment of the Muslims is the restoration of the caliphate in some "liberated" part of the Muslim world. This pure Islamic state, under a caliph, would then turn into a base for further expansion.[535]

Now we will look at what the Bible predicts about a revived kingdom of the beast.

The Last Kingdom of The Beast—And the Last Caliphate of Islam

Once again, it is Revelation 17 and the scarlet beast on which we must focus. The apostle John is carried away into a desert wilderness, where he sees a woman riding a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns (see 17:3). We will discuss who the woman is in a following chapter. For now, we must look at the scarlet beast. We have already interpreted the eighth head of the scarlet beast to be al-Mahdi of Shi'ah Islam. Revelation 17:11 has a second metaphor that must be interpreted as well. The text states, "The beast … is one of the seven." What is "one of the seven"?

The Characteristics of the Heads of the Scarlet Beast

Revelation 17:10 provides the characteristics of the scarlet beast. In part, it says:

1. Five have "fallen."
2. One "is."
3. One "has not yet come," but when he comes, "it will remain a little while."

Return to our earlier chapter entitled, "Where is Allah and his Muhammad?" where we interpreted the seven heads of the beast from the sea to be the seven caliphal periods, beginning with Muhammad, followed by six caliphates and six caliphal periods of Islam.

Heads	Regime that Claimed the Caliphate of Islam	Regime Period	Caliphate
1	The Quraysh-Muhammad (and the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali)	621–661 A.D.	NA

Heads	Regime that Claimed the Caliphate of Islam	Regime Period	Caliphate
2	Umayyads	661–749	1st
3	Abbasids	749–932	2nd
4	Buyids in Baghdad Fatimids in Egypt	932–1055 909–1171	3rd
5	Seljuk Turks in Baghdad Ayyubids in Egypt	1055–1258 1169–1260	4th
6	Mongols in Baghdad Mamluks in Egypt and Syria	125–1350 1260–1517	5th
7	Ottomans	1342–1923	6th
8	Last Caliphate, led by al-Mahdi	7 Years	7th

There Are Five "Fallen" Heads (Out of the Seven Heads) of the Scarlet Beast

Revelation 17:10 tells us that five of the heads are "fallen." "Fallen," in the original Greek, has the meaning of a "violent overthrow" rather than having simply ended or having been replaced by majority vote or similar event.[536] The word "fallen" translates from the Greek *epesan* (from the verb *pipto*) and is defined by A. T. Robertson as follows: "Second aorist active indicative of 'pipto' with the -an ending. Common for the downfall of kings (Ezek. 29:5; Ezek. 30:6; Isa. 21:9, etc.). See 2 Samuel 3:38."[537] Vincent's Word Studies adds: "Lit., fell. Constantly used in the Septuagint of the violent fall or overthrow of kings or kingdoms. See Ezekiel 29:5; 30:6; Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 50:15; 51:8."[538]

The text is describing the five fallen regimes of Islam, beginning with the Umayyads and continuing through the Mongols (1258–1350), and the five caliphal periods of time that each regime was in dominion. Each of these Islamic dynasties was overthrown by a successor Islamic regime, and each regime was, or shortly thereafter became, Islamic. We will discuss the sixth regime, the Ottomans, next; but they were not overthrown as the preceding five were. The five fallen Islamic regimes and their respective five caliphate periods are reflected in our table, beginning with the Umayyads through the Mongols. They are numbered heads two through six. The first head of the beast symbolizes the Rightly Guided Caliphs, including Muhammad, and

followed by his first four successors, who were appointed by the Companions upon the death of each caliph. As we stated in our preceding chapter, the first head is not numbered because the first caliphate in Islamic history begins *after the divide of Islam* between Sunnis and Shi'ahs at the Battle of Karbala, 680.

The point? Islam has five fallen historical regimes over five historical caliphal periods of time. The scarlet beast has five fallen heads and each fallen head represents one of these five fallen caliphates.

The Head that "Is"—The Seventh Head of the Scarlet Beast and Sixth Dynasty Period

The Ottomans, the sixth regime of Islam, are not included in the "five fallen" heads because they are not a fallen regime. The Ottoman Empire was centered in modern-day Turkey. The Turks *repealed* Islamic law and abolished the Islamic state and the caliphate in 1923. The Ottomans were the caliphate of Islam for the longest period of time, almost 600 years, whereupon Turkey became a self-governing republic with the repeal of Sharia in 1923. The Turks never came under the "dominion" of a successor nation or people group—Islamic or otherwise.

Up until the Turks abolished the caliphate, we could interpret them as the head that "is." Thereafter, Islam had no caliph or caliphate. Yet, Islam still existed in spite of the absence of a caliph or caliphate. It still exists as a religion and an empire, although a "caliph-less" one. While in this caliph-less state, Islam "is." The time will come when Islam will once again be represented by a caliph, be governed by *Sharia*, and be a united Ummah, but until that event occurs, Islam simply exists. During this period, Islam is like a bear in hibernation. It is still alive, but it is dormant, waiting for the time the caliphate will be revived.

Consider the following description of a similar waiting period within Shi'ah Islam for their Mahdi. The report comes from Amir Taheri, former executive editor of *Kayhan*, Iran's largest daily newspaper:

> From childhood, Shi'ah boys are told to cultivate two qualities. The first is "entezar," the capacity patiently to wait for the Imam to return. The second is "taajil," the actions needed to hasten the return. For the Imam's return will coincide with an apocalyptic battle between the forces of evil and righteousness, with evil ultimately routed.[539]

Thus, at the present time in human history, Islam "is." It exists without a caliph and during a period of its history where waiting best describes its spiritual and political state. We need only read the daily newspapers to become aware that it is waking up from its sleep. As we will see in our next

chapter, the tonic for its revival was a twentieth century discovery in the desert sands of Saudi Arabia. Petroleum brought the Muslim lands of the Mideast from near poverty to the richest nations, per capita, in the world. It is out of this economic windfall that Islam has been, and will be, reborn to complete its worldwide jihad.

The Head that "Has not yet Come must Remain a Little While"

Revelation 17:10 tells us the scarlet beast, as a united empire, "has not yet come." Thus, this will be a future regime that has yet to unite. This future regime will exist for only a short period of time. The short period of time for this future regime is defined for us by Scripture—seven years, the period referred to as the tribulation period. This kingdom will be the last kingdom and the kingdom present upon the return of Jesus Christ and of judgment day for the beast (Dan. 7:21–22, 26–27). Thus, it is the seventh and last caliphal period of the beast.

The Meaning of "One of the Seven"

Here is a summary of the characteristics that must be met to identify the second metaphorical prophecy of the scarlet beast, i.e., "one of the seven." Each characteristic is like a clue to a riddle, and all must be met in order to solve the riddle. Furthermore, they can only be met at a precise time in human history. Until the time is "now," the clues are unable to be properly applied because the future events cannot be interpreted since all we have is a metaphor. The interpreter cannot possibly apply them without a modern-day application. Therefore, until the time is right, the clues are meaningless.

The time is now. Look at each characteristic below with Islam in mind:

1. The revived caliphate has "not yet come" (Rev. 17:10). The Turks repealed the caliphate. There is no present caliphate of Islam. Thus, to humanity at this precise time, a revived caliphate is a future event, it has "not yet come." When this revived caliphate comes, it will remain for a "little while," i.e., seven years.
2. This revived caliphate will be the final caliphal period of Islam, beginning with the first regime, the Umayyads, who led Islam for the period of time, 661–749. After Muhammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, there were six regimes and six caliphal periods. Five of the regimes were defeated by a successor Islamic regime—they are the "five fallen" empires. With the repeal of Sharia by the Turks, the

sixth head represents Islam that continues to "exist" in spite of the absence of a caliphate of Islam in the world. This is the sixth head that "is." The revived caliphate is the future caliphate that will one day be revived for a little while. The Bible counts this last regime as the seventh head of the scarlet beast.

3. As stated in the prior chapter, this last regime will ultimately be led by the Antichrist, al-Mahdi, who "was," "is not," and "will come" (17:8). Thus, the Antichrist/False Prophet will be the eighth leader or eighth head in the seventh caliphal period of Islam.

The phrase "one of the seven" (Rev. 17:11) has two possible meanings. The first is that the "seven" refers to the seven caliphates, beginning with the Ummayyads and ending with the last caliphate that al-Mahdi will lead as Antichrist. Alternatively, "one of the seven" could refer to the seven heads of the Dragon (Satan) of Revelation 12:3. We interpreted these seven heads in chapter 5 as the seven kingdoms throughout human history that have been at enmity with God and His children. The seven kingdoms are: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greeks, Rome, and Islam. Thus, Islam is the last of this group of seven that will be at enmity with God—in this case, the last kingdom in the last days.

Does the Bible Prophesy that the World will Convert to Islam?

Daniel 7:25 states that the saints will be "worn down," translated from an Aramaic word meaning "to wear away" or "to wear out," as one would "wear out a garment."[540] Thus, the meaning of the word is that Christians (the saints) will be slowly impacted to the point of deep misery, but short of death. Also, Revelation 13:17 describes a political impact upon the saints: "and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name." The "mark of the beast" is symbolic for those who have converted to the religion of the beast, i.e., Islam.

This time of great tribulation will be such that an apostasy will occur within Christianity, and those who are not truly believers will leave the faith to follow Islam. The apostle Paul prophesies of this coming apostasy as follows:

> Let no one in any way deceive you, for it [the return of Christ] will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. (2 Thess. 2:3–4)

We have already identified the "man of lawlessness" as the Antichrist, the last false prophet, al-Mahdi. The apostasy appears to describe those within the Christian faith (who never actually converted to Christ) who turn to Islam in order to preserve their lives. Thus, Christians will be "worn down" by the economic, societal, and religious pressures exerted upon them by Islam (see Dan. 7:25); but those who overcome will not convert. Their oppression seems to be limited to three-and-a-half years:

> He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. (Dan. 7:25)

> There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. (Rev. 13:5)

Is this three-and-a-half years the first half of the seven or the last half of the seven? As we will see in chapter 14, "The Reaping," it is the first three-and-a-half years, the time of the wrath of Satan.

Muslim Prophecy About the Role of Jesus ("Isa") in Islam's World Conversion

Both Sunni and Shi'ah prophecies of the Mahdi include prophecies about the return of Jesus. Jesus' return is described as coming sometime after the Mahdi has emerged and includes Jesus' worship of the Mahdi, his killing of al-Dajjal (Islam's Antichrist), his removal of crosses from Christian churches, and then his forcing of Jews and Christians to believe in the Mahdi or be killed:

> He [Jesus] will descend in the Holy Land at a place called Afiq with a spear in his hand; he will kill with it al-Dajjal [the Antichrist of Islamic eschatology] and go to Jerusalem at the time of the morning prayer. The Imam [the Mahdi] will seek to yield his place to him, but Jesus will refuse and will worship behind him according to the Shari'a of Muhammad. Thereafter he [Jesus] will kill the swine, break the cross, and kill all the Christians who do not believe in him [the Mahdi]. Once al-Dajjal is killed, all the Peoples of the Book [i.e. Jews and Christians] will believe in him [the Mahdi] and will form one single umma of those who submit to the will of God. Jesus will establish the rule of justice and will remain for forty years, after which he will die. His funeral will take place in Medina, where he will be buried beside Muhammad, in a place between Abu Bakr and Umar.[541]

But don't forget that the Jesus of Islamic prophecy is not the same Jesus as known by Christians. A summary of the Islamic view is below:

> In general, the relevant Islamic traditions hold that the prophet Jesus will return by descending from heaven, likely onto a mosque in Damascus. This is the earthly Jesus returning, however, not the crucified and risen Christ of the Christian churches. In Islamic teachings, Allah does not suffer his prophets to die an ignominious death such as crucifixion, and before his death on the cross—or perhaps even before he was actually nailed to it—Jesus was taken up bodily to heaven and someone made to resemble him (most likely Judas Iscariot, his betrayer) died on the cross in his place. Jesus will be of medium height, "ruddy" in coloration, with hair that flows down his head as if he had just bathed. He will proclaim the rightness of Islam and the wrongheadedness of his putative followers who blasphemously deified him, and then he will go on to smash all the world's crosses, kill all the pigs, and call all Ahl al-Katab, or "People of the Book"—Jews and Christians, fellow monotheists—to join the one true religion, Islam.[542]

World Conquest According to Islamic Prophecy

In our opening chapters, we outlined the importance to all Muslims of eventual world conquest of the non-Muslim world.[543] Muslims believe that al-Mahdi will be that leader who will succeed in establishing a world Islamic state. A Shi'ah tradition reports Muhammad as having stated to his son-in-law Ali:

> There will be twelve Guides (Imams) after me, the first of whom is you, O' Ali, and the last one will be the "support" (Al-Mahdi/Al-Qa'im), who with the grace of Allah, will gain victory over the whole east and west of the world.[544]
>
> The followers of all other religions will embrace Islam and profess faith in one God, just as He has said in the Qur'an … Consequently, there will be no place on earth where testimony, "I bear witness that there is no god but [Allah]," and "I bear witness that Muhammad is the Apostle of [Allah]," will not be heard. The faith that will be presented by the Qa'im will be the pure religion of Muhammad, Islam without any omission or innovation.[545]

Perhaps a quote taken from a YouTube™ video might make the prophecies of Islam a little more current and relevant. The individual on the video is an "Abu Hafs Al Misry, Rahimahullah." He speaks from Khurasan (on the western border of Afghanistan, the eastern border of Iran). As he speaks, armed gunmen can be seen behind him and to his side. Other male Muslim voices can be heard on the tape, shouting agreement with his words. The

translation of his speech follows (as taken from the translation content included with the video):

> We gather here from all over the world and we train from here and we prepare ourselves here and we unify all the Islamic groups here. Why? Because Allah, the Glorified, wants something from here … The liberation of Palestine is from here. The liberation of the Arabian Peninsula is from here. And the return of Muslim countries under the Islamic umbrella and the Islamic rule is from here. So be firm oh slaves of Allah. And spread the glad tidings and unite your efforts and join the blessed caravan. Join so that you, Oh Mujahid brother, will be a soldier and perform jihad in the path of Allah, and return again the spread of Islam all over the world. We must once again return as the leadership of humanity. This is our duty. Yes, this is our duty to return as leadership of humanity to the way of Allah, the Glorified … We praise Allah the Glorified for these blessed plans.[546]

Conclusion

The Bible prophesies of a false religion that the entire world, other than those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life, will submit and convert to; but this will not be the end, only the beginning of the end. Satan's strategy will ultimately fail but not until the world is purified of its evil and sin in the tribulation and Satan, the Beast, and the Antichrist/False Prophet are judged in the Lake of Fire.

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 10	
Point 1	Islam is presently without a caliph and without a caliphate. The Bible prophesies that an empire of a false religion will one day rule the entire world, other than Christendom. Many Muslims advocate that the return of the caliphate is necessary before Islam will be able to fulfill Muhammad's prophecy of a Muslim empire extending over the entire world.
Point 2	The scarlet beast is prophesied to be "one of seven" kingdoms of the beast. These seven kingdoms include: 1) five that are "fallen," 2) one that "is," 3) one that "has not yet come," and when it comes, "it will remain a little while." See Revelation 17:10–11.

Point 3	The Bible prophesies of a future kingdom that will dominate the entire world. Only those whose names have been in the Book of Life since the foundation of the world will not worship the Beast. Islam meets the Bible's prophetic criteria. In addition, from within Islam's own prophecies, it is prophesied to one day have dominion over the entire world.
Point 4	Islam fulfills the criteria of the scarlet beast's seven heads as follows: *Five fallen regimes*: Islam has five "fallen" historical regimes, beginning with the Umayyads and ending with the Mongols. *Islam "is*." Islam has existed in a "caliph-less" state since 1923, when the Ottomans repealed *Sharia* and removed the office of "caliph" as leader of the Islamic state. During this period, Islam still exists. Therefore, Islam "is." *The seventh and last caliphate of Islam*: Islam's "revived caliphate" will be its seventh of seven caliphal periods. This revived caliphate will rise up in the future (during its seventh caliphate period) and be led by its eighth head, al-Mahdi.

Chapter 11



Rebuilding Babel's Tower

Introduction

THE BIBLICAL ANTICHRIST/FALSE Prophet will be Shi'ah Islam's al-Mahdi, the eighth head of the scarlet beast of Revelation 17. This demonic incarnation will revive the caliphate of Islam, making it the seventh in the seventh caliphate period of Islamic rule. Al-Mahdi will lead Islam to dominate the world. This chapter will tell us how the Antichrist/False Prophet will accomplish such a feat. What will be his war strategy?

Revelation 17 pictures a woman riding the scarlet beast. The woman, called "Babylon the Great," is described as a harlot. She is pictured as extraordinarily wealthy, "sitting" on many nations, peoples, and multitudes. Yet, in one hour, the scarlet beast and his ten horns destroy her. Her vivid death is pictured in the eighteenth chapter as she is consumed with fire. The merchants of the world mourn her passing: "no one buys their cargoes anymore." They, and the kings of the earth, stand at a distance for fear of her torment, watching the harlot's destruction.

Who is the harlot? What nation of the world will be so epitomized by wealth that both merchants and kings mourn her passing? And how is it possible for one nation to somehow "sit" on the peoples of the entire world?

This chapter will lay the groundwork for al-Mahdi's war strategy to conquer the world under the banner of Islam; but first, we must identify the harlot of Revelation 17. Her destruction will be the first step in his war strategy.

Saudi Arabia—A Short History

To understand how Saudi Arabia fits into last days Bible prophecy, we must review the beginnings of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.[547]

In the mid-eighteenth century, an Islamic cleric named Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab believed that Islam had moved from its historic roots and that its believers no longer followed the true Islam of Muhammad. Abd al-Wahhab began to preach and teach what he considered to be the teachings of Muhammad from 1,000 years before; and specifically, a teaching which sought to purify the Sunni sect of Islam from all innovations added to Muhammad's teaching from the tenth century forward. His teaching focused on these ideals: 1) the importance of monotheism (the worship of one God); 2) the denunciation of all forms of mediation between God and believers; 3) the obligation to pay the *zakat* (Islamic tax paid to the leader of the Muslim community); and 4) the obligation to respond to his call for holy war against those who did not follow these principals.[548] His teaching was greeted with great resistance, resulting in his being driven out of Medina. His path took him to the Najd, an area of the central Arabian desert wastelands. There he was received by Muhammad ibn Saud, who had heard of al-Wahhab's teachings and reputation. According to Madawi Rasheed, in the year 1744, the two established an alliance, described as follows:

> Muhammad ibn Sa'ud greeted Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and said, "This oasis is yours, do not fear your enemies. By the name of God, if all Najd was summoned to throw you out, we will never agree to expel you." Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab replied, "You are the settlement's chief and wise man. I want you to grant me an oath that you will perform jihad (holy war) against the unbelievers. In return you will be imam, leader of the Muslim community and I will be leader in religious matters." (Abu Hakima 1967:30).[549]

Abd al-Wahhab represented the spiritual leader and spiritual interpreter in the alliance, and al-Saud represented the political and military ruler of the alliance. Together they began a reformation in Islam that is referred to today as the "Wahhabi Reformation."

The Wahhabi Reformation proved to be one of the bloodiest of Islamic conquests. The Wahhabi conquest, which began in the early eighteenth century, continued through the twentieth century. The two men who founded the reform movement, Abd al-Wahhab and bin-Sa'ud, were succeeded in their reform efforts by their descendants. The Wahhabis captured the two holy cities of Arabia, Mecca and Medina. (The importance of Mecca, of course, is that Mecca is considered by Muslims to be the holiest

Islamic city. Muslims make an annual pilgrimage to Mecca and pay taxes and fees for its upkeep. The taxes and fees become the possession of the controlling country as the custodian. Saudi Arabia is still the custodian of the holy places today). Later, the Wahhabi doctrine spread to the Gulf region, Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar. With each advance, a blood bath occurred of the indigenous peoples.

On September 22, 1932, Abdul Aziz bin Sa'ud completed his conquest of the Arabian Peninsula and named his conquered lands the "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." The Saud family became the royal family, the most important and the governing family of Saudi Arabia; and the Wahhabi family became the second most important family.

Saudi Arabian Governance and Religion

Saudi Arabia is governed by the head of the House of Saud, the king. The king serves as its absolute ruler and monarch. All of Saudi Arabia's kings have been descendants of Abdul Aziz bin Saud. Author Steven Schwarz describes the governance of the kingdom as follows:

> The new state was based on three powers: the whims of Ibn Sa'ud, the Wahhabi interpretation of the Qur'an (which became the country's constitution), and the sword—specifically, the ruler's personal implement for executions, the saber known as "The Neck Cutter" or "raqban." [550]

The House of Saud governed the Kingdom according to Sharia—the law of the Qur'an. There was no difference between governance and religion. The Qur'an is the state constitution. The Qur'an is the governing document for all legal decisions.

Stephen Schwarz describes the continuing alliance between the Saudi royal family and the Wahhabi family as follows:

> In the Saudi kingdom, there is no separation of powers. Al Sa'ud, the royal family, is the state; the royal family is the owner of the energy resources; the royal family's partner for 250 years … the descendants of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, are indistinguishable from the institutions of religion, justice and education. Both families are made up of Najdis, born in the central Arabian wastelands from which Al Sa'ud and Wahhabism emerged. Najdis are the sole holders of power in Saudi Arabia, occupying all administrative and decision making posts. Although no more that 40 percent of the Saudi population are Wahhabi, the cult holds a monopoly on religious life in the kingdom. The entire judiciary is Wahhabi, made up of graduates of the sect's religious schools.[551]

The Discovery of Oil and Its Impact upon Saudi Arabia

In 1932, when Abd al-Aziz Al Saud proclaimed the Arabian Peninsula to be the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the country was at most a remote backwater nation. Saudi Arabia as a nation was insignificant in matters of global commerce. In fact, the Peninsula was composed largely of rural people who followed centuries-old ways as farmers and nomadic herdsmen, driving sheep, goats, and camels across great desert expanses. Economically, the Kingdom was poor and utterly lacking in industrial development.[552] Its sole source of revenue came from fees the Saudis charged Muslims on their pilgrimage to Mecca. "When Aziz finally became king, the global depression had reduced the flow of pilgrims to a trickle, and the royal family of the new Kingdom teetered on the brink of insolvency."[553]

America was in the throes of its great depression in the late 1920's and early 1930's when Saudi Arabia was brought under Aziz bin Saud's control. At that time, oil had not been discovered on the Peninsula. In the world market, particularly in America, the depression had resulted in the erosion of oil demand to such an extent that the price of a barrel of oil had fallen to ten cents a barrel.[554]

Through the efforts of a British envoy, Sir Harry St. John Philby; American multimillionaire Charles Crane (Crane Plumbing); and officials of Standard Oil of California (SOCAL), King Aziz entered into an agreement granting SOCAL an *oil concession*. This concession allowed SOCAL an exclusive right to explore and produce oil in the entire Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. The agreement was signed on May 29, 1933, and would prove to be the only agreement Saudi Arabia would ever sign with an outside party.[555] This decision of 1933 by Aziz proved to forever change the nature of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. From this agreement, Saudi Arabia became the most important oil producer on the face of the earth.

According to the *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, Saudi Arabia, as of 2003, held 22.9 percent of the world's proven oil reserves.[556] The Middle East, as a group, which includes in addition to Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain, accounts for 63.3 percent of the world's proven oil reserves. Of the Middle East group, Saudi Arabia possesses more than twice the reserves of its closest rival, Iran. At present, Saudi Arabian oil is produced by its 100-percent owned company, Saudi Aramco. Aramco produces more oil each day than any other oil-producing country and twice as much oil as the next largest oil corporation in the world.[557]

Yet, in spite of its being the dominant world economic power in oil, it was not until 1973, in the Arab Oil Embargo, that the wealth of Saudi Arabia took a leap that is almost incomprehensible. Prior to the Embargo, the world price

for a barrel of oil was $2 per barrel. By 1974, Saudi Arabian oil production had risen from three million barrels a day (pre Embargo) to eight million barrels a day, and the world price had risen from $2 a barrel to $12 a barrel. With these two changes, Saudi oil revenues were increased six-fold. This explosion of wealth over such a brief period of time represented perhaps the greatest and most compressed economic change that any nation in all of human history had ever experienced.[558] Comparing the 1974 prices with world market prices of the present day results in an even more astounding economic profile for the Kingdom. According to the website of OPEC, for the eleven months that ended November, 2006, the price for a barrel of oil reached its high in the week of August, 25, 2006, when the average price for the week was $67.67.[559] January 2, 2008, oil surpassed $100 a barrel for the first time in history.[560] March 5, 2010, amidst the world economic recovery, oil reached its high for the first quarter of 2010 of $84.36 barrel.[561]

The Big Seven of Saudi Arabia

An astounding fact of Saudi oil production is that for the last 60 years, 90 percent of her oil has been produced by *seven giant oil fields*.[562] Author and energy expert Matthew R. Simmons lists the seven and their daily oil production as follows:

Ghawar	5,000,000
Safaniya	960,000
Abqaiq	650,000
Berri	400,000
Zuluf	500,000
Marjan	400,000
Abu Sa'fah	150,000[563]

For almost sixty years, Saudi Arabia's Big Seven oilfields have produced most of the oil that has made Saudi Arabia the world's number one producer of crude oil. In fact, 75 percent of her oil has come from five of the seven oil wells. Ghawar accounts for 62 percent of Saudi oil and is by far "the greatest oil bearing structure the world has ever known."[564]

The Saudi Royal Family—The House of Saud

The Saudi royal family, i.e., the descendants of Abdul Aziz bin Saud, the first king of Saudi Arabia, owns all rights to all petroleum resources of the Kingdom.[565] Other than the royal family, no Saudi individual possesses any rights to the land or its resources. Everything belongs to the royal family. The Saudi royal family owns the billions in revenue received through the

sale of petroleum. Each Saudi prince receives a monthly allowance from this revenue. They can spend it, hoard it, do anything they want to with it.

The Prostitution of the House of Saud from the Perspective of Many Islamists

The cozy relationship of the Saud family and the Wahhabi family that began in the eighteenth century has seen its strain over its history, but probably no more so than in modern times. The reason for the divide is the alignment of the royal family with non-Muslim countries.

The alignment began with the British, following World War I. By the end of World War II, in 1947, the Saudi king, citing mutual interests and friendship to safeguard, began to look to the Americans for security from its neighbors. In exchange, the Americans looked to the Saudis and the availability of Saudi oil as the key factor to their post-World War II recovery.[566] In other words, an "I'll scratch your back, you scratch mine" relationship began between the Saudi royals and her Western protector.

For many Wahhabists, this alignment by the royal family came to be viewed as an infidelity, a prostitution, which reached its apex when American troops landed on Saudi soil in their liberation of Kuwait in the Gulf War of 1990.

In March, 1997, CNN reporter Peter Arnett interviewed Osama bin Laden. Among the many questions that Arnett asked bin Laden was this one: "Could you give us your main criticism of the Saudi royal family that is ruling Saudi Arabia today?" Bin Laden replied:

> Regarding the criticisms of the ruling regime in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian peninsula, the first one is their subordination to the U.S. So, our main problem is the U.S. government, while the Saudi regime is but a branch or an agent of the U.S. By being loyal to the U.S. regime, the Saudi regime has committed an act against Islam. And this, based on the ruling of sharia [law of Islam based on the Qur'an], casts the regime outside the religious community.[567]

Other quotes of Osama against the Saudi royal family:

> What shows their position [the royal family] toward the umma's causes is the support they provided to the United States by opening their bases for its crusader campaign against Afghanistan; this is obvious support for the infidels against an Islamic country; and a cardinal sin that renders one an infidel.[568]
>
> It has become clear that the Gulf rulers are not qualified to apply religion and defend Muslims. In fact, they have provided evidence that they

> are implementing the schemes of the enemies of the umma and religion and that they are qualified to abandon its countries and peoples. Now, after we have become aware of the rulers' approach, we should examine the policy they have been pursuing. Anyone who examines the policy of those rulers will easily see that they follow their whims and desires, and their personal interests and Crusader loyalties.[569]

The present relationship between the United States and the Saudi Royal family is reflected in this recent *Wall Street Journal* article:

> **U.S.-Saudi Arms Plan Grows to Record Size by Adam Entous, Washington**
>
> The Obama administration plans to include attack helicopters in an expanded arms package for Saudi Arabia, swelling the size of the proposed deal to as much as $60 billion over 10 years, according to officials familiar with the matter. The deal would be the largest ever overseas U.S. arms sale, the officials said, though the size could change as the package is finalized …[570]

Dr. Timothy Furnish, in his book on Mahdism, reports the failed attempt in 1979 of Muhammad b. Abd Allah al-Qahtani, whose brother-in-law, Juhayman al-Utaybi, proclaimed al-Qahtani to be Islam's al-Mahdi. Al-Utaybi and several hundred of his followers stormed the great Mosque of Mecca, announcing that al-Qahtani was the Mahdi and he would lead the destruction of the apostate Saudi regime. Among his five demands were: "to sever relations with the West so as to protect Islamic values; to stop all oil exports to the West; to overthrow the illegitimate Saudi royal family, including the apostate *ulama* (religious scholars); and the redistribution of all Saudi wealth." Al-Qahtani and his followers were killed by Saudi troops in intense fighting over a two-week period of time.[571]

There is plenty of Muslim hatred of the royal family to go around. It is this hatred that will be the fuel to affect the divine justice of God.

Summary

Keep in mind a couple of important historical markers for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Arabia is the birthplace of Islam. Saudi Arabia is an Islamic state governed by the Qur'an. The House of Saud is wealthy beyond comprehension for most of us. The wealth of the royal family finds its root in the House of Saud's claim to the petroleum resources of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Many of the Muslim neighbors of the House of Saud hate her, considering the royal family to have prostituted itself with the West. Lastly, the preponderance of Saudi oil comes from seven massive oil wells. Through these wells, she has made herself and the merchants of the world

rich and famous and the people of the world addicted to her "fruit" (see Rev. 17:15; 18:4).

Now we will address what the Bible gives us to identify the harlot who rides the scarlet beast. There are many clues. The Saudis will meet each one.

Bible Prophecy of the Harlot that Rides the Scarlet Beast

The key chapters are Revelation 17 and 18. Revelation 17 gives us the metaphor of the "woman," a "harlot," who rides the scarlet beast that we have interpreted to be Islam. The seven heads symbolize the seven caliphate dynasties since Islam's beginning in the seventh century. The eighth head of the scarlet beast is the Mahdi, the Antichrist/False Prophet, who will revive the caliphate in its eighth caliphate period. The text names the woman, the "great harlot" (see Rev. 17:1), and upon her forehead is written, "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth" (17:5). Chapter 18 describes the aftereffects of the destruction of the harlot by the ten horns of the scarlet beast, who are all led by the eighth head, the Antichrist/False Prophet in this destruction.

Here are the identifiers the Bible gives us for the woman:

1. The harlot's "wine" has made the merchants of the world wealthy and great (Rev. 18:3, 15, 19, 23).
2. The harlot is pictured as the epitome of wealth (Rev. 17:4).
3. The harlot possesses something that the entire world desires and, in fact, is addicted to (Rev. 14:8; 17:2; 18:3).
4. The harlot "sits" on "seven mountains" (Rev. 17:9).
5. The harlot is blinded by her own arrogance; she believes her "fruit" will never depart (Rev. 18:5, 7).
6. The harlot is called "Babylon the Great," and her use of wealth is likened to an immorality (Rev. 17:5).
7. The kings of the earth have committed "immorality" with the harlot (Rev. 17:2; 18:3).
8. The harlot will be hated by those with whom she is associated. Her associates will destroy her in one hour (Rev. 17:16; 18:10, 17).
9. The harlot is drunk with the blood of the saints and the witnesses of Jesus (Rev. 17:6).

The Wine of Her Immorality

Almost every time the phrase "wine of her immorality" appears in the scripture, it is accompanied by another word that relates to *wealth, commerce, or business* (Rev. 17:4; 18:3, 15, 16, 19). For example:

> For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality. (Rev. 18:3)

Some scholars have interpreted this phrase to be a reference to spiritual adultery or spiritual apostasy. That is, the wine is a metaphor for false religion, and the immorality is what happens when the harlot spreads this false religion to the peoples of the world. This view is based on similar passages in the Old Testament in which Israel's worship of false gods is likened to spiritual adultery (Ezek. 16:17–19; 23:37, 43).[572] But here is the problem. When the phrase "wine of her immorality" is used, it is always associated with commerce or those impacted by commerce and the wealth created from that commerce. Further, this wealth comes from the harlot to those who associate with her. The wealth is not created by the selling of products to the harlot. Rather, the merchants of the world have become rich *from the harlot*. Notice verse 18:15, which repeats 18:3:

> The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning.

Any guesses what the harlot possesses that makes the merchants of the earth wealthy?

The World's addiction to Petroleum

Revelation 17:2 states, "And those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality." And 18:3 says, "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

The twenty-first century world is addicted to petroleum and petroleum byproducts. We need it for our automobiles, airplanes, and ships. We need natural gas for our stoves, boilers, and heat pumps. Almost every industry requires some form of petroleum product, whether in powering transportation or manufacturing equipment or powering factories. We cannot do without petroleum. Matthew R. Simmons, in his book *Twilight in the Desert*, gives some specifics about our addiction:

> In 1969, the last year that oil was really cheap, the world oil demand was only 45 million barrels a day. Oil prices were just over $1 per barrel, and many experts thought they were overpriced by a factor of three to four. By the time the Iranian Revolution began in 1979, oil prices were about $18, setting the stage for the second oil shock of the 1970's. When Iran's troubles began, oil prices soared once more, going from $18 to a peak of over $40

> a barrel. In the meantime, how much did this explosion in oil prices really impact demand? Between 1969 and 1978, global oil demand grew from 45 to 65 million barrels a day, an increase of 44% in a decade, despite the fact that oil prices had soared by about 14-fold.[573]

The International Energy Agency, according to its report dated February 13, 2007, quantified 2006 global oil demand at 84 million barrels a day, with a projection of 86.5 million barrels a day for 2007.[574]

The Seven Mountains Upon Which the Woman Sits

Notice another very important characteristic of the woman. The scarlet beast that carries her has seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 17:9), and these seven heads have a dual metaphor to be solved:

> Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and they are seven kings. (Rev. 17:9–10)

We have already looked at one of the metaphors—the seven heads symbolize seven kings and seven caliphate periods of Islam. The second metaphor is what we will address now, i.e., the seven heads symbolize seven mountains. This meaning and its interpretation is completely independent and unrelated to the previous meaning.

The text tells us nothing more about the seven mountains other than that the woman sits on them. Is the reader to understand them to be seven literal mountains, or do the mountains have a symbolic meaning?[575] If they are literal, how does the woman literally "sit" on seven mountains? Also, our interpretation of the text thus far has interpreted all the elements in the text metaphorically, first, not literally. If we are to now interpret the seven mountains as literal mountains, then we are switching from a metaphorical interpretation to a literal interpretation within the same passage. How would an interpreter ever be respected in interpreting the text if at one point the text is interpreted literally and in the very next point the text is taken metaphorically? In our opening section of the book, we discussed the interpretation model used by this writer: the symbols, creatures, etc., in prophetic scripture are taken metaphorically, first. Then, having interpreted the metaphor, we must find the literal truth behind it. We are interpreting a passage filled with metaphors now. Thus, to interpret the seven mountains as seven literal mountains is without consistency in the whole of our model of interpretation.

From the perspective of this writer, this is one reason why interpreters of the past have misinterpreted a revived Rome as the scarlet beast. Ancient

Rome was surrounded by seven hills, literally.[576] So this became an added characteristic pointing to Rome as the scarlet beast; in part, because it was surrounded by seven hills.

The seven heads have nothing to do with seven literal mountains. They relate to another factor, the one factor that keeps appearing in Revelation 17 and 18—the wealth of the harlot and the wealth of the merchants created from the harlot's wealth. The mountains are actually the wellspring of the harlot's wealth. They are the fountainhead! From these mountains come the harlot's *fruit* that she believes will never spoil, never run dry. What is her fruit? *The fruit is oil. It is the possession of the harlot that has made her the epitome of wealth and allowed her to prostitute herself to the nations of the world. The harlot's oil is her beauty that she sells to the nations, kings, and merchants of the world, thereby allowing them to become wealthy as she is. In the end, the peoples of the world have become drunk from her wine* (Rev. 17:2, 15).

The seven mountains symbolize the *Saudi Big Seven*: seven oil fields that have produced 90 percent of her oil for the last half century, the largest of which is Ghawar. The woman "sits" on these seven mountains. She sits on them in the present time. At no other time in human history could interpreters conclude this is what the text has in mind; but now we can. The Saudis have a Big Seven. These Seven have made the merchants of the world rich.

Why does it say that the harlot "sits" on the Seven? Because she doesn't belong on them. They are not rightfully hers!

The Woman Sits

Ever been to a ball game and had your tickets in hand only to find someone sitting in your seat?

Notice—the woman does not live in the mountains. She is not surrounded by the mountains. She sits on them (see 17:9). The Greek word is *kathemai*, and *Strong's Dictionary* defines it as follows: "to sit down; figurative to remain, reside: dwell, sit (by, down)."[577] Once again, we are not to translate the literal meaning of "sitting down" but the metaphorical meaning. The woman does not literally "sit" on the seven mountains. She simply has taken right of possession to the mountains.

The same Greek word is used in another passage, and we find there, as well, that the text cannot be meant to be taken literally. In 17:15, the woman sits upon many waters, which are "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues." In her sitting upon them, she symbolically enslaves them. The people have drunk of the wine of their conveniences and the merchants of the world have experienced the personal prosperity that the woman's wine

can provide. The result? They are eventually entrapped. They cannot do without the harlot's wine. The harlot's wine has intoxicated them beyond their ability to abstain from her wine. Notice how the text describes the people and their dependence upon the harlot: "those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality" (17:2).

Remember what we said about the royal family of Saudi Arabia? The royal family owns the petroleum resources of the entire Kingdom.[578] No other Saudi individual possesses any rights to the land or its resources. Everything belongs to the royal family. The royal family never purchased the land for fair value. They possess it for one reason: by virtue of blood descent through the first king of Saudi Arabia, Abdul Aziz bin Saud, who in 1932, declared most of the Arabian Peninsula the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.[579]

The royal family's control of the land and its petroleum rights has caused her to have many enemies. Robert Baer describes the Saudi enemies in *Sleeping With the Devil*, *How Washington Sold Our Soul for Saudi Crude*:

> In an article for Atlantic Monthly magazine, Robert Baer, a 21-year CIA veteran in the Middle East, estimated the Saud family consists of some 30,000 members—a number he says will double within the next generation. And privilege comes with membership: no need to work (there's a monthly stipend for the 3,000 to 4,000 princes, amounting to tens of thousands of dollars each); unlimited flights aboard Saudi Arabian Airlines; and first dibs (not to mention low prices) on land expropriated by the kingdom.[580]

The woman sits on the mountains because she claims possession of the petroleum in the name of the House of Saud. By what right? Her declared right.

The Arrogance of the Harlot

How does the verse go? "Pride goes before destruction" (Prov. 16:8). See if you think the following statement by the harlot sounds a little prideful.

> For she says in her heart, "I sit as a queen and I am not a widow, and will never see mourning." (Rev. 18:7)

The harlot's mourning has nothing to do with her coming judgment. The harlot believes her fruit will never fail. She will never run dry. Read the following verse that describes the harlot after her destruction:

> The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them. (Rev. 18:14)

In 2004, Saudi Arabia's oil corporation, Saudi Aramco, and its CEO, Abdullah Jumah, were questioned as to the need to bring in outside auditors to verify Aramco's oil production and petroleum reserve statistics. Jumah is quoted as stating, "Why should we? We have never failed to deliver a single barrel of oil promised to anyone, anywhere!"[581] Jumah's statement might be paraphrased in this way: "Don't worry about the numbers. We have always pumped all the oil the world needs and we always will. Nothing will ever change this."

A similar statement was made by Saudi Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Ali Al-Naimi, before a gathering of the oil industry professionals in 2004:

> WASHINGTON, 29 April 2004. Officials from Saudi Arabia's oil industry and the international petroleum organizations shocked a gathering of foreign policy experts in Washington yesterday with an announcement that the Kingdom's previous estimate of 261 billion barrels of recoverable petroleum has now more than tripled, to 1.2 trillion barrels. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's key oil and finance ministers assured the audience which included U.S Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan that the Kingdom has the capability to quickly double its oil output and sustain such a production surge for as long as 50 years … There will be no shortage of oil for the next 50 years. Perhaps much longer.[582]

From the standpoint of Bible prophecy of the last days, whether or not the Saudis' petroleum reserves are nearing their twilight is not really the issue. Our issue is whether or not the harlot proclaims arrogantly that she will not see twilight, i.e., she will never run out of oil. The House of Saud, the owner of the petroleum on the Arabian Peninsula, has done this. She *arrogantly* claims she will never run out of her wine.

The Immorality of the "Kings of the Earth"

But what about the harlot's immorality with "the kings of the earth" (see Rev. 18:3, 9)?

See if this quote might sum up what happens to the kings of the earth when lots of money is involved. This is from the book flap of *Sleeping with the Devil* by Robert Baer.

> *In Sleeping with the Devil,* Baer documents with chilling clarity how our addiction to cheap oil and Saudi petrodollars caused us to turn a blind eye to the Al Sa`ud's culture of bribery, its abysmal human rights record, and its financial support of fundamentalist Islamic groups that have been

> directly linked to international acts of terror, including those against the Unites States … Baer vividly portrays our decades-old relationship with the increasingly dysfunctional and corrupt Al Sa`ud family, the fierce anti-Western sentiment that is sweeping the kingdom, and the desperate link between the two. In hopes of saving its own neck, the royal family has been shoveling money as fast as it can to mosque schools that preach hatred of America and to militant fundamentalist groups—an end game just waiting to play out.

Historian Madawi al-Rashid describes the Saudi relationship with the West as follows:

> In the 1980s Saudi Arabia increasingly became a partner of the United States, upon whom it depended for vast quantities of arms, economic development and above all security. … By the end of the 1980s, the Saudi regime sensed hostility from important sections of society which criticized its close liaison with the United States. Early warning signals were given during the siege of the mosque in 1979. …[583] The country sought important military assistance from the United States, but continued to promote itself as a non-aligned Islamic country, resisting all U.S efforts to establish military air-base facilities on its soil. Saudi Arabia was under the illusion that this resistance would conceal the intimate relationship with the United States that had been developing since the Second World War. Military equipment and American military advisers were a constant reminder of both the country's dependence on the United States for security and its deeply rooted sense of vulnerability to internal and external threat.[584]

We (the West) are addicted to Saudi oil (and Canadian, Venezuelan, and Iraqi oil). We demand that we have it and pressure our politicians to do something about it or we will put them out of office. The politicians give us what our addiction demands. If it means they turn their heads on the immoralities of the Saudis, then so be it; and *birds of a feather flock together*.

Her Name and Her Immorality

"Immorality"—what does the word mean? And why is it used in conjunction with the harlot's wine? Three verses include the words the "wine of her immorality" (Rev. 14:8; 17:2; 18:3). If "wine" refers to Saudi Arabian oil, why is the sale or use of it immoral? What is immoral about making a profit, even if a substantial one?

It is not the amount of money, or the money itself that results in the biblical charge of immorality. It is what is done with the money. Dore Gold's book *Hatred's Kingdom, How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*

is filled with evidence of how Saudi funds are used to fund Islamic terrorists all over the world. Here is one of the many excerpts we could draw from:

> Under the reign of King Fahd, Saudi Arabia extended its religious influence globally [King Fahd is no longer monarch of the Kingdom, but this excerpt still is relevant to my point]. Part of this expansion resulted from Fahd's need to bolster his religious credentials, given his reputation for gambling on the French Riviera and enjoying the good life in his many palaces in Europe. … After all, Fahd, like all Saudi monarchs before him, was also the imam, or religious leader, of the Wahhabi movement … At the core of this campaign to spread Wahhabi Islam—and thus Saudi influence—there the Islamic charities and organizations, under King Fahd, Saudi Arabia continued to lavishly endow these charities. The Saudis donated billions of dollars to the Muslim World League … In addition, the Saudi royal family launched donation campaigns for al-Haramain—an international charitable foundation whose stated purpose was to promote "correct beliefs" in the hearts of Muslims—as well as for the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRQ) and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth … The charities were pivotal conduits for funding the most extreme Palestinian organizations, including HAMAS … A significant opportunity rose to spread the doctrines of Wahhabism on an unprecedented global scale.[585]

Saudi Arabia's Use of Oil to Deify Herself

But what about Revelation 17:5? "… and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, 'BABYLON THE GREAT.'"

The text cannot be referring to the literal Babylon, the ancient city that lies in ruins in modern-day Iraq. Our interpretation model looks first to metaphor and then interprets a literal truth behind the metaphor. Plus, in this situation, the text is explicit. It states that her name is a "mystery" (Rev. 17:5).

It wouldn't be a mystery if the woman were literally Babylon. A mystery is something you have to uncover—something hidden that must be discovered. And, as we said before, how can we switch from a metaphorical interpretation to a literal interpretation within the same passage? It's not very sound biblical interpretation if we do! What's more, Babylon, the ancient city, is in ruins today. Its ancient location is in modern-day Iraq (not Saudi Arabia), on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River. Its Old Testament spiritual infamy is from when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon likened himself to God and brought a curse upon himself and the city (Isa. 14:22–23). The curse has remained throughout the city's history, as Babylon has never been rebuilt.

In 1985, Saddam Hussein decided he would defy the curse by rebuilding Babylon on top of the ancient city's existing ruins. His reconstruction plan included his name being inscribed on many of the ancient bricks, an imitation

of King Nebuchadnezzar. One inscription read: "This was built by Saddam Hussein, son of Nebuchadnezzar, to glorify Iraq." The bricks became sought-after collectors' items after the downfall of Saddam, and the ruins are no longer being restored to their original state.[586] Saddam Hussein was executed on December 30, 2006, after being found guilty of war crimes.

"Babylon" is the Greek word for *babel* (Hebrew), meaning "confusion."[587] The city takes its name from the Tower of Babel, humanity's failed attempt to glorify ourselves by building a tower reaching to the heavens (see Gen. 11:1–9). The building of the tower just happens to be the next chapter in the Bible after Noah's Ark and the great flood. In Genesis 11, it seems we didn't want to be judged by another one of God's floods, so a tower reaching to the heavens should take care of it. When the people began to build, everyone spoke one language, but God confounded their efforts. He sent the curse of different tongues. Confusion was the result. The scene ends in total chaos. The tower was never completed. A city eventually was. The ruins of the ancient city of Babylon still remind us of mankind's attempt to glorify ourselves and make ourselves equal to God. The tower was to be the monument to our success. It became a monument to humanity's failure.

The woman is not literal Babylon. We might call her "metaphorical Babylon" or "mystical Babylon,"[588] but not literal "Babylon." What happens when the harlot, Saudi Arabia, uses her oil profits to glorify herself in the same way that the people of ancient Babylon did with their tower—by building bigger, more luxurious, more modern buildings, palaces, and everything that a materialistic society can provide for its own desires?

Have you even seen pictures of the skyline of Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia? Check out its tallest skyscraper, the Kingdom Center, rising almost 1,000 feet.[589] Do an Internet search, and look at the luxury of the royal family. Look at this quote from a Reuters News Source:

> November 16, 2007 by Andrew Hammond. **Riyadh is boom town as Saudis enjoy oil bonanza**. By Andrew Hammond. Riyadh (Reuters)—The malls are full, the cars are fast, the fashions are sharp—conspicuous consumption is king as Saudis enjoy the benefits of oil at almost $100 a barrel. Little more than a dusty desert outpost three decades ago, Riyadh is a boom town where even a stock market crash last year and a spike in inflation over recent months have failed to halt the orgy of conspicuous consumption.[590]

We close this chapter by using a quote from an unlikely source, Osama bin Laden who was probably the most searched for man in American, if not in all, history and was the man responsible for the deaths of so many on 9/11. If there ever is an example of the deception of darkness, it is the cry of a suicide bomber declaring "Allahu Akbar" (God is greater![591]) moments

before his death, and all to the glory of Allah. Osama bin Laden sent the jihadists to America to the glory of Allah; and he continued sending them around the world. So why close with Osama's diatribe against the House of Saud? The depth of darkness is deeper when one from within that darkness declares another to be even darker. So it is with the House of Saud and the Kingdom of Saud, the birthplace of Islam. Osama bin Laden is describing his repulsion over the opulent palaces of the House of Saud (referred to as the "rulers of Riyadh"):

> As for the violation of our peoples' lands and the greed of the rulers of Riyadh in building palaces, King Fahd has commissioned the building of the Salam Palace, on which he has spent 4 billion riyals. As for the palace of Dhahban, where do we start? It is 40km down the Jeddah-Medina road on the Red Sea coast, but to get an idea of the land it has greedily used up, if the Kingdom of Bahrain were put in its back courtyard, those in the palace wouldn't even notice it. And Bahrain has nearly a million inhabitants and an area of more than a million square meters! Even if the whole world came into the palaces of these kings and presidents, or into this palace in Dhahban, they would be dwarfed. Has history ever seen such foolishness?[592]

Conclusion

The harlot is Saudi Arabia. The House of Saud is simply rebuilding Babel's Tower. Their efforts are no different than those of humanity thousands of years ago in Genesis 11—a tower to the heavens sought to glorify the hands that built it. The Saudis seek to glorify themselves through their handiwork. The Tower of Babel came down upon the heads of her builders and so will the tower of the Saudis. Her oil will actually be used by God as the means of her judgment. We will see that in our next chapter.

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 11	
Point 1	Arabia is the birthplace of Islam. Saudi Arabia is an Islamic state governed by the Qur'an. Islam has been at enmity with Jews and Christians since its formation in the seventh century.
Point 2	The House of Saud, i.e., the royal family, is wealthy beyond our ability to comprehend wealth. Saudi oil and gas has not only made the royal family wealthy but also the merchants of our world. Without Saudi oil, the appetite of the world's voracious economies would be all but impossible to sustain.

Point 3	The House of Saud owns all petroleum rights in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom is the world's #1 owner of proven oil and gas reserves.
Point 4	The House of Saud is hated by most of her neighbors. She is considered to have prostituted herself to the West by virtue of her alliance with the world's free economic powers. She exchanges her oil for military equipment, protection, and wealth.
Point 5	90 percent of Saudi petroleum has been pumped by seven large oil wells.
Point 6	The world's people, particularly the developed world, cannot do without petroleum. We are addicted to it.
Point 7	Saudi Arabia fulfills these criteria of the harlot of Revelation 17: • Her "wine" has made the merchants of the world wealthy and great. • The peoples of the world are "drunk" with the wine of the harlot. • The scarlet beast has seven heads, which are "seven mountains"; the Saudis have seven oil wells that pump 90 percent of her oil; the harlot "sits" on these seven mountains; the Saudis own all petroleum rights to her oil. • The harlot does not believe she will ever see mourning; the Saudis do not believe they will ever run short of oil. • The kings of the earth have committed immorality with the harlot; the world leaders of the free world turn their heads to the immoralities of the Saudis because they must provide their people with petroleum to maintain their standard of living. • The harlot uses her wealth to exalt herself. The Saudis are rebuilding Babel's tower through construction projects of bigger and more opulent palaces and showplaces.

Chapter 12



From Her Own Cup

Introduction

Can you imagine waking up to the following headline and article:

Dubai City, Saudi Arabia—Explosion Levels Much of Riyadh. Royal Family Feared Dead. An explosion ripped through the dark of night in central Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, last evening. The thunderous explosion leveled the ground as skyscrapers and high rise buildings yielded to the enormous blast. What was not leveled was destroyed by fire as flames leapt from building to building and structure to structure. The eerie glow from flames cast shadows of glaring red into the night canopy and reflected from the glass exteriors of skyscrapers located in the world's most opulent financial center. Heat from the explosion was so intense that the famed Kingdom Center, the 1,000 foot skyscraper of Riyadh, literally crumbled into the earth during the night. Estimates of casualties are in the tens of thousands and are likely to include many from the Saudi royal family. Aid workers are awaiting an all-clear before coming near the city, as nuclear or radiologic fallout is expected. No word has been received as to the safety of King Abdullah, the reigning monarch of Saudi Arabia, nor Crown Prince Sultan bin Aziz, next in line to succeed King Abdullah.

The impact on the world financial markets is expected to be devastating. London's crude oil futures for January delivery opened this morning from its former high of $98.62 per barrel to $395 per barrel and rising. No one has claimed responsibility for the blast, but the timing of the explosion to coincide with the convening of the important 22 member Council of Ministers in Riyadh brings suspicion on many within the Islamic community, including Al-Qaeda, who has long declared King Abdullah an

apostate to be removed from leadership of Saudi Arabia. Meetings of world leaders will undoubtedly convene today as the economic survival of the present world powers is at stake.

ONE DAY THE above headline will not be a figment of one's imagination. We have identified the eighth head of the scarlet beast as the Mahdi, the coming Antichrist/False Prophet; the scarlet beast as the seventh caliphate to be revived in the seventh caliphate period of Islam, led by al-Mahdi; and the harlot who rides the scarlet beast as Saudi Arabia, the prostitute of Islam. In this chapter, we will discover the hidden deceit of the eighth head of the scarlet beast and its ten horns, who, in one hour, destroy the harlot, bringing "her own cup" upon her head.

Here is a quick summary of the Revelation 18 description of the harlot's judgment:

1. It will be quick—in one hour[593] (18:13, 17, 19).
2. No one will come near her for fear of being impacted by what torments her (18:10, 15, 17).
3. Her destruction will be accompanied by "pestilence" (18:8).
4. Her destruction will include a "fiery annihilation" (18:8, 9, 15, 18).
5. Her destruction will be accompanied by great amounts of smoke (18:9,18:19:3).
6. Her kingdom will suffer a complete destruction (18:6, 7, 14, 19, 20, 21).
7. Her destruction will somehow involve the "cup which she has mixed" for others (18:6).

The Harlot, the Scarlet Beast, and Its Heads and Horns Are all Islamic

Islam is the common denominator for the heads, the horns, the scarlet beast, and the harlot. We can reach this interpretation by looking at the one factor that continually appears in last days texts: a holy war waged against the woman, her offspring, or the Lamb. Revelation 17:6 describes the aftertaste of this holy war. The text states, "And I saw the woman [the harlot] drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus." This factor has been the one thread continuously woven into the texts of the last days, all of which reveal the presence of Satan (through Islam) in his holy war against God. There are always two sides to this war, Satan and God, and each side is represented by an opposing group of humanity. We have already looked at the texts that support this conclusion and will not

do so again. The harlot (Rev. 17:6), the scarlet beast (see Rev. 17:3, 14), and its seven heads and ten horns (see Rev. 17:14) are all tainted with the taste of holy war against the Lamb and His followers. Satan is still hiding under the cloak of his human agents, especially in the tribulation period! This factor by itself is not sufficient to conclude that Islam is identified; but this is not the only factor. It is the one factor that is always present to support many, many others.

Judgment Day Has Arrived for the Harlot

The Bible prophesies that the harlot (Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam) will be destroyed by those from the very religion birthed in her desert (see Rev. 17:16–17; 18:20). An alliance of ten Muslim leaders/nations/groups, led by the Antichrist/False Prophet, al-Mahdi, will destroy the harlot. Yet, the hand behind the destruction of the harlot is actually the hand of God. God accomplishes His divine judgment against this one who is "drunk with the blood of the saints."

God Will Judge the Harlot Using a Punishment Defined by the Harlot's Sin Against Others

In the book of Ezekiel, the prophet warned of a coming destruction upon the people of Israel, who had sinned against God in multiple ways. The consequence of the people's sins was unthinkable: Jerusalem, the city of Solomon's Temple, long thought by Israel to be beyond destruction because of the temple's presence, was about to be besieged and completely desolated by the mighty Babylonians. Through three separate exiles, 605 B.C., 597 B.C., and 586 B.C., the Babylonians either killed the people or took them into captivity. The people of Israel had fallen so far from God that their sins bore fruit through more sins and a greater depth of darkness. Here is one of many texts describing the spiritual state of the people and the city they lived in:

> Now the end is upon you, and I shall send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways and bring all your abominations upon you. "For My eye will have no pity on you, nor will I spare you, but I will bring your ways upon you, and your abominations will be among you; then you will know that I am the LORD!" (Ezek. 7:3–4)

God judged the city by "bringing your ways upon you." He brought the people's sin upon their own heads. The point? God often judges sin by using a punishment that is defined by the very sin that necessitates the judgment.

The Harlot's Sin Becomes her Abomination

Here is how this applies to Islam, and specifically, to Arab Islam (Sunni Islam). Islam was born in the desert of Arabia by revelation to Muhammad. It is from the bowels of the Arabian Peninsula that the calls for jihad were first issued by Muhammad, eventually extending beyond Arabia to all of the Middle East, Asia Minor, Spain, Africa, and Europe. Islam advanced its jihad outside Arabia, but it also advanced an internal jihad against its own. Sunni Islam has persecuted the Shi'ah minority since 680, the battle of Karbala, where 100 or so Shi'ahs were not just defeated but utterly butchered. As has been stated in prior chapters, this persecution has continued for almost 1,400 years, even to the modern day, as many Sunnis consider Shi'ahs to be unbelievers. Thus, Islam, particularly the Sunnis of Arabia, are indiscriminate murderers whose victims are quite frequently other Muslims.

It should not surprise us, then, that the harlot, Saudi Arabia (Sunni Islam), will perish by the hand of Islam! Her sin of indiscriminate murder will be turned upon her, just as the city of Jerusalem became a city of blood at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Even more specifically, this abomination will be so specific that it will be initiated by the sect within Islam that the Sunnis have persecuted for 1,400 years, the Shi'ahs. According to the will of God, the sin is turned upon the sinner (Rev. 17:13, 16–17).

Shi'ah Islam will be led by al-Mahdi against Sunni Arabia. Here is how we come to this conclusion.

1. *The ten horns are ten kings who have "not yet received a kingdom"* (17:12). That is, they are all future kings. This requirement parallels Revelation 17:10, which describes the time for the eighth head of the scarlet beast and the seventh caliphate to be a *future event*. All of these kings will be leaders of individual groups of Muslims and/or Muslim countries. The text gives us no information by which to further identify them, so to even try to name them would be pure speculation.
2. *The ten horns are ten kings who are all Muslim.* The ten horns are all heads of the scarlet beast. That is, they gain their life through the beast, and they find fulfillment through the beast. In each of our previous metaphors of beasts, we interpreted the heads and horns to be of the same nature as the beast; that is, they have protruded from the beast and were inseparable from the beast. In Daniel 7, four separate empires are represented figuratively by four separate beasts. Each of the four separate beasts had separate characteristics to distinguish the separate beasts from the others as well as the period of dominion. At no time did a characteristic

from one beast have meaning to a beast other than the one from whom the characteristic was identified. Thus, the scarlet beast has ten horns. These ten horns are all Islamic since the beast, the harlot, and the heads are all Islamic.

3. *The power and authority of the ten kings is apparently short in duration.* The text tells us the ten kings receive authority as kings for only one hour (17:12). It is doubtful that the "one hour" is literal, and taking it as a metaphor, it simply means a short time period. It could be literal—nuclear or similar devastation actually would take less time! The eighth head of the seventh caliphate period will reign only for a little while. It is as if the text is telling us that kingship is specific and relevant to these ten leaders only for the common purpose of destroying the harlot. Actually, as we will see, the eighth head destroys three of the ten nations that are part of the alliance to destroy the Saudis. No wonder the alliance is only together for an hour!
4. *The relationship of the beast and the ten kings is only to accomplish a purpose greater in importance than any other reason that might divide them (17:13, 16).* Notice: division of the group is implied in the text—specific mention is made of them giving their power and authority over to the eighth head of the scarlet beast to accomplish one thing—to destroy the harlot who rides the scarlet beast; for they all hate the harlot (17:16). Thus, the ten horns are not normally in a relationship of submission to the eighth head. This is something that happens only for this purpose. Islam is, and always has been, divided; but in the end, an alliance of ten (plus their leader) will come together to destroy the harlot. Their hatred of the harlot will unite the alliance! They will be led by al-Mahdi. He is the eighth head, and he will receive the power and authority for one hour from ten Muslim groups or nations for the purpose of destroying the harlot. The harlot's sin will turn upon the harlot.

The Fourth Beast of Daniel 7 and his Ten Horns and "Other Horn"

Remember the "other horn" of Daniel 7's fourth beast? In the days before the Ancient of Days takes his seat for judgment (see Dan. 7:26–27), another horn from the fourth beast will come up, along with the ten horns of the beast. We have already interpreted this "other horn" to be the Antichrist/False Prophet, Islam's al-Mahdi. Looking at both Revelation 17 and Daniel 7, we find the same ten horns. Both prophesy of ten nations or groups that will come together (see 7:24) in the tribulation period of the last days. At the

same time, a leader different from the ten will arise. This leader will *come up* (see 7:20). This is al-Mahdi, who emerges as Antichrist/False Prophet. The prophecy of Daniel 7:20 is a mirror image of Revelation 17, but with a few additional details. Three of the ten horns are subdued. The identity of the three will be discussed in the chapter entitled, "Israel."

A Complete Destruction Must Take Place

The prophecy of the harlot's coming annihilation is described in great detail. The text tells us it will be: complete (see Rev. 18:6, 7, 14, 19, 20, 21); quick—in "one hour" (see 18:13, 17, 19); accompanied by fire (see 18:8, 9, 15, 18); and accompanied by great amounts of smoke (see 18:9, 18; 19:3). The aftereffects of the destruction will be so great that no one will come near the harlot out of fear of being affected by the destruction (see 18:10, 15, 17). Finally, the aftereffects will include pestilence (see 18:8).

I suppose that at some point, metaphor must give way to the literal. It seems as if that has just happened. Amazingly, we have a prophecy written in the first century that uses words more relevant to the twenty-first century than the first!

Remember the Oil

How will this destruction take place? Remember the oil. It allowed the harlot to commit "immorality" with the kings of the earth. It made the merchants of the world rich and great, and it made those who had ships at sea wealthy. The oil made the peoples and nations of the world drunk. So then, according to the biblical principle we identified earlier, the oil will somehow be used in the harlot's judgment. Here is the text:

> Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. (Rev. 18:6)

This verse is very important. It gives us a clue to the instrument to be used in the harlot's destruction. Verse 18:6 says, "In the cup which she mixed, mix twice as much for her." It is from this cup that "all the nations have drunk" and from which "the merchants of the earth have become rich" (18:3, 15) and from this cup the harlot's wealth has clothed her "in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls" (18:16) and from this cup the harlot made all who "had ships at sea … rich by her wealth" (18:19).

The text is telling us that the harlot's judgment will somehow involve the oil that brought her wealth. The "unclean things of her immorality" are her oil; the "abominations" are the harlot's sins, one of which is how she has used her oil to enslave others and magnify herself. God is telling us that the sin will be turned against her. It will somehow be used against her, for "in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her." Therefore, the justice of God will include the use of the harlot's wine as the means whereby the harlot will be judged and ultimately destroyed! She has used her wine to sin against others. The consequences of her sin will become the abomination that God brings down upon her own head.

But why does the judgment of the harlot's sin turn upon the one generation (future?) of Saudis? The generation judged for the harlot's sin was not even alive when Islam was born nor when the Sunnis exacted their crimes on the Shi'ahs. In the same way that the generation living at the latter half of the seven-year tribulation period will experience the wrath of God (last chapter) on behalf of humanity, so also will the generation of Saudis experience the judgment of the harlot's sin. It is as if the wrath of God is stored up until God decides that it is time for it to be unleashed (see Hosea 13:12; James 5:3). This is precisely what happened to Israel when the judgment of God was poured out upon the generation of Jews living in Jerusalem in the time of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who destroyed the city in 605–586 B.C., leaving only the exiles in Babylon alive (see Ezek. 5–6).

Here is how the Saudi's will be destroyed.

Shi'ah Islam's "Dhu al-Fiqar"

Shi'ah Islam believes the Mahdi will rise with the sword of Muhammad, the *dhu al-fiqar*.[594] In today's modern world, the *dhu al-fiqar* of Muhammad is certainly not a literal sword. Humanity stopped using metal swords a long time ago. No, the sword of Muhammad is meant to be understood metaphorically. We quote from Shi'ah scholar Ayatollah Ibrahim Amini in regard to the *dhu al-fiqar*, the sword of Muhammad:

> The Mahdi resembles his forefather, the Prophet, in that he too will rise with a sword … However, the rise with the "sword" is a metaphor for warfare. It indicates that war and bloodshed are part of the official task of the Mahdi. He is commanded by God to make Islam a universal faith and to confront injustice and tyranny, even by force and by means of a sword. His circumstance is contrary to his forefathers' careers, which did not require them to face the situation in that forceful manner, as their charge was limited to admonition and counsel. Consequently, "to rise with a sword"

> does not mean that his weapons of defense are limited to a sword, and that he is to restrain himself from using any other kind of weapons. To be sure, he too might employ the weapons of the day or even create new weapons to overpower all the known weaponry of his time.[595]

The *dhu al-fiqar* of al-Mahdi, i.e., the sword of Muhammad, will be the oil of Saudi Arabia. The Mahdi's plan will be to remove it from the hands of the Saudis and from the world's petroleum markets. In so doing, two things will occur: the Saudis will be destroyed and/or completely removed from power, and the free economies of the world will be brought to ruin.

Oil as an Instrument of Jihad

Mordecai Abir of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs reports the following statement by Osama bin Laden. This message from bin Laden was posted on al-Qaeda's Arabian Peninsula website to all mujahidin (jihadists) in Arabia:

> … bin Laden stated that "oil prices should be at least $100 a barrel," and called upon Persian Gulf militants to exert themselves to prevent the West from getting Arab oil by attacking oil facilities all over the region. Bin Laden also encouraged all mujahidin "to stop the biggest theft in history as the West has been buying oil at a cheap price." This was the first time that al-Qaeda's leadership had openly divulged its strategy of hitting the Western economy by disrupting oil supplies and causing prices to skyrocket. … Bin Laden's call for an "oil jihad" was followed by a website message from the Arabian Peninsula al-Qaeda to all the mujahidin in Arabia, wherever they are, to focus on oil targets in their struggle against the infidels and their Saudi allies.[596]

But don't think for a moment that Osama's declaration of an oil jihad was Islam's first unsheathing of its sword. We need return to the 1973 Oil Embargo to find the first occurrence. In 1973, President Nixon announced his intention to rearm Israel against further attacks from Egypt and Syria. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia responded by gathering ten oil ministers from Arab oil-producing states for a meeting in Kuwait. The Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC, consisting of the Arab members of OPEC plus Egypt and Syria) was formed.[597] The collective oil production of the ten nations was immediately reduced by 5% per month, until the Middle East conflict was resolved. Saudi Arabia announced an immediate 10% reduction in its oil production and a complete ban on all petroleum shipments to the U.S. and the Netherlands.[598] Matthew Simmons describes the impact of the Saudi-led Embargo as follows:

> Though the amount of oil OPEC withheld was small, its impact on the price of oil was enormous and more violent than most Arab oil ministers had expected. For the better part of the prior four decades, oil prices had stayed in the $1 to $2 per barrel range. In the year preceding the embargo, oil prices had occasionally drifted towards and at times even exceeded three dollars a barrel; but three dollar oil was deemed a spike that would soon settle back to more normal levels … Within days after the 1973 oil embargo was announced, oil prices began to soar. By the end of 1973, oil prices had risen almost fourfold, finishing the year at $11.65 per barrel. The embargo was soon lifted, but long after it faded into distant history, the price of oil climbed steadily. By mid-1978, oil was selling in a stable price band of $16 to $17 per barrel.[599]

One final quote from Osama:

> So the struggle is both financial and physical. Even if the distance between us and the American military base is very great, and our weapons do not match up to their planes, we are able to soak up the pressure of these strikes with our broad defense lines. And in another way it is possible to strike the economic base that is the foundation of the military base, so when their economy is depleted they will be too busy with each other to be able to enslave poor peoples. So I say that it is very important to focus on attacking the American economy by any means available.[600]

What is my point? The Achilles heel of the free world is that our economies are dependent upon petroleum. It is in this weakness that our vulnerability is most revealed. If one attacks us at our most vulnerable point …

The Achilles Heel of the West

Islam is not able, militarily, to defeat the West. They know that, and so do we. Our military is far superior to that of any Muslim country. Our technology more advanced. Yet, there is one significant weakness that the West does have, particularly, when one compares that weakness with the strength of Islam. This weakness is the level of petroleum reserves the West possesses, combined with the addiction of Americans to the comforts and privileges of being United States citizens. No matter how strong our military, without petroleum to fuel our equipment. … Combine that with a *weak will* on the part of the American people as a whole … and we have just identified our Achilles heel!

Consider these facts. The United States is the world's number one importer of crude oil, importing 11,666, million barrels a day, according to OPEC's *2006 Annual Statistical Bulletin*.[601] The United States alone imports

24 percent of the world's supply of crude oil. According to the *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, Saudi Arabia, as of 2006, held 21.9 percent of the world's proven oil reserves.[602] The Middle East, as a group, which includes in addition to Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Syria, and Yemen, accounts for 61.5 percent of the world's proven oil reserves (the percentage of OPEC nations compared to the world is 77.2 percent[603]). Of the Middle East group, Saudi Arabia possesses just under twice the reserves of its closest rival, Iran.[604] The United States leads the world in imports and trails miserably in oil and gas reserves. Does that look like an Achilles heel to you?

Perhaps you are wondering about reports of America's untapped oil deposits held by the U.S. government. According to an article in the *American Thinker,* America has an estimated 2.3 trillion barrels of untapped reserves, most of which is located on government land.[605] However, these untapped reserves are of *oil shale*. Oil shale requires additional processes to extract available oil substances. Oil substances in oil shale are solid and cannot be pumped directly from the ground as is possible for conventional oil recovery.[606] "The oil shale must first be mined and then heated to a high temperature (a process called "retorting"). The resultant liquid must then be separated and collected."[607] "While current technologies are adequate for oil shale mining, the technology for surface retorting has not been successfully applied at a commercially viable level in the United States; although, technical viability has been demonstrated. Further development and testing of surface retorting technology is needed before the method is likely to succeed on a commercial scale."[608]

One evidence of America's Achilles heel is what happened during the 1973/74 Oil Embargo. The Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the world's largest supply of emergency crude oil, was specifically formed in the aftermath of the 1973/74 Oil Embargo as an attempt to minimize the threat to America if OPEC decided, once again, to use oil as its sword.[609] The Strategic Petroleum Reserve, according to the Department of Energy website at February 20, 2008, has enough oil reserves for only fifty-six days of draw down.[610] The last time the reserve was drawn down was during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which resulted in the drawdown of 11 million barrels of a then record high 700 million barrels.[611]

The Strength (And Weakness) of Islam

According to *BP Statistical Review of World Energy* (June, 2008), the Middle East Countries possess 755,300 million barrels of proven oil reserves. Of this group, Saudi Arabia possesses 264,200 million barrels of proven

oil reserves. North America, which includes the United States, possesses 69,300 million barrels of proven oil reserves. The United States possesses 29,400 million barrels of proven oil reserves.[612] Do the math. The Middle East possesses 10.9 times the amount of proven crude oil reserves that the entire continent of North America owns and 25.7 times the amount the U.S. owns. Does that sound like a strength to you? Only one problem for Islam. Saudi Arabia owns 34.9 percent (264,200/755,200 million barrels) of proven Middle East reserves, and Saudi Arabia is an ally of the United States of America. Therefore, the weakness of America is offset by the strength of the Saudis. We are allies. We provide our military to the Saudis, and the Saudis provide their oil to us. We watch her backside, and she gives us a reason to!

What would you do if you were a Middle East world leader who believed you had been chosen by Allah to initiate a global campaign for Islamic domination? What if you were also a Shi'ah world leader? Shi'ahs believe in the rising of their twelfth Imam, the Mahdi, who will lead Islam in global domination, beginning with revenge against Sunnis. The weaknesses of the West as well as the Saudis are obvious. The West depends on the Saudis for their oil. The Saudis depend on the West for her defense. What links the two is Saudi petroleum. Remove the petroleum from the control of the Saudis, and you have killed two birds with one stone. You have disarmed the powerful West because it depends upon Saudi petroleum. And you have removed the military protection the House of Saud has prostituted itself to obtain, thereby rendering it an impotent world power. In fact, both powers have been rendered impotent.

Seems to me that's precisely the objective for Islam and the prophesied fulfillment for Shi'ah's al-Mahdi!

The Beginning of the End—Saudi Arabian Oil Is Removed from the World Market

I thought the way this was going to end was Riyadh would be struck by a bomb, nuclear or otherwise, and the royal family would be taken out. Then, Shi'ah Islam (Iran) would acquire the oil resources of the Kingdom. Possessing the oil of the Saudis would put them in the driver's seat to launch their global jihad. But something didn't make sense to me. If that were to take place, the United States would bomb the Iranians and reclaim the oil. The only deterrent to that would be the Soviets. Would they risk World War III for Saudi oil? Particularly, since they already own around 8 percent of world oil reserves?[613] I don't think so. What hit me was a passage I hadn't thought through.

> And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come." (Rev. 18:9–10)

Why would the kings of the earth weep over the death of members of the House of Saud? Why would the President of the USA lament over their death? I don't suppose that would happen any more than it happened upon the death of Osama bin Laden. I may be wrong, but my guess is that the American president is going to be too busy trying to figure out the impact on America and the world in the absence of Saudi petroleum! Remember, the Saudis are the world's number one owner of proven oil and gas reserves, holding approximately 25 percent of the world's reserves!

If we look closely at Revelation 18:9, we see that it is not the death of the harlot that causes the kings of the earth to weep, but the observance of the *smoke of her burning*. Where is that smoke coming from? Seems to me the oil wells go up in smoke! But don't we have the technology to put out oil fires these days? I still recall seeing the oil fires of Iraq burning when America launched its attack against Iraq and also the oil fields of Kuwait when Saddam attacked Kuwait many years earlier. But they were all put out. So what's the big deal? Regardless of how the oil fields are bombed, i.e., nuclear or otherwise, the world will simply put the fires out and fight over the oil, right? But notice what the text says about the destruction: she will suffer a complete destruction (see 17:18; 18:6, 7, 14, 19, 20, 21). That means no oil will be left for anyone—doesn't it? And this passage: "Then the fruit you long for has gone for you" (18:14). The oil is gone! It's not even available for the Shi'ahs who destroyed it.

Consider this passage to help us interpret the events:

> Draw near, O nations, to hear; and listen, O peoples! … For the LORD's indignation is against all the nations, And His wrath against all their armies … And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away … For My sword is satiated in heaven, behold it shall descend for judgment upon Edom, and upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction. … For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. … For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion. Its streams shall be turned into pitch, … And its land shall become burning pitch. … Its nobles—there is no one there whom they may proclaim king—And all its princes shall be nothing. (Isa. 34:1, 2, 4–6, 8–9, 12)

Although the Edomites have long disappeared as a people group, Edom (see Isa. 34:6 above) was located on the eastern border of Arabia. Bozrah was its capital.[614] Esau, Jacob's brother, was called "Edom," and the Edomites descended from him (see Gen. 25:9). Esau married the daughter of Ishmael (see Gen. 28:9). Ishmael is the father of the Arabic peoples (see Gen. 16:12).

Isaiah 34:9 above states that "streams shall be turned into pitch." Does that sound like oil that has been burnt into ash? The nobles in verse 12—does that sound like the King of Saudi Arabia and his Councils? The "princes shall be nothing." In verse 12, does that sound like the sons of ibn Saud, the princes of the royal family who share in the oil and gas billions?

Complete destruction. The text is telling us the oil goes up in smoke. Can you imagine the impact the absence of Saudi oil will have on the world markets?

You will never believe who pulls the trigger!

Who Pulls the Trigger?

The same time I thought about the verses above, I came across an Internet post by noted expert of Islam, Daniel Pipes.

> Investigative writer Gerald Posner reveals something most extraordinary in "Secrets of the Kingdom: The Inside Story of the Saudi-U.S. Connection," his book to be published by Random House later this month: that the Saudi government may have rigged its oil and gas infrastructure with a self-destruct system that would keep it out of commission for decades. If true, this could undermine the world economy at any time. … Posner starts by recalling various hints that Americans dropped back in the 1970s, that the high price and limited production of oil might lead to a U.S. invasion of Saudi Arabia and a seizure of its oil fields. For example, in 1975, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger murkily threatened the Saudis with a triple-negative: "I am not saying that there's no circumstances where we would not use force" against them. In response, Posner shows, the Saudi leadership began to think of ways to prevent such an occurrence. They could not do so the usual way, by building up their military, for that would be futile against the much stronger U.S. forces. So the monarchy—one of the most creative and underestimated political forces in modern history—set out instead to use indirection and deterrence. Rather than mount defenses of its oil installations, it did just the opposite, inserting a clandestine network of explosives designed to render the vast oil and gas infrastructure inoperable—and not just temporarily but for a long period. … In response, the Saudis thought of ways to assure their oil would stay off the market. They began exploring the possibility of a single-button self-destruct system, protected with a series of built-in fail-safes. It was evidently their way to ensure that if someone else grabbed

> the world's largest oil reserves and forced them to flee the country they had founded, the House of Saud could at least make certain that what they left behind was worthless.[615]

Put the pieces together. If Posner's account is correct, the Saudis destroy their own oil. Perhaps they are attacked by Iran? Perhaps this is where the Alliance of ten comes in, led by al-Mahdi? Rather than leave the oil to their conquerors, they destroy it. Posner goes on to state that the self-destruct system of the Saudis is so complete that it is rigged with radiological particles so that the oil will never be useable again! It is as if the Saudis have planned for a complete destruction. The smoke is because they pull the trigger. The kings of the world are in mourning—not because they are concerned for the House of Saud, but because the oil is gone! The kings of the earth know what is going to happen to their people, their economy, their world, everything—and there is absolutely nothing that can be done about it. World War III is about to begin.

Islam in the Driver's Seat

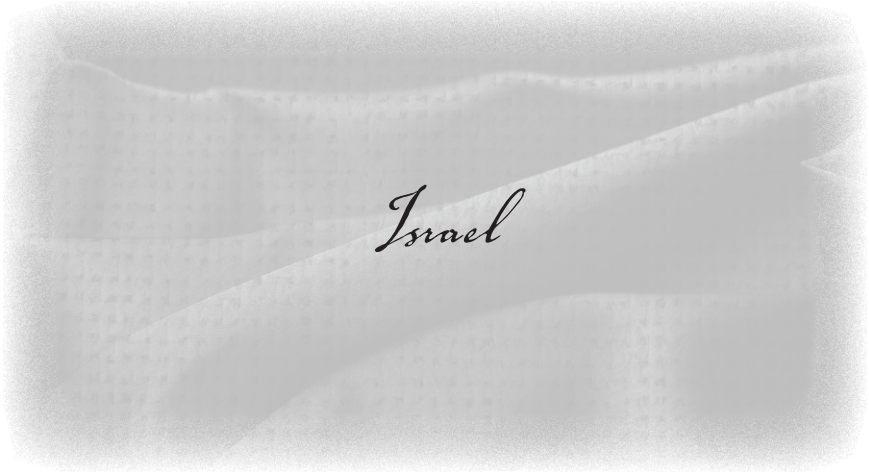
Who pulls the trigger? Looks like the Saudis. Shi'ah Islam may have forced the destruction, but the result to the world is no different. The world's number one supply of crude oil will be off the world market. The only players left will be those who control the rest of the world's reserves. Islam is in the driver's seat. The world chaos that results will be like nothing we have ever experienced. How long must we hang on? According to the Bible, three-and-a-half years (see Dan. 9:26–27). It will be during this period that the Antichrist/False Prophet will use the resulting economic crisis to press upon world leaders, causing them to yield to Islam. In return, the petroleum spigots of the Middle East will be promised to be turned back on. The point? Convert to Islam if you want to survive in the world as we know it:

> And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the freemen and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six. (Rev. 13:16–18)

666 is the mark of Islam.

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 12	
Point 1	There is one thread that is always present in last days Bible prophecies: a holy war against Jews and/or Christians. This same thread is found in the Bible's prophecies regarding the harlot. The birthplace of Islam is Saudi Arabia. Since the seventh century, she has made herself "drunk with the blood of the saints."
Point 2	God's judgment will use the harlot's own sin to destroy her. Sunni Islam's first high-water mark against Shi'ahs occurred in 680 at the Battle of Karbala. It has not ended since that day, even to the modern times. God's judgment against the harlot, Saudi Arabia, will be by the hand of Shi'ah Islam. Al-Mahdi will lead this effort.
Point 3	God's judgment will likewise use the harlot's wine from her own cup, poured out upon her head. Saudi oil has made herself and the merchants of the world wealthy and great. It has been used to possess the economic appetites of the modern world. The oil will likewise be the instrument used by God to return His judgment upon the head of the harlot.
Point 4	The eighth head of the scarlet beast, i.e., the Mahdi, will lead an alliance of ten other Muslim groups or nations to destroy the harlot. Their ultimate purpose will be to destroy Saudi Arabia for the immoralities she has committed with the kings of the earth, which, to Islam, is seen as a prostitution of Islam. A secondary reason for the Mahdi's attack against the harlot is that the West has aligned herself with Israel; thus, we are to be destroyed as she is to be destroyed. The weapon of al-Mahdi will be the removal of Saudi oil from the free world markets.
Point 5	Before al-Mahdi can claim Saudi oil, the Saudis will "pull the plug" themselves. They will destroy their oil, thereby rendering it unusable by anyone in the world. In the process, the Saudis will also be destroyed.

Chapter 13



Israel

Introduction

THERE ARE MANY Bible prophesies of coming travails for Israel in the tribulation period of the last days. One of those conflicts is led by a "Gog," the commander of an alliance of nations from the remote north as well as from nations of the Middle East, Asia Minor, and Africa. In the end, Gog and his armies are defeated, but only after Jerusalem is trampled for forty-two months. In Gog's eventual destruction, the nations of the world are made aware that there is no other God than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and Israel is made aware that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they rejected 2,000 years ago, was, and is, their Promised One, the Messiah, and Savior of the world!

This chapter will interpret the prophecy of Ezekiel 38–39, as well as related prophecies of the last days, many of which focus on Israel. Specifically, who is "Gog," and who are the nations included in his military alliance? How is God revealed in Gog's destruction? What does the Scripture prophesy of Israel's existence through the last days? Does Israel ever "convert" to believe in Jesus as Messiah? This chapter will seek to provide an answer to these questions. It will also propose a pretribulation conquest by a nation of the Middle East that will bring most of the nations of the Middle East under the dominion of this conquering nation and its king. This pretribulation conquest will begin with the conquest of Saudi Arabia (as interpreted in our prior chapter). The combination of the Saudis' destruction and that of three other nations, puts the nations of the world, including Israel, in such desperate

chaos that they will enter into a seven-year agreement with this conquering nation. Because of the length of this particular topic, this chapter is broken into four parts. Part 1 will introduce and identify Gog. Part 2 will identify the nations that make up Gog's Alliance. Part 3 will discuss a pretribulation conquest present in last days Bible prophecies. Part 4 will identify and support the conclusion that Iran (and Shi'ah Islam) is the aggressor nation in the Middle East in the last days.

Part 1—Introduction: Who is Gog?

Who is Gog?

The name "Gog" first appears in 1 Chronicles 5:4. In this passage, the scripture identifies Gog as one of the sons of Joel. Joel was a descendant of Reuben. Reuben was the firstborn son of Jacob, patriarch of the Jewish nation and father of the twelve sons who eventually made up the twelve tribes of Israel. The significance of the firstborn son was that the largest portion of the family's inheritance was left to him. Reuben forfeited his firstborn share by virtue of a sexual sin committed against his father when he slept with his father's concubine (see Gen. 35:22; 49:3–4). Consequently, it was not through Reuben's heirs that Jesus was born, but through the line of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob. No other information about Gog is given to us, either historically or biblically, and no connection is ever made between Gog of 1 Chronicles and Gog of Ezekiel 38–39. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that any significance should be placed on the use of the name Gog in 1 Chronicles 5 and the Gog of Ezekiel 38 and 39. The two texts are referring to two different individuals who just happen to have the same name. If this were not the case, the text would give us information to compare the two and make a conclusion based on common factors.

Gog Is a Specific Individual

In Ezekiel, Gog does not refer to a nation, but to a specific individual. This conclusion is based on the many references in Ezekiel that use a personal pronoun or similar word or phrase when referring to Gog (Ezek. 38:2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 15). There are other statements in Ezekiel 38 and 39 that describe Gog as an individual (he dies, for example). All are sufficient to conclude that the text is referring to a specific individual, not a nation, and, as we will see, certainly not a spiritual being.

Is Gog the Antichrist?

A popular view regarding Gog of Ezekiel 38 is that he is actually the Antichrist, an individual possessing supernatural abilities prophesied by the Bible to appear in the last days. The Antichrist/False Prophet is prophesied to deceive and dominate the world and to lead the world in a forced conversion to a false religion (Dan. 7:24–25; Rev. 13:7, 11). If Gog were the Antichrist, then he would be the false prophet that we have previously identified as Islam's coming al-Mahdi. This interpreter does not interpret Gog as Antichrist for the following primary reasons.

1. **The Antichrist (as False Prophet) will be able to perform the supernatural. Gog will not.**

The text of Ezekiel 38 and 39 makes no mention of Gog being able to perform the supernatural. (The Antichrist/False Prophet will be able to do so. See Rev. 13:11; 2 Thess. 2:9.) In addition, the text makes no mention of Gog exalting himself as God, another Antichrist characteristic (2 Thess. 2:4–5; Rev. 13, 17; Dan. 7:25). Ezekiel 38 and 39 characterize Gog as the commander of a military (Ezek. 38:7).

2. **The Antichrist will force the world to worship the first beast—the false god of a false religion.**

Gog leads no one to worship a deity, false or otherwise. We have discussed the role of the Antichrist/False Prophet as one who is pointing the world to the first beast (Rev. 13:12). The Antichrist/False Prophet, the second beast of Revelation 13, forces submission to the first beast, whom we have interpreted to be Allah. Allah will be worshiped by the world; and he will use his followers to dominate and overcome the world (Rev. 13:7–8; Dan. 7:23). Satan will experience worship, indirectly, through the world's worship of Allah (Rev. 13:2, 4). Ezekiel 38 and 39 are absent of any mention of Gog forcing the worship of a deity, false or otherwise. As will be discussed more fully below, Gog's focus is not religious in nature, but on material gain, i.e., to capture spoil (Ezek. 38:10–12). Gog does not fulfill this aspect of Antichrist Prophecy. He does not force the world to worship a deity.

3. **Gog fails as Antichrist by what he does not do.**

The Antichrist is defined in 1 John 2:18, 22–23; 4:2–3. The Antichrist identifiers previously noted were:

- The Antichrist (and the spirit of antichrist) will deny Jesus as the crucified, risen Messiah (1 John 2:22) and Savior of the world.
- The Antichrist (and the spirit of antichrist) will deny Jesus as Divine, that is, the literal only begotten Son of God, who was conceived by the seed of God (1 John 2:22–23).
- The Antichrist (and the spirit of antichrist) will deny Jesus' humanity (1 John 4:2–3).

Ezekiel 38–39 (as well as Revelation 20:7–8) is absent of any mention of Gog committing any of these Christ-denials. Therefore, Gog cannot be identified as the Antichrist because he does not deny Christ. This fact alone is sufficient to rule out Gog as the Antichrist.

4. Gog's Leadership of the Military Alliance Is Absent of any Mention of a Religious Motivation for the Attack against Israel.

As stated, Gog's evil purpose (Ezek. 38:10) is about securing financial gain (Ezek. 38:12–13). He does not attack Israel to gain the holy land (Ezek. 5:5; 38:12–13). He has no interest in the Temple Mount or its sanctuaries. Gog's battle is not launched against Israel because of who Israel is in relation to God, nor because of the spiritual significance that Jerusalem holds to Christians, Jews, or Muslims. Gog does not attempt to reclaim the Temple Mount or its sanctuaries because of its faith significance. Gog's battle is absent of any spiritual motivation. This is very significant. If Gog were the Antichrist/False Prophet, his activities would be specifically directed against the saints, the holy people (Jews), because of who they are in relationship to God, and against the beloved city because of what it means to the followers of the world's three greatest religions.

This factor also helps us in a related question. Gog is not Muslim. We conclude this because the destruction of Israel is not the motivation for Gog's assault (this doesn't mean those in his Alliance are not motivated in this way. The text is absent of their motivation, but not absent for Gog's motivation). Israel became a state in 1948, and the land returned to Israel, according to U.N. mandate. If Gog were a Muslim, the land would be a key motivator for him. Islam considers lands acquired in conquest to be permanently their possession, even if, at a later date, Islam becomes the conquered. The territory is called "dar al-Islam" once it comes under the sovereignty of Islam.[616] Land that is not "dar al-Islam" is called "dar al-harb," land of war. The significance of the land being "dar al-harb" is that it is subject to jihad and, to Muslims, "destined to come under Islamic jurisdiction, either by war (harb) or by the conversions of their inhabitants."[617] Ezekiel 38–39 is absent of any mention

of a religious motivation for Gog's war against Israel or Israel's land. If Gog were the Antichrist/False Prophet, a religious motivation would be present.

5. Gog Dies and is Buried. The Antichrist Does Not.

Ezekiel 39:11 states that Gog dies along with his army. He is buried in the land of Israel along with his troops. Gog cannot be the Antichrist/False Prophet, the Dragon, or the first beast. These were three members of the trinity of evil discussed in earlier chapters. None of these three die. They are thrown alive into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10). The three members of this group do not die because they are spiritual beings, not human beings. The Antichrist/False Prophet may indwell a human being, but he is not a human being. (It's hard to tell what he is. He's been alive for 1,200 years.) We have identified the first beast as Allah; the second beast as Islam's coming al-Mahdi, who submits to the first beast; and Satan as the demonic prince of the world to which both submit. If there were a fourth demonic being, he would be judged in the same manner as the trinity of evil is judged. There is none.

Our conclusion is that Gog is a specific human being. He cannot be the Antichrist because he fails to meet the biblical definition of Antichrist on multiple accounts.

Are Gog and Magog of Revelation 20:8 the Same as Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38–39?

The third and final time that Gog appears in Scripture is in Revelation 20:7–8. This passage describes "Gog and Magog" as the nations from the four corners of the earth that are gathered together for a major end-of-time war. Are "Gog and Magog" in Revelation 20:8 the same "Gog and Magog" found in Ezekiel 38–39? Revelation 20:8 tells us that the nations will be deceived by Satan upon his release from a 1,000-year bondage, but the Scripture does not tell us how or why this occurs. Are these the same nations defeated prior to Satan's 1,000-year binding?

Gog and Magog in Revelation 20:7–8 and Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38–39 are not the same. Here is why we can conclude these passages speak of two separate battles at two separate periods of human history:

1. The initiator of the two conflicts is different.

Revelation 20:7–9 states that it is Satan who initiates a deception over Gog and Magog to gather them for war against the "saints and the beloved city." Conversely, Ezekiel 38:15–16; 39:1–2 states that it is God who initiates

Gog's conflict against Israel. These two conflicts cannot be the same if they have different initiators.

2. The military forces of Gog and Magog are different.

The conflict of Revelation 20:7 gathers the nations of the whole earth against the saints and the beloved city. The phrase "four corners of the earth" encompasses the entire world. "Four corners" communicates the whole part, not a portion of the whole.[618] A similar phrase is used in Revelation 7:1. Both passages use the phrase "four corners of the earth" to refer to the entire earth. The text is not referring to a region or even one or more continents. There are seven continents in the world: the "four corners of the world" symbolizes all of them or, at a minimum, the militaries of the nations that encompass the whole world! Conversely, Ezekiel 38–39 specifically locates Gog in the remote north of Jerusalem. How is it possible that the nations from the remote north (Ezek. 38 and 39 above) are the same nations as those described as from the "four corners of the earth" (Rev. 20:7)? They cannot be!

3. The purpose of the two conflicts is different.

As we will see below, in Ezekiel 38–39, the purpose of the future conflict described has a divine, redeeming purpose. That is, God uses the conflict against Israel to reveal Himself to the entire world and to bring Israel back into relationship as His covenant people (Ezek. 39:27–29). Actually, this is the same purpose that most of the book of Ezekiel focuses on: that through the fulfillment of prophecy (Israel's destruction by Babylon, 586 B.C.), God is revealed as the Lord God to Israel and the nations.

In Revelation 20:8, another conflict is prophesied, one different from that of Ezekiel 38–39. Just prior to this conflict, Satan is bound for 1,000 years so that "he would not deceive the nations any longer" (Rev. 20:3). The phrase "deceive the nations" refers to the prophetic event of Revelation 6, which began when the seven seals of the book were opened, ushering in world wars. The first four of the seven seals release four horses: white, red, black, and ashen, each of which is a metaphor for some aspect of coming world wars. When Satan is bound up no longer to deceive the nations (see Rev. 20:6), the Scripture is telling us that the wars prophesied by the first four seals of Revelation 6 are over. Satan will be no longer be able to deceive the nations of the world and induce them into war, since he is bound up. Peace over the world will be restored during this period.

The divine will in each passage is different. Ezekiel 38–39's purpose is to restore Israel. Revelation 20 is to usher in the final Great White Throne judgment. Both purposes are fulfilled, but both in different ways. In Ezekiel 38–39, the divine

will is fulfilled as God is revealed to the nations of the world, and Israel is redeemed. In Revelation 20, the divine will is fulfilled as peace returns to the earth. In the end, Satan is judged the final time for his lies and deceptions. These are two separate events and two separate fulfillments.

Satan's 1,000-Year Binding

Perhaps you are wondering why Satan is "bound" (see Rev. 20:2) for 1,000 years, only to be released for a short time to deceive the nations, once again (see Rev. 20:7–8)? It seems as though the Scripture is prophesying that the nations will be judged twice, with two separate Armageddons.

Have you ever heard someone ask the question, "If God is all powerful, why doesn't He do something about evil? Why doesn't God destroy Satan?" This is another one of those questions upon which an entire book could be written. This writing will attempt only a brief answer.

God is all-powerful—so powerful that He is only constrained by Himself. There is none greater or equal in power to God—other than God Himself. God created Satan to be eternal (Rev. 20:10); and not even God can undo what God has done. Although God cannot put an end to an eternal Satan, he can put Satan away. The one thousand years that Satan is bound is God's way of putting Satan away, of keeping him from his lies, deception, and efforts to hinder the plan of God on earth, until that day Satan will finally be judged. During the time period that Satan is bound up, Satan cannot tempt humanity to evil and cannot deceive the nations to war. This is the meaning of Revelation 20:1–3, which depicts Satan as being "bound" with a "great chain" and thrown into the abyss. Certainly, there is no literal chain that ties Satan up. The chain is a metaphor that means that during this one thousand years, Satan will not be able to deceive humanity as he has done since the time of Adam and Eve.

While Satan is bound up, a "parenthesis" of time occurs so that Satan's ultimate judgment in the Lake of Fire is simply delayed. The "short time" that Satan is released following the 1,000-year period is simply that period where Satan picks up where he left off to deceive the nations (represented by the names "Gog" and "Magog" [Rev. 20:8]) and to complete his own judgment. The 1,000 years is an "in the meantime," a "grace parenthesis," whereby God gives unbelieving humanity a final opportunity to freely choose Him without the hindrance of Satan's voice and without the consequences of world war. It is as if the millennial period returns humanity to the state of Adam prior to the fall. The tree of good and evil existed in the center of the Garden, signifying Adam's free choice to obey God or not; but in the millennium, Satan is now absent. Free will is present, but Satan is not. He has been tied up. Humanity can now choose to obey God without the presence of the great Dragon, Satan, to deceive and tempt away from God.

Satan's imprisonment is only a delay in his ultimate judgment. The Great White Throne judgment (see Rev. 20:11–15) will be the final judgment, closing this age and bringing in the New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven to earth (see Rev. 21). This interpretation is supported by Matthew 24:22, which provides this: "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short." Without the binding of Satan, humanity would not survive the "grace parenthesis," the one thousand years. With Satan bound, humanity will survive. In fact, many will chose to come to know Christ by their own unhindered free will. They are the "elect" for whose sake Satan has been bound.

Is the Battle of Ezekiel 38–39 the Same as the Battle of Armageddon Described in Revelation 16 and 19?

An important question is whether or not the conflict described in Ezekiel 38–39 is the same as that described in Revelation 16:12–16 and 19:11–21. It is the view of this writer that they are the same. Here are the similarities:

1. Both battles are initiated by God and set in motion by God's wrath.

In Revelation 16, the six bowls of wrath are all poured out by the angels of God to initiate God's ensuing wrath. The Battle of Armageddon is the sixth bowl poured out, and it is poured out at the initiative of God. Likewise, Ezekiel 38:18–19 describes Gog's conflict as initiated at the wrath of God.

2. Israel comes to faith in Jesus following both battles.

Look at Ezekiel 39:25–29. Verse 29 states, "I [God] will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out of My Spirit upon the house of Israel." The fulfillment of this prophecy can only take place, according to scripture, when Israel proclaims Jesus Christ as Messiah and Lord (see Luke 13:34–35). Israel must repent of the sin of unbelief before God will demonstrate His favor by pouring out His Spirit upon the house of Israel and no longer hiding His face.

The Old Testament warns of Israel's rejection of the Messiah (see Isa. 53:3) and prophesies of their repentance of this event (see Zech. 12:10). In Zechariah 12:10, the people are mourning in the midst of God's grace. Why? The people are mourning because they realize at the second coming of Jesus Christ that they missed Him the first time (see Zech. 13:6).

The time of rejoicing by Israel begins when she receives Jesus as Lord. Following the second coming, Christ will then establish the millennial reign

of His church (see Rev. 20:4). The Jews will witness the miracle of the return of Christ. They will witness the miracle of His defeat of Gog and His Alliance. In the process, they will come to know the reality of what God has done for them in Jesus Christ, and they shall be saved—the remnant of Israel will be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (see Rom. 9:27). Thus, Ezekiel 38–39 and Revelation 19:11 must be describing the same battle, for both events conclude with Israel coming to salvation.

Part 2—The Nations Included in Gog's Alliance

The Identity Of The Nations Of Gog's Alliance

We have interpreted Gog to be an individual. Now we look to identify the nations he will lead against Israel.

Entire books have been written on Ezekiel 38 and 39 and the identity of the nations in Gog's Alliance. It is not the purpose of this writing to summarize all of the possible views on the identity of the members of Gog's Alliance. Interested readers have many other sources available, should this be their intent. One resource this writer has found most helpful is that of Douglas Berner, *The Silence is Broken, God Hooks Ezekiel's Gog & Magog*. This work is recommended as a good survey of the different views that have been offered for Ezekiel 38 and 39.

The nations or groups comprising Gog's Alliance can be grouped into these four divisions:

1. Those nations from the land of Magog (Ezek. 38:2–3; 39:1), led by Gog, its prince (38:3; 39:1): Rosh (interprets "Rosh" as proper noun, as discussed below), Meshech, and Tubal (38:2–3; 39:1).
2. Other nations specifically named in Gog's Alliance:
   - Persia (38:5)
   - Ethiopia (38:5)
   - Put (38:5)
   - Gomer (38:6)
   - Beth-togarmah (38:6)
3. "Many peoples with you" (38:6)
4. Possible additional allies in Gog's Alliance:
   - Sheba (38:13)
   - Dedan (38:13)
   - Merchants of Tarshish with its "young lions" (or villages) (38:13)

Of this list, those that have been identified with near consensus by Bible scholars include:

- Persia—interpreted as modern-day Iran[619]
- Ethiopia (Cush)—interpreted as modern-day Ethiopia (Africa), including Sudan to its north[620]
- Put—interpreted as modern-day Libya (Africa);[621] alternatively, some have interpreted this as Somali and Yemen;[622] and some have interpreted it as Asia Minor (Turkey).[623]
- Gomer—interpreted as modern-day Turkey[624]
- Beth-togarmah—interpreted as modern-day Armenia and parts of eastern Turkey and northwestern Iran[625]
- Sheba—interpreted as modern-day Yemen (Arabian Peninsula)[626]
- Dedan—interpreted as southeastern Arabia or, perhaps, a neighboring country to Sheba in Arabia on the Persian Gulf; Sheba and Dedan were brothers through Raamah (Gen. 10:7) and his father, Cush.[627]

We will now identify those nations in Gog's Alliance where consensus is lacking as well as discuss Gomer and Beth-togarmah, two important allies in Gog's Alliance.

The Land of Magog—Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal

The text tells us that Gog is from the "land of Magog" (see Ezek. 38:2). Unfortunately, we are immediately thrown into a quandary about Gog's identity. The translation of a Hebrew word in the second verse is the subject of disagreement among Bible scholars. The word is "rosh," the literal meaning of which is "chief" or "head."[628] In Ezekiel's context, rosh can be interpreted in one of two ways:

1. As an adjective that describes the type of prince that Gog is: that is, a "*chief*" *prince*.
2. As a proper noun, that is, the name of a particular person, place, or thing (initial letter capitalized).

The New International Version (along with the *Revised Standard Version* and the *English Standard Bible*) interprets "rosh" using the first approach, i.e., rosh is an adjective modifying prince. The NIV translates in this fashion:

> Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; prophesy against him. (Ezek. 38:2)

The New American Standard Version (NASB) (along with the New King James Version) translates Rosh using the second approach, i.e., as a proper name. The NASB translates in this fashion:

> Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him. (Ezek. 38:2)

These are the two primary interpretations of rosh. There are very qualified language scholars on either side of this interpretive issue, and there is an absence of consensus among language scholars as to which approach is best. So how can we possibly interpret the passage if modern language scholars cannot agree? We will start down a pathway using one of our two options and see if each subsequent interpretation of other verses in Ezekiel 38–39 confirms our previous choices. In the end, our objective will be that all of our interpretations are confirmed by one another.

Rosh Is a Proper Noun

The presence of the miraculous in the victory leads us to the first step in the identity of Rosh, of whom Gog is prince. Rosh will be a nation of significance and power that is viewed by the world to be capable of leading the nations of the world against Israel! Thus, to identify Rosh, we need look for a superpower nation at enmity with the nation of Israel. It so happens that Rosh is interpreted by many scholars as Russia, for reasons we will discuss below, and Russia is a superpower at enmity with Israel. This leads us to begin our identification of Rosh by concluding that Rosh should be interpreted as a proper noun, i.e., the name of a particular nation, rather than as an adjective describing a prince. This starts us down a pathway using the NASB of Ezekiel 38 and 39 rather than the NIV.

To give us a little confidence in our initial step of interpreting Rosh as a proper noun, consider the following from the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:*

> This name occurs in the prophecies against Gog in Ezekiel 38:2,3 and 39:1, where the King James Version has "Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." This translation is due to ro'sh being the common Hebrew word for "head" or "chief" (compare the Greek variant and the Vulgate), and is regarded as incorrect, that of the Revised Version (British and American), "Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal," being preferred.[629]

Rosh as Russia

The first nation named in the text from the land of Magog is Rosh (see Ezek. 38:2). The identification of both Rosh and the other nations in Gog's Alliance is made difficult because throughout history the names of nations have changed and the dominion of a particular geography has changed as well. Nor is there sufficient historical or other evidence to identify clearly whom these nations were in Ezekiel's day, when the prophecy was first written. Further, given the existence in the twentieth century of the cold war between the West and Russia, modern-day interpreters are apt to interpret Rosh as Russia simply because of the presence of modern-day factors leading to this conclusion. The most reliable historical references we must draw upon, then, are those written prior to the cold war and before Russia became a superpower at enmity with the West.

There are two pre-twentieth century sources often cited by interpreters. The first is nineteenth century Hebrew scholar H.W. F. Gesenius (whose Hebrew Lexicon was first published in 1847), who provides the following definition of Rosh:

> Ezekiel 38:2, 3; 39:1; pr. n. Of a northern nation, mentioned with Tubal and Meshech; undoubtedly the Russians, who are mentioned by Byzantine writers of the tenth century, under the name of "Ros," dwelling to the north of Taurus, and … described by Ibn Fosslan, an Arabic writer of the same age, as dwelling on the River Rha (Wolga). (See Ibn Fosslan, Bericht von den Russen …) Compare Jos. De Hammer, Origines Russes, Petersburgh, 1827 … In the Koran, Kor. Xv. 31; 1.12.[630]

Similarly, there is a nineteenth century compilation by Lyman Coleman, who interprets Rosh as north of modern-day Armenia, i.e., Russia; Togarmah as Armenia and Gomer as modern-day Turkey (Cappadocia, located in the heart of modern Turkey).[631] Describing the descendants of Noah's grandson Japheth, Lyman Coleman states, "Togarmah is by common consent referred to as Armenia … The original country of Magog was the Caucasian mountains and the regions north around the Caspian. … The Russians and Scythians are the descendants of Magog … they are remote northern nations."[632]

International Standard Biblical Encyclopedia puts it this way:

> Some have supposed that the Russians are here meant, as one of the three Scythian tribes … They invaded the land of Judah in the days of Josiah. Herodotus, the Greek historian, says: "For twenty-eight years the Scythians ruled over Asia, and things were turned upside down by their violence and contempt."[633]

Smith's Bible Dictionary adds: "probably a proper name, referring to the first of the three great Scythian tribes of which Magog was the head."[634]

Our initial conclusion, based on pre-twentieth century geographers, is that Rosh is Russia. As we will see, there are many additional reasons that support this initial conclusion.

1. Gog is the Supplier of Military Hardware to Other Members of His Alliance.

Ezekiel 38:7 gives us important information to identify Gog. The text warns Gog that he must not only prepare himself for the battle, but also all those "assembled about you." This is a significant identifier for Gog. We are looking for a superpower that has the means to supply many nations with military armaments. Russia is a known supplier of military equipment to the enemies of Israel. It is, in fact, the world's leading supplier of military equipment to the developing nations of the world.[635] As such, Russia is a superpower that has supplied Israel's enemies with military supplies.

We will soon discuss Iran's important role in Gog's Alliance. For now, consider the following description of Russia's ongoing supply of military arms to Iran. This statement is only one example of similar statements that could be found in other Middle East nations, excepting Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq. The statement is taken from a Congressional Research Study by analyst Richard F. Grimmett:

> Elsewhere in 2005, Russia made an agreement with Iran for 29 TOR-M1 (SA-15 Gauntlet) surface-to-air defense systems for over $700 million. Russia also agreed to upgrade Iran's Su-24 and Mig-29 aircraft, as well as their T-72 main battle tanks. Sales of advanced military equipment to Iran by Russia and others has been an issue of intense interest to U.S. policymakers for some time, given the hostile relations the U.S. and Iran have had since the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, and the rise to power of an anti-American government in Tehran. … As the U.S focuses increasing attention on Iran's efforts to enhance its nuclear as well as conventional military capabilities, major arms transfers to Iran continue be a matter of concern.[636]

2. Gog Possesses What Appears to Be Nuclear Weapons.

Why is the possession of nuclear weapons a significant identifier? Because the modern-day nations that possess such weaponry make a short list! Let me first show you how the text describes the aftereffects of the battle. Then, we'll look at the short list of nations possessing nuclear weapons.

1. It takes seven months to bury the bodies of Gog's soldiers and "cleanse the land" (Ezek. 39:12).
2. It takes seven years to burn the weaponry (39:9).
3. There is one location where the dead will be buried, Hamon-gog (39:11). The bodies are not buried where they fall but in this special location (39:15).
4. The valley where the bodies and equipment are buried will block off all passersby (39:11).
5. Anyone who sees a dead man's bone is not to bury it but to set up a marker so that the buriers can bury it in its designated burial ground (the valley of Hamon-gog) (39:15).
6. It takes an official person to bury the bones and bodies; the buriers are referred to as "set apart men" (39:14).
7. The "set apart men" will "constantly pass through the land, burying those … left on the surface of the ground," and also those "passing through" (39:14).
8. The reason why everything must be buried is to "cleanse the land" (39:12, 16).

The details of the battle scene have the characteristics of a modern-day nuclear bomb that has contaminated the earth and everything in it. No one can pass through the land because the land is contaminated. Only those set apart can bury anyone or anything, i.e., only those who are trained to decontaminate the land! It is only in Hamon-gog that the burials take place, a burial ground specifically set aside for those contaminated. Finally, the dead include those killed in the battle as well as those killed who were passing through.

The aftermath of this battle is much like what happened after Russia's nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986. The nuclear fallout from radioactive materials resulted in the relocation of large groups of people in the Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia due to contamination. Over 336,000 people were evacuated and eventually resettled, and areas still exist today that cannot be inhabited.[637]

Ezekiel 38:4 describes Gog's army as attired with "buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords." Don't for a moment think that Gog will attack Israel with primitive weapons, such as bows and arrows and metal swords. We must think of their meaning to a reader in the sixth century B.C. A literal reading of Ezekiel's text describes an army advanced only in the eyes of the sixth century B.C.; yet to that reader, this army was well equipped with the most advanced weaponry of the day. The meaning in the twenty-first century? The same. The army of Gog will be equipped with the best weaponry of the

twenty-first century. The battle is clearly a battle in the future days, as the text tells us that the battle will take place "in the latter years" (Ezek. 38:8).

The Short List—although my source is certainly not official, the *New York Times* article makes the point needed. The list of nations possessing nuclear weapons is short, at least so far as the public is concerned:

> By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, Published: May 26, 2010
>
> LONDON (AP)—Britain disclosed Wednesday that it has a stockpile of 225 nuclear warheads, its first public accounting of its total nuclear arsenal. … Countries that do not possess nuclear weapons have long demanded more openness from the nuclear-weapon states—the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China … Four other nations have or are suspected of having atomic arms—Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea.[638]

3. Gog Is from the Remote Parts of the North.

We have already concluded that Gog is an individual, the commander of the military Alliance. Ezekiel 38:15 tells us that Gog is located in the remote parts of the north.

It is logical to conclude that Gog, as the leader of the superpower nation that equips and prepares the other members of the Alliance, makes his abode with the superpower nation he leads. The text tells us that Gog is located in the "remote north." The significance of this geographical hint should not be underestimated. There have been many nations in ancient Bible times who were Israel's enemies from the north. Among those were Assyria and Babylon. The Assyrians defeated the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. The Babylonians defeated the Southern Kingdom of Israel in 586 B.C. (Jer. 1:13). Both of these nations were defined as from the north by Scripture (Zeph. 2:13; Jer. 1:13).

It is important to note that the present text includes a refinement of the meaning of "north" when it gives the location of Gog as the "remote north." The Hebrew text in transliterated form is *yerekah*, meaning "flank, side, extreme parts, recesses."[639] Thus, the kingdom of Gog, the land of Magog, i.e., Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, is located geographically not just to the north, but to the remote north.

The modern nation to the extreme north of Israel is Russia. In fact, Moscow, Russia, is on a line directly north of Jerusalem.

In conclusion, the text gives us hints to identify Rosh: 1) Rosh (through Gog, his prince) is the supplier of military hardware to the Alliance, while also a nation at enmity with Israel. 2) Rosh is a superpower that possesses nuclear weapons. 3) Rosh is located in the remote parts of the north. Modern-day Russia meets all of these characteristics. We conclude that "Rosh" is Russia.

Meshech and Tubal

Having concluded that Rosh is Russia, the interpretation of Meshech and Tubal is not as difficult, since they are described along with Rosh as from the "land of Magog" (Ezek. 38:2; 39:1). Once again, we turn to nineteenth century scholar Gesenius:

> Moschi, a barbarous people inhabiting the Moshian mountains, between Iberia, Armenia, and Colchis, Ps. 120:5, almost always joined with the neighboring Tibareni, Gen. 10:2, Ezek. 27:13, 32:26, 38:2, 39:1; just as in Herodutus (iii. 94; vii. 78).[640]

Gesenius bases his view, at least partly, on the works of Herodutus, Greek Historian of the fifth century B.C. and frequently regarded as the "father of history" in Western culture.[641] The specific statement in Herodutus which aligns Meshech with Tubal is as follows: "The nineteenth provincial district—the Moschians, Tibarenoi, Makrones, Mossynoikians, and Mares—was assessed 300 talents."[642]

Gesenius states regarding Tubal: "Tubal … a nation of Asia Minor, dwelling by the Euxine sea, to the west of Moschi."[643]

As does Lyman Coleman: "Her merchandise was with Tarshish in the far west, and Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, in the northeast, provinces in the Caucasian mountains, between the Caspian and Black Sea."[644]

And who is Moschi? Modern-day Moscow. *Easton's Bible Dictionary* goes so far as to name Meshech and Tubal as the ancestors of the modern-day nations comprising Moscow and Tobolsk, Russia.[645] *Fausset's Bible Dictionary* agrees with Easton.[646]

Conclusion: Meshech and Tubal are interpreted as member countries, cities, of the modern-day, post-Soviet Union, Russian Federation.

Gomer

The ISBE identifies Gomer as we have noted above—"the sons of Gomer … were all settled in the West Asian tract. The West Asian tract is the modern land of Turkey."

Beth-Togarmah

Gesenius states the following regarding Beth-Togarmah ("beth" = "house", literally, the "house of Togarmah"):

> … of a northern nation and country sprung from Gomer (the Cimmerians), abounding in horses and mules. We should, apparently, understand "Armenia," as very abundant in horses … Such is either tradition or the opinion of the Armenians themselves, who regard Torgom the son of Gomer … As the founder of their nation, and they call themselves the "house of Torgom." See J. D. Michaelis Spicileg. Georg., t.i., p 67–78.[647]

Conclusion: We interpret Gomer and Beth-Togarmah as Turkey and Armenia, respectively.

Many Peoples with You

The third division of Gog's allies is found in Ezekiel 38:6, 9, 15, and 22. In each of these four passages, the phrase "many peoples with you" is used.

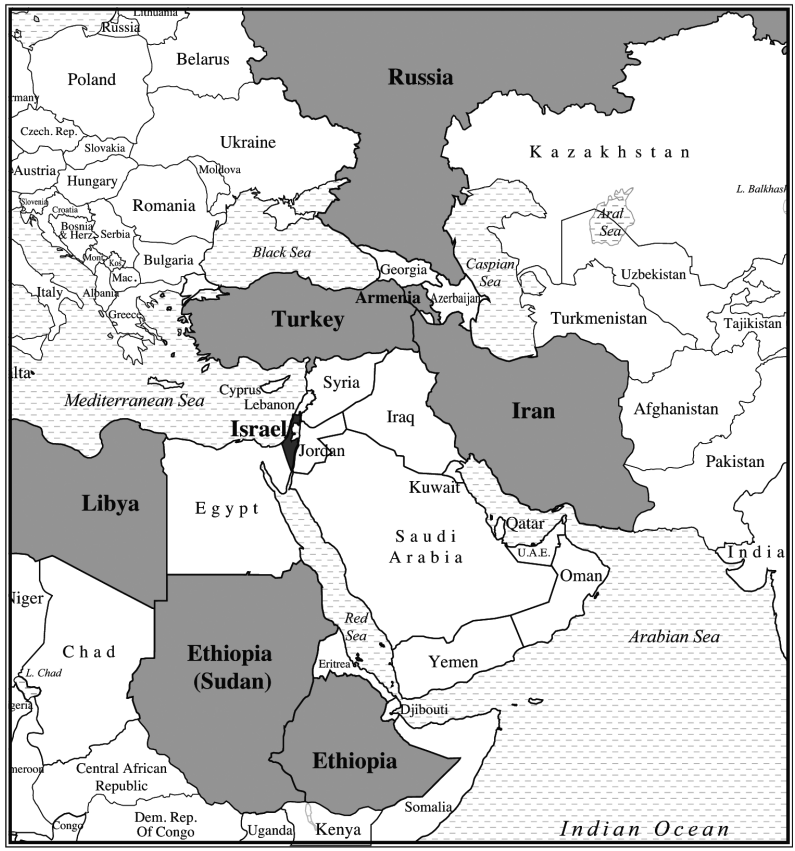
It is important to note that this third division in Gog's Alliance is not identified by citizenship or national identity. That is, the "many peoples" that join Gog's Alliance are not described as Persians, Ethiopians, etc., but simply as "many peoples." Who are the "many peoples" the text is referring to? They are Muslims from around the world, particularly those Muslims living in countries neighboring Israel. As we will see next, they are now under the dominion of Iran. The "many peoples" of Ezekiel 38 refers to the Muslim populations of these subdued countries who will join Gog's Alliance against Israel—*either by choice or by force*.

Al-Qaeda

There is another category of Muslims included in the "many peoples" of Ezekiel 38–39. As of December 31, 2008, the United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counter Terrorism, listed forty-four organizations that it labeled as "Designated Terrorist Organizations."[648] HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement), Hezbollah (Party of God), Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Al-Qaeda are among the forty-four. The charter of most of these organizations includes specific language identifying their purpose: to destroy Israel and to reclaim the land of the Middle East that Islam acquired in its jihads of the seventh to tenth centuries (which Islam considers to be permanently theirs—*Dar al-Islam*). Thus, Gog's "many peoples" also includes the organizations that make up the terrorist watch lists of the world's free nations.

Conclusion: They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Map 12-1 shows those nations included in Gog's Alliance. Remember, however, that this Alliance only includes those specifically named in Ezekiel 38–39.

Nations Specifically Named In Gog's Alliance



Gog's Alliance =

Israel =

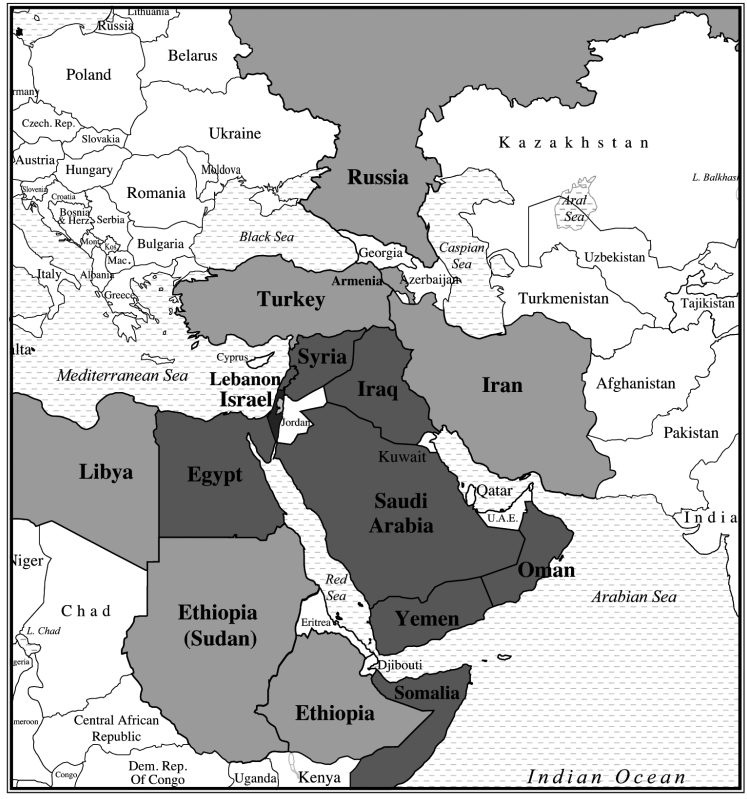
Look Who Got Left Out of Gog's Alliance

Ezekiel 38–39 describes a battle against Israel in the last days (we interpret it to be Armageddon, which concludes at the end of the tribulation period). We have identified those nations that the Scripture tells us will be involved in this last day's conflict. But did you notice the nations not involved in that conflict that should be involved? Those nations that have been at enmity with Israel since the earliest days of the Old Testament?

Look at Map 12-2, which includes the nations named in Gog's Alliance as well as those not named in the Alliance that we would expect to be. All of these nations are neighboring lands to Israel, and all of these nations have historically been at enmity with Israel. Yet, they are absent from Gog's list! Why? Here is the group:

1. Iraq
2. Syria
3. Jordan
4. Lebanon
5. Saudi Arabia
6. Egypt

Neighboring Nations Not Named In Gog's Alliance



Gog's Alliance =

Nations excluded from Gog's Alliance =

Israel =

Why are these six nations not included in Gog's Alliance against Israel, particularly since these six are all historic enemies of Israel? I propose that the reason why the six neighboring nations are absent from Ezekiel's list is because they have been previously subdued by one of the nations included in Gog's Alliance. At the time of the Alliance's attack on Israel, they are all under the dominion of this nation so that when this nation joins the Alliance, those nations previously subdued join as well—not as independent nations, but as "many peoples" now under the dominion of this nation. I also propose that the subduing nation in Gog's Alliance is a Shi'ah Islam nation (as opposed to Sunni), based on our previous interpretations of Daniel 2, 7, 9, and Revelation 13 and 17.

Part 3—The Pretribulation Conquest

The Prior Conflict—Muslims Vs. Muslims

It is the view of this writer that Daniel 11:36–45; Daniel 7:24; and Revelation 17:12–13, 16 prophesy of a pretribulation conflict that precedes and leads up to the firm covenant of Daniel 9:27 (Seventieth Week) and that Ezekiel 38–39 finishes the tribulation period at Armageddon and the gathering of the nations for the final battle. This conflict will begin with the destruction of Saudi Arabia's oil. It will then continue to include three other Middle East nations. I will provide you with the basis of this interpretation below, but for now, the basic proposition is that in order for the world to agree to the seven-year firm covenant prophesied by Daniel 9:27, the context in human history would have to be unparalleled in human suffering (see Dan. 12:1).

The aggressor nation in this pretribulation conflict? The aggressor must be one of the named nations in Ezekiel 38–39 in order for the latter prophecy of Ezekiel 38–39 to be fulfilled. The neighboring nations to Israel are not included in the Alliance of nations named by Ezekiel 38–39. There must be a reason for their absence, since they have been at enmity with Israel since ancient times. It is the view of this writer that they are under the dominion of one of those named nations in Gog's Alliance in order for this to be the case. I will propose a Shi'ah nation from Gog's Alliance to lead this prior conflict. The reasoning for a Shi'ah Islam nation is that Shi'ah Islam has fulfilled all of our prior interpretations of last days Bible prophecy where a sect of Islam has been identified.

There is only one nation in Gog's Alliance that is Shi'ah Islam—*Iran*. Shi'ah Islam is also the sect of Islam from which we have interpreted the Antichrist/False Prophet to arise.

A Time of World Chaos that Precedes the Tribulation Period

Our next chapter will discuss, in detail, the seven-year tribulation period of Daniel 9:27. The battle that I am proposing will take place prior to the beginning of this seven-year period of tribulation. To understand the battle that I am proposing, we must briefly review Daniel 9:27. This passage prophesies of a "firm covenant" that will be entered into in the seven years preceding the return of Christ (the last "week" of the seventy weeks).

The question that we must ask ourselves is what conditions would have to be present for the world to enter such an agreement? Economic chaos, famine, and starvation will be prevalent in the world for such to occur. In a prior chapter, we interpreted Revelation 17 to foresee a coming destruction of Saudi Arabia, thereby plunging the world into economic chaos as a result of the removal of Saudi Arabian oil reserves from the world markets. But that is only the beginning of the chaos. Consider also that, according to the view being proposed for Ezekiel 38–39, not only would Saudi Arabia be defeated but also the other four Muslim nations (excluding Jordan as we will see below) surrounding Israel. Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt are all in this group. It is not just the removal of Saudi oil from the world markets that necessitates such chaos. Oil is just the beginning. There will be economic chaos followed by famine, then followed by (or preceded by) World War III. It is also not just Iran that is waging jihad against Sunni Muslim countries. It is Shi'ah Islam, predominantly located in Iran, and led by the miracle-working al-Mahdi, who leads this offensive. In the final analysis, this is Islam's quest for world submission that begins with a pretribulation conquest of its own.

A review of Revelation and the opening of the seven seals by Christ, the Lamb, finds a prophecy of a coming financial crisis. This crisis occurs during the tribulation period (not before it), but it gives a precursory view of what this author believes will begin to happen in the pretribulation conflict. When the third seal is opened, a black horse and its rider usher forth from heaven with a pair of scales in his hand (see Rev. 6:5). The pair of scales in the riders hand is a metaphor for commerce. Scales were used in the first century and earlier times as a means of weighing and measuring grains and similar food quantities to calculate the price in coinage of the day (see Amos 8:5; Mic. 6:11). Revelation 6:6 then states that a quart of wheat and three quarts of barley are priced at the same amount, one denarius (one denarius was equal to a day's wage). In the first century, wheat was the main food source. Barley was also a main source of food, yet it was the cheaper food. One day's food needs were equal to one quart of either food source, whether barley or grain, and the price was the denarius, the wage for one day.[649]

The text is prophesying of a time when a day's wage will pay for a day's food. This will be a time of world famine, resulting from world war. No longer will the choice be made for the better food, wheat. People will buy the barley because they will be able to get three times as much food for the same price (three quarts of barley go a lot further than one quart of wheat). The wheat and barley are not to be taken literally, but metaphorically. The metaphor is prophesying of a time when luxuries will no longer be the choice of humanity, but rather, the basic necessities of life are all people will be able to afford. In other words, no more steak and lobster for the whole of humanity. The concluding verse states, "Do not harm the oil or the wine." Oil and wine are for the rich. The text is telling us that the rich will not be impacted by the famine.

The breaking of the fourth seal unleashes the ashen horse (pale green, the color of death) and its rider, Death. Revelation 6:8 states that one-fourth of the world's population will die. In today's terms, that means 1.5 billion people (6.0 billion population in the world)! They are killed by sword, famine, pestilence, and the wild beasts of the earth. That is, through war (the sword) and all that follows war—famine, pestilence, and wild beasts, all terms symbolizes the whole of death that results in a time of world chaos precipitated by conflict among the nations.

So then, where does this pretribulation conflict lead us? It leads the world's nations to a point where they are willing to negotiate with Islam and enter into an agreement calling for world peace. Such an agreement would hardly be an event one might seek to enter unless to do so forestalls a greater world calamity than that envisioned by the agreement. The seven-year firm covenant described in Daniel 9:29 is simply the vehicle to this end. Far-fetched? How else do we explain the nations missing from Gog's Alliance against Israel? And how else do we explain passages such as Daniel 12:1 that prophesies of a coming time of distress like the world has never experienced? In our previous chapter, "Sharia in Bible Prophecy," we interpreted this firm covenant to be the Dhimma Contract entered into by non-Muslims with their conquering lords. This chapter will give some of the details of the conquest that precipitates the Dhimma.

The Pretribulation Conquest of the King of Daniel 11:36f

In an earlier chapter, we interpreted many of the characteristics of the kingdom of Daniel 11:36 to be an Islamic kingdom. Now, we will look at some specific prophesies in Daniel 11:36 that extend beyond the spiritual makeup of the kingdom and leader to the kingdoms in conflict, specifically, the pretribulation conflict that I am suggesting.

The following list itemizes the specific prophecy of Daniel 11:36. It begins with a recounting of the specifics and concludes with the interpretation.

1. A "king" will arise. He will do as he pleases (Dan. 11:36).
2. The "king of the South" and the "king of the North" will "collide" with him (Dan. 11:40).
3. He will enter the "Beautiful Land" (Israel).
4. He will make his headquarters "between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain" (Dan. 11:45).
5. Many countries will fall to him, including, apparently, the king of the south and the king of the north (Dan. 11:41).
6. He will come to his end, and no one will help him (Dan. 11:45).

As we interpret the above specifics, we will do so with the assumption that Shi'ah Iran is the aggressing nation. Part 4 of this chapter will offer some additional evidence that supports this view. Also, we will identify the "king" as the Antichrist/False Prophet, al-Mahdi. The reason is because of the many spiritual identifiers in Daniel 11:36 that we have interpreted to be the Antichrist/False Prophet in prior chapters. These are the same identifiers that we found in Daniel 7:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:12–18; 17:8, 11. In all of these passages, we interpreted the Antichrist/False Prophet to be present.

The King of the North and the King of the South

Most Bible scholars have interpreted the king of the south as Egypt and the king of the north as Iraq (or Syria).[650] This writer concurs with the prevailing view. The text then describes a conflict between the Antichrist/False Prophet and each of these nations (Dan. 11:40) that occurs at the end time.

Egypt Will Not Be Rescued

Daniel 11:40, 43 tells us that the king of the South, i.e., Egypt, will be overcome by the Antichrist/False Prophet. The prophecy is that this king (Iran) will "gain control" of the "precious things" of Egypt. How likely is it in the modern day that Egypt would be attacked by Iran?

Egypt is one of two Muslim nations in the world that has normalized relations with Israel (the other is Jordan).[651] This immediately distinguishes Egypt from the other Muslim nations neighboring Israel and places it at the top of Iran's list, since they have shown some favor to Israel. Further, Egypt is aligned with Israel's ally, the United States, the "Great Satan," a term of derision first used by the Ayatollah in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution of 1979.[652]

Conclusion: Egypt will be one of three Arab Muslim nations that will be subdued by Iran. Daniel 11:40–42 specifically names it, and modern alliances support this conclusion.

Iraq Will Be One of the Three Nations Subdued by Iran

As we have stated, scholars have concluded the "king of the North" is symbolic for Iraq (or Syria).[653] The text then states that both the king of the south (Egypt) and the king of the north (Iraq) will collide against the kingdom led by the Antichrist/False Prophet.

Here are other factors to support this view. Iraq has a Shi'ah majority (60 percent), located predominantly in southern Iraq on the border with Iran. Iraq and Iran have historically been rivals from ancient times. Iraq, the modern-day equivalent of Babylon in the Old Testament, was defeated by Media-Persia in 539 B.C., under the leadership of Cyrus the Great.[654] Encarta Encyclopedia gives the following background of the more recent Iran/Iraq divide:

> The border between Iraq and Iran has been contested diplomatically and sometimes militarily for several centuries. After the Ottoman Empire conquered present-day Iraq in 1534, making it the easternmost part of its empire, Iran, its eastern neighbor, became a frequent rival. More recently, when Iraq was made a separate state in the aftermath of World War I (1914–1918), Iraq and Iran disagreed sharply over the precise border between them, especially in the area of the Shatt al Arab, a river channel providing Iraq's only outlet to the sea, via the Persian Gulf.[655]
>
> The Iran-Iraq War began … when Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980 and ended in August 1988 after both sides accepted a cease-fire sponsored by the United Nations. The war was one of the longest and most destructive of the 20th century, with likely more than one million casualties. Despite the conflict's length and cost, neither Iran nor Iraq made significant territorial or political gains, and the fundamental issues dividing the countries remained unresolved at the end of the war.[656]

It is unlikely that the rivalry between these two nations will ever be healed, much less cause them to align on the same side of a military dispute. This statement is affirmed by the present context of Iran/Iraq relations in the post-Sadaam era. Iraq is presently aligned with and supported by the United States. At the date of this writing, United States and coalition troops are still on Iraqi soil. It is well documented by the intelligence community that Iran has actively participated in the arming and supplying of the insurgency in Iraq in an effort to destabilize the U.S.-backed government in Iraq. Where

Iran has supported Iraq, it has not been the post-Sadaam Shi'ah majority government led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, but the Shi'ah Islamist leaders.

From updated CRS Report #22323, Iran's continuing influence on the post-Saddam Iraq regime is purposeful: to ensure that Iraq can never again become a threat to Iran:

> With a conventional military and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threat from Saddam Hussein's regime removed, Iran seeks to ensure that Iraq can never again become a threat to Iran, either with or without U.S. forces present in Iraq. Some believe Iran's intentions go well beyond achieving Iraq's "neutrality"—that Iran wants to try to harness Iraq to its broader regional policy goals and to help Iran defend itself against international criticism of Iran's nuclear program. By supporting armed Shiite factions, Iran's activities in Iraq have hindered—and continue to pose a threat to U.S. efforts to stabilize Iraq, and have heightened the U.S. threat perception of Iran generally. However, Iran faces difficult choices in Iraq now that its protégé Shiite factions, formerly united, are competing and often fighting each other. This competition is intensifying in the run-up to January 31, 2009 provincial elections. [657]

Conclusion: Iraq is the modern-day equivalent to the king of the North of Daniel 11:36. This conclusion does not change if the United States were to remove itself from active military involvement with Iraq. Iran cannot afford for Iraq ever to become a military threat to its survival. Iraq is the king of the North prophesied to be in conflict with the Antichrist/False Prophet, of Shi'ah Iran.

Jordan Will Be Rescued

Daniel 11:41 tells us that Jordan will be rescued when it refers to "Edom, Moab, and the foremost of the sons of Ammon." According to *Easton's Bible Dictionary, Smith's Bible Dictionary,* and *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* these three ancient nations were all located east of the Dead Sea in the modern-day nation of Jordan.[658]

The Third Nation to Be Subdued by Iran

Daniel 11:36 names two nations to be defeated by the king, al-Mahdi of Shi'ah Islam. It names Jordan to be rescued. We must look to another prophecy to complete the list of pretribulation nations. Daniel 7:24 tells us that three nations will be subdued. It does not tell us who those three nations will be. We have interpreted Revelation 17 that Saudi Arabia will

be defeated by al-Mahdi and his Alliance, and therefore, possibly, a fourth nation subdued by Iran (it is possible that Saudi Arabia is counted in the three). Who might be the third nation that is prophesied by Daniel 7:24 to be subdued by al-Mahdi? We can only speculate, but there are only two Middle East candidates remaining: Syria and Lebanon.

Both of these countries are historically at enmity with Israel. Both of these countries are predominantly Sunni Islam (although Lebanon has significant Shi'ah populations). I will give information that aligns the two. It is my proposal that the two together represent the third nation that comes under al-Mahdi's dominion. The nature of that dominion and the specifics of how it occurs cannot be concluded with certainty, as the Scripture does not provide us the details. It is quite possible that the dominion given to al-Mahdi is not the result of a military defeat, but a surrender and yielding similar to what happened in Revelation 17 that defeated the harlot, Saudi Arabia. We will first look at their enmity with Israel and then their alignment together.

Syria and Its Enmity with Israel

Syria has been designated by the United States as a sponsor of international terrorism.[659] The consequence of this designation is the prohibition of direct aid by the United States to Syria and the restriction of bilateral trade relations between Syria and the United States. Additionally, on December 12, 2003, President Bush signed the Syria Accountability Act, H.R. 1828, which imposed additional economic sanctions against Syria.[660] The United States has also "designated several Syrian entities as weapons proliferations and sanctioned several Russian companies for alleged WMD or advanced weapons sales to Syria."[661]

Here is a description of the relations of Iran and Syria taken from a recent CRS Report to Congress. Notice particularly the recent agreement between Syria, Iran, and Turkey (another member of Gog's Alliance) to allow Iran to export natural gas to Syria via Turkey and the one-billion dollars in military aid by Iran to Syria to purchase Russian anti-ship missiles:

> Reliable information on the extent of Iranian influence in Syria is difficult to quantify. Nevertheless, there have been several recent reports of increased Iranian investment and trade with Syria. In the manufacturing and industrial sectors, Iran has proposed to build car manufacturing plants in Syria, establish an industrial zone for Iranian companies in Damascus, invest in concrete production and power generation, and overhaul Syria's urban transportation network. In the energy sector, Syria, Iran, Venezuela and Malaysia recently established a joint petroleum refinery in Homs, Syria. In addition, Iran, Turkey, and Syria reached a new natural gas deal that would

> allow Iran to export 105 billion cubic feet of natural gas annually to Syria via Turkey. Syrian-Iranian military cooperation also may be expanding. During a visit to Damascus in the summer of 2007, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reportedly offered to provide Syria with $1 billion in military aid with which Syria would purchase tanks, MIG-31 fighter jets, and anti-ship missiles from Russia and North Korea.[662]

Consider this statement from CRS #33487, which describes Hezbollah, the Lebanon-based terrorist organization, and the role it plays to connect Syria, Lebanon, and Iran:

> Syria is an important interlocutor between Iran and its Hezbollah protégés; Iranian weapons transit through Syria on their way to Hezbollah caches in Lebanon. Syria emerged as a key, if indirect, actor in the 2006 Israel-Lebanon-Hezbollah crisis, primarily through its role as a source and conduit for the delivery of rockets and other mainly Iranian weaponry to Hezbollah units in southern Lebanon; some believe Syria is still shipping weapons from its own inventories to Hezbollah as well. In March 2007, Israeli officials presented the U.N. Security Council and foreign governments with evidence and pictures of trucks crossing from Syria into Lebanon and unloading weapons. One former U.N. peacekeeping official said it would be "humanly impossible" to cut off the flow of arms to Hezbollah without Syrian help,commenting on the task of interdicting Lebanon's porous 230-mile border with Syria and 140-mile Mediterranean coast line.[663]

Syria and Oil

Revenues from oil account for an estimated 40 percent to 50 percent of the annual budget for the Syrian government.[664] Syria has one of the smallest known reserves of oil in the Middle East, and most energy experts believe that, barring significant new discoveries, Syria will exhaust its oil reserves in the coming decades.[665] The significance of this fact must not be overlooked, for it places Syria at a distinct disadvantage in coming years. Without oil, Syria will be forced to rely on outside interests for its economic survival. As we have seen in prior chapters, Iran has significant oil and gas reserves, in fact, second only to Saudi Arabia. However, in spite of Iran's reserves, Iran's infrastructure needed to bring oil to market is severely lacking.[666] Saudi Arabia has the infrastructure that Iran does not have. This fact reinforces our interpretation that Iran will attack Saudi Arabia for its oil and its infrastructure. It will need it for itself as well as for the nations it will bring under its dominion, i.e., Syria.

Nuclear Syria?

In a 2002 speech to the United States Senate, former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described Israel's inherent right to protect the lives of its citizens.[667] Israeli leaders have vowed to bomb any nuclear facility of Arab nations it considers a threat to its people. It doesn't appear that Syria has taken Israel's warning to heart. Consider the report below by the *Washington Post,* which describes Israel's 2007 bombing of Syria's nuclear facilities:

> **Shock Waves from Syria**, Did Israel bomb a secret nuclear facility equipped by North Korea? Thursday, September 20, 2007; Page A20
>
> THERE's BEEN no official confirmation of the targets or results of an Israeli air raid in northeastern Syria on Sept. 6. Yet, like a subterranean explosion, the event is sending shock waves through the Middle East and beyond. Syria has protested to the United Nations, though it hasn't been very clear about what it's protesting. On Tuesday, a front-page editorial in Damascus's main government-run newspaper criticized the United States for not condemning the attack. An Israeli newspaper, meanwhile, noted triumphantly that no nation other than North Korea had come to Syria's defense, rhetorically or otherwise.[668]

For those who need more information on Syria's construction of nuclear facilities, point your browser to this phrase: "Israel bombs Syria," and you will find a 1,455 page *Sourcebook on the Israeli Strike in Syria, 6 September 2007, Version of 2009-02-01* located at web address: http://www.fas.org/man/eprint/syria.pdf. This sourcebook includes hundreds of pictures documenting Syria's construction of a nuclear facility as well as its interactions with North Korean leadership, who allegedly supplied the materials in this clandestine effort.

Lebanon and Its Relationship with Syria

In recent years, Lebanon has depended upon Syria for military and intelligence support. This has created a dependence by Lebanon upon Syria. Analyst Alfred B. Prados states the following in his report to Congress, dated November 23, 2007:

> Syria has long regarded Lebanon as part of its sphere of influence. … Another remaining question concerns the ability of the Lebanese security forces to assume responsibility for maintaining order in areas vacated by Syrian forces. Lebanon's ground forces number approximately 70,000 organized into 11 under strength brigades and a few separate units and armed largely with obsolescent equipment, plus minuscule air and naval

> forces, each consisting of about 1,000 personnel. In this connection a Lebanese study group has prepared a report indicating despite Syria's formal withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, Syria continues to occupy as much as180 square miles of Lebanese territory (approximately 4.5 percent of the country). The drafters of the report believe Syria maintains camps and smuggling routes through which they infiltrate foreign fighters and weapons into Lebanon.[669]
>
> A cornerstone of Syrian foreign policy is domination of the internal affairs of Lebanon. Many hard-line Syrian nationalists consider Lebanon to be an appendage of the Syrian state and, to this day, there is no official Syrian diplomatic representation in Beirut. From a geostrategic standpoint, Lebanon is considered Syria's "soft underbelly" and a potential invasion route for Israel. The Lebanese economy also is deeply penetrated by pro-Syrian business interests.[670]

Based on the current relationship of Lebanon and Syria, it is likely that these two countries will align similarly in any effort that endangers either country, whether Iranian or otherwise. Further, Lebanon is host to Hezbollah. CRS Report to Congress #RL32048 details the Iran/Hezbollah relationship as follows:

> Iran has maintained a close relationship with Hezbollah since Hezbollah's inception in 1982. Hezbollah was formed by Lebanese Shiite clerics sympathetic to Iran's Islamic revolution and responsible for several acts of anti-U.S. and anti-Israel terrorism in the 1980s and 1990s … Whether or not Iran instigated Lebanese Hezbollah to provoke the July–August 2006 crisis with Israel, Iran has long been a major supplier and benefactor of Hezbollah. Iranian-supplied rockets were fired by Hezbollah on Israel's northern towns during the fighting. As part of a package of aid to Hezbollah said to exceed $100 million per year, reported Iranian shipments to Hezbollah over the past five years have included the "Fajr" (dawn) and Khaybar series of rockets that were fired at the Israeli city of Haifa (30 miles from the border), and over 10,000 Katyusha rockets that were fired at cities within 20 miles of the Lebanese border.[671]

Conclusion: Syria/Lebanon are the third likely dominion prophesied by Daniel 7:24 that will occur during the pretribulation conquest of al-Mahdi. This writer sees them both combined as one. Bottom line—where Syria is, so Lebanon will be.

What About the Palestinians and the Gaza Strip Upon Which they Locate?

Why does the Gaza Strip matter? This small strip of land hardly seems significant enough to be mentioned in last days Bible prophecy. Daniel 11:45

states, "He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain."

To "pitch the tents of his royal pavilion" means that the king, al-Mahdi, will set up his headquarters at a particular location; that location is given to us—"between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain." Look at our maps on page 260. The only seas that the text could be speaking of are the Mediterranean Sea to the west of Israel and the Dead Sea to the east of Israel. The "Holy Mountain" is a specific reference to Jerusalem (see Isa. 27:13). There is but one strip of land between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean Sea—the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip has been occupied by Israel ever since Israel's 1967 Six-Day War.[672] The Strip has a population of 1.5 million people, "One million of whom were, as of March 2005, refugees who fled to the territory from other parts of Palestine as part of the 1948 Palestinian exodus arising from the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and their descendants. The population is predominantly Sunni Muslim and speak a Western Egyptian dialect of Arabic."[673] As of the 2007 election, HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement) is the leading political party. According to GlobalSecurity.org:

> HAMAS receives funding from Palestinian expatriates, Iran, and private benefactors in Saudi Arabia and other moderate Arab states. Some fundraising and propaganda activities take place in Western Europe and North America. … Syria serves as an important base of the Hamas organization, from a political, information and operational perspective. Officials in the Hamas leadership reside in Syria and conduct their operations from there. This applies particularly to the so-called political office of the Hamas, headed by Khaled Mashal. They are in regular daily contact with the Hamas leadership in the territories, headed by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, and with the terrorist operatives of Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam (Hamas battalions) in the territories.[674]

The text is telling us that al-Mahdi will set up his headquarters, not in Iran, but on the Gaza Strip. Why the Gaza Strip? The text is silent. Perhaps Syria's cooperation with HAMAS has some bearing on the location. Or perhaps the Strip's proximity to Israel precludes a nuclear or other cataclysm by Israel. Regardless, the Antichrist/False Prophet does not defeat the Beautiful Land at this time. Daniel 11:41 states, "He will also enter the Beautiful Land." He does this when he sets up his headquarters on the Gaza Strip (occupied by Israel since 1967). It will take the midpoint of the tribulation period before he overcomes Israel. Revelation 11:2 tells us that Jerusalem will be "trampled underfoot" for forty-two months. That's three-and-a-half years. This writer sees this as the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation period, which means that at the mid-point of the Treaty of Daniel 9:27, the Treaty will be broken, and Jerusalem will be trampled.

Shi'ah Islam's Prophecy of al-Mahdi's Base of Operations

We have mentioned the belief of Shi'ahs that al-Mahdi is in hiding (occultation), where he has been concealed for 1,200 years. Some Shi'ahs believe he locates himself in a well behind the Jamkaran Mosque in Qom, Iran, where he is believed to have appeared for a brief moment. On Tuesday evenings, Shi'ahs gather to leave prayer notes in the well, petitioning the Hidden Imam with their prayer requests.[675] It is believed by some Shi'ahs that when the Hidden Imam rises to begin his final work (as al-Mahdi), he will do so from Mecca.[676] Shi'ahs believe the Hidden Imam comes for *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) every year, but he is concealed from their view.[677]

There is a Shi'ah prophecy that al-Mahdi will govern from Kufa, located in modern-day Iraq.[678] "Kufa … is a city in Iraq, about 170 kilometers (110 mi) south of Baghdad, and 10 kilometers (6.2 mi) northeast of Najaf. It is located on the banks of the Euphrates River. The estimated population in 2003 was 110,000. Along with Samarra, Karbala, Kadhimiya, and Najaf, Kufa is one of five Iraqi cities that are of great importance to Shia Muslims. The city was the final capital of Ali ibn Abi Talib [from whom Shi'ahs are founded]. The Great Mosque of Kufa is located here, one of the earliest mosques in Islam. It was constructed in the middle of the seventh century after the Caliph Omar established the city. The mosque contains the remains of Muslim ibn 'Aqil, first cousin of Husayn ibn 'Ali [Ali's son by Fatima]."[679]

Shi'ahs have no prophecy that al-Mahdi will govern from the Gaza Strip. This is one area where Bible prophecy and Islamic prophecy differ.

What about Yemen and Oman in the Pretribulation Conquest?

Ezekiel 38:13 states, "Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all its villages will say to you, 'Have you come to capture spoil? Have you assembled your company to seize plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to capture great spoil?'"

As we will see, Sheba and Dedan are the modern nations of Yemen and Oman, respectively, located on the southernmost tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The statement of Ezekiel 38:13 seems to imply that Sheba and Dedan are not involved in the Alliance at the same level or the same time as that of the other named nations in Ezekiel 38:4–6. It is almost as if these two nations are more interested in the economic ramifications of Gog's assault against Israel than other ramifications. It is for this reason that this interpreter opts that Sheba and Dedan are brought under Iran's dominion in the pretribulation conquest rather than specifically in Gog's conquest of the latter half of the

tribulation. When Saudi Arabia falls to Iran in the pretribulation conquest, that is the more logical time when the neighboring lands to the Saudis will join al-Mahdi. Certainly, the text gives us little to make this conclusion, so we hold to it loosely.

What about Russia in the Pretribulation Conquest?

There is but one very weak hint that Russia assists al-Mahdi and Iran in the pretribulation conquest. Daniel 11:39 states, "He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god." Perhaps "help of a foreign god" is referring to Russia's provision of military and other supplies to Iran in the pretribulation conquest? We have already come to this conclusion for our interpretation of Ezekiel 38:7 in the battle of Armageddon. Perhaps Russia is doing the same in Daniel 11:39 as well. We cannot hold to this view with certainty, for the Hebrew word translated "god" is translated in this way in many other Bible verses.[680] Nevertheless, the metaphor works quite nicely.

What about Turkey in the pretribulation Conquest?

Daniel 8:19 prophesies of a coming event that has applications in Daniel's time as well as the tribulation at the end of days. In our next chapter, we will review the dividing of the seven-year period of tribulation into two periods of three-and-a-half years. The first three-and-a-half years are the period of the wrath of Satan, and the last three-and-a-half years are the period of the wrath of God—and, specifically, the finishing of God's indignation. Daniel 8:19 also states, "He said, 'Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end.'"

The view we will discuss in the next chapter is that Gog's battle does not occur until the time of the wrath of God, i.e., the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation. The Daniel 8 prophecy will occur at that time period as well. This period is also the "final period of the indignation … the appointed time of the end."

Scholars have almost uniformly interpreted Daniel 8 as having been fulfilled with the coming of Alexander the Great and the eventual division of his kingdom into four divisions following Alexander's death.[681] One of Alexander's leaders was Antiochus Epiphanes, who is interpreted by most scholars to be the "small horn" that grows "exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land" (Dan. 8:9). The growth of Antiochus' kingdom is thought to have been fulfilled when in the second century B.C., Antiochus overran Palestine and Jerusalem, including his desolation of the temple in 168 B.C.[682]

This writer concurs with the interpretation that Antiochus Epiphanes fulfills Daniel 8. He is the little horn of Greece, and Greece is the goat in Daniel 8. However, Antiochus is also a "type" that will occur in the end of days, specifically, the "final period of the indignation," the "appointed time of the end." This period is not the pretribulation conquest that we have previously interpreted as occurring prior to the entering into the seven-year Treaty. Rather, the "appointed time of the end" is the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation. Daniel 8:21 ultimately adds Turkey to the group (located in Alexander's Greek kingdom) that includes Iran, but this does not take place until the second half of the tribulation period. (Turkey is also specifically named by Ezekiel 38–39 as Gomer.)

Another reason that supports Turkey not joining Iran until the latter half of the tribulation is that Daniel 8:24 predicts the destruction of "mighty men and the holy people." The "holy people" are, without question, the Jews (see Isa. 62:12). Other passages tell us that the Jews are not destroyed until the end of the seven-year tribulation period. Daniel 12:7 states, "And as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed." The events will not be completed until the "shattering of the power" of the Jews. This ending cannot occur until the end of the tribulation period (at the second coming of Christ).

The conclusion that the "power of the holy people" is not shattered until the end of the tribulation period is also supported by Revelation 11:2. Revelation 11:2 states, "And they will tread underfoot the holy city for forty-two months." The forty-two months refers to the last three-and-a-half years of the seven-year tribulation period, when Israel is overcome by converging forces. This overcoming of Israel will begin at the midpoint of the seven years (see Dan. 9:27). Jerusalem will be trampled for the remaining period of the seven-year tribulation period. Daniel 12:11 gives us the number of days—1,290 days or forty-three months, the period of time from the time the "regular sacrifice" is abolished (that is, the midpoint of the seven years) and the "abomination is set up," here interpreted as the time just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ. The trampling of Israel will be ended with the defeat of the overcoming forces by Jesus Christ and his heavenly forces at the second coming of Christ. We will discuss this event in our next chapter.

With all the nations surrounding Israel that make up Gog's Alliance as well as the four nations subdued in the Revelation tribulation conquest, the question arises as to why it takes so long before Israel is completely destroyed. The forty-two months of trampling that Revelation 11:2 prophesies seems to be forty-one months too long! It seems Israel would be annihilated sooner and thereby necessitate a more rapid second coming of Jesus Christ to overcome Gog and his forces. Actually, Daniel 12:7's reference to the shattering of the "power of the holy people" could quite

possibly be referring, not to the Jews, but to a country that is protecting the Jews. This country would be the "power of the holy people" that is shattered, thereby bringing the end. When that country is shattered, then so will the holy people be shattered. Interpreting the phrase "power of the holy people" in the modern day could result in America being that "power of the holy people" in the tribulation period. This view interprets America as somehow holding the forces of the Antichrist/False Prophet at bay until America itself is shattered. Then comes the end.

Conclusion: Turkey will join Iran in its onslaught against Israel in the latter half of the seven-year period of tribulation, not the pretribulation conquest.

To Summarize

Here is what we have concluded regarding the pretribulation conflict prophesied by Daniel 11:36:

1. The "king" is al-Mahdi, the Antichrist/False Prophet. Shi'ah Islam is his religion, and Iran is his country.
2. The king of the South is Egypt. The king of the North is Babylon, located in modern-day Iraq. Egypt is defeated. The text tells us this specifically in Daniel 11:42–43. The implication is that Iraq is also, but this is not stated specifically. Many other nations are likewise defeated.
3. Edom, Moab, and the sons of Ammon are rescued. The sons of Ammon comprise modern-day Jordan. They are likely rescued by Israel; although, we cannot make this conclusion with any certainty, as the text is silent as to the reason of the rescue. See Daniel 11:41.
4. Al-Mahdi will locate his headquarters on the Gaza Strip.
5. We have previously reviewed Revelation 17 and concluded that Saudi Arabia would be defeated by a consortium of ten Muslim nations led by the Antichrist/False Prophet. Combining this earlier interpretation with the interpretation at present results in the following conclusion:

    - Saudi Arabia, the harlot, is defeated by al-Mahdi and his Alliance of ten Muslim nations (Rev. 17:12).
    - Egypt, the king of the South, is defeated by al-Mahdi (Dan. 11:40, 42).
    - Iraq (or Syria), the king of the North is defeated by al-Mahdi (Dan. 11:40).

- A third Muslim nation is defeated by al-Mahdi (Dan. 7:24), likely, Syria/Lebanon.

6. Other Muslim nations submit to al-Mahdi: namely, those nations of the Middle East other than Israel and Jordan. See Daniel 11:40. Those countries likely include Yemen, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and eastern African nations Somalia and Sudan.
7. Libya and Ethiopia "follow at his heels," meaning they will submit to this leader. See Daniel 11:43.

The remaining part of this chapter will offer modern-day evidence that Iran is a likely candidate to lead this pretribulation battle in fulfillment of Daniel 11:36; Daniel 7:25–26; and Revelation 17:12–13, 16–17.

Part 4—Iran in the Last Days

A Shi'ah Nation that Leads the Pretribulation Conquest

Our objective is to identify the nation named in Gog's Alliance that is also a Shi'ah Islam nation. We are looking for Shi'ah Islam because our earlier interpretation of Bible prophecies, i.e., Daniel 2 and 7 and Revelation 13 and 17, all pointed us to Shi'ah Islam. This nation will be the lead Muslim nation that will follow al-Mahdi's leadership in bringing the world under Islam.

Iran is the only Muslim country in Gog's Alliance with a 90 percent Shi'ah population. Iran also satisfies a requirement of Daniel 7:23–24 that we have not discussed, "different." Iran is *different*. In our earlier chapter, we interpreted Daniel 7:24 to refer to the Mahdi as a supernatural, demonic incarnation and, therefore, "different" from the other kings (who are human beings). We also stated that in prophetic scripture, horns refer to kings and/or the kingdoms they lead, interchangeably. Thus, in the same way that the Mahdi/Antichrist will be different, we should expect that the kingdom he leads will be different.

Iran is "different" from the other nations surrounding Israel, both those named in Ezekiel 38–39 and included in the Alliance and those omitted from the Alliance. There are six Middle East neighbors of Israel left out of Ezekiel 38–39. These six nations are all Arab nations. Iran is not Arab. Iran is Persian.

Consider this statement as reported by *The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)*, Inquiry and Analysis-No. 426, March 12, 2008. The statement is made by Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmad Abu Gheit in response to Iran's desire to renew relations with Egypt (Egypt is an Arab nation). It

seems that the Egyptian Minister prefers that "Arab problems … should be dealt with by Arabs," not by Persians:

> Iran is an influential power in the Gulf. For the last two or three years … it has been trying to involve itself in Arab problems so as to gain influence that will serve it in its struggle with the West. Thus, Egypt believes that Iran has a problem with the Arab world, and that its interference in [Arab] problems is detrimental to Arab interests. This is Egypt's position at this stage. … The Arab problems in the region should be dealt with by the Arabs, and not by other forces inside or outside the region … "Let me stress that there is no conflict between Egypt and Iran. Egypt recognizes Iran's value, and respects it as a religious [force] with a [distinguished] Islamic history. Egypt also appreciates Iran's influence in East Asia, in Afghanistan, in Pakistan and in the Gulf … [However], it would be inconceivable for Egypt to consent to [establish] full and normal relations with a country that reveres the man who assassinated [the late] Egyptian president [Anwar Sadat]. There is an Egyptian consensus [on this] …"[683]

I quote this statement from the Egyptian Minister only to demonstrate that in the Middle East, to be Arab is quite different than to be Persian. This difference matters in the Middle East! It also matters in Bible prophecy.

The Threat of Iran

We have tentatively identified Iran as the "different" Shi'ah Islam nation that will subdue Arab countries neighboring Israel in the last days. Is Iran able to accomplish such a feat? Does it have the military to accomplish such? Does it have the spiritual will to see such a feat through to the end? Consider this Senate Intelligence Report, which describes Iran's current missile inventory as "among the largest in the Middle East":

> One of the most disturbing aspects of the Iranian WMD ["weapons of mass destruction"] program is its determined effort to construct ballistic missiles that will enable Tehran to deliver conventional or, potentially, chemical, biological, or nuclear warheads against its neighbors in the region and beyond. Iran claimed last fall that its Shahab-3 missile can currently strike targets at distances up to 2,000 km (1,200 miles), including Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and southeastern Europe. It is believed that Iran's Shahab-4 will have a range of 4,000 km (2,400 miles), enabling Iran to strike Germany, Italy, and Moscow. The below map by the Congressional Research Service illustrates the estimated ranges of the ballistic missiles Iran is developing [See Map 12-3]: The U.S. Intelligence Community concluded in its November 2004 721 Report: "Iran's ballistic missile inventory is among the largest in the Middle East …"[684]

Quoting from the same Congressional Report, it seems that Iran and its President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have made public threats against both the United States and Israel, the sum of which pose a serious threat to national security and to the security of friends and allies of the United States:

> Iran poses a threat to the United States and its allies due to its sponsorship of terror, probable pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and support for the insurgency in Iraq. The profile of the Iranian threat has increased over the last year due to the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has made public threats against the United States and Israel, the continuation of Iranian nuclear weapons research, and the recent attacks by Hezbollah, an Iranian terrorist proxy, against Israel. Iran has provided Hezbollah with financial support and weapons, including the thousands of rockets Hezbollah fired against Israel in July and August 2006. Iran thus bears significant responsibility for the recent violence in Israel and Lebanon.[685]

Iran's nuclear program is but one of Iran's threats to the United States. Iran regularly provides "material support to groups that use violence to prevent Israeli-Arab peace." Additionally, Iran provides support to terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and Hezbollah.[686]

Iran is Aligned with Russia

We have interpreted Rosh as Russia. We have stated that Russia will align with a nation from the Middle East in its attack against Israel, and we have posited Iran to be that nation. If this interpretation is correct, then we must find evidence in the modern day that Iran and Russia are aligned with one another.

As reported by Internet Yahoo.news, Associated Press, the alignment of Russia and Iran is far from a secret relationship:

> "**Iranians in test run of first nuclear power plant**" Associated Press Writer Nasser Karimi—Wed Feb 25, 2009, 2:22 pm.
>
> BUSHEHR, Iran—Iranian and Russian engineers carried out a test-run of Iran's first nuclear power plant Wednesday, a major step toward starting up a facility that the U.S. once hoped to prevent because of fears over Tehran's nuclear ambitions. American opposition to the plant eased when Iran agreed in 2005 to return spent fuel to Russia to ensure it can't be reprocessed into plutonium. Russia is providing enriched uranium fuel for the plant in the southern port city of Bushehr. But the U.S. and its allies say there are deep questions about whether Iran intends to use other parts of its nuclear program to develop atomic weapons. Tehran denies that. The United States said Wednesday that the fuel deal with Russia shows Tehran

> does not need the most controversial part of its nuclear program—facilities to produce its own enriched uranium …[687]

From a 2006 report by Lionel Beehner, Council of Foreign Relations, on Iranian Russian relations:

> **Russia, Iran: Brothers in Arms**. The burgeoning partnership between Iran and Russia threatens to unravel UN efforts to squeeze Tehran to forego its nuclear ambitions. A veto-wielding member of the Security Council, Russia has thus far resisted efforts to punish the Iranians for forging ahead with their enrichment activities and ignoring a raft of UN resolutions. Of course, Moscow is motivated by fears of losing lucrative business opportunities, not to mention an important ally in the region. Bilateral trade eclipsed $2 billion in 2005, and as this new Backgrounder explains, Russia now supplies the bulk of Iran's conventional arms. That includes a proposed air-defense system that would give Iran a credible deterrent against any American or Israeli move to strike its nuclear installations. Russia also built a light-water nuclear power plant at Bushehr, an $8 billion project set to go online as early as next year (GlobalSecurity.org).[688]

Conclusion: I could quote report after report. The bottom line? Iran is a significant military threat in the Middle East and, therefore, the entire world. As a Russian-supplied Middle East nation and as an emerging nuclear armed nation, it is a likely candidate in the modern time to fulfill our interpretation of last days Bible prophecy.

Iran's Public Statements Against Israel

It is doubtful that any of our readers will wonder if Iran is at enmity with Israel, a biblical characteristic that clearly must be satisfied. However, so as not to minimize the obvious, we have included a few quotes to document what most of us already know.

From CRS Report to Congress #RL32048 describing Iran's current president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and other Iranian leaders of the past, we find a statement clearly indicative of Iran's enmity to Israel:

> Iran's support for Palestinian militant groups has long concerned U.S. administrations, particularly since doing so gives Tehran an opportunity to try to obstruct Israeli-Palestinian peace prospects. … However, other Iranian leaders have made similar statements in the past. In the 1990s, Khamene'i called Israel a "cancerous tumor" and made other statements suggesting that he seeks Israel's destruction. In December 2001, Rafsanjani said that it would take only one Iranian nuclear bomb to destroy Israel,

whereas a similar strike against Iran by Israel would have far less impact because Iran's population is large.[689]

Iran's president at the time of this writing, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has been equally public of his enmity towards Israel. The same Report to Congress states that Ahmadinejad has inflamed world opinion with several anti-Israel statements:

- On October 26, 2005, he stated at a Tehran conference entitled "A World Without Zionism" that "Israel should be wiped off the map" and that "anybody who recognizes Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nations' fury." A U.N. Security Council statement and Senate and House resolutions (H.Res. 523 and S.Res. 292), passed in their respective chambers, condemned the statement.
- On December 9, 2005, and then again on December 14, 2005, and May 28, 2006, he questioned the veracity of the Holocaust. In the CRS-5 December 14 case, he called it a "myth"—and stated that Europe should create a Jewish state in Europe, not in the Middle East.
- On January 1, 2006, Ahmadinejad said that the European countries created Israel after World War II to continue the process of ridding the European continent of Jews.
- On April 14, 2006, he said Israel is "heading toward annihilation."[690]

Other accounts say Ahmadinejad believes his mission is to prepare for the return of the twelfth "Hidden" Imam, whose return from occultation would, according to Twelver Shiite doctrine, be accompanied by the establishment of Islam as the global religion.[691]

A Very Important Prophecy About Iran

Unlike the six Arab nations that border Israel, Iran is *not prophesied* to be at enmity with Israel based on passages such as Psalm 83 or Numbers 24 (which apply to the sons of Ishmael, of which Iran is not).[692] Neither is Iran "to the north" of Israel and thereby referenced in prophecy as a natural enemy of Israel. If we look at our previous map of the six nations neighboring Israel, Iran is located due east of Israel, not north of Israel.

The question we must answer is whether or not the Bible prophesies of a nation *from the east* of Israel that will be at enmity with Israel in the last days? If there is no such prophecy, then it is irrelevant how capable and likely Iran may be in the modern day to defeat the six neighboring nations to Israel.

There are three separate Bible prophecies that make Iran very relevant in our day, all of which name a country "from the east": Isaiah 41:2; 46:11; Revelation 16:12. In each of the three prophecies, God initiates the nation "from the east" into battle. This factor is also present in Ezekiel 38:16. Each of the prophecies include specific information identifying the geographical location of the nation God will direct. It is from the east. Iran is the only nation included in Gog's Alliance that is from the east of Jerusalem.

What about Iraq? First, Iraq is not included in the list of five nations specifically included in Gog's Alliance in Ezekiel 38–39; and, unless the nation is included in this list of nations, it should not be considered as a candidate for this last days conflict against Israel. Even if Iraq were included in Ezekiel 38–39, it is not from the east. Iraq is the location of ancient Babylon. Whenever the Bible refers to "Babylon," it always uses the phrase "from the north" (see Ezek. 1:4; 26:7). Therefore, Iraq is eliminated biblically since it is not included in Ezekiel 38–39 and is also not "from the east."

Let me say again: Iran is the only nation in Gog's Alliance that is uniquely located east of Israel. Looking at Revelation 16:12–16 closely, we see the addition of specifics very relevant to our interpretation. The text states that the way will be prepared for the kings "from the east" (see Rev. 16:12), who will join the "kings of the whole world" (see Rev. 16:14) and accompany the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet in the war of the great day of God, the Almighty (see Rev. 16:16).The Dragon is Satan (Rev. 12:9). We have interpreted the Beast to be Allah (see Rev. 13:4). We have interpreted the False Prophet (see Rev. 13:11–13) to be the coming Antichrist, Shi'ah Islam's al-Mahdi, who will rise in the last days. We have interpreted Gog to be a human being, a leader of a superpower nation at enmity with Israel.

Revelation 16:12 tells us that the "water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east." We must interpret this phrase metaphorically, not literally. In modern times, the presence of water in the Euphrates River does not limit a nation's army from crossing the Euphrates. The text is telling us that in the last days, something will happen that will allow the kings from the east to cross barriers otherwise present so as to initiate Armageddon. Whatever the barriers are, their removal will cause an advantage to be realized by the kings from the east. Otherwise, the phrase "that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east" would have no relevance or meaning. The ultimate purpose? Iran will be used by God to gather the nations of the world for Armageddon, and in the process, God will execute His judgment against the nations of Gog's Alliance and the world.[693] The opposing army in this battle will be the forces of God that are led by Jesus Christ (see Rev. 19:11–21).

Conclusion: Iran is the nation from the east that will follow al-Mahdi's lead in the pretribulation conquest as well as in Gog's Alliance at the close of the tribulation period.

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 13	
Point 1	Gog is a specific human being in the last days, who will lead an Alliance of nations against Israel.
Point 2	Gog is not the Antichrist.
Point 3	The battle(s) of Ezekiel 38–39 is not the same battle as described in Revelation 20:8, when Satan is released following his 1,000-year prison term.
Point 4	The battle(s) of Ezekiel 38–39 culminate in the Battle of Armageddon, described in Revelation 16:12–16 and 19:11–21.
Point 5	After the battles of Ezekiel 38–39 and Armageddon, Israel repents of the sin of unbelief in Jesus and thereby receives salvation by the grace of God. This occurs in conjunction with the second coming of Jesus Christ.
Point 6	The nations of Ezekiel 38–39 are as follows: Rosh is Russia, from the remote north. Meshech and Tubal are modern-day countries of the Russian Federation. Gomer is Anatolia (Turkey). Beth-Togarmah is modern-day Armenia. Other named members of Gog's Alliance are shown on the included map.
Point 7	The "many peoples" of Ezekiel 38–39 that join Gog against Israel include six nations neighboring Israel that have been subdued by a named member of Gog's Alliance. The six nations that have been subdued are: Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. The nations are subdued by a Shi'ah nation. This conflict occurs before the tribulation period begins and results in a worldwide economic crisis that puts the world in a position whereby an agreement (the Dhimma contract) is entered into with the conquering nation, Iran.
Point 8	Iran is the Shi'ah nation included in Gog's Alliance that launches the pretribulation conquest. Iran is "from the east." It will be led by al-Mahdi.

Chapter 14



The Reaping

Daniel 12:1: Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time.

Introduction—The Coming Judgment of Humanity

THE BIBLE PROPHESIES of a coming reaping for humanity for individual and corporate sin. In this Reaping (this judgment will be referred to in this chapter as the "Reaping" with an uppercase "R"), humanity will bear the consequences of its many choices of sin and rebellion against God. Consider the following New Testament passage. Please be sure to notice in whose hand the sickle is held:

> Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles. (Rev. 14:14–15, 20)

The Reaper is the Only Begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, and His angels. Because of humanity's sins against God, divine wrath has been stored up, and a judgment is due humanity in the last of this age. Through this Reaping, the world and the covenant people of Israel will be made ready for the return

of Jesus, the establishment of His 1,000-year kingdom reign on earth (the millennial reign of Christ—Rev. 20:6), and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.

In this chapter, we will interpret the tribulation period, the period often interpreted by Bible scholars as the seven years of tribulation immediately preceding the second coming of Christ. As we will see, this period is the third part of three dependent but separate parts of the Reaping. This seven-year period is oftentimes referred to as the "Seventieth Week," based on a reading of Daniel 9:24–27 (Daniel 9:24 decrees a total period of judgment to be seventy weeks, and Daniel 9:25–26 describe sixty-nine weeks to have been fulfilled, leaving the last week of years to be fulfilled, i.e., the Seventieth Week). Throughout this chapter, we will use the terms "tribulation period," "Seventieth Week," and "Reaping" all to refer to the same period, the seven years preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ. This chapter will also interpret the rapture, that time when believers in Jesus are carried away to join Jesus in heaven. As we will see, the rapture and the second coming of Jesus Christ are two separate events.

The Reaping—Introduction

Daniel 9:24–27 describes three separate and dependent periods of judgment decreed by God for humanity to bear the consequences of its sins and bring in the millennial kingdom of Christ. In the discussion following, we will refer to each of these three dependent periods as a separate period of one Reaping. As we will see, the total length of judgment decreed by God is seventy "weeks of years," i.e., 490 years. At the end of the 490 years, God will "bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place" (Dan. 9:24). The effect, then, of the Reaping is to purify the world, open the hearts of humanity for the finished work of Christ, and enable the millennial reign of Christ (see Rev. 20:4) to be brought in. Through the Reaping, the Word is fulfilled: "that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10–11).

As one might expect, the 490 years are not consecutive years. Humanity's sins are not limited to one nation or people group or even to one or more generations of humanity's existence. Rather, humanity's sinfulness extends over all nations, over all peoples, and over all time periods of human existence. The three dependent (but separate) periods of Reaping, likewise, extend over multiple generations of humanity, and each is separated by many generations.

The Holiness of God Demands a Response to Sin

So devastating is the Seventieth Week that Daniel 12:1 describes it as "a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time." Matthew 24:21 states, "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will."

How can a loving God allow such a time for humanity?

We fail to grasp the depth and depravity of our own sin; nor do we grasp the purity of God and His holiness. God's holiness requires a consequence for the sin that we have individually chosen. Otherwise, right and wrong have no meaning, and divine righteousness is without substance.

The plight of sinful humanity before this Holy God is pictured by the prophet Isaiah, who finds himself in quite a dilemma as he views the Lord God Almighty on His throne. Isaiah's response can best be summed up in his own words: "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips … for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isa. 6:5). Oh, that we knew how desperately we are in need of a Savior (see Rom. 3:23; 6:23)! Our sin has ruined us, and we need to be in the same state of mourning that Isaiah was in. Merciful God then provides the remedy for Isaiah that grants him safety in the presence of Holy God: Isaiah's lips are purified by a touch from a burning coal. Isaiah's sin is forgiven (see 6:7).

In the same way that God provided the means for Isaiah's sin to be forgiven, so also He has provided for our sins to be forgiven. In the process, the coming "Indignation" of God is placed upon the back of His Son:

> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. (Rom. 5:8–9)

Christ became the object of God's wrath. By God's plan, Christ died on a cross over 2,000 years ago to save us from the coming wrath of God, to save us from reaping what we have sown (see Gal. 6:7–8). God did so at a very great cost—the cost of His Only Son, the Incarnate God. When humanity rejects Jesus Christ, they reject the provision of God, not only for eternal life but also from the coming wrath of God. The Indignation of God, in one sense, accomplishes a purification of sins for humanity. The trauma of the Seventieth Week concludes with the second coming of Christ. The world looks upon the one who was crucified, but this time, He comes visibly from the heavens (see Matt. 24:29–30).

Here is how Scripture describes God's perspective on humanity's sin against Him. Ezekiel 22:29, 31 says, "'The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery, and they have wronged the poor and needy

and have oppressed the sojourner without justice. … Thus I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; their way I have brought upon their heads,' declares the Lord GOD."

God's response to human sin is described as His "indignation," which is "poured out on them." Other passages describe God's response to humanity's sin in like manner: Isaiah 26:20–21; Obadiah 1:15–16; Zephaniah 3:8; 34:1–2; John 3:17–18.

How Long Will the Reaping Require?

Daniel 9:24 describes three periods of Reaping, which have been calculated for humanity's sins and the *bringing in* of the kingdom of Christ. Bible scholars have interpreted this period to be "seventy weeks of years."

How Long Is Seventy Weeks of Years?

Daniel 9:24 describes the total period of Reaping to be seventy weeks of years. Literally, seventy weeks is 490 days (70 x 7 days in a week). Is the seventy weeks (490 days) literal or metaphorical? If literal, the 490 days would be over shortly after the angel transmitted the prophecy to Daniel in the sixth century B.C.! Hardly the correct interpretation. If metaphorical, then one day in a week is symbolic of some other period of time. Also, our method of interpretation used in this writing has been to interpret prophetic texts metaphorically first and then to find the literal truth behind the metaphor. An Old Testament passage helps us to interpret the period best represented by a day in the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24:

> You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years. (Lev. 25:8)

"Seven sabbaths of years" is defined for us by Leviticus 25:8 as: "seven times seven years … namely, forty-nine years."[694] Therefore, each day in a week is symbolic of one year, and one week symbolizes seven years (not seven days). Similarly, in Ezekiel 4:4–6, the prophet Ezekiel lay prone for 430 days, each day representing one year of the people's rebellion against God. Using this same definition in Daniel 9:24 brings us to a total length of time of 490 years (70 times 7 weeks, with each day symbolizing one year). This period must be divided into three separate but dependent periods:

> So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks

> and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing. … And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering. (Dan. 9:25–27)

Notice the three periods: "seven weeks" (v 9:25), "sixty-two weeks" (v 9:25), and "one week" (v 9:27), the sum of which is seventy weeks (7, plus 62, plus 1). Also, notice that the Seventieth Week is separated by an indefinite period of time from the preceding sixty-nine weeks (7 plus 62) by the insertion of the phrase "after the sixty-two weeks" (9:26). The Seventieth Week could come immediately after the sixty-ninth week, or it could be delayed indefinitely until the prophecies are fulfilled for this last week.

We can summarize the three periods as below:

Daniel 9:24–27			
v 24	Total Reaping Period (all 3 periods)	70 x 7 years =	490 years
Divided into Three Non-consecutive Periods of Reaping over a Span of Centuries:			
v 25	1st period—the rebuilding of Jerusalem	7 x 7 years =	49 years
v 25	2nd period—until Messiah begins	62 x 7 years =	434 years
v 27	3rd period—the time of the desolater	1 x 7 years =	7 years

The dating of the periods could be as follows:

- First Period (forty-nine years): Decree issued in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (457–56 B.C.; the mission of Ezra; compare Ezra 7:8ff), confirmed and extended to the twentieth year of the same king (compare Neh. 2:1ff; 6:15–16), around 445 B.C.[695]
- Second Period (434 years): The 483 years (49 + 434) extend from 457 B.C., the date of Artaxerxes decree, through 27–28 A.D. (457–483), when Christ's public ministry began.
- Third Period (seven years): The last seven-year period, i.e., the Seventieth Week, a future period that will end just before the return of Christ.

There are many different views on the dating of the three periods above. None of the views are able to date the first period without questions. We cannot let the unanswered questions of the first period keep us from pressing forward on the remaining two periods. Unanswered questions on these two later periods are less problematic. This writing is primarily concerned with the third period, the Seventieth Week. This is the only period that is future, and the one that is most relevant to the modern day.

The Reaping—To Whom Does It Apply?

Daniel 9:24 states the prophecy is decreed "for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression." Initially, one might conclude that "your people" refers solely to the Jewish people, because they are literally Daniel's "people" at the time of the prophecy. The context of the passage seems to further support this initial conclusion as well. The verses immediately preceding the prophecy include Daniel's specific request of God to hasten the return of Israel to Jerusalem from their seventy years of exile in Babylon (see Dan. 9:2, 17–19; Jer. 25:11). However, God's response to Daniel's prayer goes far beyond Daniel's request. Daniel's specific request is answered in the first period of Reaping, i.e., the first period of forty-nine years (seven sevens), when the people of Israel were released from exile in the first year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia (539 B.C.; Ezra 1:1). However, the work to rebuild the temple and walls of the city was stopped by Israel's disgruntled neighbors (see Ezra 4:1–4) sometime after the Israelites' return from exile. The walls remained uncompleted for many years.

The next time the walls became a focus was in the time of Nehemiah, in the reign of Artaxerxes, some 100 years later (see Neh. 1:3). In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, King of Persia (see Neh. 2:1), around 445 B.C., Nehemiah left Babylon to successfully lead the efforts to rebuild the walls of the city.[696] This appears to be the beginning date for counting the seven sevens of the first period. It was under the leadership of Nehemiah that the walls were successfully rebuilt and completed (see Neh. 6:15).[697]

The second period of Reaping requires an additional "sixty-two sevens" (434 years) to be added to the "seven sevens" (forty-nine years) to arrive at the time of Messiah the Prince (see Dan. 9:25). Messiah the Prince is a reference to the Only Begotten, the Savior of the world, Jesus (see Isa. 53), who was born, crucified, and rose from the grave on the third day. This second period of Reaping did not satisfy the wrath of God for the Jews. The Jews rejected Jesus in the first century. Their rejection continues to the present day, so they cannot have satisfied the wrath of God in the second period of Reaping, and their transgression cannot be finished.[698] Gentiles received

Jesus as Savior beginning in the first century. To these, the second period of Reaping brought in the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy, including forgiveness of sins. To Christians, the second period of Reaping has begun to have been satisfied. "Your people" must include Christians, since fulfillment occurred for the Christians in the first century.

Further, if this view is correct, then we should not expect to see Christians subject to the wrath of God during the Seventieth Week. That is, the rapture will take place sometime prior to the "pouring out of the wrath of God" in the Seventieth Week. As we will see, this is precisely the case. Christians will be raptured at the midpoint of the seven years.

The Reaping Will Allow Six Separate Spiritual Events to Occur

Daniel 9:24 provides six specific spiritual events that occur. Here are the six events. For those interested in more detail for the six, please see the endnotes for each.

1. To finish the transgression.[699]
2. To make an end of sin.
3. To make atonement for iniquity.[700]
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness.[701]
5. To seal up vision and prophecy.[702]
6. To anoint the most holy place.[703]

The first three spiritual events deal with sin and what God will do to finish it. The last three deal with what will happen once the first three have been completed. We might describe the first three as the negative events of the seventy weeks and the last three as the positive events of the seventy weeks.

Christians might initially conclude that the six events have been fulfilled already by the coming of Jesus Christ, for Christ's death on the cross certainly accomplishes the first three, and the first three allow the last three to be brought in. But this view cannot be adequately supported because the prophecy itself is not finished with the coming of Jesus in the first century. Daniel 9:26 prophesies that after Messiah is "cut off and [has] nothing … the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary." If "sin, transgression, and iniquity" were "finished" within the context of this prophecy by Messiah Jesus, then no part of the seventy weeks of judgment would remain following His coming for Christians. That is, Jesus, having been crucified and raised on the third day, would have satisfied the wrath of God, and nothing more would be required. Such is not the case, for Satan has not been bound and will not be until the Seventieth Week has been finished.

The People of the Prince Who is to Come, the Destruction of the City and the Sanctuary

Daniel 9:26 has a very important prophecy that we already have interpreted in our chapter on the Revived Roman Empire. We will not discuss this part of Daniel 9:26 again. The "people of the prince who is to come" are the Muslims; the destruction of the "city" and the "sanctuary" are the destruction of Constantinople and the Hagia Sophia Cathedral on May 29, 1453, by the Muslims under Sultan Mehmet II (not the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. by the Romans). The parenthesis of time between the sixty-ninth week and the Seventieth Week begins with the destruction of Constantinople, May 29, 1453. It continues through the present day as we await the beginning of the Seventieth Week.

Part 2—Two Periods of Wrath during the 70th Week

We have laid the foundation to understanding the coming tribulation to be a period of seven years just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ. Our initial view is based on Daniel 9:24–27. But this is not the only passage that the Bible gives to make this interpretation. There are no less than three other passages that do likewise; however, these other passages refer to periods of three-and-a-half years rather than one period of seven. Since Daniel 9:27 refers to a breaking of the one week of seven years in the middle, i.e., three-and-a-half years, all of these passages must be considered in determining the significance of seven years in the last days.

- Daniel 9:27: And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering.
- Revelation 13:5–7: There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.
- Daniel 7:25: He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.
- Daniel 12:9, 11: He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days."

Daniel 9:27's "one week" is the seven years that are the Seventieth Week, i.e., the tribulation period. The text includes a mid-week event referred to as: "he will put a stop to sacrifice" in the "middle of the week." Revelation 13:5 prophesies that the first beast will be granted authority for forty-two months. Forty-two months are three-and-a-half years. Daniel 7:25 prophesies of the other horn wearing down the saints for a "time, times, and half a time." This phrase is interpreted by many Bible scholars to be three-and-a-half years (time = 1 year; times = two years; ½ a time = ½ year).[704] Finally, Daniel 12:9 prophesies 1,290 days (three-and-a-half years, plus one month) until the abomination of desolation is set up. One month beyond the three-and-a-half years does not change the importance of this recurring time period of three-and-a-half years in the end of days. The Bible gives significance to this period of time. Why? Because the Seventieth Week is divided into two equal periods of three-and-a-half years each.

Metaphoric or Literal Interpretation of the three-and-a-half years

We are interpreting this time period using a literal reading of the text rather than a metaphoric reading. We have been using a model that interprets prophetic texts first as metaphor and then finds literal meaning behind the metaphor. We have done this with all of the prophecies except for Ezekiel 38–39. Ezekiel 38–39 was a prophetic text, but without the symbolic identifiers found in texts such as Revelation or Daniel; and so we departed from our model of interpretation with valid reason.

Why interpret time periods literally now? My response is to offer the "antichrist type" provided by Antiochus Epiphanes IV's desecration of the Temple (167 B.C.) and the ceasing of the worship of Jews for approximately three-and-a-half years thereafter until his death in 164 B.C. Antiochus' sacrilege is mentioned in both Old and New Testament prophecies (Dan. 8:9–12; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15). It stands as the abomination desolation of Jewish history that the future Antichrist/False Prophet will duplicate, according to Daniel 9:27. This was a three-and-a-half year period in the second century B.C. that was fulfilled *literally* based on the Bible's prophecies. This period is the same period mentioned in the prophetic texts above. When we look at the book of Revelation, a recurring number appears, seven. This number, biblically, is very often interpreted literally. *Easton's Bible Dictionary* describes it, in part, as follows:

> This number occurs frequently in Scripture … On the seventh day God rested, and hallowed it (Gen. 2:2, 3). The division of time into weeks of seven

> days each accounts for many instances of the occurrence of this number. This number has been called the symbol of perfection, and also the symbol of rest … the seven churches, seven spirits, seven stars, seven seals, seven vials, and many others, sufficiently prove the importance of this sacred number [see Lev. 25:4; 1 Sam. 2:5; Ps. 12:6; Ps. 79:12; Prov. 26:16; Isa. 4:1; Matt. 18:21, 22; Luke 17:4]. The feast of Passover (Exod. 12:15, 16), the feast of Weeks (Deut. 16:9), of Tabernacles (Deut. 13:15), and the Jubilee (Lev. 25:8), were all ordered by seven.[705]

The point is that the number seven (or any number) is used in the Bible as a literal number. There are seven literal days in a week, the Jews were in exile for seventy literal years in Babylon, and they wandered in the wilderness for forty literal years. The literal number might also symbolize another meaning, e.g., divine perfection, completion, and rest, etc., but this does not exclude a literal interpretation first.

Let us suppose, however, that we should use a metaphoric interpretation rather than a literal interpretation? What difference would it make in our conclusions? Very little. The point is that the Seventieth Week that is the tribulation period, be it seven years or something longer (or shorter), will be a period of tribulation unlike anything humanity has ever experienced. Whatever the length of time, this period will be traumatic. Further, whatever the length of the tribulation, be it seven years or some other length of time, halfway through this tribulation period, a breach will occur. The mid-point of the week will be reckoned by the stopping of all "sacrifice and grain offering" (Dan. 9:27), as well as the granting of authority to the first beast (see Rev. 13:5) and the wearing down of the saints (see Dan. 7:25). This is the real point, not whether or not the mid-week is three-and-a-half years or twelve-and-a-half years. In the middle of the tribulation, an event of significance will distinguish time and history.

The "Rescue" of Daniel 12:1

The closing phrase of Daniel 12:1 describes a rescue that will take place during the tribulation of all those found "written in the book." This rescue is commonly referred to as the "rapture."[706] "Rapture" is translated from the Greek *harpazo* (see 1 Thess. 4:17), meaning to be "carried away" or "caught up," and has come to mean the secret return of Christ for His followers to remove them from the difficulties of the tribulation Period. A key passage supporting this view is 1 Thessalonians 4:15–18 (emphasis added):

> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen

> asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be *caught up* together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thess. 4:15–18)

Other passages that support a rapture of the saints include Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:37, 40–42; and John 14:1–3.

When Will Christians Be "Rescued"?

There are entire books written on the "when" of the rapture, i.e., pre-, mid-, or post-tribulation rapture. It is not the purpose of this writing to review the merits of these three views nor the many scholarly variations of each. To the extent necessary to support a midtribulation rapture, these issues will be briefly discussed. Interested readers are directed to one excellent source for a complete discussion of this event: *Three Views on the Rapture, Pre-, Mid-, or Post-Tribulation?,* Stanley N. Gundry, Editor, by Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and others.

The First Three-and-a-Half Years of the Tribulation Will Be Endured by Christians, and Some Will Be Martyred.

Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 13:7 both say that the saints will be overcome or worn down by the kingdom of the beast. Both of these passages are describing a yet-to-be-fulfilled event lasting three-and-a-half years. Daniel 7:25's war against the saints is followed by the court sitting for judgment, thereby prescribing the time of the "wearing down" of the saints, i.e., the last of the tribulation period (see Dan. 7:26–27). Revelation 13 is likewise an end time event because Revelation's primary theme and purpose is to alert the saints to the second coming of Jesus Christ and the events that will lead up to His return (see Rev. 1:1,7).

Compare Daniel 8:19; 9:26; and 8:24 with Revelation 13:7. They are all prophesying of the same time period—the Seventieth Week, the seven years of tribulation immediately preceding the return of Christ. All of these passages speak of believers in Jesus being martyred or overcome by the first or second beasts, Satan's agents, Allah and Al Mahdi, respectively.

The Wrath During the Tribulation Period

The Bible tells us that believers in Christ will not experience the wrath of God. Christ has already been subjected to the wrath of God on our behalf

(see Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). However, as stated, the Bible prophesies that believers in Christ will experience the wrath of Satan (see Rev. 12:17). So how do we interpret the seven-year tribulation period in the context of the wrath of God vs. the wrath of Satan?

Suppose the seven years of tribulation are divided into two periods of three-and-a-half years each: the first period being the time of the wrath of Satan (inflicted against Christians and the world) and the last period being the time of the wrath of God (inflicted against the unbelieving world, specifically, the beast and his followers)? That is, Christians are saved from the wrath of God, but not from the wrath of Satan.

Remember who the Reaper was in Revelation 14:14, in the beginning of the chapter? He was holding the sickle and wearing a golden crown. The text referred to Him as the "son of man." The Reaper was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. The wrath was the "wrath of God" (see Rev. 14:10, 19), and those who were being reaped were those "who worship the beast and his image" (14:9). They received a mark to demonstrate they had converted to the worship of the beast, Allah. The mark is the mark of the beast, 666 (see Rev. 13:16). It is the mark of Islam, the cloak under which Satan will wage his war in the last days. The mark 666 is not literal, but symbolic, identifying the individual as having converted to the religion of the beast, Allah.

Christians, however, do not convert to the religion of the first beast (see Rev. 13:8). They are not reaped by the sickle of God, because it is only those whose names have not been written in the Lamb's Book of Life who are reaped. Christians will not be on earth when the Reaper "gathers the clusters from the vine of the earth" (Rev. 14:18). Why? The first three-and-a-half years of the seven years are the years of the wrath of Satan, and the last three-and-a-half years are the years of the wrath of God. Christians are raptured between the two periods.[707] Thus, we are describing a pre-wrath, midtribulation rapture.

Biblical scholar Gleason Archer is my source for much of this view. In describing the seven-year period of tribulation, he distinguishes the wrath of God from the wrath of man/wrath of Satan. He states:

> Thus we see that chapters 8–19 [Revelation] relate to the terrible strokes of judgment by which the wrath of God is poured out upon man. These stand in clear contrast to the preceding chapters (6–7) [Revelation] which relate the period of the wrath of man against the loyal, Christ-confessing church … The sixth seal ushers in the final phase of the wrath of God upon the Antichrist and his realm.[708]

The Multitude of Revelation 7 that Comes out of the Tribulation

Revelation 7 supports a pre-wrath, midtribulation rapture. In this passage, the Apostle John is in heaven, having been brought there by an angel to see the things that must shortly take place (see Rev. 4:1). In the seventh chapter, John is shown two groups. The first group is 144,000 in number, and the second group is too numerous to count. The second group stands "before the throne and before the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9). They are physically present in the heavenly throne room (see Rev. 7:9) and are worshiping the Lamb. This great number is further described as from "every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues," all of whom are clothed in white robes, washed by the blood of the Lamb, and who had "come out of the great tribulation" (Rev. 7:9, 14). The second group is clearly made up of believers in Jesus.

The question we must address is: when did this group arrive in heaven? Are they believers who have died since the time of Christ and now gather in the heavenly throne room? Are they all martyrs, similar to the group of martyrs described "under the altar" in the preceding chapter? Or, are they the raptured saints who have just arrived in heaven immediately prior to the time of the wrath of God?

The timing of the scene in Revelation 7 is important. It occurs as a precursor to the beginning of the wrath of God, which is unleashed in the opening of the sixth seal in the preceding chapter. As Revelation 7 opens, John observes two groups. The second group is too numerous to count, and this group is already present in the heavenly throne room when his vision begins. The angel has just been instructed not to harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until the "bond-servants of our God are sealed on their foreheads" (see Rev. 7:3). This means that the sixth seal (in the preceding chapter), which begins the wrath of God is stopped, temporarily, until final preparations are made. Final preparations include the sealing of the bondservants and the rapture of the saints. The text tells us that the second group "are the ones who come out of the tribulation" (see Rev. 7:14), who are present and visible to John in the throne room (see Rev. 7:9). They have come "out of the great tribulation" (Rev. 7:14) so that the sixth seal, i.e., the wrath of God, can be opened to begin the time of the wrath of God. These are believers—their robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb (see Rev. 7:14), and they have been removed from the tribulation that is about to be unleashed on the world. That is, they are the raptured saints.

The Plight of the Jews in the Tribulation

There are two passages we must address to determine the plight of the Jews in the tribulation. The first is Revelation 7, which describes an interlude between the breaking of the sixth and the seventh seals. The seven seals are opened one at a time by Christ as the apostle John, present in heaven, observes the happenings of each seal as it is opened. With the breaking of the first seals, four horses usher forth, beginning with a white horse, followed by red, black, and ashen steads. Riders on each horse are representative of what the future bodes for humanity—the taking of peace and the onslaught of world wars and the related consequences to humanity. When the sixth seal is opened, humanity makes its first verbal expression of what is about to happen. Those on earth make this statement: "Hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6:16–17). The sixth seal ushers in the time of the wrath of God; but before the wrath is poured out, something must be done. Revelation 7:3: "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

The phrase "do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees" looks back to the immediately preceding sixth seal that was just opened. The sixth seal included natural disasters emanating from the heavens as stars fell to the earth and the sky was split apart (see Rev. 6:13–14). So terrible were the natural disasters that "kings of the earth and the great men … and the rich … hid themselves in the caves." This group then exclaims, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6:15–16).

The divine instruction to "not harm the earth …" until the bondservants were sealed "on their foreheads" (7:3) means that this special group is going to be protected by God from the terrible consequences of the sixth seal. The prophesied natural disaster was not to unleash its calamities until the bondservants were appropriately "marked," that is, sealed and protected. This protection is further described in Revelation 9:1–12, when the fifth trumpet is blown, which begins the unleashing of "locusts" from the bottomless pit.

Who is in the special group that is accorded protection from the wrath of God? The Scripture tells us. They are the 144,000, 12,000 each from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. They are not literally 144,000 people, but rather, they are the complete number of Jews that God has saved for Himself. They come through the tribulation, but they will not experience the consequences of the wrath of God. They represent the remnant of Jews that God has saved for himself and who are living in the midpoint and beyond of the seventieth

week of tribulation (see Isa. 11:11–16; Jer. 23:3). This is the same act of God that occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C. by the Babylonians. God marked those who would not be killed (see Ezek. 9:4–6). He kept for Himself a remnant who did not fall by the sword and saved them by scattering them to the nations and by taking them into exile, where they lived through the time of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem and then complete destruction in 586 B.C. (see Ezek. 6:8; 9:8). God saved the remnant in the sixth century. He will do so again at the close of this age.

At the time of the opening of the sixth seal, the remnant are not believers in Jesus. By the end of the Seventieth Week, i.e., the time of second coming of Christ, these will be believers in Jesus. In the meantime, they must be protected from the wrath of God, i.e., the plagues and disasters that are coming on unbelieving humanity during the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation. When the Seventieth Week is completed, the Jews (and unbelieving humanity that has been brought to the Lamb) will have brought in the six prophetic events of Daniel 9:24.

The remnant will experience the wrath of God, but they will not be harmed by it. They will be taken through the tribulation, and in the end, they will look upon the One whom they have pierced and will receive Him as their Savior (see Rev. 1:7). This is the remnant of Jews that will come to Christ in fulfillment of Romans 9:25; 11:25–29. This is the group that will ultimately be saved by God at the second coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the tribulation. We discussed this event in our previous chapter on Ezekiel 38–39. Another passage supports this conclusion. Revelation 11:1–2 describes the happenings to Israel in the tribulation:

> Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread underfoot the holy city for forty-two months."

The measuring rod that measures the temple of God and those who worship in it is a metaphor for those Jews who have faithfully honored and believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and are living during the last half of the tribulation Period. They are "measured," meaning they are "protected" from what is to come. Again, this is the same meaning as that present for sealing on the forehead of the 144,000 (see Rev. 7:3). The reason we can conclude that this group is the remnant (and not the body of Christ) is the phrase "those who worship in it" with reference to the temple and the altar. The temple and the altar (of sacrifice) is included as a metaphor

for the practice of Judaism, and the phrase "those who worship in it" is a metaphor for the true Jewish people.

Revelation 11:2 continues, "Leave out the court outside the temple … it has been given to the nations … for forty-two months." The text is telling us that other than those Jews who will convert to Christ upon His return, i.e., the remnant, the Jewish people are given over to the first beast, Allah. The city, Jerusalem, will be occupied, i.e., tread down, during the last half of the tribulation. It will not be destroyed, but it will be tread down, occupied by the first beast (see Dan. 8:18–24; 12:7). At the return of Christ, Jerusalem will be liberated, based on our previous interpretation of Ezekiel 38–39.

What about Ezekiel 38–39?

As we saw in our last chapter, Ezekiel 38–39 prophesies of a victory by God over the forces of Gog, but the question is: when is the victory? Is it at the beginning of the last three-and-a-half years or the end of the last three-and-a-half years? Is the battle of Ezekiel 38–39 one battle or a series of battles? Is it possible that Ezekiel 38–39 begins with victory for Gog, only to be followed up (at the end of the three-and-a-half years) with the defeat of Gog?

It is the view of this writer that Ezekiel 38–39 prophesies of an initial "trampling" of Israel by Gog's forces. Then, following this victory, Gog is turned about, along with his forces, and brought out of Israel to be annihilated on the mountains of Israel. Ultimately, Israel is victorious, but only at the end of the tribulation at the second coming of Christ. The summoning of Gog and his Alliance is prophesied beginning in Ezekiel 38:8 (not in verse 1):

> After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations. … You will go up, you will come like a storm … and you will say, "I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely … and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of the world." … and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog. (Ezek. 38:8–9, 11, 12, 16)

Gog's Alliance is initially successful in its quest "to capture spoil" (38:12) from Israel. This initial success begins the forty-two months of the trampling of the holy city described in Revelation 11:2. However, the initial success is

limited in its duration. After three-and-a-half years, Gog's forces are turned about, with "hooks in your jaws," i.e., they are removed from the Holy City:

> And say, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army … Persia, Ethiopia and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you.'" (Ezek. 38:3–6)

The verses that begin Ezekiel 38 (1–6) are an introduction of the ultimate fulfillment of chapters 38–39. The phrase "put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out" is what God will do once Israel has been trampled by Gog's forces for forty-two months. Gog will be brought out of Israel, much like a fish is hooked and brought out of the sea. The two chapters are not to be interpreted as one battle that Gog is defeated in, but as a series of battles that initially begin with Gog's success against Israel. This success is not an annihilation of Israel but, rather, a success sufficient to induce Israel to negotiate the seven-year Treaty (Dhimma) of Daniel 9:27 discussed previously. Then, when the Treaty is broken in mid-point, the trampling prophesied by Revelation 11:2 begins. The "turn you about" does not occur until the end of the forty-two months, the time that Messiah Jesus returns to earth.

Conclusion

It is finished. The cross of Jesus Christ opened the doorway to eternal life for humanity. The wrath of God, having been satisfied by the death of the Only Begotten One, will need not be satisfied again for those in Christ. Those who have placed their faith in Christ will not experience the Reaping of God's wrath. It is finished for them. For those who have not received Christ by faith, they will be subject to the wrath of God. Humanity and the whole earth will experience the closing of one age and the beginning of another, much like humanity and the judgment of God in the time of Noah (see Matt. 24:37–38). The first three negative events of Daniel 9:24 will be fulfilled, thereby allowing the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the sealing up of vision and prophecy, and the anointing of the holy place (see Dan. 9:24). The millennial reign of Christ will begin as Satan will be bound from deceiving the nations to war, the church (which will then include Israel) will reign over the nations on earth (see Rev. 20:4–6), and the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem (see Ezek. 40–48); but that will need to wait for another book. It is finished. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Summary of Key Points in Chapter 14	
Point 1	Daniel 9:24–27 describes three separate and dependent periods of judgment decreed by God for humanity to bear the consequences of its sins and bring in the millennial kingdom of Christ. We refer to these three periods as one Reaping. The total length of time is seventy "weeks of years," that is, 490 years. The 490 years are not consecutive years. There is a break between the last seven years and the prior two periods of weeks of years. The last seven years are the tribulation period, the seven years preceding the return of Jesus Christ.
Point 2	The Reaping will allow for the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the sealing up of vision and prophecy, and the anointing of the holy place. These last three of six events prophesied by Daniel 9:24 will not take place until after the tribulation period.
Point 3	The tribulation period (the 70th week) will be broken into two periods of the wrath: the first three and one-half years are the time of the wrath of Satan, which has been poured out ever since the time of Jesus Christ, in fulfillment of Revelation 12:17. The last three and one-half years are the time of the wrath of God. Christians will be subject to the time of the wrath of Satan, but not to the time of the wrath of God. Christians will be rescued, i.e., raptured, in the middle of the seven-year tribulation period, prior to the wrath of God being poured out.
Point 4	In the middle of the tribulation period, the Dhimma Contract will be revoked, and all persons will be forced to submit to (and worship) Allah. This event will lead to the rapture of Christians who will not worship Allah.
Point 5	The Jews who make up the "remnant" will also not worship Allah. They will experience the tribulation, but upon the return of Christ at the close of the tribulation, they will repent of unbelief in Jesus and be saved. Jerusalem will likewise be liberated from the Antichrist and his Gog forces at this time.
Point 6	Gog and his forces will trample Israel for forty-two months, the last three and one-half years of the tribulation period. Then, upon the second coming of Jesus Christ, they will be removed and annihilated.

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8. It is not the purpose of this writing to present a theology of Satan. However, some introduction needs to be made of this writer's interpretation of Satan's role in Scripture, and specifically, in the last days. When I describe a continuous spiritual battle between God and Satan, I do not mean to propose that the forces of good and evil are somehow equal. God and Satan are not equal. God is all-powerful, all

knowing, and in control of all things (Acts 17:26; Job 12:23; Ps. 47:7–8; 66:7). Satan is not. Satan in the Hebrew language literally means to be or act as "accuser" (Job 1:6; Zech. 3:1–2) or as adversary (*Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greek Texts*). As accuser, Satan accuses humanity before God of their unrighteous acts. For example, Satan accuses the righteous man Job by telling God that Job's trust in God is related to his prosperity. Take away his prosperity and Job will curse God (Job 1:6ff). Satan does likewise for all humanity, as depicted in Revelation 12. There, Satan loses his voice as accuser and is thrown down from heaven at the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of humanity (Rev. 12:9). The Scripture says that Satan was overcome by the "power of the blood of the Lamb" and by the "word of their testimony" (Rev. 12:11), and in his being overcome, Satan loses his voice as accuser.

As adversary, Satan is God's chief demonic opponent (1 Chron. 21:1; Job 1:6 ff.; 2:1 ff.; Ps. 109:6; Zech. 3:1, 2). (See Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 448). He is the spiritual force that possesses and gains power only as he successfully deceives and tempts humanity not to follow God or to be reconciled to God through Christ. Satan functions as the Antichrist when he deceives humanity away from the Only Begotten Son (1 John 2:18–22), who is humanity's "Reconciler" to God (Isa. 53:6; 2 Cor. 5:18). Satan is the "father of lies" (John 8:44) because he takes the truth of God and reshapes and changes it so that it corrupts God's original intention.

As it relates to the last days, Satan, knowing his time is short (Rev. 12:12), opposes God by pouring out his wrath against the children of God, i.e., the true Israel, and those who hold to the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 12:17). God limits Satan's wrath by providing for the physical rapture of the saints, by protecting the true Jews during the tribulation (Rev. 7:3; 9:4; Rom. 9:27; 11:25), and by providing for the eternal security of believers during the tribulation (Rev. 13:7–8). Finally, in the last days, the hand of a sovereign God will even allow Satan's darkness to become darker when a person yields to it (2 Thess. 2:8).

9. Actually, the serpent is not identified as Satan until much later in the Bible. See Revelation 12:9, where the Dragon is identified as Satan.
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58. Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 14–28. Dallas : Word, Incorporated, 2002 (Word Biblical Commentary 33B)*
59. Ibid.
60. The "*Shahada*" or profession of faith is a statement that all persons must make in order to become a Muslim. The statement is, "*There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*." The creed is memorized in the Arabic language and must be more than intellectual assent. Utterance of the *shahada* before witnesses is sufficient for one to become a Muslim; however, faith must be combined with practice in daily life and faith. (See Malise Ruthven, *Islam in the World*, p. 60; Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner, *Unveiling Islam*, p. 122–123.)
61. The *Salat* or Prayer, a basic duty to be performed both individually and publicly, at least three times per day. (The Sunnah specifies five times per day.) Friday is the day of public prayer (along with feast days), and Muslims are required to participate in both private and public prayer. Muslims are required to pray in precisely the same physical movements and all at the same time. In the earliest days of Arabia, these uniform physical movements had the effect of disciplining the different clans and tribes and to communicate the greater purposes of the *Umma*

(community) over the clan. Prayer in the Mosque is elevated above private prayer.

62. The *Zakat* or Charity, or almsgiving, is the act of individual Muslims to purify themselves (and their property) of greed and selfishness by giving to the weak among them. Almsgiving allows the equitable distribution of goods to the entire community and is intended to bring unity and the betterment of society as a whole. Muslims are obligated to give 2.5 percent of their net incomes (income after paying personal expenses, family expenses, debt obligations, taxes, etc.) to charity. Muslims believe that everything is the property of Allah and that Allah rewards charity. The Qur'an states: "Those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and establish regular prayers and give Zakat, will have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve" (Surah 2:277).
63. For Islam, Ramadan is a month of annual fasting, from sunrise to sundown, to remember Muhammad's receipt of the Qur'an in 610 A.D. (practiced in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar). Fasting during Ramadan is a lifelong requirement for Muslims, based on Surah 2:183, "*O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may (learn) self-restraint*." Fasting includes abstention from sexual intercourse, eating, drinking, and smoking during the prescribed time of the day. Not all Muslims are permitted to fast, including women who are menstruating or pregnant, the elderly incapable of holding the fast, youths, and the sick. Failure to participate in the fast by other Muslims is an unpardonable sin, with potential eternal effects that are irreversible. One Muslim scholar reports, "Whoever breaks one day's fast of Ramadan without an authorized permission from Allah, he will never be able to redeem it (with another) day's fast, even if he fasts to eternity."
64. Hajj or Pilgrimage—The *Hajj* was not instituted in its final form until Muhammad's Farewell Pilgrimage of 632, when Muhammad made his farewell sermon. *Hajj* is obligatory for all Muslims who can make their way to Mecca. It is a once in a lifetime requirement; obligatory in the sense that if one has the income and health to make the journey, the journey is required.
65. John L. Esposito, "FAITH AND PRACTICE." In *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/book/islam-9780195157130/islam-9780195157130-div1-14 (accessed 30 March 2010).
66. Ibid.
67. See Ergun M Caner and Emir F Caner, *Unveiling Islam*, for the view that Allah and God are not the same god; and David W. Shenk, *Journeys*

of the Muslim Nation and the Christian Church, for the view that Allah and God are the same god.

68. John L. Esposito, Peter Von Sivers, Rüdiger Seesemann, John Schoeberlein, Dru C. Gladney, Bruce B. Lawrence, Kamran Bokhari, M. B. Hooker, Fred R. van der Mehden, P. S. Van Koningsveld, Jocelyne Cesari, Frederick Mathewson Denny and Kathleen M. Moore, "Islam," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World.* Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0383 (accessed 25 March 2010).
69. *Sharia Law for non-Muslims, Center for the Study of Political Islam*, p. 6.
70. Nuh Ha Mim Keller, *Reliance of the Traveller, A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law*, 822.
71. Timothy R. Furnish, *Holiest Wars, Islam's Mahdis, Their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden*, 18.
72. Daniel C. Peterson, "Eschatology," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0223 (accessed 06 April 2010).
73. "Ishmael." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, edited by John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1080 (accessed 11 April 2010).
74. "Hajj." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, edited by John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e771 (accessed 11 April 2010).
75 Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 15.
76. Robert Spencer, 33–34.
77. Ira M. Lapidus, 16.
78. The month of Ramadan is the ninth lunar month of the Islamic calendar; Ramadan also means "fasting." It is the fourth "pillar" of Islam. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramadan (accessed February 22, 2007).
79. Ibid., 41, quoting Bukhari, vol. 9, book 91, no. 6982.
80. Karen Armstrong, *Islam, A Short History*, 84–85.
81. Ibid., 4.
82. Ibid., 5.
83. Abdel Haleem, M. A. S., trans. "The Joint Forces." In The Qur'an. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/book/islam-9780192831934/islam-9780192831934-chapter 33:40 (accessed 18 March 2010).
84. Timothy Furnish, 18.
85. Ibid.

86. "Martyrdom." In *The Islamic World: Past and Present*, edited by John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t243/e209 (accessed 26 March 2010).
87. Lapidus, 33.
88. Lapidus, 24.
89. Lapidus, 24.
90. Andrew G. Bostom, *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism from Sacred Texts to Solemn History*, 73.
91. http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/2416.htm (accessed March 18, 2010).
92. *Washington Post,* October 19, 2007, section B, p. 1, by Jacqueline L. Salmon and Valerie Strauss, Washington Post Staff Writers.
93. Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner, *Christian Jihad*, 21.
94. "Just War" criteria have been developed by Christian theologians, beginning with Augustine of Hippo (354–430 A.D.). The just war criteria were developed by Augustine as a means of helping Christians with the ethics of war. Unlike pagans, Christians were to be guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ, including "love thy enemies." Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) also contributed greatly to the criteria, which sought to develop a blue print for Christians to engage in ethical warfare. This effort resulted in six broad requirements to be met for Christian warfare to be considered "just": 1) Just cause-force may be used to correct or limit a public evil, in self-defense, or to preempt an anticipated attack. 2) Legitimate authority—only a legitimately constituted public authority may declare war. 3) Right intention—the ultimate goal of the use of force is to reestablish peace. 4) Probability of success—force may not be used in a futile cause. 5) Proportionality of violence—the overall destruction expected from the use of force must be outweighed by the good to be achieved by the force. 6) Principle of last resort—force may only be used after all peaceful alternatives have been genuinely attempted and failed. For a thorough and complete discussion of "Just War Theory" as well as the concept of "Holy War," see *"Love Your Enemies, Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory"* by Lisa Sowle Cahill, Fortress Press, Minneapolis.
95. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_on_Terrorism, (accessed March 6, 2008).
96. http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm (accessed March 6, 2008).
97. The words are those of Osama bin Laden, who quotes from the Qur'an and from the hadith. Bruce Lawrence, Editor, *Messages to the World, the Statements of Osama bin Laden*, 187.
98. http://www.milestonedocuments.com/documents/full-text/urban-iis-call-to-crusade/ (accessed April 16, 2010).

99. Stephen Miller, 209.
100. Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22, An Exegetical Commentary*, 120. Garland Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on The Revelation*, 167.
101. Robert L Thomas, *Revelation 1–7, An Exegetical Commentary*, 447.
102. Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner, *Christian Jihad*, 39–45.
103. Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity,* Volume I, 15.
104. Gonzalez, 15.
105. Stearns, 168.
106. Gonzalez, 16.
107. Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*, 72.
108. Stearns, 265.
109. Leonard B. Glick, *Abraham's Heirs, Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe*, 26.
110. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decline_of_the_Roman_Empire (accessed March 26, 2008).
111. Gonzalez, 218.
112. Gonzalez, 268–270.
113. Gonzalez, 266.
114. Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner, *Christian Jihad*, 73.
115. Caner, 84–85.
116. http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/g7-cde1078.html (accessed April 16, 2010).
117. http://www.milestonedocuments.com/documents/full-text/urban-iis-call-to-crusade/ (accessed April 16, 2010).
118. Caner, 100.
119. Thomas F. Madden, *A Concise History of the Crusades*, 213.
120. Eric H. Cline, *Jerusalem Besieged,* 235.
121. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquisition (accessed April 6, 2008).
122. Caner, 163.
123. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felix_Manz (accessed April 24, 2010).
124. Glasse', 280.
125. Ibid., 281.
126. Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2nd Edition, 32.
127. Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, 50.
128. Peter Stearns etal., 287.
129. Bernard Lewis, 50.
130. Ira M. Lapidus, 31–33.
131. Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam, From jihad to Dhimmitude*, 43.
132. Paul Fregosi, *jihad*, 209.
133. Bat Ye'or, 54–55.

134. Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity*, 30.
135. Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam, From Jihad to Dhimmitude*, 39.
136. "Ahl al-Kitab." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*., edited by John L. Esposito. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e74 (accessed May 14, 2010).
137. Philip Jenkins, 22–23.
138. Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, 72–73.
139. Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam, From Jihad to Dhimmitude*, 40.
140. As quoted from Amir Taheri's book, *Holy Terror: Inside the World of Islamic Terrorism*, adler & adler, 1987, 241–3.
141. The verses from the Qur'an are taken from an article by Bassam Koury at http://www.answering-islam.org/Terrorism/peace-loving.html (accessed March 15, 2010). The article also includes an important discussion of the doctrine in Islam referred to as "abrogation." This doctrine holds that verses in the Qur'an that are later in chronology supersede or "abrogate" earlier verses in the Qur'an. Thus, *"Let there be no compulsion in religion,"* 2:256, the verse cited by many to support Islam as a religion of peace, has been "abrogated" by the verses listed.
142. Nuh Ha Mim Keller, 599.
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid.
145. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas (accessed January 4, 2009).
146. Ibid.
147. Ibid.
148. Ibid.
149. Ibid.
150. Stephen Miller, *Daniel*, 76.
151. John F. Walvoord, *Every Prophecy of the Bible*, 218.
152. Stephen Miller, *Daniel*, 96.
153. Miller, 93.
154. Miller, 95.
155. Miller, 97.
156. My first awareness of the fifth empire must be credited to "dadad" at http://www.prophecytalk.com/index.php?topic=4584.30 at April, 2008. Although I could not disagree more with Dadad's conclusions regarding the fifth empire as well as his reasoning for the empires of Daniel 7, he was the first to point this out to me.
157. I make the statement that "Rome is on the side of God" very loosely. So loosely that I must cite the definition that Christ gave when He was

asked what it meant to be against him. In Luke 9:49–50, we find Christ responding to one of His disciples: John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us." But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you."

158. *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Anaheim, CA: Foundation Publications, 1998), WORDsearch CROSS e-book.
159. Stephen D. Renn, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greek Texts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 2005), WORDsearch CROSS e-book.
160. Miller, 98.
161. *Time* magazine, March 5, 2007, 28f.
162. Stephen Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam*, 75.
163. "Caliph," in *The Islamic World: Past and Present.*, edited by John L. Esposito. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t243/e56 (accessed May 11, 2010).
164. Jafri, Syed Husain M., Joseph A. Kéchichian, Hamid Dabashi and Ahmad Moussalli. "Shi`I Islam." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0736 (accessed May 10, 2010).
165. Khaled M. G. Keshk, "Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e1069 (accessed May 13, 2010).
166. Malise Ruthven, 74.
167. "Hasan ibn Ali," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*, edited by John L. Esposito. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e816 (accessed May 13, 2010).
168. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasan_ibn_Ali#Shi.27a_view (accessed May 13, 2010).
169. Cyril Glasse', 33–34.
170. Malise Ruthven, 181, quoting from Gustav Thaiss in N. R. Kedie (ed.), Scholars, Saints and Sufis (Berkeley, 1972), 356.
171. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Karbala (accessed January 18, 2008).
172. Syed Husain M., Jafri, Joseph A. Kéchichian, Hamid Dabashi, and Ahmad Moussalli, "Shi`I Islam," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0736 (accessed May 10, 2010).
173. Ibid.

174. The term "Imam" has different meanings for Sunnis and Shi'ahs. For Sunnis, the term means a prayer leader and does not have significance in the history of a successor to Muhammad. For Shi'ahs, the term is likened to the Sunni term "caliph," but only for those Shi'ahs consider legitimate. See Cyril Glasse', *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, 366.
175. Ali had eight wives after Fatima and a total of thirty-six children, so the choice was not so much about Ali, alone, but rather about Ali and Fatima together, thereby insuring the true and closest bloodline to the Prophet. Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali#Descendants.
176. No Shiite sect accepts the first three caliphs as "rightly guided." They begin their first true Imam with Ali, cousin of the Prophet and husband of Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet.
177. S.H.M Jafri, *The Origins and Early Development of Shia Islam* (London: Longman, 1979), 281, as quoted at http://www.wm.edu/so/monitor/spring2001/paper2.htm#_edn27.
178. Syed Husain M. Jafri, Joseph A. Kéchichian, Hamid Dabashi, and Ahmad Moussalli, "Shi`I Islam," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0736 (accessed May 10, 2010).
179. "Shii Islam," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*, edited by John L. Esposito, *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2189 (accessed May 13, 2010).
180. Ibid.
181. "Zaydis," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*, edited by John L. Esposito, *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2567 (accessed May 13, 2010).
182. Ibid.
183. Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism, The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shiism*, 165.
184. Vali Nasr, *The Shiite Revival*, 52–53.
185. http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS21695.pdf, p. crs-6 (accessed October 25, 2010).
186. Stephen Schwarz, *The Two Faces of Islam*, 75.
187. Cyril Glasse', 369, and, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taqiyya, (accessed April 22, 2008). See also Walker, Paul E. "Taqiyyah," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0784 (accessed 29-Aug-2010).
188. Stephen R. Miller, 197.
189. Stephen R. Miller, 196.
190. John F. Walvoord, 232.
191. Stephen Miller, 201–203.

192. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ten_Promised_Paradise (accessed May 10, 2010). Quoting Al-Nawawi, *Tahdhib al-Asthma' wa al-Lughat* 2:181–182; Abu Nu'aym, *Hilya al-Awliya*' 1:62–72 #1; al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A`lam al-Nubala*' 1–2:467–508 #2.
193. "Companions," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.,* edited by John L. Esposito, *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e443 (accessed May 10, 2010).
194. Cyril Glasse', 87.
195. Hawting, G. R., "Rightly Guided Caliphs," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0687 (accessed May 10, 2010).
196. Young, 147; Miller, 201; Jerome, 77.
197. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_the_Great#Hostility (accessed May 7, 2008).
198. Furnish, 4.
199. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Husayn_ibn_Ali (accessed May 10, 2010).
200. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasan_ibn_Ali#Timeline (accessed May 10, 2010).
201. Sachedina, 18–20.
202. Miller, 96, and footnote 75 and 76.
203. "Ishmael," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*, edited by John L. Esposito, *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1080 (accessed May 10, 2010). See also Cyril Glasse', 193.
204. Glasse, 193.
205. According to the website of the Saudi Arabia Information Resource at September 28, 2006 (www.saudinf.com/MAIN/c541b.htm), the national flag of Saudi Arabia is green in color and inscribed in Arabic on the flag in its center is the "Article of Faith," "There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is Allah's Messenger"; below the Article is a drawn sword.
206. Khalid Yahya Blankinship, "Sword Verses," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0979 (accessed May 10, 2010).
207. The Middle East Quarterly, Spring 2005, Volume XII: Number 2, Beheadings in the Name of Islam, by Dr. Timothy R. Furnish, available at www.meforum.org/article/713 (accessed May 15, 2010).
208. The Middle East Quarterly, Spring 2005, Volume XII: Number 2, *Beheadings in the Name of Islam*, by Dr. Timothy R. Furnish, www.meforum.org/article/713 (accessed May 9, 2007)
209. http://al-sunnah.com/sword.htm and www.jihadwatch.org/dhimmiwatch/archives/001932.php.

210. Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Christianity Under Islam*, *From Jihad to Dhimmitude*, footnote 9, page 39, and the references therein.
211. Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam, From Jihad to Dhimmitude*, 39.
212. Bruce Lawrence, editor, *Messages to the World, The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, 185.
213. Sachedina, 174.
214. The Middle East Quarterly, Spring 2005, Volume XII: Number 2, Beheadings in the Name of Islam, by Dr. Timothy R. Furnish, available at www.meforum.org/article/713 (accessed May 15, 2010).
215. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_the_Great#Legacy_and_division_of_the_empire (accessed August 8, 2008).
216. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romulus_Augustus (accessed May 15, 2010).
217. Gonzalez, 218.
218. Peter N. Stearns, *World Civilizations, The Global Experience, Volume 1*, 355–357.
219. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sasanids (accessed May 12, 2008).
220. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parthia (accessed May 12, 2008).
221. New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (Anaheim, CA: Foundation Publications, 1998), WORDsearch CROSS e-book.
222. Ibid.
223. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/07/AR2008050703587_pf.html (accessed May 10, 2008).
224. Matthew George Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary: And Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1897), WORDsearch CROSS e-book
225. Glasse', 99.
226. It is quite possible that this prophecy has already been fulfilled, as the Muslim's begin the dating of their own calendar when Muhammad made his historic emigration from Mecca to Medina ("Hijra") on July 16, 622. The Muslim calendar was instituted by Caliph Umar in the year 637, sixteen years after Muhammad's emigration to Mecca (Glasse', 83). The Muslim calendar is cited by the number of years followed by the letters "AH," referencing the initials of the Latin anno Hegirae (in the year of the Hijra). Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_calendar at February 23, 2007.
227. Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, 307.
228. Abdel Haleem, M. A. S., trans, "Light," in *The Qur'an*, *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/

article/book/islam-9780192831934/islam-9780192831934-chapter-24?astart=31&asize=20 (accessed 27 May 2010).
229. http://feedproxy.google.com/~r/InfidelsAreCool/~3/MHNu2-U-PCU/ (accessed December 29, 2009).
230. http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/hadith/bukhari/006.sbt.html (accessed December 29, 2009).
231. Robert Spencer, *The Truth About Muhammad*, 68, citing Ahmed ibn Naqib al-Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller: A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law*, translated by Nuh Ha Mim Keller, Amana Publications, 1999, o24.8.
232. http://www.religioustolerance.org/isl_adul1.htm (accessed December 29, 2009).
233. http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/fse/Pages/honorkillings.html (accessed December 29, 2009).
234. http://infidelsarecool.com/2009/08/12/jordan-rape-victim-killed-by-uncle-to-cleanse-family-honor/ (accessed December 29, 2009).
235. http://infidelsarecool.com/2009/03/22/jordanian-beats-daughter-to-death-for-wearing-makeup-in-honor-killing/ (accessed January 5, 2010).
236. http://www.religioustolerance.org/fem_cirm.htm (accessed January 1, 2010).
237. http://thewip.net/contributors/2009/06/bahrain_offers_women_no_protec.html (accessed December 30, 2009).
238. Abdel Haleem, M. A. S., trans, "Women," *In The Qur'an, Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/book/islam-9780192831934/islam-9780192831934-chapter-4?astart=34&asize=20 (accessed 27 May 2010).
239. http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/2006.htm.
240. Robert Spencer, 173.
241. Robert Spencer, 172.
242. Robert Spencer, 170.
243. Robert Spencer, 172, quoting Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, 439.
244. For a thorough discussion on the various sources for women as occupants in hell, see: http://www.answering-islam.org/Women/in-hell.html.
245. http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/hadith/bukhari/024.sbt.html (accessed December 29, 2009).
246. http://answering-islam.org/Shamoun/women_in_islam1.htm (accessed December 30, 2009).
247. Ira M. Lapidus, *The History of Islamic Societies, second Edition*., 28.
248. Ira M. Lapidus, *The History of Islamic Societies, second Edition*., 15.

249. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubal (accessed December 29, 2009).
250. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahadah (accessed December 29, 2009).
251. http://www.foxnews.com/world/2009/11/30/switzerland-defends-ban-mosque-minarets/?test=latestnews (accessed May 26, 2010).
252. Roger Crowley, *1453, The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West*, 190.
253. John F. Walvoord, *Every Prophecy of the Bible*, 235.
254. Stephen R. Miller, 196f.
255. Haggith, 334, and available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate, at May 8, 2008.
256. St. Jerome, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel translated by Gleason L. Archer, Jr.*, 77.
257. David Haggith, *Prophets of the Apocalypse*, 316–318.
258. Stephen R. Miller, 268.
259. Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, 147–148.
260. John F. Walvoord, *Every Prophecy of the Bible*, 218–219.
261. John F. Walvoord, 231, 233.
262. http://www.lamblion.us/2009/01/antichrist-muslim-antichrist-islams.html (accessed May 19, 2010).
263. http://www.raptureready.com/rr-eu.html (accessed May 12, 2010).
264. http://europa.eu/index_en.htm (accessed May 18, 2010).
265. "Fact Sheets on the European Union," 2007 Edition. Author of the publication: European Parliament. Official responsible: Ishmael Olivares Martinez, Director. p. 11.
266. Ibid.
267. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/11992M/htm/11992M.html#0001000001 (accessed May 20, 2010), as summarized at http://europa.eu/abc/treaties/index_en.htm (accessed May 20, 2010).
268. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maastricht_Treaty (accessed May 20, 2010).
269. http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/take/index_en.htm (accessed May 20, 2010).
270. http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/take/index_en.htm (accessed May 20, 2010).
271. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6901353.stm (accessed May 28, 2010).
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347. Glasse', 102.
348. Grabar, 74.
349. Grabar, 74.
350. Website, "Islamic Awareness," www.islamic-awareness.org/History/Islam/Inscriptions/DoTR.html (accessed October 6, 2006). See also, Grabar, 94–95.
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466. Quraysh—a "powerful Meccan tribe at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. … The Quraysh were prosperous merchants controlling Mecca and trade in the region. Muhammad was born into the Hashemite clan of the Quraysh tribe." See "Quraysh" in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*, edited by John L. Esposito. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1947 (accessed 25 May 2010). "The Quraysh Arab tribe at Mecca made a special place for themselves in this Arab society. The most important trading center of western and central Arabia was Mecca in the Hijaz. … It had sufficient water to satisfy many camels; however, it was protected by hills from Red Sea pirates; and it possessed a respected shrine to which pilgrimage was made. … The Quraysh were organized on Bedouin principles, without a king or any other municipal institutions beyond the clan councils; they used an assembly of notables of all the clans for non-binding consultation. The threat of blood feud guarded the peace." See Marshall G. S. Hodgson, 154.
467. "For Sunnis, the first four successors of Muhammad: Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, and Ali ibn Abi Talib. All were prominent Companions of Muhammad and belonged to the tribe of Quraysh. The period of their rule is considered a golden age, when the caliphs were consciously guided by Muhammad's practices. The period saw the establishment of Arab Muslim rule over the heartlands of the Middle East and preparation for conquests and expansion carried out under subsequent dynasties." See "Rightly Guided Caliphs." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, edited by John L. Esposito, *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2018 (accessed 25 May 2010).
468. **Ummayyads:** The Umayyads were the first Islamic caliphate (Cyril Glasse', *Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, 408). Under the Umayyads, Mecca remained Islam's holiest city, but the Islamic capital was established in Damascus, Syria, following the murder of Caliph Uthman. The Umayyads clan was comprised of descendants of Umayyah, a member of the Quraysh Tribe of Mecca. Caliph Uthman, the third of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, was a relative of Umayya, but not a descendant. Muawiya I (661) is considered the first caliph of the Umayyads. It was Muawiya that opposed Ali and his sons, Hasan and Husayn as legitimate caliphs of Islam. Under Muawiya I, and then his son, Yazid, the divide between Sunni and Shiite sects of Islam occurred, reaching its peak in the Battle of Karbala, 680, when Ali's son, Husayn was brutally martyred along with his small band of followers. The Umayyads caliphs had the

reputation of being cruel tyrants who favored their family members over other Muslims (under Muawiya, the Companions of Muhammad, no longer held sway, but rather, Muawiya's descendants). The Dome of the Rock was constructed in 691 by al-Malik, an Umayyad's caliph. The rule of the Umayyads ended in 750, when the Abbasids killed Caliph Marwan II at the Battle of the Zab River. See Glasse', p. 408–409; 11, and Peter Stearns, etal., *World Civilizations, The Global Experience, Volume I, Beginnings to 1750*, p. 290. Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Volume 1, p. 217f.

469. **Abbasids**: The Abbasids were the second caliphate of Islam, following the Umayyads (Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Volume 1, p. 234). The Abbasids took their name from their clan—the House of Abbas. The patriarch of the clan was al-Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, the uncle of Muhammad. Hence, this clan claimed an indirect blood relationship with Muhammad, resulting in initial support among the Shiites. Al-Abbas led his armies in initial victories over the Umayyads armies in the mid-8th century. Al-Abbas recruited Shiites as his allies against the Ummayyads by virtue of the claim of blood relationship to Muhammad. Persia and Iraq fell to the Abbasids in 750, and the ultimate victory was at the River Zab near the Tigris in 750 where the Umayyads Caliph Marwan II was killed. The Abbasids wanted to eliminate all future claims of the Ummayyads and invited the remaining members of the Umayyads to a reconciliation banquet. As the Umayyads were enjoying the feast, the guards covered them with carpets and they were all slaughtered. See Peter Stearns, etal., *World Civilizations, The Global Experience, Volume I, Beginnings to 1750*, p. 294. Shortly after their defeat of the Umayyads, the Abbasids moved the capital to Baghdad in 762. They enthroned themselves as caliph and began persecution of the Shiites, who had allied with them against the Umayyads. They sought to purge the various strands of Shiism from Islam. See Glasse, p. 11, and Bernard Lewis, *Arabs in History*, pp. 84f. See also *Ira M. Lapidus, A History of Islamic Societies*, *Second Edition*, pp. 53–66.

470. **Buyids**: The Buyids were Shi'ahs of Persian origin. In 945, they invaded the heartlands of the Abbasid Empire and captured Baghdad. The Buyids chose not to depose the Abbasid caliphs, but rather to retain them to legitimize their own reign. The Abbasid caliphs were merely figureheads under Buyid reign. The Buyids controlled the caliph and his court but could do little to preserve the Islamic empire from further disintegration. They were supplanted in 1055 by another group of nomadic invaders from central Asia via Persia, the Seljuk Turks. See Peter Stearns, etal., *World Civilizations, The Global Experience, Volume I, Beginnings to 1750*, p. 310. See also Glasse', p. 80. According to Bernard

Lewis, the Buyids adopted the title "Amir al-Umara," "Commander of Commanders," symbolizing his headship of both the state and religion. See *Arabs in History*, p. 105–106.

471. Bernard Lewis, 105.

472. **Fatimids**: The Fatimids were Ismaili Shiites (Seveners) who founded Islam's other capital in Cairo, Egypt, in opposition to the latter reigning caliphate of the Abbasids of Baghdad. The Fatimids established their own caliph in Egypt, thereby laying claim to both spiritual and political authority for all of Islam (contra to the latter Abbasid caliphate reigning in Baghdad). The Fatimids took their name from Fatima, daughter of Muhammad and wife of Ali, thereby claiming blood descent from Muhammad. The Fatimid Caliphs also were the Imams of the Ismailis, a sect of Shiite Islam, whose doctrine defines the Imam or Caliph as divine. See Glasse', p. 123–125. The Ismailis are also known for the Shiite group referred to as "Assassins," a group of fanatical followers who waged a campaign of terror and assassinations against the kings and princes of Islam in the name of a mysterious Hidden Imam, the twelfth Imam (who we will interpret as the Antichrist/False Prophet of Revelation 17:8,11). See *Arabs in History*, p. 160–162.

473. **Seljuks**: The Seljuks (or "Saljuks") were Sunnis of Turkish origin. Their name comes from the military family that led them (see Bernard Lewis, *Arabs in History*, p. 160). The House of Seljuk was a branch of the Oghuz Turks that, in the ninth century, lived on the periphery of the Muslim world, north of the Caspian and Aral seas. In the tenth century, the Seljuks migrated from their ancestral homelands into mainland Persia, in the province of Khurasan, where they mixed with the local population and adopted the Persian culture and language.

    The Seljuks supplanted the Buyid Amirs in Baghdad in 1055 and immediately removed all Shiite influence that had occurred during the Buyid reign, marking the beginning of Turkic reign in the Middle East. They seized control of the caliphate under their leader, Toghrul Beg (or "Bey"), who assumed the title "Sultan." The Seljuks continued the practice of the Buyids of not deposing the Abbasid Caliphs but using them as figureheads to legitimize their reign. According to Lewis, the Seljuk Turks were able to wrestle Syria and Palestine from local rulers and from the declining reign of the Fatimids of Egypt in the West. Their conquest even extended to areas under the control of the Christian Byzantines in Turkey.

    Under the Seljuks, a large part of Islam united under a single authority for the first time since the early Caliphate. See *Arabs in History*, p. 161, and Cyril Glasse', p. 350. The Seljuk advance into Anatolia, Asia Minor, against the Byzantines, opened the door to

nomadic peoples of Turkic origin. The region later formed the nucleus of the powerful Ottoman Empire. The Sultanate provided stability to Islam until the conquest of the Mongols in 1258.

474. **Ayyubids**: The Ayyubids were a Sunni dynasty founded by Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi or Saladin in the late twelfth century, when Egypt was under control of the Fatimids. In 1177, Saladin declared the Fatimid Caliphate ended. He restored the name of the Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad as Egyptian caliphs and established himself as ruler of Egypt and eventually Syria and Palestine. It was Saladin who led Islam to reclaim lands lost to the Crusaders during the First Crusade (1193). See *Arabs in History*, p. 166–167, and Cyril Glasse', p. 59. The Abbasids continued their control of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt until the arrival of the Mongols in 1258.

475. **Mongols**: The Mongols were a people of the Siberian Steppes of Asia. According to Glasse', the Mongols were Shintoists who saw God as a spirit whose presence was active in nature. This caused them to be naively open to other religions, treating their own rites as magic that could be used in conjunction with the religions of conquered lands. After conquering Islamic lands, the Mongols adopted the religion of the conquered peoples into their Shinto's origins. Their leader was Genghis Khan, who successfully united the Mongol tribes in 1206.

    The superiority of the Mongols lay in their tribal unity; extremely strict discipline; ability to endure hardship; and their strategic use of spies, terrorism, and superior siege equipment. Mongols were known for their cruelty and barbarism. See Cyril Glasse', p. 274. According to Bernard Lewis, Genghis Khan led the Mongols in 1221 in victorious conquest over Iran. Genghis died in 1227, resulting in a pause in Mongol advance into Islamdom.

    Mongol Prince Huleku captured Baghdad in 1258, killed the Caliph, and abolished the Abbasid Caliphate. In spite of the decline of the caliphate to the point of figurehead only under both Buyid and Seljuk reigns, the caliphate represented the legal center of Islam and the token of its unity. In its destruction, the end of an Islamic era occurred. The Mongol conquest of the Arab world was confined to Iraq and Iran. Syria and Egypt were saved from the Mongols by the Ayyubids. See Barnard Lewis, p. 168–169.

476. **Mamluks:** According to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamluk, "The first Mamluks served the Abbasid caliphs in ninth century Baghdad. The Abbasids recruited them mainly from areas near the Caucasus (mainly Circassian and Georgian) and in areas north of the Black Sea (mainly Turkic, most of whom were Kipchak Turks). Most of the captured were of non-Muslim origin. The Mamluks were often sold into slavery

by impoverished steppe families or kidnapped by slave-traders. The Mamluk system gave rulers troops who had no link to any established power structure. … The slave-troops were strangers of the lowest possible status who could not conspire against the ruler and who could easily be punished if they caused trouble, making them a great military asset. Mamluks were frequently used as mercenaries." Ironically, the eventual commander of the Mamluks, Baybers, was earlier enslaved by the Mongols before he was sold to the Egyptians, where he rose to power through his military service. See Peter Stearns, etal., *World Civilizations, The Global Experience, Volume I, Beginnings to 1750*, p. 488.

Baybers united Syria and Egypt and repulsed the advancing Mongols from the east. Baybers also crushed the remnants of the Crusaders in Syria. An ingenious idea of Baybars was to invite a member of the Abbasid family to establish himself as Caliph in Cairo. The caliph was nothing more than court functionary of the Mamluk Sultan. The caliph had no authority or even right to express his opinion. He passed his time visiting the Mamluk officials and staging parties for them. According to Bernard Lewis, the Cairo Caliphs represented the final stage in the decay of the Caliphate. See *Arabs in History*, p. 170. The Mamluks remained in power in Syria and Egypt until the advance of the Ottomans in the fifteenth century.

477. **Ottoman Dynasty:** The Ottoman Dynasty takes its name from the Osman family of Turkey, which became increasingly powerful during the early years of the fourteenth century. The Osmans populated an area of the world situated on the western edge of the Seljuk Empire in Anatolia, from where it served as a buffer zone between the Byzantines to the west and the Seljuks to the south and east. In this context, the Osmans acted as mercenaries at different times for the Byzantines and then the Seljuks, expanding their own territory at the expense of both. See David R. Ringrose, *Expansion and Global Interaction*, p. 42.

The Ottomans took advantage of the death of the Byzantine Emperor in 1341, which brought civil war there, and the bubonic plaque in Europe allowed Ottoman invasion as far inland as Bulgaria. After conquering much of the Balkans and Southeastern Europe, the Ottomans turned their armies to the land of Islam. Beginning in the fifteenth century, Selim I, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, conquered Egypt. However, the prize for the Ottoman's was the long cherished capital of Byzantium, Constantinople. In 1453, Constantinople was taken by Mehmet the Conqueror and immediately renamed "Istanbul." See Karen Armstrong, *Islam, A Short History*, p. 109–110.

With the conquest of Constantinople, the age of the Ottomans began, reaching their zenith under Sulayman the Magnificent in 1566.

Sulayman controlled Asia Minor, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, North Africa, the coast regions of Arabia, Azerbaijan, the Balkans, Hungary, and vassal states in the Volga regions and the southern steppes of Russia. Karen Armstrong states, "By the end of the fifteenth century, Islamdom was the greatest power bloc in the world. It had advanced into eastern Europe, into the Eurasian steppes, and into sub-Saharan, Africa, in the wake of the Muslim traders. … The whole world seemed to be becoming Islamic. Even those who did not live under Muslim rule discovered that the Muslims controlled the high seas, and that when they left their own lands they had to confront Islamdom. … Islam seemed invincible, and now Muslims were ready to establish new empires, which would become the most powerful and up to date in the world." Karen Armstrong, Islam, *A Short History*, p. 110–111.

The success of the Ottoman Empire was in no doubt impacted by the Ottoman's mastery of gunpowder. According to Peter Stearns, p. 519, it was the use of huge cannons of the Ottomans against the Byzantine fortresses of Constantinople, that paved the way to success; and the use of field guns to supplement trained infantry was just as much the reason for the Ottoman's success against the Middle East. See Peter Stearns, etal., *World Civilizations, The Global Experience, Volume I, Beginnings to 1750*, p. 519. The Ottoman Empire lost its status as a world power in the seventeenth and following centuries as battle after battle was lost and territories formerly within the great Empire were granted independence from invading forces.

Dr. Timothy Furnish summarizes a final attempt to resurrect the caliphate by the Ottomans in the eighteenth century. He states, "The Ottomans, starting in the eighteenth century, resurrected the caliphate as a rallying point for Muslims against Russian, British, and French imperialism. Late Ottoman rulers were attempting to recapture some of the religious legitimacy that had been lost with utilization of the prosaic titles of *padishah* and sultan, by setting themselves up as the world's preeminent Muslim rulers. This attempt ultimately failed to rally the Islamic world to their side at times of trouble, and Kemal Atatürk abolished both the sultanate and caliphate following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1924." See http://www.meforum.org/article/159 at June 13, 2007.

Amidst the decline of the Ottoman Empire, efforts were sought to modernize the Muslim state. "The process of reform is referred to as: 'tanzimat' (meaning reorganization of the Ottoman Empire). Tanzimat was a period of reformation that began in 1839 and ended with the First Constitutional Era in 1876. Tanzimat emerged from the minds of reformist sultans like Mahmud II and Abdülmecid as well as prominent

reformers who were European educated bureaucrats, such as Ali Pasha, Fuad Pasha, Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, and Midhat Pasha. They recognized that the old religious and military institutions no longer met the needs of the empire in the modern world." Tanzimat reforms had far-reaching effects. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and other progressive leaders and thinkers of the Republic of Turkey and of many other former Ottoman states in the Balkans, the Middle East, and North Africa were educated in the schools established during the Tanzimat period. "The reforms peaked in 1876 with the implementation of an Ottoman constitution checking the autocratic powers of the Sultan. The details of this period are covered under the First Constitutional Era. While the new Sultan Abdülhamid II signed the first constitution, he quickly turned against it." See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decline_of_the_Ottoman_Empire.

478. According to Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ataturk, "Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was an army officer, revolutionary statesman, the founder of the Republic of Turkey and its first president. Mustafa Kemal established himself as a successful military commander while serving as a division commander in the Battle of Gallipoli of World War I. Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the hands of the Allies, and the subsequent plans for its partition, Mustafa Kemal led the Turkish national movement in what would become the Turkish War of Independence. His successful military campaigns led to the liberation of the country and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. Mustafa Kemal implemented what are known as Atatürk's Reforms, which led to sweeping changes in the political, economic and cultural sphere of the Turkish nation and the drive to create a modern, democratic and secular state based on Western principles of governance shaped by Kemalist ideology."
479. Ira M. Lapidus, 45.
480. "Rightly Guided Caliphs," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*, edited by John L. Esposito, *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxford-islamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2018 (accessed 25 May 2010).
481. Cyril Glasse', 408.
482. http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article10336.htm (accessed August 30, 2007)
483. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_al-Mahdi (accessed January 31, 2008).
484. Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism, The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shiism*, 6–7.
485. http://www.Umman.net/khoei/imam.htm.
486. Ibid.
487. Ibid.

488. http://pewforum.org/events/0503/sachedinabio.htm (accessed September 6, 2007).
489. Sachedina, 23.
490. Sachedina, 22.
491. Sachedina, 23.
492. Sachedina, 23.
493. Sachedina, 22.
494. Though it is discounted even by the most extremist clerics, a popular belief in Iran holds that the twelfth Imam lives at the bottom of a well in Jamkaran, just outside of Qom. Devotees drop written requests into the well to communicate with the Mahdi. http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID={32B294D4-A21C-4095-8D59-1B49230E3F5D} (accessed August 30, 2007).
495. Sachedina, 74–75.
496. Acts 10:39: "And we are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And they also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. God raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should become visible …"
497. Sachedina, 66–67.
498. Sachedina, 168.
499. Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam,* 71.
500. Arjomand, 40.
501. Sachedina, 7–8.
502. Timothy R. Furnish, *Holiest Wars, Islamic Mahdis, Their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden*, 14.
503. Timothy R. Furnish, 14.
504. Timothy R. Furnish, 5.
505. Cyril Glasse', 123–125.
506. Sachedina, 13.
507. Sachedina, 60–61.
508. Sachedina, 157.
509. Timothy R. Furnish, *Holiest Wars, Islamic Mahdis, Their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden*, 5.
510. Sachedina, 64.
511. Sachedina, 174.
512. Sachedina, 174.
513. Sachedina, 174.
514. Sachedina, 76.
515. Sachedina, 42. There are many factions within Shiism, which disagree based on the historical accuracy of the son of al-Askari, the eleventh Imam. Sachedina includes a discussion of twelve separate factions on this

question, each of which is reported by Islamic historian named Hasan bin Musa al-Nawbakhti. See p. 42f.

516. The concept of al-Mahdi also exists in Sunni Islam. For a review of Sunni views on al-Mahdi, see Timothy R. Furnish, *Holiest Wars*.
517. Arjomand, 39–40.
518. Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22, An Exegetical Commentary*, 30.
519. Robertson, A.M., D.D., LL.D., Litt. D., Archibald Thomas. *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1930), WORDsearch CROSS e-book.
520. Sachedina, 160.
521. Sachedina, 161.
522. Sachedina, 76.
523. Sachedina, 175.
524. In Islam there are two flags. One is white, and one is black. Written across both flags in Arabic are the words, "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger." The white flag is called *Al-Liwaa* and serves as the sign for the leader of the Muslim army and is the flag of the Islamic State. The black flag is called *Ar-Raya* and is used by the Muslim army. It is also called the flag of jihad and is carried into battle. One flag is governmental, and the other is a military flag. When Muhammad returned to his home city of Mecca after being exiled for eight years, he returned as a conqueror. With him were ten thousand Muslim soldiers. They carried with them black flags. On the flags was one word written in Arabic: "*punishment*." Available at, http://answering-islam.org.uk/Authors/JR/Future/ch04_the_mahdi.htm, at September 3, 2007.
525. http://answering-islam.org.uk/Authors/JR/Future/ch04_the_mahdi.htm. (accessed September 3, 2007).
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527. Matthew George Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary: And Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1897), WORDsearch CROSS e-book.
528. Ibid.
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530. Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, for a complete discussion of this topic.
531. http://www.thenation.com/directory/bios/bruce_lawrence (accessed September 6, 2007).
532. Bruce Lawrence, 121, note 25.
533. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid_Qutb (accessed August 20, 2007).
534. Bruce Lawrence, 42, note 25.

535. http://www.meforum.org/article/159 (accessed August 14, 2007).
536. David E. Aune, Vol. 52C, *Word Biblical Commentary : Revelation 17–22. Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002).
537. Archibald Thomas Robertson, A.M., D.D., LL.D., Litt. D., *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1930), WORDsearch CROSS e-book.
538. Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (New York: Scribners, 1887), WORDsearch CROSS e-book.
539. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2006/04/16/do1609.xml (accessed February 6, 2008).
540. Stephen R. Miller, 214.
541. Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism, The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shi`ism*, 171–172.
542. Timothy R. Furnish, *Holiest Wars, Islamic Mahdis, Their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden*, 18.
543. Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, 72–73.
544. http://www.shia.org/mehdi.html (accessed July 16, 2008).
545. Sachedina, 174.
546. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BGIOWcXYNc (accessed September 3, 2007).
547. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is located on the Arabian Peninsula. The land area for the Kingdom comprises 90 percent of the land area on the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by the Red Sea on its western border; the Arabian Sea on its southern border; the Persian Gulf on its eastern border; and by the states of Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait on its eastern border. Its southern borders include the states of Yemen and Oman. The Kingdom includes the well-known Muslim cities of Medina, Mecca, Jeddah, and Riyadh (its capital). The largest of its land area is comprised of the Arabian desert.
548. Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 16.
549. Madawi Al-Rasheed, 17.
550. Stephen Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam, The House of Saud from Tradition to Terror*, 106.
551. Stephen Schwartz, 261.
552. Matthew R. Simmons, *Twilight in the Desert*, 1.
553. Simmons, 9.
554. Simmons, 10.
555. Simmons, 26–27.
556. Simmons, 101.
557. Simmons, 101.
558. Simmons, 56.

559. http://www.opec.org/home/basket.aspx.
560. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/02/business/02cnd-oil.html?hp (accessed January 31, 2008).
561. http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/data_graphs/40.htm?selectedTab=daily (accessed May 26, 2010).
562. Simmons, xv.
563. Simmons, 89.
564. Simmons, 40, 89, and 151.
565. Simmons, 261.
566. Dore Gold, 66.
567. Bruce Lawrence, Editor, *Messages to the World, The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, 45.
568. Bruce Lawrence, 223.
569. Bruce Lawrence, 226.
570. Adam Entous, "U.S.-Saudi Arms Plan Grows to Record Size," *Wall Street Journal*, August 14–15, 2010, A7.
571. Ibid., 61.
572. Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22, An Exegetical Commentary*, 282.
573. Simmons, 59.
574. http://www.greencarcongress.com/2007/02/iea_forecasts_i.html (accessed June 26, 2007).
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576. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_hills_of_Rome (accessed July 16, 2008).
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579. Simmons, 261.
580. Robert Baer, *Sleeping With the Devil*, xxix.
581. Simmons, 338.
582. http://www.arabnews.com/?page=6&section=0&article=44011&d=29&m=4&y=2004
583. Timothy Furnish, *Holiest Wars, Islamic Mahdis, Their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden*, 60.
584. Madawi al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 161.
585. Dore Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom, How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*, 125–127.

586. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon (accessed June 14, 2007).
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588. Ibid.
589. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_Tower (accessed June 27, 2007).
590. http://www.reuters.com/article/lifestyleMolt/idUSL 1541047320071116 (accessed November 16, 2007).
591. "Allahu Akbar," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, edited by John L. Esposito, *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e129 (accessed 26 March 2010).
592. Message posted on the Global Islamic Media Front to all Muslim, entitled "Depose the Tyrants," December 16, 2004, as reported in *Messages to the World, The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, edited by Bruce Lawrence, 265–266.
593. Revelation 18:8 states, "In one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine and she will be burned up with fire." This verse is addressing the aftereffects of the judgment to the people surrounding the harlot. Only the judgment to the harlot occurs in one hour.
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595. Ayatollah Ibrahim Amini, Al-Imam, al-Mahdi, The Just Leader of Humanity, Chapter 14, page 10, and www.al-islam.org/mahdi/nont1/chapt-14.htm (accessed February 20, 2008).
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598. Matthew R. Simmons, *Twilight in the Desert, The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy*, 54.
599. Matthew R. Simmons, 54–55.
600. Bruce Lawrence, editor, *Messages to the World, The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, 151.
601. Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, *2006 Annual Statistical Bulletin*, 94.
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603. Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, *2006 Annual Statistical Bulletin*, 18.
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679. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kufa (accessed May 30, 2010).
680. *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Anaheim, CA: Foundation Publications, 1998), WORDsearch CROSS e-book.
681. Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, 233f.
682. Edward J. Young, 170f.
683. http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=ia&ID=IA42608 (accessed February 7, 2009).
684. Staff Report of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Subcommittee on Intelligence Policy, August 23, 2006; *Recognizing Iran as a Strategic Threat: An Intelligence Challenge for the United States*, p. 15. http://fas.org/irp/congress/2006_rpt/hpsci082306.pdf (accessed February 10, 2009).
685. Ibid, 6.
686. CRS Report to Congress, #RL32048, *Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses*, dated November 1, 2006, by Kenneth Katzman, summary page.
687. http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090225/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_iran_nuclear (accessed February 24, 2009).
688. http://www.cfr.org/publication/11873/russia_iran.html (accessed February 26, 2009).
689. Ibid., CRS-23.
690. Ibid., CRS-4-5.
691. Ibid., CRS-5.
692. The difficulty arises when one considers the Persian Empire at its greatest extent vs. Persia as a nation. The Empire at one time included most of the Middle East and Egypt, as well as Asia Minor. See Smith's Dictionary, under keyword search "Persia." The Empire of Persia would be covered by the prophecies of Psalm 83 and Numbers 24, but not the nation of Persia.
693. Since the text of Revelation 16:12 is plural ("kings from the east"), it is conceivable that Iran will not be alone but will be joined by other nations "from the east," e.g., Afghanistan, Pakistan, or India.
694. Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 151.

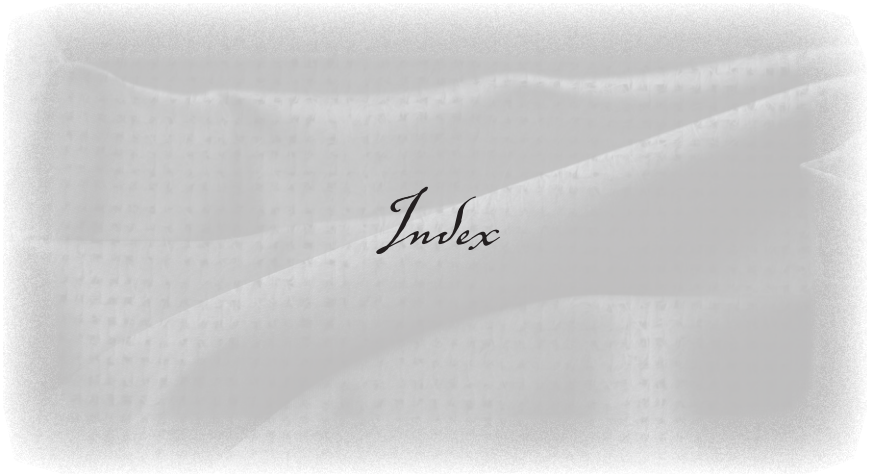
695. A. C. Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel*, 136. For a review of different interpretations of the first period, the seven 7's, see Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel, New American Commentary*, 253; Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel,* p. 202f; John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary, p. 257f.
696. *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel,* translated by Gleason L. Archer, Jr., 96.
697. Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel,* 194, and other sources cited there.
698. Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel,* 194.
699. To Finish the Transgression: When we look at the second event of Daniel 9:24, it is important that we not miss the definite article, "the." The text states: "… to finish *the* transgression …" It does not state, "to finish transgression. …" The text is speaking of a specific transgression, not sin in general. Sin in general was atoned for with the death of Christ (1 John 2:2). The specific transgression the text is referring to is a particular event that has reference to a particular people, the Jews (John 19:14–15; Matt. 27:24–25). The "transgression" Daniel 9:24 is referring to is the rejection by the covenant people of God, the Jews, of one of their own: Jesus of Nazareth, the Only Begotten Son of God, descendant in the line of King David (Ps. 89:36–37), and Himself a Jew. This specific sin can only be finished when the Jewish people have repented of their rejection of Jesus as Messiah and come to Him as Savior. Until they do, their own words quoted above will continue to condemn them, and their experience of the three positive elements of Daniel 9:24 will be beyond their grasp. It will be finished in the second coming of Jesus Christ, when Israel repents of their sin of unbelief. They will then experience forgiveness and their "sins will be taken away" (Rom. 11:27); but it will take the completion of the Seventieth Week to do so.
700. To Make an End of Sin and Atonement for Iniquity: When Christ died on the cross 2,000 years ago, His death was the atoning event for the sins of the world. Through this event, forgiveness for sins could be offered to humanity (1 John 2:2). Christ's death was the propitiation for humanity's sins. "Propitiation" translates the Greek word *ilasmos*, which has also been translated "atoning sacrifice." That is, Christ is the "atoning sacrifice," the "satisfaction," or "required payment" for the sins of the whole world. His death thereby atones for the sins of humanity, much as a criminal, having served his sentence, is freed from further condemnation for his crime (Col. 2:13; Isa. 53:5). The work of Christ on the cross is the "atonement for iniquity" that is prophesied

in Daniel 9:24. *It has already occurred* and is not a future event that the Reaping will bring in. Further, the death of Christ finishes sin in the sense that the atoning work of Christ removes the sin that separates us from the Holy God; the atoning work of Christ makes up for that which believers have fallen short (Rom. 6:23). Satan, the accuser has lost his voice. He cannot accuse believers of that which Christ has paid for on the cross (Rev. 12:11).

701. Everlasting righteousness is impossible so long as Satan, the "prince of the air" (Eph. 2:2), the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30), continues his reign on earth (Luke 4:6). The Bible prophesies that at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound up and imprisoned for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1–3). This "binding up" is referred to when Daniel 9:27 prophesies that the "one who makes desolate" will come to his destruction. Although Daniel 9:27 is not referring specifically to Satan, it is referring to his false prophet; and Satan, his false prophet, and his first beast are all three "thrown alive into the Lake of Fire." Thus, when Satan and his agents are bound in the Lake of Fire, the millennial reign of Christ can begin, and everlasting righteousness can be brought in. The bringing in of everlasting righteousness is implied in another passage. Revelation 19 describes the resurrected and raptured saints that accompany Christ upon His return to earth to set up His millennial kingdom on earth. They are clothed in fine linen, bright and clean. This phrase is a metaphor for the spiritual condition of those who accompany Christ in His second coming: they are made pure by the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:6) and, accordingly, can bring in everlasting righteousness, not of their own, but of Christ's, which has been imputed to them (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the "ruler of the kings of the earth," who has "… released us from our sins by His blood …" (Rev. 1:5–6) will return with His kingdom. When He does, He will bring in everlasting righteousness.
702. Vision and prophecy cannot be *sealed up* until the prophecies of the New Testament have been fulfilled as well as those of the Old Testament. There are many prophecies of both Old and New Testament that have not yet been fulfilled. Consider Daniel 12:9, Philippians 2:9, Revelation 20:1. None of these prophecies have been fulfilled—*yet*. Neither can they be fulfilled until the end of the present age, the end of the Seventieth Week. When they are fulfilled, the millennial reign of Christ can begin.
703. The third positive event referred to in Daniel 9:24 is that the "most holy place" will be "anointed" (Dan. 9:24). The "most holy place" is the

temple in Jerusalem that was previously located on the Temple Mount. The temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. Since then, it has been desecrated by the construction of numerous pagan shrines, the latest being the Dome of the Rock, Islam's shrine to Muhammad and Allah. The temple cannot be anointed until it is rebuilt; and, it cannot be rebuilt until the Dome of the Rock, Islam's shrine to Muhammad and its blasphemy against Jesus Christ, is removed from its present site. Then, the blood of Jesus can purify the site, and the altar of sacrifice can be consecrated (Ezek. 43:26). When this occurs, it will likewise be a fulfillment of all prophesies of Ezekiel 40–48 regarding the millennial temple. The "anointing of the holy place" is a distant future event occurring subsequent to the second coming of Christ and during the millennial reign of Christ.

704. Stephen R. Miller, 214, cites Montgomery, *Daniel*, 312; Lacocque, *Daniel,* 154; Archer, *Daniel*, 94; Jerome, *Daniel,* 81.
705. Matthew George Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary: And Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1897), WORDsearch CROSS e-book.
706. "Rapture" translates from the Latin word *raptus,* the Vulgate, which translates the Greek word *harpazo*, meaning "to pluck" or "to catch." Hence, "caught up" (verse 4:17) is the English translation, sometimes rendered "rapture." *Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary.*
707. The closing phrase of Daniel 12:1 describes a rescue that will take place during the tribulation. This rescue is likely a reference to the rapture. Rapture is translated from the Greek word *harpadzo*, meaning, to be "carried away," and has come to mean the secret coming of Christ for His followers to remove them from the difficulties of the tribulation Period. Passages offered to support this view generally include Matthew 24:37, 40–41; 1 Thessalonians 4:15–18; John 14:1–3; Daniel 12:1.
708. *Three Views on the Rapture,* by Gleason L. Archer Jr., Stanley N. Gundry, Paul D. Feinberg, and Douglas J. Moo, 1996, 104–106.
709. Stephen R. Miller, 270.



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