HOW RADICAL ISLAM WILL IMPACT THE END TIMES

THE EIGHTH KINGDOM

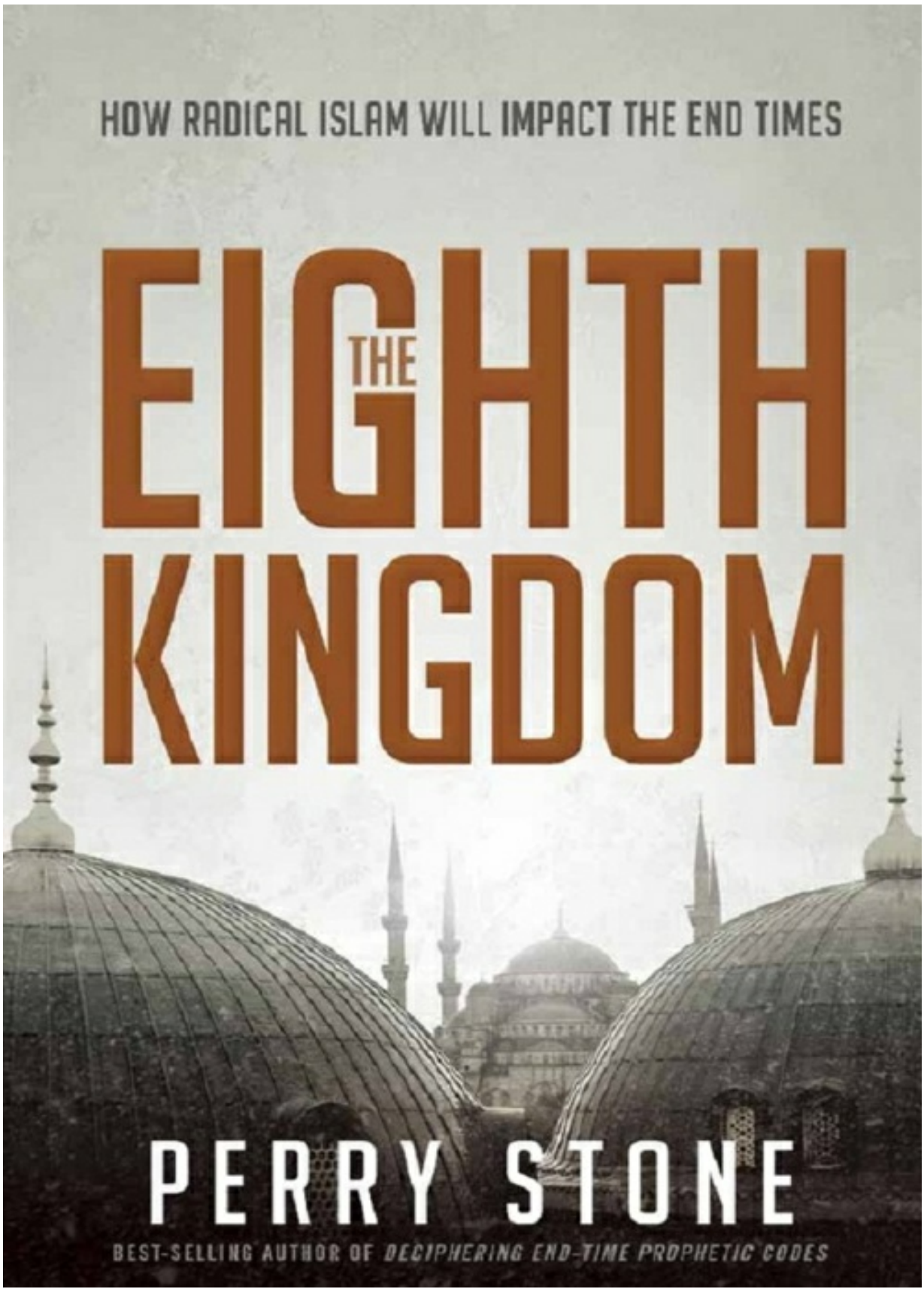


PERRY STONE

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF *DECIPHERING END-TIME PROPHETIC CODES*

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INTRODUCTION

THE RISE OF A COMING KINGDOM

THERE IS AN unsettling mood hanging like foreboding storm clouds over North America. This restlessness reminds me of the gusting winds that rattle leaves and bend branches prior to a southern storm sweeping in from the west. From the polished, silver-tongued politicians strutting through the marble halls of Congress to the pin-striped, suit-wearing Wall Street stockbrokers, it seems everyone is concerned about America's future.

After all, most empires continue for two to three hundred years; then they peak and slowly decline. The major empires of history don't necessarily disappear from the scene—many simply no longer have the power, influence, and economic edge that they once had. They become followers instead of leaders, borrowers instead of lenders, the tail and not the head (Deut. 28:43–44).

Where is America moving, and where is the world heading? Who will emerge from among the sea of nations as the survivor and the leader? Will a united Europe rise from the ashes of past wars to become the final empire of history? Or what about the

1.6 billion Muslims[1] throughout the world who for fourteen hundred years have anticipated the last days and the uniting of a final Islamic caliphate empire ruled by their caliph?

Their "awaited one" will rule the world clutching a sword in one hand and waving a Quran in the other. Are there parallels and similarities between this Islamic expectation and biblical prophecies about the end times? Will the Antichrist be a radical Muslim?

According to the prophets of the Bible, there will arise out of the ocean of humanity a kingdom described by biblical visionaries as "the kingdom of the beast." The head of this coalition will unite ten kings and their nations, directing a final assault against Israel, Jerusalem, and the Jews. He will control all buying and selling, and only those who accept his rule, his religion, and his mark will be permitted to purchase and sell goods. (See Revelation 13:16–18.)

Before 9/11 no one could see such a kingdom coming in America except a few high-level officials in federal intelligence agencies. Since 9/11, seldom a day passes without an Islamic nation (such as Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan) making headline news. Fanatical Islamic regimes such as Hamas, ISIS, and Hezbollah are spewing fiery rhetoric like flaming swords from their mouths in hopes of spreading their message of "Death to the Little Satan, Israel, and death to the Great Satan, America." Where are we headed, and what role does America play on this end-time prophetic stage?

In this informative and prophetically stirring book, *The Eighth Kingdom*, you will learn:

- The end-time predictions of Jesus that haven't occurred yet
- The Islamic link to the Antichrist and the mark of the beast
- The Islamic agenda to silence Christians and the laws the coming Islamic ruler will put into place
- The two most important resources to invest in and other ways to prepare practically and spiritually for the days ahead

In the coming pages I will detail biblical prophecies and Islamic traditions that point to the rise of a coming kingdom—an eighth kingdom—and a final global dictator who will seize the world. You'll discover that the Bible identifies this man as the Antichrist and that Islam calls the leader of the last caliphate the Mahdi.

I have had several Muslim friends since 1993 with whom I have shared this information. Although they disagree with my final conclusion, they have told me that it really made them think about what the Bible predicts.

There may be Christians with differing opinions and beliefs from what you will read in this book. However, it is my desire to present fresh insight and to challenge a more traditional mind-set about prophetic events. The Lord Himself said, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18). Keep reading for a fresh look at the biblical concept of the "time of the end" (Dan. 8:17).

SECTION I

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

CHAPTER 1

THE STAGE IS SET

And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

—DANIEL 12:9

THE PROPHETIC SEERS are at it again. Every time a major event such as a Middle East war, a tsunami, a killer earthquake, or a Katrina-style weather phenomenon strikes the planet, the prophetic teachers and secular soothsayers begin chirping their warnings like birds in April announcing spring has arrived. Since Christ rode a cloud to heaven from the top of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, centuries of prophetic preachers and teachers have tried to discern every other cloud of global conflict looming over the horizon as the cloud through which Jesus may return. Are we really in the time of the end, and if we are, just what is the time of the end?

First, the time of the end is not the "end of time"—a phrase often repeated when believers speak about the last days. The phrase "end of time" is not found in either of the Testaments.

Neither is it the end of the world as some suggest. The concept that the world is going to end is a misunderstanding of a verse in the English translation of Matthew's Gospel. Christ predicted:

> And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?
>
> —MATTHEW 24:3, KJV

The phrase "end of the world" paints a picture on the canvas of the human imagination of a total annihilation of the planet and the complete apocalyptic destruction of mankind. However, since the New Testament was written in Greek, the meanings of certain words differ in Greek from English. For example, there are three different Greek words translated as "world" in Matthew chapter 24, the famous Olivet discourse where Jesus is predicting the signs of Jerusalem's destruction, the future Tribulation, and His return to set up His kingdom. These three Greek words for "world" are:

THE WORD IN MATTHEW	THE GREEK WORD	THE MEANING
The end of the world (Matt. 24:3)	*aion*	An age or a course of time
The gospel preached in all the world (Matt. 24:14)	*oikoumene*	The globe; the earth (Roman Empire)
Tribulation impacting the world (Matt. 24:21)	*kosmos*	The inhabited world

In Matthew 24:3 the disciples were asking Christ to reveal the signs of His return. When Jesus spoke of the end, He was not alluding to the end of planet Earth but the *aion*—the end of the age. These Jewish disciples, raised in synagogues and understanding prophetic writings, were taught that the Hebrew prophets foresaw a coming kingdom in which a Messianic figure would rule the world. Under his rule Israel's enemies would be defeated, the Jews would become the leading ethnic group, and all nations would amass in Jerusalem once a year to worship (Zech. 14:16). The prophet Daniel made such a prediction:

> I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.
>
> —DANIEL 7:13–14

The phrase "son of man" is used more than one hundred times in the King James Version of the Old Testament. God addressed the prophet Ezekiel as "son of man" ninety-three times. In verse 13 of Daniel's prophecy above, the Messiah was identified as "One like the Son of Man." In the New Testament Jesus calls Himself "the Son of Man" on numerous occasions (e.g., John 1:51; 3:13; 6:27). Christ came preaching the gospel of the kingdom, performing miracles, and predicting the future of Israel. The disciples discerned He was the

Messiah (Son of Man) Daniel had prophesied would bring forth the final, victorious kingdom on Earth (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27).

According to Jesus, several key signs would occur before the final Messianic kingdom would be set up in Jerusalem. He predicted the final age would be preceded by wars and rumors of wars, famines, and pestilences in various places (Matt. 24:6–7). He warned them that enemy armies would surround Jerusalem and eventually level the city and the temple (Matt. 24:2; Luke 21:20). He gave them advanced warning that great persecution would follow, and families would turn on one another, breeding offenses and hatred (Matt. 24:9–12). Christ then revealed the premier indicator that would climax the age of man:

> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.
>
> —MATTHEW 24:14

The spread of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire in the disciples' day was a sign of the fullness of time for Israel, Jerusalem, the temple, and the Jewish people. From the Day of Pentecost around AD 32 when the church was birthed until AD 70 when the Roman Tenth Legion invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the city, eventually plowing it under one year later, the gospel of the kingdom had been preached around the Mediterranean Sea in what we call the Middle East, Europe, and Asia Minor. The "end" came for Israel, Jerusalem, and the temple just as Christ predicted in Matthew 24:1–2.

Some modern theologians attempt to "prove" that all of the prophecies related to the time of the end and the return of

Christ were fulfilled between AD 66 and 70. They quote the historian Flavius Josephus, saying that the events of which he speaks give evidence that all the cosmic signs predicted by Christ have been fulfilled. These events recorded by Josephus included strange cosmic activity—a star shaped like a sword hanging over the city and a comet that appeared over Jerusalem—for one year prior to the destruction. He also told of a supernatural light that was seen at night, and the eastern gate of the inner court, "shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night."[1]

When I'm told that Matthew 24 was fulfilled in AD 70, I remind the person to keep reading all of Matthew 24, which predicts the destruction of the temple, the signs of Christ's coming, and the end of the age. The latter part of Matthew 24, verses 15–21, did not occur in AD 70 or, for that matter, at any other time in past history. These signs include:

- The abomination that makes Jerusalem desolate (Matt. 24:15)
- Great tribulation such as has never been seen in world history or shall ever be (Matt. 24:21)
- The shortening of the days of the Tribulation for the elect's sake (Matt. 24:22)
- The sun being darkened, the moon not giving light, and stars falling (Matt. 24:29)

• The Son of Man appearing in the heavens for all to see (Matt. 24:30)

• Angels gathering His elect from the four areas of the earth (Matt. 24:31)

The above events have not yet happened but will unfold at the time of the end. This small three-letter English word *end* is also used several times in Matthew's Gospel and is important to understand when answering the question: Are we really in the time of the end?

The disciples asked for the signs of the "end" of the age, which is translated from the Greek meaning "the completion, or the consummation of a thing." W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* says the word *end* "does not denote a termination, but the heading up of events to the appointed climax."[2] The disciples were requesting certain indicators of the completion and consummation of the age. The word *end* is used in Matthew 24 when Jesus warned of wars, famines, and pestilences, saying that when these things were seen happening on Earth, they were "the beginning of sorrows" (v. 8), but "the end is not yet" (v. 6).

Telos, the Greek word for "end" in this passage, is a common word also used in Matthew 24:13 when Jesus talked about enduring "to the end," and in Matthew 24:14, which says that after the gospel is preached around the world, "then the end will come." *Telos* has a variety of meanings, including, "to set out, to reach a final goal, the uttermost and the conclusion of a thing." According to *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*, *telos* alludes to a

"termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be."[3] In Greek writings, *telos* always indicates the end of some act or state, but not the end of a period of time, which they call (in Greek) *teletutte*.

Notice this word indicates the termination of something but not the end of a time period. In other words, Christ is revealing that certain signs will indicate the termination of one age and the beginning of another. It does not refer to "the end of time," a term that some use but that is not found in Scripture. The concept of the end of time possibly comes from Revelation 10:6, in which during the future Tribulation an angel states, "There should be time no longer" (KJV). A clearer translation is, "Time will no longer be delayed."[4]

This verse in Revelation alludes to how the prophetic events surrounding the Great Tribulation, which occurs at the time of the end, will suddenly accelerate like an eighteen-wheeler going downhill without any brakes. Once the final time is set in motion, the prophecies will come to pass faster than one can keep up with! There will be no restraining of events, as the restraining power will be removed.[5] (See 2 Thessalonians 2:1–8.) The actual meaning of "the time of the end" refers to when certain prophetic signs related to the return of Christ begin to merge in one season and during one generation.

Jesus warned His generation that they would see the destruction of Jerusalem because their forefathers were guilty of killing the prophets:

> Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in

> your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.
>
> —MATTHEW 23:34–36

Just as Christ predicted a final season (end) would come for Israel, Jerusalem, and the temple (fulfilled in AD 70), the prophets of Scripture also predicted a future generation that would witness the return of the Jews to Israel from the Gentile nations, the rebuilding and expansion of Jerusalem under Jewish control, the blossoming of the land, and a restoration and rebuilding of the temple.

There was a living generation that remembered the predictions of Jesus and saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies between AD 66 and 70 and witnessed the destruction of the Holy City. Most traditional prophetic scholars believe that the generation that witnesses the restoration of Israel and Jerusalem and the return of the Jews will be the generation of the time of the end. The apostle Peter gave a dynamic revelation of the link between these future restorations and the return of Christ.

THE PROPHECY: TIMES OF RESTITUTION

> Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

—ACTS 3:19–21, KJV

The return of Christ is contingent upon "the times of restitution of all things." The word *times* is in the plural form, meaning "a series of events" linked to restitution. The word *restitution* is similar to the word *restoration*. The Greek word for "restitution" (*apokatastasis*) was used to describe the Jews' return to Israel from Egypt with Moses and their return to Israel after the Babylonian captivity. In both cases the Hebrew nation was released from bondage, returned to their land, and brought restoration to the land through agriculture and farming (Jer. 27:22; Joel 2:25). Christ will return after an order of restoration occurs.

The biblical prophets also predicted a series of restorations that will unfold prior to the return of the Messiah. When these predictions begin to come to pass, it is a major witness that the closing out of the end of the age is at hand and the kingdom of the Messiah is over the horizon.

The first major event would be the reestablishing of Israel as a nation. More than a hundred years before Israel was reborn on May 14–15, 1948, Bible scholars who accepted the literal interpretation of the restoration prophecies began writing and teaching that the Jews must return to a restored nation called Israel prior to the Lord's return, including:

> • Professor S. W. Watson, who in 1888 taught that three things must occur before Christ could return. First, Israel would again be a nation. Second, Jerusalem must be in the hands and control of the Jews, and, finally, the Jews would be returning from

all nations back to the Promised Land.

• A. B. Simpson, who in 1912 wrote a book titled *The Coming One*, in which he stated, "Then there is the promise of their [Israel's] restoration. This is to be in two stages: first, national; then, spiritual. These two stages are represented by Ezekiel in the vision of the valley of dry bones."[6]

• Harry Rimmer, who in 1940 wrote a prophetic book titled *The Coming War and the Rise of Russia*.[7] In it he mentions fourteen things that must occur prior to the coming of Christ. He stated that the Jews would be back in Palestine and will have Jerusalem back. He predicted that there would be a great war that would drive the Jews back to Palestine. He also spoke of Hitler dividing Germany and how Germany would later be united again.

• Finis Dake, the great Bible scholar and author of *Dake's Annotated Bible*, made the following comments on the prediction in Isaiah 35:1 that Israel's deserts would blossom and fill the world with fruit: "A complete restoration or reestablishment. It refers to the Millennium when Christ will reign 1,000 years. No prophecy about the coming of the Lord can be fulfilled until the Jews are back in their land."[8] He understood two facts: that no prophecy about the coming of the Lord could be fulfilled until the Jews were back in their land (Israel) and that the

> blossoming of the desert was to be taken literally. This is remarkable when you consider that in the 1930s and 1940s when his Bible notes were written, the Jews were scattered among the nations and were being persecuted by the Nazis, the nation of Israel was nonexistent, the land was called Palestine and was under British mandate, and most of it was either a swamp or desolate, dry wilderness. In my opinion, he only missed one part of his interpretation. He placed the timing of this fulfillment during the thousand-year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:4), not during the time of the end.

When examining prophetic Scripture, these men and others like them took the prophecies about Israel's restoration literally and not spiritually or allegorically. They predicted a day when the Jews would return and rebuild the places of old. Several understood there were seven signs of the time of the end.

SEVEN ENCOURAGING SIGNS OF THE TIME OF THE END

Not all signs related to the return of Christ are negative (wars, famines, earthquakes, and so on). Many are very encouraging and exciting. There are seven events that have transpired and are continuing to unfold that are a part of the restitution and give evidence of the coming of Christ. They are:

> 1. Israel would be restored as a nation in one day (Isa. 66:7–8; Hos. 3:4–5; Zech. 3:9).

2. The land would begin to blossom and be fruitful (Isa. 27:6; 35:1–8).

3. Water would break out in the desert for irrigation (Isa. 35:6–7; 41:18).

4. Jerusalem would be in Jewish hands and expand its borders (Ps. 102:16).

5. Jews from Gentile nations outside Palestine would return back to Israel (Isa. 43:5–6; Jer. 16:14–16).

6. The early and latter rains would return in the last days (Hos. 6:3; Joel 2:23; Amos 4:7).

7. The walls of Jerusalem would be rebuilt by strangers and the gates open continually (Isa. 60:1–11).

Israel's restoration process began during the 1800s with the birth of the Zionist movement, but it was manifested to the world on May 14, 1948, when David Ben-Gurion and others made a proclamation declaring a new state for Jews called Israel. Part of the proclamation read: "The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles."[9] Within hours Arab armies advanced toward the infant nation to abort the plan. Just as ancient Israel had to deal with seven nations living around them in Joshua's time (Deut. 7:1), in 1948 the Jews had to deal with troops from seven surrounding Arab nations who announced the Jews would be "thrown into the sea."[10] A war of independence was waged in which Israel survived against amazing odds. Today they boast

one of the most advanced militaries in the world.

One of Ben-Gurion's goals was to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah and make the desert blossom with vegetation. In 1953, at age sixty-seven, Ben-Gurion resigned as prime minister of Israel to pursue his dream. This former Israeli leader and his wife, Paula, moved into a three-room wooden prefab hut at Sde Boker in the desolate Negev Desert. It was a dry, empty, sunbaked landscape. Years later Beersheba, the hometown of Abraham, became a large town, and today more than fifty-four farms are scattered throughout a region called the *Arabah*—the Negev and the southern part of Israel—producing tomatoes, peppers, melons, and a host of fruits and vegetables. Today the desert is blossoming.[11]

Ben-Gurion and other early Israeli settlers were also responsible for laying water pipelines to assist in irrigation. Years later US satellites discovered a huge reservoir of water under the desert, which today is pumped out and is the lifeblood used in the drip irrigation process, enabling the desert to blossom with agricultural life.[12]

In 1967 Egyptian military forces, headed by Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, threatened Israel and were planning an attack. Israel preempted the assault with an air campaign, destroying Egypt's air force while the planes were still on the runway.[13] During this Six-Day War involving Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, Israeli paratroopers seized the eastern (Arab) half of Jerusalem. At this time this section was known as the country of Transjordan. At the conclusion of the war Israel annexed both East and West Jerusalem together, forming a

united Jerusalem under Israeli control. At that moment Jerusalem was united as one city without walls and became the long-promised capital of Israel.

Although from 1948 to 1967 Jews continually immigrated to Israel from surrounding nations, the Russian Jews living behind the Iron Curtain were forbidden visas to exit the Communist stronghold. In the latter part of the 1980s, with the approval of Mikhail Gorbachev, Jews received visas to return from the north country of the Soviet Union back to Israel, thus fulfilling the promises God gave them through Jeremiah and Isaiah thousands of years ago.[14]

Years later, in the early 1990s, there was a sudden return of the physical rains that soaked the soil of Israel, thus replenishing and nourishing the farmland, the deserts, and the Upper Golan Heights. As the windows of heaven were opened, once-dry riverbeds were flowing with fresh water. It was a sign of the return of the latter rains upon the land.

Today the old city of Jerusalem is shared by the world's three monotheistic religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Out of the eight gates built in the walls of the old city, only one, the Eastern Gate, remains sealed with large stones. All other gates are opened to citizens and visitors. Children are seen strolling along the streets continually amidst noisy buses and cars, occasionally darting in and out of the crowd that fills avenues throughout the day.

EARTH'S FINAL ACT

This seven-phase restoration that is now occurring is a sign of

the time of the end and evidence that the Messiah will soon return. We are the generation that has witnessed the culmination of these events during one specific time period, and I believe we are witnessing many other prophetic stepping-stones as the stage is set and the curtain is about to rise for another act of the drama of the end times.

Not everyone, however, is happy about Israel's return or the nation's development. In fact, a large majority of the approximate 1.6 billion Muslims are very unsettled or unhappy about Israel. To them, Israel is a modern nation forced upon the world by the Americans and British, and the Jews occupy Islamic lands, illegitimately surrounding two famous Islamic mosques in Jerusalem. This is why Islamic nations or radical Islamic groups have six times initiated a war with Israel. They want to defeat the Jews and drive them from the land that Muslims believe originally belonged to Islam.

> I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops—many people are with you.
>
> —EZEKIEL 38:4–6

History appears to be repeating itself. Ancient Israel dealt with six major world empires, and since their reformation as a nation, we are seeing the same leading nations battle the new Jewish state in modern time.

In their past Israel has dealt with Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Since Israel was reformed as a

nation in 1948, it has entered conflicts with the first three prophetic nations from the past. The next nation on the war list will be the Persians, or the Iranians. The following chart shows how these conflicts in the present are paralleling conflicts in ancient Israel's past:

THE NATION	THE WARS FOUGHT WITH ISRAEL
Egypt	Egypt fought Israel in 1948, 1956, and 1967.
Assyria	Syria fought Israel in 1948, 1967, and 1973.
Babylon	Babylon (Iraq) fought Israel in 1991.
Media-Persia	The coming conflict
Greece	
Roman Empire	

Israel's advanced military technology, coupled with five victories in five major conflicts since 1948 (in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1991), has prevented a coalition of surrounding Islamic nations from annihilating the Jewish state. Israel's secret arsenal of advanced bombs and laser weapons has deterred fanatical regimes from launching a massive invasion of the nation. However, that is about to change in the coming days. Islamists have several agendas, including a long-term military strategy inspired by what I term apocalyptic Islam.

This end-time, last-days, Islamic theology is inbred into Islamic minds from the birth of a child forward. The ultimate goal of Islam is to form a global empire one day and to convert the world to its religion, eventually defeating both Jews and Christians. This is not just a tradition handed down among a

few “fanatics.” The ideas of Islamic global domination and the defeat of the Jews are taught continually in Islamic schools around the world.

According to Daniel and John, two apocalyptic prophets whose biblical predictions have fascinated, inspired, and, yes, at times bewildered generations of Christians, a final empire will form that will control all buying and selling and will behead those who resist (Rev. 13:17; 20:4). I believe this final prophetic empire is an Islamic coalition of nations whose influence will overshadow the Middle East and much of Europe, and whose heart will beat the strongest in the regions of Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Its command center will be in Iraq and will be eventually moved to Jerusalem. The man who will direct this final showdown among the nations will be the Antichrist of biblical prophecy.

The countdown to the showdown has begun. The final act of the apocalyptic play is about to begin. Let’s go behind the curtain, backstage, and get a major preview of the script written for the time of the end. In the next chapter, “Seven Down and One to Go,” I’ll explain the six kingdoms that have already passed into history and what I expect to happen as the seventh and eighth kingdoms make their entrance on the world stage.

CHAPTER 2

SEVEN DOWN AND ONE TO GO

There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

—REVELATION 17:10–11

FROM A BIBLICAL/PROPHETIC perspective, six major empires have risen on the world scene and faded into the fog of history, with the seventh empire still to arise. It will exist for a short period and will be followed by an eighth and final empire, identified as "the kingdom of the beast." The beast's kingdom will form a ten-nation coalition that will wreak havoc on opposing nations, beheading all its enemies (Rev. 20:4).

Both past and future biblical prophecy are always linked to Israel and the Jewish people. Of the seven prophetic kings, John, when writing the Book of Revelation, indicated that five

had already fallen and no longer existed in John's time. These kingdoms began with the Egyptian Empire, which was the first major empire in the Bible to impact the Hebrew people for more than four hundred years (Gen. 15:13). These five kingdoms included:

1. *The Egyptian Empire*—their history is recorded in the Book of Exodus.

2. *The Assyrian Empire*—their history is recorded in 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles.

3. *The Babylonian Empire*—their history is recorded in Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

4. *The Media-Persian Empire*—their history is recorded in Daniel.

5. *The Greek Empire*—their history is found in symbolism in the Book of Daniel.

When John wrote the Book of Revelation in approximately AD 95, these five major empires had fallen from the charts of history and were no longer in global control. However, John identified an empire in existence in his day, calling it "one is." The only global empire in John's day was the Roman Empire, whose armies were occupying Israel in Christ's time. In AD 70 the Roman Tenth Legion had used battering rams to beat down the walls of Jerusalem, torching the temple and leading Jews in chains onto ships and taking them back to Rome. By AD 95 a great persecution was sweeping the Christian church, and Christians in Rome were hiding in miles of underground caves

called catacombs. At the time of John's apocalyptic vision in Revelation, Rome was in complete control of all political, military, and economic affairs in the nations surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

In Revelation 17:10 John identifies the seventh empire as, " . . . and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time." The identity of this kingdom has differed among Bible scholars. Every empire from the past was succeeded by a stronger empire, and this succession has never been broken. If the Roman Empire was the sixth prophetic empire that eventually faded, and the succession would continue until the end of days, then who or what was the seventh empire that continues for "a short space" (KJV)? The question actually is: Who or what followed the Roman Empire? This is difficult to answer, because the Roman Empire was never defeated politically or militarily by a single empire. Rome simply deteriorated morally, politically, and spiritually and faded from power. The Roman Empire was eventually overrun by numerous Germanic tribes.

Some historians point out that when Imperial Rome declined, Germanic tribes from the east seized much of the land once ruled by Rome. They identify this period as the dark time of the barbarian age for the former Imperial Rome. Scholars note that there were ten groups that eventually took over the land once ruled by Rome. These ten groups are identified by most researchers as:[1]

1. The Huns
2. The Visigoths

3. The Vandals

4. The Ostrogoths

5. The Franks

6. The Anglo-Saxons

7. The Suevi

8. The Burgundians

9. The Heruli

10. The Lombards

Such groups as the Seventh-Day Adventists believe that the prophecy of the ten horns of Daniel (Dan. 7:24) and John's ten-horned beast (Rev. 17:12), along with the ten toes on the metallic image (Dan. 2:42), was fulfilled when these ten groups eventually settled throughout the countries that Rome once ruled. This, however, cannot be the final literal fulfillment.

The Bible teaches: "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44). In the days of the ten kings, thrones will be cast down and the judgment will be set (Dan. 7:7–10).

These ten groups listed above eventually took over the land of Imperial Rome. However, the future ten prophetic kings receive their power and authority in the span of one hour when the beast (Antichrist) forms his eighth kingdom (Rev. 17:12). I

have read the many beliefs that the ten kings of prophecy were these ten groups that have already come and gone, but this is not the fulfillment of the many end-time predictions in Daniel and Revelation.

Christ will return in the days of the ten kings, and He did not return after the demise of the ten tribes who seized the Roman regions in ancient history. (See Revelation 17:12–14.)

THE FALL OF ROME

After three centuries of persecution Constantine became emperor of Rome in 312, legalizing Christianity by proclaiming it one of the official religions of the Roman Empire. The imperial Roman Empire was then split between Rome in the west and Constantinople in the east, a city built by Constantine in Turkey and known today as Istanbul. As *Imperial* Rome fell, a new *spiritual* Rome emerged that combined the power of *church* and *state* under one entity—the pope and the Roman Church in the West. A new political/spiritual empire came into existence in the East, which was called the Byzantine Empire.

When answering who or what took the place of the Roman Empire, there are several suggestions. Some suggest that the seventh empire was the Holy Roman Empire, which consisted of a coalition of territories located in Central Europe during the Middle Ages and that continued through early modern history. Otto the Great, crowned as emperor in 962, is considered the first of the Holy Roman emperors. During the war with Napoleon in 1806, Francis II, the last Holy Roman emperor, dissolved the empire.

In the late fifteenth century the empire was termed the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. Although the empire dissolved in the seventeenth century, the power of Germany was evident in World Wars I and II. Only after the defeat of Hitler in 1945 was the power of Germany broken and replaced with a movement to unite Europe into a new coalition, later identified as the European Union.

This brings us to the second theory, which connects the modern European Union (EU) with the seventh empire of prophecy, continuing a "short space." It is noted that many of the EU's membership nations were historically a part of the ancient Roman Empire, and since the seventh empire is a continual succession of the other, then the seventh, or the EU, is linked with the sixth (Imperial Rome). Since the Holy Roman Empire existed for more than 840 years, this empire cannot be the empire continuing a "short space," as mentioned by John. The EU, originally called the European Economic Community, was built on the foundation of the European coal and steel communities and was set up to help unite Europe, to prevent the many wars in Europe, and to establish peace. The EU began with six nations and has grown to twenty-eight member nations.[2] Since John says the seventh will continue a "short space," some suggest that the EU's currency, the euro, and the leaders of the EU nations will rule and control the economic strategies of Europe for a short time but eventually be swallowed up by the eighth and final kingdom of the Antichrist.

There is also a third theory. Some westerners are unaware that in the past, Islam forged a major empire in the Middle East.

The Ottoman Turks conquered the Byzantines in a battle in Constantinople in 1299 and seized the largest Christian church in the empire, turning it into a mosque. The Turks spread their influence and dominion throughout northern Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, and southern Russia. At one time the Ottoman Turkish Empire was as large as the ancient Roman Empire. From 1299 to 1923 the world—especially the Middle East, northern Africa, and southeastern Europe—dealt with the Turks.

Just after World War I the Turks invaded Armenia, killing at least 1.5 million Armenians, many of whom were Christians. In 1917 the grip of the Ottoman Turkish Empire began to slip, as evidenced when British commander General Allenby conquered Palestine in 1917.[3] Eventually the Americans, French, and British became the main players in dominating the politics and economies of northern Africa and much of the Middle East. The discovery of oil in 1908 in Persia was the beginning of Western influence. The West needed oil, and the Arab nations of the Middle East needed the money to become more than a tribe of nomads living in the desert. Prosperity was hidden in the liquid black gold of the desert, and Western oil companies drilled in the sand dunes, turning oil into a cash flow. The Gulf States befriended the West for bringing them needed technology that created untold wealth.

Oil wealth linked the Islamic Gulf States in the East to Western nations, and relations focused on prosperity and growth. The West was appreciated and admired by the Islamic kings and princes of the Middle Eastern Gulf States. However, the clear skies turned ominously dark in 1948 when Britain and

America participated in re-forming the nation of Israel and handing a partitioned Palestine back to the Jews. Since the demise of the Ottoman Empire, Islamic eyes have scanned the global horizon looking for an expected "white horse rider" who will unite the Muslims under a new Islamic caliph.

Since the Ottoman Turkish Empire began in 1299 and continued until 1923 (624 years), it is unlikely that it is the seventh prophetic empire, which continues for only "a short space." We know that Rome was divided between East and West, with Rome leading the West and Turkey leading the East. However, the ten kings are leaders in the future and not leaders from the past.

Please notice that although Imperial Rome collapsed, the Roman Church united the church with the state and maintained spiritual and political dominion throughout areas of Europe. The Byzantine Empire ruled from the East and continued its dominion for over a thousand years. Then the Holy Roman Empire was forged. Thus, in some form or another, a Roman form of government and system has continued throughout history since the time of Christ.

I believe the best choice for the seventh empire that forms in the last days prior to the rise of the Antichrist is linked to the European Union, since most of the present EU nations were a part of the imperial Roman Empire. For the first time since the Roman Empire was divided under Constantine, Europe has been united under one banner, with one currency, and with one open border. The EU is heavily influenced by the West and will eventually be overrun by forces from the East.

THE RISE OF THE EIGHTH KINGDOM

Following the "short-spaced" seventh empire, an eighth and final prophetic empire will emerge during the latter time called the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21). This eighth and final empire consists of a coalition of ten kings who will hand over their authority to one man, identified by scholars as the Antichrist. This eight-kingdom coalition will dominate world affairs for forty-two months, as Daniel predicted: " . . . and they shall be given into his hand until a time [one year] and times [two years] and the dividing of time [six months]" (Dan. 7:25, KJV; see also Dan. 12:7). This final forty-two months is set to occur at the conclusion of a seven-year time frame identified as the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21). It will include a time of trouble for Israel such as the nation has never experienced (Dan. 12:1).

When carefully examining all of the details given in the Bible and in the commentaries of the early fathers concerning the rise of the Antichrist and his "beast kingdom" and comparing them with certain Islamic apocalyptic expectations of their final awaited one, it is obvious that the biblical description of this final dictator is eerily similar to an anticipated Islamic man that Muslims believe will arise at the end of days. Identified by Muslims as the *Mahdi*, according to Islamic traditions and beliefs handed down concerning this future leader, this man will unite Islam under one empire, which parallels prophecies about the biblical Antichrist.

In the following chapters we will take a closer look at this eight-kingdom coalition and its prophetic leader. There are similarities between biblical prophecy and Muslim traditions

that are interesting to explore. Recognizing these similarities and studying what it means to us today can help to reveal the truth of what lies ahead for our world.

SECTION II

THE ISLAMIC CONNECTION TO END-TIMES PROPHECY

CHAPTER 3

THE RETURN OF BABYLON

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

—DANIEL 2:41–42

I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

—DANIEL 7:8

DANIEL WAS THE first major Old Testament prophet to actually unveil details of the final empire that would arise at the time of the end. This revelation of the kingdom of the beast is revealed in several major prophetic dreams and visions recorded in the Book of Daniel. This Hebrew prophet was living in Babylon at the time the first dream was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. The three main dreams/visions are:

1. Daniel 2—the dream of a metallic image given to King Nebuchadnezzar

2. Daniel 7—the vision of a beast with ten horns

3. Daniel 8—the vision of a little horn (final leader)

First, let's carefully examine the Daniel 2 account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. During the night the Babylonian king saw a large image of a man, which consisted of various grades of metal, beginning with gold at the head and concluding with a mix of iron and clay feet with ten toes (Dan. 2:31–35). The image had:

- A head of gold
- A chest and two arms of silver
- Thighs made of brass
- Two legs of iron
- Two feet that were a mixture of iron and clay
- Ten toes that were a mixture of iron and clay

The ancient Persians had a strange belief in seven levels of heaven. The first level was made of lead, the second of tin, the third of copper, the fourth of iron, the fifth was a mix, the sixth was of silver, and the seventh was made of gold. The Persian belief started with the lesser metal and went up to the most precious metal last.[1] In Nebuchadnezzar's dream the image begins with the most precious metal at the top and concludes with the least valuable at the bottom.

Around 700 BC the Greek poet Hesiod divided humanity into five different ages—consisting of gold, silver, bronze, heroic (the only nonmetal age), and iron.[2] In other writings the world's spiritual history is divided into gold, silver, steel, and *mixed iron* ages, moving it from the age of *revelation* to the age of *apostasy*!

THE METALLIC IMAGE IN DANIEL 2

Nebuchadnezzar's vision is a mix of both world history and spiritual history and moves from gold to iron and clay. This image with its metals represented the major empires of prophecy that would begin in Daniel's day with Babylon and conclude with a ten-king coalition that would be ruling the world at the return of the Messiah. History has interpreted the meaning.

The head of gold

The head of gold represented Babylon, the empire responsible for destroying the temple and taking the Jews captive. The Babylonians were known for their gold wealth. One hundred years after the death of King Nebuchadnezzar an ancient historian wrote that he had never seen so much gold as was in Babylon. One temple, the Temple of Belus, had an eighteen-foot human statue of solid gold. There were also statues of two golden lions and one golden image of Ishtar. Inside the temple there was a forty-foot-long golden table, on which were placed three golden religious objects weighing a total of five thousand pounds. No wonder Babylon was called "the golden city."

The chest and arms of silver

The second empire, following Babylon, was Media-Persia. This empire is represented on the image by the chest and arms of silver. It was the Media-Persian Empire that allowed the Jews to return to Israel and rebuild their homes and temple. Silver was an important metal to the Persians, since their taxes were to be paid in silver. It is said that the Persians also placed silver harnesses on their horses.

The thighs of brass

The third empire was Greece, under the command of the military genius Alexander the Great. The Grecians were typified by the imagery of thighs of brass on the image. The armies of the Greeks used brass helmets and weaponry in their conflicts.

It was the Grecian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes who defiled the temple, filling it with pagan idols, placing a Hellenistic priest in the temple, and requiring the sacrifice of pigs on the altar.

The legs of iron

The Roman Empire, identified by the legs of iron, followed the Grecians. Iron has a twofold meaning: it was a metal the Romans mastered for use in their chariots and weapons, and it also typifies war and fighting, which was a central feature when the Romans set out to conquer new territory. The Romans destroyed the temple for a second time and took the Jews captive.

The metallic image in the king's dream stands on two iron legs, which predicted a two-division split in the Roman Empire. The process began in AD 395 when the Roman Empire was divided between the East (one leg) and the West (the other leg). In 476 the West (Rome) fell to the Germanic tribes, but the eastern leg became the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantines ruled out of Constantinople, Turkey, and built churches in Palestine commemorating many of the Christian holy sites. While the Roman Church maintained dominion throughout much of Western Europe through the influence of the popes and cardinals of the Roman Church, the Byzantines exercised influence over much of the East, including Palestine and Jerusalem, during a period of one thousand years.

Eventually the eastern (Byzantine) branch of the leg of Rome fell into the hands of Muslim Turks in 1453. An Islamic empire known as the Ottoman Turkish Empire ruled from Palestine from 1517 to 1917. After seizing control of Palestine and Jerusalem in 1517, the Turks began rebuilding the upper walls of the old city of Jerusalem. The Turkish power continued until the early twentieth century. During the peak of its authority this empire stretched over three continents and contained twenty-nine

provinces. This empire succeeded both the Roman and Byzantine legs of the Roman Empire. Eventually Palestine and Jerusalem were occupied by the British, who crushed the Turkish rule after four hundred years.

The Ottoman Empire was the seat of the Islamic caliphate until 1923 when it was abandoned and replaced by the Republic of Turkey, today known as the country of Turkey. Since 1923 Muslims worldwide have dreamed of the time when a *holy man* will arise and restore Islam to its glory days of influence, experienced during the days following Muhammad and the times of the Ottoman Empire.

The feet, a mixture of iron and clay

As time and history move forward, the metals become less in value and weaker in strength. The king saw two legs of iron that eventually turned into two feet of iron and clay, representing Rome and Turkey and the final East-West division.

The division of the iron and clay

Iron is mentioned ninety-five times in the King James Version of the Old Testament and is used when referring to weapons. Thus, iron is a picture of war, strength, and fighting. The word *clay* is used twenty-seven times in the English translation, identifying a clay jar, a clay seal, a clay house, and, in this reference, clay feet.

If we examine history, we can begin to see the possible interpretation of the iron and the clay mixture of the Roman Empire divided into two divisions—the East and the West.

These divisions can be observed in:

- The Roman Empire division
- The Roman religious division
- The Roman political division
- The Roman spiritual divisions

The Roman split placed Rome on one leg and Constantinople on the other. Both Rome and Constantinople came into play when Constantine legalized Christianity in the Roman Empire. Both Rome and Constantinople were built on seven hills, and Constantinople was called the "new Rome."

There was both a political and a religious split in the empire. The Catholic Church was the main force from Rome, and the Orthodox branch of the church eventually evolved after a split in the eleventh century.

In contemporary times the iron and the clay also became visible through Communism and democracy. In fact, Communism was known as "the Iron Curtain." With the decline of Russia, in so many nations today we can now see the iron of Islam clashing with the clay of democracy.

> And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.
>
> —DANIEL 2:42–43

Contemporary history has become the interpreter of the two

feet. The clay represents democracy, and the iron is a part of a kingdom that uses war, fighting, and its strength to control. Beginning with the decline of the Ottoman Empire, another political/military force entered the world stage at the conclusion of World War I—Communism. This movement out of Russia eventually grew into an atheistic, anti-God, anti-Christian belief system that rules its people with an iron fist. Their national symbol was the (iron) hammer and the sickle, and those living in its bondage were said to be behind the Iron Curtain. For seventy years, from 1917 to 1987, the iron fist of Communism clashed with the clay of democracy, crushing any democratic opposition. Iron ruled in the East, and clay (democracy) in the West.

In the late 1980s with the fall of Poland, the Berlin Wall, and, eventually, the breakup of the Soviet Union, another iron kingdom that was scattered across the Middle East began to pull together like metal attracted to a magnet. Their common vision was to defeat Israel and remove the Jews from Palestinian lands. This new iron was the fanatical branch of the Islamic religion, which preached a call to jihad (a holy war for the Islamic cause). These radicals wanted to unite Islam and strategically defeat Israel and her Western allies. Once again we see where the clay of democracy is strong in the West and the iron is rising out of the (Middle) East.

The clay democracies of America and Britain have led the charge to reform Afghanistan, Pakistan, and nations in the Middle East into flourishing democracies. However, the iron and the clay are not mingling well. Islamic militants and strict followers of Islamic law will not permit liberal democratic ideas

to mingle with the strict observance of Islamic law and tradition. To devout Islam, democracy is too soft. Secular democracies allow alcohol, something forbidden among Muslims. Women in democratic nations often expose their bodies in an immodest fashion, something again forbidden in a strict Islamic culture. As the West attempts to liberate Islamic nations using democracy as the weapon, the clay is not mixing with the strict iron of Islam. I believe this is why Daniel said that the iron and the clay will not mix (Dan. 2:43).

The ten toes, made of a mixture of iron and clay

At the conclusion of the age at the time of the end, the image is standing on two feet with ten toes. These two feet are a mixture of iron and clay. Therefore, in prophetic symbolism, one foot is East and one foot is West. The early father Hippolytus comments on these:

> As these things, then, are in the future, and as the toes of the image are equivalent to (so many) democracies, and the ten horns of the fourth beast are distributed over ten kingdoms . . . [3]

The ten toes are ten future kings. It appears that five will emerge from the West and five from the East, since the two legs and two feet identify the East and West. Scholars have long debated the identity of the ten kings the ten toes represent. They are certainly a coalition of end-time nations prior to the return of Christ. Many prophecy teachers have taught that the Common Market (now the European Union) would be the fulfillment of this prophecy. In 1951 the Treaty of Paris was signed, creating the European Coal and Steel Community

(ECSC). This stirred prophetic interest, since coal came out of the clay of the earth, and steel was made from iron ore (thus the iron and the clay).

One purpose for the creation of the ECSC was to unify nations in Europe to prevent further war. In 1957 the Treaty of Rome was signed, creating the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community. Eventually a common economic market was set up in Europe. There were six original member countries: France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg.

In 1981 Greece became the tenth member to join, and prophetic teachers began sounding the trumpet, warning North America that the ten kings of prophecy had formed. However, the trumpet became a more muffled sound as more than ten nations have since united with the EU coalition. By 2013 there were twenty-eight nations in the coalition, with more waiting in the wings to join.

I believe the EU is part of the seventh empire that continues a short space, but I do not agree that it is the eighth empire with the final ten kings. There are three facts that present a challenge in making the EU the final ten kings of prophecy. First, as stated, there are more than ten nations in the EU, with many others planning to join in the future. Second, the present nations in the EU are predominately Western nations from the Western side of the Roman Empire. The two toes and ten kings must be both East and West. It is pointed out that the EU is a continuation of the old Roman Empire. Third, take a look at the other nations that were a part of the old Roman Empire and which are NOT presently a part of the EU:

1. Egypt
2. Ethiopia
3. Israel
4. Lebanon
5. Syria
6. Parts of Iraq
7. Turkey
8. Jordan
9. Morocco

These nations were all part of the Roman territory when John wrote the Apocalypse (the Book of Revelation) and, with the exception of Israel, are all Islamic nations today; yet eighteen hundred years ago these regions were all under the occupation, control, or influence of the emperors of Rome. I have often said, "Some prophecy teachers have all ten toes growing out of one foot—the Western one," which would be the case if we force a belief that the EU is the sole fulfillment of Daniel's ten toes.

One explanation is that most of the above nations will eventually join the EU and use the euro currency, which may be possible with the demise or decline of the US dollar. Or the ten kings may actually be a combination of Islamic nations (some listed above) that will form a ten-nation coalition and give their Islamic nations over to the Antichrist to form one

unit of ten kings.

The rising of the ten kings

Some prophets identify the leaders of this ten-nation coalition as the ten kings mentioned in Daniel 7:24 and Revelation 17:12. Democratic nations like America elect one person as president. The Romans gave their leader the title of emperor. Britain and Israel speak of their leaders as prime minister. The only area in the world where the governmental leaders are still identified as kings is in the Islamic Persian Gulf, with such leaders as the king of Saudi Arabia. Seven of the Gulf nations are called *emirates*. Several have a prince who oversees their nation. The kingdom of Jordan also has a king and a monarchy form of government. This may be another clue as to the identity of the Antichrist, as he is called "the prince who is to come . . . " (Dan. 9:26).

The Persian Gulf is a major sea through which much of the world's oil travels on oil tankers. This prophetic beast could rise up not only out of the *sea* of nations but also from the literal nations that are surrounded by the Persian Gulf.

It is during the days of these ten kings when "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44).

THE VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

The second prophetic vision is recorded in Daniel 7. This vision describes four animals, each representing a different prophetic empire. Daniel saw, " . . . the four winds of heaven

were stirring up the Great Sea" (v. 2). The "Great Sea" is identified as an early name for what is today the Mediterranean Sea—the great ocean linking northern Africa, Israel, Turkey, Italy, and Spain.

The four beasts in the vision represent empires that would have dominion over the nations surrounding the sea. The first beast was a lion with two wings, which is traditionally identified as Babylon (v. 4). In the time of ancient Babylon there were carved statues of creatures with human heads and the bodies of winged lions called *lamassu*, which were positioned at the entrances of temples and gates. Two winged lions are carved at the corners of the gates of Xerxes at Persepolis in Iran. When a winged lion was carved with an open book, it meant peace, but one with a closed book meant war.

The second beast in succession was a bear and is historically linked to the second empire of biblical prophecy—the Persian Empire (v. 5). History reveals that some of the largest bears in the world came from the mountains of Persia. The bear in Nebuchadnezzar's vision had three ribs in its mouth (v. 5), representing the three nations the Persians overthrew—Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt. The Book of Daniel mentions the Persian king Cyrus's victory over the Babylonians.

The third apocalyptic creature is identified as a leopard with four wings (v. 6). The leopard is known for its speed. This accurately describes the swiftness with which the third empire—Greece, led by Alexander the Great—defeated the Persians and moved its headquarters to Babylon. Alexander expanded

his empire from Egypt to India.

The fourth and final beast is the most important to us and the most interesting. There is no physical description of a specific animal given by Daniel, other than this: " . . . a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns" (v. 7). This fourth beast fits the imagery of the imperial Roman Empire.

Some may suggest that the interpretation of these beasts is a more contemporary interpretation, written long after the fact. However, one of the earliest Christian theologians, Hippolytus (170–236), pastor of the church at Rome and familiar with the prophetic interpretations, taught that the meanings of these animals were:[4]

> • The lion was Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar was the head on the image. The two wings on the lion represented the glory that was taken from Nebuchadnezzar but restored after his breakdown.
>
> • The bear was the Medes and Persians, and the three ribs in the mouth of the bear represented Media, Persia, and Babylon.
>
> • The leopard was Alexander the Great, and the four wings represented the four divisions of the empire after his death.
>
> • The nondescriptive beast was Rome. The ten toes are ten kings that arise out of the Roman area.

This interpretation has remained the primary interpretation by traditional Christian prophetic teachers for centuries. These four beasts are the four successive empires of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

THE LITTLE HORN

The apocalyptic literature of both Daniel and Revelation allude to a beast that had ten horns on the head (Dan. 7:7–8, 20, 24; Rev. 13:1; 17:3, 12). Horns can represent a kingdom, a king, or a superior authority. The horns on the head of the apocalyptic beast are identified as ten kingdoms ruled by ten kings.

> And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.
>
> —DANIEL 7:24, KJV

> The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.
>
> —REVELATION 17:12

Daniel saw one man identified as a "little horn" (leader) who will arise in the midst of the ten. He is described in Daniel's vision.

> I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.
>
> —DANIEL 7:8

> And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land.
>
> —DANIEL 8:9

This little horn, which has "eyes like the eyes of a man," is symbolic of a person who will become the final world dictator. The term "little horn" is unique. It could allude to his physical size as being small in stature. It may also refer to his authority being diminished and small, and yet, through his "big mouth," he will gain authority and influence. He will have a "mouth speaking great things" (Dan. 7:8, KJV) and shall "speak great words against the most High" (v. 25, KJV). This little horn will also uproot or take over three of the ten kings (v. 8). Daniel mentions that Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia will be the three nations that he will overthrow (Dan. 11:43). Several early fathers also identify these three nations in northern Africa as being the three nations that the Antichrist will root up when he rises to power. All three of these nations are presently Islamic in nature, with all three having a small Christian population.

THE COMMAND CENTER OF THE BEAST

With many nations involved, where will the beast set up his command center headquarters? Daniel was the first biblical prophet to see three empires compared to the beast resembling a lion, a bear, and a leopard. More than six hundred years later John saw the final beast's empire, which was the same nondescriptive beast Daniel saw with ten horns on its head. John gave a very graphic description and revealed that the last beast's kingdom is a combination of the beast empires revealed

by Daniel!

> Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.
>
> —REVELATION 13:2

The lion of Daniel was ancient Babylon (Dan. 7:4). Today this area consists of Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. The bear of Persia (v. 5) today includes the nations of Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The ancient Greek Empire, symbolized by the leopard (v. 6), would today include all of the above, including Macedonia and Turkey. With the exception of Greece, all the nations listed above have one common thread—they are Islamic nations, controlled by Islamic governments. It is clear that this end-time beast's kingdom is a united coalition of Islamic nations or the formation of a long-awaited Islamic crescent that will stretch from Pakistan in the east all the way to Egypt in the northern horn of Africa. The nations would include but not be limited to:

- Afghanistan
- Pakistan
- Iran
- Iraq
- Syria
- Lebanon
- Egypt

- Libya
- Ethiopia
- Greece
- Macedonia

FURTHER EVIDENCE OF ISLAMIC CONTROL

The body of the beast was a leopard, the imagery identifying the kingdom of Greece. After the death of Alexander the Great, his (Grecian) empire was divided among his four main generals (Dan. 11:4). Each of Alexander's four generals received a portion of the massive landmass that had been conquered and controlled by the Greek Empire. The four generals and the areas they ruled from are:

THE GENERAL	THE REGION	THE PRESENT AREA
Ptolemy	Egypt and northern Africa	Egypt, Libya, and North Africa
Seleucus	Assyria and Babylon	Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq
Lysimachus	Turkey	Turkey and southern Russia
Cassander	Greece and Macedonia	Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania

After seeing this four-part division of the Greek Empire, Daniel gives a clue as to the area from which the coming Antichrist would arise:

> And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.
>
> —DANIEL 8:9, KJV

The Antichrist arises from one of the following four divisions of the former Greek Empire:

1. Egypt—home of the ancient Egyptian Empire

2. Turkey—home of the one-thousand-year Turkish Empire

3. Greece and Macedonia—home of the ancient Greek Empire

4. Syria and Iraq— home of the ancient Babylonian Empire

We are informed that the Antichrist will invade northern Africa, seizing Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia (Dan. 11:43). We read that, during a series of wars, "But news from the east and the north shall trouble him" (v. 44). During this time in prophetic history the northern king will be Turkey, one of the strongest Islamic nations in the Middle East. If Turkey comes against the Antichrist, then he obviously is not headquartered in Turkey. If he invades from the outside and takes over northern Africa, then neither is his headquarters centered there. That leaves the

region of Greece or Syria-Babylon.

The best choice among the four locations from a biblical and historical viewpoint is the Syria-Babylon territory. For centuries scholars have observed numerous prophecies indicating the rise of a leader from the Assyrian territory. Biblical prophecy also links him to Babylon.

THE DEADLY WOUND

John's last prophetic beast was a seven-headed creature with ten horns. These seven heads allude to the seven empires of past and future Bible prophecy. (Remember, five empires had already fallen in John's day, and one was—but John was also seeing a future king, the seventh head.) Out of these seven major prophetic empires, one of the "heads" was wounded to the point of death, but he would revive.

> And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.
>
> —REVELATION 13:3

I have heard ministers explain this prediction to mean that the Antichrist will be shot in the head and be raised from the dead to the amazement of the masses. The big challenge with this interpretation is the text itself, which reads "one of his heads," not "his head." Any man has just one head, but a kingdom has many heads, or leaders, within that kingdom.

There are three possible meanings as to the interpretation of one of the seven heads being wounded. The word *wound* here

means “to maim or slay violently, like an animal.” It implies a sudden blow that defeats one of the heads on the beast. Some use this passage to teach that the Antichrist will receive a physical wound to his head and die, but he will supernaturally be resurrected from the dead as a *demonic resurrection* to imitate the resurrection of Christ.

Another school of thought believes that the Antichrist will take a major military defeat at the midway point in the Tribulation, and then suddenly, near the point of complete defeat, he will be reenergized and will seize opposing nations, annexing them into his kingdom. One reason to suggest this interpretation is in Revelation 13:4, where the world “wonders after the beast” and says, “Who can make war against the beast?” The Antichrist will amaze the world with his ability to fight and conquer nations.

The third and most plausible meaning is that one of the previous seven kingdoms (one of the beast’s heads) was mortally wounded. Notice, one of the *heads*, and not one of the horns, is wounded. The horns represent the individual kings, and the heads allude to earthly prophetic kingdoms. The emphasis is not on the Antichrist as such, but upon one of the beast’s heads or one of the seven empires of prophecy. As previously stated, the seven empires are as follows:

1. Egypt
2. Assyria
3. Babylon
4. Media-Persia

5. Greece

6. Rome

7. The East-West Division

Out of the above list, which empire or nation no longer exists? The Egyptian empire faded in glory after the departure of the Hebrews, but the nation of Egypt still exists. The Assyrians, presently called Syria, exist but with little to no influence on the global scene. The Persians are today called the Iranians, and the Iranian people still consider themselves to be Persians, not Arabs. Greece is a contemporary nation and part of the EU. Italy, whose capital is Rome, is a nation among world nations and the headquarters for the Roman Catholic Church, centered in Vatican City in Rome. Even Turkey continues to exist with the same name of its former empire. Only one of the previous empires of the ancient world no longer exists in name, and that is Babylon.

BABYLON—BACK FROM THE DEAD

The Tower of Babel built by Nimrod, mentioned in Genesis 11, is the beginning of the kingdom of Babel (Gen. 10:10). Centuries later Nebuchadnezzar constructed one of the world's most elaborate cities off the Tigris River in Mesopotamia. This is the Babylon where Daniel penned the Book of Daniel during his time as a Jewish captive.

Although the name *Babylon* is the ancient name of an empire of prophecy, the area of Babylon was called by that name five hundred years after the Jews returned from captivity.

In 1 Peter 5:13 Peter addressed "the church that is in Babylon . . . " (KJV). The name *Babylon* is mentioned six times from Matthew's Gospel to 1 Peter 5:13, and in each reference it alludes to Babylon, the capital of Chaldea. John in Revelation mentions the name of Babylon six times, referring to a spiritual Babylon (Mystery Babylon—Rev. 17:5), and predicts the economic collapse of Babylon. Why does John use the name Babylon when alluding to the future destruction of a city built on seven hills (Rev. 17:9)?

The present territory of Iraq is the same region of the ancient political Babylon of the Bible. The early name was the land of Shinar, the site of the first megastructure called the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11). Centuries later the prophet Zechariah saw and was given dimensions of a flying scroll. Using the measure of one cubit to equal twenty-five inches, the scroll was forty-one feet eight inches long and twenty feet ten inches in diameter.

This scroll recorded a curse that consumed the timbers and the stones of a house. The prophet peered into the future and saw an *ephah* (basket) with a lead lid covering it, weighing one talent (122 pounds). Inside the basket was a woman who was called "Wickedness." She was being carried by two angel-like beings with wings to a foundation located in the plains of Shinar (Zech. 5:1–11). Today there is a section of flat land near Baghdad called Shinar. This is the area referred to in the vision of Zechariah.

When commenting on this strange prediction in the 1940s, biblical scholar Finis Dake, in the side notes in his *Annotated Bible*, commented:

> One thing is certain—Babylon will be the center of activities in the East during the last days, in commerce, religion, and politics. It will be rebuilt and become the capital of the Antichrist. He will come from Syria, which will take in Babylon in those days, for the Syrian division of the old Grecian empire included all the countries of Syria and Iraq.[5]

Babylon is also a theme in the prophecy of Isaiah. Isaiah exposed the fall of Lucifer (Satan) from heaven in Isaiah 14:12–15. God then predicts the defeat of Babylon and how He will break the rod of Assyria out of the land of Israel (Isa. 14:22, 25). The prophecy suddenly takes an abrupt turn from an Assyrian prophecy to a prophecy against Palestina:

> Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia, because the rod that struck you is broken; for out of the serpent's roots will come forth a viper, and its offspring will be a fiery flying serpent.
>
> —ISAIAH 14:29

Palestina is the ancient name of the area where the Philistines once ruled in Israel. One of the theological definitions identifies "the general territory on the West coast of Canaan, or the entire country of Palestine."[6] In the prophetic future the leaders of both Assyria and Babylon will be deeply involved with people living in Palestine. Out of this Palestinian conflict will come forth a "fiery flying serpent." The only place in Scripture where the symbolism of a fire-colored serpent is found is in Revelation 12 where John saw: "And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads" (Rev. 12:3). This dragon is Satan, and the seven heads are the

seven empires of prophecy, each of which had a strong demonic *prince* spirit attempting to control the spiritual atmosphere and governmental leaders of these empires (Dan. 10:20).

I believe the event of the Palestinians forging a Palestinian state and the resulting conflict surrounding this event will initiate many of the wars between Israel and her Muslim neighbors.

CHAPTER 4

ISLAM 101—WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

. . . which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

—GALATIANS 4:24–26

THOSE LIVING IN the West often struggle to understand why millions of Muslims have such hatred for the Jewish people. Until 9/11 many Americans knew nothing about Muslims or the Islamic religion. The founder of the Islamic religion, Muhammad, whose name means "the praised one," was born in 570 and was from Arabia.

Muhammad claimed he received a series of visions and revelations from Allah, which became the basis of the Islamic

holy book called the Quran. Muhammad was from the Quraysh tribe, which claimed to be direct descendants from Abraham through his son Ishmael. Muhammad's father, Abdullah, died before Muhammad was born. His mother, Amina, died when Muhammad was six. He was raised by his uncle and traveled with caravans throughout Syria and Arabia. At age twenty-five he married a wealthy widow named Khadija and had six children through her.

Muhammad lived near Mecca, a settlement in Arabia. It was a community situated at the center of the north/south and east/west caravan routes. Arabian merchants covered the area with beds, food, stables for camels, and other services. Mecca also contained a 140-foot-deep well with crystal-clear water. Called ZamZam, the well was believed to cure illnesses. This well drew people from far and near to Mecca.

The other distinguishing mark of Mecca was a large black rock, different from all others in the area. No one knew how it got there, and the caravans were afraid of it. (It was probably a meteorite.) Those living in Mecca built a large cube-shaped stone building over the rock called the *Kaaba* (meaning "cube" in Arabic). On the stone the local inhabitants of Mecca had placed statues of different gods and goddesses. Muhammad's grandfather was the keeper of the keys to the Kaaba.

Before Muhammad's time Mecca had become a tourist attraction for the caravans. Each year pilgrims traveled to Mecca to drink of the special springs and kiss the black stone. The local people charged money for visitors who wanted to kiss the rock for good luck.

By the fifth century the tribe members of Quraysh were the

guardians of the Kaaba and were the dominant tribe in Mecca. This tribe provided the arrangements for all pilgrims visiting the Kaaba, and the senior members of the group collected the income from the pilgrims. At the time of Muhammad there were 360 different idols sitting on the black stone in the Kaaba.[1] It was in this spiritual setting that Muhammad began praying and fasting at age forty.

As Muhammad grew, he spent time on the hills outside the city of Mecca, in Arabia. Beginning in the year 610, at age forty, he claimed to have heard a voice speaking to him while praying in a cave above Mecca. Fearful, he ran home, where his wife wrapped him in a blanket. Then he heard the voice again, telling him that he was the chosen messenger of God to bring his people, the Arabs, the message of one God who controlled all things. He alleged to hear the voice saying, "You, wrapped in your mantle, arise and warn."

According to Muslim belief, Muhammad received a series of visions from an angel who he claimed was Gabriel. His early messages spoke of God's goodness and power, the need to return to God, and the final judgment that was coming. He declared that there was only one God, and his name in Arabic was Allah. It was taught that Allah was the same God worshipped by both Jews and Christians. As Muhammad preached his messages among the Arabs, those who chose to follow his teachings became known as Muslims, and the religion was called Islam, meaning "submission."

During Muhammad's time there was much idol worship throughout Arabia. There were theological divisions among Christians, and the Jews and Christians were at odds. In the

Arabian city of Mecca a conflict arose among the merchants at the Kaaba. If the people believed there was only one God, it would destroy the pilgrimages and the income from visitors who came to pray before their gods sitting on the stone. Many Arabs called Muhammad a liar, a fraud, and a false prophet. Eventually Muhammad and his new followers were forced from Mecca, and they moved to a new city where they were received. Muhammad named the city *Madinat al Nabi*, meaning, "City of the Prophet," today called Medina in Saudi Arabia.

Soon conflicts arose between followers of Muhammad in Medina and the people of Mecca. Muslim groups began raiding the caravans. Muhammad began teaching that if his followers died fighting, they would go straight to paradise. The eight-year war finally ceased when the people in Mecca gave in to the Muslims. Muhammad declared Allah to be the true God, removed the idols, and made Mecca the center for the Islamic religion. The pilgrimages to the Kaaba remained a central feature of his teachings, and today one of the five pillars of Islam requires a Muslim follower to pray at the Kaaba in Mecca at least one time before death. This is called the *hajj*. The Islamic religion began to sweep through Arabia, as every day more Arabs continued joining the religion.

At age sixty-two Muhammad began complaining of severe headaches and fever. Some Muslims believe he was poisoned by one of his wives, who was Jewish. He never recovered, and one day, after saying a few prayers, he passed away.

During his lifetime the followers of Muhammad claimed him to be a prophet. He brought forth a series of what believers call

"revelations." After the death of Muhammad his sayings were collected and placed in a book called the Quran. The Quran is considered to be the sacred revelations of Islam, just as the Bible is considered God's sacred revelation to Jews and Christians. The Quran contains 114 surahs, or chapters, starting with the longest surah and ending with the shortest. The surahs were the alleged revelations given to Muhammad over a twenty-two-year period. Muhammad was believed to be illiterate; therefore the revelations were written down by his followers as they heard him recite it. The words were written on leaves, pieces of parchment, and even dried bones. The Quran was compiled after Muhammad's death and written in the Arabic language.

Muslims believe that one hundred four sacred books were given by God to mankind. However, one hundred of these were given to Adam, Seth, Enoch, and Abraham and have been lost. The four remaining books are the books of Moses (or the Torah), the psalms of David, the Gospels of Christ, and the Quran. Other books contain the *hadith* (traditions), which are the teachings of Muhammad that were put together by followers who knew him personally. Fourteen hundred years later Islam claims an estimated 1.6 billion followers and is said to be the fastest growing religion in the world.[2]

While Muslims claim to accept the Torah, Psalms, and the four Gospels, they also claim the Bible has been *tahrif*, meaning, "corrupted" or "altered." Muslims believe that since Jesus did not write the Bible Himself, it is not accurate. Many stories in the Quran are very different from the stories in the Bible. For example, the Bible teaches that Abraham dwelt by

the trees of Mamre and built an altar there to the Lord (Gen. 13:18). The Quran teaches that Abraham said, "O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Your Sacred House [Kaaba]; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular Prayer . . . " (Surah 14:37). When asking a Muslim about the contradiction that Mamre is in Hebron and the Kaaba is in Arabia, a Muslim said, "The Quran is infallible. The Jews and Christians changed the Bible to make it fit for them." This is why witnessing to Muslims by simply quoting Scripture seldom wins them to Christ. It is love and the presence of the Holy Spirit that can impact their hearts.

Let me point out that this book is not intended to form a debate on the doctrines of Islam and Christianity. However, one will not understand how Islam will fulfill many of the Bible's predictions of an eighth kingdom that seeks to destroy Israel and the Jews unless one understands certain Islamic beliefs and traditions.

AFTER MUHAMMAD'S DEATH—TWO BRANCHES OF ISLAM

The death of Muhammad left a void in the leadership of the Islamic religion. He announced no successor; therefore the battle for the prophet's successor began immediately. The Muslim elders elected Muhammad's second convert and the oldest man in the group, Abu Bakr. Abu's title was caliph. Most Muslims accepted this decision, but a small minority did not. The smaller group believed that Ali, Muhammad's adopted son and the father of Muhammad's two grandsons, Hassan

and Hussein, should replace Muhammad. A struggle began that led to the deaths of many of Islam's first caliphs. As a result, two branches of Islam developed—the Sunnis and the Shiites. The Sunnis accepted Abu as successor, and the Shiites believed the heir to Muhammad was Ali.

Abu Bakr, the first caliph, brought the tribes of Arabia under Islamic rule. The second caliph, Omar (634–644), began an expansion that lasted for one hundred years. It was under Omar that the mosque in Jerusalem was built on the Temple Mount. During these hundred years Muslim armies extended the empire into Iraq, Iran, and parts of central Asia. As Syria came under Islamic control, the headquarters of the Umayyad dynasty (661–750) was Damascus, Syria.

The third caliph, Othman, was assassinated, thus causing a war between the Sunnis and the Shiites that continues off and on to this day. As the years progressed, several different Islamic dynasties arose, and the headquarters of the Shiites eventually became Baghdad, Iraq. It was in Karbala, Iraq, that Hussein, the son of Ali, was murdered along with seventy followers. Each year during the Islamic month of Muharram the Shiites commemorate the death of Ali.

The division not only split the religion into two branches, but it also caused a split in opinions as to where the headquarters of Islam should be. While all Muslims consider Mecca and Medina to be sacred places, the Sunnis claimed Mecca as their headquarters, and the Shiites moved from Damascus to Baghdad. Today Iran has become the strength of the Shiite branch, with 93 percent of its Muslim population as Shiite Muslims.[3]

THE SHIITES

The desire for the Iranians to take over Iraq may be based on more than a need to acquire oil or a desire to control a land closer to Israel. It appears to be rooted in the concept that the Mahdi will reappear in present-day Iraq. To Shiite Muslims, Iraq held an important role in its past history and will do so in its future.

For many years the countries of Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon have been inhabited predominantly by members of the Sunni Muslim sect. The more radical Shiite Muslims have been centered in the country of Iran. It has been a plan of the radical Muslims to overthrow the governments of Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria and form a huge Islamic crescent under the control of the Shiite group. Eventually Iraq will fall to radical Islam. Once radical Islamists control Iraq, they will have Syria in their back pocket! Lebanon was once an Arab Christian nation, but when radical Muslims took over the nation during the civil war of 1975–1990, many Arab Christians were forced to flee the country. Some were permitted into Israel, and others had to face severe persecution and even death at the hands of the fanatics. Today in Lebanon two radical Shiite groups—Hezbollah and Amal—are gaining ground in their desire to control the nation, populated by a larger majority of Shiite Muslims than Sunni Muslims.[4]

The Shiite Muslims are quite different from the Sunni Muslims for several reasons:

1. Many Shiite Muslims are involved heavily in

occult activities. They practice palm reading and the reading of tea leaves. Many Shiites celebrate Ashura, the anniversary of the murder of Muhammad's grandson Hussein thirteen hundred years ago, by beating themselves, slashing their backs with knives or their heads with nails, or piercing their bodies with a sword.[5]

2. The Shiite Muslims often display pictures of their imams, which is normally not done by the Sunnis. It would not be difficult to imagine seeing a group of Shiite Muslims, along with a group of apostate Christians, worshipping the image of the beast that will be brought to life through the demonic powers of the false prophet (Rev. 13:11–15).

3. Shiites have a strong desire to take Jerusalem and destroy Israel. They are constantly calling for jihad, which is a holy war against Israel and any other groups or religions opposing radical Islam.

For the following simple reasons I believe that out of a strong fanatical branch of Islam will come a man who will hold the world hostage with nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. It appears likely he will come from the Shiite branch of Islam.

1. The world's final dictator will, according to Daniel, "become strong with a small number of people" (Dan. 11:23). The Shiites only make up about 10–13 percent of the worldwide Muslim population.[6]

2. Daniel also indicates that the Antichrist will be "great . . . toward the east" (Dan. 8:9). East of Jerusalem, Israel, are the countries of Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, along with the southern Russian states. These territories are strongholds for the more radical Muslims. An estimated 93 percent of Muslims in Iran are Shiite Muslims.[7]

3. While many Sunni Muslims have Jewish friends and get along with Christians from the West, the Middle East Shiite Muslims have a tendency to be overtly anti-Semitic and consider America "the Great Satan." (It should be noted, however, that many members of al Qaeda are Sunni Muslims.)

I have heard Sunni Muslims in Israel and America say that the actions and thinking of radical Islamists are not truly representative of Islamic teachings and are perversions of the traditions. One Sunni in Israel said, "I hate the Shiites. They give everyone a bad name."

Today, the thread that ties the fabric of Islam together is the belief that Israel and Jerusalem will once again be in the total control of Muslims, with the Jews and Christians expelled permanently from the Holy Land.

CHAPTER 5

ISLAM AND THE LAST DAYS

Fight those who do not believe in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.

—SURAH 9:29

And when the Word is fulfilled against them (the unjust), We shall produce from the earth a Beast to (face) them: he will speak to them, for that mankind did not believe with assurance in Our Signs.

—SURAH 27:82

IT COMES AS a surprise to many to learn that Muslims have

strong traditions concerning the last days. Their expectations of what is coming in the future is eerily parallel to the biblical predictions of a final world empire controlled by a warlike military leader. In Israel I have met with both former Muslims and practicing Muslims to compile many of their beliefs relating to the last days. In the Quran the last days are noted by several terms:

- Day of uprising
- Day of separation
- Day of reckoning
- Day of awakening and sending forth
- The last day
- The encompassing day
- The hour

Many Muslims teach that the last days will be preceded by three trumpet blasts. At the first blast all creatures in heaven and the earth will be struck by terror. At the second blast all creatures in heaven and the earth will die. At the last blast, forty years after the first two blasts, all will be raised again for the judgment. The length of judgment will be one thousand years. (Some Islamic scholars say it will be fifty thousand years.)

ISLAM'S FINAL PROPHET—THE MAHDI

Years ago I was amazed to discover that Muslims believe they will one day control the entire world and everyone will convert to their religion. I was also disturbed to learn how most Muslims actually feel about Jews and the state of Israel, especially the strong feelings among Muslims living in the Middle East.

The split between the two divisions of Islam—Sunni and Shiite—eventually became so great that eleven of the twelve early leaders of Islam from the Shiite branch were poisoned or killed by their opposition. According to Shiite belief, it is this twelfth leader who will play a role at the end of days.

Many Shiites in Iran have a teaching called the doctrine of the Twelver. The twelfth imam was the son of the eleventh imam, who at a young age was destined to be a chosen imam of the Shiite branch but disappeared and was never heard from again.

Since the graves of the other eleven are known and the grave of the twelfth has never been discovered, the tradition states that the twelfth caliph has been supernaturally protected by God for the past twelve hundred years. Most say he is in a desert in Arabia. Still others believe he is in Iraq. Since the disappearance of the twelfth imam, the Shiite sect has been expecting this twelfth prophet to reappear at the end of days and become the final unifier of Islam. Called the Mahdi, this man, according to Islamic tradition, will be a military expert who will bring the world under the control of Islamic law and justice.

THE MYSTERIOUS COMING OF IMAM AL-MAHDI

The word *Mahdi* translates as "the guided one." The Shiites believe the Mahdi will be guided so directly by God that he will be divinely protected by God from all error and sin in all he does. He will interpret Islam to all men and lead the final Islamic revolution that will convert the world to the Islamic faith. Shiites believe the Mahdi will be both a political and military leader of great conquest.

There are numerous traditions concerning this mysterious person. The Islamic holy book, the Quran, has little to say concerning this person. Most traditions about the Mahdi developed in the eighth century or later. While both the Sunni and the Shiite branches have a teaching on the Mahdi, the Shiites have the strongest teaching, believing he will appear toward the end of the world. Below is a list of teachings from Islamic tradition concerning the Mahdi and the end of days.

- His name will be Muhammad, and he will trace his lineage as a direct descendant through Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad.
- The name of his father and Muhammad's father will be the same.
- He will have the disposition of Muhammad.
- He will have a bald forehead and a high, hooked nose.
- He will have a distinctive mole (the "mark of a prophet") and a V-shaped aperture between his front teeth.

- He will appear just before the end of the world, during a time of great difficulty.
- He will convert the world to the Islamic faith.

Most Muslims believe the Mahdi will arise from the East. Other traditions state that this man will unite Muslims into a single united kingdom. If men do not submit to his teaching and instruction, he will beat them into submission until they return to Allah. Of course, those who rebel against him will meet a swift death by the sword of Islam. Many Islamic nations still behead people for certain crimes. Years ago a former CIA agent who attended my father's church was in Saudi Arabia when a group of men were buried in the sand with their heads protruding from the ground. The heads of the offenders were literally snapped from their bodies by using a bulldozer with blades and covered with sand.[1]

Other Islamic traditions further enlighten us concerning the expectations of Muslims about the coming Mahdi:

- The Syrian army will attack him but will be destroyed in the desert. When this happens, both Iran and Syria will unite to pledge their allegiance to him.
- He will take Turkey through force.
- After uniting all of Islam, he will then take over the entire world in the name of Islam. Muhammad predicted the conquest of Spain, which some believe will occur under the Mahdi.

• Under the Mahdi's leadership there will be great prosperity, including gold and silver for his faithful followers.

• After all of this is accomplished, the Mahdi will rule for five, seven, or nine years (depending upon which tradition is followed), and then the end of the world will come, followed by the judgment of Allah.

When one studies the expectations of Muslims, there are amazing links between their traditions of the Mahdi and the prophecies given by biblical prophets. For example, I have compared Islamic traditions about the Mahdi to biblical references regarding the Antichrist—the world's final world dictator. Some Muslims would not appreciate such a comparison, but other Muslims with whom I have shared this comparison were almost shocked by the parallels between the twelve-hundred-year-old Islamic beliefs and the ancient prophecies of the Bible concerning the world's last dictator:

MUSLIM BELIEF	BIBLE PROPHECY
The Mahdi will unite the Muslim world.	The Antichrist will bring ten kings under his subjection (Rev. 17:12).
	The prophet Daniel predicted that the coming Antichrist "shall honor a

The Mahdi will bring gold and silver to his followers.	god . . . which his fathers did not know . . . with gold and silver" (Dan. 11:38).
The Mahdi, according to some traditions, will rule for seven years.	The Antichrist will come to his position early during the seven-year Tribulation (Dan. 9:27).
According to Islamic beliefs, the Mahdi will take over Turkey.	Daniel states that the "king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships" (Dan. 11:40). The "king of the north" during the Tribulation will be the nation of Turkey. Turkey will be in conflict with the Antichrist.
Syria and Iraq will submit to the Mahdi.	I believe there is biblical evidence that the Antichrist will come out of the area of Syria and Iraq, which is the territory of ancient Babylon.
	Daniel states the coming

Most Muslims believe the Mahdi will appear from the East.

Antichrist "grew exceedingly great . . . toward the east" (Dan. 8:9).

Muslims believe that after the appearing of the Mahdi, Jesus will reappear and will march into Jerusalem following this Islamic leader. Jesus will then announce He is a Muslim and not the Son of God and will convert the people to Islam. This is when the Mahdi will kill the *swine* (Jews) and remove the *cross* (alluding to killing Christians).

The Bible indicates a false prophet will arise following the Antichrist's taking Jerusalem captive, and both the Antichrist and false prophet will form a large religious following (Rev. 13:11–15).

THE SIGN OF WAR

The theme of war is predicted and anticipated in Islamic apocalyptic belief. It is predicted that a war will occur between the Eastern powers and the Western powers. Two European countries will also be attacked. Some Muslims note that Osama bin Laden initiated the beginning of the war between the East and the West with the 9/11 attacks on America. Since 9/11 both Spain and Britain have been attacked by terrorists, which some saw as the beginning of the attacks on the two European countries. Sheikh Nazim Adil al-Haqqani, world leader of the Naqshbandhia Order, said the following about the coming Mahdi:

> As believers of the traditions, we believe in a savior who will come first, before Jesus Christ. We have in our traditions his name, which is Muhammad d'ul Mahdi. He is coming, but his arrival will be after a great war. It will be the fight of the big powers with each other. And in that war the savior will come like a divine hand from heavens to the earth and stop the war.[2]

One of the important signs will be when an Islamic army is prepared for the arrival of the Mahdi. In Iraq the al Qaeda army has been replaced by the Mahdi army, called "the country's most dangerous accelerant of potentially self-sustaining sectarian violence" by the Pentagon.[3] Prior to the recent war in Iraq, I was eating lunch with a friend who serves as an officer in the US military. At that time he mentioned a cleric in Iraq who had approximately five hundred seminary students serving as an armed militia. Their leader, a black-turban-wearing religious cleric named Muqtada al-Sadr, is a Shiite Muslim with close ties to Iran. He is also a close friend with the leader of Hezbollah in Lebanon. Since the beginning of the recent war, al-Sadr's small army grew from five hundred to more than sixty thousand radical militia members.[4]

Why would this cleric form a Mahdi army? The Shiite Muslims believe the Mahdi will appear in Iraq. Al-Sadr is simply preparing the minds and hearts of his followers for the arrival of this man, and he is preparing the army that will march to Jerusalem to liberate the city from the Jews and Christians.

Fearing his own assassination, al-Sadr has fled back and forth from Iraq to Iran many times. He believes the time will come when Iran will move into Iraq and take over at least the southern half of Iraq, including the half of Baghdad where he

and his militia will be waiting to join Iran's army.

Al-Sadr's mark is the large black turban he wears. While black turbans are common among the Shiite branch of Muslims living in Iran and parts of Iraq, a quote from the Muslim hadith will explain the power of the black turban: "On the authority of Thawbaan (May Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah said: 'If you see the Black Banners coming from Khurasan go to them immediately, even if you must crawl over ice, because indeed amongst them is the Caliph, Al Mahdi.'"[5] It is also reported that the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad, said: "The black banners will come from the East and their hearts will be as firm as iron."[6]

The Iranian Shiites believe they are the fulfillment of this prediction. Since they are situated in the east of Palestine, many Shiites believe they are the black-turbaned people.

THE ATTACK IN MECCA IN 1979

On November 20, 1979, some fifty thousand Muslims were celebrating the Islamic New Year in the Islamic year 1400. As the crowds were assembling for morning prayers, a group of about two hundred armed men and their followers suddenly burst into the al-Haram Mosque that encloses the Kaaba, the large black stone at Islam's holiest site. They demanded that one of their holy men, Mohammed Abdullah al-'Utaibah, be declared the Mahdi. When the chief imam refused their demands and pronounced them as heretics, fighting suddenly broke out, trapping fifty thousand worshippers in the conflict.[7]

The command was given to close and lock the gates of the mosque. Snipers rushed atop seven minarets (prayer towers). The battle lasted nearly two weeks. This was due to certain Islamic laws relating to damaging the mosque. Also, the hostages were not to be injured; the Saudi government wanted to take the hostages alive.

It would be discovered the heretics believed the time had come to cleanse Islam of the influences that were corrupting it. They wanted a ban on soccer, television, and higher education. After the assault ended, sixty-three of the rebels were beheaded, including the leader, Juhayman al-'Utaybi.[8]

At the same time, a group of Shiites began rioting in the eastern section of the country. These were followers of Ayatollah Khomeini, the new leader of Iran. The riot ended with the death of fifteen people.

It was during the fourteen-hundred-year anniversary of Islam that an Iranian exile named Ayatollah Khomeini managed to return to his country, remove the moderate shah of Iran (a friend of the West), and seize control of the nation, instituting a very radical form of Islam. Americans were shocked and amazed that the US embassy and personnel were held hostage for 444 days. During his exile Ayatollah Khomeini smuggled thousands of cassette-tape messages to his followers in Iran. These messages inspired the people of Iran to be ready to accept this radical leader's return as ruler.

The timing of Ayatollah Khomeini's return on the anniversary of the founding of Islam was suspect. There were high expectations among many Muslims that the Mahdi would rise out of Iran or a neighboring nation. Some believe Khomeini

timed his return on the fourteen-hundred-year anniversary of the founding of Islam in hopes that the people of Iran would declare him the final prophet and expected one.

In 1991, prior to the Gulf War, Yasser Arafat contacted the president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, and congratulated him for waging war on the United States. He then spoke of the glorious time when he, Arafat, would fly the Palestinian flag over Jerusalem, the capital of the new Palestinian state, and Saddam would ride his white stallion across the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem toward the Temple Mount! Many Islamic leaders own a white stallion or horse in case Allah should choose one of them to be the Mahdi.

A RELIGION OF PEACE?

The first murder in the Bible was done in the name of religion, as Cain slew his brother Abel. Both men brought an offering before the Lord, but the Lord favored Abel's sacrifice. In a jealous rage Cain murdered his brother (Gen. 4:5–8). Since that time men have killed one another "in the name of God."

Jesus warned of a time when His people would die as martyrs, and the murderers would believe they were doing God a favor.

> They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.
>
> —JOHN 16:2

During the past two thousand years the world has been drenched in the blood of innocent people who were victims of

religious conflict. From the Roman Empire, the Roman Church, and the Inquisition to the Islamic call for jihad, men are dying in the name of religion.

Some politicians and American Muslims have pointed out that Islam is "a religion of peace." I have certainly met and personally know Muslims in Israel and Jordan—both desert dwellers and secularists—who want to live in peace. The early history of the religion, however, is one of fighting, conquering, and conflict. While most Muslims are not looking for an actual combat, dedicated and practicing radical Islamists believe the world needs to be converted to Islam, just as true Christians wish to spread the gospel around the world.

One of the tenets of Islam is that of jihad, or a holy war. Few Americans had heard the term *jihad* before the attack on America on September 11, 2001. Even then, for fear of anti-Islamic backlash, secular newscasters were reminding Americans that Islam is a peaceful religion. Yet few commentators were familiar with the Islamic scriptures that allow for war and death to the infidel.

Since there are two different branches in Islam with a mixture of end-time theology, a spiritual and military conflict is occurring between the Sunnis and the Shiites as to in which region of Iraq the future Mahdi will appear. The two specified locations are the cities of Samarra, a holy site for Shiite Muslims, and Karbala, a holy site for Sunni Muslims.

The Great Mosque of Samarra, one of Shiite Muslims' holiest sites, was constructed in the ninth century in Samarra. Samarra also holds the shrine where the tenth and eleventh caliphs, Ali al-Hadi and Hassan al-Askari, were buried. It was in Samarra

where the twelfth imam, Muhammad Al-Mahdi, the son of the eleventh, disappeared. Some suggest the young boy was hidden in the shrine and will reemerge from that well to announce the new Islamic caliphate at the end of days.[9]

The apocalyptic struggle between these two locations was evident on February 22, 2006, when bombs were set off in the Golden Mosque, a Shiite mosque that sits adjacent to the Mosque of the Twelfth Imam in Samarra. Americans could not comprehend why Muslims would destroy one of their own mosques. However, it was a group of Sunni Muslims who posed as police officers who blew up the famous Shiite mosque. It was an attempt by the opposing group to destroy the mosque where the last (twelfth) imam was allegedly to appear. The bombing was a division over the apocalyptic beliefs of two opposing groups within the Islamic religion. Months later the Shiites retaliated against the Sunnis by bombing an important mosque in Karbala, which the Sunnis believe would be the site of the appearance of the Mahdi.

Both Sunnis and Shiites have extensive end-time beliefs, many of which agree and others that differ between the sects. The battle for Iraq was more than "sectarian violence" and a struggle to remove Western forces from the land of Allah. It was the rebirth of an ancient religious conflict that dates to the earliest times of Islam. Most informed Muslims believe in prophetic events with the same passion as Jews who believe in the Scriptures and Christians who believe in Christ's return. It is interesting to understand how these beliefs crisscross and form an end-time theology with the world's 1.6 billion Muslims.

CHAPTER 6

THE BIBLE, THE QURAN, AND THE KINGDOM OF PERSECUTION

And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

—REVELATION 6:2

BIBLE-BELIEVING CHRISTIANS QUOTE specific scriptures when pointing to end-time prophecies, and Muslims refer to the Quran and the hadith when referring to their beliefs on the time of the end. At times Christians and Muslims use the same scriptures to identify the final Antichrist of Christian prophecy or the Muslim's final awaited one. This apparent contradiction of interpretation can be rather confusing to Christians and Muslims who are aware of each other's interpretation.

As we have already discussed in this book, Scripture gives many predictions concerning the Antichrist, his kingdom, his peace treaty, his sudden invasion of Jerusalem, and his assault on Israel and the Jewish people. The Islamic hadith reveal the rise and rule of the Mahdi. An example of Scripture used in both the hadith and in biblical prophecy is found in the Book of Revelation.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

According to the Book of Revelation, the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation period is initiated when a mysterious white horse and its rider come galloping on the world scene:

> And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.
>
> —REVELATION 6:2

Many biblical scholars identify this rider as the Antichrist. In John's day Roman emperors and military conquerors were pulled in chariots by white horses. A white horse was also reserved for use by a major leader or military person. The Greek word *toxon* is used for "bow," which is the bow of a warrior or a fighter. There are two Greek words for crown in Revelation. The Greek word for "crown" in the verse above is *stephanos*, which is a word used for a wreath placed on the head of the winner of the prize at the games or contests. This crown is given for the person's conquest.

In 1993 I was surprised to learn that Muslims believe the

Mahdi will appear on the world scene riding upon a white horse.

> It is clear that this man is the Mahdi who will ride the white horse and judge by the Qur'an (with justice) and with whom will be men with marks of prostration on their foreheads [marks on their foreheads from bowing in prayer with their head to the ground five times daily].[1]

> I find the Mahdi recorded in the books of the Prophets. For instance, the Book of Revelation says: "And I saw and behold a white horse. He that sat on him—went forth conquering and to conquer."[2]

In John's vision there are two different riders on white horses: the rider introduced as one of the four horsemen (Rev. 6:2), and a rider in Revelation 19, identified as the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (vv. 11, 16). The first horseman (Rev. 6:2) is linked to the Antichrist, and the rider in chapter 19 is Christ Himself. The Antichrist arrives on the world scene on a white horse seven years before Christ appears on His.

It is interesting to note that most Islamic leaders own white stallions. Saddam Hussein was often seen in large military parades riding on a white stallion. I was told that Muammar Gaddafi in Libya owned one, and even the son of Osama bin Laden has personal white stallions and has said he desires to be a peace negotiator in the future. Islamic tradition teaches that the Mahdi will appear on a white horse, and some Islamic scholars believe the white horse rider in Revelation 6 is a prediction of the coming Mahdi.

Christian scholars note that the rider has a bow but no arrows. Some conclude this could be a hidden clue that this white horse rider will come in "peace" instead of war. Some

refer back to Daniel 9:27, where the Antichrist makes a treaty, or a "covenant," for seven years. This treaty will involve a false peace with Israel and surrounding nations. The Bible indicates: "By peace [he] shall destroy many" (Dan. 8:25, KJV), and "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them" (1 Thess. 5:3, KJV).

This covenant for peace is more of an agreement for Israel's security than a standard peace treaty. The word peace in Daniel 8:25 is not *shalom*, the common Hebrew word used for "peace, blessing, and prosperity." It is *shalvah*, meaning "security" (false or genuine), or "making things quiet." This final world dictator will initiate his own laws to create a false sense of security in order to destroy those opposing him. The word for *destroy* in the Hebrew means to "decay, ruin, lay them in waste." If the Antichrist has a Muslim link, then this prediction alludes to Islamic-style peace, not the type of peace we think of in the West. If individuals follow strict Islamic law (called Sharia), then they will have security. If these laws are broken, then the trespasser will be punished—at times with death.

Islam has an apocalyptic belief that there will be peace treaties signed before the arrival of the Mahdi.

> There will be four peace agreements between you and the Romans. The fourth agreement will be mediated through a person who will be from the progeny of Hadhrat Haroon (A.S.) and will be upheld for seven years.[3]
>
> —MUFTI A. H. ELIAS

> The Prophet (pbuh) said . . . He will divide the property, and will govern the people by the Sunnah of their Prophet . . . and establish Islam on Earth. He will remain seven years, then die, and the Muslims

will pray over him.[4]

—NARRATED BY JABIR IBN SAMURAH

> [The Prophet said,] The Mahdi . . . will fill the earth with equity and justice as it was filled with oppression and tyranny, and he will rule for seven years.[5]

—NARRATED BY ABU SA'ID AL-KHUDRI Biblical scholars believe the coming Tribulation is seven years in length (Dan. 9:27), and contemporary Islamic scholars are stating that there will be a rule of the Mahdi lasting seven years!

BEHEADING OF PEOPLE

For centuries liberal scholars have criticized one prophecy found in the Book of Revelation. In fact, these doubt peddlers would relegate the Book of Revelation to some mysterious, strange book whose application applied to the first century only. The criticized prophecy says:

> And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

—REVELATION 20:4

This scripture indicates that during the final seven years of the Tribulation, people who turn their faith toward Jesus Christ will face execution by beheading. In the Greek text the phrase "I saw souls beheaded" literally reads, "I saw souls who were beheaded with the ax." For years twentieth-century

commentators pointed out that "civilized" nations today no longer behead people; thus this reference alluded to the Roman Empire slaying believers during the Roman persecution in John's day. Paul himself was beheaded in Rome. Today, however, men are slain by guns and bombs and not beheaded by an ax or a sword.

Since the war on terror, however, the entire world has been shocked to see groups of masked Islamic fanatics reading a decree against innocent men or women and then literally beheading them. This radical form of execution is promoted among the sayings of Muhammad in the Quran:

> Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them . . . because they acted adversely to Allah and His Messenger.[6]
>
> —SURAH 8:12–13, SHAKIR

> Seize them and slay them wherever you find them.
>
> —SURAH 4:89

> When you meet the unbelievers in the battlefield strike off their heads and, when you have laid them low, bind your captives firmly.[7]
>
> —SURAH 47:4, N. J. DAWOOD TRANSLATION

When a few United States troops were photographed humiliating men in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, practically every Islamic leader in the region went into a rage as Arabic-speaking papers and journalists united to condemn and demand the punishment of the American soldiers who would humiliate these possible terrorists.

However, the same Islamic world was strangely silent when violent and bloody pictures of fanatics beheading Western

businessmen in Iraq hit the newspapers and Internet. Why were these same leaders who went into a rage because of events at the Abu Ghraib prison incident suddenly silent when viewing an innocent headless victim of Islamic fanaticism? Because Islam not only believes in beheading, but also several of the large Muslim nations practice it!

The only religion in the world whose religious book and traditions believe and practice the act of beheading is the religion of Islam. This is one of many reasons why I believe that the final world dictator identified in the Bible as the Antichrist will not have a Jewish link but an Islamic one.

CHANGING LAWS AND THE CALENDAR

If and when an Islamic leader unites the Islamic world and seizes the surrounding Gentile nations, what would be some of the first changes under Islamic rule? The first changes an Islamic messiah would initiate are the laws governing religion and worship. These changes are alluded to in Daniel 7:25 (KJV):

> And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Muslims call God *Allah*. They do not use the Hebrew name of *Yahweh*, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The future Islamic dictator will speak great words against the Hebrew God (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:6). Muslims consider Allah to be the same God of Abraham, Isaac, and Ishmael, but the Arabic name

Allah was not a name revealed to Muhammad. It was a name already in existence in pre-Islamic times.

The Antichrist will change times. The word *times* can allude to changing the year or the calendar. Any global Islamic leader would set out to change the times in three ways:

> 1. *By changing the Gentile and Jewish calendar to the Islamic calendar.* Islam uses a different calendar than Western nations. Most Gentile nations, especially those familiar with Western culture, use a solar calendar, which dates time before and after Christ's birth. For the West the year 1979 was 1,979 years from Christ's birth. The Islamic calendar began in the year 622; thus all time for Muslims is counted from 622 forward. The Islamic calendar reached the fourteen hundredth year in 1979 during the Iranian revolution. In a final conquest of the world by an Islamic leader all nations would be forced to follow the Islamic calendar and not the Christian or Jewish calendars.
>
> 2. *By changing the year from 365.25 days to 354 or 355 days a year.* The West (and most modern nations) uses a solar calendar that consists of 365.25 days to complete one solar year. The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar, with 354 or 355 days completed to make a complete Islamic year.
>
> 3. *By changing the day of worship to Friday—the Islamic day of worship.* Hindus worship on

Thursday, Muslims on Friday, Jews on Saturday, and traditional Gentile Christians on Sunday. Under Islamic rule only one day, Friday, would be chosen to worship Allah.

This power to change times and laws is for a "time [one year] and times [two years] and the dividing of time [one-half year]," which totals forty-two months (Dan. 7:25, KJV; see also Dan. 12:7; Rev. 12:14).

Note that Daniel 7:25 states the Antichrist will change times and laws. While this could allude to the Law of Moses in the Torah, the Aramaic word is *dath*, and in the context it could allude to changing the religious laws. This interpretation agrees with the religious agenda of a global Islamic leader. According to Muslim tradition, the time will come when the entire world will be converted to the Islamic religion, and no other religion will be practiced.

Under Islamic rule there would be four main assignments that any new Islamic kingdom would initiate.

1. *The first assignment would be forced conversion or death*. In such nations as the Sudan and parts of Nigeria today, armed Muslim warriors enter villages demanding the entire village to meet together. Those who convert to Islam are spared. Those who do not are killed to create fear. Often the men are killed while the wives and daughters are raped and the children taken and raised as Muslims. In Indonesia more than eight thousand Christians have been forced to convert to Islam or face death. The magazine *Voice of*

the Martyrs often documents the persecution of Christians from around the world.

2. *The second assignment would be to destroy churches and synagogues.* Indonesia is the largest Islamic nation in the world, with 1.7 million people. Although the president is a moderate Muslim leader, radical Muslims—jihad warriors—have killed more than ten thousand Christians in two years. At least six hundred church buildings have been set on fire, bombed, or destroyed since 1995. While many moderate Muslims have gotten along with Christians for years, the rise of the fanatics is a serious threat to the stability of many Asian nations, including Indonesia.[8]

3. *The third assignment would be to capture and retrain the youth.* When Christian youth are taken as captives, they are forced to convert or become slaves. If they convert, they are sent to Islamic schools where they are taught the Quran and Muslim doctrine. While the Bible, the principal foundational book of America's documents, is banned from public schools in America, in Islamic countries the Quran is taught in the school systems the moment a child can read. Muslims are aware that in order to win the next generation, it begins with the youth.

4. *The fourth assignment would be to spread the message to new areas.* Islam is taking new converts

> and having them travel into other nations in order to bring the Islamic message. This missionary effort is supported with millions of dollars from Islamic nations, especially Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has provided more than $50 million to organizations to help "evangelize" America for Islam. Overall the Saudis have spent approximately $95 billion since the mid-1970s to export Wahhabism (the sectarian form of Islam that is both the Saudi state religion and a chief theological component of Islamism, the totalitarian ideology guiding global jihadism and terrorism) on a global scale, and there is no evidence of decreased activity in its missionary effort.[9]

Any religion has the right to proclaim its message to people and then allow the people to choose what they wish to believe. This is the universal method by which the Christian message is to be presented. Ministers preach a gospel message and conclude with an altar invitation. True Christianity never forces anyone to convert. However, among the fanatical Muslims no opportunity is given to reject the Quran or teachings of their prophet—because rejection is the path to death. The following explanation of apostasy is given, including the consequences for the apostate:

> Apostasy (*irtidad*) is the act of turning away from Islam having accepted it. This involves the rejection of *tawhid* and *nubuwwa* and the essentials of Islam (e.g. that the Qur'an is a book of God). There are 2 types of *murtad—fitri* and *milli*. A *fitri murtad* is one who was born of Muslim parents (or at least one parent) and then rejects Islam. If he rejects Islam, then, according to the fatwa of our *maraji*

> (including Ayatullahs al-Khu'i and Khumayni) he is to be killed. A *milli murtad* is one who converts and then rejects Islam—he is to be given 3 days to repent and accept Islam again. If he does not accept by the fourth day he is to be killed.[10]

Hatred toward Israel, the West, Jews, and Christians is a common thread among the fanatical communities. Among moderate Islamic countries, such as Jordan, Christians experience limited freedoms. Secular Muslims are often repulsed at the twisted thinking of many Muslims. However, among the Shiite branch of Islam, many Muslims blame America for the rebirth of Israel and despise our support of the Jewish state. In their minds, if they can't defeat Israel, they'll defeat America from within for supporting Israel.

THE KINGDOM OF PERSECUTION

The beast's kingdom will be marked as the greatest season of persecution against Jews and those who convert to Christianity that has ever been experienced. This will produce the greatest number of religious martyrs in history (Rev. 6:9–11). Numerous prophecies speak of this time:

> But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.
>
> —DANIEL 11:44, KJV

The phrase "make away many" means to utterly slay and destroy. According to the Hebrew dictionary, it can mean to seclude and ban for religious reasons. The rage of the beast is

visible in his treatment of the Jews.

> And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.
>
> —DANIEL 8:24, KJV

The phrase "holy people" alludes to the Jewish people living in Israel. Notice the prophecy says "not by his own power," because the power and authority the Antichrist receives will initiate from Satan.

> Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.
>
> —REVELATION 13:2

Daniel informs us that during the final forty-two months of the beast's kingdom:

> And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.
>
> —DANIEL 12:1, KJV

Jesus described this same upheaval of humanity in Matthew 24:21 as the "great tribulation." The wars and destruction and loss of life will be so great that without divine interruption (the return of Christ), the entire human race would be in danger of extinction:

> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And

> unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.
>
> —MATTHEW 24:21–22

The apostle Paul also spoke of this time of trouble and predicted:

> For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.
>
> —1 THESSALONIANS 5:3

The seven-year peace treaty initiates a false sense of security, as the Gentile nations and Israel will declare, "Finally, peace and security!" Suddenly the armies of the beast invade northern Africa, controlling the Suez Canal sea-lanes. His soldiers of jihad sweep into the oil-rich nations of the Persian Gulf, seizing the black gold of the Arabian deserts. Israel will have been forced to disarm after the war of Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38; 39), thus left unprotected from the Antichrist's forces. The Antichrist will use the Palestinian cause to create a massive uprising on the streets inside of Israel, thus retaking East Jerusalem. He will station his command center in Jerusalem as indicated in Daniel 11:45:

> And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

Scholars indicate the "glorious holy mountain" is actually Jerusalem or Mount Moriah, the original location of the two ancient Jewish temples. The word *seas* (plural) alludes to the

Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. (Jerusalem is positioned between these two seas.) The following passage in Daniel says: "There shall be a time of trouble [referring to the Great Tribulation—Matthew 24:21]" (Dan. 12:1). At that time the words of Daniel 11:39 will be fulfilled: "He shall . . . divide the land for gain." The Palestinians will be given the land they are demanding. Then the predictions from the Quran and the hadith will be reality. The Muslims will be permitted to "kill the swine [Jews] and destroy the cross [anything representing Christianity]."[11]

This one man will turn against the Jews with a vengeance. Anyone who receives Christ during this season will be added to the Antichrist's hit list. Thankfully this time of trouble will only last for forty-two months. It will be interrupted by the return of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

The peace treaty will be signed with Israel for one prophetic week, which is seven years (Dan. 9:27). The Antichrist and his armies invade Jerusalem in the middle of the seven years, known as mid-Tribulation. (See Revelation chapters 11 and 13.) During the final half of the seven years the Antichrist reigns from Jerusalem and will eventually be defeated by Christ, who returns at the conclusion of the seven years (Rev. 19:11–16). If the beast lives in Jerusalem for the last forty-two months, where will his throne of rule be the first forty-two months? We will find out where in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMING ANTICHRIST

"For I will rise up against them," says the Lord of hosts, "and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, and offspring and posterity," says the Lord.

—ISAIAH 14:22

NAMED BY THE West "the Butcher of Baghdad," Saddam Hussein took control of Iraq in July 1979. A Baathist, Saddam's vision for Iraq was one of power and grandeur. Fully aware of the historic significance of his nation, Saddam set in motion plans to rebuild the ancient city of Babylon, erect the world's largest mosque with the Euphrates River running through it, and eventually become the leader of a new Islamic crescent that would include Israel as its prize possession. A lengthy war with Iran canceled many of his plans, but not before Saddam began spending millions of dollars rebuilding buildings in the

region of ancient Babylon.[1]

THE MYSTIQUE OF ANCIENT BABYLON

After Noah's Flood men began to rebuild cities in the plains and valleys. One of the first cities among many was Babel, built by Nimrod, the grandson of Noah through his son Ham (Gen. 10:1–10). According to Josephus, Babel was built in the plains of Shinar as an act of rebellion against God for sending the Flood and destroying the world. Nimrod began erecting a tall tower, intending it to be so high that any future floodwaters would never reach the top. Josephus indicates that God destroyed the tower by sending a strong wind.[2] The tower was called the Tower of Babel, which can translate as "confusion," alluding to the incident where God scattered the people by confusing their languages.

The modern area of Iraq became known in early history as Mesopotamia. The next reference to the plains of Shinar is during the time of Abraham, when a war was raging between five kings in Canaan and four kings from Mesopotamia who were being led by Amraphel, the king of Shinar (Gen. 14:1). The three other kings listed in Genesis 14 as allies of Amraphel are:

- Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam—this is modern Persia or Iraq.
- Tidal, the king of the nations—this was a king over Gentile tribes.
- Arioch, the king of Ellasar—this was a city near Ur,

or Mesopotamia.

These four kings ruled from the area of modern Syria and Iraq. Abraham, the father of the Hebrews, engaged in war against these four kings and reclaimed the possessions seized during the battle. Following his war victory, Abraham went to Jerusalem where he met with Melchizedek, the first priest of God (Gen. 14).

Abraham's first battle was with kings from the same area where Israel's worst enemies still live. Since 1979 the countries of Syria and Iran have been the leading opposition against the Jews, the rebirth of Israel, the reunification of Jerusalem, and the return of the Jews to their historic land. Just as the kings surrounding ancient Babylonia initiated the first conflict with the father of the Hebrew nation, the future Islamic kings of a new Babylon will instigate the final mother of battles that will climax in the valley of Megiddo in central Israel (Rev. 16:16).

After Abraham, the next mention of the Babylonian area is penned in the prophetic Book of Daniel. By this time Babylon was not just a city built on the Euphrates River, but it had grown into a mighty kingdom, powering over Mesopotamia and extending its dominion by conquering Israel and Jerusalem. Thousands of Jews were taken captive in Babylon for seventy years, including the prophet Daniel. It was the Babylonian armies who destroyed Solomon's temple, seizing the priceless vessels of gold and silver and storing them in the treasure houses of Babylonian gods (Jer. 52).

Ancient Babylon (the area of Iraq today) was eventually seized by the armies of the Medes and Persians in

approximately 546 BC. Many years later the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great conquered the Persians and took possession of Babylon, extending their global dominion into more countries. Following the Greeks, the Roman Empire began to form and eventually became the fourth kingdom in Daniel's prophecies (Dan. 2:40; 7:23).

Hundreds of years later, in the seventh century, the Arabs would possess the land of Shinar and set up the headquarters of various branches of Islam near the banks of the Euphrates River. In AD 637 the Arabs defeated the Persian army and established the first Arab empire in Mesopotamia. The first Arab government was called the Umayyad Caliphate, with several caliphates following. Then, in 750, a dynasty called the Abbasid Caliphate came into power.

THE ARABIANS TAKE BABYLON

Throughout history the Babylonian area was occupied by the Sumerians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, and Greeks—but never by the Arabians. A prophecy in Isaiah implies the Arabians would be there, but after the Babylonian destruction they would no longer live there:

> And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.
>
> —ISAIAH 13:19–20

This prophecy of destruction must allude to the present,

since the Arabians did not pitch their tent there until AD 637. Between 661 and 750 the Arabs conquered Babylonia and the town of al-Kufa, which was situated near the ruins of ancient Babylon. This town became the capital of Iraq and the headquarters for the Umayyad dynasty. Between 744 and 750 the Islamic caliph Marwan II ibn Muhammad transferred his residence to Harran, Iraq. Beginning in 717, fanatical caliphs began to persecute the Jews living in and around Babylon. Throughout Islamic history the fate of the Jews often depended upon who the regional Islamic governors were at the time.

In 850 the Islamic caliph al-Mutawakkil, a religious fanatic, demanded Jews to wear a yellow head covering. The poor and those who worked as servants of the Arabs had a yellow patch attached to their clothes either on their chest or back.[3] During the early centuries of Islam, Jews and Christians were often forced to wear yellow clothes with patches on them to identify them as Jews. In most instances Jews and Christians were levied with heavy taxes.

Clearly the plains of Shinar, the Tower of Babel, the city of Babylon, and the kingdom of the Babylonians have played major roles in biblical history and prophecy. Iraq and the city of Baghdad have served as headquarters for caliphs in Islam since the infancy of the religion.

THE NEW BABYLON—RISING FROM THE ASHES

The final battle of battles involving Israel and her enemies will

be with a future king of Iraq. Prophetically he will be the king of neo-Babylon. On October 11, 1990, the *New York Times* said:

> Under President Saddam Hussein, one of the ancient world's most legendary cities has begun to rise again. More than an archaeological venture, the new Babylon is self-consciously dedicated to the idea that Nebuchadnezzar has a successor in Mr. Hussein, whose military prowess and vision will restore to Iraqis the glory their ancestors knew when all of what is now Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, and Israel was under Babylonian control.[4]

The ancient king Nebuchadnezzar left instructions for the future of Babylon on cuneiform script tablets. On these clay tablets twenty-five hundred years ago the scribes instructed those who found the tablets to rebuild the temples and palaces. This message was so clear to Saddam Hussein that during this building project he had bricks impressed with his image and that of old king Nebuchadnezzar!

One Iraqi archaeologist, Shafqa Muhammad Jaafar, said, "Because Babylon was built in ancient times, and was a great city, it must be a great city again in the time of our great leader, Saddam Hussein."[5]

According to Paul Lewis of the *New York Times*, the motivation for Saddam rebuilding Babylon was to strengthen Iraqi nationalism by appealing to history. It also portrayed Saddam in the eyes of his people as the new Nebuchadnezzar, a leader who eventually conquered the world in his day.[6]

After Saddam spent $100 million, thousands of workers laid sixty million bricks along new walls in the new Babylon. Every six feet along the wall there is a brick with an inscription in

Arabic saying, "The Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar was reconstructed in the era of Saddam Hussein."[7] After the laying of sixty million bricks and the rebuilding of gates, walls, and palaces, the last Babylonian festival was in 1988. The war with Iran had taken its toll on Iraq, and the building program ceased. Instead, Saddam began placing hundreds of millions of dollars into his lavish palaces, scattered throughout the country.

Saddam's invasion into Kuwait was not for its oil deposits. Iraq has huge amounts of the world's reserves of oil. The spiritual motive was to begin annexing the land that once belonged to ancient Babylon. It would have also given Iraq a much-needed coastline. Even the name *Babylon* comes into play constantly in the minds of Iraqis. In the early nineties Saddam built a supergun with a 16-inch barrel that was 172 feet long. The gun was tested and set a world record by shooting a projectile 112 miles straight up. The supergun was code-named "Baby Babylon" by the Iraqis.

A second gun was being built when the parts were intercepted by special agents. The gun had a 39-inch barrel and was 512 feet long, with the potential range of hundreds of miles. This larger gun was being named "Big Babylon!"[8]

THE DEMISE OF SADDAM

Saddam Hussein, the Butcher of Baghdad, met his doom on the gallows in the very land he ruled. Just like Hitler and evil dictators before him, Saddam's rule has come to an abrupt finish. He will never become the leader of a new Islamic crescent or the new king of a new Babylon. Yet, in the future,

under a new and different leadership, the ancient land of Shinar (Iraq) could once again expand with wealth from the oil wells and be rebuilt into a strong nation.

After all, the Bible teaches a season of false peace. This peace must involve Israel and her Arab-Muslim neighbors. Yet out of this region of the world will arise the leader of the new Islamic republic, a Muslim who will at first be received by the Islamic world but in the end will be the most violent, bloodthirsty human to have ever walked on Earth.

According to Paul, this man's appearance is now being restrained, but one day he will be revealed in his full identity (2 Thess. 2:1–10).

IRAQ WILL BECOME THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE BEAST

Modern Iraq was once the center of the ancient Babylonian empire. Baghdad served as the headquarters and center of operation for several Islamic dynasties. Today the Shiite branch of Islam needs a headquarters, and I believe Iraq, in the future, will become the center for Shiite Muslims who will claim this prophetic territory. Prior to the 2002 invasion of Iraq I wrote that the new government would be a Shiite government. Iraq is important since the Antichrist does not invade Israel until the middle of the seven-year period. He will be living and ruling from another nation prior to making his move against Israel. The prophet Daniel was told: "He [the Antichrist] shall come up and become strong with a small number of people" (Dan. 11:23). His authority is identified through the symbol of a

little horn (Dan. 7:8). Not well known during his first forty-two months in power, the Antichrist will not be a powerful leader (such as an elected official over the EU), but he will control a small number of people. He will gain his power through deception and demonic power (Rev. 13:1–5).

Another indicator that Iraq will be heavily involved in this end-time prophetic conflict is found in the Book of Revelation. John speaks of activity linked with the Euphrates River and a massive two-hundred-million-man army that will cross the Euphrates, passing through the nation of Iraq.

THE EUPHRATES CONNECTION

The Euphrates and Tigris rivers divide Iran from Iraq. The Euphrates begins in Turkey not far from Mount Ararat. It travels through Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, emptying into the Persian Gulf (seventeen hundred miles long). The Euphrates was the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire. This river is the only river mentioned by name in apocalyptic prophecies related to the final days of the rule of the beast kingdom.

Biblically there are several powerful ancient spirits that have been confined under the great river Euphrates, which will be released during the Great Tribulation:

> . . . saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.
>
> —REVELATION 9:14–15

These wicked angels will rise up and motivate a massive

army of two hundred million soldiers to slay one-third of mankind during a thirteen-month period (Rev. 9:13–19). I personally believe these angels are the same ancient prince spirits (called "principalities" in Ephesians 6:12) that once ruled from the past empires of prophecy. These include the spirit of Babylon, the spirit of the Medes and Persians (Dan. 10:13), along with the prince spirit of Greece (v. 20). The above-mentioned empires all ruled from ancient Babylon, and, according to Daniel, each kingdom had a strong demonic spirit dominating the atmosphere over the kingdoms (Dan. 10).

Later, toward the conclusion of the Tribulation, the Euphrates River will dry up to make a way for a massive army, headed by the kings of the East:

> Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.
>
> —REVELATION 16:12

John, in Revelation, indicates severe drought and famine will precede this event (Rev. 6:8; 11:6). Presently, during the dry season, the water level of the Euphrates may drop as low as twenty-four inches. The country of Turkey has constructed several massive dams that can shut off the flow of the Euphrates like a knob on a faucet. Why is the emphasis on the Euphrates so important? Because ancient Babylon was built along the Euphrates, and Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, sits near the Tigris River, not far from the Euphrates.

When the Euphrates dries up and a massive army marches across, they will march from the East, which includes Iran,

Afghanistan, and Pakistan. These nations are located on the east of the Euphrates. These three nations are home to millions of Islamic radicals, all promoting their fanatical form of Islam and strict radical agenda. The Antichrist will be "great . . . toward the east" (Dan. 8:9), which includes these Islamic-controlled areas mentioned above.

Armies marching from the East would also need to pass through Iraq as they proceed into Israel and the valley of Megiddo, the site of the future battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16). We cannot underestimate the historical, spiritual, and political importance of the Iraqi nation. The land of Iraq was ancient Shinar, the land of the first battle Abraham fought, and it will be the land where the last king will rise and battle the Jews in their homeland. Important historical facts about Iraq include:

- It is the site of the Tower of Babel.
- It has the same territory as ancient Babylon.
- Its territory has been ruled by three prophetic empires.
- It is the heart of the 10/40 window.
- It is the headquarters for Shiite Muslims.
- Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law, was murdered here.
- Some believe the twelfth imam disappeared in Iraq.
- Many Shiites believe the Mahdi will appear here.

- It is the country where the Euphrates River flows.
- It is located toward the east from Israel—where the Antichrist will be strong.
- Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, and Lebanon united will form the old Babylon.

The importance of Iraq can be summarized in this way: Iraq was the cradle of civilization and the area where Abraham lived (in Ur) before migrating to the Promised Land (Gen. 11:31). It was home to the four kings whom Abraham and his servants fought (Gen. 14:1–8). It is the place of the Tower of Babel, the site of the first global religion and first world government (Gen. 11). It was the area where three major empires of Bible prophecy set up their kingdoms. It was the headquarters of the Shiite branch of Islam and the site where many Muslims believe the twelfth imam disappeared and where the Mahdi will reemerge to take possession of the world, forming an Islamic empire.

It is not necessary for a future Iraqi ruler to continue rebuilding the ancient ruins of Babylon. The spirit of Babylon will be released during the Tribulation and will work in the heart of the beast and his ten kings. This new Babylon will eventually consist of Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, and, from a religious perspective, it will also include Iran.

THE MAIN ARGUMENT OPPOSING THE NEO-BABYLON

Scholars may argue that ancient Babylon has been destroyed,

and the Bible says it will not be rebuilt. Pastor Mike Coleman, a friend of mine, once said that he was told by a Hebrew professor this is one of the reasons Saddam desired to rebuild Babylon—to prove the Bible was wrong! Throughout the Old Testament the prophets gave grave warnings about the utter destruction of Babylon. Many references are found in Jeremiah, chapters 50 and 51:

> Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.
>
> —JEREMIAH 50:39, KJV

> And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.
>
> —JEREMIAH 51:64, KJV

In Jeremiah's time Babylon had invaded Israel, destroyed Jerusalem, burned the temple, and led the Jews into captivity. Jeremiah was predicting the utter destruction of Babylon. Yet Jeremiah's prophecy is very parallel to the prophecy in Revelation 17 and 18 concerning "Mystery Babylon." Jeremiah's Babylon is a political city, and John's Babylon is a religious and economic system.

During the Gulf War I flew on a plane with a rabbi from Hungary. We discussed the Gulf War. He believed Jeremiah alluded to a future war in the area of ancient Babylon, today Iraq. He noted America's involvement in the Gulf War appeared to parallel the warnings of Babylon's destruction:

1. Jeremiah said a nation from the north would rise against Babylon (Jer. 50:41). The Medes and Persians who overthrew Babylon were from the East. America is called "North America."

2. Jeremiah said many kings would be raised up from the ends of the earth (Jer. 50:41). The largest coalition in history was raised up during the Gulf War.

The rabbi then showed me in Scripture where the Babylon of Jeremiah 51 was a future Babylon, or the area of modern Iraq. He noted that the original Babylon was never destroyed in the manner that we read in Jeremiah's prophecy. Ancient Babylon slowly deteriorated into ruins and rubble. Jeremiah said the Babylon he saw would be destroyed by a "destroying wind" (Jer. 51:1). He noted that "bright arrows" would be used (v. 11) and the reeds would be "burned with fire" (v. 32). The rabbi said, "During the Gulf War or a future conflict, America or Israel may be forced to use nuclear or other modern weapons [the destroying wind] or missiles [arrows] tipped with powerful weapons that will burn the area with fire." He continued, "If this prophecy does not happen in this war, it will in the future, and old Babylon will be destroyed."

If the headquarters of the Antichrist will be Iraq—the area of ancient Babylon—then at what point in time could this area be destroyed? It could be devastated during a war with Israel or the West and rebuilt for the Antichrist. After all, the nations of the earth would never allow Iraq to be destroyed without demanding that the West rebuild it, the same as we did in Japan after World War II.

Others suggest that in the middle of the Tribulation the Antichrist's headquarters will be destroyed, and he will move his armies into Israel. Since John, in Revelation, sees "Mystery Babylon" burned with fire in one hour, and this prophecy is fulfilled during the final forty-two months of the Great Tribulation, Iraq could become the command center for the beast's kingdom during the first forty-two months. Following a major conflict with the king of the North (Turkey, Dan. 11:40–44), the area of Iraq could be destroyed, and the Antichrist would then make his move into Israel.

Without doubt, Iraq will become the center of attention in the last days. Just as Jerusalem is the gate of heaven and the place where God placed His name, ancient Babel was the gate of wickedness and the place where deceit and spiritual corruption were birthed (Zech. 5:5–11).

A final reason I believe that Iraq will be the headquarters of the future Antichrist is the destruction coming to surrounding nations prior to the seven-year Tribulation. Isaiah 17:1 predicts the utter destruction of Damascus and Syria. Damascus is the world's oldest continuing city and has never been completely destroyed in a war. It will, however, become nonexistent in the future. We also read where the Persians (Iranians) will participate as a leading nation in the upcoming war against Israel, called the battle of Gog and Magog. In the future, with Damascus (Syria) and the Iranians destroyed, the one nation that will continue to exist will be the nation sitting between Syria and Iran—Iraq.

CHAPTER 8

THE MARK OF THE BEAST AND THE ISLAMIC LINK

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads. . . . Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

—REVELATION 13:16, 18

ASSUMING THE FUTURE Antichrist of Bible prophecy is a Muslim or represents one branch of the Islamic religion, then how does the Bible's most recognized prophecy, dealing with the infamous mark of the beast, fit into an Islamic scenario? The Bible teaches that the Antichrist's kingdom will head up an economic system of buying and selling by using a mark, which will be his name or the number of his name.

> He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or 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 it is the number of a man: His number is 666.
>
> —REVELATION 13:16–18

Verse 18 from the Amplified Bible reads:

> Here is [room for] discernment [a call for the wisdom of interpretation]. Let anyone who has intelligence (penetration and insight enough) calculate the number of the beast, for it is a human number [the number of a certain man]; his number is 666.

For this kingdom to control all purchasing and selling is important for several reasons. First, the famines and judgments created during the first forty-two months of the coming Tribulation will bring about a massive shortage of both water and food. John indicated that there will be no rain for forty-two months during the first part of the Tribulation (Rev. 11:2–6). This drought impacts the food supply, causing a famine on one-third of the earth, and a water crisis, also identified in Revelation as the time when the entire Euphrates River (seventeen hundred miles long) dries up. The Middle Eastern nations already have encountered shortages of fresh drinking water, and other regions struggle with wheat and rice food supplies, especially during drought or seasons when locusts emerge.

The one Middle Eastern nation with the technology and ability to feed its people and ship out more than 400 percent of its produce is Israel. There are numerous underground

reservoirs of water, hidden since the time of Creation, which are now being tapped for irrigation purposes for hundreds of farms stretching from Galilee in the north to the Arabah desert lands in the south.

Governments or individual leaders who can control or manipulate the buying and selling—especially of food reserves—will have the masses literally eating out of their hands and submitting to their wishes. People do bizarre things when they are starving. In the Bible, during one severe famine women ate their own children to survive (Lam. 2:20). Others ate dove's dung and donkey heads to delay starvation and death (2 Kings 6:25–29).

According to Josephus, in the time prior to the destruction of the temple in AD 70, a severe famine struck Judea, resulting in people boiling their leather shoes and attempting to eat them. Most starving people would follow any religion that provides food.

WHAT IS THE MARK?

Since the second century, early Christian fathers, Bible scholars, and students of prophecy have debated the "mark" prophecy, dissecting each word, exploring history, and comparing verses to unlock the mystery of the mark of the beast. The lack of understanding is evident when reading the older commentaries by Christian theologians:

> Despite numerous attempts to identify the "mark of the beast" with names, computers, monetary systems, and the like, its precise nature is unknown, remaining to be disclosed as the end draws near.[1]

—MERRILL UNGER

> I confess my ignorance as to the number six hundred and sixty-six. I cannot present you with anything satisfactory to myself. We find, answering to the number six hundred sixty-six, the words *apostasy* and *tradition*: but I cannot say anything positive at this point.[2]
>
> —JOHN DARBY

> Irenaeus has only uncertain guesses to offer, and he thinks the Apocalypist intended the name remain hidden till Antichrist should come. The language, however, implies that it is discoverable by those who have the requisite wisdom; and the command, "let him that hath understanding calculate the number," shows that the author expects some to solve the enigma.[3]
>
> —ISBON BECKWITH

> It seems to me to be one of those seasons which God has reserved in His own power; only this we know, God has written *Mene Tekel* upon all his enemies; he has numbered their days, and they shall be finished, but his own kingdom shall endure forever.[4]
>
> —MATTHEW HENRY

While older scholars during the past two hundred years have been unable to decipher this enigma, Scripture teaches we should count, or calculate, the number of the beast. What does it mean to "count the number of a person's name"?

HEBREW GEMATRIA

There are two main languages in which the letters of the alphabet can be interchanged with numbers: Greek and Hebrew. The Greek language contains twenty-four basic letters, and the Hebrew language has twenty-two main letters. Hebrew uses only consonants and no vowels. The dots and marks

underneath or above certain letters determine the vowel pronunciation. The Greeks would learn to interchange the letters for numbers by the influence of a mathematician named Pythagoras.

The Hebrew mystics believe that the alphabet conceals certain secrets that can be discovered through the method of *gematria*. Hebrew gematria is rule twenty-nine of the thirty-two rules of rabbinical hermeneutics.

Using this system, each individual Hebrew letter has a numerical value. After exchanging a letter for a number, the numbers can be summed up, producing the total number value of the word. Occasionally an entire sentence will be added up to give a sum total of the meaning of the letters. Below is a Hebrew chart showing the twenty-two Hebrew letters along with the number value of each letter. When John alluded to counting the name of the beast, he was referring to this system, which was well known among leading rabbis and students.

The basic translation code for the standard gematria for the Hebrew alphabet is as follows:[5]

DECIMAL	HEBREW	GLYPH
1	*Aleph*	א
2	*Bet*	ב
3	*Gimel*	ג
4	*Deled*	ד

5	*Heh*	ה
6	*Vav*	ו
7	*Zayin*	ז
8	*Ches*	ח
9	*Tes*	ט
10	*Yod*	י
20	*Chof*	ך כ
30	*Lamed*	ל
40	*Mem*	ם מ
50	*Nun*	ן נ
60	*Samech*	ס
70	*Ayin*	ע
80	*Pey*	ף פ
90	*Tzadi*	ץ צ
100	*Kuf*	ק
200	*Reish*	ר
300	*Shin*	ש
400	*Tof*	ת

EARLY FATHERS USED THIS SYSTEM

The early fathers were familiar with this system of interchanging the letters with numbers. Revelation 13:18 states, "Count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man" (KJV). The Greek word for man is *anthropos*, which is a singular word for man and also a word used for mankind. Some say the phrase could read, "It is the number of mankind." Several church fathers attempted to calculate certain names or phrases and identify the Antichrist or the system from which he would arise.

The apostle John had a student named Polycarp, who taught Irenaeus (140–203). One rather famous example of gematria is when Irenaeus took the letters forming the word *LATEINOS* and showed the sum was 666.

L	A	T	E	I	N	O	S	Total
30	1	300	5	10	50	70	200	666

Irenaeus said, "Then also Lateinos . . . has the number six hundred and sixty-six; and it is a very probable [solution], this being the name of the last kingdom [of the four seen by Daniel]. For the Latins are they who at present bear rule."[6] Since the fourth empire of Bible prophecy was Rome, and Rome ruled in the first four centuries, it was commonly accepted by many early fathers that the final empire prior to Christ's return would be some form of the Roman Empire.

Eventually the political Roman Empire faded into history and

was replaced by the Roman Church, whose influence in Europe and part of the Middle East controlled the rise and fall of kings who controlled much of the old Roman territory. The Latin language was accepted and used in the Roman Church, thus the interpretation of the phrase *LATEINOS*, numerically interpreted to be 666, maintained a strong following.

Objections later formed when it was pointed out that the correct spelling by Greek authors of the word in Latin would be *LATINOS* and not *LATEINOS*. The correct spelling (dropping the English letter *e*) changes the numerical value to 661 and not 666. (The reason *ei* was used in the original spelling was because *ei* is used for the long letter *i* in Latin.) Another opposing theory developed when a parchment of an old scroll was discovered in Egypt and found to be a small scroll fragment from Revelation 13—the same section dealing with the number of the beast. This fragment totaled to the number 616 and not 666. Most scholars, however, believed that this was a later version and have dismissed this theory.

Because of severe persecutions in the first-century church, initiated with the wicked emperor Nero, many Christians in the first-century church felt Nero would become the beast of the Apocalypse. Nero ruled Rome for fourteen years but was sentenced to death for setting fire to Rome. He escaped, but he later committed suicide on a dirty cot at age thirty-one. In 69 the historian Tacitus wrote about a rumor that Nero faked his death and was hiding, to emerge in the future.

After John penned the Apocalypse (around 95), he mentioned that the Antichrist would have “one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was

healed" (Rev. 13:3). Centuries later some early fathers (in the second, third, and as late as the fourth century) interpreted this to mean that Nero would rise again and his "death wound" would be healed. Thus this wicked, ungodly emperor would become the Antichrist. Below are three quotes:

> Nero will be raised from the dead, appear again at Rome, persecute the church once more, and finally be destroyed by the Messiah, coming in his glory, and being accompanied by the prophet Elijah.
>
> —VICTORINUS (AD 304)

> Nero will become the precursor and forerunner of the Devil, coming to lay waste the earth.
>
> —LACTANTIUS (AD 250–325)

> Nero, the basest of men and even of monsters, was well worthy of being the first persecutor; I know not whether he may be the last, since it is the current opinion of many that he is the Antichrist to come.
>
> —SULPICIUS SEVERUS (AD 400)

The theory that Nero would return from the "pit" and rise again as the future Antichrist was reinforced according to some; then his name was transliterated from Latin into Hebrew. The letter *n* is added in the transliteration to conform to the Hebrew spelling of Nero's name. Thus the Latin name "Nero Caesar" becomes *Nrwn qsr*. These individual letters are given their Hebrew equivalent, and with each letter given its respective numerical value, they total 666. (Refer to the *LATEINOS* chart earlier in this chapter.) Why would intelligent and biblically knowledgeable scholars accept a theory that an emperor who had passed away more than three hundred years earlier could return from the grave to become the Antichrist? It appears to have been a misunderstanding in the interpretation of passages from the Book of Revelation. As

stated earlier, John saw this beast with a wound to one of its heads, and the deadly wound was suddenly healed. Since Nero was the first persecutor, it was assumed he would return and be the last.

A second reference also added fuel to this speculation of Nero returning:

> The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.
>
> —REVELATION 17:8

An interesting observation is gleaned from this prophecy. First, the beast (Antichrist and his kingdom) was (meaning previously existed), and is not (did not exist in 95 when John penned the Apocalypse), and is (or now confined into the abyss—a location under the earth). Because Nero was, and at the time of John's writing was not, and in the future will come forth from the abyss, the assumption was that Nero would one day come back from out of hell and be permitted to rule again, bringing destruction to the earth.

MARKING EVERY PERSON

For centuries trying to understand how every person could receive a mark on his or her hand or forehead confounded ministers and scholars. The world was so large and the population so spread out that it would take many years to brand the entire world. Yet the Bible says, "He causes all to

receive a mark."

With the invention of modern computers, many scholars and students of prophecy began to teach that the "mark" was linked to some form of a computer, since information was linked globally through computer systems. In the 1980s a story was widely circulated that stated that the European Union, with its headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, had constructed a new supercomputer capable of placing information about everyone on Earth into its large database systems. The report continued that this supercomputer was so large that it was nicknamed "The Beast." Suddenly prophetic interest in Revelation 13 surfaced again. The main contradiction to making this or any other computer the beast of Revelation is that the beast is identified using the personal pronoun *he*, and a computer is an *it*, not a *he* (personal pronoun). Secondly, the beast is given to the burning flames at the return of Christ, which alludes to hell. There is no purpose for Christ to send a computer and its hardware into hell.

Eventually another system connected to purchasing and storing information on products emerged. It was the barcode system printed on product labels and boxes that could, allegedly, in the future be printed on the skin with invisible ink.

The most recent theory involves a new type of computer chip, smaller than a grain of rice, which could be imbedded with millions of bits of information and implanted just under the skin. These devices are presently implanted in pets to help track them if they are lost from their owners. In the early 1990s I was ministering in Brooksville, Florida, and was invited to meet a man who was welding parts for Russian satellites. He could

communicate with the space shuttle from his home, using advanced computers and special equipment. He related to me that they were testing a small chip that would one day be implanted just under the hairline of a person's forehead and under the outer skin of the right hand. The chip operates with a special battery that is charged continually by the heat of the human body. The gentleman believed that this chip would one day replace all identity cards.

Since the development of these special chips, it has been reported that on a predetermined date everyone in the United States will be required to have one of these implanted in either their right hand or forehead. Each chip will hold personal information that can be scanned. Another type of scanner already exists that is used in major theme parks, such as Disney World in Orlando, Florida. When checking into your hotel in a Disney Park, you receive a special card. However, cards can be lost. When entering the main park, you insert your card and place your finger in a scanner. This amazing scanner actually reads the lines in your finger and gives each line a number. Each human being has a fingerprint pattern that distinguishes that person from all others on Earth. Thus if the card is lost, the scanner can accurately identify any person who has access to the park.

There are also new scanners that can read the retina design in the human eye. These have been used successfully in prisons and will possibly be used in the future in airports to identify passengers boarding planes. Just like the fingerprint, the retina of the human eye has a distinct design.

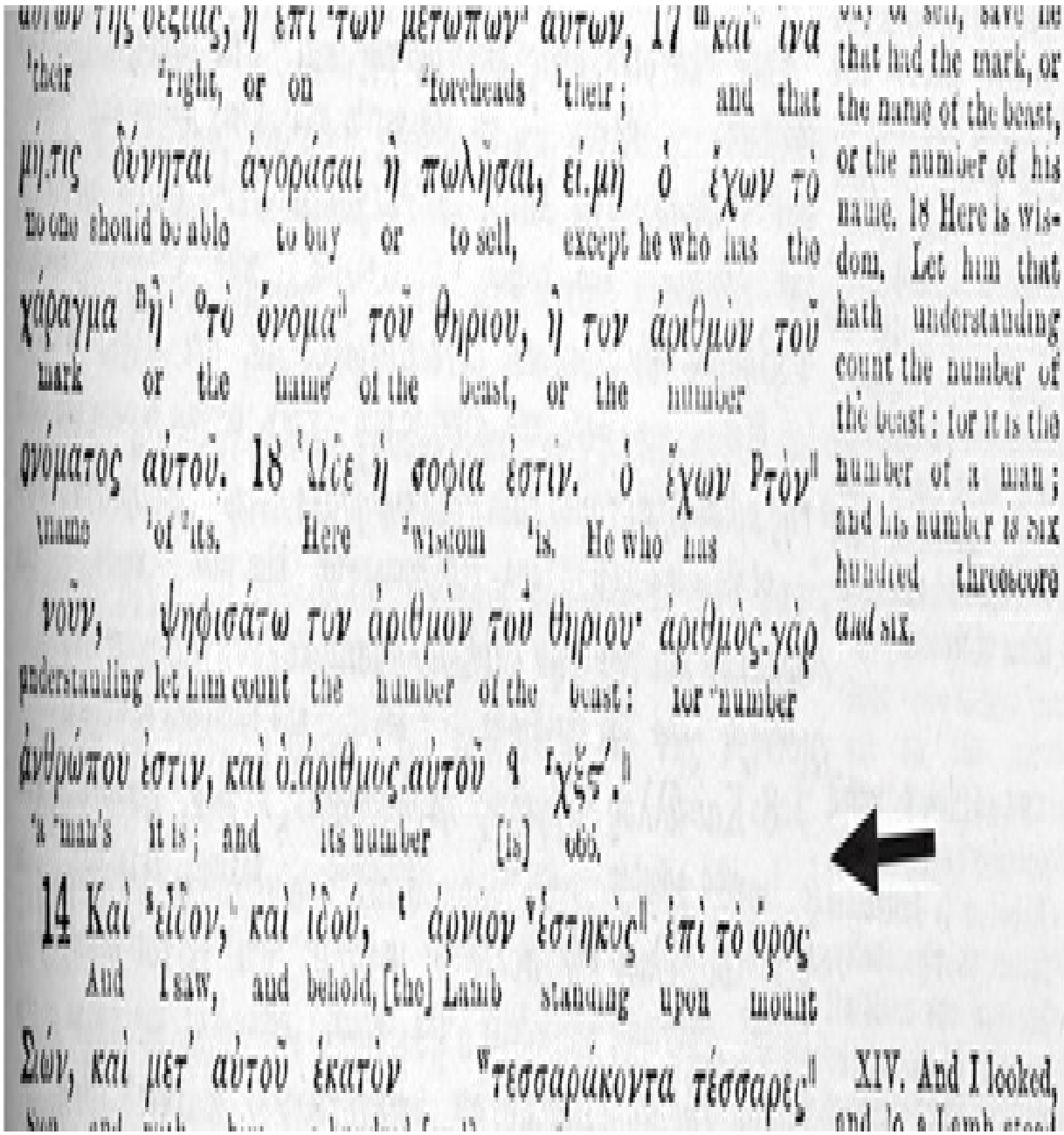
With the large computers, computer chips, hand scanners,

and eye scanners, there is now nowhere to hide. These scanners can record and store information. However, looking back at the text in Revelation, there are three ways given by which a person can buy or sell:

- The *mark* of the beast
- The *name* of the beast
- The *number* of the beast

THE OLDEST MANUSCRIPTS

Another interesting insight about the mark of the beast emerges when examining one of the oldest Greek manuscripts. In most of today's translations of the Holy Scriptures, the number 666 is spelled out using "six hundred, threescore and six." However, in some of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament, the 666 is actually identified by three Greek letters.



Erasmus (1516) relied on twelfth-and thirteenth-century manuscripts, which represented the Byzantine text, the Koine text, or the Majority text. All Greek New Testaments translated before the middle of the fifteenth century were copied by hand, using one of these three manuscripts.

After the middle of the fifteenth century, modern versions of

the Greek New Testament were based on the Byzantine manuscript, also known as the *Textus Receptus*, compiled by Erasmus in 1516, or on the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, edited by Eberhardt Nestle in 1898.

For three hundred years—until the 1900s—the *Textus Receptus* remained the main text. It is the text used by the 1611 King James translators of the Bible, who translated the first English Bible that was approved by the king. When the early fathers quoted from the Greek New Testament, we know they used the manuscript identified as the Byzantine text, also known by the name *Textus Receptus*.

In an old Greek manuscript, the mark of the beast is identified by three Greek letters, known as *chi*, *xi*, and *stigma*. These three letters are found in the third-century Egyptian text and in the Majority text. Modern Greek spells out these letters. It was in the later 1800s that Nestle, instead of using these three letters, added up the numerical value of these letters to total 666.

The reason for the number 600, 60, and 6 (666) is the gematria of the three Greek letters. The letter *chi* has the Greek numerical value of 600. The letter *xi* has a value of 60, and the letter *stigma* has a value of 6. Thus the three Greek letters penned in the oldest manuscript of Revelation 13:18 totals to 666. The Greek letter *chi* has a form similar to the Hebrew letter *tof*, the twenty-second and final letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The letter *chi* looks like an *X*, and the ancient form of *tof* is a + or an *X*. The Greek title *Christ* begins with the letter *chi* (*X*). In the early Roman church the letter *chi-rho* was the mark or monogram of Christian Rome.

The second Greek letter found in the Revelation manuscript is the letter *xi*. This letter is transliterated as our English letter *x*, which is the same form as the letter *tof* in Hebrew and *chi* in Greek. The numerical value of *xi* is 60.

The final letter is unique. According to commentaries on the Greek New Testament, there are twenty-four letters in the Greek alphabet plus three archaic letters, one of which is the *digamma*, also known as the *stigma*. The letter *stigma* is not used in Modern Greek; today it is the letter *sigma*. In ancient times it was used as the sixth letter of the Greek alphabet. It was used as a letter to represent the number 6. The *stigma* was also a mark that was placed on slaves in the Roman period. The *stigma* is transliterated as the letter *s*, and its number equivalent is 6.

The standard gematria for the Greek alphabet is as follows:[7]

GREEK LETTER	GREEK NAME	NUMERIC VALUE
A, α	*Alpha*	1
B, β	*Beta*	2
Γ, γ	*Gamma*	3
Δ, δ	*Delta*	4
E, ε	*Epsilon*	5
		6 is sigma, ς final form
Z, ζ	*Zeta*	7

Η, η	*Eta*	8
Θ, θ	*Theta*	9
Ι, ι	*Iota*	10
Κ, κ	*Kappa*	20
Λ, λ	*Lamda*	30
Μ, μ	*Mu*	40
Ν, ν	*Nu*	50
Ξ, ξ	*Xi*	60
Ο, ο	*Omikron*	70
Π, π	*Pi*	80
		90 is 
Ρ, ρ	*Rho*	100
Σ, σ,	*Sigma*	6, 200
Τ, τ	*Tau*	300
Υ, υ	*Upsilon*	400
Φ, φ	*Phi*	500
Χ, χ	*Chi*	600
Ψ, ψ	*Psi*	700
Ω, ω	*Omega*	800
		900 = sampsi 

What is the reason for using these three Greek letters and

not just the number 666? Barnes comments:

> There can be no doubt that the number 666 is the correct reading, though it would seem that this was sometimes expressed in letters, and sometimes written in full. Wetstein supposes that both methods were used by John; that in the first copy of his book he used the letters, and in a subsequent copy wrote it in full.[8]

The fact is that no one has been able to give a clear, solid understanding as to the actual prophetic meaning of these three Greek letters and how they will fit into the name, number, or mark of the beast. However, there may be a rather bizarre "link" between the form or shape of these three letters and possible symbols that are connected to the Islamic religion.

COULD THE LETTERS BE SYMBOLS?

Not only are all twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet used to form words, but also each individual letter has a particular symbol it represents. The first letter, *aleph*, represents an ox. The second letter, *bet*, represents a house, and the third letter, *gimel*, represents a camel. The symbols predate the time when the alphabet took on the form of letters. Before letters, it was first represented in the form of symbols in the same manner that the Egyptians used hieroglyphics, or word pictures, which revealed a message when read.

Is it possible that these three Greek letters—*chi*, *xi*, and *stigma*—are actually hidden clues that reveal certain symbols that give us more insight on the future beast and his religion?

GREEK LETTERS REPRESENTING "666"
(REVELATION 13:18–BYZANTINE TEXT)



CHI	XI	STIGMA
600	60	6

Chi The first of the three Greek letters is the letter *chi*. As I mentioned earlier, this letter takes on the form of a symbol that looks like the English letter *x*. In Greek this letter has a *ch* sound and is the first two letters in the Greek word *Christos*, a Greek word meaning "Christ." If this letter is intended to be a mark or a symbol, is there a link in some nation or religion that would use an emblem or mark similar to the letter *chi*?

It is interesting to note that the Saudi Arabian civil ensign is in the form of two swords that cross one another, laid out over a green background. Saudi Arabia is the most important nation on Earth in relation to the Islamic religion. It is where Islam's prophet, Muhammad, received his revelations that formed the Islamic religion at Mecca, located in Arabia and presently the world headquarters for all Muslims. Mecca houses the famous Kaaba, where millions of Muslims each year perform the *hajj* (pilgrimage). Saudi Arabia is also the home to Medina, where Muhammad is buried. Saudi Arabia is such a strict Islamic nation that all other religions are suppressed, and any other form of religious worship other than Islam is forbidden and even punishable by prison and in some cases by death. Certain punishments have been met by beheading, which is

permissible under certain circumstances according to the Quran.

Xi It is quite interesting to observe the form of the second Greek letter used in Revelation 13:18, the Greek letter *xi*.

Former Muslims have noted that the Greek letter *xi* was very similar in appearance to the Arabic letter that forms the name Allah, the name for God used worldwide among all Muslims. The name Allah is the Arabic name for God and is the name all Muslims use when speaking of God. Christians will use the term "the Lord" or simply say "God." Jews use the name Adonai, which is a common name for the God of Abraham. The Muslims, however, use the name Allah.

All Muslims will tell you that this name Allah is the name of the same God worshipped by both Jews and Christians. But remember what I wrote previously: scholars note that the name Allah was actually not a name formed by Muhammad but was the name of a pre-Islamic moon deity that was worshipped in pre-Islamic times among the Arabs throughout the Arabian Peninsula. Some scholars go as far as to allege that Muhammad may have used the name Allah to help win many of the tribal people who had been involved in the worship of the moon prior to the time of Muhammad's revelations.

Stigma The third Greek letter, *stigma*, has a form that is also a symbol of something or someone connected to the Islamic religion. As stated earlier, *stigma* is not a letter in Modern Greek, but it is a letter that was a brand placed on slaves. E. W. Bullinger states, "Now the word στζγμα (*stigma*) means a mark,

but especially a mark made by a brand as burnt upon slaves, cattle, or soldiers, by their owners or masters; or on devotees who thus branded themselves as belonging to their gods."[9]

Several years ago a lamb was born in Durmen Village, Uzbekistan, just three days before a major Islamic holiday. This lamb caused quite a stir, because on the black fleece of the lamb was a white pattern that formed the Arabic word for Allah on one side and Muhammad on the other side.[10] When the third Greek letter, *stigma*, is turned sideways, which is the way it appeared on the fleece of the lamb in Uzbekistan, then it is similar to a letter that the villagers believed represented the name Muhammad.

This concept, that these letters could represent symbols, may be a new idea to contemporary Christians; however, keep in mind that throughout nineteen hundred years of church history no one has successfully broken the code of the mark during this entire period. There has been speculation that it is linked to computers, special chips, or invisible tattoos, but this mark of buying and selling is initiated by the false prophet of Revelation 13:11–18. Thus the economic control is linked to the religion of the beast and benefits those following his orders. The mark, name, and number are three different methods employed to control the limited resources available, especially food, during the Tribulation.

It is clear that the beast empire rules in and around the Mediterranean Sea, which is a stronghold for the Islamic faith. If these three letters are symbols, as some former Muslims suggest, then:

1. The letter *chi* could allude to a symbol of two swords used in Saudi Arabia, the headquarters of the Islamic religion.

2. The letter *xi* could refer to the name of the god that will be worshipped during the time of the Tribulation.

3. The mysterious letter *stigma* could refer to the mark that will be used on the right hand and forehead enslaving the followers of the Antichrist during the Tribulation.

Remember, the *chi*, *xi*, and *stigma* together represent the number of a man.

THE NUMBER SIX

Throughout the Bible numbers have had special meanings. For example, the number three refers to unity:

- Faith, hope, and love
- Body, soul, and spirit
- Outer court, inner court, and holy of holies

The number seven is found 463 times in the King James Version of the Bible. Seven always alludes to fullness and completion and is often found alluding to some form of perfection. It has been called God's perfect number. Other numbers, such as twelve, allude to government and divine order. There were twelve tribes of Israel, twelve disciples, and twenty-four elders (twelve times two). The number six is

recognized as the number of man. God formed man on the sixth day of Creation (Gen. 1:27–31). Man was given six days to work and was to rest on the seventh (Exod. 20:9–10). Goliath, the giant from Gath, was six cubits and a span, with a description of six weapons, including the head of his spear, which weighed six hundred shekels of iron (1 Sam. 17:4–7).

The image set up by Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon (a picture of the future image of the beast) was sixty cubits high and the breadth was six cubits (Dan. 3:1).

It is unique how the number six is linked to the Islamic religion.

- Muhammad was forced to flee from Mecca to Medina in the year 622 (the *Hijra*).
- Muslims worship on the sixth day of the week (Friday).
- Muhammad's name can total to 666.

It may seem a coincidence that the number six has a link to the Islamic faith, but consider how the number seven is connected to the Jewish people. The religious Jews worship on the seventh day, have a jubilee every seventh year, and were commanded to honor a national jubilee every seven times seven years (Lev. 25). When considering the significance of a mark that would seal the followers of a future world dictator, I realize many people will simply "blow off" this particular theory. While I am not personally dogmatic on this concept, I am offering it to you as a topic to consider and investigate on your own; I believe there is merit for its consideration.

A NAME, A NUMBER, AND A MARK

The forehead and the right hand When Muslims pray, they bow facing toward Mecca in Saudi Arabia. The more pious Muslims will press their foreheads against the floor, eventually creating a light red spot on the center of the forehead. Devout Muslims also carry prayer beads with them and move the beads with their fingers as they pray.

Sanctions against nations In the past the UN Security Council has voted to place sanctions upon certain nations involved with building weapons of mass destruction or the slaying of multitudes of innocent victims under the command of a ruthless dictator. At other times the United States has placed economic sanctions or blocks upon other nations, such as Iran, Libya, and Iraq, for supporting terrorism or selling dangerous weapons.

Often these imposed sanctions have little impact upon the dictator or leadership of the nation, but they have a terrible impact upon the average families living in the nation. Necessary items such as medicine, baby formula, diapers, and basic food staples are in short supply and high demand. The average citizen suffers, but the leader uses his connections in the black market to smuggle into the country everything his heart desires through poorly monitored borders.

Part of the anger against the West, especially against the United States, is caused by the sanctions placed for many years on Islamic countries. Much of the Arab and Islamic world see these as political tools to kill the nation's poor and those

dependent upon Western powers to survive. Because of the propaganda they are given, they are unaware that the sanctions are placed to pressure the dictator/ruler to act in a civilized manner. The propaganda machine emphasizes the evils of the West and reveals the negative impact upon the children and their parents.

This future mark of the beast will be a *reverse sanction*. No man can buy or sell without the mark, name, or the number of the beast. The ultimate option of not receiving the mark is death by beheading (Rev. 20:4). Thus, if the Antichrist is supported by or descended from an Islamic background, Islam will have its own form of retaliation by controlling ten nations and the economic power.

THE TWO MOST VALUABLE ASSETS

I am not an economist, a specialist in the stock market, or an investor. For more than thirty-four years of ministry I have placed all income from offerings or book and tape resource sales back into my ministry. I have numerous friends and associates who are quite informed in the areas of investments. Presently, there are several areas where investors have placed strong emphasis.

For several years the stock market has been on a roller-coaster ride, climbing, then suddenly dipping, leaving investors with a strange feeling in the pit of their stomach as they try to catch their breath when the market graph begins sliding toward the low end. Unseen variables such as terror attacks, corporate scandals, and sudden loss of jobs can cause

loss of thousands of dollars to common investors.

Others say that investing in land is the best future investment. My grandfather owned several pieces of rental property, which were a source of income for him and my grandmother, especially in their latter years. Single dwellers and families will always need apartments, duplexes, and houses to rent and to own. However, any major recession, depression, and job market slash can impact this area. On many occasions my grandfather had men staying in his apartments who had lost their mining jobs and were unable to pay the rent for several months.

There are some who insist that a percentage of a person's portfolio should be in precious metals, including silver and gold bullion or coins. History does note that in times of economic crisis precious metals seem to do well as investments. Of course, a person must know someone who is willing to purchase what he has. During the Great Depression the American government established a food-rationing system. Families received food ration stamps each month. The stamps limited the amount of bread, sugar, wheat, and lard a family could purchase.

In examining the future according to the prophecies, there are two items that every human being must have, and I know of few if any people who are making investments in these two items—*food and water*.

As mentioned earlier, during the time of the coming Tribulation there will be extended famines and disasters that will impact the sea, land, grass, trees, and water, resulting in global hunger. A national famine always produces civil unrest

and eventual hunger and possible starvation to the masses.

The Euphrates River, a life source for those living along the Fertile Crescent, which runs the length of Iraq, will dry up. Thousands of farmers and farming communities that thrive along the banks of this famous river will cease to exist during this severe drought.

In the future it will be food and water that will become the valuable assets. We can live without stocks, mutual funds, property investments, and gold coins. However, the human body must have water and food. Whoever can own and control the future supply of food and water will be able to gain the respect of people.

This is clearly demonstrated in third-world countries. We know of missionaries who personally travel to remote regions on the earth and feed the hungry in nations where the poor and unloved are allowed to starve in the streets. One missionary feeds lepers, and another, a pastor of a twelve-thousand-member youth group, left the multitudes of believers to whom he had been ministering to feed two thousand Muslims a day. The love demonstrated by these Christians has touched the hearts of those they feed, until many have turned their hearts to Christ!

It is clear that controlling the food and water supplies will be the key to the beast's kingdom controlling the masses, as he rations food through his own economic system.

Let's wrap up with a summary of the evidence in Scripture:

1. The beast will arise out of the Great Sea region, which is the Mediterranean (Dan. 7:1–2).

2. The beast will arise out of the territory of the former empires of biblical prophecy (Dan. 8:1–9).

3. The beast will turn against the Jews and attempt to destroy them (Dan. 12:7).

4. The beast will behead those who resist his system of rule and refuse to worship him (Rev. 20:4).

5. The beast is great toward the east, the south, and in Israel (Dan. 8:9).

6. The beast will split control of Jerusalem into two parts (Zech. 14:2).

7. The beast will demand worship and issue his own economic system (Rev. 13:17–18).

As we observe the times in which we live and the alignment of nations along with the expectations of Muslims around the world, anticipating the re-forming of an Islamic empire and the arrival of the Mahdi, there is little doubt of the role of a future Islamic dictator and that somehow the mark of the beast will come into play during the final forty-two months of his rule.

CHAPTER 9

RADICAL ISLAM'S PLAN TO CONTROL THE WORLD

"Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

—REVELATION 13:4–7

FIFTY YEARS AGO the very thought that a militant Islamic leader could unite a radical Islamic coalition into a feared global threat would have been considered a severe stretch of fiction. Twenty-five years ago the possibility of a violent Middle

Eastern dictator gaining access to weapons of mass destruction was discussed among military brass behind closed doors. Today the threat is not *if* this possibility exists but *when* a frightening assault with weapons of mass destruction will come.

All religions have a commission to teach others about their beliefs, and this includes the Islamic religion. Their agenda is both practical and prophetic. The practical plan is to expand the Islamic crescent from its Middle East stronghold into Europe and Asia, eventually dominating the large cities in North America. The prophetic agenda is to ensure that the predictions and traditions of its founder, Muhammad, are fulfilled. In Muhammad's day the Islamic religion grew by the use of the sword and forced conversion. Today it grows through large Muslim families, conversion, and, in some countries, forced conversion. Despite the smooth tongues of educated Muslims who tell the West not to worry, the sword of fanatical Islam is once again slashing its way through nations, slaying the infidels who would resist conversion to the religion of Allah. As the Quran says:

> The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of the hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land.
>
> —SURAH 5:33

It was once thought impossible that small, third-world nations would ever become a threat to modern democratic nations. After all, America and the Soviet Union were the two

superpowers possessing weapons that created mushroom clouds with devastating impact. After the fall of Communism, the Soviet Union became a black marketer's dream. Weapons were exchanged for drugs and much needed money.

In the early nineties one source informed me that the Iraqi government had hired more than five hundred former Soviet Union scientists who were working on Iraq's weapons program. These included several men knowledgeable in the development of nuclear weapons. Today numerous Islamic nations are on the road to nuclear weapons development, including rogue nations such as Iran.

HOSTAGE TO THE WEAPONS

Imagine this scenario. A Middle Eastern diplomat working at the United Nations has secretly arranged to have certain packages delivered into the United States via a foreign cargo ship. The individual packages are as small as a briefcase. Upon arrival a contact intercepts the packages, delivering them to the proper sources. Within a few months a small nuclear bomb has been built and hidden in Brooklyn, New York.

On the West Coast another cell agent has arranged for a series of packages to arrive via ship to a specific location. This package holds five sealed vials of a deadly biological plague. The vials are secured at an undisclosed location until a coded signal is given.

A third cell leader effectively crosses the Mexican border into Texas with the assistance of a Mexican gang. He too is carrying a special chemical, called X-1. It is a nerve agent that

can be released in the air without being detected. The deadly chemical is placed in a secure room in an apartment building, shared by two men who are part of the numerous sleeper cells Americans have been warned about for months.

On a predetermined signal, the head of an Islamic coalition from the Middle East contacts the US president, demanding that he pressure the Israelis to once and for all pull out of Palestinian territories and get out of East Jerusalem. He demands that within seven days Israel release to the international community all information and location of their nuclear weapons. If the American government and Israel fail to respond within seven days, the nuclear bomb will be released in the largest Jewish community in the world—Brooklyn, New York. The biological agents will be spread across Los Angeles and in Houston, Texas. Because the sleeper agents were careful to conceal their arsenal, no one in our federal or state governments knows where the dangerous bomb and the deadly biological substances are hidden. Suddenly America is held hostage by an invisible threat. The fear factor strikes at the hearts of Americans as, on the evening news, the media leak the possibilities of millions of deaths resulting from this possible attack.

What does the president do? If he says no, then he will be blamed for millions of Americans' deaths. What do you think the average American would do? I believe American citizens would force Israel to do what the terrorists have demanded. After all, they reason, why should Americans suffer for what a group of Jews are doing ten thousand miles away in another country?

The above scenario taking place is not impossible. In fact, it is quite probable. All Muslims desire the "liberation" of Jerusalem and want Israel replaced by the Palestinian state—including the physical removal or death of the Jewish population. This may be why the biblical prophet Zechariah said Jerusalem would become "a cup of trembling unto all the people round about" (Zech. 12:2, KJV). The prophet also predicted that Jerusalem would become a "burdensome stone for all people" (v. 3, KJV). This verse infers that dealing with Jerusalem will be like carrying a huge, very heavy stone on one's shoulders.

All methods of expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem have, and will, fail—until the intrusion of the Antichrist. He and his people will successfully liberate Jerusalem from the infidels. His success will be his ability to merge a coalition and successfully hold nations hostage with his spectacular arsenal of weapons.

THE ANTICHRIST AND HIS WEAPONS

In Revelation 13 John announced the appearance of the beast and his kingdom. John poses the questions, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13:4). Later, in the same prophetic book, we read where the beast and his ten kings destroy a large city in one hour (Rev. 18:10, 17, 19). This powerful blast produces a smoke that creates fear in the hearts of those who are standing "afar off," observing the destruction (vv. 9–10, 18, KJV). Within one hour these ten kings will give their kingdoms (nations) over to the beast (Rev. 17:12). After carefully researching the chapters alluding to these passages, I

believe the reason nations submit to the beast is the fear that he will destroy both the leaders and their people who resist him. This is how Saddam was successful in retaining power in Iraq. He murdered thousands of his own people, including anyone who disagreed with his mode of operation.

The biblical prophets visualized many wars prior to the return of the Messiah. During these battles men would die in a manner unknown to the prophet. Imagine when Zechariah saw the vision of the final battle for Jerusalem and how men would die:

> And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.
>
> —ZECHARIAH 14:12

This prophecy alludes to the time when the armies of the Antichrist are surrounding Jerusalem. Some say the flesh of men melting alludes to the moment that Christ returns, when, by the brightness of His coming, He destroys the global armies, thus eliminating those who would attempt to exterminate the Jews (2 Thess. 1:1–10). Others believe it reveals a weapon of unbelievable power that literally melts human flesh while people are still standing on their feet. This verse may be alluding to a neutron bomb, whose explosion literally melts the flesh from a human body. Such weapons, nonexistent in Zechariah's day, are now locked in silos on military bases!

China, North Korea, and Russia are actively selling ballistic missiles to Middle Eastern nations, including Iran. The real

danger is not a traditional ballistic missile but a missile warhead tipped with biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons.

After the Gulf War, UN inspectors entered Iraq and were shocked to discover 50 chemical-filled ballistic warheads, 12,694 mustard gas–filled artillery shells, and over 10,000 sarin-filled artillery shells and rocket warheads. They also discovered 300 tons of bulk agents ready for use.[1]

All of this with Saddam claiming he had no weapons of mass destruction!

The future beast will use his own stash of weapons to institute his own forms of justice on surrounding nations. No one will be successful in conquering him or stopping his progress of taking possession of nations. This is why Daniel identified this beast as "exceedingly dreadful" (Dan. 7:19). Daniel said this man would use peace to destroy many.

> Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means.
>
> —DANIEL 8:25

Daniel is saying that through the Antichrist's knowledge, he will be successful with deceiving many. This deceit will be linked to his so-called peace agreements, which will eventually be broken. Daniel 11:27 paints a picture of deception through negotiating:

> Both these kings' hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time.

The Antichrist will initiate a covenant (a firm agreement) for one "week" (Dan. 9:27). The Hebrew word for "week" is *shabuwa´* and alludes to a week of years—or seven years. The Antichrist will lie and break the agreement in the middle of the seven years, invading Jerusalem and setting up an image of himself to be worshipped by his followers (Rev. 13:14–15). Daniel saw the process:

> Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.
>
> —DANIEL 9:27

> And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.
>
> —DANIEL 8:25, KJV

The Antichrist will promise peace, yet "by peace shall destroy many." The word for *peace* in this passage literally means "security." He will tell people they will have security if they follow him. How ironic that this is the same theme the Palestinians use when negotiating with the Israelis. Israel demands security, and the Palestinians promise "land for peace." Just as the Oslo Accords collapsed, the future promises of peace signed by Islamic nations with Israel will be a covenant of deceit. The word for *destroy* in this passage means "ruin or decay." This passage could read, "And promising security he will ruin many."

It may seem strange, but some Muslims are expecting peace treaties to be signed, after which the Mahdi will rule for seven years. The Prophet Muhammad reportedly said:

> Al Mahdi will be from my progeny. His forehead will be broad and his nose will be high. He will fill the world with justice and fairness at a time when the world will be filled with oppression. He will rule for seven years. . . . large numbers of people from Iraq will come to him and pledge their allegiance to him. . . . This person (Imam Mahdi) will distribute the spoils of war after the battle. He will lead the people according to the Sunnat and during his reign Islam will spread throughout the world. He will remain till seven years (since his emergence). He will pass away.[2]

Another interesting observation is made in the following statement:

> There will be four peace agreements between you and the Romans. The fourth agreement will be mediated through a person who will be from the progeny of Hadhrat Haroon (A.S.) and will be upheld for seven years.[3]

Three observations can be made from these Islamic traditions:

1. They believe a peace agreement will be signed and upheld for seven years.

2. The agreements will come after a major war.

3. The Mahdi will rule for seven years (some teach longer); then he will die.

Now, compare these traditions with the various revelations given in Scripture concerning the last days and the kingdom of

the Antichrist.

1. The coming dictator signs a peace treaty for seven years (Dan. 9:27).

2. The treaty will be signed after major wars in the Middle East (Ezek. 39:9).

3. The man who signs the treaty will be destroyed at the end of the seven years (Rev. 19:20).

Muslims have not taken their traditions from the Bible, but their expectations of the Mahdi are very similar to the predictions found in the prophetic books of the Scriptures. The common question is: How will surrounding Arab-Muslim nations make peace with Israel when there is such hatred between these two ancient relatives?

THE TIMING OF A FALSE PEACE

At the present time many Islamic nations are uninterested in a true peace with Israel. The majority is supporting the Intifada, an internal uprising between the Palestinians and Israelis. Others are calling for an all-out holy war (jihad) against Jews living in Palestine. (Many refer to the entire country of Israel as Palestine.) If Israel were to defeat surrounding nations in a major war, which they will in events prophesied in Ezekiel 38 and 39, the international community would demand a peace settlement.

During the battle of Gog and Magog all but one-sixth of the enemy armies will be killed. This will be the greatest war victory

in Israel's history. Some scholars speculate this could also be the time when Damascus, Syria, will be utterly destroyed, as predicted in Isaiah 17:1. Since 1948 Israel has fought five wars with its Arab neighbors. Syria has been involved in four of the past five conflicts. If Syria sent a chemical or biological weapon to be released upon the Israeli population, Israel would not restrain itself from utterly destroying its enemy.

Many believe the seven-year agreement of Daniel 9:27 will be signed after the Gog and Magog war. It may be that at that time individuals connected with Hamas, Hezbollah, and other radical groups will realize that Israel, as a nation, is here to stay. They may acknowledge that future wars could mean a total annihilation of all human beings in the Middle East. Most Islamic nations will only agree to peace with Israel after a huge war, resulting in countless deaths in Muslim countries, has ended. This is one reason why I suggest that the aftermath of the war of Gog and Magog could initiate the seven-year agreement between Israel and her surrounding enemies.

I am certain that organizations like the United Nations will lead the way for a major peace treaty at the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation. This may be alluded to in Revelation 6:2, when John saw the rider on a white horse. This verse indicates this white horse rider receives a crown and power to conquer. Each time I read this, I am reminded that all UN vehicles throughout the world are white in color. The United Nations is offering Israel and the Palestinians the opportunity to use UN security forces to guard the roads and checkpoints in Israel. The UN peacekeeping forces are scattered throughout the world, and the United Nations has power to place economic

and military sanctions on entire nations, thus limiting their banking, selling, and purchasing activities.

The white horse rider goes forth to conquer. The Greek word for "conquer" in Revelation 6:2 means "to subdue." This rider introduces the seventh kingdom of prophecy, which will continue for a brief time (Rev. 17:10–11). He will ride his way across the globe, subduing nations and eventually forming his final eighth kingdom with a ten-nation coalition.

HOW TO DESTROY USING PEACE

Destruction under the guise of peace was visible in Afghanistan. As long as the Afghans observed the strict laws of the Taliban, they were unharmed. If any person resisted or disagreed with even one small point of Taliban rule, they were met with swift Islamic justice. Crowds gathered in stadiums to watch people shot, hung, or beheaded for such evils as having a television, owning a VCR, or stealing to feed their hungry children. Even a woman who exposed her face in public faced severe punishment.

During his forty-two-month rule the beast and his kings will control all global economics and influence world political decisions. Those who differ or oppose these policies will be beheaded (Rev. 20:4). I am certain the Antichrist will take this passage from the Quran as his inspired reason for beheading the "infidels."

> "I will instill terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers: you smite above their necks and smite all their finger-tips off them." . . . It is not you who slew them; it was Allah.

—SURAH 8:12, 17

Those who will submit to his plans, purposes, and policies will be permitted to buy and sell using the "mark of the beast" (Rev. 13:17). Those rejecting the mark will be killed. The peace initiated by the Antichrist will bring survival to his followers and death to his enemies (Rev. 20:4).

According to Islamic tradition, the Mahdi will institute Islamic justice through peace. But his justice will be exacted by the sword of Islam. Anyone who rejects the Quran or Muhammad as the prophet and refuses to follow their strict, twisted concepts will be killed. Again, this accurately fits the description given by biblical prophets about the coming beast and his kingdom!

CHAPTER 10

THE (ISLAMIC) SUN WILL RISE IN THE WEST

I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire.

—REVELATION 10:1

HAVING TRAVELED TO the Middle East and specifically to Israel on more than thirty-two occasions, I have had opportunity to make acquaintances with Messianic believers, Arab Christians, secular and religious Jews, and Muslims. My Muslim friends are some of the most considerate and friendly persons I have encountered in the country. Some are bus drivers, others are businessmen, and all are trying to make a living for their families. They have little or no interest in the politics occurring and get along well with people of other religions, including Jews and Christians. In fact, while some say they are Muslims, they seldom if ever take time to pray five times a day, and they

miss services in the mosque. Of course, the more devout Muslims remind them they are not being a "true Muslim."

In the West and the Middle East Muslims can be divided into basically three categories. There are secular Muslims who are "Muslim in name only" and have been influenced by Western thought at liberal universities. Devout Muslims who keep the five main pillars of Islam—daily prayer, charity, fasting, faithfully attending the mosque, and the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca, if able)—comprise the second and largest segment. The third group are Islamic fanatics, those who consider Jews and Christians to be infidels and believe that in the last days they must participate in jihad to kill the infidel, force conversion to Islam, and spread the Islamic religion to non-Islamic nations through terrorism, war, or any method required to eventually turn the world to Islam. A friend who served as secretary in an important federal agency once told me that they suspected up to 200 million Muslims could be classified as leaning, or possibly leaning, toward engaging in jihad.

Muslims from all three groups believe that the Islamic religion will eventually become the accepted single religion of the entire world. According to Islamic history, by 711 much of what was the old Roman Empire had come under the control of Islam. Islamic influence ran from Morocco to Persia and into Europe. At the height of the Ottoman Turkish Empire (the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) Islam stretched over three continents, including North Africa, southeastern Europe, and the Middle East. The Turks also controlled Palestine and Jerusalem from 1517 to 1917. After World War I the empire

declined, and in 1923 it was succeeded by the Republic of Turkey. Muslims have since dreamed of restoring not just a single Islamic empire under one leader, but they also want to avenge themselves of their military defeats that eventually came through France and Spain. Moderate Muslims believe Allah will make this happen in his time and by his will. Fanatical Muslims, however, believe they are given authority by Allah to kill the unbeliever and force Islam upon those who survive this jihad.

In the time of Muhammad the "West" was considered the regions now known as Great Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal. With the rise of the United States as the leading economic and military nation on Earth, the West has taken a new direction. When Muslims in the Middle East speak of the "West," the term has become more than one nation or region of the world. It encompasses Great Britain, Spain, France, and, of course, America (and Canada). If these Western nations formed a body, then the United States would be the heart. Islam does not distinguish a separation between "religion and state," as America does with "separation of church and state." In devout Islamic countries the state rides on the back of the religion. The nation's leaders must be Muslims, the laws are Islamic, and the Islamic religion embraces the government, as the government is the mirror of Islamic law and tradition. When Muslims speak about America, most perceive the United States as a "Christian nation" whose government is dominated with and controlled by wealthy Jews or Zionists. Since the goal of Islam is to make Islam the only true religion in the world, then the West must eventually be defeated and crushed by jihad (terrorism) or

converted to Islam. Knowing these concepts and Islamic ideas, I was curious to learn of an Islamic prediction relating to the last days, that the sun would one day rise in the west.

Islam has about seventy signs that indicate the "last days." Some are major, and others are considered minor in nature. Some predictions are ominous and disastrous, including many cosmic signs and signs of nature similar to signs mentioned by Christ. Muslims, Christians, and Jews consider earthquakes, plagues, and wars as "signs" of the time of the end, or the last days.

Listed among the major signs is a rather strange, curious prediction stating the sun would rise from the west:

> Allah's Apostle said, "The Hour will not be established . . . till the sun rises from the West. So when the sun will rise and the people will see it (rising from the West) they will all believe (embrace Islam) but that will be the time when: (As Allah said,) 'No good will it do to a soul to believe then, if it believed not before, nor earned good (by deeds of righteousness) through its Faith.'"[1]
>
> —SAHIH BUKHARI

After researching the possible interpretations of this prediction, I discovered there are basically three main schools of thought as to the meaning of this hadith.

The first and very common interpretation is that the literal sun will one morning rise in the west instead of the east. As evidence that this could happen, some Muslims state that the planet Mars has shifted, and consequently the sun is now rising on Mars's western side. However, the hadith prediction says nothing about Mars. Obviously it would be impossible for the sun to rise in the west as the earth's rotation causes the sun to appear on the horizon from the east.

The second interpretation is that before the world ends, Islam will spread and be received in the nations of the West. Traditionally Islam has been strong in the eastern part of the world, especially when traveling from northern Africa eastward toward Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, and throughout the southern Russian states that were once a part of the ancient Roman Empire. The sun rising indicates the spread of Islam from the east to the west, which includes Spain, Great Britain, France, and eventually the United States. France's population is 66 million,[2] approximately 5 million of which are Muslims.[3] Islam is the second largest religion in England and Wales, with over 2.7 million Muslims.[4] Islam is growing in America. However, there are no reliable definitive statistics for the number of Muslims living in America. A 2001 article by Daniel Pipes in the *New York Post* made this observation:

> Uncertainty has generated some wildly divergent numbers. A large 1990 demographic survey counted 1.3 million Muslims. In 1998, a Pakistani newspaper put the number at 12 million. Even the usually authoritative Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches found 527,000 American Muslims in 1996 and six times as many (3.3 million) in 1998. Needing some kind of consensus figure, Muslim organizations came up with a self-acknowledged "guesstimation" of 6 million, which this year they decided to raise to 7 million.[5]

Thus, to some moderate Muslims, the sun, or "light of Islam," is rising in the areas of the West with the spread of the message of Islam and the acceptance of the religion among the Western nations.

The third interpretation is perhaps the most intriguing. Several years ago while ministering in Pensacola, Florida, I

watched the head of the Nation of Islam, Minister Louis Farrakhan, teaching about the spread of Islam. The Nation of Islam's national headquarters is located in Chicago, Illinois, and provides thousands of votes to any politician running for office in the Chicago area or in the state of Illinois. When a handsome and bright young man, Barack Obama, was running for state senator in 1996 to serve the Thirteenth District, the area included Chicago's South Side neighborhoods, "including areas in which Farrakhan was considered to be highly influential."[6]

At the conclusion of Farrakhan's televised message he quoted the prediction that the sun would rise in the west. As I understand his interpretation, he suggested that a special messenger would arise in the West (America) and help spread the light of Islam into the darkened minds of the American (the Western) population. As I listened carefully, I sensed that Minister Farrakhan was suggesting that he might be the "sun" that would impact the West.

THE EMBLEM OF THE RISING SUN

When then Senator Barack Obama began campaigning in the primaries, several interesting facts were brought to the surface by those wanting to learn more about this "dynamic and charismatic" African American candidate. It was known that he was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, on August 4, 1961, to Ann Dunham, a white American from Wichita, Kansas, and Barack Obama Sr., who was from Kenya. When Obama was two years old, his parents separated and later divorced. His biological

father returned to Kenya and was killed in an automobile accident in 1982. Barack's mother eventually married Lolo Soetoro, an Indonesian student, and eventually the family moved to Indonesia where Obama attended school until age ten. Returning to Hawaii, he lived with his maternal grandparents from 1971 to 1979, graduating from high school.

Obama eventually graduated with a BA from Columbia University in 1983. After four years in New York he moved to Chicago to work with church-based community organizations. He eventually entered law school at Harvard in 1988 and graduated *magna cum laude* in 1991 with a doctor of law degree (JD). The list of accomplishments continues, until he reached the pinnacle of his career and became an instant American legend by becoming America's first African American president.

During the primaries opponents of Obama were quick to call attention to several points of "interest" that were made public. The first was that the senator's nickname was Barry, but Obama later demanded he be called by his formal name, Barack. It was pointed out that Barack is a deviation of Barak and is an Islamic name and was the name of Muhammad's horse. The Islam name means "lightning." I pointed out that Barack was also a biblical name (spelled Barak), found in the Book of Judges, chapters 4 and 5. During the campaign it was claimed by some that Senator Obama's father and stepfather were Muslims (although "others" claimed they were nonpracticing Muslims). The third point was Barack's middle name was Hussein, the same exact name of the former president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein. Soon the secular media made it clear that

anyone calling the senator Barack Hussein Obama was attempting to scare the American people and attempting to link the senator to the Islamic religion.

The senator's campaign made it clear that his present faith was Christianity and that he had been a member of one church, Trinity United Church of Christ, for twenty years. The interest in Obama's religion led to investigating the messages and background of the pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright. According to an article written in March 2007 by Ryan Lizza, senior editor at *The New Republic*, "Wright was a former Muslim and black nationalist who had studied at Howard and Chicago . . . "[7] Other journalists dug into the church's website, bulletins, magazines, and recorded sermons and alleged that the church had posted a Hamas manifesto in the church's bulletin. It was also noted that Wright was a very close friend with Louis Farrakhan, the radical leader of the Nation of Islam, who once called Jews "blue-eyed devils" and white people "white devils"—the same Louis Farrakhan who had spoken on television after 9/11 about the sun rising in the west.

During the primaries and even after Senator Obama became the Democratic nominee for president, there was much behind-the-scenes concern in his campaign that just the perception of an "alleged Islamic link," or at least the perception that Obama may have strong secret links to Muslims, could hurt the possibilities of Obama becoming president. Contacts inside Israel reported there were questions among key Israeli military personal and Knesset members as to whether or not Obama would continue his support for Israel and how he would react if another possible war were to erupt in Islamic nations, such as

Iran. The concern among some Israelis grew as occasionally leaders in Muslim nations in and around the region began to make speeches to their audiences and address the possible future president as "Our brother Muslim Obama." To these individuals a man who has a Muslim father is automatically a Muslim himself by birth, unless the birth son confesses publicly to another religion. An article in *USA Today* summed up the feeling of American Muslims:

> After months of balancing their support for the presidential candidate with concerns that their allegiance could do more harm than good, millions of relieved Muslims cheered the election of the son of a Muslim immigrant whose middle name is Hussein.[8]

During the presidential campaign the apprehensions among some Obama opponents reached a peak when something interesting was noted about a seal that had been created in Chicago for the Obama campaign.

THE SYMBOLS IN THE SEAL

The Obama campaign eventually introduced a special seal that became the campaign logo. While the imagery of the seal can be interpreted one way to all living in the West, to a Muslim with a "prophetic imagination," some suggested, the seal could have sent a "cryptic" or hidden message. The seal was the letter *O* (representing the *O* in Obama) with a rising sun within the circle. The explanation given was that it represented the sun rising on a new day in America, representing hope. When exploring the Internet during the campaign, I found where the

Associated Press said this about the new seal (emphasis is mine):

> A new seal debuted on Obama's podium Friday, sporting iconography used in the U.S. presidential seal, the blue background, the eagle clutching arrows on left and olive branch on right, but with symbolic differences. Instead of the Latin "E pluribus unum" (Out of many, one), Obama's says, "Vero possumus," rough Latin for "Yes, we can." Instead of "Seal of the President of the United States," Obama's website address is listed. And *instead of a shield, Obama's eagle wears his "O" campaign logo with a rising sun representing hope ahead.*[9]

The newly designed large eagle emblem, similar to the presidential seal, was massively criticized during the primaries and was immediately dropped by the campaign. However, the large *O* with the rising sun remained as the main logo throughout the primaries until the election of President Obama. I doubt that few if any people in America would have questioned if there was a "cryptic message" being sent to Muslims throughout the world that the anticipated and predicted "sun was now rising in the West." I knew of the Islamic hadith and also noticed the unique seal with the rising sun. However, the "conspiracy" that this seal was a secret message seemed to fail in the fact that no single Muslim, Islamic leader, or news agency from any Islamic nation noted the rising sun or made a comment concerning it. However, the leader of the Nation of Islam made a very controversial statement.

Prior to the election Rush Limbaugh reported that Louis Farrakhan used a controversial term when describing Senator

Obama. In a transcript posted on Limbaugh's website, Farrakhan, addressing an audience, said, "You are the instruments that God is going to use to bring about universal change. And that is why Barack has captured the youth. And he has involved young people in a political process that they didn't care anything about. That's a sign. When the Messiah speaks, the youth will hear. And the Messiah is absolutely speaking."[10] In the Christian faith the word *Messiah* comes from a Hebrew word that means "anointed one." There is only one true Messiah, and that is Jesus Christ. However, Scripture warns that false prophets and false christs would appear (Matt. 24:24). The individuals would be religious leaders who would lead people astray from the truth.

Why would the leader of the largest black Islamic movement in America call at that time a presidential candidate the Messiah? It was reported on Worldnetdaily.com that senior staffers with the Obama campaign were members of the Nation of Islam.[11] When combining the Islamic link in Obama's family, his name, his former pastor's past, the friendship of Farrakhan, and the seal, it added fuel to the controversy and suggestions that Obama was a "secret Muslim" who would eventually compromise with our enemies. The statement that "the Messiah is absolutely speaking" could lead one to believe that Farrakhan has accepted Obama as the "sun rising in the West."

Let me personally state that I believe Obama has accepted the Christian faith and is not a "secret Muslim," as some suggest. He has numerous minister friends, especially in the African American community. It is evident that President Obama is completely familiar with black Christian churches and

their pastors, having worked in Chicago. He was sworn in using Abraham Lincoln's Bible (not the Quran) and allowed Rick Warren to use the name of Jesus in the inaugural prayer. I do, however, see how his family background could assist him in being easily accepted and warmly received in moderate Islamic nations.

POLITICALLY AND RELIGIOUSLY CORRECT

Christians who acknowledge a born-again experience also believe that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and that He is the only mediator between God and man (John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5). We believe that if any other religion that preceded Christianity or followed Christianity was sufficient to bring mankind into an eternal relationship with God, then the death and resurrection of Christ would not be needed. It is clear that all other religions, while they may contain elements of truth, fell completely short in their teachings and among their followers, thus the need for the Messiah and the Redeemer.

America is now in the season of not just being politically correct but also of becoming "spiritually correct." It is taboo to teach that Christ is the only Savior and that the Christian faith has the premium on truth. Today we are informed that all religions are a path in the same direction that ends at the gates of heaven. According to this watered-down theology, no one is a "sinner," and a good moral person has the same right to enter the pearly gates as a dedicated Christian. The prevailing attitude is that God would never send a person to hell

(although Hitler is there). It is this type of liberal theology that will eventually deny that Christ is the Son of God and introduce the spirit of antichrist to the world (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3). In the Book of Revelation a future religious leader identified as the lamb with two horns will merge two major religions together under his control (Rev. 13:11–18). I believe those two religions will be apostate Christianity and Islam. For Muslims to receive an alleged Christian leader, the leader must deny that Christ is the Son of God, since 1.6 billion Muslims deny that Jesus is God's Son and teach that "[Allah] begets not, nor is He begotten" (Surah 112:3).

It stands to reason that at some point a noted world leader must arise on the global scene who promotes peace and unity among all faiths. I am certainly able to get along with anyone who chooses to get along with me, despite our political or religious differences. However, when the divinity of Christ is rejected and the Savior becomes just a good man or just another prophet, then I will stand for Christ! Since the future "lamb with two horns" rules from Jerusalem, and the two religions with the largest followers in the Middle East and Europe are traditional Christianity and Islam, then any leader with both religions in his background would be an excellent forerunner to prepare for the future fulfillment of the prophetic scriptures.

From a biblical and prophetic perspective there will be several wars that will transpire in the future, including wars involving Israel and her internal and external enemies. Eventually, however, there will be major peace treaties signed with Israel and her surrounding enemy nations. We must

remember that there is a false peace that will prevail prior to the final end-time events. It may be that it will take a leader with a dual religious background (Islamic and Christian) to help create the climate needed to bring the Muslims and the Jews together at the same table. It is also important for all believers to remember this passage:

> Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.
>
> —DANIEL 2:20–21

ISLAM SPREADING IN THE WEST

America is a melting pot and a mixed multitude of nations. Prior to 1963 any children immigrating to America from foreign nations attended a public school where each morning they heard a Bible story read and heard a prayer offered to God, often concluding in the name of Christ. Through the influence and political pressure of an outspoken and radical atheist named Madalyn Murray O'Hair, both prayer and Bible reading were removed from our public schools by a decision of the US Supreme Court. Prior to this time anyone coming to America understood this nation to be a Christian nation, with moral and spiritual values based upon the Bible. Many early immigrants arriving from Europe were Catholic, Protestant, or Orthodox Christian in their faith. During the past fifty years millions of immigrants from the Middle East, Asia, and India have begun pouring into America, bringing with them Islamic, Hindu, and

other religious faiths to the United States.

After 1963–1964, as people from other faiths began pouring into the nation, they no longer heard a story from Scripture or a prayer prayed to our God. Thus they continued to follow their own religious indoctrination, continually growing families in many of the major cities in America. Our nation is based upon religious freedom, and true Christians would never force conversion upon anyone. Conversion is a matter of personal faith and a personal decision.

Many Muslims settle in America and build their homes, families, and businesses. There are, however, various individuals and groups whose motives for being here have nothing to do with becoming a prosperous American citizen, and they refuse to blend in to any type of American tradition or culture or assimilation.

Once such person is Abdul Alim Musa, a Washington, DC, imam who has stated that he is working to replace the US government with an Islamic state by 2050. He has stated he will establish a complete way of Islamic life in the United States.[12] The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) chairman has stated, "Islam isn't in America to be equal to any other faith, but to become dominant."[13] He is also reported to have said, "I hope to see an Islamic government over the US one day."

The plans that many Muslims have for America include (but are not limited to):

- Establish mosques in every city
- Call on society to embrace and accept Islam

- Establish full-time Islamic schools to raise leaders
- Establish businesses and finance Islam through the businesses
- Encourage Muslims to build a community near the mosques
- Establish social welfare institutions

There is also a lesser-known agenda that is subtler and could have an impact not only upon Christianity but also upon the freedom of Christian ministers to speak the truth when comparing Christian teaching to Islam or when exposing the contradictions found in Islamic teaching. This sly agenda includes (and, again, is not limited to):

- Make speaking against Islam a hate crime (to silence all critics)
- Make inroads into the black community, which is often more accepting of Islam
- Engage in debates to show that Islam is equal to Christianity and Judaism
- Begin appointing Islamic leaders—regionally, statewide, and nationally
- Begin buying out media outlets, papers, and companies
- Hold America hostage with high oil prices

As an example, in 1991 Siraj Wahaj prayed at the House of Representatives and quoted from the Quran. One year later he spoke to a Muslim group in New Jersey, stating that if only Muslims were cleverer politically, they could take over the United States and replace its constitutional government with a caliphate.[14] He also stated:

> If we were united and strong, we would elect our own emir [leader] and give allegiance to him. . . . [I]f 6–8 million Muslims unite in America, the country will come to us.[15]

And according to CAIR founding chairman Omar M. Ahmad, "Islam isn't in America to be equal to any other faith, but to become dominant. . . . The Koran, the Muslim book of scripture, should be the highest authority in America and Islam the only accepted religion on Earth."[16]

The question arises: Why would certain Islamic leaders and organizations be interested in eventually establishing Islamic dominion over the United States? I have never heard any Christian minister or organization declare that the goal of Christianity is to eventually take over Saudi Arabia and make the sacred Islamic site of the Kaaba an evangelistic headquarters! Christians witness of our faith to all people, but we have never made plans to overthrow a government of any Islamic nation and force the Muslims to convert or else.

Back to the question: Why is there an agenda to make the government of America Islamic under Islamic law? There are three basic reasons:

1. To control the economic and educational centers of

the world, which in this case is the United States

2. To rise above the rival religion of Christianity and the liberalism found in the Western civilizations

3. Most importantly, to establish a visible and active Islamic kingdom on Earth

Recent events in Britain and France prove the possibility that Muslims can increase their numbers and influence in Western nations. In the fall of 2005 Muslim riots in France continued for days as mobs torched over four hundred cars, set on fire warehouses, and threw stones and sticks at police. In all Islamic cultures the families have numerous children, often as many as ten to fifteen per family, whereas in the West, the average number of children per household is two.[17] Thus Islam grows by birth rate and not just through conversion. When asking the question "Will Britain convert to Islam?", a reader commenting on an article called "The Islamic States of America" wrote:

> The Christian churches have all but disappeared from the lives of the British people. The chapels of Wales are gaunt ruins, the great Roman Catholic churches of the industrial North West are often empty and derelict, the Anglicans scuttle about in their hallowed, lovely buildings like mice amid ancient ruins, rarely even beginning to fill spaces designed for multitudes.
>
> The choirs and the bells gradually fall silent, the hymns are no longer sung and one by one the doors are locked and places which in some cases have seen worship for centuries become bare museums of a dead faith.
>
> Few listen to what these churches say. They have become exclusive clubs, whose members celebrate bizarre rituals which are baffling to

outsiders.[18]

I once read on an Islamic blog that has since been removed from the Internet a statement from a Muslim immigrant to America who was boasting about how easy it is to operate the Muslim beliefs and system in America. It was written that:

- American laws will protect us.
- Democrats and leftists will support us.
- The UN will legitimize us.
- CAIR and MAB (Muslim Association of Britain) will incubate us.
- The ACLU will support us.
- Western universities will educate us.
- Mosques in the West will shelter us.
- OPEC will finance us.
- Moderate Muslims will fertilize us.
- We will use your (West) welfare system.

Let me again emphasize that there are Muslims who are happy to be here and simply want to make a good living and raise a family. However, when digging deeper into Islamic books and blogs on the Internet and listening to Muslims discuss their future, I see that America is a part of their agenda of evangelism and eventual influence in the government.

THE INFLUENCE OF BLACK ISLAM

The largest American Islamic organization among African Americans is the Nation of Islam. Over the years I have heard certain statements made by the ministers of the Nation of Islam, including Louis Farrakhan. Such statements include racist ideas that Christianity is a "white man's religion" and Islam is for the "black man." In fact, this black supremacy theology is central to the early teachings of the Nation of Islam.

> According to the Nation of Islam, Allah, (God) created man, and the man he created was black. They believe that Allah himself is the original and supreme black man. He is the Supreme Being among a mighty and powerful race of black men. In this The Nation of Islam differs strongly with the monotheism of traditional Islam.
>
> It is the teaching of Elijah Muhammad that all black men today are a part of this God-race. The black race is thus divine and superior to all other races. Modern day blacks came into existence some 66 trillion years ago when a great explosion ripped the moon from the earth. These people were black and called the tribe of Shabazz. They explored the earth and settled the better places to live, two of which are the Nile Valley and Mecca. Again, neither the Qur'an nor the Bible support such a concept.[19]

The thought is that a black man should never be a Christian or support the Christian faith, which is based upon and followed by white men. Black men should follow Islam. The religion of Islam is often connected to Africa, thus the link mandating that black men with an African heritage should reject American Christianity and join the ranks of their fellow Muslims from around the world.

Is Islam a black man's religion? Was the founder of Islam,

Muhammad, black in color? There are no known drawings or pictures of Muhammad, but there are people who personally met him who have revealed his skin color. According to Islamic hadith:

> While we were sitting with the Prophet in the mosque, a man came riding on a camel. He made his camel kneel down in the mosque, tied its foreleg and then said: "Who amongst you is Muhammad?" . . . We replied, "This white man reclining on his arm."[20]

Muhammad is described as a "white man."

> I said to Abu-Juhaifa, "Describe him for me." He said, "He was white and his beard was black with some white hair. He promised to give us 13 young she-camels, but he expired before we could get them."[21]

> Anas reported: I saw the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) raising his hands (high enough) in supplication (for rain) that the whiteness of his armpits became visible.[22]

Let me be clear that religion should never be about skin color. However, to imply that Islam is for black men and ignore that Muhammad was white would be deceptive to say the least. It was a black man from Africa, Simon from Cyrene, who helped carry the cross for Christ when He fell under the load (Mark 15:21). One of the first biblical churches was started by a black Ethiopian who was baptized by Philip the evangelist (Acts 8). An early biblical teacher, Simon from Niger, came from a western African nation (Acts 8:26, 40). The African people were heavily involved in the formation of the Christian faith!

According to the Nation of Islam, white people are responsible for slavery. However, there again the Muslims

allow a willful historical omission by not revealing that Muhammad himself had black slaves. The following information is from the translation of *Sahih Bukhari* and other hadith.

- Muhammad had a black slave named Anjasha.[23]
- He displayed black slaves in the mosque.[24]
- Muhammad had slave girls, and at times they were whipped.[25]
- Muhammad referred to blacks as "raisin heads."[26]

Arabs invaded northern Africa in the seventh century, sending black African slaves to Asia and Arab countries. In the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, which is Arab, Berber Muslims hold possibly more than one hundred thousand black slaves.[27] In Saudi Arabia a common word for black is *abd*, meaning "slave."

In Sudan black Muslims are kidnapping black Christians and making them slaves. Therefore for Minister Farrakhan to suggest that Islam is favorable to black Africans is ignoring early Islamic history and defiantly ignoring the conflicts in the Sudan, Nigeria, and other African nations where black Muslims are killing, raping, and attacking their own people—all in the name of the spread of radical Islam.

The unique aspect of the Christian faith is that love is the center of the religion. Christians are taught: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself " (Matt. 19:19). The Bible teaches

Christians to “pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44) and “not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also” (v. 39). The Bible even teaches us to “love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you” (v. 44). This is far different from the response promoted by fanatical Muslims against others, which instructs followers of Islam to attack their enemies and cut off their fingers and heads.

Only time will reveal how the prediction of the “sun rising in the West” will be fulfilled in the minds of Muslims. Time will also reveal if Muslims will perceive a present or future American leader to be the “sun” of Islam, shining the light of the religion among the Western unbelievers. Whatever their perception will be, the message of Islam, the increase of immigration and births in Muslim families, and the desire to convert the West will certainly continue.

CHAPTER 11

THE ANTICHRIST—A RADICAL MUSLIM?

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

—REVELATION 13:1–2

AMONG THE WRITINGS of the Old Testament prophets Moses is named in Scripture 768 times, while Abram or Abraham's name is mentioned 303 times. The one individual who holds more predictions about His appearance and ministry throughout the Scriptures is the promised Messiah. There are hundreds of prophecies that refer to the Messiah, many of which were fulfilled though Christ, and many others will be

fulfilled in the future. The only other person who receives such attention in the biblical prophetic Scriptures is a person identified as the final prince of darkness, called the Antichrist.

There are few Christians in America today who have not heard the term *Antichrist*. The average Christian in the Western Hemisphere who has read prophecy books, watched end-time DVDs, or viewed apocalyptic-oriented television specials understands four basic facts revealed in Scripture about the coming Antichrist. They are:

1. The Antichrist is a man who will form a final empire at the end of the age.

2. The Antichrist will make a treaty with Israel for seven years.

3. The Antichrist will eventually set up his kingdom in Jerusalem.

4. The Antichrist will be involved in the final battle, called Armageddon.

Two biblical prophets, Daniel and the apostle John, give numerous details in their writings and prophetic visions concerning this man's rise to power, his realm of influence, and his violent reaction to those who reject his mission. Much of the church's historical understanding of this man comes from these two prophetic books, Daniel and Revelation.

COMPARING DANIEL WITH THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The prophet Daniel and the apostle John lived more than six hundred years apart. Yet, when comparing their visions, it is amazing how the Book of Daniel complements the Book of Revelation. Revelation is a continuation of, and includes deeper explanation of, the apocalyptic visions found in Daniel. Below is a list of what both visionaries saw.

1. Both saw a final period of seven years. Daniel identified the time frame as one prophetic week (seven years) in Daniel 9:27. John divided the seven years into two forty-two-month periods (Rev. 11:2; 13:5).

2. Both saw forty-two final months of world history. Daniel gave the time frame as time (one year), times (two years), and dividing of time (half of a year) (Dan. 12:7). John said the final time frame would be 1,260 days—three and a half years (Rev. 12:6).

3. Both identified the Antichrist as a "beast." Daniel saw the Antichrist as the fourth beast that would arise (Dan. 7:7). John saw the Antichrist as the beast rising up from the sea (Rev. 13:1).

4. Both reveal a time of great trouble on Earth. Daniel said it was a time such as never was or ever shall be (Dan. 12:1). John described a time of wrath and trouble (Rev. 12:7–12).

5. Both prophets saw Michael the archangel. Daniel saw Michael standing up at the time of trouble (Dan.

12:1). John saw Michael warring with Satan in heaven (Rev. 12:7).

6. Both prophets saw ten kings that would arise at the end of days. Daniel said the ten horns were ten kings (Dan. 7:24). John saw ten horns with ten crowns that were ten kings (Rev. 13:1).

7. Both saw the resurrection of the dead. Daniel recorded a resurrection after the Tribulation (Dan. 12:2). John saw a resurrection of those who were beheaded in the Tribulation (Rev. 7:9–17).

8. Both prophets saw the return of the Lord to set up His kingdom. Daniel saw an everlasting kingdom of the Messiah (Dan. 7:13–14). John saw Christ returning to make war (Rev. 19:11).

After studying this subject for more than thirty-four years, I have discovered many facts about this topic that are very clear in prophetic scriptures. I have also concluded that some church teachings from the past were based more on men's traditions or on "private interpretations" handed down from generation to generation, either of which are often built more on assumptions than on biblical or historical foundations.

For example, have you ever attended a prophetic conference, read a prophetic book, or came across research that taught the following?

- The Antichrist will be a Jew from the tribe of Dan.
- The Antichrist will rebuild a temple for the Jews on

the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

• The Antichrist will be a man of peace and will oversee the Common Market.

These three theories are based on individual interpretations or traditional theological ideas handed down for generations from a few early church fathers' specific interpretations, and they are not necessarily based upon specific biblical scriptures. In fact, as I will explain, there is much more information alluding to the Antichrist that has *not* been taught or understood than what has been taught or written. After thirty-four years and more than forty thousand hours of biblical study and research, I firmly believe the following is an accurate description of coming events related to the Antichrist:

• The Antichrist will be a Gentile (from an Islamic background) and not a Jew from Israel.

• The Antichrist will not rebuild the Jewish temple—the prophet Elijah will initiate that process.

• The Antichrist will control the oil-rich Gulf States and will control much of Europe.

• The Antichrist brings peace only to his followers and death to those who resist him.

I realize these four statements may cut against the grain of some traditional interpretations of prophetic teaching. However, when we move from assumptions to direct biblical interpretation and insight, the fog clears.

THE ANTICHRIST—A GENTILE, NOT A JEW

First, let's examine my belief that the Antichrist will be a Gentile leader and not a Jew. During the second and third centuries many early church fathers became quite anti-Semitic in their theological interpretations. Several early fathers like Irenaeus (*Heresies*, vol. 302) and Hippolytus (*De Christo et Antichristo*, pp. 14–15) taught that the Antichrist would be a Jew rising from the tribe of Dan, a teaching based on their interpretation of Jeremiah 8:15–16 and three passages in the Scriptures.

Two of these passages mentioned the Jewish tribe of Dan and horses:

> Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.
>
> —GENESIS 49:17, KJV

> The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein.
>
> —JEREMIAH 8:16, KJV

The assumption links the tribe of Dan to the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, mentioned in Revelation 6:1–8, whose appearance introduces the beginning of the Tribulation and the rise of the Antichrist.

A third passage is found in the register of the tribes of Israel, listed in Revelation 7. Scholars note that the tribe of Dan is missing from among the list of the tribes of Israel that receive a

protective seal from God during the Tribulation. Thus, since Dan is missing, it is assumed that the Antichrist must arise from the tribe of Dan, inside of Israel.

Why is Dan missing? Today in modern Israel many of the Jewish people living in the contemporary cities of Israel identified as part of Dan's ancient territory either are agnostics, atheists, or very nonreligious secular Jews. In the other areas of Israel there are many religious Jews, including reformed, orthodox, and, in Jerusalem, ultraorthodox Jews. It may be that Dan is missing because the Jewish men living in the area of Dan are simply unbelievers and therefore are not sealed as others who "[have kept] the commandments . . . " (Rev. 12:17). It is actually a biblical mystery why Dan is missing, and to suggest why is entirely speculative.

For many years I heard prophetic teachers proclaim that the Antichrist would be a Jewish political/military leader from Israel. This theory puzzled me, because I knew the world's 1.6 billion Muslims would never follow a Jew who, while living in Israel, would rule and control surrounding Middle East nations, all of which are Islamic. After many trips to Israel I began asking noted prophetic teachers, "Why is no one explaining the role that Muslims will play in end-time prophecy?" Teachers were teaching the significance of Israel and the Jews, along with a Gentile-ruled Common Market, but consistently writers and researchers of eschatology seemed to ignore the importance of the Islamic religion and the Muslims living in the Middle East and Europe.

One explanation was that Islam would be defeated in the war of Gog and Magog. This cannot be true, since there are

presently fifty-two nations whose population is predominantly Islamic, and in the war of Gog and Magog only five major Islamic nations are listed as taking part in the battle. When God said He would defeat all but one-sixth of Gog's army, it did not mean that one-sixth of the Islamic nations would remain, but that five-sixths of the invading armies would be destroyed (Ezek. 39:2, KJV).

After much research and study I believe the prophecies point out that the Antichrist will be a Gentile and not a Jew. I base this on several important prophecies and apocalyptic dreams and visions.

First, in Daniel chapter 2, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a metallic image that prophetically identifies the world empires from the time of Babylon, the empire symbolized by the image's head of gold, down through the final kingdom, symbolized by the ten toes of the image. All of the empires represented by the image are Gentile—not one is Jewish. In reality, each of the empires symbolized by the image has impacted or affected the Jewish people and Israel in some manner.

The concept that the final prophetic empire will be Gentile, not Jewish, is also referred to by Christ in Luke 21:24:

> And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

In the context of this prophecy in Luke Jesus was speaking of "the days of vengeance" (v. 22), used by Old Testament prophets to allude to the coming time of God's wrath or

Tribulation (Isa. 34:8; 35:4; 61:2; 63:4). Other signs Christ also mentioned include cosmic signs, men's hearts failing them, and His return (Luke 21:22–27). The point is that this prophecy alluding to the fall of Jerusalem to the Gentiles was not just fulfilled in 70 when the Romans destroyed the city. It will occur once more in the future when the Gentile Antichrist will invade Jerusalem, divide the city (Zech. 14:2), and set up an image of himself at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (Rev. 13:14–15).

Revelation 11:1–2 also alludes to the Gentile control of Jerusalem. John states:

> Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months."

Most scholars believe the Book of Revelation was written around 95 in the time of the emperor Domitian. The temple in Jerusalem had already been destroyed in the year 70. Twenty-five years later John was told to "measure the temple." How could John measure the temple and the outer court, which we are told the Gentiles would "trample underfoot for forty-two months," if the temple was already in ruins? The most common answer is that there will be a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem during the Tribulation. It will be at this temple where the Gentile Antichrist will place his abominable image and be worshipped by masses of his followers, causing Jews to flee from Jerusalem into the wilderness (Rev. 12:6).

WILL THE ANTICHRIST BE A RADICAL MUSLIM?

The Middle East is the heart of Islam, and Israel is the thorn in the side of Islamic leaders who desire to form an Islamic crescent. What role will Islam play in future apocalyptic events? In early 1992 I met a young woman from Iran who shared with me the detailed apocalyptic beliefs of Shiite Muslims, who make up the majority of Iran's population. Few Americans, including myself, had ever heard these beliefs. When I compared her information with the prophecies of the Bible, I became convinced that the Antichrist will claim the Islamic religion as his religion and will proclaim himself—and be received as—Islam's final awaited "messiah." He will be a master of war, using weapons of mass destruction to hold entire nations hostage (Rev. 13:4). Those who do not convert to his religion will be beheaded, and others will be forced into starvation (Rev. 13:17; 20:4). Before thinking this is mere prophetic fiction, take a journey with me into the Scriptures to receive a clearer picture of the Antichrist of prophecy.

THE WORD ANTICHRIST IN SCRIPTURE

The word *Antichrist* was coined by the apostle John and is found only in the epistles of John. It can mean "against Christ" or "instead of Christ." W. E. Vine comments on this word, saying that by combining the two words *anti* and *Christ*, it can mean "one who assumes the guise of Christ, or opposes Christ."[1] In approximately 90 John penned the epistles that

carry his name—1, 2, and 3 John. There are four passages where John used the word *Antichrist*.

> Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.
>
> —1 JOHN 2:18

> Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.
>
> —1 JOHN 2:22

> And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.
>
> —1 JOHN 4:3

> For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.
>
> —2 JOHN 7

Because John said, "Many antichrists are already in the world," some teach there is not a future person called the Antichrist, but that the Antichrist is only a spirit that throughout history has rejected the divinity of Christ. I submit to you that the Antichrist is both a spirit and a person. The "antichrist spirit" certainly existed in the time of the apostolic church, as some heretical teachers were already denying the divinity of Christ and His position as the Son of God. Yet at the end of days one man will appear who will be a prince of darkness, a son of perdition, who is identified as the Antichrist. In these four passages in his epistles John elaborates on the

three key elements linked to Christ that the spirit of antichrist and the Antichrist deny:

1. He will deny the deity of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:22).

2. He will deny Jesus Christ is the Son of God (1 John 2:22).

3. He will deny the unique relationship between the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22).

Just as the future land of conflict will be Israel and the future city of conflict Jerusalem, the present and future spiritual conflict will center around the question: Who *is* or who *was* Jesus Christ? Was He a mere man, a prophet among prophets, or was He the Son of God? To many religious Jews Jesus Christ was a mortal man of ancient history who formed a new religion. To devout Muslims Jesus Christ was one of the great prophets of Allah. But to the true Christian Jesus Christ was and is the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16).

Further evidence that the Antichrist is a mortal man and not just some evil spirit or theological belief is revealed in other New Testament passages through the use of personal pronouns. Evangelical scholars point to the following passages, which reveal significant details about this future world dictator. In each case he is identified with the use of a masculine noun or pronoun:

- "The *man* of sin . . . the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3, emphasis added).

- "*He* sits as God in the temple of God, showing

himself that *he* is God. . . . *He* may be revealed in *his* own time" (2 Thess. 2:4, 6, emphasis added).

• "The dragon gave *him his* power, *his* throne, and great authority. . . . 'Who is able to make war with *him*?' And *he* was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and *he* was given authority to continue for forty-two months. . . . It was granted to *him* to make war" (Rev. 13:2, 4–5, 7, emphasis added).

Even in John's writings he distinguished the spirit of antichrist from the person of the Antichrist. In 1 John 2:22 the Interlinear Bible reads: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is [the] antichrist."[2] The phrase "the antichrist" in Greek is *ho antichristos*, alluding to a specific person. While some suggest that the Greek definite article *ho*, translated *the*, should not be translated as "the antichrist" but simply a general term "antichrist," this does not change the fact that Daniel and John saw a man and not some spirit ruling the world!

The spirit (or the attitude) of antichrist was working in John's day. Even then there were heretics who wrote denying Christ's deity. But the Antichrist, the man of end-time prophecy, is yet to come. It was this man whom Daniel identified as the little horn rising among ten kings and to whom John refers as the apocalyptic beast.

In the Book of Revelation he is identified as the symbol of a "beast" (Rev. 13:1). The word *beasts* is also found in the King James Version of Revelation 4:6, used to identify the living

creatures around God's throne who continually worship God. The Greek word used to describe these angelic creatures is *zoon*, which is a living creature. The word used to describe the beast system of the Antichrist is *therion*, alluding to a "wild beast, or a dangerous animal."[3] The character of this wild man is thus compared by John to a wild beast that tramples, devours, and kills.

NAMES GIVEN TO THE ANTICHRIST

For centuries Bible scholars have pored over the ancient prophecies to identify numerous passages that speak of this final world leader. The following scriptures reveal the character and nature of the world's final dictator:

- The little horn (Dan. 7:8, KJV)
- A king of fierce countenance (Dan. 8:23, KJV)
- The prince who is to come (Dan. 9:26)
- The one who makes desolate (Dan. 9:27)
- The king who shall do according to his own will (Dan. 11:36)
- The man of sin (2 Thess. 2:3)
- The son of perdition (2 Thess. 2:3)
- The lawless one (2 Thess. 2:8)
- The antichrist (1 John 2:22)

• The beast (Rev. 11:7)

WHAT THE EARLY FATHERS BELIEVED

When mentioning the writings of the early church fathers, they were categorized in three groups, as follows:

1. The apostolic fathers
2. The ante-Nicene fathers
3. The post-Nicene fathers

The apostolic fathers were bishops and ministers who were taught and instructed directly under the tutorship of the apostles or under men who were trained by the early leaders in the first-century church. The ante-Nicene fathers are identified as the bishops and leaders after the apostolic fathers and until the time of the Council of Nicea in 325. Some noted ante-Nicene fathers were Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Ignatius. The post-Nicene fathers were bishops and leaders after the 325 council, such as Augustine of Hippo (who wrote on church doctrine), Chrysostom, and Eusebius.

There are numerous written statements made by the early fathers concerning the rise and dominion of the Antichrist. At one point some felt that the wicked Roman emperor Nero, a severe persecutor of the Christians, had faked his death and would rise once again from the East as the Antichrist.

> He [the Antichrist] himself shall divide the globe into three ruling powers, when, moreover, Nero shall be raised up from hell, Elias shall first come to seal the beloved ones; at which things the region of Africa

> and the northern nation, the whole earth from all sides, for seven years shall tremble.[4]
>
> But Elias [Elijah] shall occupy the half of the time, Nero shall occupy half.[5]

Nero came to power in 54, at age sixteen. He desired to rebuild Rome and to construct a series of palaces he planned to call "Neropolis."[6] His senate rejected the idea. On July 19, 64, a major fire broke out in Rome that continued for six days, reigniting for two more days. As the smoke cleared, two-thirds of Rome was destroyed. It is believed by many that Nero started the fire to clear land for his Neropolis. Because some Christians of that time believed prophetically that Rome would be destroyed by fire, Nero found his scapegoat for setting the city on fire—the Christians. He announced that Christians had set Rome on fire.

This lie created an eruption of violence against Christians throughout the Roman Empire, but especially in Rome. Nero eventually committed suicide; however, some believed he would come back from the dead in the form of the dreaded Antichrist. I am sure the early fathers had read Revelation 17:11, where it is predicted that the beast that "was, and is not," along with Isaiah 24:18, which states, "he who comes up from the midst of the pit," to apply the prophecies to Nero. This is an incorrect interpretation of Scripture and tradition.

There are also those who believe that Judas will once again come back from his confinement in hell and become the Antichrist, basing the belief on passages in John and 2 Thessalonians that call both Judas Iscariot and the coming

Antichrist "the son of perdition" (John 17:12; 2 Thess. 2:3).

Another passage in Revelation 17:7–8, along with an unusual reference in Acts 1, has led several contemporary scholars to form a theory that Judas, the betrayer of Christ, would actually be the future Antichrist. Greek scholars, such as Kenneth Wuest in his book *Prophetic Light in Present Darkness*, have taken certain scriptures as a cryptic clue identifying Judas Iscariot as the son of perdition who will return from the "pit" of hell during the Tribulation, taking possession of a human body (the embodiment of evil), and thus becoming the Antichrist. We are told that Satan entered Judas's heart, and he became obsessed with turning Christ over to the Roman soldiers and priests (John 13:27). Afterward Judas realized his error and, just as Nero committed suicide, fled to a hill outside the city walls of Jerusalem and hung himself. It appears the rope broke, and he fell headlong (Acts 1:18).

Peter, when recounting the death of Judas in an apostolic meeting, said, "Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place" (v. 25). The phrase "his own place" has created interesting discussion.

Some say Peter was simply saying he died and was now in hell, a place reserved for him because of his transgression. Others teach this "place" is a special compartment of confinement in hell, separate from the other souls and chambers of the underworld. The theory adds that Judas will be the one whose deadly wound will be healed, and he will return from the abyss at the end of days and become the Antichrist of Bible prophecy.

The theories of Nero rising again and the return of Judas have one major biblical roadblock: Both of these individuals committed suicide and have already died. Their physical bodies have returned to the dust of the earth. It would require a physical resurrection of either person to fulfill the literal prediction concerning the Antichrist. If the spirits of Judas or Nero only returned from the abyss, then none of mankind would be able to physically see either one with natural eyes, just as we cannot see angels and demons with our physical eyes. Angels and demons are spirit beings and are invisible in the natural realm, unless they appear in the forms of humans, which occurred occasionally (Gen. 19:1–5).

One argument often espoused for the return of Judas from his confined compartment in hell is that when Christ was praying for His disciples, He identified Judas as the "son of perdition" (John 17:12). The word *perdition* means "destruction." Judas was doomed for destruction for directing the betrayal of the Savior. Jesus said it would have been better for Judas never to have been born than to betray the Son of Man (Matt. 26:24). Years later, when Paul began to identify the activity of the coming Antichrist, he calls the Antichrist "the man of sin . . . the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3). The word link between what Christ said of Judas and what Paul wrote of the future Antichrist is the word *perdition*. Many years after Paul called the future man of sin "the son of perdition," John used the same word in describing the apocalyptic end-time beast and his kingdom of ten kings:

> The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth

> will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.
>
> —REVELATION 17:8

> And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.
>
> —REVELATION 17:11

To further "confirm" the Judas-as-the-Antichrist theory, some point out that the demonic power controlling the Antichrist will "go into perdition," or enter the "son of perdition," in the same manner that Satan entered the heart of Judas at the Last Supper. Thus the Antichrist will become possessed with one of the strongest evil spirits to be released in world history.

In one passage John describes the releasing of large numbers of creatures from the bottomless pit (the abyss) and names the demonic king directing them:

> And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.
>
> —REVELATION 9:11

This Greek and Hebrew name of this angel means "a destroyer." For example, during the time when the Hebrew nation was preparing to depart from Egypt, God sent a "death angel" to slay the firstborn in the homes of the Egyptians. This angel was called "the destroyer" (Exod. 12:23).

My point is this: when John was stating that the beast would "go into perdition," he was not necessarily alluding to a spirit possessing the Antichrist but to the fact that the

conclusion of the beast and his kingdom would be perdition, or destruction. At the conclusion of the Tribulation the Antichrist will be removed from the earth and be "given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7:11).

I believe that Judas sealed his doom at his death and will remain confined in "his place" for eternity. Likewise Nero has never reappeared as anticipated, as he too met his eternal fate and is confined forever. There is no biblical record of the Lord allowing a disobedient person to leave hell after years of death and return to live on Earth for any reason. In fact, the opposite is true. In Luke 16 a rich man died, and his soul and spirit were taken to hell. He desired to return to Earth from that terrible place and warn his five brothers about the dangers of the fiery chamber of eternal confinement. In the discourse he was told he could not leave where he was, neither could he be permitted to return to Earth and warn his family members (vv. 19–31).

From all biblical evidence the Antichrist is a mortal man with an "antichrist spirit" that motivates his teaching, his kingdom, and his authority. He will arise at the end of the age and will unite an army of followers that make war against all who oppose him.

As far back as the time of the destruction of the temple there was an understanding of a final world dictator who would control the world and wreak havoc on the nations. There are several interesting statements made about the Antichrist in early church writings:

> When the close of time draws nigh, a great prophet shall be sent from God to turn men to the knowledge of God, and he shall receive power of doing wonderful things. . . . And when his works shall be

> accomplished, another king shall arise out of Syria, born from an evil spirit, the overthrower and destroyer of the human race, who shall destroy that which is left by the former evil, together with himself.[7]
>
> Now this is he who is called Antichrist; but he shall falsely call himself Christ, and shall fight against the truth, and being overcome shall flee; and shall renew the war, and often be conquered, until in the fourth battle, all the wicked shall be slain, subdued, and captured, he shall at length pay the penalty of his crimes.[8]
>
> "And I inquired about the fourth beast." It is to the fourth kingdom, of which we have already spoken, that he refers: that kingdom, than which no greater kingdom of like nature has arisen upon the earth; from which also ten horns are to spring, and to be apportioned among ten crowns. And amid these another little horn shall rise, which is that of Antichrist. And it shall pluck by the roots the three others before it; that is to say, he shall subvert the three kings of Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia, with the view of acquiring for himself universal dominion. And after conquering the remaining seven horns, he will at last begin, inflated by a strange and wicked spirit, to stir up war against the saints, and to persecute all everywhere, with the aim of being glorified by all, and being worshipped as God.[9]
>
> . . . in the same manner also will the accuser come forth from an impure woman upon the earth, but shall be born of a virgin spuriously.[10]

These early traditions are interesting and can, at times, shed light upon the subject. Yet, as I feel this book as proven, I believe this beast is more than a person. It is an empire from the past that will resurrect in the future. The Bible gives ample revelation and understanding concerning the Antichrist and his kingdom, which I call "the kingdom of the beast."

THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER

Both the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse present the same climax to their visions of the time of the end. The kingdom of the beast is defeated and destroyed by the return of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, identified as the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16).

I believe you can see that we are certainly in the time of the end. The nations of prophecy are aligning in position for the great battles of prophecy. While there will be differences of opinion concerning certain parts of this teaching, I believe we have given a large-scale picture of what will occur and how recent events come into play. We have gone backstage to see what is going to happen.

Now let's get ready for the final scene in this last-day drama. It's about to get interesting! But at least you know the outcome, and for believers it is going to be a great day when Messiah returns.

APPENDIX

HOW TO PREPARE FOR WHAT LIES AHEAD

MAJOR EMPIRES AND kingdoms only continue until they become overstretched with their military, overspent in their governmental obligations, overindulgent in their lifestyle, and overconfident that their moral decline will have no repercussions on society. Since the days of the Egyptian pharaohs all kingdoms have either abruptly ended when invading armies marched on their capitals, or they have slowly declined while being replaced by a rising nation or ethnic group with stronger armies or better economic advantages.

I've stated in this book that there will be a short-lived seventh kingdom followed by an eighth kingdom, the kingdom of the beast. While it is unclear exactly what lies ahead for America, I believe there are several things concerned Americans can do from a practical and spiritual level to prepare for the times that may be ahead. "A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences" (Prov. 22:3, NLT).

First and foremost you must have a personal relationship with the Lord and understand the many covenant promises and

provisions made available in the written Scriptures. We are promised that God can and will supply our needs (Phil. 4:19).

Then there are also some practical precautions that I believe you should be taking.

1. The ability to be independent

The more independent a person becomes, the better that person can survive any disruptions originating from the government or other sources. Being independent means having your own economic sources set aside through wise investment, limited cash, and even precious metals set in a portfolio.

2. The ability to be self-sufficient

Storms can disrupt power, water, electricity, and the basic necessities we are accustomed to. Often people are unprepared for natural weather phenomena and end up suffering during long ice storms, floods, or wind destruction. Having additional food storages, water (even a well), and a generator can be a wise investment.

3. The ability to provide your own food and water

This may seem strange in a nation that has convenience stores and grocery stores on every corner, but many people are now purchasing parcels of land for the purpose of planting

their own gardens of food, just as their parents and grandparents did in the past.

4. The ability of being debt free

To some extent we will always have some form of debt. It may be the water and electric bills, the cost of food each month, occasional medical expenses, house repairs, and so forth. However, being debt free brings a special inner freedom to a person. In our ministry our two facilities (70,000 square feet, the digital television equipment, and all contents) are debt free. In our personal life we owe a mortgage on our home and do not make purchases unless we set aside the money and can pay without creating a debt.

Anyone who travels will need a credit card, since rental car companies, hotels, and airlines prefer credit cards. A bank debit card can be an alternative to a credit card in many instances. When I use a credit card, I pay the bill on time to avoid the high interest charged.

Our nation is in deep trouble due to interest charges on cars, homes, education loans, and other interest-related loans that people cannot repay. A person should seek to reduce debt in every area of life to bring relief.

While there will be differences of opinion concerning parts of the teaching in this book, I believe I have painted a large-scale picture of what will occur and how recent events come into play. We have gone backstage to see what is going to happen.

As the curtain rises and we watch biblical prophecies being played out on the world stage, we can't help but notice that America is on a collision course with the spirit of ancient empires and the coming eighth kingdom. For now, the burden of keeping America in God's favor is upon His own covenant people.

> If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.
>
> —2 CHRONICLES 7:14, KJV

May we wake up, sit up, stand up, speak up, and pray up while there is still time!

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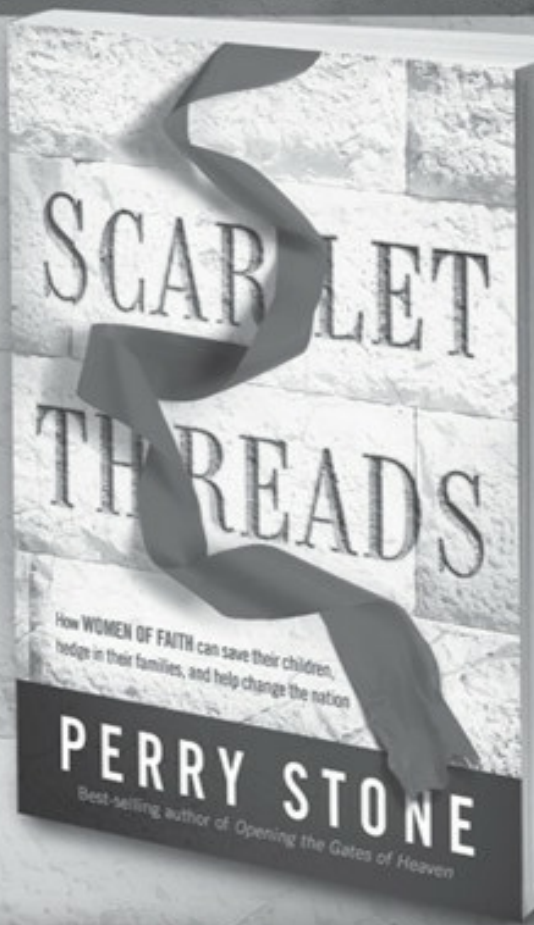
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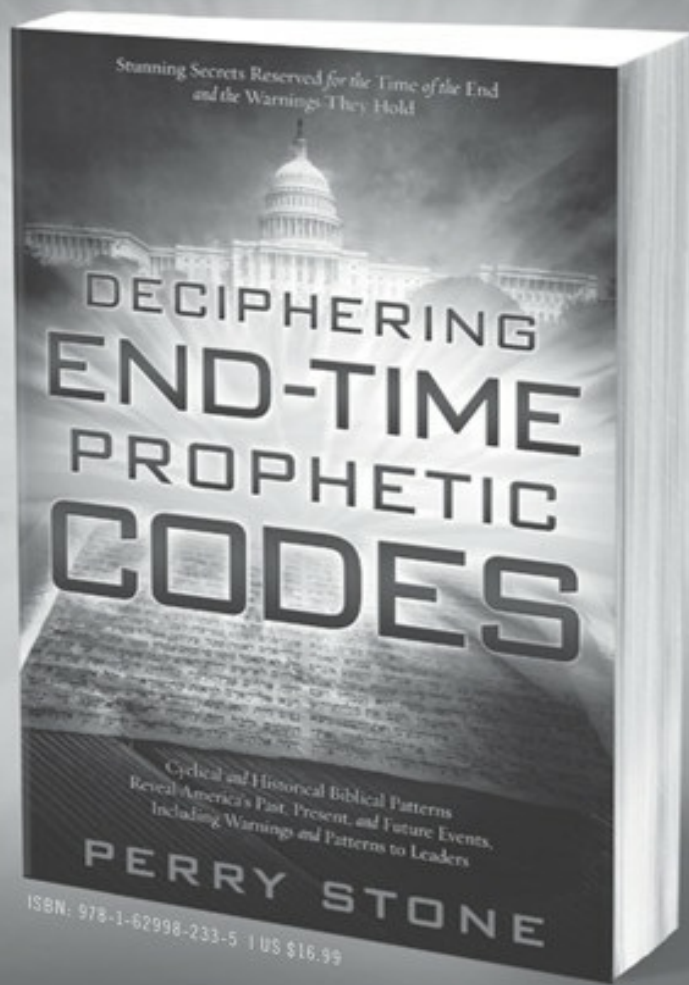
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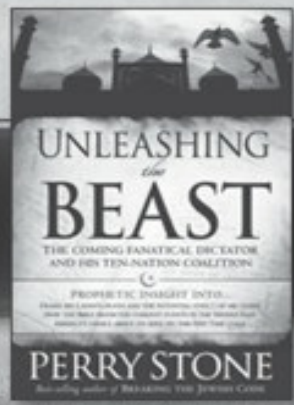
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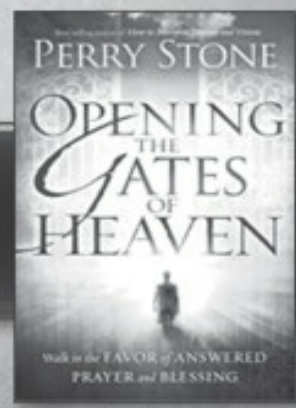
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