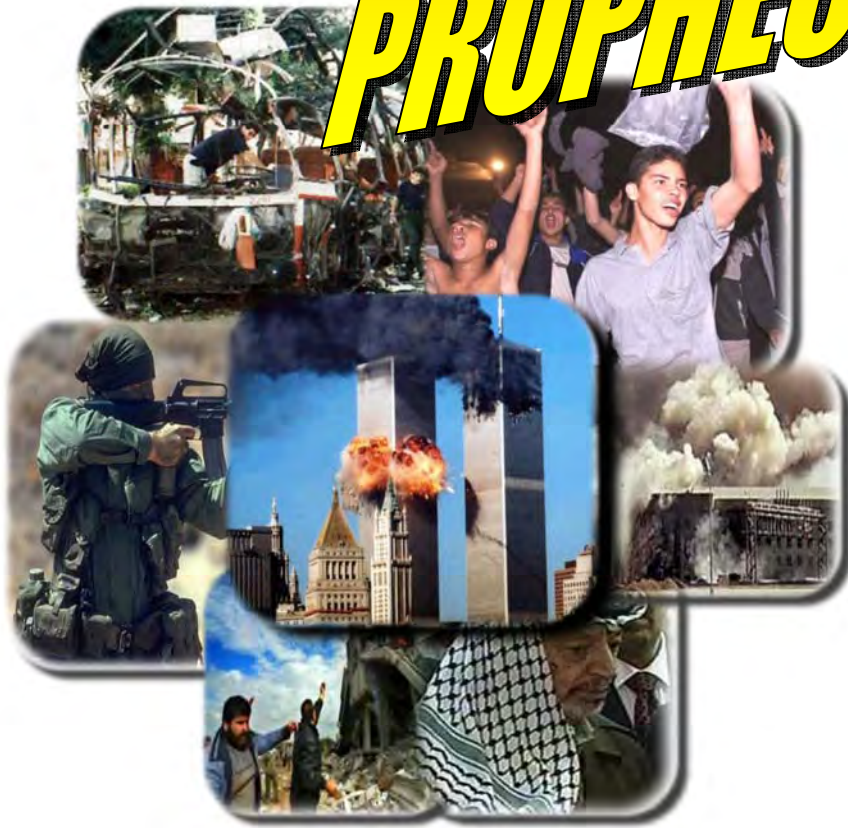


TERRORISM **AND** **PROPHECY**



By: James Summerville
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TERRORISM AND PROPHECY

This article will describe events transpiring in the years preceding Jesus' return. These end-time events will be facilitated by the downfall of the United States. Sadly, the means to bring America, the greatest nation on earth, to its knees may already be in the hands of demonically-inspired Islamic terrorists: nuclear and biological weapons.

By James Summerville

I dislike working on beautiful days. At the time I worked in a small, drab cubicle inside a drab, windowless section of an unremarkable building on Manhattan's east side. I awoke that day at 7 AM. As I peered through the window and listened to the weather forecast, I began to wish that I had chosen a different occupation, any occupation that would force me to work outdoors on such a glorious day: temperatures in the low to mid 80s; a cloudless, translucent blue sky; a gentle breeze warmed by the bright rays of the sun.

The day promised to be like any other late summer day. I awoke, showered, dressed, ate cereal, brushed my teeth, said goodbye to my parents (I lived with them at the time), walked down fourteen flights of stairs, hopped on the bus, and ten minutes later descended into the cavernous, dank world of the New York City subway system. Thirty minutes later I rose from the netherworld to the bustling streets of Manhattan.

I passed thousands of people on the way to work, and never stopped to notice any of them. To an outsider, New York City can seem at the same time exciting, scary, big, and busy. However, I'm a native New Yorker and it would thus take a lot to rouse my attention. Nothing on the way to work that morning roused my attention.

I passed a mosaic of humanity on my commute to work: nattily dressed businessmen and women; meandering, expressionless high school students straining to look and sound cool; taxicab drivers driving like maniacs; truck drivers leering at pretty pedestrians and honking at veering cabs; illegal immigrants, mostly South Americans, toiling for a few bucks an hour at the corner delis. I saw white people, black people, tan people, and artificially tanned people; men and women who obviously exercised, and people who looked as if they had skipped a few workouts. In other words, on that early Tuesday morning I saw the world on the streets of Manhattan, and the world seemed pretty ordinary.

I arrived at work at 8:40 AM.

I'm unsure how the seventy-six passengers felt as they boarded American Airlines Flight 11. Perhaps they were sleepy or happy or excited or bored. In five or so hours they expected to be in Los Angeles. Undoubtedly, most of them were not new to flying. Time and again, they heard the old cliché: flying is the safest form of travel. Sure, airline food stinks, but flying sure beats driving or taking a cross-country train.

American 11 departed Boston and rose to an altitude of 26,000 feet. At 8:13 AM the air traffic controller said, "American 11, turn twenty degrees right." It was the last routine transmission for

American 11. Sixteen seconds later the controller directed the pilots to climb, but he received no response.

Perhaps, the controller thought, the silence was due to a communication failure, which isn't uncommon. While watching American 11 travel westward across the radar screen, he attempted to reestablish communication, but to no avail. He wasn't concerned.

At 8:23 AM another Boeing 767 appeared in the controller's sector. The pilots checked onto the frequency. It was United Flight 175, lagging fifteen minutes behind Flight 11 and also traveling from Boston's Logan airport to Los Angeles. The pilot sounded relaxed: "Boston, morning. United 175 out of 19 for 2-3-0." The controller responded, "United 175, Boston Center, roger."

Ninety seconds of silence ensued. Then the controller heard something in his headset, a raw transmission without words. He radioed, "Is that American 11 trying to call?"

He heard a heavily accented voice. "We have some planes. Just stay quiet, and you'll be okay. We are returning to the airport." Apparently a hijacker had misused an audio selection switch and inadvertently communicated a message meant only for the passengers.

Fourteen years had passed since the last airline hijacking. Months before 9/11, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency of the Defense Department wrote, "We have, in fact, solved a terrorist problem in the last 25 years. We have solved it so successfully that we have forgotten about it; and that is a treat. The problem was aircraft hijacking and bombing. We solved the problem...The system is not perfect, but it is good enough...We have pretty much nailed this thing."¹

Unnerved but calm, the controller radioed, "And, who's trying to call me here?" No response. He tried again, "American 11, are you trying to call?"

The hijacker said, "Nobody move. Everything will be okay. If you try to make any moves, you'll endanger yourself and the airplane. Just stay quiet." The controller alerted his superiors that a hijacking was in progress. The pilots of United 175 must have known this. However, like other crews using that frequency, they maintained strict radio discipline; they said nothing unusual over the air.

It was now 8:28 AM. The hijackers had turned off the American 11's transponder: thereon the plane appeared as a primary blip on the radar screen. The plane turned suddenly and proceeded at an unusually high speed down the Hudson Valley. The flight downriver lasted eighteen minutes. Six minutes into that flight the hijacker was heard: "Nobody move, please. We are going back to the airport. Don't try to make any stupid moves." His tone was almost polite. The hijackers appeared to be steering the plane to New York. Area airports prepared for a landing.

Meanwhile, the pilots of United 175 checked onto a new frequency. They were traveling at 31,000 feet when the hijacked plane flew nearby. Wishing to verify its altitude, an air traffic controller radioed, "Do you have traffic? Look at your 12 to 1 o'clock position at about ten miles southbound, to see if you can see an American 767 out there, please."

The pilots heard the previous transmissions and were thus aware of the hijacking. They answered, "Affirmative. We have him, he looks about 20, yeah, 29, 28,000."

Inside hijacked American 11, Betty Ong, a forty-five year old stewardess, dialed a seatback phone. She reached a reservation agent on the ground, who passed her to Craig Marquis, a manager at the American Airlines' national operations center in Fort Worth, Texas. Breathing quickly and heavily, in a terrified voice gasping for air, Betty reported the hijackings. Mohammed Atta and four other Arab hijackers armed with blades and box cutters had stormed the cockpit and taken control of the plane. They stabbed two flight attendants and killed a business class passenger by cutting his throat.

¹ Quoted by Richard Posner, "The 9/11 Report: A Dissent." *New York Times*, 8/29/04

Stunned and helpless, Marquis could do nothing but ask a few questions. Was there a doctor on board? No, said Betty. As American 11 approached Manhattan, he asked if it was descending. Excitedly and perhaps hopefully, she answered, “We’re starting to descend! We’re starting to descend!” She was unaware that Atta had pushed the plane to over 500 mph, almost twice the allowable speed at that altitude, hardly the speed at which to land a plane. It was now 8:40 AM, six minutes from the North Tower of the World Trade Center.

The pilots of United 175 lost sight of hijacked American Flight 11. Again checking onto a new frequency, they radioed, “United 175, at Flight Level 310.” The controller answered, “United 175, roger.” One minute of silence ensued. The pilots then radioed, “We figured we’d wait to go to your center. We heard a suspicious transmission on our departure from Boston. Sounds like someone keyed the mike and said, ‘Everyone stay in your seats.’” The controller said, “Okay, I’ll pass that along.” The pilot said, “It cut out.”

Those were the last on-air words spoken by the pilots of United 175. It was 8:42 AM. A team led by Marwan al-Shehhi invaded the cockpit. The pilots had no chance to alert the world. However, a mechanic at United’s San Francisco center for in-flight complaints received a call from an attendant on board. She cried, “Oh, my God! The crew’s been killed, and a flight attendant has been stabbed! We’ve been hijacked!” The line went dead. United 175 contained five hijackers, two dead pilots, seven flight attendants, and fifty-one passengers. United 175 turned and lunged toward New York.

Around the same time, American 11 passed low over the George Washington Bridge. In the rear of the plane another flight attendant was on the phone. Madeline Amy Sweeny had reached an American flight service manager in Boston. With unusual cool, she gave him an account of the hijacking, fingered the terrorists, and confirmed Betty Ong’s account. Moments before 8:46 AM she looked through a window to determine the plane’s position. She saw the city flashing by. She said, “I see water and buildings.” Madeline was probably the first person to realize the hijackers’ intentions. She exclaimed, “Oh, my God! O, my God!”

On the ground

A few minutes after arriving at work, a coworker called. In a shaken voice, she said a plane had crashed into one of the Towers of the World Trade Center.

I called my parents. They live in a borough of New York City, on the fifteenth floor of a building with an unobstructed view of downtown Manhattan, the location of the World Trade Center. I told my mother that a plane crashed into one of the Towers. She turned on the television and then looked toward the window. She saw smoke and fire. She then glanced at the TV, remarked to my father about the low altitude of the second plane, and turned toward the window again as the second plane crashed into the South Tower. My parents saw the Towers collapse.

My coworkers and I were shocked. We lacked a television, but our ears were glued to our radios. We did not know how to react. We were like zombies, either sitting in our cubicles or walking around and talking to each other in stunned disbelief.

I left work at noon. Thousands of people were walking north, to one of the bridges connecting Manhattan to Queens. I walked across the bridge. I looked to my left. Everything seemed normal: a blue, cloudless sky, a gentle breeze, a peaceful river. I then turned to my right and stared toward downtown Manhattan. At that moment I realized that life had changed forever.

Six days later

Six days later I visited Ground Zero. My first impression, aside from the acrid smell, was the overwhelming amount of uniformed personnel (cops, the National Guard, ambulance workers, telephone repairmen, etc.). They outnumbered the civilians.

I was two and a half blocks from Ground Zero. The three- to five-storey mass of rubble was morbidly fascinating; it was difficult to turn away. Underneath and in between the rubble were the remains of almost 3,000 people: thousands of mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, friends and coworkers. It was difficult to understand the enormity of what I was seeing.

At that moment I realized I had caught a glimpse of the future.

A despicable question

“Why do they hate us?” was a common question after 9/11. I detest that question because it hints at the presumption of American guilt. Put another way, “What did we do to deserve this?” Of course many but not all of us would say, “Nothing!” However, “while the great majority of Americans reacted more or less instinctively—having been attacked, one was obliged to defend oneself and hit back—there was on the campuses and among the literary intelligentsia a school of thought, not perhaps large in numbers but loud and aggressive, that if there had been such an attack, America had had it coming and it must have been its own fault.”²

The loudest proponents of such despicable and uninformed viewpoints—that somehow “America had it coming”—were, of course, Europeans and Arabs from overseas, and the leftist intelligentsia (authors, playwrights, actors, professors) in the United States. For example:

- Sloterkijk, a German philosopher, called the United States a rogue state;
- Botho Strauss, a German writer, described the United States’ war on terrorism as the war of evil against evil;
- Berlin’s senator for cultural affairs, Adreinne Goehler, disparagingly described the World Trade Center towers as two giant phalluses;
- Seamus Milne, the editor of the British *Guardian* (an influential leftist newspaper) declared that the United States reaped what it sowed, and that Americans are too dumb to understand this;
- The American filmmaker Oliver Stone called the terrorist attacks a revolt against Hollywood and globalization, embodied of course by the United States;
- The writer Susan Sontag blamed immoral US foreign policy;
- The playwright Norman Mailer said the “World Trade Center was a monstrosity that had to be destroyed”³;

² Walter Laquer, *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twentieth Century*, pg 166

³ *Ibid*, pg 163

- Eric Foner, a professor at a New York university, admitted that he did not know which was scarier: terrorism or the war rhetoric emanating from the White House;
- A Rutgers University professor stated that U.S. foreign policy was fascist;
- A University of New Mexico professor said that people who could blow up the Pentagon would receive his vote;
- Leftist journalist John Pilger wrote that “Al Qaeda’s training camps in Afghanistan were kindergartens compared with the world’s leading university of terrorism at Fort Benning in Georgia.”⁴

The Root of Terrorism

Still others have tried to understand the roots of terror. Reluctant to define terrorism as evil, they instead attempted to depict terrorists as desperate people living in desperate conditions (abject poverty, oppressed and stifling societies, etc.) “The causes of terrorism have been a source of bewilderment and misconceptions for a long time. It was widely believed that terrorism was a response to injustice and that terrorists were people driven to desperate actions by intolerable conditions, be it poverty, hopelessness, or political or social oppression. Following this reasoning, the only way to remove or at least to reduce terrorism is to tackle its sources, to deal with the grievances and frustrations of the terrorists rather than simply trying to suppress terrorism by brute force. As an American linguist put it, ‘Drain the swamp, and the mosquitoes would disappear.’”⁵

The American linguist is wrong. For example, in the 49 states designated by the United Nations as the least developed (most of them are in sub-Saharan Africa), hardly any terrorism occurs. Furthermore, the 19 terrorist hijackers of 9/11 came from wealthy or middle-class families in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Their parents are professionals, successful businessmen, and members of the elite. Moreover, the hijackers and their terrorist colleagues in Bin Laden’s network were and are educated. It makes sense for the terrorist masterminds to recruit men and women from the upper strata of society. After all, a “contemporary terrorist operating outside his own country has to be educated, have some technical competence, and be able to move without attracting attention in alien societies. In brief, such a person will have to have an education that cannot be found among the poor in Pakistani or Egyptian villages or Palestinian refugee camps, only among relatively well-off town folk.”⁶

The assumption that poverty in the third world breeds terrorism says a lot about the person making that assumption. Too many people are willing to nonchalantly assign the blame for third-world poverty and underdevelopment on Western (i.e. European & United States) imperialism. Ignoring the underlying geographic and cultural explanations for poverty, they believe that Europe and the United States have exploited poor countries. The logical conclusion of this assumption is the belief that “somehow America had it coming.”

In the end, too many people are uncomfortable in calling a spade, a spade: terrorism is evil, and Islamic terrorists are evil people.

⁴ Quoted by Philip Jenkins, *Images of Terror: what we can and can't know about terrorism*, pg 20

⁵ Laquer, pg 11

⁶ Ibid, pg 17

Radical Islam

I don't dismiss the evidence of non-Muslim terrorists. For example, there are terrorists in Columbia (FARC and AUC, acronyms for Columbian terrorist groups), Spain (the Basque ETA), Ireland (the IRA), Japan (the Aum sect), Russia (in Chechnya), and even in the United States (remember Timothy McVeigh, Eric Rudolph, and the Unabomber?). Yet they don't pose an existentialist threat to the United States. Radical Islam, however, does.

Terrorism has been around for a long time. Historically, terrorists had limited objectives and acts of terror were perpetrated against a small section of society; e.g. kings, prime ministers, judges, etc. The following catalogue represents a sample of terrorism committed in the United States since 1940⁷:

1943	Anti-fascist exile Carlo Tresca assassinated in New York City;
1950	Puerto Rican radicals try to assassinate President Truman at the Blair House; they killed one Secret Service officer;
1954	Puerto Rican radicals open fire on the US House of Representatives, wounding five;
1961	The start of a decade-long wave of airline hijackings to Cuba;
1963	Several assassinations of, and attacks on, Civil Rights leaders (e.g. Medgar Evans), and on blacks (four black schoolgirls killed in a Birmingham church);
1965	Assassination of Malcom X;
1968	Assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King;
1968-1971	Violent protests against Vietnam War; several actual and attempted bomb attacks across America;
1969-1973	Black Panther campaign of violence against police officers in NYC, San Francisco, and elsewhere;
1972-1976	Several attacks by the extremist group Weather Underground. They targeted the Pentagon, the US State Department, police precincts, and business offices;
1973-1974	Wave of racially-inspired "Zebra murders" by black Death Angels in northern California;
1974-1986	Campaign of assassinations, bank robberies and kidnappings in California by the leftist Symbionese Liberation Army. Six are killed at in a shootout with Los Angeles police;
1974-1986	Puerto Rican radical groups carry out over a hundred bombings and other attacks on the US mainland, and on Puerto Rico itself. The Weather Underground sets off a bomb in the US Capitol;
1975-1983	Anti-Castro Cuban groups carry out 57 bombings in Dade County, Florida;
1983	Bomb explodes in the US Capitol;
1984-1987	Series of attacks by militants linked to the Jewish Defense League;
1995	Timothy McVeigh detonates bomb at the Murrah building in Oklahoma City, killing 168, including several children.

However, terrorism became a lot more indiscriminate and deadly in the second part of the 20th century. This spike in deadly and indiscriminate terrorism coincided with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.

Beginning in the first part of the 20th century, Islamic fundamentalists announced their intention to purify and remake society, by force if necessary. There were several contemporaneous

⁷ From Jenkins, pgs 61-62

fundamentalist movements in different countries. However, the foundation of Islamic fundamentalism was in Egypt. The father of Egyptian fundamentalism was Hassan al Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Al Banna believed that the state is obligated to Islamize its society. It should introduce *Sharia* law and reestablish the *Khilafah*, the unity of the political and religious realms into one. The Muslim Brotherhood and other similar Islamic movements were fundamentally opposed to the status-quo at the time (e.g. separation of mosque and state, corrupt Arab leaders, secularism, etc.), and feared and resisted Western ideology and materialism. Al Baana and his ilk also preached jihad, or holy war. In 1946 he penned an open letter to Arab rulers. He described the West as weak, unjust and tyrannical. With one determined push from the Muslim faithful, the whole world would find itself under the peaceful banner of Islam.

From the start, Muslim fundamentalists like Al Baana were ideologues who promoted violence to overthrow corrupt Arab governments, and to reestablish the Caliphate (Islamic rule) on the earth.

The granddaddy of modern Islamic fundamentalism was Sayed Qutb, another Egyptian. He taught that Islam is the one and only true religion, and consequently all other religions and civilizations are evil and fake. Western Civilization and societies are the enemies of Islam, and afraid of the latter's apparent superiority. Moreover, Qutb believed that Islam could never peacefully coexist with Western Civilization. "The struggle was not about territory but about truth and which truth should prevail in the world."⁸

Qutb wrote *Milestones*, a book that promoted his absolutist and extreme view of Islam. It is perhaps the most complete and violent expression of Islamic fundamentalism. Fundamentalists are not fighting against injustice or poverty or oppression. Rather, they're fighting against the immoral West, and specifically against Arabic regimes allied with the West. And they're not about to be appeased. Victory must be total, the society must be Islamized, and the Caliphate must be reestablished. The West must lose, Islam must win; anything short of that is unacceptable. Dissenting Muslims should be disowned and excommunicated.

After Qutb's death in 1965, *Milestones* became a huge bestseller. Millions of Muslims read and recopied it. Qutb's works were printed throughout the Islamic world, and he became posthumously famous. "He has certainly been the greatest influence as far as the Muslim terrorists in the Arab world and North Africa are concerned...his message of holy war, shorn of theological refinements, filtered down even to those who had never heard his name."⁹

Heeding Qutb's call to holy war, violent factions of the Muslim Brotherhood committed terrorism, culminating in the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1980. Violent groups in Algeria (e.g. the Armed Islamic Group and the Islamic Salvation Front) and Kashmir killed over 100,000 people during the 1990s.

The fundamentalists soon turned their ire to the leader of the free (Western) world, the United States. The blind Egyptian sheik Abdel Rahman inveighed against America. According to his distorted view, which found fertile ground in the terrorists who tried to destroy the World Trade Center in 1993, every "conspiracy against Islam, every bit of scheming, emanated from America and the task of the terrorists was to strike terror against America, and not to be afraid of the 'terrorism label.' This approach was what Jihad was all about: jihad with the sword, with the cannon, with grenades, and with the missile, jihad against God's enemies."¹⁰

⁸ Laquer, pg 33

⁹ Ibid, pg 34

¹⁰ Ibid, pg 36

Abdulla Azzam, a cleric born in Palestine, became a radical fundamentalist after he graduated from an Egyptian university in the 1990s. He migrated to Afghanistan. He saw Afghanistan's liberation from the Soviets, and the installation of Islamic rule there, as the first step toward the restoration of Islamic rule in lands that were once Muslim: Southern Spain, the Philippines, Central Asia, India, parts of Europe, and Africa. But why stop there? After Spain, why not the rest of Europe, America, and Asia? He believed the march of Islam should not stop until all of mankind is under the rule of Allah. And because jihad defeated the Soviets in Afghanistan, jihad will similarly defeat all other enemies of Islam, particularly the United States.

Azzam became a mentor to a young Osama bin Laden, who became his biggest financial supporter. Eventually, bin Laden took over Azzam's organization, and in 1988 established al Qaeda (the base). Al Qaeda established its operations first in the Sudan, and then in Afghanistan. It received a huge boost when an offshoot of the Egyptian terrorist group Gama'a Islamiya merged with it. The leader of Gama'a was Aiman al Zawahiri, who became bin Laden's deputy in Al Qaeda.

Zawahiri believes there's no chance to build an Islamic society in the Middle East unless the power of the West, particularly of the United States, is broken. Zawahiri converted bin Laden to his way of thinking. They now believe that the "rule of Islam, peace and general well-being could be established only by means of jihad, or holy war. The crimes of the West, the exploitation and the massacres committed by colonial rule, had to be avenged."¹¹ Bin Laden and others expressed this belief in his wordy and meandering fatwa against the United States, published on February 28, 1998.¹² This fatwa called for the murder of Americans, including women and children, here and abroad.

Earlier, Osama bin Laden made his intentions known through a propagandist, multi-volume guide to terrorism, *The Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad*. Written by his followers, the *Encyclopedia* expresses his intention to conduct an anti-Western terrorist campaign beyond Central Asia and the Middle East. The *Encyclopedia* also reminds Muslims of their so-called humiliation at the hands of the infidels (i.e. Westerners) over the last 300 years. Osama bin Laden's "criticisms of the West, and America in particular, can easily appear to a Westerner as the tirades of a loony ideologue with a Leninist capacity to sublimate slaughter through a testament of faith. To embittered Muslims, however, his image is far more complicated. *It is seen in the context of a civilizational tug-of-war that began in the seventh century, when Arab Muslim armies invaded Byzantine Palestine.*"¹³

In short, bin Laden and his fundamentalist supporters are calling for the fight to be taken to the United States, the leader of the Western world. Unfortunately many misguided Muslim men, mostly from wealthy or well-off families, heeded that call. Hence the terrorist attacks against America and its interests overseas in 1993, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2001.

A clash of civilizations¹⁴

Islamic fundamentalists are inspired not because of poverty or economic injustice. Rather, they seek to defeat the West and establish Islamic supremacy on this earth. Their message has seeped down to the masses. For example, Hassan Butt, a 24-year old British Pakistani typical of many young Muslim men entering adulthood, recently told *Time Magazine*, "I would fit into being called a radical, and one day,

¹¹ Ibid, pg 55

¹² This statement was signed by Sheikh Usamah Bin-Muhammad Bin-Laden; Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of the Jihad Group in Egypt; Abu- Yasir Rifa'i Ahmad Taha, a leader of the Islamic Group; Sheikh Mir Hamzah, secretary of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan; and Fazlul Rahman, leader of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh.

¹³ Reuel Marc Gerecht, "The Gospel According to Osama Bin Laden," *The Atlantic*, January 2002, pg 47

¹⁴ I borrowed this term from Samuel Huntington's influential book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996

God willing, even to be called a terrorist, if Allah permits me.” Butt said that his goal is the restoration of Islamic rule over as much of the world as possible, as in the time of Muhammad and his successors. He insists that the Koran forbids moderation: either you’re a Muslim or an infidel. If “Allah says fight, you fight.”¹⁵

Most Muslims are peaceful. However, it takes only a handful to cause great destruction: 19 hijackers killed over 3,000 people and caused billions of dollars in damage. And interviews by *Time Magazine* with “religious leaders, Islamic scholars, government analysts and ordinary citizens around the world reveal that the fervor of those who adhere to radical forms of Islam has intensified since 9/11.”¹⁶

Three years after 9/11, Muslim extremists are still committing terrorism, most recently and horrifically in Russia. “The terrorists who devastated a school and its hostages on September 3rd [2004] wrought carnage of proportions usually seen only in wartime: the death toll, in what is only a small town, may exceed 500. Even wars are rarely this cruel. They have rules, sort of, one of which is to avoid harming civilians where possible, and especially children. The terrorists in Beslan deliberately went for the most innocent and defenceless targets; they timed their attack, on the first day of the school year, to catch the maximum number; they tortured their small captives by refusing them all food and water; and when one of the explosives they had rigged in the school gymnasium went off, apparently by accident, they shot fleeing hostages in the back before blowing the building apart. If this were war, such bestial, inhuman acts would richly deserve the name of war crimes.”¹⁷

Furthermore, non-Muslim armies have invaded Muslim lands in Afghanistan and Iraq. Increasingly, many Muslims are interpreting the War on Terror as the War on Islam. “The result is that ordinary Muslims find themselves confronted with increasingly fierce claims for possession of their faith. Rival narratives have emerged at either end of the extremely broad Muslim spectrum, and they could scarcely be more different. Expressing one view, a prominent Arab columnist decries the fact that while it is obvious that all Muslims are not terrorists, it is sadly apparent that these days nearly all terrorists happen to be Muslims. The spokesman for a jihadist group in Iraq dissents. Wherever you cast your eye, he writes in a recent posting to the internet, you find only one truth, which is that infidels are slaying Muslims ‘in every way, in every land, and with overspilling hatred.’”¹⁸

Three years ago Americans asked, “Why do they hate us?” Three years later, that same question is being asked by Russians, Indonesians, Spaniards, the French, Nepalese, Turks, and many others affected by jihadist terrorism. A possible clash of civilizations is in the offing.

9/11 was a crystallizing moment for us. It revealed that although we had yet to declare war on terrorism, Islamic radicals had already declared war on us. It’s not a war solely between the United States and terrorism. Terrorism is a method, not a description. In other words, Islamic radicals use terrorism to begin a process that, in their view, will culminate in the restoration of Islamic rule on the earth. Such restoration will necessarily involve the defeat of not only the United States, but primarily the defeat of Western civilization.

The Bible predicts such a clash of civilizations. 9/11 was perhaps the opening bell in this fight to the finish. It’s a clash between the West and Muslims, between two civilizations founded by religion: Christianity and Islam. And despite the best intentions of President Bush and other leaders like British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the United States and Great Britain will eventually lose this war. I don’t pretend to know most of the details. Moreover, I firmly believe we must prosecute the

¹⁵ *Time Magazine*, “The Struggle Within Islam”, 9/13/04

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷ *Economist*, 9/11/04

¹⁸ *Economist*, 9/18/04

War on Terrorism and take the fight to the terrorists. We must do everything in our power to protect America from catastrophic terrorism: the use of weapons of mass destruction in the United States.

However, I do know this: the Bible mentions that the end-time will include three warring, competing blocs of nations representing three different civilizations. These blocs of nations are biblically known as the kings of the North, South, and East.

The Bible also states that the descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel, particularly the birthright nations Ephraim and Manasseh, will suffer from defeat and hardship during a three and one-half-year period biblically and alternately known as the Great Tribulation and the time of Jacob's trouble.

The story of how Ephraim and Manasseh became, respectively, Great Britain and the United States has been told elsewhere.¹⁹ Rather, the purpose of this essay is to demonstrate how terrorism could defeat the United States, thus laying the groundwork for the Great Tribulation, Armageddon, and the return of Christ.

Proceed with caution

“History can predict nothing except that great changes in human relationships will never come about in the form in which they have been anticipated.”²⁰ How true. Because life is unpredictable, it's often foolish to make predictions. Consider:

- a) “I think there is a world market for maybe five computers,” said Thomas Watson in 1943. He was the chairman of IBM.
- b) “Television will never be a medium of entertainment,” said David Sarnoff, the General Manager of RCA Corporation.
- c) “There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home,” said Ken Olson in 1977. He was the founder and president of Digital Equipment Corporation.
- d) In 1832 Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormons, said Jesus would return in 1890.
- e) “The year 1925 is a date definitely and clearly marked in the Scriptures,” claimed the Watchtower Magazine, published by the Jehovah's Witnesses. Jesus would return, and Armageddon would occur, in 1925. After 1925 came & went, the date was later revised to 1975.
- f) The Branch Davidians claimed that they would be killed, resurrected, and then transferred to heaven by April 22, 1959.
- g) From the Plain Truth, 1967: “The God who is real says of our peoples: ‘Prophecy against the prophets of Israel. O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes of the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up a hedge for the House of Israel to stand in the battle in the Day of the Eternal’ (Ezek. 13:1-5). That is not a message to ancient Israel, but to our nations of today. The ‘Day of the Eternal’—a time foretold in more than thirty

¹⁹ See our publication, the *Divine Destiny of America*.

²⁰ Johan Huizinga (1872–1945), Dutch historian. *In the Shadow of Tomorrow*, ch. XX (1936).

prophecies—is going to strike between five and ten years from now! You will know, then, how real it is. You will wish, then, you had heeded. I am not writing foolishly, but very soberly, on authority of the living Christ!”

- h) From a 1956 Plain Truth Article: “U.S.A. Riding to Total Collapse in 20 Short Years!” According to this article, in less than 20 years from 1956, millions of Americans will have died from famine, pestilence, and war.

During the 1960s the leaders and members of the Worldwide Church of God believed that the Great Tribulation would begin in 1972 and culminate in Jesus’ return in 1975. Just before the Tribulation, we would be whisked away in giant planes to Petra, in the Jordanian desert. I was a year old in 1972; my sister was 4 years old. Our first memories of home were supposed to be of caves in the searing heat of the Jordanian desert.

The Bible offers a vision of the future, but few details. In the pages of the Old and New Testaments, we read about symbolic beasts, a false prophet, and kings of the north, south, and east. We read about plagues, and a harlot, and resurrections from the dead. Much of this is symbolism and imagery. The Bible is rich in symbolism, metaphors and other figures of speech. For example, Jesus is referred to as a Lamb; the dictator who fights Christ at His return as a beast; and Satan himself as a dragon and roaring lion: “your adversary the devil walks about like a *roaring lion*, seeking whom he may devour” (I Peter 5:8). Jesus was not a literal lamb, and the dictator will not be an actual beast. Similarly, Herod was not a fox (Luke 13:32).

Because of such symbolism and vivid imagery, prophecy may seem somewhat unintelligible or overwhelming to the modern reader. However, much of it is later explained in prosaic terms. By piecing together a prophecy here and a prophecy there, we can slowly but surely begin to understand the biblical vision of the future. Many details, however, will still evade us.

This essay will attempt to locate some of those details. I’ll rely on biblical and secular history, current events, and common sense. The inspiration for this article is found in the remains of the World Trade Center. As I stared at the rubble and considered the lives lost on that September morning, I had an epiphany. For the first time I realized how the United States can be destroyed and thus how end-time prophecy can be fulfilled.

Armageddon

From the Columbia Encyclopedia: “Armageddon, in the New Testament, [is the] great battlefield where, at the end of the world, the powers of evil will fight the powers of good. If the usual etymology is correct, the name alludes to the frequency of battles at Megiddo.”

Megiddo is an ancient city in Palestine, “by the Kishon River on the southern edge of the plain of Esdraelon, north of Samaria. It was inhabited from the 7th millennium BC to around 450 BC. Situated in a strategic position, controlling the route that connected Egypt with Mesopotamia, it has been the scene of many battles throughout history, from Thutmose III (c. 1468 B.C.) to Gen. Edmund Allenby (later Viscount Allenby of Megiddo) in World War I.”²¹ Megiddo was a pivotal crossroads of the ancient world, where advancing armies from all directions met and fought. Thousands have died there. When Christ returns, thousands more will die there.

Armageddon refers to a place and not specifically to a battle. It’s analogous to the Battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War. Gettysburg is a town in Pennsylvania, where the northern

²¹ *Columbia Encyclopedia*, article on Armageddon, web edition.

and southern armies fought in the summer of 1863. Technically, the battle *of* Gettysburg should be referred to as the battle *at* Gettysburg. Similarly, the battle *of* Armageddon should be referred to as the battle *at* Armageddon.

“Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed. Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon” (Revelation 16:13-16).

Satan and his demons will inspire the nations to gather at Megiddo to fight Christ at His return. Because Satan has inspired these nations to persecute Israel (the modern-day twelve tribes or nations of Israel, including the Jewish nation) and the saints of God, Christ will return to wage war against them. However, because the preponderant beast power is allied with the false prophet masquerading as Christ or Christ’s emissary, the nations will be convinced that they are not fighting the real Jesus but some imposter or extraterrestrial being.

How did we arrive at Armageddon? What are the events, and who are the people, that facilitated this march toward Armageddon?

History foretold

A lot of history has been foretold by God: “And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God” (I Peter 1:17-21). And, “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’” (Matthew 25:34, one of Jesus’ Kingdom parables).

According to these scriptures, Jesus Christ’s first mission (to become our “sin offering” on that stake, to establish His Church, etc.) was foreordained. And angels foretold His return: “And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven’” (Acts 1:9-11).

Jesus will return to earth and wage war (Revelation 19:11). A great, deafening trumpet will herald His return and trigger the resurrection of the saints (I Corinthians 15:50-52). He, His angels and the resurrected or changed saints will fight against the nations assembled at Megiddo, in Northern Israel (Zechariah 14:1-9, Luke 21, Matthew 24). This is the famous battle at Armageddon.

The nations fighting at Armageddon can be classified into three categories:

- a) king of the North, alternately known as the “beast” power, or the fourth kingdom (the last manifestation of the Roman Empire) of Daniel 2;
- b) king of the South; and

c) kings of the East.

Again, how did we arrive at Armageddon? And who are these kings? To answer these questions, we must rewind history by a few millennia.

Drifting toward Armageddon

This drift began long ago, shortly after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. God created Adam and Eve, and gave them His laws. However, they sinned and God expelled them from the Garden of Eden. They had many children, and their children had children, and so on, and soon the earth became populated. However, man strayed from God's laws (Romans 1:18-32).

Man became wicked, resorted to paganism, and engaged in sinful acts. The fourth chapter of Genesis refers to *the introduction of paganism*: "To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD" (Genesis 4:26). The "Lord" (Hebrew: "Jehovah") does not refer to the Lord Almighty, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Rather, this "Lord" refers to pagan gods:

"Then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah.' If this refers to Divine worship it is not true: for Abel and Cain both began, and their descendants doubtless followed their example. What was really begun was the profanation of the Name of Jehovah [one of the divine names of God]. They began to call something by the Name of Jehovah. The Authorized Version suggests "themselves", in the margin. But the majority of the ancient Jewish commentators supply the Ellipsis by the words "their gods"; suggesting that they called the stars and idols their gods, and worshipped them.

"The *Targum of Onkelos* explains it: 'then in his days the sons of men desisted from praying in the Name of the Lord.'" The *Targum of Jonathan* says: 'That was the generation in whose days they began to err, and to make themselves idols, and surnamed their idols by the Name of the Word of the Lord. Kimchi, Rashi, and other ancient Jewish commentators agree with this. Rashi says: 'Then was there profanation in calling on the Name of the Lord.' Jerome says that this was the opinion of many Jews in his days.

"Maimonides, in his *Commentary on the Mishna* (a constituent part of the Talmud), A.D. 1168, in a long treatise on idolatry, gives the most probable account of the origin of idolatry in the days of Enos. The name Enos agrees with this; for his name means frail, weak, sickly, incurable. The sons of men, as "Enosh", are so called for a similar reason (Job 7:17; 15:14. Psalm 9:20; 103:15. Daniel 2:43).

"If Jonathan, the grandson of Moses, became the first idolatrous priest in Israel, what wonder that Enos, the grandson of Adam, introduced idolatry among mankind. Moreover, what "ungodliness" did Enoch, "the seventh from Adam" have to prophesy about in Jude 14, 15, if purity of worship was begun in the days of Enos, instead of profanation in calling on the Name of the Lord? Surely this is sufficient

evidence that this profanation of the Name of the Lord was the reason why Enoch was raised up to prophesy against it.”²²

In time, mankind grew more and more wicked. Therefore God “saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.’ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD” (Genesis 6:5-8).

Noah was a righteous man (Genesis 6:9), so God decided to start over with him and his family (his wife, three sons and their wives). God destroyed the rest of mankind with a great flood. After the flood, God made an “everlasting” covenant with Noah and reaffirmed His laws. The everlasting covenant gave man the *right to self-government*. In other words, by commanding man to punish sinners (for instance, the death penalty for murderers: Genesis 9:5-7), God gave man the right and obligation to enforce God-given and God-inspired laws. Man, however, has failed: “The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant” (Isaiah 24:5). Here God referred to an everlasting covenant with mankind. The only other place where an “everlasting covenant” with mankind (not specifically with the nation of Israel) appears is in the 9th chapter of Genesis; that is, the everlasting covenant by which God gave man the right to self-government. But man has failed to govern properly; in other words, man has broken “the everlasting covenant.”

So far we’ve identified the origins of paganism (Genesis 4:26) and government (Genesis 9:1-6).

“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth’” (Genesis 9:1). Noah and his family complied. Soon the Middle East began to be populated. The tenth chapter of Genesis records the process by which people began to group themselves into what became known as the *city-state*. “Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, ‘Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.’ The beginning of his kingdom was *Babel* and *Erech* and *Accad* and *Calneh*, in the land of Shinar [modern-day Iraq]. From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built *Nineveh* and *Rehoboth-Ir* and *Calah*, and *Resen* between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city” (Genesis 10:8-12).

Nimrod has an important role in this narrative:

“Now the sons of Noah were three, Shem, Japhet, and Ham, born one hundred years before the Deluge. These first of all descended from the mountains into the plains, and fixed their habitation there; and persuaded others who were greatly afraid of the lower grounds on account of the flood, and so were very loath to come down from the higher places, to venture to follow their examples. Now the plain in which they first dwelt was called Shinar. God also commanded them to send colonies abroad, for the thorough peopling of the earth, that they might not raise seditions among themselves, but might cultivate a great part of the earth, and enjoy its fruits after a plentiful manner. But they were so ill instructed that they did not obey God; for which reason they fell into calamities, and were made sensible, by experience, of what sin they had been guilty: for when they flourished with a numerous youth, God admonished them again to send out colonies; but they, imagining the prosperity they enjoyed was not derived from the favor of God, but supposing that their own power

²² Appendix 21 of Bullinger’s *Companion Bible*

was the proper cause of the plentiful condition they were in, did not obey him. Nay, they added to this their disobedience to the Divine will, the suspicion that they were therefore ordered to send out separate colonies, that, being divided asunder, they might the more easily be Oppressed.

“Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God, as if it was through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power. He also said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach! and that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers!

“Now the multitude were very ready to follow the determination of Nimrod, and to esteem it a piece of cowardice to submit to God; and they built a tower, neither sparing any pains, nor being in any degree negligent about the work: and, by reason of the multitude of hands employed in it, it grew very high, sooner than any one could expect; but the thickness of it was so great, and it was so strongly built, that thereby its great height seemed, upon the view, to be less than it really was. It was built of burnt brick, cemented together with mortar, made of bitumen, that it might not be liable to admit water. When God saw that they acted so madly, he did not resolve to destroy them utterly, since they were not grown wiser by the destruction of the former sinners; but he caused a tumult among them, by producing in them divers languages, and causing that, through the multitude of those languages, they should not be able to understand one another. The place wherein they built the tower is now called Babylon, because of the confusion of that language which they readily understood before; for the Hebrews mean by the word Babel, confusion. The Sibyl also makes mention of this tower, and of the confusion of the language, when she says thus: ‘When all men were of one language, some of them built a high tower, as if they would thereby ascend up to heaven, but the gods sent storms of wind and overthrew the tower, and gave every one his peculiar language; and for this reason it was that the city was called Babylon.’ But as to the plan of Shinar, in the country of Babylonia, Hestiaeus mentions it, when he says thus: ‘Such of the priests as were saved, took the sacred vessels of Jupiter Enyalius, and came to Shinar of Babylonia.’”²³

Nimrod was the catalyst in building the city-states that became the core of the Mesopotamian civilization. He inspired their sedition against God, and their folly in creating a large iconic tower that ostensibly served as a monument to themselves and their gods.

In addition to locating the origins of paganism and governments, in the account of Nimrod we’ve discovered the genesis of the *city-state*. “City-states are independent governing units consisting of a town or city with a narrow band of dependent territory around it. The earliest states in

²³ *The Works of Josephus*, Book I, chapter IV

Mesopotamia are of this kind, as are, of course, the *poleis* of Greece and the medieval city republics of Europe.”²⁴

The first city-states were created in ancient Mesopotamia. As the tenth chapter of Genesis demonstrates, Nimrod played an important part in constructing these city-states. The rise of the city-state was made possible by the introduction of agriculture. The Egyptian and Sumerian city-states (in Mesopotamia) were based on irrigation-agriculture. The rise of agriculture is monumentally important, and with respect to the purpose of this essay, integral to understanding the drift toward Armageddon.

So far I’ve discussed the rise of paganism, government, and city-states. While the next few pages may seem tangential and therefore unnecessary, a discussion of agriculture and geography is necessary for understanding the *rise of civilizations* and thus of the Kings of the North, South, and East identified in the books of Daniel and Revelation. (The rise of agriculture is also indirectly and remotely responsible for bioterrorism and bio-warfare.)

Agriculture: a necessary and brief interlude

“Agriculture is by far the most important of the world’s economic activities; it uses one-third of the total land surface and employs 45 percent of the working population.”²⁵ Furthermore, “Agriculture has been described as the purposive raising of livestock and crops for human needs.”²⁶

So far I’ve briefly described the rise of paganism, government, and the city-state based on agriculture. Agriculture necessarily involved the domestication of wild plants (crops) and animals to help cultivate those crops, and to help provide food (meat), drink (milk), clothing (wool), fertilizer, and transportation. “In short, plant and animal domestication meant much more food and hence much denser human populations.”²⁷ (Domestication: “To train or adapt an animal or plant to live in a human environment and be of use to humans, [or] To introduce and accustom an animal or plant into another region; naturalize.”²⁸)

Societies based on such forms of food production (or agriculture) evolved into city-states. City-states required a government to rule over the peasants who produced the food surpluses; bureaucrats to manage food collection; armies to protect the bureaucracy and rulers, and to enforce their rules; and a state religion to legitimize the rulers and system of government. Moreover, such states created systems of writing to record their food surpluses and transactions.

“The first unambiguously attested states yet known emerged round about 3200 BC in the Nile Valley and in southern Mesopotamia—‘unambiguously’, because writing had been invented in those two areas, and we have documents instead of merely archeological records.”²⁹ The Sumerian city-states in lower Mesopotamia (those city-states founded by Nimrod) were very warlike and religious: “No other ancient society at that time gave religion quite so prominent a place or diverted so much of its collective resources to its support....By about 2250 BC, a pantheon of gods more or less personifying the elements and natural forces had emerged in Sumer. This is the beginning of theology.”³⁰

The divine command to Noah’s family to replenish the earth could not have been accomplished without the rise of agriculture. Government, bureaucracy, a legitimizing theology, and food surpluses

²⁴ S.E. Finer. *The History of Government*, vol. 1, pg. 6

²⁵ David Grigg. *An Introduction to Agricultural Geography*, 2nd ed., pg. 1

²⁶ *Ibid*, pg. 2

²⁷ Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, pg. 92

²⁸ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*

²⁹ S.E. Finer, vol. I, pg. 100

³⁰ J.M. Roberts, *History of the World*, pg. 42

which led to overpopulation, which led to emigration: all of this depended on food production and thus agriculture. The Middle East, especially Mesopotamia, was the first region to build modern societies based on agriculture. “One of the central facts of human history is the early importance of the part of Southwest Asia known as the *Fertile Crescent*....That area appears to have been the earliest site for a whole string of developments, including cities, writing, empires, and what we term (for better or worse) civilization. All those developments sprang, in turn from the dense human populations, stored food surpluses, and feeding of nonfarming specialists made possible by the rise of food production in the form of crop cultivation and animal husbandry. Food production was the first of those major innovations to appear in the Fertile Crescent. Hence any attempt to understand the origin of the modern world must come to grips with the question why the Fertile Crescent’s domesticated plants and animals gave it such a potent head start.”³¹

What gave the Fertile Crescent, or the Middle East, a head start was its temperate climate (mild winters; hot, long, and dry summers) that supported diverse and hardy plant species. The domestication of these species (e.g. wheat, barley, pea, lentil, chickpea, etc.) and of animals (sheep, goat, cow, etc.) provided the Fertile Crescent inhabitants with the ingredients of a relatively healthy diet: carbohydrates, protein, and fat. Furthermore, the domestication of large animals provided clothing, transportation and help in plowing the fields. “Most notably, they provided meat, milk products, fertilizer, land transport, leather, military assault vehicles, plow traction, and wool, *as well as germs that killed previously unexposed peoples*.”³²

This last point—the introduction of germs from domesticated animals—is hugely important with respect to the history of mankind, and very relevant to the purpose of this essay: to demonstrate how terrorism may facilitate Armageddon and the Great Tribulation.

Most of history’s killer diseases—smallpox, measles, plague, malaria, tuberculosis, influenza, etc.—evolved from diseases (and hence germs) found in animals:

Human Diseases and Their Animal Counterparts³³

Human Disease

Measles
Tuberculosis
Smallpox

Influenza
Whooping cough
Falciparum malaria

Genetically related animal disease

Rinderpest of cattle
Tuberculosis of cattle
Pox viruses of domestic animals, including cowpox
Influenza in pigs, ducks, and chickens
Similar disease in pigs and dogs
Malaria in birds (perhaps chickens and ducks)

“Food production permitted a vast and rapid rise in the number of people, and soon sustained the rise of cities and civilization. Human populations, once concentrated into such large communities, offered potential disease organisms a rich and accessible food supply...”³⁴ Once wild animals were domesticated and living in close proximity to humans (in settled communities dependent on agriculture), and because of the proximity of humans to the waste produced by them and the

³¹ Diamond, pg. 135

³² Ibid, pg. 158

³³ Alfred Jay Bollet, *Plagues and Poxes*, pg. 3

³⁴ William McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, pg. 52

domesticated animals, the disease-producing germs found a way to jump from their animal hosts to humans. Thus Nimrod's achievement—the rise of a city-state dependent on agriculture (itself dependent on the domestication of plants and animals)—had a fatal consequence: the introduction of deadly infectious diseases.

In the future, terrorists and rogue states will undoubtedly weaponize some of these diseases and infect so-called enemies, like Americans, with them. Furthermore, in the end-time, governments will no longer have the capacity to provide basic services (e.g. sanitation). Cities will become dirtier, reservoirs will become contaminated, and health systems will collapse. Killer diseases flourish in such environments. For example, exploding rat populations in dirty cities and contaminated drinking water may lead, respectively, to deadly outbreaks of bubonic plague and cholera.

Infectious disease has played a paramount role in the history of mankind. For example, from 1348 to 1350, Plague killed about 25 million people in Europe. Smallpox first appeared in the Western Hemisphere in 1517 or 1518 AD. Over the next century, this disease destroyed over 90 percent of the indigenous Indians of Central America, the Caribbean, and tropical South America. From 1918 to 1920, the Spanish Influenza killed about 20 million people worldwide.

The Bible includes an example of the huge consequences of infectious disease. The second books of Kings and Chronicles record the siege of Judean cities (including Jerusalem) by the Assyrian army. “Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them” (II Kings 18:13). The Assyrians besieged Jerusalem. The Assyrian commander delivered a message to the rulers of Judah and Jerusalem: give up or be killed by the most intimidating army in the history of man to date. The Assyrians were especially cruel: “There is absolutely no doubt that the Assyrian armies and their kings carried out exquisite torture and extensive atrocities. Defeated enemies were flayed alive, impaled on pillars or stakes, walled up alive, castrated, and decapitated. After the defeat of Elam its king was decapitated and his head slung round the neck of a captured courtier; three rebellious chieftains had their tongues pulled out by the roots and were then flayed alive; three other noble rebels were slaughtered and their flesh distributed around the surrounding lands. Two more were forced to crush the bones of their father....From the time of Tiglath-Pileser III the deportation of the conquered peoples was institutionalized....The reasons were various—to punish, to weaken the rival power, to enlarge the Assyrian manpower base, to import skilled craftsmen, to populate urban centers and strategic sites and to re-cultivate abandoned lands.”³⁵

It's impossible to overstate the consequences of defeat or exile. Had Jerusalem succumbed to the Assyrian threats or warfare, the history of man would be profoundly different. “In all probability, the people of Judah would have met the same fate if the Assyrian army had attacked and captured Jerusalem in 701 BC and treated its inhabitants as they had treated those of Samaria and other conquered places before. If so, Judaism would have disappeared from the face of the earth and the two daughter religions of Christianity and Islam could not possibly have come into existence. In short, our world would be profoundly different in ways we cannot really imagine.”³⁶

Why didn't Jerusalem and Judah succumb to the military superiority of the Assyrians? Simply, God intervened and ravaged the Assyrian army with plague or some other disease (cholera?) (II Kings 19:35).

³⁵ J.M. Roberts, pgs 235-236

³⁶ *What If? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*, ed. by Robert Crowley, pgs 5-6

Agriculture, part II

Mesopotamian city-states soon became overpopulated. Their residents began to emigrate. Because of such immigration, and of conquest and trade, the methods of Mesopotamian food production spread quickly around the globe. From the Fertile Crescent, food production (or agriculture) spread mainly along east-west axes (that is, from east to west, and vice-versa). This area encompassing Europe, the Middle East, and Asia is commonly referred to as Eurasia.

Eurasian lands share the same latitude and hence ecology and climate. “Localities distributed east and west of each other at the same latitude share exactly the same day length and its seasonal variation. To a lesser degree, they also tend to share similar diseases, regimes of temperature and rainfall, and habitats or biomes (types of vegetation). For example, Portugal, northern Iran, and Japan, all located at about the same latitude but lying successively 4,000 miles east or west of each other, are more similar to each other in climate than each is to a location lying even a mere 1,000 miles due south.”³⁷

Plant seeds adapt to ecological variations (day and season length, average temperature, amount of rainfall). Regions that share similar ecologies (e.g. most of Eurasia) can therefore grow similar plants and crops. Dissimilar regions cannot. For example, a Canadian farmer would be foolish to plant corn adapted to growing in Mexico. Because such corn is genetically predisposed to sprout in March, it would find itself buried under several feet of Canadian snow.

“That’s part of the reason why Fertile Crescent domesticates spread west and east so rapidly: they were already well adapted to the climates of the regions in which they were spreading....By the time of Christ, cereals of Fertile Crescent origin were growing over the 8,000-mile expanse from the Atlantic coast of Ireland to the Pacific coast of Japan.”³⁸

Similarly, the spread of domesticated animals followed along the same east-west axes of Eurasia. For example, horses first domesticated in modern-day Ukraine could flourish in most of Eurasia. On the other hand, “the spread southward of Fertile Crescent domestic animals through Africa was stopped or slowed by climate and disease, especially by trypanosome diseases carried by tsetse flies. The horse never became established farther south than West Africa’s kingdoms north of the equator. The advance of cattle, sheep, and goats halted for 2,200 years at the northern edge of the Serengeti Plains...not until the period A.D. 1-200 [thousands of years after their initial domestication in the Fertile Crescent and Eurasia]....did cattle, sheep, and goats finally reach South Africa.”³⁹

A short discursive summary

You may be wondering what this discussion about agriculture and geography has to do with the terrorism and prophecy. Well, the domestication of plants and animals led to the rise of agriculture. Agriculture facilitated the settlement of communities, which grew into city-states. City-states reliant on agriculture created and depended on the machinery of government, that is, on rulers, bureaucracies, armies, and legitimizing theologies: the basic ingredients of a state. The first modern city-states were created in ancient Mesopotamia. According to the 10th chapter of Genesis, they were founded by Nimrod.

Because of similar ecologies, plants and animals first domesticated in the Middle East could flourish in Europe and Asia (together, Eurasia). Eurasian lands were thus receptive to the innovations

³⁷ Diamond, pg. 183

³⁸ Ibid, pg. 185

³⁹ Ibid, pg. 186

(agricultural, technological, sociological, and political) created in the Middle East. These innovations included the city-state dependent on irrigation-agriculture, writing, and standing armies and bureaucracies.

When the Fertile Crescent city-states became overpopulated (and because of conquest and trade), people from the Middle East emigrated to Europe and Asia. These immigrants took their technologies, know-how, and theologies with them. This is how, for example, many of the theological myths created first in the Middle East found their way to Europe and Asia. This is how, for example, the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar became the Greek goddess Aphrodite.

Over time, they built communities, city-states, kingdoms, and eventually *civilizations* based on the political, social, and religious innovations created in the Middle East.

Back to Genesis

“Now the whole earth (really the Middle East; because of the Noachian flood, people were concentrated in the Fertile Crescent) used the same language and the same words. It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.’ And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. They said, ‘Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. The LORD said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:1-9).

So far we’ve discovered the origins of paganism, government, the city-state. Now we have discovered the *origin of different languages*.

“The central elements of any culture or civilization are language and religion.”⁴⁰ Historically, people have identified themselves by the differences between them and others. Before the Tower of Babel incident, mankind was concentrated in the Middle East (not enough time had elapsed since the Noachian flood for people to migrate to other parts of the world), and thus shared similar customs and religions. They were also monolingual. After the Tower of Babel, mankind became multilingual.

With the introduction of different languages, people began to notice differences between each other. No longer could common religious beliefs be conveyed and systematized in one shared language. Because it’s impossible to convey similar religious beliefs to people speaking different languages, nuances were introduced in theological views shared heretofore by everyone. Nuances soon became differences, and differences became new religions.

“[A]nd from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:9). This did not occur immediately. (The Bible doesn’t provide an exhaustive account of the history of mankind; in several places, years and decades fly by in just a few verses. So it is with this scripture in the eleventh chapter of Genesis.) This scripture describes a process catalyzed by divinely-inspired confusion: the introduction of new languages and the resultant changes in religious beliefs.

⁴⁰ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, pg 59

Whereas before people in the Greater Middle East saw only the similarities between themselves, they now saw differences based on language and religion.

Because of overpopulation engendered by food surpluses in the agriculturally-based Mesopotamian city-states, people began to migrate to other regions of the earth. Again, they took their innovations, technologies, theologies, and their domesticated plants and animals with them. Because of ecological similarities between the Middle East, Asia, and Europe, immigrants to these areas built communities modeled on the city-states and societies created in the Fertile Crescent. However, due to linguistic and religious differences, the city-states and societies founded by the Middle Eastern migrants in Asia and Europe eventually grew into different civilizations. We have thus discovered the *origin of civilizations*.

Civilization

We've located the origins of paganism, government, the city-state, language, and now civilization. "Human history is the history of civilizations. It is impossible to think of the development of humanity in any other terms. The story stretches through generations of civilizations from ancient Sumerian and Egyptian to Classical and Mesoamerican to Christian and Islamic civilizations and through successive manifestations of Sinic [Chinese] and Hindu civilizations. Throughout history civilizations have provided the broadest identification for people...Civilization and culture both refer to the overall way of life of a people, and a civilization is a culture writ large."⁴¹

When God introduced different languages at Babel, He created a process that would eventually result in the formation of different civilizations. The process can be succinctly summarized:

- a) At Babel people began to speak different languages. They were thus unable to express their similarities (in religion and customs) with each other. Therefore, their customs and religious beliefs started to diverge. Shortly thereafter, they began to associate mainly with people who shared their language and religion. Thanks to God, the Greater Middle East was already multilingual; now they were multicultural and multi-religious.
- b) Because of overpopulation, the different groups of people in the Mesopotamian city-states began to migrate to other regions of the earth. People migrated with others who shared their language and religion. In their new lands, they began to create communities modeled on the city-states in Mesopotamia. Such city-states—in Asia, Europe, and elsewhere—were populated by people sharing the same language and religion. Mankind was now divided into different ethnic groups defined mainly by language and religion. The different cultures evolved into different civilizations; as noted, "civilization is a culture writ large."
- c) There have been many civilizations in history. Examples include Sumerian, Egyptian, Indus, Cretan or Minoan, Mycenaean, Classical (Hellenic and Roman), Chinese or Sinic, Mesoamerican, Arab or Islamic, Judeo-Christian, and Western. Because of differences in time and space, most of these civilizations did not interact. Beginning in the 1500s AD, European exploration, immigration, and colonization changed this.
- d) By the 18th century, European (or Western) civilization dominated the globe. Such dominance is waning. There are now eight interacting and competing civilizations: Sinic

⁴¹ Ibid, pg. 41

(or Chinese), Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox (eastern Europe and Russia), Western, Latin American, and African. Again, language and religion are the defining characteristics of these civilizations.

- e) In the years preceding Jesus Christ's return, three blocs of nations representing three different civilizations will lock horns in deadly conflict. Biblically they are known as the kings of the North, South, and East. These civilizations find their origins in the confusion inspired at Babel, thousands of years ago. Moreover, the blocs of nations representing these civilizations will converge in the Middle East.

I'm getting ahead of myself. We've traveled a few thousand years in a few paragraphs. In order to understand these competing end-time civilizations, and their collective agenda and motivations, we must return to ancient Mesopotamia.

Immigration

"If demography is destiny, population movements are the motor of history. In the centuries past, differential growth rates, economic conditions, and governmental policies have produced massive immigration by Greeks, Jews, Germanic tribes, Norse, Turks, Russians, Chinese, and others."⁴²

Throughout history, there have been waves of immense immigration. For example, between 1821 and 1924, almost 55 million Europeans emigrated overseas, 34 million of them to shores of America. Around 2000 BC there was a similar movement of people.

"Mesopotamia and Egypt are the foundation-stones of written history. For a long time they dominate chronology and may conveniently be dealt with more or less in isolation. But obviously their story is not the whole story of the ancient Near East, let alone that of the ancient world. Soon after 2000 BC the movements of other peoples were already breaking it up into new patterns."⁴³

Much of ancient history is an account of the consequences resulting from the often violent interaction between civilized (i.e. people living in settled communities) and uncivilized people, usually from the steppes of Asia or the hinterlands of Europe. A group of people migrate and settle in a community based on agriculture. They build a city-state, which could eventually grow into a kingdom and a nascent civilization. They build governments and palaces, and walls to defend against invaders. These potential invaders are people located outside these city-states and kingdoms. For a variety of reasons—a bad harvest, overgrazing of their herds, the invention or discovery and application of new military technology, the allure of the civilized community—these 'barbarians' begin to invade the settled city-states and kingdoms, with fatal consequences. For example, the use of horse chariots by the barbarians transformed warfare and history:

"The new technology of battle quickly transformed the entire social balance of Eurasia. No people or state in the civilized world could withstand horse chariotry. Rapid and extensive conquests and a widespread churning of peoples all across the continent resulted from this abrupt alteration in the balance of power. As barbarian war bands conquered, they everywhere altered the life of the peoples they subdued, sometimes drastically, in other cases only superficially. Civilized societies ceased to enjoy military superiority vis-à-vis their barbarian neighbors. The social gradient no

⁴² Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, pg 198

⁴³ J.M. Roberts, *History of the World*, pg 71

longer ran smoothly from the heights of Middle Eastern civilization outward to the periphery of the agricultural world, as had been the case in the third millennium BC, but was complicated by sporadic reverse movements which brought massive waves of semi-civilized conquerors into the ancient centers of civilization. As a result, such barbarian conquests as the Kassites in Mesopotamia, the Hyksos in Egypt, and the Mitanni in Syria all rested their power upon a command of the newfangled techniques of chariot war.”⁴⁴

Such waves of immigration occurred quite frequently. Beginning around 2000 BC, 1700 BC, and 1300 BC, waves of immigrants invaded Egypt, Babylonia, Greece, Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), and Canaan, and either conquered or disrupted the city-states, kingdoms, and civilizations located there.

The early history of the Hebrews can be located in these waves of immigration. Common or secular history does not record the migration of Abraham’s family, or of the Hebrews into Egypt, or the exodus of the Israelites. This is because these migrations were hidden in the larger waves of immigrants moving around in 2000 BC or 1700 BC or 1300 BC. One such small group of migrants was the family of Abraham.

Abraham

“Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot. Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. Sarai was barren; she had no child. Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there. The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran” (Genesis 11:27-32).

Abraham and his family were born in Ur, a wealthy city-state in lower Mesopotamia. Around 2000 BC, he and his family (led by his father Terah) migrated to Haran, in modern-day Syria. They were part of a larger wave of immigration during this period. Even secular histories admit to the plausibility of the biblical history of Abraham: “The first stage of their [the Hebrews] story of which history must take notice is the age of the patriarchs, whose traditions are embodied in the biblical accounts of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There do not seem to be good grounds for denying that men who were the origins of these gigantic and legendary figures actually existed. If they did, they lived around 1800 BC, and their story is part of the confusion following the end of Ur. The Bible states that Abraham came from Ur to Canaan; this is quite plausible and would not conflict with what we know of the dispersal of Amorite and other tribes in the next four hundred years.”⁴⁵

While in Haran, Abram (his name was later changed to Abraham) received a message from God: “Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless

⁴⁴ McNeill, *The Rise of the West*, pg. 106

⁴⁵ J.M. Roberts, pg 87-88

you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:1-3).

Abram obeyed God (Genesis 26:5) and was thus blessed with two unconditional, divine covenants. The first covenant promised national greatness to Abraham’s numerous descendants; indeed, he would become the “father to many nations,” some of them kingly and very prosperous (Genesis 17:1-8). This promise was fully realized in the line of Isaac and Jacob, Abraham’s son and grandson, the latter being the forefather of the nation of Israel.

The second covenant (Genesis 22:15-18) reaffirmed the first covenant by promising that Abraham’s descendants would become very numerous (“multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore”). More important, all the nations would be blessed through Abraham’s progeny. It is common knowledge that Jesus was Jewish and hence a distant descendant of Abraham. Thus the second part of the second covenant is messianic and was realized when Jesus was born.

God promised that Abraham would become a father of many nations. This did occur. The Jewish and Arab nations trace their lineage to Abraham. And believe it or not, the United States, Britain and many European nations can trace their lineage to Abraham. Indeed, his seed has become very numerous. However, the promises of national greatness applied mainly to Israel.

The story of how the thirteen tribes of Israel became great nations, and of how two tribes in particular—Ephraim and Manasseh—became Great Britain and the United States is told elsewhere. (Please refer to our book, *The Divine Destiny of America*.) The purpose of this discussion is to show how Abraham fathered two warring civilizations: Judeo-Christian and Islamic.

Abraham, the father of many nations and two civilizations

Abraham had many children. However, only two are prominent: Ishmael and Isaac.

The story begins when Abraham and his wife Sarah are old, well past their child-bearing years. God had promised that he would bless Abraham and Sarah with a son. However, Sarah became impatient and therefore urged Abraham to produce a son with a surrogate mother: Hagar, his maid. Abraham complied, and nine months later Ishmael was born.

However, contrary to custom, God said that Abraham’s first-born son Ishmael would not receive the covenantal blessings promised in the 17th and 22nd chapters of Genesis. God promised that Abraham would be the father of many prosperous and strong nations, and that the world would be blessed through his progeny. These blessings would be realized through the descendants of Abraham’s second son (this time with Sarah), Isaac. God “said to Abraham, ‘Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for *through Isaac your descendants shall be named*. And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant’” (Genesis 21:12-13).

God promised that Isaac and Jacob, Abraham’s son and grandson, would become the forefathers of prosperous, strong nations. Indeed, Jacob prophesied that his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, would become, respectively, a great company of nations and a great nation. A short summary of the Israel’s history⁴⁶:

- a) God made two covenants with Abraham and extended the promises therein to his son Isaac and grandson Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel. God promised national greatness to the Israelite nations, especially to the birthright nations of Ephraim and

⁴⁶ This account appears in our publication, the *Divine Destiny of America*.

Manasseh. God also promised that the “scepter shall not depart from Judah.” In other words, Judah would become the forefather of the kingly line of Israel. Moreover, God promised that the entire earth would be blessed through the descendant of Jacob. This was fulfilled when Jesus was born.

- b) David, a descendant of Judah, unified the confederate tribes of Israel into a kingdom. God promised that his throne would last forever.
- c) Unified Israel divided into two lesser kingdoms—the house of Israel, comprising ten northern tribes, including the birthright nations Ephraim and Manasseh; and the house of Judah comprised of the tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin—in the reign of David’s grandson Rehoboam. In the 8th century BC the Assyrians conquered the house of Israel and deported its inhabitants into Mesopotamia; thereafter, they became “lost” to history. Over a century later, the house of Judah was conquered and exiled into Babylon.
- d) Before the Assyrian conquest (745-718 BC), some Israelites of the house of Israel (represented by the birthright nation of Ephraim) migrated westward, undoubtedly guided by the unseen hand of God to a sparsely populated section (the “wilderness” of Jeremiah 31:2) of Europe blessed with a good climate and productive soils. There they established colonies, which over time grew into nations known to history as the Celts (e.g. the Brythons of Britain; the Scoti of Scotland; the Belgi of Belgium; the Danes of Denmark, the Celt Iberians of Spain, etc.). They were the trailblazers who, because of opportunism and trade, began to leave Israel during the days of Solomon.
- e) Again guided by the unseen hand of God, the bulk of the house of Israel followed their trailblazers after Assyria succumbed to defeat in 612 BC. European ecology would support the explosive growth of the Israelites in their new lands. After all, God promised that Ephraim and Manasseh would grow together into a “multitude in the midst of the earth” and later separate into a great company of nations and a great nation (Genesis 49:12). The sparsely populated northwestern and western sections of Europe were ecologically well-suited to support such growth in population and prosperity. While there, these Israelites found Christian grace (Jeremiah 31:2).
- f) Great Britain (Ephraim) and the United States (Manasseh) fulfilled the divine blessings promised to the house of Joseph. After all, they:
 - Grew together (Genesis 48:16) and thus shared similar laws and customs, and later separated into a great nation and company of nations (Genesis 48:16);
 - Are rich (“fruitful,” Genesis 49:22);
 - Reside in temperate eco-zones (barring Hong Kong & Singapore, there are no rich tropical nations), by the seas (Genesis 49:22, Ezekiel 21:5);
 - Possess strong militaries (Genesis 49:24);
 - Have monarchies (Genesis 49:26). This attribute applies only to Great Britain, which possesses a constitutional (and titular) monarchy;
 - Are Christian (they “found grace in the wilderness” – Jeremiah 31:2);

- Migrated westward to the faraway islands (Jeremiah 32:9-10) north and west of Palestine (Isaiah 49:12); and
 - Engaged in colonization (Genesis 49:22).
- g) The rest of the Israelite tribes are described as Ephraim's "companions" (as the birthright nation, "Ephraim" was often used biblically to represent the ten-tribe house of Israel). As companions, they would have probably relocated to the northwest region of Europe, where they, too, "found grace in the wilderness."
- h) The ancient Danites tended to rename conquered, traversed, and settled territory after the name of their eponymous forefather. Many European names betray their Danite origin: Macedonia, the Danube, the Danieper, the Daniester, and especially Denmark (or Danmark, the "mark of Dan"). The Danish peninsula was occupied not only by the Celtic Danes, but also by several Germanic tribes: Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Cimbri, and Teutons. The word German stems from the Latin *Aleman*, a name applied to the Germanic Alammani. The word *Alammani* (one of the Germanic tribes) looks and sounds a lot like the word *Halmanni*, the name applied to the main tribe of Assyria. If the Danes (Celts) originated in the Israelite tribe of Dan, and the Germanic tribes in Assyria, then such a mixture of ancient Israelites and Assyrians fulfilled the divine prediction that God will sift the ten-tribe house of Israel among the nations (Amos 9:9).
- i) Because of this admixture, some of the ancient Israelites were mislabeled as Germanic. For example, the Germanic Cimbri (and probably Teutons) were likely ancient Israelites, as were the Saxons and Jutes (Jews).
- j) In 586 BC the Babylonian Empire conquered the house of Judah and exiled its inhabitants into Babylon. However, God promised to deliver the prophet Jeremiah and some of his companions (his "remnant") from captivity and bring them into an unknown land.
- k) God commissioned Jeremiah to exercise authority over the nations and kingdoms (together, the nations of Judah, Levi and Benjamin, comprising the kingdom of Judah), and "to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jeremiah 1:1-10).
- l) Jeremiah fulfilled his commission, and the prophecies specified in the 17th and 21st chapters of Ezekiel, by bringing the king's (Zedekiah's) daughters to the island of Ireland. One of them married a Jew (Jute) not of the kingly Perez line of Judah, thus healing the breach in the kingly line of Judah and reestablishing the Israelite monarchy in the land of Joseph (together, Ephraim and Manasseh), as was prophesied in Jacob's parenthetical statement: "From there [the land of the house of Joseph] is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel" (Genesis 49:24).
- m) Upon His return, Jesus will inherit the throne located in Westminster Abbey. Jesus will relocate that throne to Jerusalem, the eventual seat of His everlasting government on Earth.

The tribes or nations of Israel can thus be found in North America (the United States & Canada), Northwestern and Western Europe, the Middle East (the descendants of Judah, Benjamin,

and Levi), and Australia and New Zealand. Beginning in the time of Solomon, and especially after the dissolution of the Assyrian Empire (612 BC), the nations of Israel migrated to Europe. They had long lost any trace of their true identity, and were thus pagan to the core. However, God promised that they would find Christian grace in the wilderness of Europe (Jeremiah 31:2).

They found Christian grace in the early centuries of the Common Era (AD). In the subsequent centuries, these descendants of Abraham's grandson Jacob helped create the medieval Judeo-Christian Civilization and its successor, Western Civilization.

Civilizations don't appear out of thin air

Many civilizations build on the achievements of their predecessors. For example, the Judeo-Christian and Western civilizations inherited some of the achievements and forms of governance established in the Roman Empire.

Imperial Rome was the strongest, most intimidating Empire in the ancient world. It began as a Republic. Through imperialism and the acquisition of colonies, and through war (especially the Punic Wars with Carthage), Rome acquired an Empire.

The Empire was born in war, sustained in war, and died in war. To a greater degree than most empires, before and after, Rome kept a larger percentage of its adult male population in the army (about 350,000), and devoted a very healthy portion of its revenue to maintaining its army and imperial bureaucracy.

Most of the growth occurred during the years of the Republic, from the middle of the 4th century BC to the 1st century BC. The Republic was wracked with periodic civil wars and internecine feuds between the leading families and generals. By the end of the 1st century, beginning in the reign of Julius Caesar, Rome became an Empire.

As foretold in the biblical book of Daniel, Rome was cruel. "The Republic gave the conquered next to nothing in return....Whatever their original motivation, these campaigns were gigantic wars of plunder. It was quite true that all previous states had plundered likewise, but the predatoriness of Rome surpasses all of them by its immensity. The Roman armies slew, carried off booty, exacted vast indemnities, and reduced hundreds of thousands to slavery..."⁴⁷

Such cruelty survived into the Empire. For example, "Owning or killing people, Romans believed, was as natural as water running downhill. Who can comprehend a father's tossing an infant into the village dung heap for being female, sick, or a surplus mouth to feed? The Romans were not offended, especially if the father followed the law and invited five neighbors to examine the baby before he left it to die."⁴⁸ The Romans also fed its malefactors or slaves to the beasts in the Coliseum, just for fun!

It's amazing that such a cruel society could produce such lasting achievements. The Romans have bequeathed to us civil law, citizenship, and of course Christianity. "Western Europe is the heir to Rome. Rome was the carrier of culture of the Hellenic world which she incorporated: of Christianity and of Roman law which have shaped western values to our day; the planter of civilization of cities, disseminator of the Romance family of languages, author of a literature including political history that, along with the Greek and the Hebrew, provided European scholars, writers, and statesmen with a common stock of experience and models until the nineteenth century...and so we could go on, recalling Romans' feats in engineering, in road-building, in monumental architecture, and the like."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ S.E. Finer, vol. I, pg 439

⁴⁸ *U.S. News & World Report*, "The Ancient World", pg 79

⁴⁹ S.E. Finer, vol. I, pg 385

Nothing lasts forever. Like most empires, Rome experienced imperial overstretch. It acquired its wealth by trade and tribute. However, with no new lands to conquer, and thus no new sources of revenue, Rome's income began to dwindle as the costs of maintaining its armies and empire became costlier. Eventually the Romans resorted to soaking the poor with heavy taxes. This created a two-tiered society: the rich who evaded taxes and lived in decadent luxury, and the vast amount of poor people struggling to survive.

As it became weaker, Rome was confronted with new enemies: German barbarians to the north and the Persians to the east. Administratively, it became difficult to rule this vast Empire from Rome. In 292 AD, Emperor Diocletian inaugurated a process that would culminate in the division of the Empire, as prophesied centuries before in the book of Daniel. "The prudence of Diocletian discovered that the empire, assailed on every side by the barbarians, required on every side the presence of a great army, and of an emperor."⁵⁰ In time, the Empire was split in two.

Beginning during the reign of Emperor Constantine (in the fourth century), the capital of the eastern portion of the Empire was in Asia Minor. In time, the eastern half of the Roman Empire evolved into the Byzantine Empire; it lasted until the Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople in the 15th century. The Byzantine Empire gave birth to the Orthodox Civilization.

The Western half of the Empire, however, lasted until Rome's fall in 476 AD. "The 4th century west was threatened on the Rhine front by the Germanic federation known as the Alamanni and on the Danube by the Quadi and their allies and, in particular, by the Goths....The real crisis of the Roman empire was generated on the Danube, as the Goths, under pressure from the Huns, negotiated or forced their way across the river, a process leading to the momentous defeat at Adrianople. Despite the treaty concluded in 382 by Theodosius I, the Romans were never able fully to recover, and the ensuing fragility of their command of the Balkans is the most important strategic consideration in the division of the empire into eastern and western parts. In the fifth century, the west was overrun by mainly Germanic invaders—Goths and then Franks in Gaul, Goths and Suebi in the Spanish peninsula, Vandals in North Africa..."⁵¹

These Germanic tribes conquered and destroyed Rome, and ushered in the second European Dark Ages. The achievements of Roman Civilization (civil law, Christianity in Western Europe, etc.) were at stake. In the "European Far West, the barbarian onslaught nearly overwhelmed civilian life. This is not surprising, for civilization in those regions had hitherto always been confined to a thin stratum of landowners, officials, and merchants; and...in western Europe, the invading barbarians were comparatively quite numerous. As a result, in western Europe and central Asia, the capacity of civilized communities to absorb and convert the invaders was greatly overstrained..."⁵²

However, Civilization was saved by Christianity, and particularly (and ominously) by the Catholic Church.

Early Christianity, a very brief but necessary history

Originally, all Christians were Jews. "The divine authority of Moses and the prophets was admitted, and even established, as the firmest basis of Christianity."⁵³ In his magisterial history of the decline of the Roman Empire until the fall of Constantinople in 1452, Edward Gibbon included a succinct and

⁵⁰ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. I, pg 361

⁵¹ *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization*, article on the Roman Empire

⁵² McNeill, *The Rise of the West*, pg 391

⁵³ Gibbon, vol. 1, pg 451

insightful history of the early centuries of Christianity. He affirms what most scholars believe, and indeed, what the Bible states: early Christians were considered a sect of Judaism.

“The origins of modern Christian diversity, biblical scholars contend, can be found in the early Christians’ ties to Judaism. Despite the drama of Pentecost and the missionary fervor that followed, it was actually some time before the first Christians thought of themselves as having started something altogether new.”⁵⁴

Gibbon records that the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem were Jewish. They presided over congregants identified as Nazarenes, who “united the law of Moses with the doctrine of Christ.”⁵⁵ However, unlike Judaism, Christianity was an inclusive religion. With relish, the early Christians, especially the apostle Paul, proselytized among the Gentiles (or non-Jews). The gentile converts, however, brought their pagan beliefs into the early Church. During the next few decades there was a struggle between two sets of Christians: those who kept “the commandments of God and [held] to the testimony of Jesus” (Revelation 12:17) and those who discarded any trace of Judaism, especially its adherence to Old Testament law and theology. “The Jewish converts, or as they were afterward called, the *Nazarenes*, who had laid the foundations of the church soon found themselves overwhelmed by the increasing multitudes, that from all the various religions of polytheism inlisted (sic) under the banner of Christ.”⁵⁶

In the ensuing centuries, Christians engaged in a long process of self-definition in relation to Judaism. The breach between early Christianity and Judaism (as expressed in the Old Testament) was hastened by the disastrous consequences of the 1st and 2nd Jewish revolts in Palestine, from 66-70 AD and in 135 AD. The Romans quashed these revolts and subsequently persecuted the Jewish religion. Most Christians, therefore, dared not to associate themselves with Jews, and consequently discarded laws, customs, and ideology inspired by Old Testament theology. In short, after these revolts, most Christians decided not to be tainted by association with the persecuted Jews. Shorn of Judaic or Old Testament influences, this emerging Christianity had to invent or adopt new customs, laws, and theologies.

The men who succeeded the Church leaders of the apostolic era (31 AD to the 90s AD) grew up in a world infused with paganism and Hellenism (Greek ideas): “The innumerable deities and rites of polytheism were closely interwoven with every circumstance of business and pleasure, of public or private life; and it seemed impossible to escape the observance of them, without, at the same time, renouncing the commerce of mankind.”⁵⁷

Because they did not want to be associated with the persecuted Jews, and because they wanted to accommodate the pagan converts, these men sought to replace God’s laws, Holy Days and Festivals with pagan substitutes. For example, “The Roman Catholic Church chose December 25 as the day for the Feast of the Nativity in order to give Christian meaning to existing pagan rituals. For example, the Church replaced festivities honoring the birth of Mithra, the god of light, with festivities to commemorate the birth of Jesus, whom the Bible calls the light of the world. The Catholic Church hoped to draw pagans into its religion by allowing them to continue their revelry while simultaneously honoring the birthday of Jesus.”⁵⁸ The early Roman Catholic Church might have had good intentions

⁵⁴ *U.S. News & World Report*, “Mysteries of Faith: Exploring the Bible with New Insights and Discoveries”, pg 20

⁵⁵ Gibbon, vol. 1, pg 453

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, vol. 1, pg. 453

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, vol. 1, pg 460

⁵⁸ *MSN Encarta Encyclopedia*, article on “Christmas”, web edition

in trying to convert the gentiles by Christianizing pagan rituals. But in doing so, they undermined the truth of God.

Moreover, many of the so-called Church fathers were infatuated with Hellenistic ideas and philosophies. Hellenism refers to Greek culture and its diffusion. Greek ideas were first propagated throughout the Mediterranean world by the conquering armies of Alexander the Great, in the fourth century BC: “The conquests of Alexander the Great spread Hellenism immediately over the Middle East and far into Asia. After his death in 323 B.C., the influence of Greek civilization continued to expand over the Mediterranean world and western Asia.”⁵⁹

The Romans adopted Greek ideas, and Plato was an icon. The Church fathers were by and large citizens of the Empire and thus shared this great respect for Plato and Platonism. For example, “The theologians Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and St. Augustine were early Christian exponents of a Platonic perspective. Platonic ideas have had a crucial role in the development of Christian theology and also in medieval Islamic thought.”⁶⁰

Even the Catholic Encyclopedia admits Plato’s influence on early Christian theology: “Nevertheless, the great majority of the Christian philosophers down to St. Augustine were Platonists. They appreciated the uplifting influence of Plato’s psychology and metaphysics, and recognized in that influence a powerful ally of Christianity in the warfare against materialism and naturalism.”⁶¹

Why were many so-called church fathers (e.g. Clement, Origen & St. Augustine, perhaps the most famous and influential Christian theologian) devoted to Platonic ideas? These men were products of their time. They were pagan converts who had previously embraced Hellenic and pagan ideas. And because they discarded most Old Testament theology, they needed replacements. They found several replacements in the teachings of Plato.

The “Greek apologists recognized also elements of truth in Hellenic literature, especially in the Platonic and Stoic philosophy, and saw in them, as in the law and prophecies of Judaism, a preparation of the way for Christianity. Justin (Martyr) attributes all the good in heathenism to the divine Logos (Jesus), who, even before his incarnation, scattered the seeds of truth...and incited susceptible spirits to a holy walk. Thus there were Christians before Christianity; and among these he expressly reckons Socrates and Heraclitus. Besides, he supposed that Pythagoras, Plato, and other educated Greeks, in their journeys to the East, became acquainted with the Old Testament writings, and drew from the doctrine of the unity of God, and other like truths....This view of a certain affinity between the Grecian philosophy and Christianity, as an argument in favor of the new religion, was afterwards further developed by the Alexandrian fathers, Clement and Origen.”⁶² Furthermore, “even Augustine acknowledges the Platonists approach so nearly to Christian truth that with a change of some expressions and sentences, they would be true Christians.”⁶³

The emergence of medieval Judeo-Christian Civilization, and then Western Civilization

The Christianity that emerged in the 4th and 5th centuries was shorn of most traces of Old Testament theology, and infused with pagan and Hellenic myths and philosophies. The nascent Catholic Church embraced and embodied this emerging Christianity.

⁵⁹ *Columbia Encyclopedia*, article on “Hellenism”

⁶⁰ *MSN Encarta Encyclopedia*, article on Plato

⁶¹ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article on Plato

⁶² Philip Shaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, pg 114

⁶³ *Ibid*, pg 114

Moreover, when Christianity became the official state religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century AD, “there was a need to create a hierarchy and to accommodate its jurisdiction within the traditional powers of the state.”⁶⁴ After Emperor Constantine’s embrace of Christianity in the early 4th century, there were two main institutions in the dying Western half of the Roman Empire: the Roman imperial bureaucracy and the emerging Catholic Church.

The imperial bureaucracy died in the fall of Rome, in 476 AD. The last Roman institution left standing was the Catholic Church. Under the reign of Pope Leo I (440-461 AD), the Catholic Church and especially the papacy, began to assert itself: “Leo is one of the only two popes in all of Church history to have been called “the Great” (the other was Gregory I, 590-604 AD)...So forcefully articulated were Leo’s claim for the pope’s universal and supreme authority over the Church, in fact, that his own pontificate constitutes a major turning point in the history of the papacy....Leo is also celebrated for his courageous personal confrontation with Attila the Hun near Mantua in 452, when the warrior was laying waste to northern Italy and preparing to move south toward Rome. Heading a delegation from the Roman Senate, Leo persuaded Attila to withdraw beyond the Danube. In 455 he also met the Vandal king Gaiseric (or Genseric) outside the walls of Rome. Although Leo failed to persuade Gaiseric to withdraw, he succeeded at least in preventing the torching of the city and the massacring of its people.”⁶⁵

Under Leo the Catholic Church, and particularly the papacy, began to interfere in the civil affairs of the state. This trend continued after the downfall of Rome. Under Leo’s successors, the Catholic Church’s mission was two-fold: (1) to assert its authority, both spiritual and temporal, and (2) to civilize the German barbarians. To an astonishing degree, the medieval Catholic Church accomplished both goals. The civilization of barbaric Europe began in earnest under Pope Gregory the Great, 540-604 AD. “Gregory saw as a part of his duty the launching of the first great missionary venture since the days of St Paul.”⁶⁶ Moreover, as a result of several decades of maneuvering, “Gregory became virtually the civil as well as the spiritual ruler of Rome. He negotiated treaties, paid the troops, and appointed generals and governors.”⁶⁷

The Middle Ages thus included the growth of the Catholic Church and papal intrusion into the temporal or civil affairs of the nascent states. In the opinion of the medieval popes, there was no separation of church and state. In short, both the authorities of “God” and “Caesar” were invested in the papacy.

Medieval Europe was also divided among many different emerging nations: the Romanic or Latin nations of southern Europe, including Italians, the French, Portuguese, and Spaniards; the Celtic nations, among them the Britons, Picts, Scots, the Welsh, and Irish (most of them were descendants of the “lost tribes” of Israel); Germans or Tuetons of central Europe; and the Slavs of the Balkans. Over a period of time, various tribes began to consolidate and create national governments that claimed sovereignty over particular territories with fixed boundaries. Leaders of these governments began to disdain papal interference. In the ensuing centuries, there was a constant tug-of-war for power between the papacy and the national leaders of the emerging European nation-states.

Because the Catholic Church came first, and because of its mission to civilize and convert Europe, the papacy enjoyed a distinct advantage in this struggle. The apex of the Church occurred in the ninth through twelfth centuries AD. The Church “uniquely pervaded the whole fabric of society. It had, for instance, almost a monopoly on culture....Literacy was virtually confined to the

⁶⁴ McNeill, *Rise of the West*, pg 406

⁶⁵ Richard McBrien, *Lives of the Popes*, pgs 75, 77

⁶⁶ J.M. Roberts, *History of Europe*, pg 88

⁶⁷ McBrien, pg 97

clergy....The clergy controlled virtually all access to such writing as there was....History, philosophy, theology, the illumination of manuscripts, all played their part in sustaining a culture above all sacramental....[The medieval church] was a great landowner which did not die. It controlled much of society's wealth...The clergy and their dependents were numerous; the Church was the economy's major employer."⁶⁸

Thus during the Middle Ages a new civilization began to emerge in Europe. It was a Christian civilization that admitted its Judaic roots: hence the designation Judeo-Christian. This Civilization encompassed many states founded by the descendants of the "lost tribes of Israel," including Britain, France and Spain.⁶⁹ At first, Europeans identified themselves as Christian members of the self-titled one and universal Catholic Church. Later, their loyalties became divided as the rulers of states became jealous of the power wielded by the Church. In other words, these leaders wanted some of the proverbial pie.

The leaders of the nascent states began to compete with the papacy and Catholic Church. The first famous example was provided by Charlemagne, the founder of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire. "During his reign, Charlemagne built a kingdom that included almost all of western and central Europe and he presided over a cultural and legal revival that came to be known as the Carolingian Renaissance. His empire did not long survive his death, but its two main territories, East and West Francia, later became the major parts of two important European entities: West Francia became modern-day France, and East Francia became first the Holy Roman Empire and then the modern state of Germany. Charlemagne's close alliance with the popes, the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, also established a precedent for subsequent ties between medieval popes and kings."⁷⁰

After rescuing the papacy from the menacing and harassing Lombards, on Christmas day in 800 AD the Pope declared Charlemagne to be the emperor of the Romans. His Empire included much of Europe. However, it soon disintegrated into various nascent states after his death. In the West, these states would eventually become France, Britain, Spain, Portugal, etc. In central Europe, the Holy Roman Empire was born. The Empire consisted of Germany, the lowlands (everywhere from Southwest France to Poland), Switzerland, North Italy, and Croatia. "It was Roman in that the would-be emperor had to be crowned in Rome. It was holy...in that it was envisaged as the secular arm of an indivisible Christian commonwealth of which the spiritual part was the Church."⁷¹ Henceforth, Europe was divided into three competing entities: the Catholic Church, the nascent states (e.g. France, Britain, etc.), and the Holy Roman Empire.

European topography fostered such competition. Clusters of mountains (the Alps, Pyrenees, Carpathians, etc.) and several rivers (Rhone, Rhine, Danube, Po, the Elbe, Oder, Vistula, etc.) dot the European landscape. Over time, this facilitated the emergence of several nascent states with definable territories and boundaries. Because of its varied topography, it was very difficult for any one state to dominate Europe. Europeans would thus begin to divide their loyalties between their states and the Catholic Church.

"In Europe...the reach of the Church was limited by competing pretensions of secular authorities (Caesar vs. God) and by smoldering, gathering fires of religious dissent from below."⁷² The emergence of such dissenters or reformers was a matter of time. The Catholic Church had become

⁶⁸ J.M. Roberts, *History of Europe*, pgs 123, 124

⁶⁹ Again, please refer to our publication, *The Divine Destiny of America*.

⁷⁰ *MSN Encarta Encyclopedia*, article on Charlemagne

⁷¹ S.E. Finer, vol. 2, pg 898

⁷² David Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor*, pg 201

very rich and despotic. Such characteristics led to corruption and decadence, perhaps best illustrated in the pontificate of Alexander VI. He “was the most notorious pope in all history. His pontificate was marked by nepotism, greed, and unbridled sensuality....it soon became evident that the consuming passions of his pontificate would be gold, women, and the interests of his family....the pope’s main political preoccupation during his pontificate was with the transformation of the Papal States and central Italy into a family enterprise and with the containment of the great Roman families. The means employed included assassination, seizures of properties, and the creation of cardinals for a high price.....The eccleasical act for which he is also remembered was his excommunication, torture, and execution in 1498 of the famous Florentine preacher and reformer Girolamo Savonarola, who had been denouncing papal corruption and calling for a council to reform the Church and depose Alexander VI.”⁷³

Savonarola was by no means the last such ‘troublemaker.’ On October 31, 1517 Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses condemning indulgences to the doors of the All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany. That event proved to be one of the turning points of history. Soon others began to join Luther’s movement against papal excess and tyranny, although for different reasons. Other reformists like John Calvin and Erasmus, and national leaders like Henry VIII (monarch of England), distanced themselves from the Catholic Church. Soon a civil war between Protestants and Catholics erupted in Germany, and Europe seemed afire. For instance, in “parts of Poland, the Protestant pastors carried their lives in their hands; in Bohemia, Austria, Bavaria, Catholic priests were armed. Travellers were not always safe; in the canton of Lucerne and in the Black Forest Protestant merchants had been seized and burnt.”⁷⁴

This was a clash within the Judeo-Christian civilization. The Protestants and Catholics contended for the medieval soul of Christianity. The Catholics believed that “they could be right with God through chiefly external means such as pilgrimages, rituals, visiting relics, and paying for Masses....[Protestants] hungered for internal means which would produce truly changed hearts and help them realize inwardly the experience of God.”⁷⁵

The Protestants and Catholics were soon joined by another faction: the temporal rulers. “It happened that all these met challenge from a significant number of territorial and national rulers who chafed under such threats and who were seeking secular power. Spain, France, and England, beginning to cohere as nations, became powerful enough to challenge the Papal States, and the allies of the pope, who also had great ambition and a lust for temporal power. These rulers were not spiritually free from papal domain, but through a shifting pattern of alliances they were weakening the pope’s temporal reign....It was on this scene that, when Luther was to make his challenge to Rome, the pope would not know how to counter him or, if he made moves to do so, would not be free for reasons of political alliance easily to close in and exterminate him.”⁷⁶

The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) marked the end of the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counterreformation. (Religious differences still sparked the English civil wars of the 17th century.) Fought mainly in Germany, this war decimated the population of central Europe. It was a Europe-wide war: the German Protestant princes and foreign states (France, Sweden, Denmark, England, and the Netherlands) fought against the Holy Roman Empire, represented by the Hapsburg dynasty.

The war resulted in the Treaty or Peace of Westphalia (1648). This treaty marked the end of an era. “Calvinism joined Lutheranism and Catholicism as a recognized expression of the Christian faith.

⁷³ McNeill, pgs 267, 268

⁷⁴ C.V. Wedgwood, *The Thirty Years War*, pg 23

⁷⁵ Martin Marty, *Martin Luther*, pgs 27-28

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, pg 28

Princes, if they chose, could for the first time allow Protestants and Catholics to exist within their territories. And the pope was excluded from any interference in the religious affairs of Germany....After more than a thousand years the state was free to transact its business as though the pope did not exist.”⁷⁷

This watershed helped facilitate the demise of Judeo-Christian Civilization and the subsequent rise of Western Civilization. States were finally free from papal interference and they began to organize themselves along secular, nationalistic lines. The West was gradually becoming more secular and nationalistic. And wars between nations replaced wars between religions.

“The French and the English and then the Dutch, Spanish, Swedes, Prussians, Germans, and Italians crystallized their national identities in the crucible of war. To survive and succeed in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, kings and princes increasingly had to mobilize the economic and demographic resources of their territories and eventually to create national armies to replace mercenary ones. In the process they promoted national consciousness and the confrontation of nation against nation. By the 1790s, as R.R. Palmer put it, ‘The wars of kings were over, the wars of peoples had begun.’ Only in the mid-eighteenth century do the words ‘nation’ and ‘*patrie*’ enter into European languages....The emergence of British identity was prototypical. English identity was defined in wars against the French and Scots. British identity subsequently emerged as ‘an invention forged above all by war. Time and time again, war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it.’⁷⁸

There are eight defining characteristics of Western Civilization⁷⁹:

1. Classical legacy: The West (including Central and Western Europe, America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand) inherited several Greek and Roman achievements: Greek philosophy, Roman law, Latin and Christianity.
2. Catholicism and Protestantism: Together, they form Western Christianity, still the defining mark of Western Civilization. “During most of its first millennium...what is now known as Western civilization was called Western Christendom; there existed a well-developed sense of community among Western Christian peoples that they were distinct from Turks, Moors, Byzantines, and others; and it was for God as well as for gold that Westerners went out to conquer the world in the sixteenth century.”⁸⁰
3. European languages: After religion, the most important distinguishing mark of Western civilization.
4. Separation of Church and State: “Throughout Western history first the Church and then many churches existed apart from the state. God and Caesar, church and state, spiritual authority and temporal authority, have been a prevailing dualism in Western culture.”⁸¹ Indeed, this dichotomy between church and state will exist until Jesus returns, and is a defining characteristic of the end-time. The symbolic beast (the state) and the false prophet

⁷⁷ Bruce Shelly, *Church History in Plain Language*, pg 322

⁷⁸ Huntington, *Who Are We*, pg 29

⁷⁹ Borrowed from Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations*, chapter 3

⁸⁰ Ibid, pg 70

⁸¹ Ibid, pg 70

(representing a church) will duel for supremacy during the three and one-half years known as the Great Tribulation. More on this later.

5. Rule of law: The medieval Christians resurrected the Roman notion of civil law, and the primacy of law. They and the political theorists of the 17th and 18th centuries also emphasized the importance of natural law, and Britain adopted common law.
6. Social pluralism: Unlike other civilizations, people in Western society have traditionally separated themselves into distinct groups based not on blood but on, for example, occupations (guilds) and religious orders (monasteries).
7. Representative bodies: “Social pluralism early gave rise to estates, parliaments, and other institutions to represent the interests of the aristocracy, clergy, merchants, and other groups. These bodies provided forms of representation which in the course of modernization evolved into the institutions of modern democracy.”⁸²
8. Individualism: The aforementioned traits contributed to the emergence of individualism. Protestantism’s emphasis on the personal relationship with God contributed mightily to the rise of individualism.

Historically, civilizations are usually dominated by a state or a combination of states. At one time or another, Western Civilization has been dominated and thus represented by France, Great Britain, and the United States. During the latter part of the 20th century, the United States represented the dominant or core state of Western Civilization. It has therefore borne the brunt of Islamic terrorists who want to destroy Western Civilization. In their eyes, if you destroy America, the destruction of Western Civilization will surely follow.

The United States has become the dominant or core nation in Western Civilization because of its role in the Cold War (the official defender of the “free world” from the Communist bloc led by the Soviet Union). The United States continues in this role because of its overwhelming military superiority and the pervasiveness of its culture. However, in recent years some member states of the European Union have challenged the notion that the United States represents Western Civilization.

The United States vs. Europe

The United States industrialized rapidly after the Civil War. Due to the transcontinental railroad and the economic changes set in motion during the Civil War, a national economy emerged. By the end of the 19th century, the United States had the strongest economy in the world. “The United States had clearly surpassed Britain as the largest manufacturing nation in the world, with 30 percent of the world output by 1900 and 35 percent by 1907....By virtually every important industrial measure, the United States was clearly the most powerful nation in the world.”⁸³

By the end of the 19th century, the United States had a strong, continental economy and engaged in worldwide trade. American strategists and leaders recognized the need for a strong military to protect the United States’ economic interests. Thus in 1889, the Navy’s Annual Report proposed the creation of two battleship fleets, one for each coast. With a combined fleet containing twenty

⁸² Ibid, pg 71

⁸³ Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America’s World Role*, pg 131.

battleships and twenty coastal monitors, the United States had become a first-rate military power. This power was demonstrated vividly in the short-lived Spanish-American War of 1898. By the turn of the century, the United States had arrived on the international scene.

Inevitably a great nation-state will face difficult choices. The first such choice was whether to intervene in the First World War (1914-1918). Most Americans were decidedly pacifistic. However, because the United States traded with combatants from both sides, and because this was an all-out war that eventually claimed the lives of 20 million people, Germany felt compelled to attack British merchant ships in the Atlantic. Some of these ships carried American goods and people.

The choice for war was made in 1917. Disgusted by the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare by Germany on merchant ships in international waters, and alarmed by the German proposal for an alliance with Mexico, the United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. (In return for Mexican help in its war against the United States, the German government pledged to help Mexico reclaim Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.)

America's entry into the War, said President Woodrow Wilson, was not to defend the anachronistic, imperial, and colonialist British and French empires against the similarly constituted German and Austro-Hungarian empires. Instead, declared Wilson, the United States "shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples...."⁸⁴

In his address before Congress, and later in his famous Fourteen Points to transform international relations, Wilson declared the United States' intention to revitalize Western Civilization. He wanted to replace empires with national states based on self-determination, and to relegate colonialism and imperialism to the dustbin of history. However, France and Britain disagreed with Wilson's image of Western Civilization, and chafed at the newly-found assertiveness at the upstart United States.

In the meantime, the United States continued its march to global preeminence. By the mid-1940s the "United States had replaced Great Britain as the dominant world power. By 1945 American production had reached levels that were scarcely believable. The United States was producing 45 percent of the world's arms and nearly 50 percent of the world's goods. Two-thirds of all the ships afloat were American-built."⁸⁵

On the other hand, by 1945 Europe was a mess. Two world wars, depression and economic malaise, fascism, and the devastating effects of Spanish influenza had all but destroyed Europe's economies and self-confidence. A devastated agricultural sector and a severe winter in 1946 combined to bring the specter of starvation to Europe. Moreover, the Eastern European states had succumbed to Soviet communism. And Britain declared that it could no longer support Turkey and Greece in their struggle against communist insurgencies. For the second time in a decade, the fate of Western Civilization was at stake. Communism had replaced fascism in posing an existential threat to the West.

The Truman administration recognized the threat and sprang to action. The Truman doctrine offered US support to any regime fighting against communist insurgencies, and the Marshall Plan provided massive financial aid to help rebuild European economies and societies. NATO, created in 1949, became an alliance of Western Europe and the United States against the Soviet Union.

By 1950 the United States had assumed its role as defender of the West, and of Western Civilization. For the next forty years, under the menacing shadow of the Soviet Union, the European states had no choice but to follow the leadership of the United States. The United States created

⁸⁴ Woodrow Wilson's address to Congress, April 2, 1917

⁸⁵ Stephen Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938*, pg 27

international institutions (e.g. the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) to help promote its interest.

Since 1945 the United States has been the indisputable core or dominant state in Western Civilization. However, as the Soviet menace subsided, some European countries began to chafe at United States dominance. France, and to a lesser degree Germany, began to offer a European alternative to US dominance. In time, this alternative became known as the European Union.

The founders of the European Union—Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, both Frenchmen—believed that the causes of the world wars lay in Europe’s system of competing nation-states. Schuman said, “Because Europe was not united, we have had war.” These visionaries offered a solution: a political and economic union of European states that would make continental conflict unthinkable. In 1951 six states—West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands—formed the European Coal and Steel Community. In time, this Community evolved first into the European Economic Monetary Union (EMU) and then into the European Union (the EU). In addition to forming a union to banish continental conflict forever, the EU added new members (now 25) and a new purpose: a European alternative to US dominance in Western Civilization. On the first day of 2002, twelve EU countries discarded their national currencies in favor of one European currency called the “Euro.” In June 2004, an expanded EU consisting of twenty-five members adopted Europe’s first ever written constitution. Presently, the EU has all the trappings of a cohesive state: a national currency and central bank, a parliament, a civil service, a supreme court, a military staff, and diplomatic corps.

With the arrival of a new alternative to US dominance in Western Civilization, it seems that Europe is destined to compete with the United States for supremacy in the West. However, the EU is no match for the United States.

The United States has become the most powerful nation since Rome. “Like Britain in the nineteenth century, the United States in the twenty-first century has power to spare. In fact the U.S. has more power than Britain did at the height of its empire, more power than any other state in modern times. It deploys the world’s only blue-water navy of any significance and the world’s most powerful air force; its armed forces have expeditionary capability undreamed of by any other power; its economy, powered by unceasing technological innovation, is the biggest and most dynamic on earth; its language has achieved a ubiquity unrivaled by any tongue since Latin; its culture permeates distant lands; and its political ideals remain a beacon of hope for all those ‘yearning to be free.’”⁸⁶

Power is relative; that is, the power (economic, military, and cultural) of a particular nation is not measured absolutely but only in comparison to the power wielded by other countries. Taking this view, the power of the United States is even more impressive. For example, our gross domestic product (GDP) is larger than that of the next three nations combined (Japan, Germany, and France). We spend more on our military than the next eight countries combined. We’re the only country with the capacity to simultaneously deploy unconventional weapons (i.e. nuclear weapons) and conventional forces anywhere in the world. A majority of the world’s largest companies, in revenue and workforce, are American. We are the undisputed leader in creating and using information technology. We spend an inordinate amount of money on research and development.

Militarily, the United States is not about to cede its primacy anytime soon. “On the drawing board are lightweight Stryker brigades, state-of-the-art stealth warships, super-fast low-profile watercraft for coastline combat, and all the science fiction paraphernalia for the Army’s next-generation ‘Objective Force.’ These weapons will include non-line-sight cannons, electromagnetic

⁸⁶ Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, pg. 349

‘rail guns,’ robotic mules and assault vehicles, long-endurance unmanned tactical aircraft, loitering attack missiles, and total digital integration of fire and sensor systems.”⁸⁷

On the other hand, Europe

For years, people inside and outside the Church have expected the EU to become the new “United States of Europe.” They predicted that, in a relatively short amount of time, the EU would become stronger—militarily and economically—than the US. Moreover, the EU will grow stronger while the United States becomes weaker. Somehow the EU will defeat the United States. In victory, the EU will morph into the dreaded prophetic and symbolic “beast” of the Bible’s apocalyptic books (specifically, Daniel and Revelation).

Conceptually, these warnings are warranted. Indeed, the Bible does predict the emergence of a dominant European superstate, and later I will discuss this in detail.

However, as already noted, the Bible provides a vision of the future but few details. In other words, the Bible predicts the emergence of a European superstate, but it doesn’t tell us how it will emerge. So many of us have tried to fill in the details, and many of our predictions have not materialized.

In predicting the rise of the EU to global preeminence, we have portentously announced anything that would support this thesis: e.g. the creation of a European foreign policy and army (rapid reaction force). However, we have failed to mention or notice the difference between intention and reality.

The reality is this: the European Union is not becoming stronger and the United States is not becoming weaker. Granted, the combined economy of the EU is roughly equal to that of the United States, and it has a larger population. However, the EU’s military muscles are small and flabby. And the “key question is assessing the challenge presented by the EU is whether it will develop enough political and social-cultural cohesion to act as one unit on a wide range of international issues, or whether it will remain a limited grouping of countries with strongly different nationalisms and foreign policies....Europe faces significant limits on its degree of unity. National identities remain stronger than a common European identity, despite fifty years of integration, and national interests, while subdued in comparison to the past, still matter....As Germany grew with reunification, developed a more “normal” foreign policy, and insisted on more weight in votes on European issues, French attitudes toward EU institutions became more cautious.”⁸⁸

Europe cohering into a superstate modeled on the United States has been bedeviled by the presence of different languages and the lack of mobility. Most Europeans speak only their native languages, and by and large they remain homebodies: less than 2% of them live in a non-native EU country.

Moreover, Europe is getting older. “At present, the EU has 35 people of pensionable age for every 100 of working age. But Europeans are not having enough children to replace today’s workers. A Deutsch Bank report in 2002 calculated that, on current demographic trends, by 2050 there will be 75 pensioners for every 100 workers in the EU.”⁸⁹

Despite such daunting statistics, Europeans are reluctant to accept social reform. They recoil at the idea of reforming their precious welfare state that doles out generous benefits to the unemployed

⁸⁷ Peter Peterson, “Riding For a Fall,” an article appearing in the September/October 2004 edition of *Foreign Affairs*

⁸⁸ Joseph Nye, Jr., *The Paradox of American Power*, pgs 30, 31

⁸⁹ *The Economist*, 9/25/04

and early retirees. They don't want to tinker with labor laws that make it very difficult for employers to hire and fire people.

Because most of their revenue is devoted to supporting a generous welfare state, and despite the rhetoric, the EU shows no intention of building a strong continental army. Comparing the armed forces of the United States and the EU is like comparing the might of the boy scouts to that of the United States Air Force.

Presently, the European nations have neither the ability nor the will to lead, despite protestations to the contrary. The Europeans "are unwilling to pay to project force beyond Europe, but, after the Cold War, they would not pay for sufficient force to conduct even minor military actions on their own continent without American help....For Europe, the fall of the Soviet Union did not just eliminate the need for geopolitics. Many Europeans took the end of the Cold War as a holiday from strategy. Despite talk of establishing Europe as a global superpower...average European defense budgets fell below 2 percent of GDP..."⁹⁰

In addition, the European economies are stuck in a vicious circle. Low growth leads to higher unemployment, which leads to costlier welfare benefits (e.g. unemployment insurance). Higher welfare costs lead to higher taxes and hence lower growth. In a nutshell, this describes Germany and France (but not Britain).

The EU also lacks popular legitimacy. EU development has occurred without the assent of average Europeans. Jean-Claude Juncker, the Prime Minister of Luxemburg, explains this process: "We decide on something, leave it lying around and wait and see what happens. If no one kicks up a fuss, because most people don't know what has been decided, we continue step by step until there is no turning back."⁹¹ This sly and undemocratic process has resulted in a European populace alienated from the EU government. "Nearly half a century after its birth, the EU's approval ratings remain pretty feeble. In the most recent Eurobarometer, just 43% of EU citizens said they had a positive image of the Union, against 21% with a negative image. Even in Germany, one of the weightiest founder members, only 39% thought the country had benefited from EU membership, against 38% who thought it had not. A previous Eurobarometer found that almost half of EU voters would not mind, or indeed would be 'very relieved', if the EU were simply to disappear."⁹²

Europe's devotion to its precious welfare state has prevented the EU from building a strong military. Without a strong military, the EU cannot impose its will nor be taken seriously by other countries. "Europe's relative weakness has understandably produced a powerful European interest in building a world where military strength and hard power matter less than economic and soft power, an international order where international law and international institutions matter more than the power of individual nations, where unilateral action by powerful states is forbidden, where all nations regardless of their strength have equal rights and are equally protected by commonly agreed-upon international rules of behavior. Because they are relatively weak, Europeans have a deep interest in devaluing and eventually eradicating the brutal laws of an anarchic Hobbesian world where power is the ultimate determinant of national security and success."⁹³

The development of the European Union is ominous for this reason: some of its rules and forms of governance will survive the EU's downfall. Moreover, the EU has established an institutional framework which has provided mechanisms (e.g. "Enhanced Cooperation") that promote inter-governmental cooperation. The European superstate following in the wake of the EU will employ

⁹⁰ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, pg 25

⁹¹ Quoted in *The Economist*, 9/25/04

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Kagan, pg 37

some of those rules, institutions, and forms of governance (e.g. use of one currency). In other words, the EU has already laid some of the groundwork for the eventual emergence of the prophesied European superstate. This groundwork will enable the European superstate to emerge rapidly and coherently. In short, the rules and institutions developed by the EU will help the ten states comprising the European superstate to become a functioning unit overnight.

Self-image matters

Despite their bravado, European leaders know that talk about the emergence of a strong alternative to United States is just that: talk. They know they are weak and the United States is immensely strong. The EU can huff and puff all it wants. Yet unless they build a strong military to rival that of the United States, the EU cannot impose its own version of Western Civilization. Absent a stark and sudden reversal of fortune, the United States will thus remain the dominant or core state of Western Civilization.

The United States emerged as the victor of the Cold War, and as the indisputable leader of Western Civilization. “At the end of the twentieth century, numerous nondemocratic regimes still existed, most importantly China, but none of them, including China, was attempting to promote nondemocratic ideologies in other societies. Democracy was left without a significant secular ideological rival, and the United States was left without a peer competitor. Among American foreign policy elites, the results were euphoria, pride, arrogance—and uncertainty. The absence of an ideological threat produced an absence of purpose. ‘Nations need enemies,’ Charles Krauthammer commented as the Cold War ended. ‘Take away one, and they find another’.....The foreign policy debates of the 1990s were largely over who might be such an enemy....

“(O)n September 11, 2004, Osama bin Laden ended America’s search. The attacks on New York and Washington followed by the wars with Afghanistan and Iraq and the more diffuse ‘war on terrorism’ make militant Islam America’s first enemy of the twenty-first century.”⁹⁴

The United States is at war with militant Islam. However, as demonstrated earlier, the militant Islamists are engaged in a much larger war against Western Civilization. Long ago, the Bible predicted a clash between civilizations in the end-time. In this and the foregoing sections, I’ve discussed at some length the evolution of civilizations (Judeo/Christian and Western) created in part by the descendants of the biblical patriarch Abraham. I’ve also demonstrated that America, the descendant of Manasseh (one of the “lost tribes” of Israel), is the dominant or core state of Western Civilization, and that the EU is beginning to assert itself (at least rhetorically) as an alternative to US dominance.

Furthermore, the Bible predicts that the descendants of ancient Israel, particularly America, Britain, and the modern Jewish nation in the Middle East, will experience defeat and adversity in the end time. Because the Bible predicts that the end-time clash between the Western and Islamic civilizations will be won by the West, and because the United States and Britain are described as defeated during the end-time, sometime in the future the United States will abdicate its role as leader of Western Civilization. This will result in a role reversal: Europe will become the leader of the West because somehow the United States cannot perform that role. This also means that something catastrophic must happen to the United States.

I cannot prove it, but it’s reasonable to assume that this catastrophe or series of catastrophes will occur in our war against terrorism. Later I’ll demonstrate that the deployment and use of weapons

⁹⁴ Huntington, *Who Are We?*, pg 263-264

of mass destruction in America by Islamic terrorists is a distinct and frightening possibility. Indeed, many foreign policy experts predict that it's a distinct probability.

The other son: Ishmael

This clash between civilizations (the West and Islam) is some sort of internecine feud between Abraham's descendants. The conflict began around 4,000 years ago.

Custom dictated that, as the eldest son, Ishmael would receive the divine blessings promised to Abraham. However, God reserved those blessings for the descendants of Isaac and Jacob. Yet God did not leave Ishmael empty-handed: "And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation" (Genesis 17:20).

Despite receiving a divine blessing and becoming the father of twelve sons who fathered twelve tribes, there "are, however, hints of ethnic tension in the narratives as well. Like Cain, Ishmael is depicted as an outcast and prone to violence (Gen. 16:12), and as a wanderer." Moreover, "the Arabs trace their ancestry back to Abraham through Ishmael."⁹⁵

Mothers exert a strong influence on their sons. Because Hagar disliked Sarah (and vice-versa), Ishmael therefore disliked Sarah and her son Isaac. We see a hint of this when Ishmael mocked Isaac: "So the child [Isaac] grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, who she had borne to Abraham, scoffing." (Genesis 20:18).

At that time, Ishmael was a mere teenager, and teenagers are inherently immature. Yet Ishmael's actions were costly. He stoked Sarah's considerable ire and thus provoked her to convince Abraham to expel Hagar and Ishmael from her household. Hagar and Ishmael became upset when Abraham complied. In their eyes, their expulsion was unfair. And it was doubly unfair for Isaac to ostensibly usurp Ishmael's birthright blessings. Unaware of God's intention to bless Abraham through the line of Isaac, or incapable of comprehending that, Ishmael probably felt that Isaac usurped what was rightfully his. (We see a parallel of this story in the account of Jacob and Esau.) Because of this and their expulsion, Hagar and Ishmael probably despised Sarah and Isaac. And they passed their resentment down to their descendants, and their descendants did the same, and so on: hence the genesis of the enmity between the Arabs and Israelites.

What is the rest of Ishmael's story? No one knows. However, the Arabs trace their lineage to Ishmael. And their story begins to crystallize in the seventh century AD.

For several centuries before and after Christ, the Greater Middle East was dominated by either the Romans or Persians, or sometimes both. However, beginning in the seventh century AD, Arab armies overran the Middle East; during the subsequent centuries, Central Asia, the Balkans and even Spain fell to the Mohammedan armies. "The speed of these conquests was remarkable; but far more remarkable was the enduring realignment of cultural boundaries and the regrouping of peoples that followed in their wake. The ancient Middle East, where the earliest human civilizations had matured, only to be submerged under a wave of Hellenism and split politically between Iran and Rome, was united once more. Within the new political frame, a distinctive Islamic cultural synthesis soon took form, incorporating elements drawn from all the civilizations which had met and mingled at this crossroads of the ecumene for a millennium past."⁹⁶

⁹⁵ *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, article on Ishmael

⁹⁶ McNeill, *Rise of the West*, pg. 417

Beginning around 613 AD an obscure Arab merchant had begun to denounce the polytheism of the Arabs and to preach a new revelation from God. His name was Muhammad (c. 570-632 AD) and his message caught on. As he attracted followers, Muhammad's message became a movement, which soon morphed into an army. Within two decades, Mohammedan armies had conquered all of Arabia. "Through his [so-called] inspired utterances, his personal example, and the organizational framework he established for Islam, Muhammad laid the basis for a distinctive new style of life, which within the space of two centuries attracted the allegiance of a major fraction of the human race...."⁹⁷

Muhammad founded a religion, an empire, and a civilization. Islamic civilization once embraced Spain, the Balkans, the Middle East, and Central Asia (including India). It waxed in the centuries after the fall of Rome (476 AD) and waned during the decline of the Ottoman Empire, beginning in the 17th century AD. Its history can be summarized⁹⁸:

632 AD	Death of Muhammad.
656	Murder of Uthman, the third Caliph [Islamic ruler], and the first Civil War. A crisis over succession leads to a rift and the creation of two Muslim factions, Sunni and Shi'ite.
680	Second Civil War and the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson Hussein in the Battle of Karbala.
750	Overthrow of the Umayyad caliphate by the Abbasids. Under leaders like Harun al-Rashid, Islam is transformed from an Arab faith to a cosmopolitan, multiethnic religion.
910	Establishment of the Fatimid caliphate in North Africa and, with it, the spread of Ismaili Shi'ite doctrine, the belief that the seventh imam to succeed the Prophet was Ismail.
1000	Sunni revival. In a backlash against Fatimid rule, Sunni adherents fight other Muslim sects, particularly the Ismaili Shi'ites and, later foreign infidel Crusaders.
1100s	Spread of Sufism. For centuries Sufis propagate a spiritual and mystical form of Islam.
1200s	Mongol invasions. A pagan conquest of Muslim territories marks a separation of political authority from Islamic religious authority for the first time.
1400s – 1700s	Ottoman expansion. The Ottomans spread Islam through conquest and sustained it through the creation of a religious bureaucracy.

⁹⁷ Ibid, pg 421

⁹⁸ Quoted from *Time Magazine*, 9/13/04, pgs 54-55

- 1700s Birth of Wahhabism in Arabia. Its rigid, puritanical beliefs are a reaction to the growth of Western ideas. Later, with Saudi oil and power, the sect gains enormous influence.
- 1979 Iranian Revolution. Rallying the Muslim world against Western influence, Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini reunites religious and political authority under Islamic law, or Shari'a.
- 1990s Formation of al-Qaeda. Composed of loosely affiliated terrorist cells, its activities fuel a resurgence in Islamic fundamentalism.

Christianity vs. Islam

“The relations between Islam and Christianity, both Orthodox and Western, have often been stormy.... The twentieth-century conflict between liberal democracy and Marxist-Leninism is only a fleeting and superficial historical phenomenon compared to the continuing and deeply conflictual relations between Islam and Christianity.”⁹⁹

The clash between the West and Islam began early. By the middle part of the 8th century, Arab armies had conquered the Middle East, Northern Africa, Spain, Persia, and northern India. It might have conquered all of Europe had it not been for the valiant stand taken at Tours, France by the Frankish Prince Charles Martel, in 732 AD.

By the 1400s AD the Ottoman Turks created an empire. They weakened and then destroyed the Byzantine Empire, and thereafter subdued the Balkans and North Africa. In 1529 they besieged but failed to conquer Vienna. In 1683 they tried again, and failed. For almost 1,000 years, from the conquest of Spain in the mid-700s AD to the second siege of Vienna in 1683, Europe was threatened by Islamic conquest. “Islam is the only civilization which has put the survival of the West in doubt...”¹⁰⁰

The tide began to turn by the end of the 15th century AD. Christians regained control of Spain and increasingly assertive European states, aided by innovations in ocean navigation, had begun to colonize. Subsequent centuries included rapid industrialization and the cohering of strong and assertive European nation-states. After World War I, Britain, France and Italy had established supremacy in the lands of the defeated Ottoman Empire. By 1920 European or non-Muslim states had gained control over all but four Muslim states: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan.

The power and influence of the West declined during the progression of the 20th century. For example, by 1920 the West ruled almost half of the earth's landmass. By 1993, this figure was cut in half. With the exception of Israel, the Middle East is now composed entirely of sovereign Arab states (and a Persian state: Iran). And there has been a concomitant resurgence of Islam in the Middle East.

This resurgence is marked by the repudiation by Arabs of European and American ideas and influence. Preeminent historian Bernard Lewis observes:

“It should now be clear that we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations—that perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the

⁹⁹ Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, pg 209

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, pg 210

worldwide expansion of both. It is crucially important that we on our side should not be provoked into an equally historic but also equally irrational reaction against this rival.”¹⁰¹

Despite Mr. Lewis’ sage advice, the West is now engaged in civilizational conflict with Islam. The Bible predicts this clash of civilizations, and predicts the winner.

Apocalyptic Biblical Prophecy: history foretold

The biblical books of Daniel and Revelation have much in common. They describe people, places and things in the end-time, often employing symbolism which is later explained in prosaic language. They include fanciful descriptions of beasts and a false prophet, of kings and kingdoms, of saints and sinners.

Daniel was a teenager or young man when he entered Babylon as an exile in 597 BC. He was pious, wise, and courageous. He was also a prophet and an interpreter of dreams. Daniel gained prominence when God revealed to him the meaning of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. In his dream Nebuchadnezzar saw a great statue composed of four distinct parts: "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay" (Daniel 2:32-33).

These parts represented four successive kingdoms. “You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery” (Daniel 2:37-43).

The head of the statue represented the **kingdom of Babylon**, the first such kingdom. The neo-Babylonian Empire was founded by Nabopolassar (625 BC). Allied with the Medes, Nabopolassar’s armies sacked Nineveh in 612 BC, thus destroying the Assyrian Empire. Under the reign of Nabopolassar’s son Nebuchadnezzar, the neo-Babylonian empire reached its apogee. He defeated Egypt, Judah, and over a period of time, exiled the latter’s inhabitants into Babylon. However, Babylon’s rule over the Greater Middle East was short-lived.

Cyrus the Great founded the **Persian kingdom**, the second prophesied kingdom. Through war and subterfuge, Cyrus united the Medes and Persians into an empire that would defeat the Babylonians in 538 BC. Cyrus set out to rule the Mediterranean coast and Asia Minor and to civilize the east. He accomplished all three goals.

However, the Persians weren’t satisfied. They wanted Greece. “This epic struggle, which began on the plain of Marathon and encompassed the tragic defeat of the Spartan Legion at

¹⁰¹ Bernard Lewis, “The Roots of Muslim Rage: Why So Many Muslims Deeply Resent the West and Why Their Bitterness Will Not Be Easily Mollified,” *The Atlantic*, September 1990, pg 60

Thermopylae, ended eleven years later in 479 BC, with decisive victory for the Greek forces and solidified their consciousness of themselves as a nation, a nation superior even to the most powerful nation of all time.”¹⁰² The Greek city-states had united to defeat a foe. Shortly afterward, they fought each other during the long, destructive Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC). This war resulted in the defeat of the world’s first democracy, Athens. However, the victors, Sparta and its allies, were exhausted after a nearly thirty-year conflict. In fact, the whole Greek peninsula was ripe for the picking.

Macedonian king Philip II seized the opportunity and conquered the exhausted Greek city states. Philip died in 336 BC. His son Alexander the Great assumed the throne. By 323 BC, Alexander and his armies had conquered the Persian Empire and much of the civilized world. He founded the Hellenic **Greco-Macedonian Empire**, the third of Daniel’s four kingdoms.

The rise of Alexander the Great and the Greco-Macedonian Empire was foretold in the 8th chapter of Daniel:

“In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king a vision appeared to me, Daniel...I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last. I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power, but he did as he pleased and magnified himself. While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power. Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven” (Daniel 8:1-8)

The ram possessing two horns represented the Persian-Median Empire, and the unstoppable goat represented Alexander and his armies (Daniel 8:20-21). Daniel foresaw the short reign of Alexander; he died at age 33. Thereafter, his kingdom was split in four halves by his generals: Ptolemy (Egypt, Palestine, and parts of Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey); Cassander (Macedonia and Greece); Lysimachus (the Balkans); Seleucus (Syria, Armenia, and eastern Mesopotamia).

Most of the 11th chapter of Daniel is a running account of the friction between the Seleucid and Ptolemaic empires, respectively the “king of the north” and the “king of the south.” The 11th chapter, however, culminates in the end-time, years before the return of Jesus. As we shall see, the last five verses of the chapter are devoted to the exploits of the end-time “king of the north” and “king of the south.”

During the times of the Seleucid (“king of the North”) and Ptolemaic (“king of the South”) empires, control over Palestine passed from one to the other kingdom, and back again. Sometime during this period, the Seleucid king or prince Antiochus Epiphanes secured control over Palestine (175-164 BC). He was the prophesied “small horn” of Daniel’s 8th chapter:

¹⁰² Thomas Cahill, *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter*, pg 189

“Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper. Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, ‘How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?’ He said to me, ‘For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored’” (Daniel 8:9-14).

Halley’s Handbook offers the consensus view of these scriptures:

“The Little Horn, which arose out of the Four [generals or successive parts of Alexander’s kingdom], is generally agreed to mean Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC), of the Syrian branch of the Greek Empire, who made a determined effort to stamp out the Jewish religion....*Yet the repeated phrase “time of the end” may mean that along with the near view of Antiochus there may have been in the distant background of the vision the ominous outline of a far more terrible Destroyer to mar the closing days of history, of whom Antiochus was a symbolic forerunner.*”¹⁰³

In addition to invading Jerusalem and exiling several thousand Jews, Antiochus desecrated the temple of God by erecting an idol in it, sacrificing a pig to Zeus on the altar, and forbidding the practice of Judaism. Indeed, he was the forerunner to the end-time **false prophet** alluded to in many scriptures:

- “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the **false prophet**” (Revelation 16:13)
- “Then the beast was captured, and with him the **false prophet** who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20)
- “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the **false prophet** are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Revelation 20:10)

This false prophet is also the infamous “man of sin”: “Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first,

¹⁰³ *Halley’s Handbook*, pg 348-349, emphasis mine

and the **man of sin** is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (II Thessalonians 2:1-4).

Together, these scriptures reveal that in the end-time a great false prophet (alternatively referred to as the “man of sin”) will be allied with something symbolically called the “**beast**” **power**. He “sits” in the **temple of God**, professing that he is God and possessing supernatural powers. Because the apostle Paul is referring to the Christian God (after all, Paul was a Christian), this false prophet is masquerading as Christ himself, or Christ’s emissary.

The 8th and 11th chapters of Daniel describe the infamous exploits of Antiochus Epiphanes, the forerunner of the end-time false prophet:

“At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the **abomination of desolation**. Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

“Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all. But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain” (Daniel 11:29-38)

Antiochus placed the “abomination of desolation” (the idol) in the temple of God. In His famous Olivet prophecy of the end-time, Jesus also referred to an “abomination of desolation”:

“Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’

“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 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.

“Therefore when you see the ‘**abomination of desolation**,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the ‘holy place’ (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 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 24:1-21).

Jesus predicted certain end-time events: wars and rumors of war, famines and diseases, natural disasters, false prophets, and martyrdom. These events have occurred throughout history, and will occur with unimaginable and unprecedented magnitude during the years preceding Jesus’ return. However, Jesus singles out a specific event: the “abomination of desolation” sitting in the “holy place” (the reconstituted or rebuilt temple of God). Luke’s account of the Olivet prophecy includes another specific event: armies surrounding Jerusalem.

A short summary, so far

A summary of the foregoing: A charismatic, powerful false prophet will arise in the end-time. He was typified by Antiochus Epiphanes. Like Antiochus, he will desecrate the temple of God, proclaim himself to be God or His emissary (the “abomination of desolation”), and possess supernatural powers. Moreover, he is allied with something called the “beast” power. Because the forerunner of the false prophet, Antiochus, was a part of the “king of the North,” it’s reasonable to assume that the end-time false prophet will be allied with the end-time “king of the North,” and that the end-time “king of the North” and the so-called “beast” power are one and the same.

Apparently the false prophet will enter Jerusalem on the coattails or with the armies of the “beast” power (or the end-time “king of the North”). Jerusalem and the Middle East will be the epicenter of worldwide conflict during the end-time. Events in the Middle East will trigger the period of time referred to as the “Great Tribulation” and “time of Jacob’s trouble.”

A short summary of the end time

“And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. 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. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.” (Daniel 11:40-45).

Again, the 11th chapter of Daniel refers to the conflict between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms. Throughout most of the chapter, Daniel refers to the Ptolemaic kingdom as the “king of the South” and the Seleucid kingdom as the “king of the North.” Verses 29 through 39 refer to Antiochus Epiphanes (the forerunner of the end-time false prophet, who will also desecrate the end-time temple of God in Jerusalem). However, beginning in verse 40, Daniel jumps a few thousand years to the end-time.

According to verses 40 through 45 of the 11th chapter of Daniel, the end-time will include kings of the South and North engaged in conflict in the Middle East. (We’ve already established that the “king of the North” and the “beast” power are the same.) The “king of the South” “pushes” at the “king of the North.” This implies something short of warfare (perhaps terrorism or an oil embargo, or both). Sufficiently provoked, the “king of the North” will conquer the “king of the South,” and invade Israel, Egypt, and some other countries in the Middle East. The story resumes in the 12th chapter of Daniel:

“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:** and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man

clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?

“And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a **time, times, and an half**; and when he shall have accomplished to **shatter the power of the holy people**, all these things shall be finished.

“And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

“And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the **abomination that maketh desolate set up**, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days”

The last five verses of Daniel’s 11th chapter, and the entirety of the 12th chapter, are set in the end time. Again, this end time is characterized by the following:

- a) A false prophet;
- b) A “king of the North,” alternatively referred to as the “beast” power;
- c) An alliance between the false prophet and the “king of the North” or “beast” power (the 16th, 19th, and 20th chapters of Revelation);
- d) A “king of the South;”
- e) An “abomination of desolation” set up in the reconstituted or rebuilt temple of God in Jerusalem;
- f) Armies surrounding Jerusalem;
- g) The defeat of the “king of the South,” and the invasion by the “king of the North” of Israel, particularly Jerusalem, and of neighboring lands (e.g. Egypt);
- h) The foregoing events will precipitate the Great Tribulation (24th chapter of Matthew; 12th chapter of Daniel), which will last for a “a time, times, and a half of time”;
- i) The Great Tribulation will be characterized by the martyrdom of God’s saints (the Church) (Matthew 24:9) and the shattering of the “power of the holy people;”
- j) Worldwide war, famines, diseases, natural disasters; Jesus will return to save mankind from total destruction;
- k) As we see in the 14th chapter of Zechariah, the last few chapters of Revelation, several chapters in Isaiah, shortly after His return, Jesus will establish the Kingdom of God.

The foregoing summary begs a few questions:

- a) Who are the kings of the North (alternately called the “beast power”) and the South, and the false prophet?
- b) How long is “a time, times, and half of time”? and
- c) Who are the “holy people”?

Kings of the North (beast power) and South

I’ve already discussed how Daniel was a prophet. For example, thanks to God, he interpreted the constituent parts of Nebuchadnezzar’s statue as representing four successive imperial kingdoms. Because Nebuchadnezzar’s empire was the first such kingdom, we are able to determine the identity of the three successive empires:

1. Babylonia;
2. Persian;
3. Greco-Macedonian; and
4. Roman

I’ve discussed the first three empires. Now we’ll turn our attention to Rome.

“And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 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. 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 2:40-43).

God described the fourth kingdom, Rome, as “strong as iron,” and that it would be imperial. Earlier I described the Roman Empire (in the section entitled “Civilizations don’t appear out of thin air”). Indeed, at “its apex, ancient Rome ruled not only the Mediterranean and Europe but much of North Africa and Asia Minor as well. Yet despite straddling such massive stretches of land, encompassing a variety of cultures, and engaging in almost continuous warfare, the Roman Empire endured more than five centuries and bequeathed to the modern world a rich legacy of culture, religion, and law.”¹⁰⁴

This is where it becomes interesting. Daniel’s second chapter predicts the rise and strength of Rome, and its division into two halves. It also predicts that Jesus Christ will return to establish His Kingdom during the reign of the Roman Empire:

“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” (Daniel 2:44)

Jesus did not return in the days of the Roman Empire. So what gives?

¹⁰⁴ *U.S. News & World Report*, The Ancient World, pg 70

The Beast Power

Sometimes the Bible can be purposively redundant. In other words, just in case the reader didn't understand prophecy the first time, here it is again. For instance, Daniel's 7th chapter mirrors its 2nd chapter. Instead of four successive kingdoms portrayed by the constituent parts of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, the 7th chapter includes portrayals of four "beasts" representing the same four kingdoms:

"Daniel spoke, saying, 'I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, 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. 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 7:2-8)

Daniel's descriptions of four beasts match his description of the four parts of Nebuchadnezzar's statue. Like the fourth kingdom in chapter 2, the "fourth beast" was exceeding "dreadful and terrible." Again, as in the days of the fourth kingdom in chapter 2, Jesus Christ will return in the reign of the "fourth beast" and establish His Kingdom:

"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 angel explains to Daniel that the four beasts represent four successive kingdoms. Daniel, however, was very curious and frightened by the dreaded 4th beast:

"Then I wished to know the truth about the **fourth beast**, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; and the **ten horns** that were on its head, and the **other horn** which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth **which spoke pompous words**, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. I was watching; and the **same horn**

was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

“Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. **The ten horns are ten kings** who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall **persecute the saints of the Most High**, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand. For a time and times and half a time” (Daniel 7:19:25).

As related in a few chapters, Daniel foresees several thousand years of history. Among his divinely-inspired predictions is the rise of four successive kingdoms: Babylon, Persian, Greco-Macedonian, and Roman. During the days of the latter kingdom, Jesus will arrive and establish His kingdom.

However, Jesus has not returned. So the Bible must be referring to a latter-day type of the Roman Empire. The Bible refers to that Empire as the “beast.” The “beast” has ten horns that symbolize ten kings. Therefore, this kingdom will comprise ten states or governments. Allied with this beast, or latter-day type of the Roman Empire, will be the “little horn,” who speaks blasphemy against God. In the 11th chapter of Daniel and in the 2nd book of Thessalonians, we meet an end-time religious figure masquerading as Christ himself or His emissary. He, too, will speak blasphemy and possess supernatural powers. This is obviously the false prophet.

Moreover, because the “beast” of Daniel 7, the “fourth kingdom” of Daniel 2, and the “king of the North” of Daniel 11, are the dominant empires in the end-time, they must be one and the same. Henceforward, I’ll use both terms—“beast” and “king of the North”—to refer to the same entity.

The Book of Revelation further describes this “beast” power.

Revelation

The book of Revelations contains two chapters devoted primarily to describing “beasts.” First the 13th chapter of Revelation in its entirety:

“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. 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. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘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. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

“Then I saw another **beast** coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. **He performs great signs**, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 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.”

The 17th chapter of Revelation in its entirety:

“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, ‘Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.’ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: ‘MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.’ I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

“But the angel said to me, ‘Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. 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.

“Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. 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. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

“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. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.

“Then he said to me, ‘The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.’”

The books of Daniel and Revelation have many things in common. The key to understanding their prophecies is that, while Daniel and Revelation include descriptions and predictions of events that happened long ago, like the rise of four successive kingdoms, many of their prophecies nevertheless culminate in the end-time, a few years preceding the return of Christ. By noting their similarities, we can thus conclude the following about the end-time:

- a) In the end-time certain kingdoms or power blocs will arise. They are alternately called the kings of the North and the beast, and the king of the south;
- b) These kingdoms or power blocs will fight each other, and the “king of the North” will prevail;
- c) Therefore, the “king of the North” is the preponderant power bloc or kingdom in the end time;
- d) Daniel’s 2nd and 7th chapters predict the emergence of four successive kingdoms: Babylon, Persian, Greco-Macedonian, and Roman. Both chapters state that Jesus will arrive and establish His kingdom during the reign of the fourth kingdom, that is, Rome. He didn’t establish His Kingdom then, so a type of this fourth kingdom (Rome) must be extant during the end time;
- e) The “fourth kingdom” (Daniel 2, a type of the Roman Empire), the “beast” power (Daniel 7), and the “king of the North” (Daniel 11) are all described as the dominant kingdom during the end-time. This leaves us with one inescapable conclusion: the “king of the North,” the fourth kingdom, and the “beast” power are one and the same;

- f) This end-time kingdom is described as having “ten toes” or “ten horns.” Because they represent ten kings, this dominant end-time kingdom comprises ten states;
- g) Because this kingdom is an end-time manifestation or approximation of Daniel’s fourth kingdom, Rome, then it’s reasonable to assume that it will be located in Europe. The “seven heads” of the beast refer to seven approximate manifestations of the Roman Empire since the fall of Rome in 476 AD. The European superstate represents the last such manifestation.
- h) This European kingdom or short-lived empire (in the last part of Daniel 11, the “king of the North”) consisting of ten states will conquer something called the “king of the South.” This conflict will occur in the Middle East (Daniel 11:40-45). We’ve already established that the king of the North is a nominally Christian European superstate. In addition to conquering the “king of the South” and invading Israel, this European superstate will invade Egypt and some other Arab countries. Hence it’s safe to assume that the “king of the South” is Islamic;
- i) We therefore have the presence of two clashing civilizations in the end time, Western (European) Civilization founded by Christianity and an Arabic civilization founded by Islam. This clash will precipitate many of the events that culminate in the Great Tribulation, Armageddon, and the return of Jesus.
- j) The European superstate will ally itself with something called “the little horn.” Daniel describes this “little horn” as “persecuting the saints of the Most High” and “speaking blasphemous words.” Likewise, Revelation describes him as another “beast” who performs great signs. This “beast” is also referred to as a harlot draped in purple (the color of majesty). Throughout the ages this “beast” has persecuted God’s true Church (“the blood of the saints”);
- k) In His Olivet prophecy describing events that will precipitate His return and the establishment of His Kingdom, Jesus described one last martyrdom of God’s Church: “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake” (Matthew 24:9);
- l) The “harlot,” “beast” and “little horn” are thus an entity that has been around for a long time, and will be persecuting God’s Church when Jesus arrives. This entity is allied with Daniel’s fourth kingdom. And this entity provides this last manifestation of the Roman Empire (the European superstate) with religious legitimacy. Moreover, it is led by a person who will be invested with supernatural power from Satan himself. Paul refers to this person as the “man of sin” (II Thessalonians 2:1-4);
- m) This “man of sin” is none other than the end-time false prophet (Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:6). The false prophet is a deceptive and insidious religious figure: “he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon” (Revelation 13:11);

- n) The false prophet and his organization are allied, fatally, with the European superstate. Because the European superstate is nominally Christian, and because the apostle Paul portrays the false prophet as a pseudo-Christ, this false prophet and his organization must also be nominally Christian;
- o) This alliance—and the time of the Great Tribulation sparked by the placement of the abomination of desolation (an idol described by Paul as the “man of sin” proclaiming himself to be God) in the temple of God—will last a “time, times, and a half of time” (Daniel 12:7), or 42 months (Revelation 13:5).
- p) Toward the end of this period, this alliance will fall apart. This break-up is predictable: Europe is nominally Christian but overwhelmingly irreligious. Therefore, a disturbing event will spark a religious revival among Europeans. As the shock of this event wears off, Europeans will return to their irreligious ways. They will become disdainful of the false prophet and his organization (Revelation 17:16);
- q) The kings of the North (the European superstate) and South (an Islamic state or combination of states, or a transnational terrorist network) are joined by a third combination of states referred to as the “kings of the East” (Revelation 16:12). These kings probably refer to Asian states that have a stake in the Middle East (perhaps access to oil). Thus our original clash of civilizations between Islam and the West grows by one more (Asian or Sinic) civilization.
- r) The European superstate appears unbeatable (Revelation 13:4). However, this perception does not prevent the king of the South (Islamic state or states) and the kings of the East (Asian states) from engaging in warfare and conflict with the supposedly indomitable European superstate.
- s) The end-time is also characterized by warfare (and consequent disease and famine) that will threaten the very existence of mankind: “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). This means that these nations, and terrorists, will have resorted to nuclear and bio-warfare.

A framework for the end-time

The overarching framework for the end-time is provided by the existence and clash of three warring civilizations: Western or European, Islamic, and Asian. Everything else results from this clash. The dominant European superstate (alternately, the “king of the North,” and the “beast”) represents Western Civilization, itself threatened by Arabic states and terrorists representing the Islamic Civilization (the “king of the South”). This is why I spent considerable time in explaining the emergence and history of these civilizations.

Earlier I mentioned that, presently, the dominant or core state of Western Civilization is the United States. However, in the end-time this dominant or core state will be in Europe. This dominant European state may be Germany.

Several end-time scriptures in the books of Isaiah and Micah refer to Assyria as a dominant state in the end-time:

- “Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My indignation. I will send him against an ungodly nation, and against the people of My wrath....Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, that He will say, ‘I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks’” (Isaiah 10:5-6, 12);
- “There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt” (Isaiah 11:16);
- “That I will break the Assyrian in My land, and on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulders” (Isaiah 11:25);
- “In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria--a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, ‘Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance’” (Isaiah 19:23-24);
- “And He shall stand and feed His flock, in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; and this One shall be peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land, and when he treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princely men” (Micah 5:4-5).

Clearly, a pivotal state called Assyria will be extant in the end-time. The ancient Assyrian kingdom was destroyed in 612 BC. Therefore, these scriptures refer to the state founded by the descendants of the defeated, migrating Assyrians, or to a type of the Assyrian state.

Like the Israelites, the Assyrians were composed of several tribes, one of which was called the *Halmanni*, from which the Latin word German (*Aleman*) is derived. Furthermore, the Spanish word for German is *El alemán*; in French, it is translated as *Allemand*. This is important. The Romans called the Germans by the name of an ancient Assyrian tribe. Because Latin gave birth to the modern-day romance languages of Spanish and French, the latter two nations call the Germans by the name of an ancient Assyrian tribe. Is this a mere coincidence, or does it suggest that the Assyrians migrated westward and settled in modern-day Germany?

If true, then the end-time Assyria (Germany) will lead the European superstate that will represent and defend Western Civilization. Germany’s end-time role finds precedent in the medieval Germanic Holy Roman Empire. The Germanic kings and princes of the fiefdoms and states comprising the old Holy Roman Empire were uneasily allied with the papacy. The tenuous and short-lived end-time alliance between the papacy and the European superstate will apparently be a marriage of convenience.

In order for this end-time European superstate led by Germany to emerge, a catastrophe or series of catastrophes must force the United States to abdicate its role as defender of Western Civilization. It will be up to Europe to assume this mantle.

People usually turn to religion when disaster strikes. Europeans are no different. When disaster strikes the United States and Europe, many Europeans and their leaders will ask, Why? As the world's preeminent religious and nominal Christian organization, the Catholic Church will attempt to provide the answers. As the only religious organization with clout in Europe, the Catholic Church and the Pope will assume a larger-than-life role during this tumultuous and soul-searching time. "More than at any other time in modern history of the papacy, the Pope is recognized worldwide as an authentic religious figure."¹⁰⁵

For a short time there will be a religious revival in Europe. People and leaders will turn to the Pope. Their search will be facilitated by the miraculous signs the Pope will perform. As predicted by the apostle Paul, Satan himself will invest the end-time false prophet—or as he put it, the "man of sin"—with supernatural power. He will be so powerful that, according to Jesus, even some of the "the elect" (that is, God's true Church) could be deceived (Matthew 24:24).

The Europeans will be the last such people to experience a religious revival:

"For almost three centuries religion was a declining factor in human affairs. In the seventeenth century, after more than a hundred years of bloody religious war, the leaders of Europe in the Treaty of Westphalia attempted to reduce and contain the influence of religion in politics. In the following century, Enlightenment thinkers exalted reason over faith as a source of human understanding. The nineteenth century saw increasing confidence that science would dethrone religion. Mankind, it was widely believed, was moving into a new phase of rationalism, pragmatism, and secularism. Religious beliefs, Freud argued (in *The Future of an Illusion*), were 'insusceptible to proof...incompatible with everything we have discovered about the reality of the world.' They were, in short, 'delusions.'

"Modernization and modernity appeared to be undermining religion, which was held to be a dark holdover from the past. Outside the United States fewer people in the Western world practiced religion, churches were increasingly empty, and religious beliefs and religious institutions came to play a minor and peripheral role in most Western societies. In the public arena, religion gave way to ideology. People, governments, social movements were defined by their identification with one of the major secular ideologies: liberalism, socialism, communism, fascism, authoritarianism, corporation, democracy. These ideologies dominated political debate, shaped domestic and international alignments and conflicts, and provided models for how countries could organize their politics and economies."¹⁰⁶

The root of Western Civilization is Christianity. However, over time religion lost its salience, especially in Europe, less so in America. However, America was always more religious than Europe, and it remains so today. Moreover, during the last two decades there has been a resurgence of religion in America, marked by the rise of conservative Christianity that has decried the decline of morality in America.

¹⁰⁵ Paul Elie, "In Search of a Pope," *The Atlantic*, 9/04, pg 98

¹⁰⁶ Huntington, *Who Are We?* pg 355

Many other nations have experienced similar religious revivals. Indeed, many of the nastiest and most intractable conflicts and wars in the world are rooted in political, economic, and territorial issues. However, leaders have exploited the religious passions of these combatants. “Once the conflict becomes focused on religious issues, it tends to become zero-sum and difficult to compromise: either a temple or a mosque is built at Ayodha; either Jews or Muslims control the Temple Mount.”¹⁰⁷ And, “Religion has been particularly acute in conflict zones such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, Kashmir and the rest of India and Pakistan, Northern Ireland, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of Asia.”¹⁰⁸

The religious resurgence has occurred everywhere except in Europe. “Do you believe in God? If you are European, you probably shuffle your feet, look mildly embarrassed, and mutter, ‘Well, it depends on what you mean by God?’ Or something of the sort. In Western Europe, a mere 20% of people go regularly to a [church] service; in Eastern Europe, only 14%. But if you are American, the answer is almost certainly an unabashed ‘Yes.’ Only about 2% of Americans are atheists, and a startling 47% tell pollsters that they go to a religious service at least once per week. Even if that is an over-statement, the broad difference between continents is clear. To most Europeans, it has seemed obvious for the past century and more that modernism is the foe of religion, and of Christianity in particular. But religion is flourishing in both the developing world and America. The reason is largely the powerful evangelism of new denominations that sprang up in America in the 19th and early 20th centuries.”¹⁰⁹

In addition to being irreligious, Europeans are antagonistic toward the Catholic Church: “The Vatican is becoming increasingly alarmed at what it regards as official anti-Roman Catholic sentiment and secular trends in Europe, as government after government approves measures on abortion, family law and scientific study that run counter to Catholic teaching. Vatican concerns rocketed into view during a controversy in the European Parliament this month over remarks on homosexuality and women by an Italian politician who has close ties to the Holy See.

“On Oct. 5 [2004], a committee of European Parliament members voted to oppose Italy's nomination of Rocco Buttiglione, a Christian Democrat, to be the European Union's justice commissioner. During a hearing before the Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee, he had labeled homosexuality a sin and asserted that the family exists so a woman can raise children under a man's protection. Buttiglione is a friend of Pope John Paul II and various high-ranking Vatican officials.

“It looks like a new Inquisition. It is a lay Inquisition, but it is so nasty,” Cardinal Renato Martino, who heads the Vatican's Council for Justice and Peace, told reporters this week in response to the dispute. ‘You can freely insult and attack Catholics and nobody will say anything. If you do so for other confessions, let's see what would happen.’”¹¹⁰

Despite such antagonism, in the end-time Europeans will turn to the Catholic Church, and specifically to the Pope. The Bible is abundantly clear on the alliance between the European superstate and a false prophet (a pseudo-Christ) and his organization. However, because the Pope will know that Europe is, at root, hopelessly irreligious and secular, he'll decide to move the papacy elsewhere. Indeed, in the spirit of religious revivalism, in an emotive and symbolic gesture to Christians everywhere, he'll try to relocate Christianity to its birthplace: Jerusalem. This return to Jerusalem will coincide with a conflagration that will threaten some of the Christian holy places there.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, pg 357

¹⁰⁸ Jonathan Saks, “The Dignity of Difference: Avoiding the Clash of Civilizations,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute Wire*, vol. 10, July 2002, pg 1

¹⁰⁹ *The Economist*, 12/21/02

¹¹⁰ *Washington Post*, 10/20/04

Christianity returns to Jerusalem

“The Dome of the Rock, along with the adjoining al-Aqsa Mosque, constituted the first great religious building complex in the history of Islam. It marked the beginning of a new era. The time for borrowing for adaptation, for improvisation had passed. The Umayyad caliphate was no longer a successor state of Rome and Persia, but a new universal polity. Islam was no mere successor religion of Christianity, but a new universal dispensation. The place, style, and above all the ornamentation of the Dome of the Rock reveal its purpose. The style and scale were surely intended to rival and outshine the Church of the Holy Sepulcher [again, the clash of civilizations between Islam and the West!]...

“The choice is significant. Jerusalem is never mentioned in the Qur’an. Even the name ‘Jerusalem’ does not figure in early Muslim writings....The choice of a site in Jerusalem for the first great Islamic shrine is more remarkable. *The site was the Temple Mount, the scene of major events in both Jewish and Christian sacred history. The actual spot was the rock on which, according to rabbinic tradition, Abraham had prepared to sacrifice his son, and on which in later times the Ark of the Temple [sic, should be “Covenant”] had rested.* This, ‘Abd al-Malik seemed to be saying, was the shrine of the final dispensation—the new Temple, dedicated to the religion of Abraham, replacing the Temple of Solomon, continuing the revelations vouchsafed to the Jews and Christians and correcting the errors into which they had fallen.”¹¹¹

Jerusalem is the birthplace of three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Medieval Crusaders decided to reclaim Jerusalem for Christianity. During the Crusades, control of Jerusalem passed hands between the invading Crusaders and Islamic defenders several times. By the end of the last crusade, control of Jerusalem remained in the hands of Islam. However, Islamic suzerainty over Jerusalem and the Middle East began to weaken during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire (the last and first decades of the 19th and 20th centuries).

“(S)ince 1897, the Zionist movement had pressed for some form of Jewish entity in Palestine—sometimes described as a Jewish Commonwealth, sometimes envisaged as a future Jewish State—and this was at the centre of Zionism’s appeal for Jewish immigration. Nowhere was the fear of eventual Jewish statehood felt more strongly than among the Arabs of Jerusalem.”¹¹²

Jewish emigration to Jerusalem and Palestine picked up steam during the first part of the 20th century. This caused instability. As one of the three holiest places in Islam (Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia being the other two), the Arabs felt that Jerusalem belonged to them. The Jews disagree: God gave Jerusalem to their ancestors and it thus cannot belong to another nation.

In 1948 the modern state of Israel was born. It was the political equivalent of an earthquake. As a result of the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel expanded its borders. However, a majority of Arabs never recognized, and still don’t recognize, the legitimacy of Israel in Palestine. (Under pressure from their fellow Arabs, the Palestinians rejected the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan that would have established Jewish and Arab states in Palestine, and would have internationalized Jerusalem.)

Jerusalem is a divided city. The “Old City” is overwhelmingly Arabic; it encompasses the Temple Mount, the Dome of the Rock, and many Christian holy places. The “New City,” so called because it was built by the Jews in the 20th century, is largely Jewish. Therefore, the religious sparkplugs reside in the Old City. Many Jewish fundamentalists have expressed their desire to reclaim

¹¹¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years*, pgs 68-69, emphasis mine

¹¹² Martin Gilbert, *Jerusalem in the Twentieth Century*, pgs 10-11

the property on which the al-Asqa Mosque and Dome of the Rock were built. Muslims, however, will defend their property, by force if necessary.

For many Jews, “there is no substitute for the Temple Mount. The inherent tension caused by the juxtaposition of the Temple Mount [the location of the ancient 1st and 2nd Israelite temples] and the Western Wall [the remaining original part of the 2nd Jewish temple] has not dissipated. *The fact that, in this of all places, sovereign and victorious Israel is unable to express its religious and national affinities, and thus actually seems to acquiesce to this allegedly humiliating situation—that of gentiles looking down on Jewish worship—has led fanatical elements to unceasingly concoct schemes to blow up mosques.*”¹¹³

There are several Jewish fundamentalists and fanatics who are willing to do anything to build a third temple of God. Even the Bible hints at the existence of a third Jewish temple:

“This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words and say, ‘This is the **temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!**’ If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever” (Jeremiah 7:3-7)

This scripture hints at the existence of three temples. Solomon built the first temple, which the Babylonians destroyed in 586 BC. A second Temple was destroyed by the Roman general Titus in 70 AD. A third temple has yet to be built. However, it is in this temple that the abomination of desolation will be placed:

“So when you see standing in the **holy place** ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.”

Paul defines the “abomination of desolation” as the “man of sin” (or false prophet) locating his throne in the newly built or reconstituted third temple of God. “Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the **temple of God**, showing himself that he is God” (II Thessalonians 2:1-4).

¹¹³ Meron Benvenisti, *City of Stone: The Hidden History of Jerusalem*, pg 85, emphasis mine

Together, these scriptures reveal that a third Jewish temple will be built. Amazingly, it will not be the residence of a new Jewish high priest or rabbi. Instead, a so-called Christian religious figure (the Pope) will return Christianity (in the form of Catholicism, of course) to its birthplace, Jerusalem. The new or reconstituted Jewish temple will become, in essence, the new Vatican. The Pope will arrive on the coattails or with the armies of the new European superstate (biblically known as the “king of the North,” or “beast”).

“The concept of an End of Days, in which God’s kingdom will be established on earth, exists in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam...If there’s one thing that has made it difficult to repress this subversive idea today, it is the existence of the state of Israel. The creation of Israel in 1948 and its conquest of Jerusalem in 1967 aren’t ordinary history: For those inclined to hear them, they’re divine proclamations that the hour is near. For literalists, the venue for the final events is Jerusalem—and at its center, the Temple Mount.”¹¹⁴

The “shattering of the power of the holy people”

In His Olivet Prophecy Jesus admits the central importance of the Temple and the “Abomination of Desolation” in it. The possibility of a Jewish fanatic blowing up the al-Asqa Mosque and Dome of the Rock is real. Already, Jewish intelligence is worrying about threats on the life of Israel’s Premier Ariel Sharon. Jewish settlers are upset about the transfer of the West Bank to the Palestinians, and the concomitant dismantling of the settlements there. “The hillboys [a disparaging name applied to fanatic Jewish settlers] oppose the withdrawal, of course, but have more ambitious plans. They want, according to the Shin Bet, ‘to commit an act that will change reality’....

“Murdering Sharon could be that sort of act; Yigal Amir, the assassin of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, is a hero to the hillboys and their supporters. But the Jewish terrorists know that even killing Rabin didn’t end the Israeli government’s determination to give up ‘holy land’ for reasons of national security or diplomacy.

“That’s why Israeli intelligence officials fear something even bigger than a prime ministerial assassination—an attack on the Al-Asqa mosque, Islam’s third holiest shrine, located on Jerusalem’s Temple Mount.

“‘Sharon can be protected,’ says a former military intelligence officer. ‘The real nightmare is one of these hillboys on a dark night with a shoulder-launched missile that can hit Al Asqa from 1,000 meters. Blow the roof of the mosque, and what happened after the World Trade Center will seem like a sideshow.’”¹¹⁵

Prophecy is not fulfilled in a vacuum. In other words, the end-time European superstate and false prophet, and the Islamic “king of the South,” will not appear out of thin air. Certain events will facilitate the creation of a hastily-assembled European superstate, that will spark a European religious revival, that will force the Pope to relocate to Jerusalem, that will result in the construction of a third Jewish temple, and that will result in armies of several nations surrounding Jerusalem. Perhaps one of these events is Jewish terrorism against the third-holiest site in Islam, the Dome of the Rock and the adjoining al-Asqa mosque. (It’s ironic that we should be worried about Islamic *and* Jewish fundamentalists.)

Another event is foreshadowed in the book of Daniel:

¹¹⁴ Gershom Gorenberg, *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount*, pg 14

¹¹⁵ Zev Chafets, “Under Fire: A new breed of Jewish militants threatens Sharon’s life—and Israel’s stability,” *NY Daily News*, 9/19/04, pg 39

“‘But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.’ Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, ‘How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?’ Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the **power of the holy people has been completely shattered**, all these things shall be finished” (Daniel 12:4-8).

The Bible defines a “time” as a year. Biblically, there are 360 days in a year. Thus, prophetically and symbolically, the amount of time spent by the “woman” in the “wilderness” is 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6), or 3 ½ years, the same amount of time given to the prophetic and symbolic beast of Revelation (42 months - Revelation 13:5 - which amounts to 1,260 days or 3.5 years). Moreover, the woman (prophetically and symbolically, the Church) mentioned in the 12th chapter of Revelation is further described as (prophetically and symbolically) spending “a time, and times, and half a time” in the wilderness. Since she is described earlier as spending 1,260 days (or 42 months or 3 ½ years) in the wilderness, a “time” thus means 1 year; “times” (plural), 2 years; and “half a time,” one-half of a year (or simply, 3 ½ years, or 42 months, or 1,260 days). Hence Daniel’s “a time, times, and half a time” represents three and one-half years of great, unparalleled tribulation.

More important, during this time the “power of the holy people” shall have been completely shattered. Who are the holy people? And how is their power shattered?

For years we’ve been taught the “holy people” refer to the Church. Proponents of this view point to the persecution of the Church predicted in Jesus’ Olivet Prophecy and in the book of Revelation. And they point to the fact that the modern-day nations of Israel—among them, the United States and Britain—are not and cannot be “holy” because they have rejected the seventh-day Sabbath, the sign between God and His people (Exodus 31:17).

I agree that the “holy people” of Daniel’s 12th chapter could refer to the Church. However, God refers to ancient Israel as “holy”:

“And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a **holy nation**.’” (Exodus 19:3-6).

Because the Bible refers both to the Church and Israel as holy, therefore it’s not inconceivable that the “power of the holy people” can refer to the economic and military power wielded by the modern descendants of the ten “lost tribes” of Israel, primarily the United States, Britain and the modern Jewish nation in the Middle East.

There is one major prerequisite for the fulfillment of the events mentioned throughout this essay. The formation of the European superstate, the Islamic “king of the South,” and the Asian “kings of the East”; the assumption of the European superstate as the defender of Western

Civilization; the alliance between this superstate and the Pope: all of this will be facilitated by the downfall and defeat of the United States.

During the last few decades, the Church has been admonished to “Watch.” Primarily, this has been a call to “watch” for the emergence of the European superstate biblically known as the “beast” and “king of the North.” However, we should redirect most of our attention to the United States (all the while keeping a wary eye on the Middle East and Europe). The United States will suffer a catastrophe or series of catastrophes that will lead to the fulfillment of the biblical prophecies mentioned herein. Therefore, the question we must ask is not, “How will the European superstate emerge?” Rather, the fundamental question should be, “How will the United States, the strongest nation since Rome, be destroyed?”

Life can change in a day

“Unless the United States suffers a major catastrophe (and one, moreover, that does not also affect other major powers), there is only one way that the relative balance of power capabilities between the United States and the other major powers extant at the turn of the millennium will change: very slowly, and over many decades.”¹¹⁶ Kim Nossal is correct: absent a major catastrophe, the United States will remain the most dominant nation in the world during the foreseeable future.

Great empires and nations rise and fall, and the United States is no different. Consider the British Empire. In 1615 Britain was hardly ‘Great’; it was a second-rate power on the periphery of Western Europe. Two hundred years later, Britain had acquired the largest empire in history, comprising forty-three colonies in five continents and covering about 25% of the world’s land surface. Almost 450 million people lived under its rule. Despite the American Revolution (1775-1783), a momentary (and for future generations, momentous) blip in Empire building, the English built an Empire through war (e.g. the Anglo-Dutch Wars, the Seven-Years War, the Napoleonic Wars, etc.), commerce, and trade. During the 20th century, the British Empire unraveled under the burden of two ruinous world wars, and under the onslaught of national sentiment unleashed by those wars. The Empire dissolved with astonishing speed. While it took three centuries to build the Empire, it took just three decades to dismantle it

It’s amazing that it took almost 200 years for the British to build their empire and only thirty years for it to be dismantled. The United States needed less than 200 years to become the most dominant nation in the world. However, on 9/11 it took less than an hour to realize that life can change radically in one day. And it might have been worse.

A nuclear 9/11

On October 11, 2001 former CIA Director George Tenet told President Bush that based on credible evidence provided by a CIA agent code-named Dragonfire, al-Qaeda possessed a ten-kiloton nuclear bomb it had stolen from Russia. Worse, the nuclear weapon was in New York City.

American intelligence could not independently confirm this report. However, the Russian arsenal includes several ten-kiloton nuclear weapons. And al-Qaeda has the resources and desire to obtain such weapons. Moreover, it would be relatively easy to smuggle it into the United States. (After all, several tons of drugs are smuggled into the United States every year.) “Worldwide, there are 50,000 ships, carrying 9 million containers, calling at 3,000 ports. In the United States we have 361 river ports and seaports. Every year we get 50,000 visits from 8,100 foreign ships. Every day

¹¹⁶ Kim Nossal, “*Lonely Superpower or Unapologetic Hyperpower?*” quoted in Nye, pg. 38

21,000 containers enter the United States. We can verify the contents of only about 4 to 6 percent of those containers. And it would require only one rogue container to bring commerce to its knees.”¹¹⁷ In 2000 alone, 489 million people, 127 million cars, 11.6 million maritime containers, 11.5 million trucks, 2.2 million railroad cars, 829,000 planes, and 211,000 ships entered the United States. Of the 489 million people who entered the US in 2000, 350 million of them were not US citizens. Federal Express handles and delivers five million packages per business day; UPS, 13.6 million per day.

Moreover, in an experiment conducted by Brian Ross of ABC News, depleted uranium was shipped in a package originating in Jakarta, Indonesia and traveling to a Los Angeles port. The package passed through US Customs undetected and unopened. A driver then picked up the package and delivered it to a warehouse located one mile from the Los Angeles Convention Center. This demonstratively and embarrassingly proves that a terrorist can easily smuggle a nuclear weapon or nuclear materials into the United States.

In addition, the United States shares very long borders with Mexico and Canada, and large sections of them are unmanned. Compared to the size and population of the United States, Israel is miniscule. The United States has 47 times as many people as Israel, and 441 times the amount of territory. New Jersey is 753 square miles larger than Israel, and has 2.5 million more people. If tiny Israel can't prevent terrorists from entering its territory from Gaza and the West Bank, how much more difficult will it be for our government to prevent terrorists from entering the continental United States.

A determined terrorist, therefore, has plenty of opportunities to smuggle a portable nuclear weapon into the United States. And on October 11, 2001 President Bush had reason to believe that a nuclear weapon was in New York City. If leaked to the press, such information would cause chaos in Manhattan. People would leave in droves. There would be innumerable traffic accidents and fatalities, and perhaps looting of stores to obtain necessary items. Older people would suffer heart attacks. In short, panic would ensue in the New York City and indeed in the whole Northeast. The stock market would plummet and the economy, already fragile because of 9/11, could collapse.

Six months earlier the CIA had picked up al-Qaeda chatter about an “American Hiroshima.” We know that bin Laden has long expressed an ardent wish to obtain nuclear weapons. In August 2001 he invited two Pakistani nuclear scientists, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Abdul Majeed, to Afghanistan for a three-day meeting. Bin Laden and his coterie quizzed Mahmood and Majeed on the technical aspects of nuclear weapons. Moreover, according to Mahmood, bin-Laden's colleagues said al Qaeda had already obtained a nuclear weapon from Islamic radicals in Uzbekistan.

Mahmood and Majeed may have had connections with the “father” of the Islamic nuclear bomb, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan. “A German-trained metallurgist, Khan had led Pakistan's nuclear weapons program from its infancy.”¹¹⁸ We have since learned that Khan was selling nuclear technology and expertise on the black market. For over a decade, with or without the knowledge of the Pakistani government, *Khan Laboratories* provided North Korea, Iran, and Libya (and possibly other states, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt) with technology and expertise in building nuclear weapons. According to the director for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Khan operated a “Wal-Mart of private-sector proliferation” of nuclear materials. (In January 2004 the *New York Times* acquired a *Khan Laboratories* brochure offering different types of nuclear technology. The brochure was emblazoned with a Pakistani Government stamp.) “Most troubling are orders, invoices and manifests found in Khan's overseas records describing shipments that cannot be accounted for by

¹¹⁷ E.J. Dionne, “Make Our Ports Safer,” *Washington Post*, 9/17/04

¹¹⁸ *Washington Post*, 10/26/04

known customers.”¹¹⁹ Thus we cannot rule out the possibility that terrorists obtained such technology and expertise.

Moreover, Mahmood is typical of several Pakistani men working for the government, whether in the intelligence agencies, army, or nuclear establishment. He’s an Islamic extremist. In the late 1980s he published an essay that predicted catastrophes for nations in moral decay. Presumably Mahmood shares the common Islamist belief that the United States typifies such nations.

President Bush had every reason to be alarmed (and scared) about the possibility of a nuclear weapon in New York City. This intelligence was presumably false. But the fear is real.

Several months after 9/11, al Qaeda’s press spokesman, Suleiman Abu Gheith, issued a statement supporting the terrorist attacks and proclaiming their right “to kill 4 million Americans—2 million of them children—and to exile twice as many and wound and cripple hundreds of thousands.”¹²⁰ Abu Gheith justified mass murder because, according to al-Qaeda, the United States has collaborated with the Jews to kill millions of Muslims (including Iraqis, Palestinians, and Afghans). “Nearly three thousand Americans died in the 9/11 attacks, it would take 1,400 similar assaults to reach that figure of 4 million. Or it could take just one, if al Qaeda had access to the right nuclear weapon.”¹²¹

Moreover, in the aftermath of the Afghan war, in the home of Abu Khabub, a senior official in al-Qaeda, CNN discovered a 25-page essay entitled “Superbomb.” The essay described types of nuclear weapons and their properties, and the effects and physics of nuclear blasts. David Albright, a former nuclear weapons inspector, concluded that the essay’s author had the expertise to build a crude nuclear weapon. The essay further demonstrated al-Qaeda’s interest in procuring nuclear weapons.

The consequences of a nuclear 9/11

The energy released by nuclear explosions is calculated in tons, kilotons (thousands of tons), or megatons (millions of tons) of TNT. The energy released by the Hiroshima bomb measured 13 kilotons, or thirteen thousand tons of TNT. The energy released by a stolen 10-kiloton bomb would be equivalent to that of ten thousand tons of TNT.

Suppose a terrorist detonates 10-kiloton nuclear weapon in Times Square (in the heart of Manhattan), one of the most famous addresses in the Western World. What would happen?

First, because we work nearby, my brother-in-law and I would be vaporized. There would be nothing left of us to bury. My sister would have to bury my parents; they died from the fallout. Times Square would simply vanish in the tremendous heat (tens of millions of degrees) produced by the blast. The fireball would incinerate everything in a radius of a third of a mile. The theatre district, Grand Central terminal, the *New York Times* building, Rockefeller Center, Carnegie Hall, the Empire State Building, Madison Square Garden, and the surrounding non-landmark buildings: all of them, destroyed.

On an average day over 500,000 people work in this section of Manhattan. This number doesn’t include countless shoppers and tourists. Detonation of a nuclear weapon would kill all of them. If you escape instant vaporization, you would likely be killed in the collapse of buildings or from fire and fallout in the following hours. The innumerable amount of wounded people would overwhelm our hospitals. Fires would rage for days.

¹¹⁹ *ibid*

¹²⁰ Quoted in Graham Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe*, pg 12

¹²¹ *Ibid*, pg 14

Imagine this scenario not only in New York but in Houston or Chicago or Washington, DC or Seattle or in whatever city is closest to you. Imagine the panic throughout the United States. Imagine the collapse of our stock market and economy. Imagine a massive “run” on our banks as millions of depositors try to withdraw their money. Imagine international investors dumping their treasury bills and dollar-denominated assets. Imagine the subsequent massive devaluation of the dollar. Imagine the ensuing hyperinflation.

Imagine the stoppage of all airline, truck, and train traffic as we inspect vehicles to ensure that no more bombs are being smuggled into and around the United States. Imagine people stampeding to Wal-Mart and other stores to purchase necessary items. Imagine the empty shelves because we have closed our ports to incoming trade. Imagine people fighting for the dwindling stock of necessities. Imagine, therefore, the disastrous and cascading effect this would have on the world economy. Imagine a world depression caused by a nuclear terrorist attack on the United States.

Imagine the crisis in confidence in the US government. People would no longer believe that the Government could protect its citizens. Imagine calls for “strong men” who could provide us with such safety. Imagine martial law and the infringement of civil liberties, including free assembly on the Sabbath. Imagine our overseas forces brought home to patrol our streets and towns. Imagine, therefore, an America withdrawing to its borders, and the chaos that would produce overseas. Imagine a Europe forced to rearm. Imagine Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan going nuclear at speed because the US has withdrawn its security umbrella. Imagine Israel without the implicit protection of the United States. Imagine a messier and deadlier Middle East.

Imagine vigilante groups killing peaceful Arabs who had nothing to do with the terrorist attacks.

Imagine life without comforting routine. Usually we go to bed knowing what the next day will bring: work, or school, or Sabbath services, or a lazy Sunday afternoon watching TV. When our refrigerators become empty, we take it for granted that our supermarkets will have food on their shelves. When our cars are running out of fuel, we take it for granted that we can buy gas at the local Exxon, Mobil or Texaco. Then one day, life will change forever. Catastrophic terrorism will devastate the United States and the foregoing imagined consequences will become real. Life will no longer be routine.

(Jesus said that as in “the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be,” Matthew 24:37-39. True, life will go on in the end-time. However, some societies will be a lot more devastated than others. America’s devastation will be complete. Therefore, life will not be the same. However, in relatively unaffected Botswana, for example, life will go on almost as usual.)

Imagine the consequences of a nuclear terrorist strike in the ensuing few months:

“Consider the consequences of a second major attack on the mainland United States—the detonation of a radiological or dirty bomb, perhaps, or a low-yield nuclear device or a chemical strike in a subway. Any of these events could cause death, devastation and panic on a scale that would make 9/11 seem like a pale prelude. After such an attack, a pall of mourning, melancholy, anger and fear would hang over our public life for a generation.

“An attack of this sort is already in the realm of possibility. The recipes for making ultimate weapons are on the Internet, and the materiel required is available for the right price. Democracies live by free markets, but a free market in everything—enriched uranium, ricin, anthrax—will mean the death of democracy. Armageddon is being privatized, and unless we shut down these markets, doomsday will be for sale. Sept. 11, for all its horror, was a conventional attack. We have the best of reasons to fear the fire next time.

“A democracy can allow its leaders one fatal mistake—and that's what 9/11 looks like to many observers—but Americans will not forgive a second one. A succession of large-scale attacks would pull at the already-fragile tissue of trust that binds us to our leadership and destroy the trust we have in one another. Once the zones of devastation were cordoned off and the bodies buried, we might find ourselves, in short order, living in a national-security state on continuous alert, with sealed borders, constant identity checks and permanent detention camps for dissidents and aliens. Our constitutional rights might disappear from our courts, while torture might reappear in our interrogation cells. The worst of it is that government would not have to impose tyranny on a cowed populace. We would demand it for our own protection. And if the institutions of our democracy were unable to protect us from our enemies, we might go even further, taking the law into our own hands. We have a history of lynching in this country, and by the time fear and paranoia settled deep in our bones, we might repeat the worst episodes from our past, killing our former neighbors, our onetime friends.

“That is what defeat in a war on terror looks like. We would survive, but we would no longer recognize ourselves. We would endure, but we would lose our identity as free peoples.”¹²²

In May 2002 Bill Keller from the *New York Times* interviewed Eugene Habiger, a retired four-star general who had overseen our strategic nuclear weapons program until 1998, and had been in charge of the Department of Energy's nuclear terrorism program until 2001. Summarizing his decade of experience, Habiger said the detonation of a nuclear bomb in a major US city was a matter of time: “it is not a matter of if; it's a matter of when.”¹²³ Wryly, Bill Keller said that is perhaps why Habiger lives in San Antonio.

Does Osama or other terrorists have the bomb?

Maybe. The scariest answer is that we just don't know. However, if Islamic terrorists don't have the bomb, it's not from lack of trying. Since the fall of the Soviet Union there have been countless incidents in which scientists and criminals have tried to smuggle nuclear materials on the black market. These incidents usually involve the illicit sale of weapons-grade highly enriched uranium or plutonium, necessary ingredients for building uranium- and plutonium-based nuclear weapons.

We know about these incidents because intelligence agencies and police caught the criminals in time. What about the smugglers who weren't caught. Consider a sample of frightening incidents:

¹²² Michael Ignatieff, “Lesser Evils: what it will cost us to succeed in the war on terror,” *NY Times*, 5/2/04

¹²³ Quoted in Allison, pg 6

- As early as 1993, senior al-Qaeda official Jamal al-Fadl met with Salah Abdel al-Mobruk, a senior official of the Sudanese government, who was offering a supply of weapons-grade highly enriched uranium;
- On at least four occasions between 1992 and 1999, there have been four thefts of weapons-usable nuclear materials from Russian institutes. Thankfully, all such materials were later recovered;
- On November 23, 1995 Chechen terrorists placed a crude dirty bomb containing radioactive material (cesium 137) and dynamite in a park in Moscow. The terrorists did not detonate the dirty bomb but instead alerted the media. They wanted to demonstrate how easy it is to deploy and detonate such weapons;
- In January 2000 Chechen terrorists (from the same group that carried out the atrocities in a Russian school) stole radioactive materials from a nuclear waste plant in Grozny, Chechnya;
- Between July 2001 and July 2002 Chechen rebels stole radioactive materials (possibly some plutonium) from a nuclear power plant in Volgoonskaya, Russia;
- In November 1993 Russian Navy Captain Alexi Tikhomirov stole ten pounds of highly enriched uranium and tried to sell it for \$50,000;
- “In 1998, in one of several similar cases, Israeli intelligence reported that bin Laden paid more than 2 million pounds to a middleman in Kazakhstan who promised to deliver a stolen warhead -- though there is no evidence that delivery took place;”¹²⁴
- In May 1994 German police discovered a small but troubling amount of plutonium in a garage in Tengen, Germany. The source of this plutonium was probably Arzamas-16, one of Russia’s top nuclear weapons labs;
- In December 1994 Czech police in Prague seized over eight pounds of highly enriched uranium inside a metal container in the rear seat of a parked car. They arrested a Czech nuclear scientist, a Russian, and a Belarusian for stealing it;
- In December 1997 the Russian government admitted the theft of highly enriched uranium from a facility in war-torn Abkhazia, Georgia;
- In December 1998 the FSB, the successor agency to the KGB, broke up a conspiracy by Russian personnel at a nuclear weapons lab. They were planning a heist of nuclear material in an amount that would enable someone to build an atomic bomb;
- In April 2000 four Georgians (not the US state) were arrested for stealing highly enriched uranium; and

¹²⁴ *Washington Post*, 10/26/04

- In November 2003 a Russian court sentenced a government official for stealing and attempting to sell (for \$55,000) uranium yellowcake, a precursor to highly enriched uranium.

If al-Qaeda or some other terrorist group acquired in one purchase, or over several purchases, forty pounds of highly enriched uranium or half of that amount in plutonium, it could produce a nuclear weapon in less than a year.

Moreover, terrorists could obtain nuclear weapons from poorly guarded facilities in Russia; half of the world's supply of plutonium and highly enriched uranium is in Russia. At the end of the Cold War, there were around 22,000 tactical nuclear weapons in fourteen of the fifteen newly independent states of the former USSR. In 1991 former President George H.W. Bush declared that the US would unilaterally withdraw its tactical nuclear weapons from areas around the world, and challenged Soviet Premier Gorbachev to do the same. In 1992 the Russian Military Defense declared that its tactical weapons were removed from the newly independent states and stored in Russia. However, this occurred during a very tumultuous time in Russian history, during the dismantlement of the Soviet Union. "Under the most favorable conditions, Federal Express or DHL would find it challenging to move so many items from so many sites in so little time without losing any. But the Soviet Ministry of Defense had to do this as the country was coming apart at the seams, and in fact dissolved in December 1991. Inflation had jumped over 2,000 percent, fueling corruption and criminality throughout Russian society....At steel, aluminum, palladium, and other plants, general directors decided to sell those commodities on the international market to the highest bidder and pocket the profits themselves. More troubling for the disarmament efforts, the military officers charged with extracting nuclear weapons and returning them to Russia were not receiving regular paychecks. In light of these realities, is it conceivable that 22,000 nuclear weapons—which are much more valuable than steel or aluminum—were recovered without a single loss? As [then] Secretary of Defense Cheney observed in 1991, recovery of 99 percent of the weapons would constitute 'excellent' performance. But even that level of efficiency would leave 220 highly portable nuclear weapons lost, stolen, or otherwise unaccounted for."¹²⁵

This is why the late Russian general Alexander Lebed's statement is even more alarming. In May 1997, as the national security advisor to former Russian President Yeltsin, he admitted to members of the US Congress that Russia could not account for 84 one-kiloton Soviet suitcase nuclear bombs. (From the combined effects of blast, heat, and radiation, a one-kiloton bomb detonated in Times Square would kill approximately 250,000 people within one week.) The Russian government disputed this statement. However, the United States had similar weapons; called Special Atomic Demolition Munitions, they can be stored in a backpack carried by one person. During the Cold War, the Soviets played copycat. Therefore, it's reasonable to assume that these weapons exist, and that Lebed was telling the truth.

Moreover, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States lost nuclear weapons! "At least four Soviet submarines, armed with a total of *forty nuclear weapons*, sank during the Cold War. According to press reports, one of these was partially recovered from the Pacific Ocean floor by a unique deep-ocean mining ship....Three nuclear missiles and two nuclear torpedoes were recovered. The Department of Defense has acknowledged a number of what it calls 'broken arrows' (accidents involving a nuclear weapon, including loss), although it has never said how many. The confirmed reports include a 1965 case in which an aircraft loaded with a B43 nuclear bomb rolled off a carrier

¹²⁵ Allison, pgs 69-70

stationed near Japan. Neither the aircraft nor the weapon was ever recovered. A year later, the U.S. Air Force accidentally dropped a twenty-megaton nuclear bomb in the Mediterranean Sea during a high-altitude refueling mission near Palamares, Spain. After three months of frantic search, it was found. Given the sensitivity of such events, it is reasonable to infer that the few official confirmations are merely the tip of the iceberg.”¹²⁶

In the three years following the fall of the USSR, the German government reported more than 700 cases of attempted sales of nuclear materials. In 2002 the US National Intelligence Council admitted the existence of a vast and growing black market in weapons of mass destruction, but acknowledged our inability to know the extent or magnitude of such smuggling.

In addition to Russia, we should worry about Pakistan. I’ve already discussed Abdul Qadeer Khan, the father of the Pakistani bomb, who sold nuclear technology and expertise on the black market. His clients included North Korea, Libya, Iran, and possibly Saudi Arabia; past clients included Iraq. Moreover, Pakistan has around fifty nuclear weapons, and enough highly enriched uranium to produce fifty more. In its pursuit to build nuclear weapons, it has collaborated with the governments of, and with black market groups and companies based in, China, North Korea, Myanmar, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Germany, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates.

Pakistan’s ties to the Taliban in Afghanistan, and the presence of radical Islamists in its intelligence services, are especially worrying. Moreover, there have been a few assassination attempts on President Musharraf. In addition, a recent election demonstrated the popularity of fundamentalist Islamic parties. What will happen if terrorists kill President Musharraf and the government falls into the hands of Islamic fundamentalists? In order to prevent the destruction of its nuclear facilities in one airborne strike from India, the Pakistani government has dispersed its nuclear weapons throughout the country. It will therefore be almost impossible for the United States to seize their nuclear weapons. The rise of an Islamic fundamentalist state (think Iran) with nuclear weapons is a frightening thought.

Iran has admitted to two decades of obfuscation. It has admitted lying to international monitors and agencies about its clandestine nuclear program. Despite implausible and phony affirmations about its peaceful intentions—why does an Iran sitting on a sea of oil need nuclear energy?—we believe that, if left unchecked, Iran will have deployable nuclear weapons in a few years. And Iran is a demonstrable state sponsor of terrorism, a financier of Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad and other terrorist groups. Therefore, it’s not implausible to believe that Iranian nuclear weapons will one day fall into the hands of terrorists.

North Korea possesses a few nuclear weapons and has the capacity to produce many more. Moreover, it is the world’s biggest proliferator of missiles and other such weapons. Perennially starved for cash, a “nuclear-armed North Korea with a serial production line for an additional dozen weapons per year could become a Nukes R’ Us for developing nations, ‘rogue states,’ and terrorist groups.”¹²⁷

In addition, there are at least 130 nuclear research reactors using highly enriched uranium in more than forty countries; security at these reactors range from good to poor to very poor to nonexistent.

In the first debate of the 2004 Presidential election, both candidate John Kerry and President Bush declared that the biggest national security threat to the United States is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. The detonation of a nuclear weapon in a US city, or simultaneous detonations in several cities, would shake this country to the core. Because the

¹²⁶ Allison, pg 71

¹²⁷ Ibid, pg 80

use of such weapons would be unprecedented, the consequences of a nuclear attack in the United States are unknowable. The consequences of a bio-attack may be even graver.

Bioterrorism

“The history of smallpox is one of wholesale human suffering and the devastation of populations, as well as of the death or disfigurement of populations, as well as of the death or disfigurement of historically important people. Smallpox also had a critical impact on the outcome of many battles and military campaigns.”¹²⁸

The introduction of smallpox into unexposed populations had devastating consequences. For example, when it was introduced to Iceland in 1707, 18,000 people died out of a population of 50,000. During eight months in 1853, smallpox killed over 80% of the population of some Hawaiian Islands. When Peruvian slavers raided Easter Island during the 1860s, they took 1,000 men hostage and transported them to Peru; 900 of them died from smallpox.

In recent decades the United Nations led a very successful campaign to eradicate smallpox in the world. The last naturally occurring case of smallpox was in 1977. That’s the good news. The bad news is that the world is dangerously vulnerable to a smallpox attack. “Aerosol release of smallpox virus disseminated among a relatively small population could result in a significant epidemic. Evidence suggests the infectious dose is very small. Several factors are for concern: the disease has historically been feared as one of the most serious of all pestilential diseases; it is physically disfiguring; it bears a 30 percent case-fatality rate; there is no treatment; it is communicable from person to person. Vaccination ceased in this country in 1972, and vaccination immunity acquired before that time has undoubtedly waned. Prior to eradication, data on smallpox outbreaks in Europe indicated that victims had the potential to infect 10 to 20 others. However, there has never been a smallpox outbreak in such a densely populated, highly mobile, unvaccinated population such as exists today.”¹²⁹ Infected people will resemble the man below.

Man with Smallpox, Source: CDC, B Rice

¹²⁸ Bollet, pg 75

¹²⁹ The ANSER Institute for Homeland Security, “Dark Winter”

For these reasons, smallpox is the ultimate bio-weapon. It has an incubation period of two weeks, during which an infected person could infect a host of others, and they will infect their families, friends, coworkers, fellow shoppers, and so on. By the time the first symptoms appear, millions of people could have been exposed.

Recognizing the danger of a smallpox attack, in June 2001 a group of respected defense think tanks sponsored an exercise called “Dark Winter.” They asked current and (Man with Smallpox, Source: CDC, B. Rice)

former government officials to respond to a simulated bioterror attack using smallpox. Terrorists infected three shopping centers—in Oklahoma, Georgia, and Pennsylvania—with smallpox. Because of its two-week incubation period, the government had no way of knowing who was infected, and how many. Nor could they determine if the infected people had left these states or the country. Moreover, it did not have enough vaccination to treat the unaffected in those states.

Because we’re a very mobile society, two weeks after the initial terrorist attack, there were 2,000 cases in fifteen states. By this time, the US government closed its borders to prevent a worldwide outbreak. And it had exhausted its stockpile of vaccination.

By the third week the situation had become calamitous. Our medical system had collapsed and stocks of vaccines could not be replaced in time. There were 16,000 confirmed cases, and the computer program predicted 300,000 deaths after three weeks. After a few months, one to three million Americans died, and many more millions overseas. The government was contemplating martial law.

In 1999 the John Hopkins Center for Civilian Defense Studies conducted a different simulated exercise in which terrorists infected residents of Crystal City, Virginia [a fictional city] with smallpox. “Under this scenario, more than 15,000 people die of smallpox worldwide within two months, and epidemics rage out of control in 14 nations. All global supplies of the smallpox vaccine are depleted, and it will take years to manufacture enough to save humanity. The global economy teeters on the brink of collapse as nations close their borders and sink into isolation, barring all Americans from entering their countries. In the city of Northeast [a fictional name], utter chaos reigns, and the National Guard enforces martial law over the city’s two million residents. Similarly, government authority either breaks down or reverts to military-style control in cities all over the world as smallpox claims lives and pits terrified citizens against one another. Meanwhile, back in Northeast, a top smallpox expert scribbles projections on the back of an envelope and gently slides it in front of the state governor: within 12 months 80 million people worldwide would be dead.”¹³⁰

These are two very serious and credible simulations of smallpox epidemics caused by a bioterror attack. Other experts have concluded that if the virus were released today, with a 30% kill rate, nearly two billion people worldwide would die.

A slew of other diseases

In addition to smallpox, there are a slew of other diseases that terrorists could weaponize:

Bubonic Plague: In history, this disease was spread mainly by fleas and rats. Hungry fleas feed on infected rats. When the rats die, the fleas try to find another host, usually humans. Bubonic plague—so called because of the enlarged and painful lymph nodes (or buboes) it produces—killed an estimated 25 million Europeans from

¹³⁰ Laurie Garret, “The Nightmare of Bioterrorism,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2001, pg 77

1348 to 1350 AD. There were subsequent outbreaks. In 1709 plague killed 300,000 Prussians. From 1720 to 1722, 50% of the people in the French towns of Marseilles and Toulon died from plague. London was afflicted by plague from 1604 to 1610, and 1640 to 1609.

As the Japanese did over a Chinese hamlet during World War II, terrorists could unleash plague infected fleas into an American city. Or in the tumultuous end-time, in several areas civil society will break down and government will no longer be able to provide basic services, such as sanitation. Cities will become dirtier. The rat population will explode, and thus plague could be reintroduced.

Cholera:

It's a very deadly infection of the gastrointestinal tract. It could cause more deaths, more quickly, than any other epidemic disease. Some epidemiologists believe that cholera decimated the Assyrian army during the siege of Jerusalem, during Hezekiah's reign.

Cholera usually spreads when people share the same water supply, either for drinking, washing or cooking. It strikes quickly. In Basra (Iraq), in 1821, cholera killed 15,000 to 18,000 people in three weeks. In August 1817 it killed 100,000 people in Java.

Terrorists could contaminate supplies of water with cholera. Indeed, in the last few years Arab men have been caught scoping the reservoirs of New York.

Anthrax:

Anthrax has already been used as a bio-weapon. In 2001 the anthrax terror attacks (spread via mail tainted with anthrax spores) infected eleven people, killing five of them.

Infection can occur through inhalation (the deadliest form), through the skin (cutaneous) and through the gastrointestinal system after accidental ingestion of the anthrax organisms. In 1970 the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that, if 50 kilograms of anthrax spores were released over a city of 5 million, over 250,000 people would become sick and over 100,000 would die. In 1993 the US Congressional Office of Technology concluded that the release of 100 kilograms of anthrax spores would be as lethal as the hydrogen bomb.

“As the anthrax letters dramatically demonstrate, the crucial ingredient in a successful biological attack is not advanced laboratory equipment or virulent microbes alone, but knowledge. The FBI believes that hundreds if not thousands of Americans with advanced scientific training could have made ‘this anthrax.’ Such expertise is increasingly available around the world. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, thousands of scientists skilled in biotechnological warfare found themselves unemployed or penniless. The demise of South Africa's apartheid system and Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War also added to the talent pool from which weapons scientists can be recruited.”¹³¹

¹³¹ Judith Miller, Stephen Engelberg, William Broad, *Germs: Biological Weapons and America's Secret War*, pg 335

Botulism: It's one of the deadliest poisonous substances in the world. "A single gram, evenly disbursed and inhaled, could kill more than one million people....It causes muscular paralysis that is so rapid that the inability to breathe is lethal in only a few minutes."¹³²

It is not too difficult to produce purified botulinum toxin. Between 1990 and 1995, aerosols of the toxin were released in Tokyo on at least three occasions by the Japanese-based *Aum* doomsday cult. The attacks failed because of faulty technique, poor aerosol equipment, or other factors.

The Soviets developed botulinum toxin for use as a bio-weapon. As of 2002, four countries were listed by the United States as having stores of this toxin: Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and Syria. In 1991, after the Gulf War, Iraq admitted to the United Nations that it had produced 19,000 liters of concentrated botulinum toxin, three times the amount needed to kill every human on earth. This store of toxin has never been accounted for.

Tularaemia: A disease that commonly affects wild rabbits, mice, and squirrels. A human victim will contract either ulceroglandular disease, which has a 4% mortality rate, or typhoidal Tularaemia, which kills 35% of its victims. Tularaemia can be aerosolized by determined and skilled terrorists, and spread over large, inhabited areas.

Ebola & Marbug: They can also be aerosolized by determined, skilled terrorists. Ebola and its cousin Marbug attack every organ and tissue in the body. The first symptoms will include fever, body aches and vomiting. Then spontaneous tears will appear in the body, and blood will pour from the wounds. "The heart bleeds into itself and the eyeballs fill with blood."¹³³ Death occurs very shortly thereafter.

Man's inhumanity

One of the earliest cases of bio-warfare occurred in the Middle Ages. The Mongols would throw cadavers infected with bubonic plague over the walls of cities they were besieging.

From 1932 to 1945 the Japanese developed an advanced bio-warfare program. Unit 731 of the Japanese Imperial Army conducted ghastly biological experiments on prisoners. During the program's height, Unit 731 was producing 660 lbs of Plague bacteria per month, and was capable of producing 1,400 lbs of anthrax; 2,200 lbs of cholera organisms; and 2,000 lbs of typhoid, paratyphoid and dysentery combined.

The accounts are grisly, and they rival anything performed by the Nazis. In order to test the effects on humans, they purposively infected people with the following: smallpox, typhus, tuberculosis, pneumonia, Salmonella, meningitis, tetanus, cholera, glanders, scarlet fever, Tularaemia, tick encephalitis, gas gangrene, and several other diseases. For example, Unit 731 would force

¹³² Bollet, pg 215

¹³³ Tom Mangold & Jeff Goldberg, *Plague Wars: The Terrifying Reality of Biological Warfare*, pg 384

prisoners to eat biscuits and cake laced with smallpox, and chocolates stuffed with anthrax. They would force prisoners to drink milk infected with cholera organisms.

Sometimes they dissected live people to determine the affects of the disease on the organs. A young medical assistant working in Unit 731 made the following observation:

“The fellow knew that it was over for him and so he didn’t struggle when they led him into the room and tied him down. But when I picked up the scalpel, that’s when he started screaming. I cut him open from the chest to the stomach and he screamed terribly and his face was all twisted in agony. He made this unimaginable sound, he was screaming so horribly. But then he finally stopped. This was all in a day’s work for the surgeons, but it really left an impression on me because it was time.”¹³⁴

In August 1942 Unit 731 sent a small airplane over the Chinese hamlet of Congshan in the Zhejiang Province. The plane released something that appeared as smoke to onlookers. Actually, they had released fleas infected with Plague. The fleas attacked the rats. After the rats had died, they had to find other hosts. Two weeks later people began to notice symptoms, such as high fever. During the next two months, Plague ravaged the Chinese hamlet. 392 people out of a population of 1,200 died.

It’s apparent that the Japanese government was planning to use bio-warfare against American soldiers. “It was clear to them from the Congshan horror that the use of Plague-infected fleas had been highly successful. According to Professor Kei-ichi Tsuneishi, an authority on Ishii’s germ warfare programme, the Japanese were planning to use biological weapons in 1944 to defend a vital airstrip on Saipan, their Pacific island stronghold. They planned to drop porcelain bombs containing trillions of the Plague fleas on the invading GIs. The plan failed only because a Japanese submarine carrying biological weapons equipment and specialists was sunk before reaching the island.”¹³⁵ (Shiro Ishii, the microbiologist in charge of Unit 731.)

The United States, the Soviet Union, Iraq, and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) also developed extensive bio-warfare programs. Moreover, doomsday cults developed and used biological weapons. For example, in 1984 the hedonistic Rajneeshees cult deliberately infected salad bars in the Dalles, Oregon with Salmonella germs. Dozens of people became sick. In addition, the Rajneeshees also experimented with other pathogens, including germs that cause typhoid fever and dysentery.

On March 20, 1995 twelve people died after members of the *Aum* doomsday cult released sarin nerve gas in the Tokyo subways. This sect also carried out nine unsuccessful biological attacks, including the release of anthrax over Tokyo. The attacks failed because the cult did not use a sufficient amount of virulent bacteria, and because the execution of the attacks was sloppily conducted.

Wars, rumors of war, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in diverse places

“And you will hear of wars and rumors of war. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places” (Matthew 24:6-7).

According to the oft-repeated cliché, history repeats itself. Technically, this is untrue. Rarely does history repeat itself. Wars recur, but the reasons and circumstances are different each time. This is why I don’t expect a resurgence of fascism in Europe and that the end-time European superstate (the “beast” or “king of the North”) will not be led by a facsimile of Hitler.

¹³⁴ Mangold & Goldberg, pg 20

¹³⁵ Ibid, pg 24

Furthermore, Jesus' prediction conveys the impression that these wars will be fought by nation-states and kingdoms (combination of nation-states). However, this does not rule out the destructive effects of terrorism.

We live in a unipolar world. In other words, the United States is so far ahead militarily and economically that it doesn't make sense for any other major state to challenge us. Sure, we're not invulnerable and we have problems (e.g. our huge current account deficit). But power is measured comparatively, not absolutely. And because other nations have similar problems, it's very safe to assume that no other nation will overtake us any time soon.

However, because the United States descended from an ancient Israeli tribe (Manasseh), we can't be one of the ten states comprising the preponderant "beast" power in the end time. I've already included scriptures alluding to the defeat and subjugation of the descendants of the ancient ten "lost tribes" of Israel. One scripture is worth quoting:

"For thus says the LORD: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the *time of Jacob's trouble*, but he shall be saved out of it.

"'For it shall come to pass in that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds. Foreigners shall no more enslave them. But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them'" (Jeremiah 30:5-9).

These scriptures reveal that the modern nations descended from the ancient ten "lost tribes" of Israel will be defeated and enslaved (either literally or figuratively) in the period known as the "time of Jacob's trouble." When the Bible employs the name "Jacob" in prophecy, it is usually referring to either the entire 12 tribes of ancient Israel (13 if you split the tribe of Joseph into the two tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim), or the northern "house of Israel," which comprised the ten "lost tribes" that eventually migrated to Europe and the United States. (Again, please refer to our publication, *The Divine Destiny of America*. It will prove that the United States and Great Britain, in particular, have descended from the ancient Israeli tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim.)

Because the Bible predicts that the United States will suffer from defeat and privation in the end-time, it cannot be part of the victorious European superstate that will defeat the Islamic "king of the South." This also means that the United States will have abdicated its role as defender of Western Civilization, and that Europe will assume this mantle. Therefore, something catastrophic must happen to the United States in the end-time.

Based on current events and trends, it's absurd to believe the United States could be defeated in war by European states, China, or Japan (never mind the weak Middle Eastern states). Hence the United States must be defeated and devastated by something else. After 9/11, and in consideration of the dangers posed by Islamic terrorists using portable nuclear weapons or biological weapons, that "something else" probably means catastrophic terrorism.

A combination of catastrophic (i.e. nuclear and biological) terrorism, war, and associated pestilences would devastate the United States (and the other nations descended from ancient Israel, including Britain). The prophet Isaiah alludes to such devastation:

“Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, the houses are without a man, the land is utterly desolate, the Lord has removed men far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. But yet a tenth will be in it, and will return and be for consuming, as a terebinth tree or as an oak whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump” (Isaiah 6:11-13).

As noted, the “holy seed” (or “people”) can refer to Israel (Exodus 19:6). Moreover, in several places the Bible describes a second exodus of the descendants of the ancient Israeli tribes from their lands to Palestine. This occurs after Jesus returns (e.g. Jeremiah 30:3, Jeremiah 23:5, and Jeremiah’s 16th chapter). In addition, the Bible also predicts that Jesus will return and save the Israelites from complete destruction: “The Lord will save the tents of Judah first...” (Zechariah 12:7). The use of the word “first” implies that there are others. Those “others” include the modern nations of Israel, including and especially the United States and Britain.

The United States (and the nations descended from ancient Israel) will be so devastated that only a “tenth” of their populations will return in the prophesied second exodus to Palestine.

A plausible scenario

In this essay I’ve discussed certain prophesied events, like the emergence of a European superstate (“king of the North,” “beast” power) and an Islamic “king of the South,” in the context of a millennia-old struggle between Western/Judeo-Christian and Arabic civilizations founded by two religions, Christianity and Islam. Presently, the United States is unquestionably the dominant or core state in Western Civilization. Yet the Bible predicts that the United States (as descendants of an ancient Israeli tribe, Manasseh) will suffer from defeat and privation in the end-time, in a period known biblically as the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (elsewhere known as the Great Tribulation). So a series of catastrophes must weaken the United States to such a degree that it will be forced to relinquish its role as defender of the West. Europe will then assume that mantle.

Earlier I included the imagined consequences of a nuclear terrorist strike in the United States. It’s worth repeating:

Suppose a terrorist detonates 10-kiloton nuclear weapon in Times Square (in the heart of Manhattan), one of the most famous addresses in the Western World. What would happen?

First, because we work nearby, my brother-in-law and I would be vaporized. There would be nothing left of us to bury. My sister would have to bury my parents; they died from the fallout. Times Square would simply vanish in the tremendous heat (tens of millions of degrees) produced by the blast. The fireball would incinerate everything in a radius of a third of a mile. The theatre district, Grand Central terminal, the *New York Times* building, Rockefeller Center, Carnegie Hall, the Empire State Building, Madison Square Garden, and the surrounding non-landmark buildings: all of them, destroyed.

On an average day over 500,000 people work in this section of Manhattan. This number doesn’t include countless shoppers and tourists. Detonation of a nuclear weapon would kill all of them. If you escape instant vaporization, you would likely

be killed in the collapse of buildings or from fire and fallout in the following hours. The innumerable amount of wounded people would overwhelm our hospitals. Fires would rage for days.

Imagine this scenario not only in New York but in Houston or Chicago or Washington, DC or Seattle or in whatever city is closest to you. Imagine the panic throughout the United States. Imagine the collapse of our stock market and economy. Imagine a massive “run” on our banks as millions of depositors try to withdraw their money. Imagine international investors dumping their treasury bills and dollar-denominated assets. Imagine the subsequent massive devaluation of the dollar. Imagine the ensuing hyperinflation.

Imagine the stoppage of all airline, truck, and train traffic as we inspect vehicles to ensure that no more bombs are being smuggled into and around the United States. Imagine people stampeding to Wal-Mart and other stores to purchase necessary items. Imagine the empty shelves because we have closed our ports to incoming trade. Imagine people fighting for the dwindling stock of necessities. Imagine, therefore, the disastrous and cascading effect this would have on the world economy. Imagine a world depression caused by a nuclear terrorist attack on the United States.

Imagine the crisis in confidence in the US government. People would no longer believe that the Government could protect its citizens. Imagine calls for “strong men” who could provide us with such safety. Imagine martial law and the infringement of civil liberties, including free assembly on the Sabbath. Imagine our overseas forces brought home to patrol our streets and towns. Imagine, therefore, an America withdrawing to its borders, and the chaos that would produce overseas. Imagine a Europe forced to rearm. Imagine Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan going nuclear at speed because the US has withdrawn its security umbrella. Imagine Israel without the implicit protection of the United States. Imagine a messier and deadlier Middle East.

Imagine vigilante groups killing peaceful Arabs who had nothing to do with the terrorist attacks.

Imagine life without comforting routine. Usually we go to bed knowing what the next day will bring: work, or school, or Sabbath services, or a lazy Sunday afternoon watching TV. When our refrigerators become empty, we take it for granted that our supermarkets will have food on their shelves. When our cars are running out of fuel, we take it for granted that we can buy gas at the local Exxon, Mobil or Texaco. Then one day, life will change forever. Catastrophic terrorism will devastate the United States and the foregoing imagined consequences will become real. Life will no longer be routine.

A terrorist attack using biological weapons (e.g. smallpox) would produce similar (perhaps more severe) consequences. Now imagine the consequences of simultaneous attacks by terrorists

using nuclear *and* biological weapons. Many foreign policy experts admit it's just a matter of time before such catastrophic terrorism happens here.

I don't pretend to know most of the details. However, because the Bible provides us with a vision of the end-time, we can make educated guesses based on biblical prophecy, historical trends, current events, and common sense. *The following scenario of the end-time is nothing more than an educated guess.* In recognition that each action produces a reaction, I've placed these events in chronological order. However, because life is full of unforeseen twists and turns, I recognize that the end-time may not unravel in this order, and will include several unforeseeable events. Yet one by one, in whatever order, these events will probably occur:

- a) The Bible predicts the existence of a third Jewish temple. Indeed, many Jewish fundamentalist groups want to reclaim the Temple Mount (the site of the Solomonic and Herodian temples) for Israel. They also want to build a third Jewish temple there, on property considered by Muslims to be Islam's third holiest site, the al-Asqa mosque and the adjoining Dome of the Rock, together known as the *Al-Haram al-Sharif*.

It's inconceivable that the Israeli government would purposely destroy the *Al-Haram al-Sharif*. However, Shin Bet, Israel's counterintelligence and internal security service, worries about Jewish fundamentalists blowing up the *Al-Haram al-Sharif*. Destruction of this property would enrage Muslims around the world. Moreover, it would unite a disunited Arabic world, from which the prophetic "king of the South" will emerge. This king of the South could be a state, a combination of states, or even a transnational terrorist network that claims the loyalties of Arabs throughout the region. If the latter, and in fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 11:40-45), the European superstate would be compelled to invade several Arab countries in order to quash the terrorists.

- b) The Arabs would consider the destruction of the *Al-Haram al-Sharif* as a declaration of war on Islam. The Arab states, however, are weak. Therefore, terrorists will likely take matters into their own hands. They'll try to decimate Israel and the United States with catastrophic terrorism: the use of nuclear and biological weapons, perhaps simultaneously. (Arabs see the US as Israel's sponsor and protector.) They will also terrorize American allies, including Britain, Canada, Australia, and the northwestern European states. The US and these nations were founded by descendants of the ten "lost tribes" of Israel. Hence the "time of Jacob's trouble" (elsewhere known as the Great Tribulation) has begun.
- c) I've already discussed the imagined consequences of such catastrophic terrorism. In America and her allies, civil society will disappear, governments will collapse, the delivery of public services (e.g. sanitation) will cease, and killer diseases (e.g. cholera, influenza, plague) will proliferate as cities become dirtier, water supplies become contaminated, and health systems collapse.
- d) The US and its allies (specifically Britain) will retaliate against the perceived perpetrators and their collaborators. Putting aside the difficulty of retaliating against a transnational terrorist network unaffiliated with any particular country, Americans will demand (understandably and justifiably) massive retaliation in the form of tactical nuclear weapons.

- e) The use of nuclear terrorism and US retaliation with tactical nuclear weapons means that the nuclear genie is out of the bottle. Other countries may resort to the use of nuclear weapons. For example, India may try to preempt catastrophic terrorism by striking Pakistani nuclear facilities. A war would ensue and it could escalate into a nuclear exchange. (Both countries have nuclear weapons.)
- f) By this time, World War III has begun. Many nations will unfairly blame America for starting it. As a result, Americans might be ostracized and persecuted throughout the world.
- g) America and its allies are devastated. The fate of Western Civilization hangs in the balance. Therefore, the European states least affected by terrorism, and probably led by Germany, will form a union. In numbers there is strength. And before the terrorists have a chance to strike at them, this European superstate will likely go on the offensive: its armies will be deployed to the Middle East. (The Europeans also want to protect their access to Middle Eastern oil.)

In poll after poll, Europeans state their biases against Israel. In the most recent poll, Europeans claimed that Israel is the greatest threat to world peace, and thus more dangerous than, say, Iran or North Korea. Because they're biased, and because this conflict originated in Jerusalem, the European armies will surround and invade Israel. Because they want to quash the terrorists, they'll also invade some of the surrounding Arab states;

- h) This conflict represents the last clash between the Western/Judeo-Christian and Arabic civilizations founded by religion, Christianity and Islam. The overarching religious aspect of this end-time conflict is apparent in the actions of terrorists who want to establish Islamic rule on the earth. In so doing, they would have to destroy Western Civilization. Because the United States has been destroyed, Europe will thus assume the mantle of defender of the West.

This is the last phase of the millennia-old struggle between the Western/Judeo-Christian and Arabic civilizations, or between Christianity and Islam. "When the two religions met in the Mediterranean area, each claiming to be the recipient of God's final revelation, conflict was inevitable. The conflict, in fact, was almost continuous: the first Arab-Islamic invasions took Islam by conquest to the then Christian lands of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa and, for a while, to Southern Europe; the Tatars took it into Russia and Eastern Europe; and the Turks took it into the Balkans. To each advance came a Christian rejoinder: the Reconquista in Spain, the Crusades in the Levant, the throwing off of what the Russians called the Tatar yoke in the history of their country, and, finally, the great European counterattack into the lands of Islam, which is usually called imperialism."¹³⁶

- i) Europeans are famously secular and irreligious. Shocked and confused by the magnitude of these events, they'll seek answers and guidance from the last remaining (nominal) Christian organization with any clout, the Roman Catholic Church. With the help of Satan-inspired supernatural powers, the Pope (who will be the end-time false prophet) will become a

¹³⁶ Bernard Lewis, "I'm Right, You're Wrong," *The Atlantic*, May 2003, pg 41

larger-than-life figure. Indeed, the Bible predicts that this end-time Pope will grant religious legitimacy to the European superstate (Revelation 13:13-18, 19:20).

- j) In a grand and emotive gesture to Christians worldwide (Protestants, Orthodox Christians, and Catholics alike), and to ensure the protection of the so-called Christian holy places, the Pope will announce his intention to return Christianity to its birthplace, Jerusalem. On the coattails or with the armies of the invading European superstate, the Pope will relocate to Jerusalem. In ostensible efforts to bring peace to the region, he'll try to mediate the conflict between the Jews and Palestinian Arabs.
- k) Successful mediation requires that the Pope defuse the issue that triggered the whole mess: the destruction of the *Al-Haram al-Sharif* and the subsequent construction of a third Jewish temple. He must appear fair to both sides. Therefore, with the support of the European armies, he'll persuade the Jews to vacate the temple. He'll also prevent the Muslims from regaining control of the property. And because this issue is all-consuming, the Pope himself will set up shop in the temple. In reality, the temple will become the new Vatican. This is the "abomination of desolation" in the "holy place," foretold two millennia ago in Jesus' Olivet Prophecy.
- l) The Asian states grow extremely worried by the turmoil in the Middle East. They, too, will seek strength in numbers, and thus form a union that is biblically known as the "kings of the east" (Revelation 16:12). In order to ensure their access to Middle Eastern oil, they'll send delegations to the Middle East. Then they'll send armies.

The Asians are worried because most of their oil comes from the Middle East. Terrorism and turmoil threaten the production and delivery of oil. Without the delivery of Middle Eastern oil, the Asian industrializing economies would collapse.

The danger of terrorists destroying Saudi Arabian oil facilities, especially the Abqaiq complex (the world's largest oil-processing facility), is acute. Terrorists want to depose the corrupt ruling family of Saudi Arabia, the house of Saud. The easiest way to do this is to destroy the Saudi's capacity to extract, process, and sell oil. After all, 85% of Saudi revenue comes from the sale of oil. Destruction of Saudi oil fields and facilities would reverberate throughout the world economy. "Saudi Arabia controls the largest share of the world's oil and serves as the market regulator for the global petroleum industry....the industrialized world is absolutely dependent on Saudi Arabia's oil reserves...If the Saudi spigot is shut off, by terrorism or political revolution, the effect on the global economy, and particularly on the economy of the United States, will be devastating."¹³⁷

- m) In the meantime, supported and emboldened by the might of the European armies, the end-time Pope (false prophet) will enact an array of civil and religious laws. "He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time" (Daniel 7:25).

¹³⁷ Robert Baer, "The Fall of the House of Saud," *The Atlantic*, May 2003, pg 62

- n) Popish legislation will be contrary to God's laws, holy days, and customs. (This is one of the reasons why the Pope is called a "false prophet.") The fate of true Christianity, and of the right of free worship and assembly, hangs in the balance. God therefore inspires some of His remaining saints to oppose the Pope and his laws. These saints will be like the Old Testament prophets, inveighing against religious and civil corruption, injustice, and lies. And like some of the Old Testament prophets, some of these end-time saints will be martyred: "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake" "(Matthew 24:9).
- o) Because Satan is inspiring the destruction of Israel (the Jewish state and the nations descended from the ten "lost tribes") and the Church, God will counter this by inspiring His saints to perform a great end-time work. In many ways, this end-time work will rival and exceed the dynamism and importance of first-century Christianity. Like the 1st century Christians, end-time Christians will perform signs and wonders (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17). Yet the existence of mankind was not threatened in the 1st century AD. Speaking about the end-time, Jesus said, "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:22). Therefore, the role and importance of the Church in the end-time cannot be exaggerated.
- p) God will specifically call two men to become his last two "witnesses." Like Moses and Aaron, and Elijah and Elisha, God will invest these men with supernatural powers. They'll represent the Church and Israel (the modern Jewish nation and the nations descended from the ten "lost tribes.") Their story is foretold in the 11th chapter of Revelation:

"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. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.

"These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

"When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Then those from the peoples, tribes,

tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

“Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here.’ And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.”

Whom do you root for?

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the *god of this world* has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (II Corinthians 4:3-4). Satan is the “god of this world.” In other words, Satan has influenced the world’s religions (including Christianity), customs, laws, governments, and civilizations. Elsewhere Paul calls him the “prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2).

The Bible describes Satan as motivating the three main end-time power blocs—the European superstate (the “king of the North”), the Islamic “king of the South,” and the Asian “kings of the East” (the 13th, 16th & 17th chapters of Revelation). “For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the *kings of the earth* and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty....And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon” (Revelation 16:14-16, emphasis mine).

Earlier I asked a couple of simply-stated questions: How did we arrive at Armageddon? What are the events, and who are the people, that facilitated this march toward Armageddon? This essay answers those questions. *I’ve entitled this essay “Terrorism and Prophecy” because many if not most of the end-time events will be facilitated by the downfall of the United States. Presently, the only thing that can destroy the United States is catastrophic terrorism (the use of nuclear and biological terrorism).*

I’ve also spent considerable time in trying to answer the following questions:

1. Who is the dominant “king of the North” or “beast” power in the end-time? The European superstate led by Germany.
2. Who is the king of the South? An Islamic state or combination of states, or a transnational terrorist network that claims the loyalties of Arabs throughout the region.
3. Who is the false prophet? The Pope who is allied with the European superstate.

4. How long is the Great Tribulation (elsewhere, the “time of Jacob’s trouble”)? Three and one-half years.
5. What happens to the United States in the end-time? The US and its allies will most likely be devastated by catastrophic terrorism (e.g. nuclear and biological weapons). This will force European nations least affected by such terrorism to unite and become the ‘defender of the West’ against Islamic terrorism. This is the last phase of the millennia-old conflict between two civilizations founded by religion: Islam and Christianity.
6. What is Satan doing during the end-time? Satan is motivating the European superstate, the Islamic “king of the South,” and the Asian “kings of the East.” Satan is inspiring laws, decrees, pogroms, and wars; together, these events threaten the existence of Israel, the Church, and in general, mankind.
7. What is God doing during the end-time? The short answer: a lot!

What is God doing?

In many ways, the history of man has unfolded on a supernatural chessboard. God moves a piece here or there, and Satan counters. This game of chess has been going on since the dawn of time. God declares checkmate in the 19th chapter of Revelation:

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

“Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.’ And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh” (Rev. 19:11-21).

God also declares checkmate in last few chapters of Zechariah:

“The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem” (Zech. 12:7-9).

“Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

“Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south” (Zech. 14:1-4).

God will punish mankind before the arrival of Jesus and His Kingdom. Divine punishment will be passive or aggressive. In other words, sometimes God will passively allow man to engage in harmful, destructive behavior. Other times, God will aggressively mete out punishment in the form of plagues and supernatural events, such as meteors and other extraterrestrial objects crashing into Earth. His punishment, whether passive or aggressive, is summarized in a few chapters in the book of Revelation.

Seals, plagues, and vials

“I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this” (Revelation 1:18-19). Jesus commanded the apostle John to record the past, present, and future in the book of Revelation. This three-part instruction provides the book’s format.

In the initial three chapters, the apostle John describes the conditions of seven churches in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). These chapters apply to the immediate past and to the present (that is, to conditions extant during the last decade of the first century AD, during which John wrote the book of Revelation). The future arrives in chapter 4: “After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, ‘Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this’” (Revelation 4:1).

The rest of the book of Revelation is set in the years preceding the return of Jesus (the 19th chapter of Revelation). In a vision John sees heaven and certain momentous decisions and events that occur therein. Beginning in chapter five of Revelation, John sees “seven seals.” Seals one through four represent the infamous horsemen of the apocalypse:

- Seal #1: a white horse representing false religious figures, including pseudo Christ's. This is a conquering 'horsemen,' implying war in the name of religion. As noted, the end-time conflict will be between two civilizations founded and inspired by religion, Christianity and Islam. Islamic terrorists are trying to reestablish the Caliphate on this earth, and the European superstate is allied with a Pope who grants it legitimacy.
- Seal #2: a "fiery red horse" representing war. "Fiery" means wars beyond comprehension. "And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword" (Rev. 6:4).
- Seal #3: a black horse representing famine. Famine is a byproduct of war. Worldwide war will bring worldwide famine: "So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, 'A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and wine'" (Rev 6: 5-6). This implies that as food becomes scarce, its price will skyrocket.
- Seal #4: a pale horse. "And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades [the grave] followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth" (Rev. 6:8). The fourth horse represents the combined consequences of war, famine, and disease. For example, worldwide war destroys agricultural sectors and closes borders to trade. Famine ensues. Lack of food weakens our immune system, thereby making us susceptible to disease. Killer diseases will proliferate because our governments will no longer be able to provide basic services (e.g. sanitation) and our health systems will collapse. Animals and rodents ("beasts of the earth"), and particularly their fleas, are carriers of diseases. When the animals and rodents die, their disease-producing fleas and ticks will seek new human hosts to feed on.

At this point, God intervenes by sending His saints (the Church) to proclaim His message. God is willing to give man one more chance to repent. However, because God's message is contrary to the rules and laws established by the Pope in the end-time, the latter will persecute and kill His saints. This is represented in the fifth seal:

- Seal #5: "When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed" (Rev. 6:9-11).

Defiant mankind has rejected their last chance from God. Until now God's punishment has been passive. In other words, God has passively allowed man to destroy himself through religiously-

inspired war and its byproducts (e.g. famine, disease). Beginning in the sixth seal, God becomes a lot more aggressive:

- Seal #6: “I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’” (Rev. 6:12-17).

The sixth seal announces the arrival of natural disasters, such as great earthquakes and extraterrestrial objects hitting the earth. Moreover, this seal is a prelude to God’s aggressive punishment. God announces the commencement of “His wrath” in the seventh seal:

- Seal #7: “When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets...So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound” (Rev. 8:1-2, 6).

Before the commencement of the first trumpet plague, God announces His intention to protect some of the descendants of the ancient tribes of Israel (Rev. 7:1-8), and to protect an “innumerable multitude” of people who turn to Him in these unbelievably devastating times (Rev. 7:9-14).

As noted, God becomes very aggressive in the series of the next seven plagues. The first **four trumpet plagues** represent natural disasters caused by God: meteors or debris from space hitting the earth’s land and seas, causing vast, unprecedented destruction. For example, 33% of all trees and sea creatures will be destroyed and killed. Rivers and seas become contaminated, and people die. Other inexplicable plagues will affect the amount of sunlight and moonlight we receive (Rev. 8:12).

The three remaining plagues are exceedingly ominous. “And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, ‘Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound’” (Rev. 8:13).

- Trumpet Plague #5: “Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee

from them. The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. 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" (Rev. 9:1-11)

Apparently the "locusts" represent armies. But during a five-month period, these armies don't kill; they only torment. The full meaning of this plague eludes us. However, because of the injunction not to kill anyone, this implies something short of combat. Perhaps it implies the use of non-lethal biological agents designed to incapacitate humans. For example, Q fever is not normally fatal. But it does cause fatigue, aching muscles and weight loss. Terrorists can spread Q fever by aerosol. They can also spread Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis by aerosol. The fatality rate for this disease is less than one percent. However, the infected person would suffer from malaise, intermittent but severe fevers, headaches, nausea, aching muscles, and diarrhea.

- Trumpet Plague #6: "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*. Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million....And thus I saw horses in the vision....out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed--by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts" (Rev. 9:13-21).

This plague represents an escalation of warfare with unimaginable consequences: a third of mankind, dead. However, it's astonishing that man will still not repent and changes his ways. This penultimate phase in World War III will culminate in the battle at Armageddon.

The next few chapters of Revelation provide us with an intermission. John describes the aforementioned two witnesses and their end-time ministry, and the "beast" power allied with the false prophet (the European superstate and the Pope). These scriptures also contain admonitions to the beleaguered saints of God (collectively, the Church) (e.g. Rev. 13:10). In short, Satan is trying to destroy God's Church. The members of God's Church (the saints of God) are those who "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17). And, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

God is encouraging the saints to remain steadfast during this tumultuous time, even unto the pain of death (Rev. 12:17, 14:13). When they receive their reward after Jesus returns (eternal life,

positions of responsibility in the Kingdom of God), their pain and suffering will seem inconsequential by comparison.

The importance of the Church in the end-time is inferred in 10th chapter of Revelation:

“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. He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.’

“The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, *but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel*, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

“Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, ‘Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.’ So I went to the angel and said to him, ‘Give me the little book.’ And he said to me, ‘Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.’ Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. And he said to me, ‘*You must prophesy again before many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.*’”

In the last scripture of this chapter, John represents the Church. Before the commencement of the seventh plague, God commands the Church to “prophesy [preach] *again* before many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.” In other words, a merciful God sends His people to the nations. They will warn people of the consequences of their sins. They’ll urge people to repent, and to turn to God. Many people will be convinced (Revelation 7:9-14). Yet most people will not take advantage of God’s mercy. Therefore, God will become angrier. And “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

The story of God’s wrath resumes in the fifteenth chapter of Revelation:

- Trumpet Plague #7: “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete” (Rev.15:1). The seventh trumpet plague is not an actual plague, but it’s a very ominous announcement of seven last plagues, called “vials.” After the seventh of these last plagues, God’s wrath will be complete.

The 16th chapter of Revelation describes the devastating effects of the seven last vial plagues. The first five of these last plagues will afflict defiant mankind with “foul and loathsome sores;” contaminate the oceans and rivers, killing all fish; remove the atmospheric protection from the rays of

the sun (“men were scorched with great heat”); and produce a great eclipse of the sun and moon over Jerusalem, the headquarters of the European superstate and Pope.

The sixth and seventh plagues deserve special mention.

- Vial Plague #6: “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. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. ‘Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.’ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon” (Rev. 16:12-16).

We’ve arrived at Armageddon. I’ve devoted a large portion of this essay to describing the emergence and actions of the end-time kingdoms or blocs of nations: the European superstate (“king of the North” or “beast power”); an Islamic state or combination of states, or transnational terrorist network (“king of the South”); and a combination of Asian states (“kings of the east”). I’ve also described the emergence of the end-time Pope allied with the European superstate.

Until now, these nations have fought against each other in what amounts to World War III. This war was probably precipitated by the disastrous effects of catastrophic terrorism (nuclear and biological weapons) on the United States and its allies (Britain and the states in Northwestern Europe, Canada, Australia, etc.). This destruction was unleashed by Islamic terrorists who want to reestablish Islamic rule (the Caliphate) on this earth. Therefore, World War III began as a religious war; hence the very important role played by the Pope.

However, as the old cliché goes, “Politics makes strange bedfellows.” In other words, Satan will inspire these warring nations to unite to fight a common enemy: the returning and vengeful Jesus Christ. His return is announced in the seventh vial plague:

- Vial Plague #7: “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:11-16).

The Kingdom of God

Why is Jesus’ return considered a “plague” to many people? Because defiant mankind will not be happy to see Him: “For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind,

to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh, *and the slain of the LORD shall be many* (Isaiah 66:15-16, emphasis mine).

Jesus will slay the wicked people who oppose Him. The first casualties will be the leader of the European superstate and the Pope: “And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh” (Rev. 19:19-21).

Upon Jesus’ return, God will raise His dead saints (e.g. Moses, Elijah, Ruth, Esther, Peter, Paul, Mary, etc.) as indestructible, eternal spirit beings. He’ll likewise change the living saints who survived the “Great Tribulation” (alternately, the “time of Jacob’s trouble”). The apostle Paul describes this resurrection and metamorphosis:

- “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first” (I Thessalonians 4:16).
- “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him” (I Corinthians 15:22-23).
- “There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body” (I Corinthians 15:40-44). The difference between our physical and spiritual bodies is almost indescribable.

Then Jesus, His angels, and the resurrected and changed saints will fight the nations gathered at Megiddo: the battle at Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16; Zech. 12:7-9, 14:1-4). After Jesus vanquishes His enemies and sends Satan and his demons into exile (Rev. 20:1-3), He’ll establish His kingdom:

- “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:2-4).

- “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the House of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:31-33). “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Jesus will return and establish His kingdom. In fact, during His ministry Jesus constantly returned to one dominant theme: the Kingdom of God. “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose” (Luke 4:42-43). And, “Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people” (Matthew 4:23; other examples are found in Matthew 9:35, Mark 1:15, etc.). In addition, Jesus delivered several parables concerning the Kingdom of God (Mark 4:30-32, Mark 4:11, etc.).

The extent of the Kingdom of God will be worldwide: “For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). Moreover, the Kingdom of God will have laws (the biblical commandments), subjects or citizens (the people who survived the Great Tribulation but weren’t changed into spirit beings upon Jesus’ arrival), and rulers. The supreme King will be Jesus. David will be king over the reconstituted twelve tribes of Israel (Ezekiel 37:24), and each resurrected apostle will have jurisdiction over a particular tribe: “Then Peter answered and said to Him, ‘See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?’ So Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel’” (Matthew 19:27-28).

The rest of us: our roles in the Kingdom of God

What has God prepared for us?

- “To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7). This implies immortality.
- “He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death” (Revelation 2:11). This, too, implies immortality.
- “He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, *to him I will give authority over the nations*; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father” (Revelation 2:26-27).
- “And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10).

Simply stated, we'll be rulers and priests in the Kingdom of God. Some of us will have jurisdiction over a few cities, others over many cities, others over countries, and others over continents. Jesus alludes to this division of labor in one of His parables:

“Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: ‘Certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Do business till I come.’ But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’”

“And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, ‘Master, your mina has earned ten minas.’ And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, *have authority over ten cities.*’ And the second came, saying, ‘Master, your mina has earned five minas.’ Likewise he said to him, ‘*You also be over five cities.*’”

“Then another came, saying, ‘Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’ And he said to him, ‘Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’”

And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.’ (But they said to him, ‘Master, he has ten minas.’) ‘For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me’” (Luke 19:11-27).

The resurrected and changed saints will rule with Jesus forever. For the first thousand years, we'll rule and teach the people who survived the Great Tribulation but weren't part of the first resurrection (Isaiah 66:19-21). During this time Satan and his demons will be in exile.

The rest of the story

During the Millennium, people will still have free will and human nature. Despite Satan's exile, sometimes human nature will get the better part of them (e.g. the existence of “sin offerings” during the Millennium presupposes the commission of sin: Ezekiel 43:25, 45:17, 45:22, 46:20).

In short, people will have the same human nature as we have now. The big difference is that, during the Millennium, Satan will not be around to tempt anyone. And Jesus and His resurrected and changed saints will lovingly and sometimes sternly (out of love) teach and reprove people. They'll have at least 100 years to accept Jesus and become converted by keeping His commandments and way

of life (Isaiah 65:20). Although the Bible doesn't explicitly affirm it, we're left with the impression that once a person truly accepts Jesus and is converted (over a process of time), he or she will be changed into an eternal spirit being.

God will want to determine if people truly love Him, and if they desire to live in a godly manner. It's difficult to determine this in an environment free of the temptations posed by Satan. Therefore, "when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog [representative names for the nations], to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are [sic, should read "were cast"]. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:7).

Sadly, not everyone will pass this test. As incredible as it sounds, men and women who lived in the last generation of the Millennium, who lived in utopia, will reject God and follow Satan. This demonstrates two indisputable facts: (1) it's very difficult to overcome human nature and (2) it's difficult to resist Satan's temptations. This is why time and again Jesus promised rewards to the saints who overcome the temptations and wiles of Satan the devil:

- "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7);
- "He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death" (Rev. 2:11);
- "To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it" (Rev. 2:17);
- "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'—as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star" (Rev. 2:26-28);
- "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" (Rev. 3:5);
- "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name" (Rev. 3:12);
- "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

To overcome Satan's world and to accept Jesus and our Christian responsibilities is our task today. Simply summarized, every Christian has the responsibility to keep the commandments of God

and hold to the testimony (or faith) of Jesus (Rev. 12:17, 14:12). People who live during the Millennium will have the same responsibilities.

As noted, God will foil Satan's attempt to overthrow the Kingdom of God after the Millennium. According to an allusion in the book of Jude, after this last attempt, Satan and his demons will be like "wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 12, 13). In other words, God will eventually send Satan and his demons into permanent exile, into a dark, impenetrable void (not unlike a massive black hole) from which there is no escape. They will be there forever, with each other and their thoughts; bickering, accusatory, angry demons without light and hope. This is Satan's fate.

After Satan's permanent banishment, God will resurrect everyone who wasn't resurrected a thousand years earlier, in the first resurrection. "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:11-15).

The people resurrected in the first resurrection, or the living saints changed upon Jesus' return, are those who accepted Jesus and were converted. In other words, during their lifetimes God called them and they responded. After choosing to accept God's calling, they matured as Christians. Overcoming is a process. Judgment, too, is a process. It's a period of time in which people received and accepted God's truth and a chance for salvation. During their lifetimes, God is judging these Christians according to the words and laws of the Bible.

During the Millennium, and afterward the period of time commonly referred to as the "Great White Throne Judgment," God will judge people according to same biblical laws and statutes. If people pass the test, they'll graduate to eternal life with positions of responsibility in God's kingdom. If they fail during their 100-year probation period, they will be killed and consumed by fire; this is called the "second death," from which there will be no resurrection.

After the Great White Throne Judgment period, God the Father will transfer His throne to this earth: "Then comes the end, when He [Jesus] delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians 15:24-25).

After the period of time known as the "Great White Throne Judgment," after the last iniquitous man or woman has been put to death in the "lake of fire," and after everyone has been changed into spirit beings, God the Father will transfer His throne to earth. "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God [the Father] Himself will be with them and be their God.'

God the Father's throne will be on a transformed earth. He will be based in "New Jerusalem," a city that originated in heaven. This marks the end of a phase of God's plan. It began with Adam and Eve, and continued with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It included the creation of Israel; the captivity and exile of ancient Israelites; the migration of certain ancient Israeli tribes to new lands; the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus; the creation and ministry of the Church; the return of

Jesus and the concomitant resurrection of His saints; the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth; the permanent exile of Satan and his demons; and the eventual transfer of God the Father's throne to a transformed earth. Then God the Father will inaugurate the next phase of His plan.

The next phase of God's plan begins where the Bible ends. We don't know what it will involve. Until we're told by God Himself, I suppose we must be content with the scriptural promise: "Eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him" (I Corinthians 2:9).